



**Whatley and Westdown Quarries
Community Liaison Group Meeting
01 April 2025 - 17:30
Whatley Quarry**

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

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|-------------------------|---|
| • Philip Ham (PH) | Councillor Somerset Council, Mendip Central & East (Chair) |
| • Richard King (RK) | Great Elm residents' representative |
| • Barry Clark (BC) | Councillor, Mendip Central & East Somerset Council (SC) |
| • Andrew Bramston (ABR) | Whatley & Chantry Parish Council |
| • Ian Kirby (IK) | Leigh on Mendip Parish Council |
| • Estelle Kirby | Leigh on Mendip Parish Council |
| • Vince Pitt (VP) | Heidelberg Materials, Area General Manager (South): Mendips and Masters |
| • Chris O'Connor (CO) | Heidelberg Materials, Operations Manager (South): Mendips and Masters |
| • Samantha Stagg (SS) | James Reed PR, communications for Heidelberg Materials |

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Colin Arnold (CA) | Principal Planning Officer, Somerset Council (SC) |
| • Steve West (SW) | Mells Parish Council |
| • Richard Evans (RE) | Whatley & Chantry Parish Council |
| • Will Palmer (WP) | Whatley & Chantry parish council |
| • Martyn Ford (MF) | Senior Enforcement Officer (Planning, Rights of Way, Gypsies and Travellers) Somerset Council |
| • Andrew Gunn (AGU) | Principal Planning Policy Officer, Somerset Council (SC) |
| • Ann Crowcombe (AC) | Cranmore Parish Council |
| • Simon Clegg (SC) | Nunney Parish Council |
| • Simon Stonehouse (SST) | Natural England |
| • Lila Morris (LM) | Somerset Wildlife Trust |
| • PC Toni Lines (TL) | Avon and Somerset Police |
| • Kirstie Gibbon (KG) | Heidelberg Materials, Project Manager – Westdown Quarry |
| • Trystan Mabbitt (TM) | Heidelberg Materials, Consenting and Development Manager |
| • Alexandra Hemming (AH) | Heidelberg Materials, Senior Landscape Architect |
| • Dave Barton (DB) | Heidelberg Materials Regional Transport Manager |

Agenda

1. Introduction – Chair

- Welcome and Chair introductions
- Apologies
- Review of minutes from last meeting
- Matters arising from last minutes

2. Whatley quarry update (Vincent Pitt, Area General Manager, South Region)

- Operational overview
- Logistics (including road and rail)
- Feedback
- Community giving update (SS)

3. Environmental Update

4. Planning update - Westdown

5. Any other business

6. Dates of next meetings

MEETING MINUTES

1. Chair's introduction

Welcome & Apologies:

- PH welcomed Chris O'Connor (CO) to the group. CO set out that he looked forward to getting to know the group's members and keen to understand more about the issues discussed at this liaison group.
- The Group confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting and these are now approved.
- Matters arising from the last minutes:
 - Real time reporting of blasting: VP set out that restrictions on the Heidelberg Materials (HM) text service (number of text characters etc) means that this is not feasible. He proposed that a monthly update would be sent to members of the group that request it and also posted to the [community website](#).
AB said he would like to receive this information as would RE and WP.
ACTION: Initiate monthly blasting update.
 - VP detailed the routes that HGV drivers are told to use (see below).



- It was requested that this be attached separately and distributed with the meeting minutes and also shared with local parish councils.
ACTION: Circulate HGV route map to liaison group members.

AB referenced and HGV travelling through Whatley with registration no starting: WK24 at 10.33 that day.

ACTION: Heidelberg materials (HM) to investigate.

- VP confirmed that Langdon Turner had been approached re moving the cattle feeder. VP confirmed he had spoken to Vince Turner.
- Other matters held over are addressed by today's agenda.

2. Whatley Quarry update

Operational overview:

- VP provided an update on production and sales volumes year to date. There were higher sales, against plan, though similar to last year.
 - Strategy to destock continues with sales above production levels.
 - This will help reduce triple and double handling of material on site.
- BC asked about sticks of dust. VP confirmed that this product (<4mm) is being sold. VP confirmed that this is primarily being sold into agricultural sector as agg-lime. This follows a sales drive at the end of last year, with more sold in Q1 than in previous two years.

Capex

- New welfare facilities at Whatley quarry have been slightly delayed but should be complete by May.
- A successful trial of electric shunter took place earlier this year and VP confirmed that the rail head will be receiving delivery of its first in June. This forms part of £300K railhead investment, which also includes track replacement.
- The Whatley rail improvement group continues to meet and includes representatives from Network Rail (NRW), Freightliner and Mendip Rail as well as HM. The aim of the group is to look at identifying efficiencies and possible additional mitigation measures. This has included looking at best practice re noise mitigation being used in other sectors/other parts of the country.
- Whatley will be the first quarry in the UK to be using an electric locomotive.

Projects

- The Loop upgrade (4.5 mile circular walk around the quarry) is 60% complete. In recent weeks two volunteering days involving x 11 employees had taken place to improve parts of the path on the south side of the quarry (see below).



- A new viewing platform on the footpath is to be installed soon as part of this development work. Its location will be on the west side of the quarry.
- VP also advised that KG is looking into exercise equipment for future installation on the walk.

- Two memorial benches are being installed on the Loop. One is already in place in memory of Pat Orman (see below), the other will be in memory of Justin Collis who also died last year.
- VP set out that CO and others from the quarry are participating in the 3 Peaks Challenge to fundraise for the British Heart Foundation in memory of their colleague Pat, who died while at work at Whatley over the Christmas period. See (insert link to Whatley community website re details of fundraising activity).
- Work on new ramps in the quarry continues.

Recruitment

- The quarry is looking to recruit one apprentice in September 2025 following two apprentices joining in 2024.
- Continuing recruiting for two 2 in maintenance team (nights). Details at: www.heidelbergmaterials.com/en/careers

Blasting Operations:

VP provided an update on quarry blasting:

- Of the recently installed additional vibration monitoring in Whatley and in Mells there have still been no triggers to date in Whatley and have recorded very low vibration levels in Mells.
- Of the 31 blasts so far in 2025, 100% have been at, or below, 4.5mm/s PPV (self-imposed level we work to wherever possible on the south face of the quarry).
- 100% of blasts within permitted 9.5mm/s limit at 95% confidence.
- Highest blast PPV recorded January – March 2025: 3.95 mm/s PPV on 19 March (level 7 east).
- Average PPV recorded January – March 2025: 2.45mm/s

BC queried how this had been achieved as he thought it was contrary to what EPC's specialists had outlined was possible in their previous talk to the liaison group. VP said the specialists will always be cautious. He added that the introduction of double and triple decking for most blasts had helped reduce vibration levels, plus, moving away from the side of the quarry closest to Chantry has also helped.

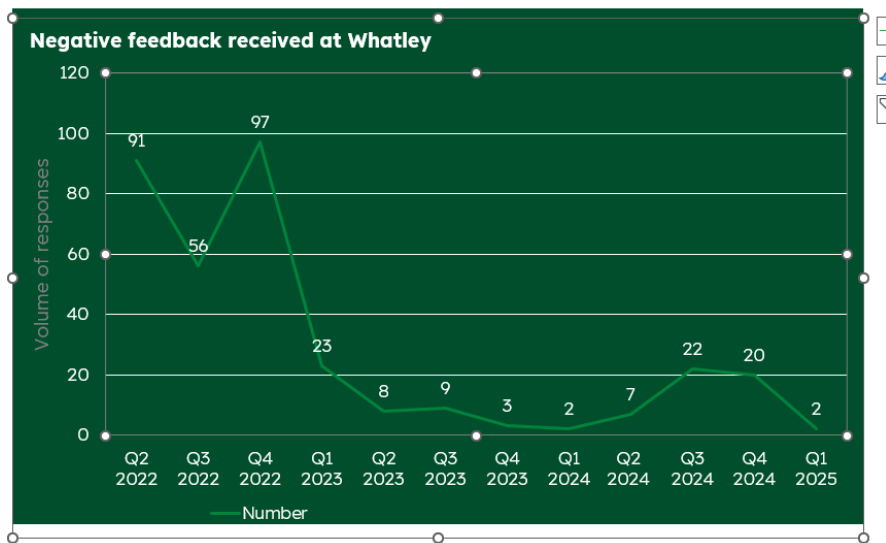
AB asked for the slide shown to be distributed.

ACTION: Forward slide to AB

Feedback

- VP and SS provided information on feedback received:
 - Two pieces of negative feedback were received in Q1 2025.
 - One related to rail, and the other to blasting.

Negative feedback received Q1 2022 – Q1 2025



Westdown

- VP said that the target date for opening remains Q3 2026.
- VP explained that the focus is currently on scoping and tendering work for future commencement. Currently site mapping is underway, but hampered somewhat by vegetation.
- VP set out that HM has retained onsite security at weekends to address issue with motorcross bikers trespassing. The company has also been in contact with the local Police.

PH commented that Torr quarry has also been experiencing similar issues.

AB thanked the quarry for the recent litter picking in the area. It was commented that much of the litter stems from HGV drivers.

- VP explained that Westdown will have welfare facilities, and the team are considering what this would be for HGV drivers, as conscious that other local facilities are limited.
- BC asked if a HGV cab window-height rubbish bin could be installed at the exit to the quarry. AB asked if messages about not littering could be included in driver induction packs.

ACTION: HM to investigate bins and include info about littering in driver protocols.

ACTION: HM to share details of local PCs.

Community update

- SS gave an update on recent community/charitable contributions.



- 5 Alive parish magazine
- Purple Elephant Family Support – children's festival in Frome.
- Friends of Chantry – sponsorship of Brodsky Quartet as part of Frome festival programme.



- SS advised that HM is also currently liaising with Mells recreational fields re potentially supporting the resurfacing tennis/basketball court.
- VP confirmed that Whatley quarry is also committed to supporting The Loop Whatley fundraising walk: summer 2025. The date for which is confirmed now - **SUNDAY 13 JULY**.
- SS shared details about the funds (excluding volunteering, supply of materials, or equipment) donated to local villages in the period 2020-25. Community donations for requests coming from Whatley/Chantry and Great Elm have been the biggest beneficiaries to ph.
- BC raised HM's recent donation to Nunney PC re refurbishment of the village playground, as the new-look playground will be unveiled on 10 April 2025.
- PH and BC asked if the breakdown of donations could be revised to include materials etc.

ACTION: HM to provide revised information including value of donations, volunteering etc.

Environmental update

- AH was on leave so a detailed update will be provided at the next meeting.
- It was confirmed that AH and colleagues were to participate in the second Great Elm residents' walk on 03 April. RK confirmed that a number of residents would be in attendance – boosted by the good weather.

Planning update

- TM was on not available to due to work diary clash. A detailed update will be provided at the next meeting.

AOB

- EK asked about the electric shunter's capacity and battery life. VP confirmed that it is expected to pull up to 10-11 loaded wagons, with a possibility it may reach 15. The battery life is guaranteed to be 20 years.

Next meeting date

The next meeting will take place on TUESDAY 15 JULY 2025 at 17.30 at Whatley quarry offices.

Further meeting dates are:

14th October 2025

Meeting Ends 18:27