

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
2nd July 2026
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| • Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) | Cheddar Parish Council |
| • Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) | Axbridge Town 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
Distribution Supervisor |
| • Ben Ayres (BA) | Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Resource Manager |
| • Alex Hemming (AH) | Heidelberg Materials UK, Senior Landscape
Architect |
| • Aaron Cocking (AC) | Heidelberg Materials UK, Higher apprentice
Batts Combe Quarry |

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR | Somerset Council |
| • Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) | Somerset Council |
| • Jim Hardcastle (JH) | Mendip Hills AONB |
| • Martin Stoyles (MS) | EHO Somerset 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 |

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)
 - 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) Ruth Amundson (RA) Mike Taylor (MT)
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

Welcome and Chair introduction.

- SP welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- SP 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.
- SP went through the actions from the previous liaison meeting.
 - MB to upload the approved minutes from the December meeting to the Batts Combe webpage. **Complete**
 - MB to upload the draft minutes from the March meeting to the Batts Combe webpage. **Complete**
 - MB to circulate the Terms of Reference to the group. **Complete**
 - 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. **Complete**
 - SP to arrange for the road sweeper to sweep the right-hand side of Venns Gate on a weekly basis. **Complete NH reported it's still not being swept both sides. SP to speak with sweeping company.**
 - SP to liaise with BAM regarding the outcome of their visit to NH's property in relation to vibration monitoring equipment. **SP advised that blasting is scheduled for next Tuesday and offered to bring the vibrograph to NH's property. NH agreed to check availability and confirm arrangements with SP.**

Batts Combe (Heidelberg UK) site update

Quarry development and site update

- SP reported that quarry operations have commenced on the western benches in conjunction with Levels 7 and 8 in the southern section of the site. Production blasts are being scheduled for Levels 4, 7 and 8.
- SP said recently sales volumes had reduced from previous months.
- SP advised the group of a recent management restructure, which has introduced new reporting lines and a more integrated approach across the Asphalt, Aggregates and Recycling divisions.
- SP advised that Batts Combe Quarry will be appointing a new Unit Manager, as he is moving to a different role within the business, joining the Internal Controls team.

- SP confirmed that his last day at the quarry is scheduled to be 14 August.
- NH wished SP every success in his new role and thanked him for his support and engagement with local residents over the past few years.

Blasting update

- SP said there had been 10 blasts this year of which the highest vibration level (PPV) recorded was 3.47mm/s and the lowest 1.52mm/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.

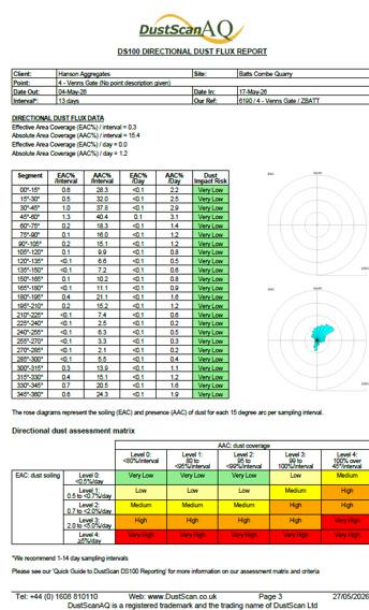
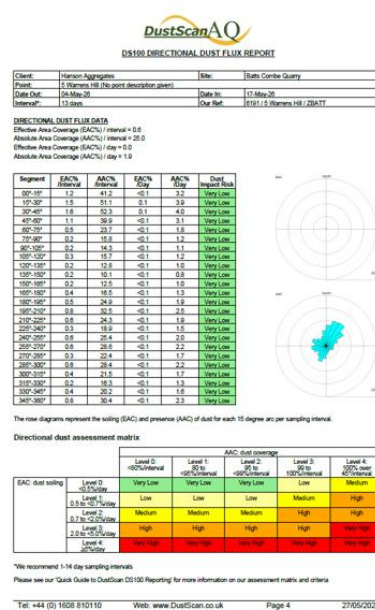
Date	Shot	PPV Recorder	Scaled Distance	Air Over Pressure	Mic	mic H	Quarry Level	Eastings	Northings	Elevation	Location of Vibrograph	gr vib	gr vib	vibrograph (m)	explosives used	blast Ratio	Number holes	holes charged	tonnes of shot	yield per hole	B
27 January 2026	R01-26	1.55	48.9	109	164	12.8	6	346285	155036	150	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	626	9970	4.70	66	66	46875	710.23	4
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
19 February 2026	R03-26	1.80	62.2	109	86	9.3	5	346286	154996	160	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	577	1867	13.32	86	40	24871	621.78	4
27 February 2026	R04-26	1.17	40.6	111	182	13.5	6	346134	155040	150	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	540	7002	6.58	82	57	46105	608.86	4
17 March 2026	R05-26	1.15	60.0	109	123	11.1	8	346269	155100	110	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	665	4127	6.36	64	47	26266	558.85	4
27 March 2026	R06-26	3.47	91.4	110	180	13.4	6	345910	155109	153	Tuffens Hill	346185	153994	1,226	9525	4.63	60	60	44115	735.25	4
01 April 2026	R07-26	0.825	51.0	109	144	12.0	7	346201	155083	134	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	612	9294	5.07	72	70	47111	673.01	4
14 April 2026	R08-26	1.975	51.1	109	160	12.6	7	346293	155056	135	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	646	9349	5.57	67	58	46463	691.99	4
08 May 2026	R09-26	1.35	58.0	108	120	11.0	4	345829	155204	175	Quarry Entrance	345867	154570	635	6614	6.91	120	112	45676	407.82	4

- PF recalled a recent blast that generated a noticeable level of vibration and queried whether it had originated from Level 7.
- SP confirmed that the blast in question had been carried out on Level 6 to remove material from the western bench. He advised that smaller blasts are now being undertaken and that instructions have been given to adjust the burden and spacing arrangements in order to reduce the number of blast holes and assess any impact on vibration levels. SP added that the quarry is seeking to minimise the production of fill material and align output more closely with current market demand.
- PF enquired whether SP had received any feedback regarding the proposal for permanent vibration monitoring.
- SP advised that there was currently limited support for the introduction of permanent vibration monitoring. However, he confirmed that the matter would be passed to the incoming Unit Manager, who would be asked to make further enquiries.

Dust monitoring

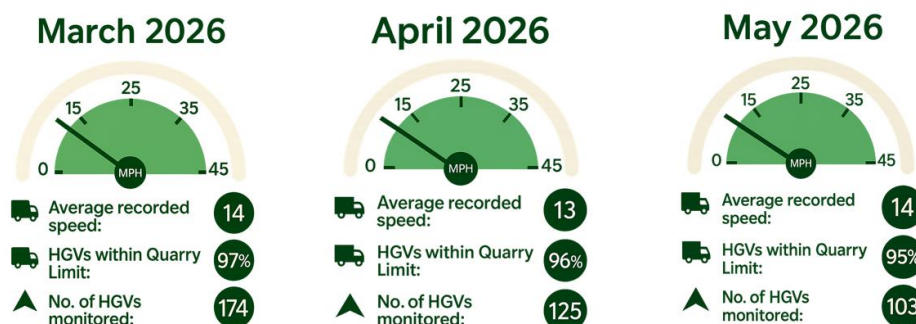
- SP presented data from the most recent site dust monitoring, noting that results consistently return as “very low.”
- NH asked whether any action was being taken to address the coffee-coloured water that occasionally runs down the road from the quarry entrance.
- SP reported that, following a recent Planning Monitoring Visit, the quarry is seeking quotations to resurface the entrance and exit road. The proposed works are expected to improve drainage and prevent discoloured water from running onto the road outside the site.

- NH asked whether the tractor and bowser employed for dust suppression were used exclusively on-site or were also deployed on the approach roads to the quarry.
- SP advised that the tractor and bowser are primarily used within the quarry for dust suppression. While they have been deployed on the approach roads in the past, this has tended to generate additional complaints. SP suggested that, should the bowser be used on the roads in future, consideration could be given to deploying the road sweeper afterwards to help mitigate any issues.
- NH commented that the priority was to implement whichever measures proved most effective in mitigating dust during the prolonged dry periods experienced recently.



Speed monitoring / Transport

- CG presented the speed monitoring data for the previous three months. The results indicated a slight improvement in vehicle speeds when compared with those recorded during the preceding quarter.



- NH commented that, despite the data presented, he felt that speeding had worsened, particularly among tractors using the route.
- CG noted that the speed monitoring data provides only a snapshot of vehicle movements. She explained that monitoring is often undertaken during peak periods to capture a higher volume of vehicles; however, this can sometimes result in vehicles travelling in convoy behind others that are already adhering to the quarry's speed limits. CG added that the quarry is taking all reasonable steps to reduce vehicle speeds, including working closely with the Transport Department and issuing bans to drivers found to be non-compliant with site requirements.
- CG noted that additional measures are in place to promote driver safety and compliance, including random drug and alcohol testing, which has achieved a 100% pass rate. She also advised that spot checks of vehicle queuing arrangements are carried out during the morning period.
- NH asked whether CG would be able to share the locations at which speed monitoring is undertaken.
- CG confirmed that this information could be shared and advised that speed monitoring is currently undertaken at Venns Gate, at the corner of Warrens Hill, and on Hannay Road. She further noted that Avon and Somerset Police are also carrying out speed monitoring activities within the area.
- CG reported that overhanging trees at the entry and exits routes to the quarry remain an ongoing concern, as they have caused damage to haulage vehicles using the route.

Feedback and complaints

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

Feedback / complaints

Complaints received 1st March 2026 – 30th June 2026

28 Complaints received in total to the Batts Combe email address from 7 separate residents.

- **1 x Axbridge resident re blasting, Batts Combe did not blast**
- **2 x driver using mobile device**
- **6 x speeding**
- **7 x blasting vibration**
- **1 x Damage to wall reported**
- **3 x Lorries blocking road**
- **4 x Lorries not sheeted**
- **1 x Lorry not giving way at the end of Venns Gate**
- **1 x Fines rich water running down the road at the quarry entrance**
- **1 x Dusty Roads**
- **1 x Lorry not stopping for resident dog walker and squeezed by on a single lane.**

- NH asked if there was an update on the queuing on Cheddar Road in the morning.
- AC commented that he now waits in his vehicle at the garage from 5:30am in order to monitor and address any instances of queuing. He reported that there is now little need to speak with drivers regarding the issue, as they tend to drive past the area and complete a loop around Cheddar rather than queueing on the roadside.
- NH noted that it was not long ago that four or five lorries would regularly queue around the bend, creating visibility issues for other road users and making overtaking difficult.
- CG advised that the issue tends to involve the same hauliers on a recurring basis. She explained that these drivers often travel long distances to the quarry and, on occasion, misjudge their arrival times, resulting in vehicles arriving before access is available and contributing to queuing.
- SP advised that he had contacted the customers responsible for the recurring queuing issues. He also confirmed that he had spoken to the customer whose vehicle had been parked overnight in the lay-by at the quarry entrance and requested that this practice cease.
- CG advised that she had also received a complaint from a local resident regarding haulage drivers leaving litter, including waste and plastic water bottles, in lay-bys when stopping for breaks. However, she confirmed that the vehicles concerned were not associated with Batts Combe Quarry.

Community giving

- SP reported that Axbridge Town Council had received the materials to repair the allotment car park. Volunteers now need to be organised to spread the material.
- SP said a donation of stone was delivered to the Frankie Howerd Trust to improve the car park in preparation for their opening ceremony.



- SP reported that work experience placements had been arranged at Batts Combe in July for four students from Kings of Wessex Academy and one student

from Churchill Academy. In addition, a student from Churchill Academy completed one week of work experience in April.

- MB advised the group that the forthcoming open day had generated significant interest and was fully booked, raising more than £1,000 for the Cheddar Youth Trust.
- SP reported a donation of £250 was made to Wedmore Festival.
- SP reported that the quarry would be attending the Kings of Wessex Academy Careers Event in October. He also advised that Axbridge First School had been invited to visit the quarry as part of their science curriculum, an activity that has become an annual event.

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

Landscape & Biodiversity update

- AH advised the group that 50 new dormouse boxes had been ordered for installation on the eastern flank of The Perch SSSI as part of a new National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) site. This will be the fourth NDMP area on the landholding and will be supported by volunteers, while also providing training opportunities for ecologists working towards their Natural England dormouse handling licence.
- AH reported that a talk had been delivered to 136 Year 5 students at Hugh Sexey Middle School. The presentation focused on how the quarrying industry and Heidelberg Materials UK develop quarries while protecting and creating habitats for wildlife, supporting the pupils' curriculum on the sustainable and unsustainable use of land.



Land and Mineral Planning update

- BA advised that the site had received notice of its Review of Old Mineral Permissions (ROMP).
- MA advised it has also undergone a site monitoring visit on 23 April by Somerset Council Mineral Planning dept. The report identified that the road surface near the quarry entrance required attention.
- SP advised that, during the monitoring visit, samples of noise and dust monitoring data, together with a log of complaints received, were provided for review. SP noted that approximately one hour was spent discussing and reviewing the information in detail with the visiting officer.
- BA advised that the Periodic Review process commenced in March. The next step is the submission by HMUK of a Scoping report in July which sets out the assessments to be prepared as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) that will accompany the ROMP submission, following which the Council will undertake a consultation process with statutory bodies on the scoping document before issuing their scoping opinion.
- BA added the Somerset Scoping opinion will set out which EIA assessments/issues need to be addressed in the submission by HMUK.
- AH reported that work had commenced on the seasonal surveys and assessments required to support the review process.
- BA expects the final submission of the ROMP & EIA (with proposed new draft conditions) is likely to be in before March 2027. Somerset will then consult on that submission and in due course determine the ROMP and issue the new set of operating conditions, (BA assume this will be in later on in 2027/early 2028).

Environmental Agency update

- No update since the previous liaison meeting.

Council update

- MT advised that there was nothing specific to report from Axbridge Town Council. However, he asked whether Heidelberg-branded lorries that fail to stop at the stop signs at the Axbridge Townsend junction could be reported.
- SP confirmed that this would be acceptable. Any reports should be sent to the Batts Combe community email address published in the minutes and should include the date, time, and vehicle registration number where possible.
- PF reported that there was nothing to raise from Cheddar Parish Council.

- RA reported that Somerset Council continues to implement its management programme, with around a quarter of returns now completed, representing an improvement on previous progress. She advised that the IT transformation project is continuing to move forward, with the aim of consolidating five different systems into a single platform. RA also noted that the budget position for the current year is positive and that work will soon begin on identifying management efficiencies and savings for the next financial year.
- RA reported that recruitment advertisements had been placed for two Mineral Planner posts; however, no suitable applicants had been successfully appointed. She added that there are plans to recruit two Policy Officers to support the service.
- RA reported that the latest Annual Monitoring Report/assessment had been published on the Council's website. She advised that the findings suggest Somerset Council is bucking national trends, with a number of significant projects currently progressing across the county.
- RA advised that the Government is expected to introduce a new planning policy aimed at supporting and accelerating housebuilding. She noted that the proposed changes are intended to help increase housing delivery and support the development of new homes across the country.

Local Resident update

- NH asked whether there had been any feedback on his previous suggestion to install a French drain to help reduce mud and water on the road at the quarry entrance, thereby improving road cleanliness and reducing the potential for material being carried onto the public highway.
- SP advised that he had discussed the suggestion with HMUK's Geology Manager. Following their review, it was concluded that a French drain would not be a suitable option in this location. Any drainage solution would need to be contained within quarry-owned land, with a cattle grid potentially being a more viable alternative. SP explained that works extending beyond the site boundary would require discharge consent and additional regulatory approvals.
- NH noted that cloudy water is currently running down Warrens Hill into local drains and ditches and emphasised the importance of addressing the issue.
- SP acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that the matter had been discussed in detail during the recent monitoring visit. He advised that the planned resurfacing of the quarry access road is expected to provide a significant improvement and suggested that the situation be monitored following completion of the works before considering whether any further measures may be required.
- BA added that the recently installed barrier at the wheel wash is awaiting commissioning and is also expected to help improve the situation by encouraging

more effective use of the wheel wash and reducing the amount of mud and debris leaving the site.

- NH also raised concerns regarding the condition of the local roads, noting that uneven road surfaces may be contributing to increased noise from passing HGVs. As PH was not present at the meeting, NH advised that he would discuss the matter directly with her outside of the meeting.
- PF advised that he had raised his concerns with the Council on two or three occasions recently, as he felt the current approach to addressing the issue may not be the most effective. He expressed the view that alternative measures should be considered to help achieve a more satisfactory outcome.
- NH asked what the protocol is when a member of the public reports that a haulier associated with the quarry has been observed using a mobile phone while driving.
- CG explained that, where concerns are raised regarding a driver's behaviour, the matter is discussed directly with the driver. The driver is reminded of their responsibilities under the Highway Code, the importance of driving safely at all times, and the need to act as a good neighbour within the local community. Discussions also reinforce awareness of vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and the expectation that all drivers operate their vehicles in a safe, courteous and professional manner.
- NH asked whether there is a limit on the number of lorries that can be parked overnight at the quarry.
- SP confirmed that there is. He explained that the overnight parking of vehicles is governed by an Operator's Licence and that the operator using Batts Combe's lorry park is permitted, under the terms of that licence, to park a maximum of 15 lorries and 8 trailers on site overnight.
- NH asked whether all of the tractors using Batts Combe Quarry operate under a single contractor or operator.
- SP advised that this is not the case and that, particularly during the current season, tractors from a number of different operators use the quarry. He noted that agricultural and contracting activities at this time of year result in a variety of operators accessing the site.

Police and school update

Police update

- No attendance

Kings of Wessex update

- No attendance

- **AOBs**

- None

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.
- SP to speak with road sweeper to sweep both sides of Venns Gate.
- NH and SP agreed to liaise regarding the date of the next blast, with arrangements to be made for a vibrograph to be placed at NH's property.
- SP to pass on the suggestion of implementing permanent vibration monitoring to the new Quarry Manager for consideration and further investigation.
- SP to consider deploying the tractor and bowser, together with the road sweeper, around the village during prolonged dry periods to help minimise dust and maintain road cleanliness.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 10th September 2026

Thursday 10th December 2026

Thursday 11th March 2027

Thursday 10th June 2027

[ENDS]