

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428
Email: clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com

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 23rd September 2020

1. Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Banks, Barrett, Conn, Evans, Pearce, Talbot, Townsend and Turner.

2. Public Forum

Cllr Townsend asked if any councillors had any questions for Mendip County Practice who were holding their patient meeting the following day. Councillors said that patients weren't looking forward to having to queue outside of the surgery in the rain as winter approached. It was mentioned that there was talk of a telephone system which would confirm arrival enabling patients to wait in their cars until the surgery was ready for them. It was possible that some form of shelter may be required.

3. Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Cllrs Drescher and Hanney both sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

4. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

5. Planning Application

2020/1712/TPO - The Vicarage, Church Street, Coleford, BA3 5NG

T1 - Elm: Dying due to infection from Dutch Elm disease. Fell to ground level.

T2 - English Oak: Prune the interfering limbs with the BT wires to prevent damage in high winds. Prune the low lateral branches extending to the neighbouring property by approx 3-4m.

T3 - Common Ash: 20% upper canopy thinning.

It was noted within the application that there was no plans to replace the trees with new. Cllr Townsend asked whether this could be used as a lever to get a TPO placed on the Elm tree on Anchor Road, which is a healthy 10m specimen. Using the Council's 4 specified criteria the Parish Council believes the Anchor Rd specimen fully qualifies as follows:

- The extent to which the tree(s) can be seen by the general public and the amenity value. Response – This elm is the only tree along some 150m of native hedgerow. It is on the main exit/entry route to the north of the village and is passed by over 1000 vehicles a day (recent survey) in addition to walker, joggers, cyclists and horse riders. It is highly visible also to people turning right from Brewery Lane from Holcombe on to Anchor Rd.
- The tree's particular importance in terms of its size, form, rarity, screening value or contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation area. Response – It is 10m high, is a decent shape, appears healthy and is an elm – need we say more about rarity! Councillors have experience of local elms that have grown to 5m or so then succumbed to the disease, this at 10m high is to our knowledge unique in the area in the public realm.

- The significance of the tree(s) in their local surroundings and wider impact on the environment. Response – With the demise of the elm tree by the Vicarage it is important that this elm be preserved to maintain the diminishing numbers of elms. It is much more visible in the public realm than the Vicarage one which has a surrounding backdrop of larger trees.
- The Council can also make a TPO as a precautionary measure but only if there is a very good reason to believe that the tree/s could be at risk in the immediate future. Response - The elm was at very high risk as its removal would have been necessary to allow the mandated visibility splays required for planning application ref 2019/2345. Although the application was refused by the Council it must still be considered to be at risk.

It was agreed that the Clerk would ask Mendip Planning why the elm tree at the Vicarage, Church Street, was awarded the TPO. Clerk to follow up.

It was agreed that the work proposed within the application should be completed on the proviso that a tree be planted to replace the Elm which needs to be felled.

Proposed Cllr Ham, Seconded by Cllr Banks
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to contact the Mendip Tree officer

6. Discuss Consultations on Proposed Changes to the Planning System

Cllr Conn had prepared a detailed response to the consultation on the proposed changes to the planning system which had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Townsend had attended a Mendip District Council meeting where this had been discussed and it was reported that if the proposals were to go ahead the calculations on housing requirements would increase the housing need in Mendip from 600 to 1000 which would be untenable. Cllr Conn said that the consultation had highlighted many unknowns and proposed that the draft consultation response be amended to include the figures from MDC prior to sending.

Proposed Cllr Conn, Seconded by Cllr Townsend
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Cllr Conn to update the response before the Clerk sending to NALCⁱ, MDCⁱⁱ and our local MPⁱⁱⁱ.

7. Response to Mendip District Council questionnaire survey on buses – Deadline for response 01/10/20

Cllr Conn had circulated to all Councillors the proposed response to the Mendip District Council survey on the village bus service which now included comments received from parishioners via the Facebook page and email.

Action: Response will be sent to Mendip District Council by the Clerk.

8. Update and discussion regarding drainage at Beacon View

The Clerk confirmed that she had applied to the Land Registry Office for confirmation of who owns the land at Beacon View and on the adjacent land, which will be essential in making future decisions on this matter. It is understood that the Parish Council owns the land where the ditch is located and it was suggested that it should be cleared as an initial attempt to resolve the drainage problem. The Clerk confirmed that she had already sought quotes to clear the ditch and locate the end of the drainage pipe. The first quote was in the region of £400 which the contractor said could fluctuate depending on what was found during the process. It was agreed that the ditch would be cleared as an initial solution.

Proposed Cllr Ham, Seconded by Cllr Allen.
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

It was agreed that the Clerk should appoint the contractor who was able to complete the job with the best quote namely £400 or lower and who is able to progress promptly.

Proposed Cllr Turner, Seconded by Cllr Ham
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: The Clerk to progress the work

9. Website accessibility statement

The Clerk confirmed that quotes had been sought from web companies to review the Coleford Parish Council website for accessibility in order to comply with new legislation. However Gordon from Gordon and Julia Web Design have completed the review and already produced the statement which had been circulated to all Councillors for consideration.

The Clerk explained that this was not the preferred way of operating but was satisfied that the review and statement were thorough and well produced and therefore should be accepted and the fee of £100 paid. It was agreed that the statement be accepted and the fee be paid to Gordon and Julia Web Design.

Proposed Cllr Conn, Seconded by Cllr Turner
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

10. Discuss of Small Grants 2020 and agree launch date

The Clerk confirmed that £2500 had been allocated as part of the budget. It was agreed that the grant should be opened up for applications but if the funds were not fully utilised this year then the amount should be rolled over for allocation during 2021/22. Applications will be considered at the November meeting.

Proposed Cllr Banks, Seconded by Cllr Ham
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to promote using social media, website and notice boards

11. SCC £1m Climate Emergency Community fund

Cllr Ham highlighted that criteria for the fund would not allow the employment of staff as proposed within the Somerset Wildlife Trust application. Cllr Conn suggested that the Clerk should respond to the request received from Somerset Wildlife Trust to say that we are interested in supporting the Trust but understand that funds cannot be used to employ staff and ask if they can clarify whether this is correct.

Cllr Conn suggested that the Coleford Parish Council should prepare a bid which he would research and bring back to the October meeting for discussion.

Proposed Cllr Conn, Seconded by Cllr Townsend
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: Agenda Item for October. Clerk to write to Somerset Wildlife Trust

12. Review future in person Council meetings

In light of the recent Government guidance tightening restrictions to prevent increase in the reproduction rate of the Coronavirus, it was agreed that for the foreseeable future Parish meetings will continue virtually using Zoom.

13. Agree payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

Invoices for payment	Amount
Ben Brenton for Grass cutting	£350.00
V Watts – Clerk expenses	£56.98
Replacement cheque for Darren Haines (Gladman printing)	£106.50

All agreed that the payments should be made

Proposed by Cllr Conn, Seconded by Cllr Banks
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: Cheques to be signed by Cllrs Ham, Townsend and the Clerk

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

Play area signage - The Clerk requested that 10 signs be bought from Vale Signs and Print at £8.50 each (no VAT) to be erected at the 4 play areas in hope that they will last longer than the laminated versions. These will give a visual reminder to all users of how to stay safe and minimise risk of Coronavirus.

Proposed by Cllr Ham, Seconded by Cllr Banks
Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to place order

Bollards at Beacon View – The Clerk will seek quotes for bollards including installation. The Clerk is waiting for a copy of the agreement and the confirmation from Land registry. This will be revisited at the October meeting.

Action – Agenda Item

One Somerset – Meeting dates circulated to all Councillors for them to attend

Action: Councillors to register intention to attend

15. Date of Next Meetings:

Next Parish Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 14th October 2020

The meeting concluded at 20.38hrs

ⁱ National Association of Local Councils

ⁱⁱ Mendip District Council

ⁱⁱⁱ Member of Parliament