

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB

Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd June 2022

Present

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

There was 3 members of the public present. The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

- 1.1 Cllr Evans reported that the cinder path (ref FR4/26) was very overgrown and in need of strimming. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask Somerset Rights of Way to get the path cleared.

Action: Clerk to report to RoW

- 1.2 Cllr Evans asked if a husband was giving chest compressions to his wife how would the defibrillator get to them? Everyone present acknowledged that it was a difficult question which had no easy answer. Enquiries would be made to establish if other parishes had found a way to address the problem.

Action: Clerk to make enquiries with other parishes to see if there are schemes in place.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Banks, Barrett, Bell, Drescher and West which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Planning Applications

1. 2022/1080/VRC - Variation of condition 2 (plans list) of permission 2021/2035/HSE (Erection of two storey side extension and demolition of conservatory).
7 Orchard Close, Coleford, Frome, BA3 5PS

All Councillors had considered the planning applications prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Pearce that the applications be recommended for approval.

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against and 2 Abstentions (District Councillors)

2. 2022/0842/FUL - Erection of General purpose Agricultural barn
Meadow View Farm Charlton Road Holcombe Radstock Somerset
The applicant attended the meet and explained that the new barn was required to store hay and machinery to ensure that equipment has a safe place to be kept. The dimensions are 150ft x 50ft with an eave's height of approx. 16ft. He also explained that it was his intention to plant trees around all of the buildings to help with reducing visibility.

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Paterson that the application should be approved

Vote: 5 For; 0 Against and 2 Abstentions (District Councillors)

4. Planning updates including enforcement issue

There were none.

5. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

6. Agree the minutes

The Clerk had circulated to all Councillors the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 8th June. It was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Townsend that the minutes should be approved.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

7. Actions from the minutes

All actions had been completed or would be on the agenda apart from:

1. It was noted that the notice board outside the piano shop was no longer as visible as it was when parishioners were visiting the post office and shop. It was agreed that the new co-op would be approached to establish if they would consider a new noticeboard outside the store.

Action: Clerk to write to the store manager at the earliest opportunity.

2. The Clerk confirmed that she had not placed the order with Geeking it Simple to provide email addresses for all Councillors as she had spoken with the Chair regarding the option of building a new website with email addresses included as part of the package. This could work out costing the same amount as just the email package from Geeking It Simple but would also update the website and improve accessibility.

Action: Clerk to make investigate options. Agenda item for August

8. Co-option of Councillors

There is currently one vacancy, which the Clerk will continue to advertise.

9. Reports

1. PCSO – No report had been received. The Clerk was asked to report to the PCSO that a piece of farm machinery had been stolen from Hillside Farm and request that he includes the village farms within his usual patrols.

Action: The Clerk to request patrol to include village farms

2. Somerset County Council – Cllr Ham reported that Nigel Taylor had sadly passed away. He was a very good friend but also an excellent Councillor at both Mendip District Council and Somerset County Council. He was the Chair of Somerset County Council until May this year but had been unwell for some time. As Chair he opened the Pump track here for Coleford Parish Council and opened the last Coleford Flower & Craft show before covid. He was a true champion of the Mendip Hills, being also the Chair of Mendip ANOB. He also overseen Glastonbury Festival as part of Gold Command for several years.

The position of CEO for Somerset is being advertised but until interviewed the remuneration was to be £230K when all other unitary are paying £150 - £180K. After an emergency meeting it is now advertised within the £190 – 200K range.

Cllr Ham confirmed he had been selected as one of 16 to be on the Scrutiny LGR implementation board.

3 Mendip District Council – Cllr Philip Ham reported that Cllr Barry Clarke and himself will be trying to attend as many meetings as possible. Barry has attended the Faulkland and Hemington PC meeting which falls the same night as Coleford PC.

Cllr Ham reported the bad line markings in Leigh on Mendip and the poor road condition outside of both Halecombe and Whatley Quarry to Somerset Highways.

Arguments have erupted in Nunney between developers and residents over parking restrictions due to a new emergency exit from the new housing development and double yellow lines which will prevent parking on the road which has been established for many years. A solution is being sought.

There have been issues relating to the £150 tax refund issued through Council Tax. Many people who are eligible have not received it. This is because many who are eligible for the payment intended to help address the rising cost of living are exempt from paying Council Tax so cannot be paid via that mechanism.

Cllr Ham said that this year is going to be very difficult due to unitary change, cost of living, inflation and the war in Ukraine.

There are many Ukrainians now living in the area and some in Coleford. Cllr Ham said that he had meet some of them and they had been extremely grateful but all have sadness in their hearts.

Cllr Townsend reported that a planning application for 30 houses on the South side of the High Street, Oakhill has been recommended for refusal by the planning board on the grounds of highways.

The approval of the Mendip District Council 2020-2021 accounts has been much delayed. They had been informed that they would be ready to sign off at a meeting tonight, which is 15 months after the deadline.

10. Highways including

1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend confirmed he had reported the excessive bumps on the crossing hump as well as a pothole opposite Lipyate House, which has already been marked up for repair by Somerset Highways. It was noted that there has been a lot of gulley clearing. Cllr Townsend asked if anyone was aware of any that were missed?

The erosion on Green Lane at Stoke Bottom has now been marked up with a traffic cone.

Regarding the email response received and circulated from Somerset Highways, Councillors were asked to respond in writing to the Clerk and Cllr Townsend with their reactions so that a response can be formulated and sent to Somerset Highways.

Action: Councillors to respond to the Clerk and Cllr Townsend with their reactions to the Highways email.

2 Discuss benefits of Auto Speedwatch system

The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from the area speed watch coordinator that Avon and Somerset Police have agreed that Auto Speed watch will be acknowledged as a tool which they will use to target drivers who repeatedly travel at excessive speeds. The system is designed locally and data gained can be viewed alongside other villages to ensure that the worst repeat offenders throughout the force are dealt with by the police. The system therefore provides a strong deterrent and should in time reduce the culture of speeding.

The system costs in the region of £500 with an annual subscription also paid. The Clerk will make further enquiries and report back at the next meeting. It is not clear whether volunteers would be required to manage the unit which could mean an additional saving in the cost of ‘working operatives’ training which is required if a speed indicator device is purchased.

Action: Clerk to investigate. Agenda item for August.

3 Report of any new issues to be reported

It was reported that there is a post sticking out of the hedge on the left as you approach the junction at Charlton. It was noted that this would fall within the parish of Kilmersdon.

Action: Cllr Ham to report to Kilmersdon PC

There is a pot hole which needs to be filled on the Leigh on Mendip side of the bridge at lower Coleford.

Action: Cllr Townsend to arrange inspection

11. Finance

1. Accounts approved for payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC - National Insurance	£19.34
V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£52.44
Adrian Mason – Internal Audit	£56.00
Somerset Playing Field Association – Annual membership	£15.00
National Allotment Association– Annual membership	£67.00
Ministry of Play – Swing seats x 2	£297.00
Keith Evans – Payback expenses	£19.57

It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Allen that the invoices should be paid.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

12. Consider request to use the corner of Highbury playing field during building works as an area to store materials, welfare facilities and park vehicles for a period of 2 weeks.

A request had been received from W J Trotman Builders asking if they could use a small corner of the playing field near to the Christmas tree during some planned work that they need to complete on a nearby property. The land would be used to store materials, place a skip and welfare facilities and park vehicles for approximately two weeks. They would fence off the area during the process to ensure it was secure and leave it as found. They have offered to pay for the facility and have asked what we might like to be paid.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would confirm that it would be acceptable providing public pedestrian access to the field was maintained via the gates. A deposit of £100 would be payable in advance to cover any costs incurred to rectify damage done to the ground if required, along with £20 per day for the duration of use.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

Action: Clerk to write to W J Trotman to confirm PC offer

13. Consider funding up to £50 to improve the wildflowers at the pump track

It was acknowledged that the brambles and stinging nettles at the pump track had become prevalent. The Clerk had spoken to a resident who had volunteered to tackle the problem by digging up and cutting back to offending plants. It had been suggested that after the Autumn cut some additional wildflower seeds could be sown to further improve the area.

Some Councillors felt that this was not the right place for the wildflowers and that it should be regularly strimmed to ensure that the stinging nettles and brambles were not allowed to become a hazard to the users of the pump track.

After discussion it was agreed that no decision should be made, but that at the August meeting the pump track and sowing of wildflowers possibly at Beacon View or other locations in the village would be an agenda item for further discussion.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

Action: Agenda item for August

14. Update on potential new Allotments site and agree how to progress.

Some of the working party met with the land agent at the site which was useful and enabled progress to be made with respect to the terms of reference. They have offered a lease of 15 years but it was agreed that the Clerk should seek for this to be extended to 25 years.

Cllr Pearce and Ham have done a lot of work on the costings and how a suitable water supply could be provided. There had been hope that the lake at the quay could have been utilized as it had been offered as a supply, but the logistics of getting it to the allotments has proved difficult. It was agreed that a trailer with 8 bulk storage containers could be regularly filled to provide water.

After consideration of the budget and the grant offered by Somerset County Council the plan would be to commence initially without the car park. Everyone agreed that additional grant funding or requests to the local quarries would mean that the car park could be added in a second phase in the near future.

The working party will complete a further review of the plans and costings for the orchards originally planned for Highbury playing field and Coleford playing field. It was agreed that there will be no trees planted at Highbury and a reduced number at Coleford playing field. Some fruit trees would be planted at the new allotments and some possibly at Beacon View.

A renewed funding application needs to be submitted to Somerset County Council for review to ensure that the grant offer will still stand. The Clerk will contact the fund coordinator to establish when the grant would be available to the Council if the amended application was to be successful.

The working party to meet to ensure that the revised application is ready to be submitted at the earliest opportunity.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

Action: Clerk to contact the land agent for extended lease and Somerset County Council to ask whether the grant would be paid up front or after the cost had been incurred.

15. Community Planning and Engagement Project

Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) have highlighted a new initiative to encourage all councils to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) by engaging with their communities.

Councils interested in developing a community plan or reviewing an existing one are being offered the opportunity to apply to work with the Smart Communities Team at the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) who are launching a new “Community Review” project. The Clerk will be attending the CCS free online information session on the 30th June to find out more about the process and hear from others who have already completed a plan.

The Clerk has also registered an expression of interest to be one of the 14 councils who will be selected to receive the full package of one-to-one support.

SALC will also be providing a programme of free training and events in the coming months on a range of topics: from creating a simple plan within our own council, through to training on social media, writing press releases and engaging with hard-to-reach groups.

16. Meetings to attend or attended

07/07/22 @ 7.30pm Doulling PC to discuss Local Community Networks and Unitary. Cllr Ham to attend.

17. Correspondence

1. A parent had been in touch to say that their child had accidentally broken a window at the Highbury playing field changing rooms and that they were prepared to pay for it to be repaired. The Clerk had sought a quote which had been passed on to the parent for payment

Action: Clerk to ensure payment is made and the window is repaired at the earliest opportunity.

2. 2 emails had been received from allotment holders at Goodeaves asking for the Council to provide a water supply. The Clerk had replied saying that a contractor had been selected to build the rainwater harvesting structure which it appreciated would not help with the current dry spell.

Action: Clerk to press the Contractor for a start date

3. An email had been received from a member of the public challenging the £900 spent on the large outdoor screen used as part of the Epsom Derby Platinum Jubilee event hosted by Coleford Revival Group at the Legion. This was funded by part of the Somerset County Council ‘Reconnecting communities’ grant intended to be used to encourage people to get out again post covid. The Clerk has already replied explaining that the screen had been rented and that the event had been well attended. The member of the public had written again to say that they felt that the grant money should have been used to purchase a screen/projector or to buy a commemorative bench. It was agreed that the Clerk would acknowledge the complaint and explain that the decision had been properly made and there was nothing that could be done at this stage to change it.

Action: Clerk to respond to the member of public

4. The Miners Welfare group had been in touch to offer silhouettes of miners free of charge to highlight the importance of mining to the village. Cllr Townsend met with Bryn Hawkins who has agreed to supply two, one to be placed at the entrance of Beacon View near to the Tommy and the second in the bottom corner of the Highbury playing field near to the sites of Mackintosh pit. They also offered the off cut of one of the silhouettes which could be fitted to the side of either the Church Hall or the Hub on Church Street – permission would need to be sought from the trustees of the Church Hall or the Hub prior to agreeing any installation. All Councillors supported these being installed at these locations.

Action: Cllr Townsend to progress the installation of the miner silhouettes

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

The Chair wished the Clerk good luck on her Bristol to Bordeaux cycling challenge which starts on the 6th July.

19. Date of Next Meetings:

There will be **NO** Parish Council meeting on the usual date of 13th July.

The next Parish Council meeting will be Wednesday 27th July 2022.

The meeting finished approx. 22.00hrs