

Whatley community liaison meeting
10 March 2021
Whatley Quarry and Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Justin Collis (JC)	Area Operations Manager (Chair)
Ian Strachan (IS)	Strategic Development Manager
Trystan Mabbitt (TM)	Consenting and Development Manager
Steven Morton (SM)	Marketing and Communications Manager
Joanne Hudd (JH)	Hanson graduate
Tobias Hooker	Hanson LEAD apprentice
Andrew Bramstone (ABR)	Resident of Chantry
Nienke Pengelly	NP Wood plc
David McGinty (DMG)	EPC Groupe - Explosive Supervisor
Martyn Ford (MF)	Senior Enforcement Officer (Planning, Rights of Way, Gypsies & Travellers), Somerset CC
Alison Barkshire (AB)	MDC for Ammerdown (covers Mells)
Colin Arnold (CA)	Principle Planning Officer, Somerset CC

Apologies:

Richard Francis	Distribution Resource Manager
Will Palmer	Whatley Resident
Andy Duncan (AD)	Principal Landscape Manager
Richard Keith-Hill (RKH)	Environmental Protection Officer, Mendip District Council

Agenda:

Number	Item	Presented by
1	Introduction	All
2	Review of previous minutes and adoption of today's agenda	Justin Collis
3	Whatley quarry update	Justin Collis
3a	Communications activity	Justin Collis
3b	Community initiatives	Justin Collis
3c	Operational overview	Justin Collis
3d	Feedback – topics and outcomes	Justin Collis
4	Other sites update	Justin Collis
4a	Vallis vale	Justin Collis
4b	Asham	Trystan Mabbitt
4c	Westdown	Trystan Mabbitt
5	Any other business	All

Minutes

1. Introductions

Chair greeted all parties and thanked them for their attendance. Introductions were given by all parties.

2. Review of previous minutes

Chair asked for validation of the previous minutes as a true and reflective account. This was agreed and the minutes accepted by the group.

3. Whatley quarry update:

3a. Communication activity

The meeting Chair provided an update on how Hanson is proactively seeking to improve the ways in which local people can engage with us:

- New 0800 644 4234 telephone number
- New email address whatley.quarry@hanson.com
- All those who make direct contact with us will still be able to.
- Work is also ongoing in enhancing how we share information with the local community including development of a local newsletter and adaptations to our community webpage

The Chair also sought the group's views on expanding local representation on the liaison committee querying if the group has the correct audience attending and if there were other local organisations that should be invited to join?

AB: Suggested utilising parish newsletters (monthly) for a small donation to run an article (just Mells) and that Hanson could contact other parishes.

SM: Set out that Hanson is looking to improve attendance, ideally with at least one attendee per parish.

TM: Commented that he would like to liaise with Somerset County Council to obtain further relevant attendees list of councillors.

3b. Community initiatives

The Chair provided an update to the group on a number of community initiatives:

- While many businesses locally contribute to debris on the road, Hanson has increased the number of road sweepers and, on average, is collecting 15 tonnes per day from each of the villages which it is disposing of. Hanson has also contracted them to power wash down the pavements outside of the quarry.



- Frome Angling Club is being given access to almost all of the waterways Hanson own, reflecting the company's increased focus on health and wellbeing as a result of the pandemic. The arrangement with Frome Angling Club will also allow children to fish for free.
- Hanson has initiated a speed check campaign on the local roads. These take the form of regular spot checks using our speed camera.
- Hanson has instigated a number of litter picks, including doing more with Mendip Quarry Producers.
- The roll out of connecting Fibreway broadband to all villages includes the placement of antennas on Hanson's land. Hanson recognises more people are working from home during the pandemic and this would support them.
- Planned changes to Hanson's Whatley quarry community webpage will provide more information on our community support programme, including how to make an application for funding and/or volunteer support.

ABR: Stated that, while the street cleaning is a positive move (including the litter pick at dead woman's bottom), what can prevent it from happening?

AB: As it is not possible to complete the Mells to Whatley route on foot, it would be great if a footpath could be put in outside the quarry for a link to be created.

AB: Also raised concerns about the road surface.

Chair advised that the road is not adopted, and Hanson cannot legally repair it. The local highway authority is responsible for maintaining the highway, in this case Somerset County Council.

3c. Operational overview

- Vince Pitt has been appointed unit manager for Whatley quarry, which was effective 4 January.
- The site is at forecast of around 5.2mt by year end.
- The excavation is continuing with level nine ready to sink. Level zero and one are finished, and level two has one further blast to complete.
- Hanson will send an invite to liaison representatives to attend the next Hinkley Point C presentations at Whatley, but this has yet to be scheduled. We expect to supply up to 5 trains per week (1,575t day / 7,875t week).
- The HSE carried out two Covid-19 audits (18 January and 25 February), the site passed with no recommendations. At the time of the meeting Hanson had no confirmed cases of Covid-19 at Whatley quarry.
- Shutdown periods during January and February were successfully conducted as planned.
- Extensive sound monitoring currently being conducted – we will share details at our next meeting. Previous monitoring has confirmed no breaches of planning conditions. No issues or concerns have been raised by Somerset County Council.
- Sound monitoring best-practice approach is being utilised:
 - An industry-leading sound monitoring company, SOCOTEC, has been appointed to carry out monitoring at nine locations including residential properties on 11, 17, 19, 22, 30 March then in April and May.
 - Retraining of all staff for continued internal monitoring.
 - SOCOTEC are the only sound monitoring supplier to offer a UK-based technical services department support.
 - Dr Rob Farnfield (EPC) is recognised as a leading expert in this area, and we are committed to sharing the findings by engagement activity once Covid-19 permits.
 - Blast design software, drones and products are at the cutting edge of available technology.

ABR: Commented that sometimes blasting is fine, but sometimes it is of concern, so we would welcome seeing the feedback and planned roadshow once Covid-19 restrictions permit.

3d. Feedback – topics and outcomes

Blasting (6 negatives, 2 positive) – investigated and all are compliant

Chair: We have received some feedback about blasting. The site has third party static monitors which are supplemented with mobile monitoring which we have placed at locations across the site.

This included residential properties in response to requests from individuals. All monitoring conducted return compliant results.

Dates of blasts are reported on our [community webpage](#) a month in advance.

Hanson welcomes feedback, and this should be sent direct to the quarry by emailing Whatley.quarry@hanson.com or calling 0800 644 4234 and not via a third party, to ensure clarity, accurate recording, and prompt responses.

ABR: Expressed some concern that some blasts are worse than others – so the low percentage is not the issue. Can you explain the science and how they can be improved?

Chair said that Hanson are looking to run a roadshow to explain the science behind the blasts.

DMG: Explained that blasts are logged with data recorded in real-time, which is subsequently used to inform future blasts.

ABR: Highlighted that the website text had changed to caveat blasting on any day Monday-Saturday and that it would not be welcomed by the local community.

SM: Set out that the text would be reviewed but essentially there has been no change in position from Hanson. Saturday blasting would only occur in the rarest of instances (only one in the previous four years) and possibly an email list could be developed to communicate this to local people as appropriate.

Noise (7 negatives, 2 positive)

Chair: While we are confident that all our activities, are well within permitted guidelines we have met with residents to explore concerns and as part of our ongoing commitment to continued improvement have instigated the following:

- Changed three dumpers from Hitachi to newer and quieter Komatsu dumpers.
- Contracted an external company to undertake independent noise monitoring.
- Enhanced and ongoing noise monitoring training of all staff.
- Rubber lining has been installed on conveyor drives on 12 February.
- Ceramic plates installed on conveyors to reduce noise.
- Operating procedure amended to reduce hopper noise.
- Additional cladding installed in areas across the plant.

- Sirens and claxons are being changed to white noise.
- Review of acoustics barriers around the site
- Review of enclosures for tipping and stocks.
- New load and haul fleet of dumpers have been ordered with expected delivery in autumn.

Dust monitoring continues with results posted on our [community webpage](#). One monitor has been removed at resident's request due to selling the property. We will aim to relocate this.

ABR: Requested clarification on whether the number is individual complaints or days of complaints.

Chair: Clarified that it means 7 separate complaints

CA: Raised the point that he received correspondence that 70 complaints had been raised in a single email, but with no evidence provided.

AB: Set out that noise at night an issue. Queried if complaints had gone to occupational health or environmental officer?

TM: Took an action to liaise with the Environmental health officer at Mendip District Council to check the status of complaints and ascertain whether the 70 complaints referred to above have been received at their offices.

MF: Raised one noise complaint – recognised it got better – discreet types of noise an issue.

Chair added that we have made additional improvements since then and that complaint was included in the above data capture

Hanson welcomes feedback, and this should sent direct to the quarry by emailing Whatley.quarry@hanson.com or calling 0800 644 4234 and not via a third party, to ensure clarity, accurate recording, and prompt responses.

Rail (2)

The feedback above has been identified as being older rail wagons – these have now moved to a different site.

Transport (0)

No feedback has been received since the last meeting regarding transport.

Lighting (0)

No feedback, though an upgrade to LED's is already underway with a phased plan in place.

Other (0)

No other complaints have been received since the last meeting.

4. Other sites update

4a. Vallis Vale

- Ongoing work with Ash dieback disease
- Consultation ongoing with a view to extending the lease to more areas

4b. Asham

- Ongoing work to manage Ash dieback disease
- Litter picking and fly-tipping removal
- Trespassing occurring and Hanson continues to work with the police

4c. Westdown

AB: Stressed the cumulative impact of quarries and has noticed the increase in traffic on the Old Wells Road.

4d. Whatley

An update was provided in relation to the overall status of planning permissions at the site:

- Pre-application Submission & Environmental Impact Scoping Opinion for additional reserves.

TM: Advised that the schemes were submitted in May 2020 with final response received from SCC in August 2020 which sought to set out the associated requirements in form of assessments and surveys that would be required to support the application.

- Status of undetermined 2012 ROMP

TM: Advised that because of the above Hanson have requested sight of SCC's legal advice in terms of the status of the undetermined application given the length of time that has passed with no decision forthcoming.

The status of the above has consequently had a bearing on the timescales associated with any future schemes and hence, while it still being finalised, will need to be held in abeyance until a response and decision is forthcoming as to the status of the ROMP.

AB: Asked what the change of conditions would involve.

TM: Advised that the changes would seek to take on board the most up to date legislation which would seek to control the quarry in light of any changes/best practice that had become available since the previous approval in 2012.

CA: Confirmed that there was no relaxation of the requirements ROMP.

Westdown

An update was provided in terms of:

- Status of consolidating application submission for Westdown and the discharge of conditions and associated operational method

TM: As part of the planning process SCC are currently seeking to validate the submission to ensure that all the relevant information and legislative requirements have been met as part of the submission.

It is anticipated that this will be completed within the next fortnight, where the SCC will then advertise and consult with key stakeholders and the communities in order to obtain views to the submission beyond what Hanson have previously sought to undertake in December last year.

In combination with the above the Hanson project team will continue to liaise with the planning officers at SCC and have earmarked a number of dates for ongoing virtual meetings together with having sought to provide drone tour footage of the quarry, initial limited and socially distanced site visits in order to seek to maintain progress on the scheme while ensuring the measures sought are fully compliant with reducing the spread of Covid-19.

AB: Asked whether given the numerous quarries in the Mendips if there were any plans to seek to control operations and the overall scale of development?

TM: Advised that the desire to continue to work with the host communities was at the forefront of Hanson's considerations with further commitments being discussed by the leadership team at present, where it is anticipated that further information on this could be shared at the next meeting.

5. Any Other Business

Chair: Thanked Jane Butcher for her support and work over the last number of years.

TM: Holwell Road Adoption is still on-going. Latest communication from Hanson's solicitors to SCC to seek to bring matters to a close was February 2021. Funds for the project continue to be budgeted (bond, maintenance costs, legal undertakings).

Final matters from around the room

Date of next meeting: 17:30 Wednesday 9 June 2021 again part physical, part Teams.

Meeting actions:

1. AB to forward contact details for Mells Parish newsletter
2. JC and IS to contact each parish for representation
3. TM contact SCC for list of councillors for invitation
4. JC to contact highways about a footpath outside of quarry. AB as councillor also to make contact
5. SM review wording for blasting on community page
6. JC share sound monitoring at next meeting
7. IS to place advert in parish magazine once details received from AB for Mells. Investigate other Parishes. Potentially Joy Brook / Whatley
8. IS send invites for next meeting
9. JC send link to minutes via email that are to be upload to community page