

Parish Council of Coleford

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Evans, Drescher, Townsend and Paterson

There were no members of the public present. The Clerk Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

1. There was a report of a house flooding on Highbury Road opposite the entrance to Preachers Vale, each time there is heavy rain.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset highway for then to investigate.

2. Concern was raised over the number of vehicles parking on the pavement outside the Legion.

Action: Clerk to ask the PCSO to monitor and educate drivers.

3. There was a report of a wing mirror hit off of a van on Highbury Street. No action to be taken by the Parish Council.

4. A man complained to a parishioner when his dog urinated on the pavement in an aggressive tone. It is understood that this is not the first time that the man has behaved in this way. No action to be taken by the Parish Council.

5. There have been issues with the phone lines at Mendip Country Practice. Patients have been asked to send an email outlining their conditions for the Doctor to review to decide if an appointment is required. It is believed that this was a temporary measure whilst the phone line was compromised.

1. A parishioner expressed concern over the beech tree at the lower playing field which looked vulnerable during the recent storm.

Action: Clerk to arrange inspection

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Bank, Barrett, Bell and Pearce which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

4. Councilor resignation and co-option

There were none.

5. Approve Minutes of Parish Council meetings held on the 12th February 2022

The minutes from the meeting had been circulated to all Councillors for consideration. It was agreed that they accurately reflected the meeting and were duly approved and signed by the Chair.

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to the website.

6. Matters arising

All actions had been completed or would be discussed as an agenda item later in the meeting apart from:

1. The Clerk explained that using Gmail for the Councillors email was not going to be an option as it would not offer the security required by the Council. The Clerk has sought quotes from an IT supplier which would provide the required level of security but at a cost. It was agreed that all Councillors would give this some consideration with a final decision being made after the election.

Action: Agenda item for the May meeting

2. The Clerk had emailed the Head of Bishop Henderson school a map showing an alternative, safer walking route to school which avoids Anchor Road. The Clerk had heard that the gate which accesses the school ground nearest to Coal Barton footpath is only accessible to certain classes, due to the covid restrictions. This would mean access to the main entrance of the school for pedestrian access would be via the Farley Dell footpath, which is much longer than the Coal Barton option. It is hoped that The Head Teacher will confirm that this more direct route can now be accessed by all pupils.

Action: Clerk to progress and if route agreed with Head promote on Facebook and OTM

7. Reports

1. PCSO report

A generic area report had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no specific details relating to Coleford.

2. Somerset County Council report

The Clerk had previously circulated the report from County Cllr Ham, as follows:

Coronavirus infection rates: The Government published its Living with Covid-19 report on 21st January 2022. Under the plan

- people with Covid are not legally required to self-isolate
- however, guidance recommends that those who test positive stay at home and avoid contact with others for at least five full days
- self-isolation support payments of £500 for those on low incomes have stopped
- routine contact tracing has ended - people in contact with someone with Covid will no longer be advised to self-isolate or take daily tests
- workers are not required to tell their employer if they need to self-isolate
- face coverings are not mandatory but they are still "strongly encouraged"

From 1 April:

- PCR and lateral flow Covid tests will no longer be free for most people
- Covid passports will no longer be recommended, except for international travel
- employers will no longer have to consider Covid as a separate risk when working out how to keep employees safe

Over-75s and people with a weakened immune system are also being offered an extra Covid booster jab this spring, six months after their previous dose.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

County Council Revenue Budget: Highlights of the 2022/23 Somerset budget include: An extra £18 million investment in Adults Social Care (13% increase), an extra £12 million invested in Children’s Services (13% increase), an additional £8.4 million identified to invest in schools and £48 million in capital projects, including roads. Additionally, there is a major investment in supporting the commitment to create a zero carbon Somerset by 2030 with £7.8 million allocated to reduce energy use in council buildings and £1 million invested in the electrifying the council fleet and building a charging infrastructure in the county. The County Council’s share of Council Tax is proposed to rise by a two per cent with a further one per cent rise under the social care precept. For a home rated Band D for Council Tax this is equivalent to a rise of 78p a week.

iAero: A new £10m aerospace centre in Yeovil dedicated to innovation, collaboration and sustainable aviation has officially opened. The iAero project, led by Somerset County Council, is a hub for collaboration and innovation on new products. It stands next door to world-leading aerospace company Leonardo UK Ltd, a key partner in the project. The centre will be the gateway for the aerospace industry to access small and medium enterprises who are looking to collaborate and innovate on new products.

Opportunity Boost Scheme: A new grant has been launched to help people in Somerset overcome financial barriers when seeking employment and returning to work. The Opportunity Boost Scheme will provide grants worth up to £500 to help with the cost associated progressing into work, such as transport costs, childcare, work clothes, learning resources and training courses. The funding for the scheme has been provided through the Somerset Recovery Fund, and the initiative is being delivered in partnership between Somerset County Council and Citizens Advice Somerset. To qualify, applicants must be aged 16 or over, not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking, and had a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000. For More information visit www.westsomersetadvice.org.uk/?p=1380

Half Term and Easter food support: Somerset County Council is again working with schools to provide food vouchers to families eligible for Free School Meals to combat holiday hunger over the February half-term and Easter holidays. The Council has helped provide food vouchers to those children in need of support during the school holidays since October 2020, providing a much-needed boost to families who have felt the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The allocation for February half-term and Easter provides vouchers worth £15 per pupil for the week and includes additional funding so that schools can also allocate vouchers to families who are in need of support but do not qualify for Free School Meals.

Ukraine: In addition to flying the Ukrainian flag and lighting County Hall in Yellow and Blue the County Council are offering extra support to Ukrainian members of staff and residents in Somerset. The Council stands by, ready to support the national humanitarian aid effort to relocate refugees displaced by Russian aggression.

3 Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Ham and Townsend reported as follows:

Council Tax – At last week’s meeting of Full Council the motion to agree an increase of 3%, representing £5 a year for a Band D tax payer was agreed after much political grandstanding. The Special Expenses Rate is to be unchanged at £12.50.

Planning - The fears over the potential open door to any speculative housing application were only slightly calmed by the refusal at appeal for 95 houses at Chilcompton. Mendip’s A Team were able to convince the Inspector that Significant and Demonstrable Harm would have been caused by the impact on the character and appearance of the area as it would appear as an incongruous addition to the village. For some inexplicable reason he argued that this was not the case at Coleford. Also, there was an issue about school capacity. The public enquiry is now in progress against Mendip’s refusal of 75 dwellings for the site at Beauchamp’s Drive just behind the White Post. Unlike for the Coleford

appeal, Mendip have again fielded an A Team. The application by Gladman for 250 houses at Writhlington includes some 30 in Mendip's area not allocated in the Local Plan. The whole application is to be decided by BANES.

Mendip have issued a public consultation on the placing of Public Space Protection Orders to try to control the invasion of encampments around Glastonbury. In December 2021 there were close to 200 such illegals.

Mendip are requesting Council Tax payers to ensure there have direct Debits set up to make the payment of the energy rebate easier to manage.

4 Unitary Update

Cllr Ham said that following the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset the Structural Changes Order were approved by the House of Commons Committee on 23rd January and will now go before the Lords on or before 14th March. The first elections to the new authority together with Somerset Town and Parish elections will be held on 5th May 2022.

8. **Planning Application**

There were none.

9. **Planning updates including enforcement issues**

There were none.

10. **Consider parishioners request that the Council writes to the landowner to secure the timber from the Elm tree (Gladman site) to make outdoor furniture for the school**

A letter had been received from a member of the public asking the Parish Council to approach the owner of the land where the Gladman development is to take place and ask if the timber can be cut down and used to create furniture which could be used at the village school.

There was discussion around the potential cost of such a project and who would fund it. But it was decided that it would be premature to discuss this as a management plan is still to be determined for the Western hedgerow and any intervention could be detrimental.

Action: Clerk to respond

11. **Highways including:**

1. Councilor updates – Cllr Townsend reported that the white lining has been completed in many places and some works done at Stoke Bottom with more drainage work scheduled for later this month. District Cllr Townsend confirmed that he will be meeting with Charlie Higgins of Highways next week to look at surfacing issues.

Cllr Ham said that a letter had been received from the landowner's solicitor regarding the potential for Somerset Highways taking some land to widen Anchor Road, (Outside the old surgery) to enable a pavement to be constructed, which would provide a safe route to Bishop Henderson school. Unfortunately, Somerset Highways are not going to pursue this option but will continue with the alternative plan of increased signage and road markings warning of the risk of pedestrians.

All agreed that this was disappointing and the correspondence from Somerset Highways will be sent to the head of Bishop Henderson school so that they also have the opportunity to respond directly.

Action: Cllr Ham to forward the correspondence to Bishop Henderson School

2. Report of any new issues to be reported

The 30mph sign on Anchor Road has turned 90 degrees and needs to be readjusted.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report.

The Clerk confirmed that the Mendip Order 2012 had been received which outlined the intention to implement double yellow lines outside the site of the new co-op. It was agreed that the Clerk would post the order on Facebook so that the public have the opportunity to respond if they so wish.

Action: Clerk to post of Facebook

12. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had prepared the bank reconciliation which would be checked by Cllr Bell before the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to drop bank reconciliation to Cllr Bell

2. Consider quote for replacement sign at Coleford Cemetery

The Clerk had obtained quotes from 3 suppliers to replace the sign in the cemetery. After discussion it was agreed that the clerk would seek photographs of the basic sign so that everyone gets an opportunity to visualise what it would look like before making a decision.

Action: Clerk to seek sample photos

2. Consider grant funding for Citizen Advice Mendip for 2022/23

A letter had been received from Citizen Advice Mendip asking whether the Parish Council would be able to financially contribute towards the running costs for the financial year 2022/23. It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Paterson that the Council should make an award of £1000.

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to write to Citizens Advice to confirm the award.

3. Invoices approved for payment:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| HMRC - National Insurance | £ 31.37 |
| V Watts - Clerks Expenses | £190.48 |
| SALC | £ 25.00 |

All Councilors agreed that the payments should be made.

Vote 6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

13. Update and discussion on the renovation of the hardcourt and proposed 3G

It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting when it was hoped that further quotes would have been received.

Action: Agenda item next meeting

14. Update on the levelling of the main football pitch at Highbury playing field

There was no update.

Action: Agenda item next meeting

15. Consider the request to employ a tree surgeon to remove some trees and branches at the butterfly bank

The Clerk has spoken with the volunteers who are going to put together a specification of work required. The Clerk will then seek quotes.

Action: Clerk to seek quotes once specification has been received.

16. Consider Tree survey report for Orchard Close and Goodeaves alongside the work already instructed.

All Councillors had received a copy of the tree survey for perusal. The Clerk explained that she had sent the report to the contractor who has been selected to complete the tree work at Orchard Close. He will compare the recommendations alongside the work which has already been agreed to ensure that any work required is completed.

Action: Clerk to progress

17. Agree plans for Annual Litter pick on Saturday 12th March 2022 @ 10am

The Clerk had spoken with the litter pick volunteer who has arranged a litter pick for Sunday the 13th March at 10am at The Hub. It was agreed that the event would be combined for maximum impact. The Clerk to liaise with the volunteer to ensure that a risk assessment is completed, that kit is available from Idverde and that posters are erected to raise awareness.

The Clerk confirmed that once the contractor had been agreed to build the rainwater harvesting structure at Goodeaves, a skip would be ordered which could be utilized for the Parish.

Action: Clerk to progress

18. Allotments

1. Discuss and agree potential sites for allotments at Vobster – including rent and terms
Cllr Ham confirmed that there had been communication with the current tenants but as yet there has been no response as to whether they will be prepared to swap fields.

Action: Cllr Ham to progress

2. Consider whether to progress with the Somerset County Council Emergency Climate Fund Grant
The Clerk will continue to liaise with Sam Shaw of Somerset County Council regarding the new location for the allotments.

Action: Clerk to keep SCC informed.

19. Meetings to attend or attended

08/03/22 @7pm Frome Town Council Local Community Network meeting – Email received following up on the meeting has been circulated to all Councillors for perusal.

08/03/22 @ 6 til 7.30pm MDC Parish Forum

17/02/22 @ 16.30 – 18.30hrs – LGR Advisory Board meeting at Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.

11/03/22 @ 7pm at the Hub - Meeting of the Flower Show committee – new member's welcome

17/02/22 – AT attended the Mendip Patient meeting

20. Update on plans for the Queens Jubilee Celebration

A full schedule of events for the extended weekend has been planned. However, a new lead is required for the organized walk. It was agreed that Cllr Ham would approach a potential volunteer.

Action: Cllr Ham to progress

21. Correspondence

There was none

22. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

1. Elections – It was agreed that the Clerk will hand out nomination papers at meeting on 23rd March. The Clerk will then hand in the nomination papers to Mendip District Council.
2. Emergency planning to be an agenda item

Action: Agenda item next meeting

3. Confirm dates of Annual meeting of the Parish and Annual Parish Council

Action: Clerk to confirm dates for the Annual meetings.

23. Date of Next Meetings:

23rd March 2022 – Planning meeting

13th April 2022 – Monthly meeting

Meeting finished at 21.30hrs