

# Parish Council of Coleford

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**In line with government guidance and recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable, it was agreed that this meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting using Zoom video technology.**

## Minutes of the Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020

### Present

Councillor Philip Ham (Chairman presiding)  
Cllr Allen, Banks, Barrett, Conn, Evans, Hanney, Pearce and Townsend.

There were no members of the public present and the Clerk, Vickie Watts was taking the minutes

### Public Forum

- PF 1 The Clerk had received a phone message asking if the Council had received a planning application to vary condition 2 of the Co-op planned at Osbornes garage site (ref: 2017/0600/FUL). The Clerk confirmed that nothing had been received to date. VW
- PF 2 Cllr Townsend and Ham have a meeting planned on the 15<sup>th</sup> August with the head of MDC Neighbourhood services to discuss the potential for Coleford to have a Crematorium. PH/AT
- PF 3 It was reported that last week there was an issue on Charmborough Lane when a horse trailer and lorry met causing the road to be blocked for 45 minutes resulting in delays for many residents.
- PF4 Concern was raised over the foundations for the renovation of the old garage located next to the pharmacy, which is being built from blocks to replace the previous timber structure. Clerk to write to building control to ensure it meets regulations. VW
- 1 Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)**  
Cllr Drescher and Harding sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.  
Cllr Turner and Talbot did not attend.
- 2 Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting**  
There were none
- 3 Approve Minutes of last Parish Council meetings held on the 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020**  
The Clerk had circulated to all Councillors the minutes from the abovementioned meetings. It was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Banks that both sets of minutes accurately reflected the meetings.

*Vote for 7<sup>th</sup> July minutes: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*  
*Vote for 21<sup>st</sup> July minutes: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

The Chair will sign the minutes at the earliest opportunity.  
The Clerk to upload the minutes to the website.

PH  
VW

#### 4 Matters arising

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

- The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council savings account did have instant access. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Ham that £20K should be transferred to that account which was seconded by Cllr Conn. The Clerk to action.
- The Clerk reported that she had invited Alvian Ltd to quote to supply the bushes and shackles for the swing at Goodeaves but they have kindly offered to supply and fit at no charge when they are completing the other work which is due to be undertaken soon.

*Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

VW

#### 5 Reports

5.1 PCSO report – No report had been received.

5.2 Somerset County Councillor report

County Cllr Philip Ham had circulated a press release from Somerset County Council which outlined that the District Councils had done a U-turn regarding unitary. The Somerset's District Councils have now agreed to work towards a plan to abolish themselves and create two new unitary authorities across Somerset. Talks will now take place between the District Councils and Somerset County Council to discuss the best option for Somerset.

County Cllr Ham detailed report by email follows:

**Corona Virus Update:** Whilst every death is undoubtedly an absolute tragedy, the situation in Somerset has been throughout the pandemic relatively quiet compared to the rest of the Country. As at 30<sup>th</sup> July, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 1308 and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 201. There have been no further Care Home deaths since 3<sup>rd</sup> July and the current number of total deaths across the County is currently 12% below the 5-year average. The latest R value for Somerset is between 0.8 and 1.1.

**Covid 19 Outbreak Management:** The Local Outbreak Engagement Board has met for the first time and agreed the Local Outbreak Management Plan. This Board will oversee the public engagement should any local lockdown actions be required. The Government has also passed down powers to the local authority to close premises, restrict open spaces and ban events in instances where the number of infections begins to rise sharply.

**Covid 19 Business Survey:** Somerset are undertaking a business survey to assess the impacts of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on the economy and will provide vital intelligence to help support local business response and recovery work. This survey forms part of a package of intelligence gathering being undertaken on the business and labour market impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, working in partnership with business leaders and stakeholders across the county. The survey can be accessed online at [www.somerset.gov.uk/businessrecoverysurvey](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/businessrecoverysurvey) until 14th August. Businesses can be reassured that their data will not be shared and all responses will be completely anonymised.

**One Somerset:** The business case to move to a Single Unitary authority across Somerset is available on [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk) and details the reasons for the recommendations and the substantial benefits to the residents of Somerset. The business case was approved by Full Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> July for submission to the Secretary of State. Engagement and consultation activities on One Somerset will continue through the later summer and autumn.

**AV1 Learning Robots:** Somerset County Council's trail-blazing use of robot technology, to help poorly children learn, is in line for a top national award. In the biggest initiative of its kind in the country, the Council invested in 50 AV1 robots to support children who can't be in school – whether it's because they are sick or overcoming physical or mental health challenges. Now the project has been shortlisted in the Digital Transformation category of the national MJ Awards 2020. The winner is due to be announced in early October.

Since being introduced late last year, 45 schools have already asked to use a robot to support children who cannot physically be in the classroom, including through the Covid-19 crisis. SCC expects that in the new school year students who are still required to shield due to the Covid-19 situation will benefit hugely from the AV1 Robot scheme.

**Library Services:** The County's Library service now allows people to use an online request form to receive a selection of up to 10 books, DVDs or Talking Books which staff pick out for customers, based on the types of authors or genres that are of interest to them. The service originally operated from Taunton, Frome, Yeovil, Minehead and Bridgwater libraries and has had nearly 900 order and collect requests. From the 27<sup>th</sup> July, this was extended to Wells, Dulverton and Ilminster and from the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Burnham-on-Sea, Williton, Wincanton and Shepton Mallet. South Petherton Community Library will be doing the same from the 4<sup>th</sup> August. Computers in the libraries need to be pre-booked and are available for one-hour slots, with time built in for cleaning. To date over 520 sessions have been booked. All current loans that would have been due back during the lockdown period have been extended to the end of August, and any overdue charges have been waived.

**Domestic Abuse Service:** Somerset County Council's domestic abuse service is to receive a share of a half million-pound fund to support local services. The Council's service provider, The You Trust, is one of a number of local agencies who help victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, which will benefit from the fund. The You Trust are often the first point of contact for someone who is seeking help and the recent lockdown had a significant impact on victims who were living with perpetrators and felt that there was no way to escape. Help is available – 0800 69 49 999 or [www.somerseturvivors.org.uk](http://www.somerseturvivors.org.uk)

**Maternity Toolkit:** The newly launched Somerset Maternity Toolkit developed by Somerset County Council and the wider Local Maternity System offers a digital guide designed to support the beginning and early part of the maternity and parenting journey. It then leads supportively onto the Parent Carer Toolkit for parents/carers of school age children and young people. The service can be accessed 24/7 from home or on a smartphone on [https://cypsomersethealth.org/maternity\\_toolkit](https://cypsomersethealth.org/maternity_toolkit)

### 5.3 Mendip District Councillors report

5.3.1 District Cllr Ham had circulated a detailed report by email as follows:

**Scrutiny.** This month last year's accounts were scrutinised which showed an overspend of £45k, but £15 million underspend on investments which would have given a return to help balance this year's accounts, this could be a costly mistake in the years ahead, not to mention the cost of Covid 19.

They also studied the performance report January to March which showed a big increase in days lost to sickness, but when questioned if this was due to Covid 19 the answer was NO but more stress related. Many items also had not completed due to the pandemic hitting the last month of the quarter,

It has been agreed to spend £60k on consultants regarding cycle ways and footpaths.

It has been agreed to spend £50k a year on a trial of hoeing weeds in one town and one village as a trial rather than using glyphosate at a cost of approx. £200 plus application cost £1000 max.

The Clerk had sent out a MDC survey regards bus use demand in an effort to help provide a better service/ routes / timetables. This is a basic survey but it can be completed with as much detail as you wish, any information that won't fit on the survey can be provided and will be considered. The Parish Council will draft a response and circulate for comments.

Gladman will be discussed as an agenda item, however Cllr Ham wished to thank Cllr Townsend for all his hard work on this on behalf of the Parish Council as he was aware of how hard he has been working on defending Coleford against this planning application.

The emptying of green waste bins, stickers and which day collections take place has caused numerous complaints and questions.

The Eagle Inn continue to challenge MDC, District Cllrs Ham and Townsend, and the Parish Council on the Asset of Community Value they had imposed on them, we believe we have done nothing other than that expected of Councillors on behalf of the parish.

The Hub will reopen as soon as possible in September, the date will be discussed next week.

5.3.2 District Cllr Townsend had circulated a detailed report by email as follows:

Mendip Full Council meeting 20-7-20

The Leader Ros Wyke gave a report on their first year in power, covering:

- Mendip is changing to become fairer, greener, more open and more transparent
- All but one rough sleeper has been found accommodation
- Over £30m in grants to local businesses has been given from central government funds
- They are committed to Saxonvale
- The reopening of Shepton Mallet train station
- Acting 'at pace' to create social housing

The Conservative Leader Tom Killen questioned:

- Why no meeting of the Phoenix Board since December 2019 to address commercial investment opportunities to secure the vital income stream for the Council?
- There is no evidence of a Recovery Plan or an Economic Strategy
- There is concern that the Saxonvale planning application is still not decided some 18 months after submission
- There appears to be no Car Parking or Gypsy and Traveller strategy

Shane Collins the Green Leader stressed that COVID 19 had reinforced the need to source food locally

The new Section 151 (Chief Finance) Officer was announced as Mr Richard Bates. Following the loss of Donna Nolan, 2 of the Council's 3 first line officers have left this year.

Mendip Planning Board 22-7-20

Two significant developments were approved:

- Frome, Sandys Lane behind McDonalds – 235 houses plus retail
- Nunney, behind the wagon park at Nunney Catch – 80 houses.

These will make a major contribution to Mendip's housing target, and secondly both sites were included within the Emerging Local Plan Part 2. This is not the case for the Gladman application in Coleford, for which the planning officer has yet to report, although we are told it will be on the agenda at the August Planning Board.

Mendip Cabinet 3-8-20

The Finance report stated that a balanced budget was in place. This is an unsubstantiated statement to make until the effects of COVID 19 costs are fully understood. A Capital underspend of £15M for 19/20 was reported. This reflects the delay in making the property purchases that are essential for the Council to achieve its Revenue requirements. There appears to be no new Commercial Strategy to take account of the new environment.

One Somerset – Member Briefing 11-8-20

Mendip's Leader, Ros Wyke, yesterday announced that the four Districts in Somerset had abandoned the idea of them working more closely but had been persuaded that Unitary was the way forward. Their proposal is now that there should be two Unitaries in the county – East Somerset comprising Mendip and South Somerset, and West Somerset including Sedgemoor and Taunton and West. The Business Case is being prepared. The plan is still for a decision in early spring 2021, Shadow Authorities to be set up in April 21 with elections and the full body in place by April/May 22. Consultation is proposed but with no detail of the method and timescales.

## 6 Planning Applications

There were none

## 7 Planning updates

Gladman's planning application - Cllr Townsend said he and Cllr Ham had learnt informally from Gladmans that the application was going to be before the Planning Board on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 although they are yet to see the Planning Officer's report. They have raised a formal complaint as this breaches MDC's own formal process and gives the Parish Council only 2 weeks until the hearing.

Cllr Ham has been pressing Somerset Highways department to make a site visit to understand the current issues that Charmborough Lane is presenting on a regular basis.

Cllr Townsend has tried to obtain quotes for a Planning Consultant to represent the Parish Council at the hearing but unfortunately the first 2 options are not available at such short notice. He asked how much money the Parish Council would be prepared to pay for a consultant. It was envisaged that it could cost as much as £2500 but this was possibly the last chance to really stand against the application. Cllr Pearce proposed that the Council should secure a planning consultant to represent the case at the planning board meeting up the value of £2500 which was seconded by Cllr Conn.

*Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

## 8 Highways including:

- 8.1 Parking outside Coop - Cllr Ham said that he heard nothing but praise since the installation of the cones and signage to prevent parking outside the co-op. This could go some way to helping the case for a 'No parking area' in the same location in the future.

The Clerk had circulated an email relating to the Anchor Road Small improvement scheme which would see a footway installed on Anchor Road before the junction of Farley Dell. The deadline for comments is the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. It was agreed that Councillors would consider the plans circulated and notify the Clerk before the 21<sup>st</sup> August so that comments can be submitted.

ALL  
VW

Cllr Conn said that we should request dropped kerbs be included within the scheme to ensure accessibility for parents with pushchairs or those using mobility scooters or wheel chairs.

VW

- 8.2 Litter in Coleford / Charmborough Lane

Cllr Townsend has contacted Neighbourhood services to ask if they could request a road closure on behalf of the Parish Council to enable a litter pick to be completed on Charmborough Lane. He will notify the Council once a response has been received.

AT

## 9 Accounts approved for payments

The following payments had been submitted for payment:

V Watts - Clerk expenses	£108.08
HMRC – National Insurance	£2.94
Brentons Landscaping – Grass cutting	£875.00
Somerset Playing Field Association - Annual membership	£15.00
Society Of Local Council Clerks – Annual membership	£80.50
Rick Hedges – Footpath Warden North Summer report	£50.00
Russ Stanley – Footpath Warden South Summer report	£50.00

It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Conn that the payments should be made. Cheques will be signed by Cllr Ham, Cllr Conn, Cllr Townsend and the Clerk

*Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions (Cllr Townsend was offline at the time of the vote)*

**10 Play Areas including:**

10.1 Consider RoSPA proposal for Memorial Gates at Coleford Playing Field

Cllr Conn reported that the RoSPA Annual report had indicated that the Memorial gates posed a low risk as the spring gate on the smaller gate did not close fast enough and that the larger double gates should be padlocked. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Evans that as the risk was low the gates would remain as they are, with no further action.

*Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

10.2 Discuss Multi Use Games Area MUGA (also known as the Hard Courts)

Cllr Allen confirmed that KM Steel were still happy to produce the new goal/basketball hoop combi for the hard courts but would have to charge an additional £150 plus VAT for the scale drawings. It was agreed that this would be sensible. Cllr Allen agreed to contact KM Steel to request that they go ahead and produce the drawings.

MA

After much discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would seek quotes to replace the hard court fence which is now in poor condition. It was also agreed that a quote should be sought for the removal of the existing lighting system which could be updated with a new more efficient system in due course which could be run on a timer system to prevent the lights being left on. Cllr Allen said that he may have contacts that will be able to help with both quotes.

VW

*Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions (Cllr Townsend was offline at the time of the vote)*

**11 Re-opening of the Changing rooms and need for Legionnaire's disease precautions**

The Clerk said that the Football club were keen to start football again and during August had weekly friendly matches scheduled with the league matches starting again in September. The Clerk had said that the Club must not use the changing rooms until further notice.

Advice had been sought from the Somerset Association of Playing Fields who had advised on cleaning requirements and ensuring that the water system was safe after a prolonged period without use. Cllr Allen had sought quotes for the water system to be disinfected, flushed and sampled to ensure it was free of Legionnaires' Disease. Switchsafe provided the most competitive quote at £400 + VAT for the full system disinfection and £350 + VAT for a Risk Assessment which will give detailed information on how to look after the system in the future to avoid any risk of Legionnaires Disease. Cllr Ham made a decision in consultation with Cllr Conn and the Clerk that the quote should be accepted in order to ensure that the changing rooms were safe to use for the start of league matches in September. The disinfection was able to take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> August and the risk assessment will take place later in the month.

After further discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would seek quotes for a deep clean by a professional company to ensure that the standards of compliance are met. The ongoing cleaning with approved products and the managing of social distancing, signage etc will be the responsibility of the Football club. The Clerk will liaise with John Hansford to ensure that this is done.

VW

VW

It was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Ham that the Parish Council would pay the cost of the initial deep clean.

*Vote: 8 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions*

**12 Review Grave Digging Code of Practice**

Cllr Pearce was concerned that there was a misunderstanding at the previous meeting over the liability of supervising grave digging. He stated that the definition of a code of practise is as follows:

‘A code of practice can be a document that complements occupational health and safety laws and regulations to provide detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations, and should be followed unless another solution with the same or better health and safety standard is in

place'. The key words is "complements" and does not take away the responsibility of the contractor or the employing entity (which in our case is the Undertaker) from complying with obligation of health and safety regulations. He said that as the landowner we should have a code of practice which we should ask the Undertakers to ensure the grave diggers abides by as it is them that has the contractual relationship with the gravedigger and not the Parish Council. The proposed code of practice follows the ICCM template which has been amended to suit the needs of Coleford Parish Council and is there as guidance which should be adhered to. The existing Cemetery Policy which deals specifically with the arranging burials, memorials and ongoing maintenance and care will need slight amendment to sit alongside the new Code of Practice.

VW

After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Pearce that the Code of Practice be circulated to regular and local Undertakers and the grave digger for perusal and comment in the first instance. This will be actioned by the Clerk.

VW

*Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions (Cllr Townsend was offline at the time of the vote)*

Cllr Allen thanked Cllr Pearce for the time that he had put into compiling the Code of Practice.

### 13 **Review Footpath reports**

The Clerk confirmed that both the North and South Footpath reports had been received and submitted to the SCC Rights of Way team. Cllr Barrett agreed to review the reports and compare with the winter reports to see if there were additional issues that need to be addressed. They will then be added to the list of works which the Ramblers or Community Payback team can complete.

MB

### 14 **Land to the rear of Orchard Close**

After discussion it was agreed that the current tenancy agreements may need to be updated. Cllr Ham to seek legal advice. Agenda item for September.

PH  
Ag

*Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

### 15 **Discuss whether there a water supply can be installed at the Goodeaves allotments**

Cllr Ham said that it was not only the cost of the ongoing water that was to be used but the cost of the installation that would need to be taken into consideration. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek a quote from Bristol Water for consideration.

VW

Cllr Hanney asked whether it was possible to have a key/card system for each user as some allotment holders have access to water using hose pipes from their homes and would obviously not wish to pay for an allotment supply. A push button tap was also suggested, as a way of preventing wastage of water.

### 16 **Discuss requirements for new Allotments**

Cllr Ham has looked at the old allotment site at Beacon View which is probably not best suited to being returned to allotments. It was agreed that Councillors would consider land within the area which could be rented or purchased for the creation of new allotments. Agenda item for September.

ALL  
Ag

### 17 **Update on the Coronavirus and the support in Coleford**

The Coleford Angels have officially stood down, having done an enormous job for our community over the past 5 months. Cllr Ham requested that the Clerk write a letter of thanks from the council. Cllr Ham also asked that the Parish Council should make a donation to the Angels so that they can hold a small celebration to remind them of all the hard and needed work they have undertaken for our Community. It was anticipated that there would be no more than 20 attending and Dagmar has quoted £6 per head for food. Cllr Conn proposed that a donation of £150 should go towards the costs which was seconded by Cllr Barrett.

VW

*Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions*

Dagaroo continues to prepare hot meals during the week and is now contributing to the running costs of the Hub kitchen.

**18 Plans for future in person Council meetings**  
 Cllr Ham suggested that the September meeting takes place virtually using Zoom. It is hoped that @ The Hub will open its doors during September. There is much demand for the hall and some adjustments will need to be made to accommodate all requests to use the facilities.

**19 Matters of urgency**

19.1 It was agreed that Cllr Banks would lay the wreath in remembrance of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Japan on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of August at 11 am. It was agreed that the Clerk could contact Revd Cridland to ask if she would be able to attend to say a few words. The Clerk will advertise on Facebook that there will be a socially distanced gathering with a 2 minute silence to mark the event. Cllr Banks to notify the Coleford Legion. HB  
VW  
VW  
HB

19.2 An application for a memorial for Mr Reginald Smith had been received from Exclusive Memorials. It was noted that the colour and inscription were acceptable but that the dimensions needed to be checked against the burial policy before approval. It was agreed that the Clerk would make the required checks and if needed liaise with Cllrs Ham, Conn and Turner to make a decision. VW

**20 Correspondence**

20.1 Bus Survey – Mendip District Council had emailed a survey for Councillors to complete on behalf of the parishioners. Further information would be welcome. The Clerk to seek Parishioner feedback via Facebook VW /  
AC

20.2 A letter had been received from Back 57 Ltd of The Eagle Inn making a complaint against Mendip District Council, District Cllr Ham, District Cllr Townsend and the Parish Council on the Asset of Community Value they had imposed on them. Cllr Ham stated that he believes they have done nothing other than that expected of Councillors on behalf of the parish. No further action required.

**21 Date of Next Meetings:**

Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	Planning Meeting – Due to clashing with the MDC planning board this meeting will be cancelled
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Parish Council meeting