

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
8th September 2022
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- Mike Brown (MB) Hanson Aggregates, Southwest area operations manager
- Simon Parkes (SP) Hanson Aggregates, Batts Combe quarry unit manager
- Michelle Beasley (MMB) Hanson Aggregates, secretariat
- Ben Ayes (BA) Hanson Aggregates, land & mineral resource manager
- Alex Hemming (AH) Hanson Aggregates, senior landscape architect
- Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) Axbridge Town Council
- Nick Hoof (NH) Resident
- Andy Langston (AL) EHO office Sedgemoor District Council
- Ruth Amundson (RA) Somerset County Council Planning
- Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) Cheddar Parish Council
- Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) Somerset

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Graham Godwin-Pearson (GP) Sedgemoor District Council
- Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) Somerset County Council
- Steve Hemmett (SH) Avon & Somerset Police
- Nicola Haynes (NH1) Resident
- Jim Hardcastle (JH) Mendip Hills AONB
- Sally Devlin (SD) Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. **Welcome and Chair introductions** - Chair Mike Brown (MB)
 - Membership Update
2. **Review of minutes and actions from last meeting** – Mike Brown (MB)
3. **Landscape and biodiversity update** – Alex Hemmings (AH)
4. **Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update** – Simon Parkes (SP)
 - Feedback & Complaints
5. **Land and Mineral Planning update** – Ben Ayres (BA)
6. **Hanson Transport update** - Simon Parkes (SP)
7. **Environmental Health update** – Andy Langston (AL)
8. **District Council update** – Cllr Pauline Ham (PH)
9. **Local Resident update** – Nick Hoof (NH)
10. **Parish Council update** – Cllr Mike Taylor
11. **AOBs**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction

- MB welcomed attendees to the meeting
- Membership update - MB welcomed NH and thanked him for stepping in for NH1. MB would like to say thank you to NH1 for all the years she has attended the liaison meeting on behalf of the residents, and asked NH if it was something he would like to continue. NH advised this was the first time he'd known that NH1 was now stepping down from her role but would like to be invited in the future.

2. Review of minutes and actions from last meeting

- MB asked if everyone was happy with the draft minutes from the previous meeting, which they were. MMB to publish approved minutes to the Batts Combe Web Page. (www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/sites/batts-combe-quarry/documents)
- SP confirmed he had contacted SH to advise him of issue at the Perch. NH asked if the police ever attend the meeting. SP advised they are invited but it is very difficult to get anyone to attend.
- SP confirmed the Bridal Path had been strimmed.
- MB advised a complaints log would be held on internal logging system (Intelex) SP & MMB to develop process to record all complaints and actions. (All complaints are to be logged however they arrive at site e.g., via WhatsApp, email, phone calls).
- SP confirmed Batts Combe web page had been updated advising hauliers we do not receive trucks until 6am.
- MB advised a possible location for a lorry park near to Batts Combe had been found for when Venns Gate is closed for short periods. MB to update at next meeting.
- SP advised previous incidents to have occurred where there is lack of communication from Highways, e.g. not advising when Venns Gate will be closed for patching potholes, which takes approximately 20 mins, and police directing lorries into Hannay Road. MB advised an alternative route for the hauliers has been approved by Highways. Please see "matters arising" for clarification in the minutes from the liaison meeting on 8th December 2022.
- MB confirmed four dates for future meetings, see page 9.
- MB to arrange teams call with hauliers, update in agenda item on transport, see page 6.
- SP confirmed he has spoken with staff leaving the quarry at 5pm about their speed.

3. Landscape & Biodiversity Update

- AH introduced herself and explained her role as being responsible for restoration. She has been with Hanson for 15 years and covers sites across the south of the UK, from Essex to South Wales. Due to there being many new members at this meeting, AH went over what she had advised in the last meeting on landscape and biodiversity issues.

- AH advised that the quarry sits within important habitats and as a part of future restoration Hanson would be restoring the quarry faces to woodland and calcareous grassland, providing habitat for species such as dormice and bats. The quarry benches are currently being developed, with grass seeding and tree planting.
- AH advised that Hanson also owns “The Perch” which is Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSi). Trees suffering from ash die back are posing a threat to Rights of Way users and thus they are being felled in a sensitive manner. We are not closing foot paths or impacting the use of the landscape. We carry out regular hazardous tree surveys and we only fell the tree if it causes a threat. The disease in Ash trees has affected the Mendips badly due to the amount of Ash here.
- AH advised “The Perch” will have info boards and viewpoints in the hope it will discourage antisocial behavior and drug use in the area. Recently there has even been 4x4 use on the land. AH advised that Hanson relies on residents to tell us what is happening.
- AH advised that the goats were causing an issue, as they destroy all the restoration being implemented, by eating the newly planted trees. MB added they also cause issues with product contamination. AH advised Hanson is working with the National Trust and the Longleat Estate to manage the population, by either relocating or culling.
- AH advised the site Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is due to be updated by the end of year 2023 and will be posted on the Batts Combe web page.

4. **Batts Combe (Hanson Site) Update**

- SP showed an aerial view photo of the quarry and advised of the development work being carried out in the mid tip and south-eastern corner. SP advised that the area known as “Mid Tip” is the next section from which material will be extracted in line with the approved development plans. This will mean that the quarry will become more visible with the timescale for this being between 6-9 months The back benches of the quarry will become more exposed, but this has already been the focus of restoration work.
- SP advised that the volumes the site is producing are dropping in tonnage. This is mainly due to reduced volumes going to Hinckley Point.

Year	Tonnage
2017	965,000
2018	875,000
2019	1,100,000
2020	940,000
2021	860,000
2022	526,000 to end of August on target for 788,000 by end of year

- SP advised that Batts Combe has a new supervisor Kyle Boyd, and a new lead apprentice starting in September. Our mobile plant apprentice, who is nearing the end of his apprenticeship will soon be replacing a member of staff who is retiring.
- SP advised there is a plan for an open day in September 2023, as unfortunately Covid-19 ruined plans for the last one. SP advised he would welcome small groups of 2-3 for quarry tours. Hanson is still trying to confirm a date for members of Cheddar Parish Council who were mostly on annual leave when we were trying to organise it previously. NH asked when do tours take place, MB advised they are done on request. Visits are always productive and help with providing solutions to problems.
- MB advised Batts Combe also has a new transport manager who was previously a haulier himself and so is aware of our constraints and issues. Having him in post will get the message across to drivers about the need to always adhere to Hanson's protocols. NH questioned if there was an "alpha male" in the group that could get the message across. SP replied the "Hanson" drivers get updated on issues at a "back to work day" which is the first day back in the new year. Hanson does not have a direct relationship with the drivers for collect clients, instead we have to liaise with the respective company office teams.
- SP advised he would like to push hauliers to walk the way into Batts Combe to get a different perspective. Experience it from a pedestrian's perspective.
- Feedback & complaints: SP advised there been very few since the last meeting. No negative feedback from either Environmental Health or a Government perspective, however there was one resident complaint received about dust. This related to an instance when the water bowser was out of service and so we stopped production until it was back in service.

5. Land and Mineral Planning Update

- BA advised the group that planning permission for Batts Combe, as with all quarries, is to be reviewed around every 15 years. The planning department at Somerset County Council (SCC) would issue the notice for the review date.
- RA advised there is a new team in the planning department at SCC, and they are only now just getting out to review sites due to covid. RA advised the visit with BA was useful and looked at the conditions from the last review. She added that she will be working on getting a letter to BA with a formal notice of a review.
- BA advised when Hanson receives a ROMP notice, it can seek to update the scheme. The current planning permission has 46 conditions which detail the operating hours, dust, noise and blasting conditions that Hanson must comply with, the end date of the permission being 21st February 2042. Until a ROMP is resolved/determined by the local mineral authority, the previous conditions apply.

6. Hanson Transport Update

- MB advised the 20MPH speed signs are now in place.
- MB advised that Batts Combe were going to be trialling a new system for drivers which will see them holding a credit card style card. This will be scanned when they arrive at site and will also hold details on driver competencies and if their site inductions are up to date etc. Hanson deal with three types of haulier:
 - Employee
 - Franchise
 - Collect drivers
- The “collects” tend to be the problematic ones. Once this system is up and running, the weighbridge staff will scan the card and advise the driver of any training that is required.
- SP advised that three drivers have been banned from site (including two tractor drivers) and one more is on a final written warning, should his behaviour continue he'll no longer be welcome – he'll effectively be banned from site.
- MB advised we have clear rules on PPE and how our weigh bridge staff are spoken to. The site team has also been actively engaging with haulier transport managers and our feedback has been well accepted. We've also put cameras on some houses so we can generate evidence of poor driver performance. MB explained that we've found the cheaper hauliers to be not as professional with drivers under pressure from their transport managers. He stressed that Hanson wants to solve the problem, and not ban people, as this ends up pushing the problem onto somewhere else.
- NH advised that some drivers are removing their dust sheets too early, and of drivers going the wrong way up Venns Gate. SP advised we now have two employees in our weighbridge so there is time for better inductions for the site.
- SP advised that one of our weighbridge staff is now carrying out the speed monitoring three times a week at different times and different locations.
- NH asked if it was possible to get a camera at height to catch unsheeted trucks. SP to research options.
- MB advised the issues would get better with rules and inductions in place and by getting smarter with mapping. NH agrees with MB comments.
- NH mentioned about tractors using the quarry with no sheeting. SP advised the tractors are banned from Batts Combe and they have also been banned from neighbouring AI quarry, Callow Rock, for lack of sheeting.
- MB advised that PC Hemmett could help, as he had agreed to carry out speed monitoring. SP to ring and remind him.

- MB advised that Hanson are looking to put a footpath in a location along Venns Gate. Hanson will fund it, but SCC Highways would need to adopt it and look after it in the future. We will need to carry out solicitors searches on the properties. BA advised it would be reference a Public Section 278 agreement. MB advised Hanson has the contracting teams to carry out the work. BA's team and Highways to work out line of owner land. MB advised this is not a priority as far as Highways are concerned but Hanson will keep pushing. It took a long time just to get the 20MPH signs agreed.
- NH advised of a new driver, wearing ear buds, driving fast up Warren's Hill. She said she admitted doing it as she was a new driver, had no radio and wanted to get through it before another truck came the other way. MB replied all customers need to be advised so they are aware, and next meeting he'll report on updating customers.
- PH advised there are new "STOP" signs in Axbridge, but lorries are not stopping. Police had been asked to monitor this, but they have not yet done so. Surveys were done by local councillors and 80% of all traffic did not stop. SP to get a photo of the junction to give to drivers and advise they must give way to the left and the right. MB advised he knows the area operations manager for Callow Rock and will advise them to do the same.
- MT advised the group of the road closure from Axbridge to Cross and the bus route changing, in the event it affected any of our staff.

7. **Environmental Health Update**

- AL advised there have been no complaints and a new permit has recently been issued for dust. The first risk assessment for this would be the end of the month.
- MB advised the whole industry has had issue this year with the dry weather. Bowers working full time but doing little to suppress the dust.
- SP advised we are currently using mains water but are looking at putting in bore holes. BCL putting feelers out for it.

8. **District Council update**

- No attendance from District Council

9. **Local resident update**

- NH advised the residents are pleased with the 20MPH signs and they have been well received, but it's been noted there are no signs between the quarry and Hannay Road.

- NH asked why the 15MPH signs have been removed. MB advised they were causing confusion. Batts Combe rules are still 15MPH. We have tried for an electronic sign, but Highways wouldn't entertain it. It may work if we can get a resident to agree to have it in their garden. NH advised since the 15MPH signs have been removed, the hauliers speed has crept up to 20MPH. SP advised that our regular speed monitoring has not picked that up. MB & SP to discuss possibility of electronic speed sign and liaise with NH afterwards as to where it could be put. MB would like to trial the electronic sign and if residents are happy then we can speak with Highways.
- NH asked if Hanson could have a sign at the exit saying speed limit is 20MPH for cars and 15MPH for lorries.
- NH asked for an update on the ROMP review, BA had already covered this. We are waiting to be served notice. RA advised they would be looking to send an invitation in the next few weeks and then the period in which it is to be completed is 12 months, with SCC determination to follow.
- NH advised there has been no damage to property reported.
- NH asked how often we carry out speed monitoring. SP advised 2-3 times a week at different times and locations. SP showed the Batts Combe web page where the speed monitoring information is published. ([Documents and reports | Hanson Communities \(hanson-communities.co.uk\)](https://www.hanson-communities.co.uk)) SP to review the frequency and locations of the speed monitoring by the next meeting.
- NH advised he was happy for Caroline to use his garden to carry out the speed monitoring. This would mean she would not have to wear Hi-Vis clothing like she has to on the road, where hauliers could spot her and adjust their speed.

10. Parish Council update

- PF advised there have been no complaints.
- MB advised of a change to rights of way of the footpath, due to a family out walking trying to get into the quarry.
- BA advised that AH is looking at the Perch as somewhere to install information boards and possibly a viewing platform.
- MT asked if we have liaison with other quarries with a trade association. MB advised it was not common practice talking with other aggregates suppliers but couldn't see an issue sharing operational knowledge like rights of way or transport.
- BA advised of a Yorkshire HGV forum between hauliers, mineral operators and county councillors that was organised in a local town hall for useful information sharing.
- BA advised if the council wanted to organise with Callow Rock, we would happily attend.

11. AOBs

- None

Summary of Actions

- MMB to upload approved minutes to the Batts Combe Web Page.
- MMB & SP to discuss process of adding complaints to Intalex.
- MB to work on lorry park location
- SP to look at getting a camera at height on the entrance to check sheeting is in place when hauliers are arriving and leaving.
- SP to contract SH to remind him to carry out some speed monitoring.
- BA to look at the possibility of a footpath in Venns Gate.
- SP to contact all customers to remind of sheeting and speed limit.
- SP to get a photo of the stop signs in Axbridge to give to drivers and advise they must give way to the left and the right.
- MB to contact area operations manager at Callow Rock to advise him on the issue with the stop signs in Axbridge.
- MB & SP to discuss electronic speed sign and liaise with NH of where to put it.
- SP to review locations and times of speed monitoring.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 8th December 2022
Thursday 9th March 2023
Thursday 8th June 2023
Thursday 7th September 2023

[ENDS]