

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th September 2021

Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Banks, Barrett, Drescher, Evans, Pearce, Turner and Townsend. 2 members of the public attended.

In the absence of the Clerk Vickie Watts Cllr Townsend took the minutes

1. Public Forum

1.1 Cllr Ham announced the passing of former Cllr Mr Ted Philips and gave his thanks and recognition for his contributions over the years. He asked all present to observe a minutes silence to pay our respects.

1.2 A member of the Parish spoke in opposition to planning application ref 2021/1414/FUL. He noted that no public notice had been seen, and was clear that the drive giving access to the site was in the ownership of himself and his partner. The site was therefore landlocked and any current parking on the site was by grace and favour access. A previous application for a dwelling on the site had been refused on the grounds of no access.

1.3 A resident had requested the provision of an electric vehicle charging point in the village. Cllrs felt that the RBL car park would be the best site, subject to their approval. The Clerk was asked to respond to the resident and send a request to the RBL

Action: Clerk to write to the RBL to seek approval for electric vehicle point

1.4 Cllr Townsend reported that the path around the south side of Newbury Works was badly overgrown.

Action: Clerk was asked to request clearance action from the site owners and Claire Haskins of Somerset Rights of Way

1.5 It was reported that the brambles had regrown to the west of Goodeaves.

Action: Clerk was asked to raise this initially with the Pay Back team.

Concern was expressed about the overgrown hedging opposite the Surgery. The Chairman was able to confirm that this is now in the new contractor's work programme.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Allen and the Clerk had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

4. Co-option of Councillors

Mr Paul Bell attended the meeting, introduced himself and explained that he wanted to join the Council as he had lived in the village for 13 years and wished to become more involved and contribute something. Mr Bell was asked to briefly leave the meeting. Some concern was expressed that the Council would remain all male but there had been no female applicants. After discussion it was unanimously agreed that Mr Bell be co-opted.

Action: Clerk to ensure paperwork is completed and notify MDC of the new appointment.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

5. Approve Minutes of Parish Council meetings held on the 11th August 2021

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

Vote: 8 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.:

7. Reports

1. PCSO

The newsletter for the Frome Rural North had been circulated to all Councillors which provided an overview of the current issues and policing priorities. Councillors felt it was of little relevance to the village as there were no specific references to Coleford. It was noted that the PCSO had been visible within the village.

2. County Councillor

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

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 29th August the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 33,812 (up from 26,526 on 25th June) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 811. The rate per 100,000 stands at 459.1 (206.9) for Somerset with Mendip at 358.2 (234.5), Sedgemoor at 673.0 (195.7), South Somerset 410.5 (214.4) and SW&T at 417.1 (187.0). The number of total deaths across the County is currently 11% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.9 and 1.2.

Infection rates in Somerset are now amongst the highest in England. It is therefore important even for those who have had both jabs to remember to observe Social Distancing and to Ventilate indoor areas at all times.

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.

Vaccination programme roll-out: Somerset continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing over 94.5% of the adult population having had one dose of vaccine and 84.6% having had both doses. Work continues to encourage further take up particularly amongst younger adults and a real focus on ensuring the second vaccine to this group.

Local Government Reorganisation: Following the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset work has now commenced to refine the transition and implementation programme. The four District Councils and Somerset County Council are working closely with MHCLG to implement the decision. A recent request from Government to look at a maximum of circa 85 Councillors on the new Council has also meant that a review of Divisional/Ward boundaries is now being undertaken. In addition, the impact of a May 2022 Unitary election on Town and Parish Councils who are not due to elect until 2023 is also under consideration with the views of these Councils being sought on the options available. It is expected that statutory orders will be laid before Parliament in the late Autumn and a vesting date of the new authority as April 2023.

Somerset Medal for Community Groups: Groups, teams and other volunteers will be presented with the Somerset Medal on Wednesday 15 September at Taunton Rugby Club after being recognised as some of Somerset's many unsung coronavirus heroes. The Somerset Medal was launched by Somerset County

Council to say a heartfelt thank-you to the best of the best. The first individual winners were announced on Somerset Day with a second round of nominations opened up to groups and teams.

£5,000 Rural Business Grants: Grants of up to £5,000 are now available to help businesses in rural parts of Somerset bounce back after the coronavirus pandemic. The grants (up to 80% of project costs) are available to assist service businesses in rural areas to help them move forward and become more sustainable. A business will need to provide 20% of their own match funding. The application process is open to Sole Traders providing rural services, Businesses providing rural services, Town and Parish Councils; Local Community led organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis and are legally constituted. The fund which is part of the wider £6m Somerset Recovery Fund will close at 5pm on 10 September 2021. Initial applications will be treated on a first come, first served basis but we will need time to check eligibility and respond. Details and application form can be found at www.somerset.gov.uk/business-and-economy/somerset-recovery-fund

Afghan refugees: Somerset County Council is committed to help a scheme to house Afghans who supported British military and to resettle interpreters and translators. People across Somerset have been stepping forward to help support Afghan refugees as the crisis being played out in the international spotlight deepens. The Council anticipates the Government will fund a number of places for refugees with strict rules on the types and locations of suitable accommodation. Anyone who would like to help in anyway should contact resettlement@somerset.gov.uk

Carbon Reduction: Over half of street lighting in Somerset is now eco-friendly and playing an important role helping the county work towards its 2030 carbon neutral target. Somerset County Council's Highway Lighting Team has started to reduce its carbon footprint in the past five years thanks to the installation of LED lanterns in 56 per cent of street lighting stock. The LED replacements have seen a reduction in the carbon produced per year, down from 9,522 tonnes in 2015/16 to 3,278 tonnes in 2020/21: a reduction of 6,244 tonnes of Co2 and resulting in a 31.75% energy saving equal to £950,00 per year.

Care leavers guaranteed interview scheme: As part of Somerset County Council's commitment to support care leavers, the council has agreed to extend its Care Leaver Guaranteed Interview Scheme to anybody who was in care as a child, wherever that was, and whatever their age now. This means people who have been in the care of a Local Authority for a significant period before the age of 16 and apply for a job with Somerset County Council will be guaranteed a job interview – provided they meet the essential job criteria.

Recent Press releases:

Pop-up Covid vaccination clinics

Somerset campaign encourages residents and tourists to 'think twice' this summer

Notice of vacancy (following the sad death of County Councillor Alan Wedderkopp)

Covid-19 testing remains key as self-isolation rules change

£500,000 to boost re-start and recovery

Joint crackdown aims to put brakes on speeding motorists

3. District Councillors

The Clerk had previously circulated the report from District Cllrs Ham and Townsend as follows:

UNITARY - The next step is for the County to put forward to Central Government proposals for the numbers of new councillors. MHCLG are looking for well below 100, though it is argued that this would give a democratic deficit. The simple solution is to go for 110, ie putting 2 unitary councillors in each existing County ward. Proposals have to be submitted by mid-September.

PARISH FORUM - A virtual Parish Forum will be held on 14th September, featuring an update from the Leader, Mendip's Tourism Grant and the new Climate Change and Resilience Officer.

8. Planning Application- 2021/1414/FUL - Erection of a Dwelling and associated works. Land South Of Anchor Road, Coleford, Radstock.

Councillors acknowledged the concern raised by the resident who spoken during the public forum concerning the access to the site, noting that the red line on the application plan included the access. Cllrs were also concerned about the safety of the exit onto Anchor Rd and also vehicles crossing the footpath which crossed the site entrance. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Barrett that the decision should be left to the Planning Officer, subject to resolution of any issues with the Ward Cllrs.

Vote 6 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions (Ward Cllrs)

9. Planning updates including enforcement issues

9.1 Appeal APP/Q3305/W/20/3265459 Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for the erection of up to 63 dwellings Appeal Location: Land Off Anchor Road, Lipyeate Cross to Luckington Cross, Coleford, Frome, Somerset, Appellant: Gladman Application Number: 2019/2345/OTS

The Gladman appeal on the 63 houses at Coleford was held virtually on 18th August. Mendip were only able to defend the appeal on the basis of the refusal, the Harm to the Countryside, our planning consultant supported Mendip's position and also presented the planning policy reasons for refusal. We also argued for refusal mainly on the basis of Highways and Sustainability. There was disappointment that the Inspector insisted on doing his site visit unaccompanied as we wanted to highlight the Highway issues to him on the ground. It was hoped that he had listened to and read all of the representations. The result could take anything from 3 weeks to 3 months.

There is some progress on the Local Plan Part 2; the Inspector's final report has been fact checked and there are no changes for Coleford. It missed Cabinet on 6th September but should be presented on 4th October and we have asked for an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council a couple of weeks later to agree its formal adoption

9.2 Appeal APP/Q3305/W/21/3270276 Erection of a single detached residential dwelling, garage and associated development (updated information received). Springwater Farm, Anchor Road, Coleford, Frome, Somerset, BA3 5GX

The Clerk had submitted on 1st September 2021 a response to the Planning Inspector repeating the concern expressed by Cllrs regarding the original planning application. A key factor was the lack of visibility to Ward Cllrs of financial accounts as requested on a Confidential basis to allow the financial viability of the enterprise to be assessed. There was also concern that stone crushing equipment had been moved onto the site and this had been reported to Enforcement as beyond the scope of agricultural activities.

10 Discuss quotes received for upgrading the MUGA including installation of 3G Astro type surface. Discuss and decide whether to proceed and apply for grant funding.

Cllr Ham reported that 2 quotes had been received; these would not be disclosed until the third one had been submitted. Although they were expected to be well above the £30k level of grant funding immediately available it was agreed that the submission for grant funding would be made by the 30th September 2021 to meet the closure date and attempt to secure an initial sum. Further funding would then need to be sought. To be discussed at 22-9-21 Planning Meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the Planning meeting on 22nd September

10. Consider quote for cutting back the hedge at Coleford Playing Field

It was agreed this would be considered at the next meeting as no quotes yet received.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

11. Consider quote for cutting back the bushes at Coleford Cemetery

LSJ Gardening Services has confirmed that this would be included as part of the annual hedge cutting contract.

12. Consider quote for the new grit bin for Beacon View

Cllr Ham confirmed that there was a large grit bin in the store which could be used. Cllr Barrett agreed to liaise with the Clerk to arrange a swap of large bins for small as necessary as Beacon View only requires a small one.

Action: Cllr Barrett and the Clerk to arrange

13. Highways including:

1. Councillor Townsend reported on the surface dressing on Charlton Rd, mud clearance from the middle of Dark Lane, a pothole repaired at Lipyeate Cross and further repairs in progress along Stoke Bottom.
2. Report of any new issues to be reported – Cllrs reported road marking issues at Preachers Vale/Lawrence Rd/Roman Way, the Farley Dell to Anchor Rd junction, along Common Lane and the 30mph markings on Anchor Rd. Cllr Ham will take up with Somerset Highways at his meeting with Sara Davis.

Action: Cllr Ham to pursue with Sara Davis

3. Discuss dangerous parking at Underhill, Church Street – Cllrs noted 3 aspects to this issue, the exit from the old Rose and Crown car park, the visibility problem for those going uphill onto Church St, and the footpath exit from the grassed area. Cllr Ham will add to his agenda with Highways

Action: Cllr Ham to take this forward with Somerset Highways

4. Discuss public concerns regarding HGV access to Charmborough Lane – Cllrs discussed the email the Clerk had received from a resident regarding the dangers arising from HGVs using Charmborough Lane. The Parish Council and the overwhelming majority of objectors to the Gladman application had raised this. A possible One Way system had been discussed with Holcombe Parish Council and they were strongly opposed. Restricting the access for HGVs to the Vobster end would give problems over 2 narrow bridges, the long bend by the Vobster Inn and the restricted width through Stockhill and Goodeaves and past the Eagle.

Action: Cllr Townsend to draft a response for the Clerk.

14. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

This will be carried over until the next meeting. A new volunteer is required to work with the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to submit the bank reconciliation at the next meeting

2. Discuss and agree charges for Coleford Athletic Football Club to use the changing rooms

The Clerk provided a spreadsheet to help calculate the appropriate level of charge which had been circulated to all Councillors. It was noted that the Council had agreed to cover the cost of the Legionella flush and deep clean at £1199 during the previous financial year. It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Turner and agreed unanimously that as the current charge of £990 pa had stood for some 5 years an increase of 5% was appropriate making the annual amount £1040

Vote 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to confirm increase with CAFC

3. Report on the Conclusion of the External Audit 2020/21

Cllr Ham reported that the Audit was complete, and there were no adverse comments or other feedback. Cllrs agreed to place on record their thanks to the Clerk.

4. Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC – Clerks National Insurance	£ 31.37
Clerk Expenses	£ 43.77
PKF Littlejohn LLP – External Audit fee	£ 360.00
Ben Windel – Installation of fencing at Beacon View	£ 352.80
Mark Reynolds	£4380.00
Kingfisher Direct – replacement slat	£ 66.00

Cllr Ham proposed that all payments should be made which was seconded by Cllr Townsend.

Vote 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

16. Consider quotes for setting up Parish Council email addresses for Councillors with associated security

Carried forward to the next meeting

Action: Clerk to further investigate. Agenda item for the next meeting.

17. Allotments

1. Update on Goodeaves Allotments – The Clerk had reported that 3 plots at Goodeaves had been given up and one divided into 2, so we now have a waiting list of only 4.
2. Discuss potential sites for new allotments - The 3 potential sites identified are still available though it was considered that the one behind the RBL was unlikely to be satisfactory. Holcombe Parish Council are also pursuing possible sites, and Leigh on Mendip have recently acquired a very successful one. The Clerk and Cllr Townsend were asked to explore possibilities of working with either village.
3. *Action: Clerk to ask Holcombe PC if there is a possibility of working with Holcombe on a joint allotment site*
4. Consider how to progress with the Somerset County Council Emergency Climate Fund Grant – it was agreed that the final decision should be made at the 22-9-21 Planning Meeting

Vote 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Agenda item for the Planning meeting on 22nd September

18. Consider extending Highbury Playing Field Charity to include Coleford Playing Field

Agreed to carry forward to a future meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

19. Jubilee Central Weekend June 2022

The Clerk has invited village groups and members of the public to attend an open meeting at the Hub on the 15th September to discuss how the village can celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

20. Meetings to attend or attended

- VW to meet with Payback team coordinator on 16/09/21 @12 noon
- PH Bus Back Better virtual meeting 14/09//21 @ 7pm
- Take Art Croscombe Village Hall 15/9/21
- Parish Forum virtual 14/9/21

21. Correspondence

There was none.

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

It had been reported that children were playing around and on top of the CRG container on Highbury Playing Field. The Clerk was asked to consult with the Council’s insurers to check our liability and what signage might be necessary.

Action: Clerk to liaise with the Insurance company

23. Date of Next Meetings:

22nd September 2021 – Planning meeting

13th October 2021 – Monthly meeting

Meeting finished at 21-20hrs