

Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
26th June 2025
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

• Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR	Somerset County Council
• Cllr Mike Taylor (MT)	Axbridge Town Council
• Cllr Paul Fineran (PF)	Cheddar Parish Council
• Nick Hoof (NH)	Resident
• Simon Parkes (SP) (CHAIR)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Batts Combe Quarry Unit Manager
• Michelle Beasley (MB)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Secretariat
• Caroline Gould (CG)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Batts Combe Quarry Operative
• Alex Hemming (AH)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Senior Landscape Architect
• Ben Ayers (BA)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral Resource Manager
• Chris O'Connor (CO) Operations	Heidelberg Materials UK, Mendips & Masters Manager

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

• Jim Hardcastle (JH)	Mendip Hills AONB
• Martin Stoyles (MS)	EHO Office Sedgemoor District Council
• James Hynes (JRH)	Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral Estates Surveyor
• Ruth Amundson (RA)	Somerset County Council Planning
• Cllr Pauline Ham (PH)	Somerset County Council
• Nathan Chard (NC)	Avon & Somerset Police
• Sally Devlin (SD)	Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. Welcome and Chair introductions – Chair Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF)
 - o Membership Update
 - o Review of minutes and actions from last meeting
2. Batts Combe Site update – Simon Parkes (SP)
 - o Quarry development and site update
 - o Feedback & Complaints
 - o Speed monitoring / Transport
 - o Community giving
3. Landscape and biodiversity update – Alex Hemmings (AH)
4. Land and Mineral Planning update – Ben Ayres (BA)
5. Environmental Health update – no attendance
6. Council update – Mike Taylor (MT) Paul Fineran (PF) Ben Ferguson (BF)
7. Local Resident update – Nick Hoof (NH)
8. Police and School update – no attendance
9. AOBs

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction.

- BF welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- Membership update – BF asked everyone to introduce themselves. He asked everyone if they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting, and if they had, were they happy for the draft to be finalised.
- NH commented that at the last meeting and in the minutes, he mentioned that he had reported some “fist-sized” rocks in the road, and at the time SP did not know if they were from a quarry lorry. He said since then SP had confirmed they were from a quarry lorry and wanted it noted in these minutes as an amendment.
- All other attendees were happy with the content of the minutes from the previous meeting.

- BF went through the actions from the previous liaison meeting.
 - ❖ **MB to upload approved minutes from previous meeting to the Batts Combe web page. Complete**
 - ❖ **MB to upload draft minutes from this meeting to the Batts Combe web page. Complete**
 - ❖ **SP to review sheeting data. Camera now in place for monitoring**
 - ❖ **SP to organise 2 x long term monitoring at residents' homes for blasting. More info in agenda**
 - ❖ **SP to set up blast notification service. Complete**
 - ❖ **NC to investigate complaint where resident felt they were not supported by the police. NC no longer in position as PCSO.**
 - ❖ **SP to get camera working over gate. Complete**
 - ❖ **SP to get quote for barrier at wheel wash. SP to confirm**
 - ❖ **NH to send photos of the block drain in Warrens Hill. Complete**

2. Batts Combe quarry site update

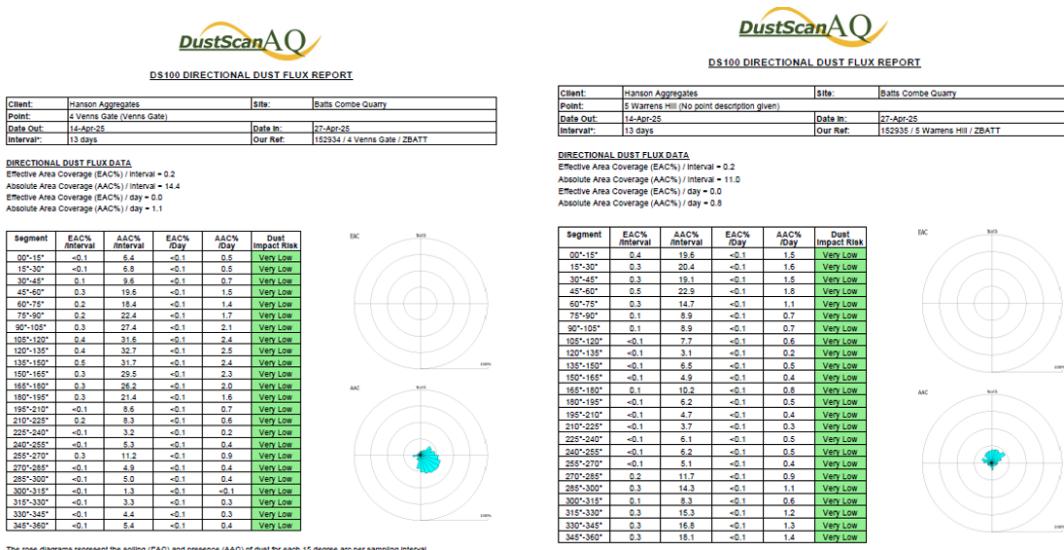
SP provided a quarry development and site update:

- The quarry is continuing to develop level 4 (southeast corner).
- Recent work has been focused on levels 6,8 and 9 (see image below).
- There had been a reduced volume in sales since the last meeting.
- Stripping and restoration is nearly completed. AH would provide a further in slides.
- A new ramp to the primary crusher has been installed



Dust monitoring:

- SP showed the group a summary of data from recent dust monitoring. He set out that an independent third-party specialist company does the monitoring and the site received the results every 4-5 weeks. He said the results always come back as "very low". Example below.



- PF commented that, while several years ago there were complaints into the council office regarding dust, the quarry has since made vast improvements and dust complaints are now rare. He said since the addition of monitoring at the allotments, when complaints are received and the data reviewed, it's very clear the dust is coming from the many building sites popping up in the area.
- SP said we are planning on doing more work with dust. The quarry also still receives regular monitoring visits from the EA who have not raised any concerns.

Blasting update:

- SP set out that there have been 17 blasts this year. The highest vibration (measured as Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) recorded was 4.55mm/s PPV and the lowest was 0.50mm/s PPV. The highest Air Over Pressure (AOP) recorded was 110d/b.

Date	Shot No.	PPV	Records	Scaled Distance	Air Over Pressure	MIc	mic/0.5	Quarry Lev.	Easting of Shot	Northing of Shot	Elevation	Location of Vibrograph	gr vlp E	gr vlp N	distance to vibrograph (m)	kg of explosive used	Blast Rati	Number of holes	Number of holes charged	Tonnes of hole	Yield per hole	Burden & Spacing
14 January 2025	R01-25	1.43	53.2	108	144	12.0	5	346341	154998	163	Unit office	345867	154570	639	2811	5.77	26	24	16226	676.08	4.0 x 4.0	
21 January 2025	R02-25	2.28	60.0	110	137	11.7	8	346283	155136	120	Unit office	345867	154570	702	7595	7.08	71	64	53780	840.31	4.0 x 4.0	
22 January 2025	R03-25	2.13	45.2	109	145	12.0	5	346114	155055	163	Unit office	345867	154570	544	5772	5.53	46	45	31910	709.11	4.0 x 4.0	
03 February 2025	R04-25	2.43	55.2	109	162	12.7	7	346322	155106	134	Unit office	345867	154570	703	5440	4.88	38	37	26574	718.22	4.0 x 4.0	
13 February 2025	R05-25	2.45	61.2	110	137	11.7	9	346233	155198	105	Unit office	345867	154570	717	4831	4.99	40	39	24104	618.05	4.0 x 4.0	
20 February 2025	R06-25	2.44	57.4	109	140	12.0	5	346286	155174	93	Unit office	345867	154570	743	7439	8.26	43	43	17740	676.08	4.0 x 4.0	
20 February 2025	R07-25	1.68	62.4	109	140	11.8	9	346286	155178	107	Unit office	345867	154570	728	4138	5.38	36	35	22260	636.00	4.0 x 4.0	
14 March 2025	R08-25	2.14	129.4	109	31	5.6	8	346334	155117	124	Unit office	345867	154570	721	315	6.27	22	22	1974	89.73	3.0 x 3.0	
14 March 2025	R09-25	1.21	45.0	108	132	11.5	5	346119	155022	161	Unit office	345867	154570	518	1634	5.25	13	13	8578	659.69	4.0 x 4.0	
18 March 2025	R10-25	2.4	59.7	109	148	12.2	7	346350	155113	132	Unit office	345867	154570	727	5643	5.75	53	44	32442	737.32	4.0 x 4.0	
25 March 2025	R11-25	0.83	64.1	109	90	9.5	5	346270	155026	155	Unit office	345867	154570	609	1969	12.84	74	56	25280	451.43	4.0 x 4.0	
07 April 2025	R12-25	1.57	53.8	108	159	12.6	7	346323	155073	135	Unit office	345867	154570	679	8959	4.95	65	59	42549	721.17	4.0 x 4.0	
15 April 2025	R13-25	2.4	51.9	109	195	14.0	9	346280	155166	107	Unit office	345867	154570	725	7755	5.71	73	66	44289	671.03	4.0 x 4.0	
16 April 2025	R14-25	2.20	50.1	109	114	10.7	5	346085	155058	159	Unit office	345867	154570	534	3469	5.02	37	37	17399	470.24	4.0 x 4.0	
06 May 2025	R15-25	1.60	55.0	109	140	12.0	5	346286	155115	160	Unit office	345867	154570	649	5359	5.61	52	45	37000	676.08	4.0 x 4.0	
19 May 2025	R16-24	1.10	64.4	108	137	11.7	8	346319	155173	120	Unit office	345867	154570	754	5082	5.71	41	41	28042	708.34	4.5 x 4.5	
17 June 2025	R17-24	1.60	65.9	110	143	12.0	8	346289	155115	120	Quarry Entrance	345869	154455	788	5256	6.35	42	39	33392	865.21	4.5 x 4.5	

- SP said a monitoring device had been placed at a resident's property, but the vibration was so low it did not trigger the monitoring equipment, he said there was more monitoring to do.

- NH asked if it was the intention to install more permanent monitoring to record PPV over long periods.
- SP replied no, because installing fixed monitoring is expensive, the monitoring needs to be concreted in. He said that, as you can see from the blasting results, all blast are well within the planning conditions, and there is nothing in our planning conditions that requires permanent fixed monitoring.
- NH asked if consistency in results would be different at different locations, and that surely something more permanent would provide better data. He added that the reason for asking is because something has changed as he is feeling the vibrations more now than before.
- PF said a lot of what you feel depends on the atmosphere. He added that he had worked with and done a lot of research in this area in the past, and some people may feel it more than others. For instance, if there was a band of stratum running through the rock, then you may feel it differently than if it was pure limestone.
- PF added that aid Batts Combe quarry is permitted to blast to a vibration level of 9mm/s PPV so there is no real purpose to install fixed monitoring as they are well within their planning limit.
- NH commented that he is trying to get to the bottom of the issue as what he is now experiencing may be impacting on the mortar in the house.
- SP reiterated that the quarry blasting has very well-defined safe levels developed to ensure people, property and the environment are protected. He set out that while the quarry can carry out random monitoring at properties, it is normally done it in the quarry car park, which is closer to the blast site. This means readings would be higher, as when monitoring takes place further away from the blast site vibration levels recorded will be less. He added that the quarry can offer to put a vibrograph at a property for temporary monitoring, but not fixed monitoring.

Speed monitoring / Transport:

- SP shared updated speed monitoring information (see graphs below).
- CG explained that as shown, the average speed captured for quarry HGVs remains at 15mph or below. She explained that no speed monitoring was carried out in April or May due to staff training and absences.



- NH asked how many trucks per hour are checked.
- CG said it depended on how busy it is, but we monitor for 2 hours each day and try to capture the speed of 20 trucks in that 2-hour period.
- NH asked in which locations the speed monitoring is carried out.
- CG advised that the quarry tends to focus on Venns Gate as this is where we receive the most complaints from, but monitoring is also done in Hannay Road and Warrens Hill.

Feedback and complaints:

- SP showed the group a list of complaints received since the last meeting (see below).

Feedback / complaints

Complaints received 6th February 2025 – 31st May 2025

29 Complaints received in total to the Batts Combe email address.

- Speeding x 11
- Driver using phone/reading something x 4
- Stone spilled on road x 2
- CB interference in lane x 1
- Unsheeted lorries x 3
- Haulier reported something thrown at his windscreens x 1
- Damage to property from reversing x 1
- Haulier entered via weight restriction x 1
- Lorries not stopping at the stop sign at Townsend, Axbridge x 2
- Road needs resurfacing causing lorries to bang x 2
- Resident blocked road with car due to being fed up with stone on his drive x 1

All complaints to be sent to battscombequarry@uk.heidelbergmaterials.com to ensure they are logged and investigated. Texts and emails to personal mobile phones and email addresses may not get actioned or logged.

- NH asked how the “sheeting” camera data is reviewed.
- SP set out it is viewed live from a screen located in the offices.
- NH asked if the footage is recorded and kept should it ever be required.
- SP confirmed that yes, data is stored and is retrievable if needed.

Community giving

SP provided an update on community giving and volunteering:

- Since the last meeting, 10 volunteer days have been approved along with machinery to clear out allotments for Axbridge TC. The quarry will also donate 20 tonnes of scalping's to make good a parking area for allotment tenants.
- Cheddar First School has received some sand, asphalt, volunteers and machinery to clear an outside area and lay artificial grass, which could not previously be used as it was very boggy (see pictures below).

Before



After



- The quarry is currently working on dates for Axbridge First School to improve its outside learning spaces – most likely to be during the school's holiday closure in August.
- The quarry is hosting work experience weeks for 4 students from Kings of Wessex in July.
- Axbridge First School will be visiting in October as a part of its science curriculum.
- SP advised that the quarry has donated 1,250 tonnes of aggregate to the "Strawberry Line" project, to build a multi-user path between Cheddar and Shepton Mallet, that will connect through to Clevedon in time.



**Any request can be made by going to the Batts Combe Community page at
www.communities.heidelbergmaterials.co.uk/en/sites/batts-combe-quarry/supporting-the-community**

3. Landscape & Biodiversity update

- AH said new dormice boxes made by Reach have been erected on The Perch in our National Dormice Monitoring Program area. She said the dormouse specialist from the People's Trust for Endangered Species carried out this visit to review our woodland management and we are awaiting the output from that.
- AH said the upper area of The Perch has been cut and collected to help reduce the fertility of the grassland and try to move it away from rank, rough grassland to more species rich. An area was left uncut to accommodate harvest mice.
- AH said goat and sheep management commenced after our last meeting but has now been paused until the Autumn.
- AH said information boards will be up before the end of the summer, just awaiting contractor availability.



- AH said a Quarry Life Award project is underway with the Axe Valley Men's Shed and the Somerset Earth & Science Centre. The project is to build a large bug hotel on the verge of the carpark with information boards. She said the project is an example of a really great way to get involved with the local community, to improve people's well-being as well as adding really valuable invertebrate habitat that can easily be replicated on any site we own in the UK.



- AH said the final restoration of our Jefferies inert quarry waste tip is nearing completion and will be seeded to grassland in the late summer.

4. Land & Mineral Planning update

- BA said there had been no update since the last meeting, there has not been a monitoring visit yet this year, and we've not had any update on the servicing of the notice for the ROMP.

5. Environmental Health update

- None – no attendance from EHO

6. Council update

- BF advised no issues to raise on behalf of Somerset County Council.
- MT confirmed there were no issues to raise on behalf of Axbridge Town Council.
- PF advised that there was nothing regarding the quarry from Cheddar Parish Council.

7. Local Resident update

- NH asked if the issue with the Council planning department was still the same, with them being understaffed.
- BF said it was still the same regarding being short staffed, and due to Somerset Council being in a financial emergency it is likely to be close to a year before it starts to recover.
- BA said most councils have a small number of skilled mineral planning officers and public places like National Parks or sites deemed as being non-compliant from previous visits would be high on their list.
- NH asked if there was any feedback regarding CB requirements.
- SP confirmed that most hauliers now have them and are following the process to call each other.
- CG said also, the rare haulier that doesn't have a CB, we encourage them to leave with someone that does.
- NH asked if there was any update on the ROMP.
- BA said as I mentioned in my update, we are still waiting to be served notice, and I've had no update from RA at Somerset Council.
- NH asked if a contractor was used for different jobs in the quarry as they drove in the wrong way through the weight restriction.
- SP confirmed all contractors are given instructions on which way to enter.

- NH advised that he often see drivers holding something, CB or phone, and it's the typical feedback he also receives from other residents.
- SP advised that there are no requirements by law regarding the use of a CB while driving, and it is permitted.
- CG said there are different types of CB's, some wired and some wireless in the more modern trucks. The wired ones can also be placed high or low, so not all drivers will be pulling them downwards from the top of the cab.

Police and school update

None - no attendance

8. AOBs

- BF said there had been an uptick in anti-social behaviour and to make the hauliers aware as well, that if anything is spotted to report it to Somerset Council.
- NH asked if anything could be done about it.
- BF said there are three things, one being an injunction, two highways could engineer some speed calming and the third is policing, all of which are being looked at.

Summary of Actions

- MB to upload approved minutes from June' meeting to the Batts Combe web page.
- MB to upload draft minutes from this meeting to the Batts Combe web page.
- SP to get a quote for a barrier at the wheel wash.
- SP to organise more blast monitoring in the village.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 11th September 2025

Thursday 11th December 2025

Thursday 12th March 2026

Thursday 11th June 2026

[ENDS]