

Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
12th March 2026
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR | Somerset Council |
| • Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) | Somerset Council |
| • Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) | Cheddar Parish Council |
| • Nick Hoof (NH) | Resident |
| • Amanda Matthews (AM) | Resident |
| • Ruth Amundson (RA) | Somerset Council Planning |
| • 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 |

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Jim Hardcastle (JH) | Mendip Hills AONB |
| • Martin Stoyles (MS) | EHO Somerset Council |
| • Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) | Axbridge Town Council |
| • Sally Devlin (SD) | Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy |
| • James Hynes (JRH) | Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Estates Surveyor |
| • Patrick Smith (PS) | Avon & Somerset Police |
| • Ben Ayres (BA) | Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Resource Manager |

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. Welcome and Chair introductions – Ben Ferguson (BF) Chair
 - Membership Update
 - Review of minutes and actions from last meeting
2. Landscape and biodiversity update – Alexandra Hemming (AH)
3. Batts Combe Site update – Simon Parkes (SP)
 - Blasting specialist presentation – Ian Healy (IH)
 - Quarry development and site update
 - Feedback & Complaints
 - Speed monitoring / Transport
 - Community giving
4. Land and Mineral Planning update – Alexandra Hemming (AH)
5. Environmental Health update – no attendance
6. Council update – Paul Fineran (PF) Pauline Ham (PH) Ruth Amundson (RA)
7. Local Resident update – Nick Hoof (NH) Amanda Matthews (AM)
8. Police and School update – No attendance
9. AOBs
10. Dates for next meetings

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction.

- BF welcomed attendees to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves as there was a new liaison group member.
- BF 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. All attendees said they were happy with the minutes from the previous meeting except for NH who requested the following comments be recorded, which he had also already emailed to Batts Combe Quarry.

NH said I thought the section referring to the black Audi reversing into concrete bollards needed a tweak. I don't recall CG setting that it wasn't quarry staff (although I may have missed her saying that) but I do recall Simon saying something to suggest he had an idea who it was and to leave it with him.

- CG Confirmed again that it was not quarry staff who owned the black Audi that hit the bollards.

NH went on to say he recalled mentioning that the promised blast monitoring test equipment deployment hadn't happened and that several buildings/a wall had been hit in recent months which was concerning to residents, in addition I think the comments I made about the state of the roads needs beefing up a bit as I said they are covered in filthy beige fines rich water which is clearly coming from the quarry. It's not just a bit of murky water and is actually problematic for residents as cars are filthy as are dogs, clothes, trainers etc if you walk the road at almost any time. The water looks to be coming from partially washed trucks leaving site and depositing the silty water which is then spread when it rains.

NH finished his request for changes to the previous minutes by adding that he also mentioned his concerns at the lack of speed monitoring over the last year with only 406 checks made compared to 414 in the 3 months before that. A massive drop off and it equates to only 1.6 checks on average per working day over the last year, and finally, he said he raised concerns at the number of agricultural tractor drivers seen on their phones while using the approach roads to the quarry.

- SP 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**

- BA to check with Martyn Ford if Somerset Council Planning Department make the monitoring visit report public on their website. Somerset Planning dept responded that it doesn't currently hold monitoring reports on their website, a copy is sent to the operator of the site monitored. The planning officer would usually attend any liaison meeting and that's the forum for them to set out the findings of their report, answer questions and detail any steps agreed with the operator.
- BA to pass on contact details for Holcim to MT. Complete
- PH to chase clearing of silt in ditch at the bottom of Warrens Hill. AM asked if it was the ditch opposite her house, as it was filled with hedge cuttings and other rubbish. PH said to keep reporting on-line. BF asked if the ditch was clear now. AM replied it wasn't cleared, and that she herself cut the hedge up to where the cars park. She said water runs off the land into the ditch, but it doesn't flood.
- SP to share new haulier process with NH. Complete and in place and haulier inductions are now under review. NH asked if there was a section on the use of mobile phones. CG said it had been included. NH asked if it could be shared once complete to which SP confirmed.

2. Batts Combe (Heidelberg UK) site update

Quarry development and site update

- SP reported that the quarry is continuing development in the south-east corner, with plans to also carry out blasting on the western benches at Levels 5, 7 and 8. He noted that this may be of interest as blasting has not taken place in that area of the quarry for some time; however, when blasting was previously undertaken there, no issues were experienced.
- SP said recently sales volumes had levelled to be in line with plan numbers.
- SP set out that the contract crush for fills/screening gabion was complete.
- SP updated the group that CG had been promoted to Fines Plant, Weighbridge & Distribution Supervisor, and would be focusing on transport and haulier-related issues.

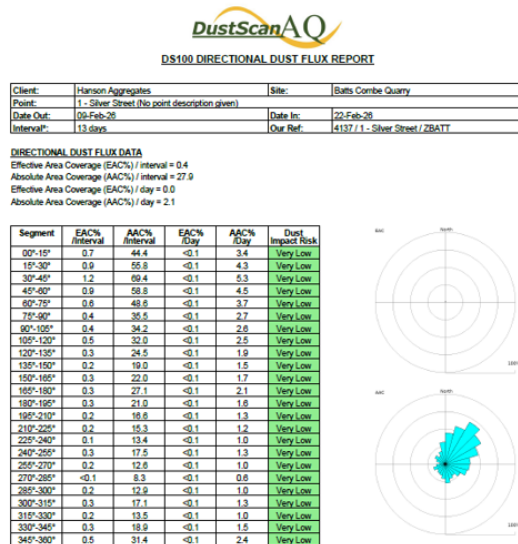
Blasting update

- SP said there had been 4 small development blasts this year of which the highest vibration level (PPV) recorded was 1.55mm/s and the lowest 1.00mm/s, the highest air over pressure (AOP) recorded was 111d/b. He confirmed that the permitted level of PPV is 9mm/s so all well within the planning condition limits.

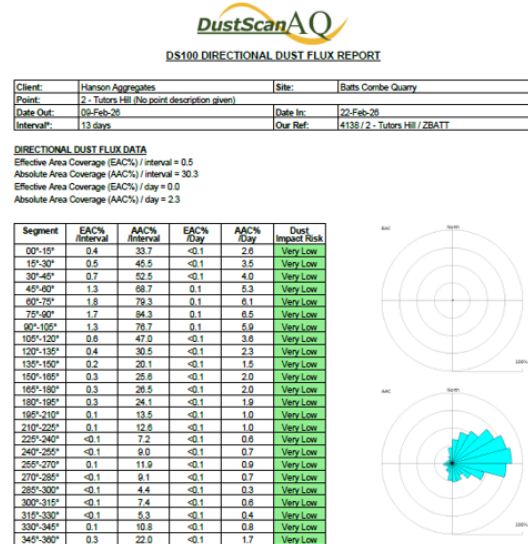
Date	Shot No	PPV Recorded	Scaled Distance	Air Over Pressure	Mic	mic m/s	Quarry Level	Eastings of Shot	Northings of Shot	Elevation	Location of Vibograph	gr vib E	gr vib N	distance to vibograph (m)	Kg of explosive used	Blast Ratio	Number of holes	Number of holes charged	Tonnes yield of st	Yield per hole	Burden & Spacing
27 January 2026	R01-26	1.55	48.9	109	154	12.8	5	346285	155036	150	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	626	9970	4.70	66	66	46875	710.23	4.0 x 4.0
12 February 2026	R02-26	1.15	59.9	109	135	11.6	8	346319	155099	120	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	696	4571	5.03	50	35	22978	656.51	4.0 x 4.0
19 February 2026	R03-26	1.00	62.2	109	86	9.3	5	346250	154990	160	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	577	1867	13.32	66	40	24871	621.78	4.0 x 4.0
27 February 2026	R04-26	1.17	40.6	111	182	13.5	6	346134	155048	150	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	548	7002	6.58	82	57	46105	808.86	4.0 x 4.0

Dust monitoring

- SP presented data from the most recent site dust monitoring, noting that results consistently return as “very low.”
- PF commented that the results are significantly improved compared with previous monitoring data.
- NH queried whether the results could be reconciled with resident reports of dusty conditions.
- SP explained that there are two dust monitors located on Venns Gate, and that the majority of dust captured had been identified as originating from the opposite direction.
- NH asked whether the analysis takes wind direction into account.
- PF confirmed that the monitoring data shows the origin of the dust, and that it is not coming from the quarry.
- SP advised that there are future plans to improve the load-out area. He also confirmed that he has maintained regular contact with Somerset Council’s Environmental Health Officer, and that during all monitoring visits to date, no issues have been raised.



The rose diagrams represent the soiling (EAC) and presence (AAC) of dust for each 15 degree arc per sampling interval.



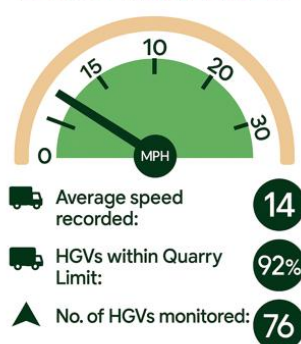
The rose diagrams represent the soiling (EAC) and presence (AAC) of dust for each 15 degree arc per sampling interval.

Speed monitoring / Transport

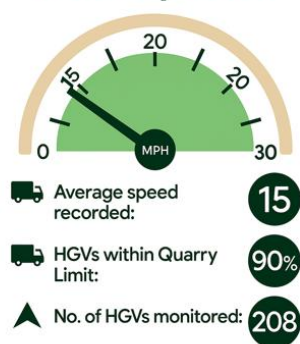
- CG reported that there was a slight reduction in speed monitoring during December due to a staff member leaving, with monitoring levels increasing again in January. She explained that February showed fewer monitored instances, not due to reduced monitoring activity, but because the site was less busy during that period.

- CG confirmed that a new rota is now in place to ensure regular speed monitoring is carried out. She advised that any drivers found to be breaching site rules are being dealt with in line with the newly implemented protocol. She said hauliers have been advised of the strict requirements, and the company's Transport Department has also been fully briefed. CG confirmed that the department is fully supportive and committed to visiting the site to assist with implementation, including carrying out random compliance checks. Also, they have been involved in reviewing the haulier induction process.

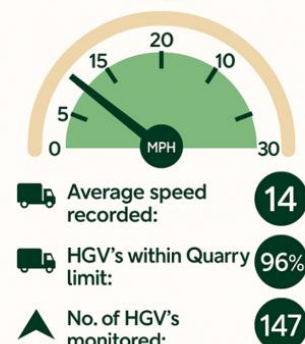
December 2025



January 2026



February 2026



- CG noted she has seen an increase in drivers report other drivers for non-compliances.
- NH asked whether a driver ban applies to the individual driver or to the vehicle.
- CG confirmed that the ban applies to the driver only.
- AM commented that as responsibility lies with the driver, this was considered fair.
- NH asked how frequently speed monitoring is carried out during the week and whether it is conducted covertly.
- CG advised that speed monitoring is carried out three times per week, on different days and at varying locations, for one hour per session. It was also confirmed that staff use different vehicles, so they are not always identifiable during monitoring.
- AM asked whether speed monitoring is carried out at peak times.
- CG advised that monitoring is undertaken at various times, including some peak periods. However, it was noted that during peak times drivers tend to be travelling more closely together, which naturally reduces vehicle speeds.
- AM asked if the quarry was now open to hauliers collecting material at weekends.

- SP replied now and again. If a customer requests it and it's worthwhile doing, then we will, but I would rather prioritise plant maintenance at the weekends.

Feedback and complaints

- SP showed the group a list of complaints received since the last meeting.

Feedback / complaints

Complaints received 1st December 2025 – 28th February 2026

30 Complaints received in total to the Batts Combe email address from 5 separate residents.

- **Speeding x 8**
 - **Driver with device in hand while driving x 3**
 - **Stone spilled on Axbridge Road x 1**
 - **Unsheeted lorries x 5**
 - **Blasting vibration x 4**
 - **Haulier breaking weight limit x 1**
 - **2 fist sized rocks found on road near quarry entrance x 1**
 - **Potholes x 2**
 - **Dirty water run-off just past quarry entrance x 3**
 - **Noise from HGV's passing x 1**
 - **Driver did not give way Warrens Hill/Hannay Road junction x 1**
 - **Inadequet sheeting x 1**
- NH queried whether the driver he had reported—who was clearly observed using a device whilst driving—had been identified and followed up based on the footage he submitted.
 - SP confirmed that the driver was dealt with in accordance with the new transport protocol.

Community giving

- SP updated the group that the volunteering days and material donation to create a car park and clear the overgrown allotments for Axbridge Town Council were still planned but had not yet been scheduled due to low staffing levels and the wet weather.
- SP said a donation of stone was delivered to Axbridge First School to improve the outside learning space.



- SP reported that Batts Combe hosted a work experience placement in April for a student from Churchill School. This was the first student from the school, and it is hoped that links will be maintained to support attendance at careers events and the hosting of further students in future.
- SP advised that four students from Kings of Wessex School were booked to undertake work experience during the last week of June and the first week of July.
- SP advised that he was in discussions with an artist regarding the creation of a sculpture from a boulder, to be donated to the Strawberry Line Project.
- SP reported that a Quarry Open Day was planned for Saturday 25th July 2026. He said there would be 400 invites (200 in the morning and 200 in the afternoon) and tickets would be sold for £2.50 per adult (children under 12 go free). The idea is a charity chosen by the liaison group will receive the money from the tickets sales direct into their bank.
- MB asked the group for any suggestions and offered to circulate email links to local charities that could benefit, for everyone to vote on.

Any request for community support 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 another thermal drone survey of our landholding, along with those of Longleat and National Trust was carried out in late December to assess the populations of feral animals across the landscape and to inform each landholding's management aims.
- AH advised control of goat and sheep populations on our land is ongoing. The aim is to reduce the populations of feral animals at Batts Combe as they are degrading our woodland habitats for dormice and our approved restoration planting. All work is being carried out by a fully licenced and insured, professional stalker.



- AH said 310 trees and shrubs, favoured by dormice were planted on an area of restoration near our old magazine store.
- AH said coppicing of the next phase of woodland habitat on the Perch has commenced along the western footpath. Coppicing aims to increase the biodiversity and scrub density within the woodland which favours dormice.

4. Land and Mineral Planning update

- AH advised that the site has received notice of its ROMP review. She confirmed that the intention is to submit the Environmental Impact Statement by end of March 2027. AH further reported that ahead of this, the first step for HMUK is the development of a Scoping Report which sets out which assessments will be carried out as part of Environmental Impact assessment process (EIA) to accompany the submission to Somerset Council.
- NH asked whether the Environmental Impact Statement related solely to nature.
- AH advised that it would cover a range of matters, including dust and noise, and confirmed that a planning consultant had been appointed and was due to meet members of the site team next week.
- AH confirmed that whilst a ROMP is not a planning application in itself, it is a public document which will be available on the planning application section of the Somerset Council website , once submitted Somerset will seek consultation responses on what assessments are proposed by HMUK and Somerset Council will then issue a Scoping Opinion that is sent to HMUK to outline what assessments are needed for the EIA & planning submission (to be submitted by end of March 27).
- AH advised the Next monitoring & compliance visit from the planning compliance officer at Somerset Council is scheduled for 23rd April.

5. Environmental Agency update

- No update since the previous liaison meeting.

6. Council update

- PF advised that there was nothing significant to report from Cheddar Parish Council. He noted that dust levels and the current control measures had improved. One complaint relating to a blast on 27 February was reported, with no further issues raised.
- AM asked whether blasting was carried out at different times during the day.
- SP responded that blasting is generally undertaken between 9:30am–10:30am or 12:45pm–1:45pm on weekdays.

- RA said, as AH has already mentioned, the ROMP process has started.
- RA reported that work is underway to improve the planning service. This will begin with the recruitment of two Monitoring and Enforcement Officers and three Policy Officers. She noted that the Chief Planner will be leaving, although it is not yet confirmed whether a replacement will be appointed.
- RA also reported that, alongside staff recruitment, a project has commenced to introduce a single IT system, which will replace the current five separate systems. She added that the latest update on the financial emergency indicates that the authority is now on track, with a clearer general indication of where it needs to be financially.

7. Local Resident update

- NH raised concerns about the condition of the road outside the quarry, noting that quarry fines are present on the highway. He asked whether consideration had been given to installing French drains and a barrier at the wheel wash to slow down vehicles, with the aim of ensuring lorries are cleaner when leaving the quarry.
- SP responded that the order for the barrier has been placed; however, the contractor originally intended to carry out the installation is no longer on the approved supplier list. As a result, an alternative contractor has had to be engaged, which has delayed the project. He advised that he anticipates works commencing within the next few weeks. With regard to a French drain, he said he was unsure whether this would be required, but noted that there are two cattle grids in place, and that the installation of the barrier should help to address the issue.
- NH commented that it would be sensible to see how the installation of the barrier performs and expressed the hope that this measure will lead to an improvement.
- NH reported that there are still some fist-sized rocks on the road, particularly near the bend on Hannay Road.
- SP stated that the company recognised that it had a responsibility to respond to reports of stone spillage on the public highway, and that a road sweeper and/or staff are deployed when such reports are received. However, he emphasised that primary responsibility rests with the vehicle drivers.
- NH stated that gravel on the road is not his main concern; however, he emphasised that fist-sized rocks falling from vehicles present a safety risk and are dangerous.
- SP said it would be difficult to pinpoint where they came from.

- NH said he just wanted to keep it in your thoughts. He said he has received a complaint from a resident about the road sweeping. Only the left-hand side of Venns Gate gets cleaned, the right-hand side is left untouched.
- SP said he would organise for the right-hand side to be cleaned once a week.
- NH asked how long the driver who was identified as using a mobile phone while driving had been banned for.
- SP confirmed that it had been for one week.
- NH asked whether there had been any update regarding the installation of a vibration monitor at his property. He advised that the blasting specialist had visited his home, but that he has not received any further communication since.
- SP advised that vibration monitors must be installed at a proper monitoring location, rather than on a pathway. He confirmed that he would follow up with the blasting specialist to check on progress and provide an update.
- PF advised that he had provided the quarry with information on blast monitoring equipment that reports data online and feeds into a global online database.
- SP commented that he considered this type of monitoring to be inaccurate, as it can record vibrations from traffic, roadworks and other external sources, rather than capturing vibrations attributable solely to blasting.
- PF queried whether this information could be beneficial for the quarry, in that it could demonstrate that blasting is not the cause of any vibrations that might result in damage.
- SP said he would ask the question.
- NH reported that he had been advised that fourteen lorries left the site at 6:00am in convoy, followed by a further ten lorries before 7:00am, also in convoy. He asked whether there was any reason the quarry could not open from 7:00am instead.
- AM commented that she felt this would be a bad idea, as it would result in quarry traffic using the roads at a time when residents are leaving their homes for work and school, increasing congestion and potential conflict.
- RA advised that she was aware that, historically, older quarries have operated with opening hours from 6:00am, whereas more recently approved quarries typically commence operations at 7:00am.
- NH asked whether this approach to quarry opening hours was in line with legislation.
- RA advised that quarry opening hours are not set out in legislation but can be addressed as part of a ROMP (Review of Old Mineral Permissions).

- NH commented that when the idea was initially raised by residents, he had focused on the potential positives but acknowledged that he had not fully considered the possible negative impacts that opening at 7:00am could have.
- AM commented that there would likely be more residents leaving their homes between 7:00am and 9:00am, which would coincide with the time when lorries would be departing the site and then returning for their second loads.
- AM asked why all of the potholes had not been repaired, noting that while some repairs had been completed, many potholes were missed.
- SP commented that the condition of roads across Somerset generally is very poor at present.
- NH asked how responsibility is shared between the Council and the quarry, noting that empty lorries create significant noise when travelling over potholes.
- BF advised that responsibility for this matter rests with Somerset Council, and that road repairs are managed through a priority system, which depends on the size of the potholes. He added that recent poor weather conditions have further deteriorated road surfaces, exacerbating the issue.
- BF advised that Somerset Council is currently reviewing its highway maintenance approach. He explained that the existing approach involves contractors only repairing potholes that have been specifically reported. As a result, if additional potholes have formed nearby in the meantime, these are not repaired at the same time, despite this being a more practical and efficient approach.
- PF commented that he felt this highlighted an issue with using external contractors, rather than having a Council-employed highways team, which he believed would be more likely to repair all potholes in an area at the same time.
- AM asked whether all hauliers were equipped with CB radios.
- CG advised that most hauliers are equipped with CB radios. She explained that the small number who do not have CB radios now pair up with a driver who does, enabling them to leave the site at the same time. She also noted that there is a section of the lane where it appears someone is keying the microphone, causing interference on the channel.
- CG added that the quarry actively encourages all hauliers to use CB radios, and that considerable effort has been made to work with hauliers to promote their uptake. However, she explained that some HGV insurance companies do not permit the use of two-way radios in vehicle cabs, which limits full adoption.
- AM commented that this may fall under the same legislation as mobile phone use while driving.

- CG advised that the use of a CB radio is not illegal, unlike the use of a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

8. Police and school update

Police update

- No attendance

Kings of Wessex update

- No attendance

9. AOBs

- AM asked whether anything could be done about vehicles parking on the corner at Warrens Hill. She explained that, although she lives on the widest section of the road, parked cars reduce it to effectively a single-track road, resulting in lorries having to reverse due to poor visibility. She also noted that she would be able to cut back her hedge to improve visibility at the corner but is currently unable to do so while vehicles continue to park there.
- BF advised that there is no formal complaints procedure, as there are no parking restrictions in place at that location. However, he suggested that residents could try speaking directly with the vehicle owners to see whether they might be willing to park elsewhere.
- AM said there is nowhere nearby for them to park.
- BF said are the parked cars causing a risk.
- SP advised that the quarry has previously raised the option of installing double yellow lines at this location and has also offered to fund the construction of a small car park for residents on a pocket of quarry-owned land. However, he explained that residents were not supportive of a car park, due to concerns that it could attract anti-social behaviour or be used by walkers and other non-residents.
- AM asked whether the cleared bank could be used for parking, if it were to be cleared, as a potential alternative solution.
- SP advised that the company would be supportive of this option; however, he noted that residents had expressed concerns about the potential for unsavoury use by individuals gathering in the area if it were to be used for parking.
- NH commented that, to the best of his recollection, it was PH who had advised that the introduction of yellow lines at that location would not be approved.

Summary of Actions

- MB to upload the approved minutes from the December meeting to the Batts Combe webpage.
- MB to upload the draft minutes from this meeting to the Batts Combe webpage.
- MB to circulate the Terms of Reference to the group.
- MB to email a list of local charities to the group for consideration as potential recipients of a donation funded by open day ticket sales.
- SP to arrange for the road sweeper to sweep the right-hand side of Venns Gate on a weekly basis.
- SP to liaise with BAM regarding the outcome of their visit to NH's property in relation to vibration monitoring equipment.
- SP to review the online vibration monitoring system details provided by PF.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 11th June 2026

Thursday 10th September 2026

Thursday 10th December 2026

Thursday 11th March 2027

[ENDS]