

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 28th September 2022

The Chair asked for a moment of silent reflection to remember the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and for our new King Charles III

Present

CLlr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Banks, Bell, Evans, Pearce and Townsend.

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

1. Public Forum

1.1 Cllr Townsend attended Holy Trinity Church to witness the commissioning of the new Head of Bishop Henderson School, Mr Chris Lane.

1.2 Cllr Townsend had received a complaint regarding the trees on the school grounds which are overhanging the houses at Anchor Close. He has reported this to Somerset County Council for action.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Allen, Barrett, Drescher, Moulding, Paterson and West which were accepted by the Chair.

3 Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

4 Agree the minutes

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 10th August had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed that they accurately reflected the meeting and should be approved.

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to website

5 Actions from the minutes

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

5.1 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.

6 Co-option of Councillors

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

7 Reports

7.1 PCSO – No report had been received.

7.2 Somerset County Council – No report was given

7.3 Mendip District Council – Cllr Townsend and Ham provided the following report:

Planning

Gladman, Anchor Rd – Mendip have confirmed that they have heard nothing from a developer about the 8 Reserved matters which will need to be approved before work commences.

Leigh on Mendip – application at Quarry Lane for 40 dwellings – District Cllr Ham and Townsend plan to attend the Informal Appeal hearing on 4th October to support the Parish Council’s objections.

Stoke St Michael – the Informal Appeal hearing for the development of 40 houses along Coalpit Lane will be heard in November

Gypsy and Travellers – Mendip have lost their appeal against a site for 9 pitches at Emborough, The Inspector ruled that as Mendip have failed to allocate enough formal sites there are no grounds to refuse. A cross party proposal has been submitted to the Head of Planning to urge them to issue Certificates of Lawfulness to the dozens of acceptable sites already in existence around the district. This would immediately rectify the shortfall and remove the risk of random settlements being approved without defence.

Full Council

Monday evening’s meeting endorsed the Climate and Ecological Emergency Plan. It still envisages 31 x 450 ft high wind turbines in the district by 2030 with 10 in place by the end of 2023. There was concern that a change in policy on fracking could harm this “delicate and beautiful area” – no such concern was expressed about wind turbines. The Plan also envisages that freight emissions will be reduced by “10% increase in use of waterborne transport”.

There were three emergency motions. The first was to promote better public transport in Mendip with County support. The second was a requirement to amend planning procedures so that Wessex Water are required to address the impact of major developments on watercourses and treatment works. They were both passed despite multiple objections. The third sought to impose a vegan culture on our local agriculture – this was withdrawn at the last meeting without explanation.

Glastonbury – It was announced that the town has been successful in obtaining a Town Deal Grant from the Government of £23M to provide a facelift, improve its attractions and car free routes.

8 Planning Applications

2022/1825/HSE - Erection of 1.5 side extension and single-storey rear extension.

11 Tinkers Lane, Newbury, Frome, BA11 3RG

All Councillors had considered the planning application prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Banks and seconded by Cllr Evans that the application be approved.

Vote: 4 For; 0 Against and 2 Abstentions (District Councilors)

9 Planning updates including enforcement issue

The appeal decision on Springwater Farm is imminent. The enforcement team is now back up to full strength and will be investigating the unauthorized dwellings at Cherry Gardens.

The Parish Councils objections against the Upper Vobster Farm have been submitted.

10 Unitary update

1. Complete the survey from the Mendip Rural Parishes liaison Group – It was agreed that working along side other rural parishes would make sense. Cllr Ham would be attending the meeting of the rural parishes at Doultling village hall on 29th September where this would be discussed and will report back at the next meeting.
2. Review of the Local Community Networks Consultation (Ends 18th October 2022) - All Councilors were encouraged to consider the new Council's website <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/> which includes information about the Local Community Networks, the pilot schemes that are running and the consultation. The consultation closes on the 17th October.

Action: Agenda item for October

The City, Town and Parish Conference (in person) will take place on the 4th October from 9.30am and 4pm at Westlands, Yeovil, BA20 2DD. All Councilors were encouraged to attend.

11 Proposal to approve and sign the agreement for the Community Review Project, to select a lead contact and discuss ideas for establishing the Steering Group

The Clerk explained that Coleford Parish Council had been selected to complete the Community Review Project with the support of the staff from Smart Communities team. Clls Bell, Moulding and Paterson have all agreed to be part of the steering group with Cllr Ham attending when possible. Volunteers from the parish have been forthcoming and the first meeting has been set for Monday 3rd October when the Steering Group Terms of Reference will need to be signed, logo selected and marketing plan agreed.

All Councilors agreed that the Terms of reference were appropriate. It was noted that the Steering Group would not make decisions but would make recommendations to the Council.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

12 Highways including:

1. Councillor update – Cllr Townsend confirmed that the work at Stoke Bottom has been completed but it won't be known whether it has been successful until it rains.
2. Update on SIDS & Speed watch – The Clerk to progress.

Action: Clerk to progress

3. Report of any new issues to be reported:
 - a) Erosion at the side of the carriageway on Charmborough Lane
 - b) Road surface has deteriorated from Coleford to Vobster. Cllr Townsend to investigate.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report

A draft response to the letter received on 22nd August 2022 from Michele Cussack of Somerset Highways had been circulated to all Councilors. It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Bell that the letter should be sent

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to send the letter

13 Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation – Cllr Banks will check the reconciliation at the end of the meeting.

2. Approve accounts for Highbury Playing Fields year ending 31/03/22 – The Clerk had presented the year end accounts to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Bell that the accounts should be approved so that they can be uploaded to the Charity commission website.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to send the letter

3. Review quotes for tree work at Orchard Close / Coleford PF & Highbury PF – The Clerk presented the updated quote from JK Services and Isaac Gregory Tree Services and after consideration it was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Townsend that the quote from Isaac Gregory which totalled £3740 should be accepted and the work carried out at the next available point by the contractor.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to instruct the contractor

The Clerk explained that a branch had fallen from a tree located on Parish Council land to the rear of Orchard Close into a garden. Although there was no physical damage to property a newly planted flower bed had been destroyed.

A contractor was instructed to remove the fallen branch at the earliest opportunity and quotes sought to have the remaining tree removed. The Clerk and Cllr Ham considered the three quotes received as a matter of urgency, which ranged from £550 to £3K. Isaac Gregory quoted £550 and was able to complete the work earlier than the other contractors so were instructed to complete the work as soon as possible to remove the risk. The works were carried out promptly.

The resident had provided evidence showing the value of the damaged plants which it was felt should be paid to replace them. All agreed that this would be the right thing to do. The cheque would be included in the payments later in the meeting.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

4. Review of ongoing charge for grass cutting contract due to increased fuel charges
In light of the current fuel prices, it was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Pearce that the inflated charge of £1038.13 per month should be paid for the remains of the season and further discussed at the time of agreeing the budget for the coming financial year.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to set up the direct debit.

5. Items for inclusion in the budget 2023/24 (E.g., Notice board repair/replacement)
The Clerk said that the process of setting the budget for the coming financial year should start in November. It was suggested that the Finance working party get together to discuss requirements for the coming year and for the longer-term plans and what finances might be needed.

Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting in November of the Finance working party

6. Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC - National Insurance (August)	£ 19.34
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V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 53.45
Debbie Reynolds – Plants	£ 65.97
SALC & NALC - Annual affiliation	£621.27
SALC - Councilor training x 2	£ 55.00
Western Web – Email	£180.00
Western Web – Website deposit	£180.00
Western Web – Domain name for 2 years	£ 30.00
Isaac Gregory – Tree removal at Orchard Close	£550.00
PKF Littlejohn – External Audit	£360.00
LSJ Gardening –Branch removal at Orchard Close	£ 80.00

It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Ham that the payments should be made.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

14 Launch of the Small Grants 2022 – deadline for applications 1st November 2022

The Clerk has placed posters promoting the grants on the village notice boards, social media and the website. Councillors to spread the word to village groups and organisations that might benefit. The total available will be £2500. The working party will meet on Tuesday 8th November and give their recommendations to full council for decision on Wednesday 9th November.

Action: Working party to meet on 08/10/22 – Agenda item for October

15 Update on the Allotments including signing the funding agreement

The Clerk confirmed that the revised Climate emergency grant application has now been approved and the funding agreement had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Townsend that the funding agreement should be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: The Clerk to return the signed acceptance

The land agent has confirmed that the legal fees to produce the lease agreement would be in the region of £1200. The Council would need to seek legal advice to review the agreement prior to signing. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Townsend that the Clerk would request that the lease for the land be written by the land agent.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: The Clerk to notify the land agent to progress with the lease.

A zoom meeting has been arranged for the working party to speak with Allan Cavill of the National Allotment Society on Wednesday 5th October at 11am to discuss the project and the best way to progress. It is then intended that there will be a further working party meeting on the 19th October at 7.30pm at the Hub.

The Council has been approached by an allotment tenant requesting that an Ash tree which is in the boundary of the plot adjacent to the Coleford Playing field, be cut down as it has die back.

Having sought legal guidance -it was agreed that an expert Arborist be instructed to report back on the health of the tree.

Action: The Clerk to seek quotes for an Arborist to complete tree review.

16 Discuss & agree whether to purchase and plant an oak tree to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee

In the spring it was agreed in principle that an oak tree should be planted to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee. It was noted that there was £597 remaining from the Jubilee fund which could be used and the tree could be planted next to the footpath, on land adjacent to the oak tree planted for King George VI After discussion it was agreed Cllr Ham would get quotes for 2 trees. 1 to mark the platinum jubilee and another to mark the appointment of King Charles III

Action: Cllr Ham to seek quotes

17 Discuss and consider future of land to the rear of Orchard Close

It was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for October meeting

18 Consider whether to declare a Climate emergency and make a plan on how to address it

It was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for October meeting

19 Playing Fields and Play Equipment

1. Review of the Annual playground inspection 2022 including

It was noted that the report showed that apart from some minor issues the play areas are in good order. Cllr Banks said that he would inspect the loose fittings at Goodeaves which had resulted from the prolonged dry spell and tighten them if possible.

The report did highlight that the hardcourts fencing was a medium risk which would only deteriorate further with time. This would be discussed later in the meeting.

Action: Cllr Banks to tighten fittings.

2. Consider quote to tighten bolts & replace where required at Goodeaves play trail

Covered above.

3. Discuss request from Coleford Collective to purchase a table tennis table for the parish

After considering information including a quote received from a member of the public, it was agreed that this would not be progressed during this financial year due to budget restrictions. The proposal could be considered as part of the Community Review later this year to establish whether there is an appetite for this within the community.

Action: Clerk to notify the member of the public of the decision and raise at the Community Review Steering group meeting

4. Update and discussion on the renovation of the hardcourt and proposed 3G – Agree any action to reduce risk.

The Clerk had spoken to the working party who had worked hard on the application to secure the MDC Community Grant for the renovation of the hardcourts in hope that a 3G style facility could be installed.

Since the news that Pennys may be able to level the playing field, the working party agreed that the pitch was more urgent and therefore the commitment to fund raise and seek grants to make the 3G project come to fruition was no longer the main priority. They agreed that the Council should progress using the grant to make it a safe space for the community.

The Clerk had spoken with the Grant Officer and asked if the grant could be used for a basic renovation comprising of a new fence with integral goal and basketball hoop. With further funding, subsequent improvements could follow including cleaning and treating the surface, remarking the courts/pitch, new tennis nets and netball hoops could be purchased and a remote managing system installed to ensure the equipment stays safe.

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Pearce that the renovation should take place if the grant could be used in this way.

Action: Clerk to establish if funds can be used for renovation and seek quotes to progress

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

A Penny's representative has confirmed that the engineer reports have been completed and is progressing. A letter has been sent seeking clarification over what costs need to be paid by the Council and at what stage. It is the understanding of the Council that any costs paid would be reimbursed upon completion of the levelling but this needs to be confirmed in writing.

Action: Clerk to establish funding situation with Pennys

6. Discuss taking on ownership of the CRG Container

Due to the Coleford Revival Group disbanding Cllr Ham has been approached and asked if the Parish Council would like to take on the container located next to the pump track at Highbury playing field, to keep it as a village asset. It is currently used for storage of the CRG kit (which would be removed) and by the Physical Training group that meet on the field. After discussion it was proposed that the Council should take on the ownership and that Cllr Ham, Cllr Pearce and the Clerk should oversee the transfer.

Vote: 6 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk, Cllr Ham and Cllr Pearce to oversee the transfer

7. Consider quotes to repair the Youth Shelter at Highbury Playing Field

The youth shelter has aged which has resulted in the pop rivets becoming weak and the sheets of metal becoming loose (exuberant young people have helped with the process) which now need attention. After discussion, Cllr Ham will investigate whether sheets of rubber conveyor belts could be used instead of metal to create a durable long-lasting solution at a low cost.

Action: Cllr Ham to investigate supply of conveyor belt

20 Discuss and approve 2 x Memorial applications

The Clerk presented 2 memorial applications from Curtis Illot (Phillips) and Exclusive Memorials (Morrow) both of which were approved by the Council.

Action: Clerk to notify the applicant.

21 Discuss whether to create an emergency plan for Coleford

Due to time restraints, it was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for October meeting

- 22 Discuss how to protect items from Coleford Industrial Heritage**
Due to time restraints, it was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for October meeting

23 Meetings to attend or attended

27/09/22 @ 7pm @ Doulling VH for Unitary discussion. Cllr Ham to attend
03/10/22 @ 7pm @ The Hub Community Review Steering Group meeting
04/10/22 @ Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil. T&PC Conference
05/10/22 @ 11am on Zoom Allotment meeting for working party
13/10/22 @ 18.30 on Teams Parish Forum Climate & Ecological Meeting
20/10/22 am & pm Site visit to Somerset Wildlife Trusts Honeygar Reserve
05/11/22 10am – 4.30pm SCOP II Climate Conference at Edgar Hall, Somerton
Various SALC training dates shared to all Councillors

24 Correspondence

CPRE magazine – Passed to Cllr Townsend
Allotment Society magazine – Passed to Cllr Pearce
Clerks and Councils Direct – Clerk to read
MDC Council Tax reduction scheme consultation – No action required
PKF Littlejohn – Confirmation of Conclusion of Audit 2021/22 with no matters raised. – Clerk to display required notices on the website and notice boards
Letter from Chair of Somerset CC looking for volunteers to join a committee to plan Somerset Day – No volunteers were forthcoming.

25 Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

There were no points raised.

26 Date of Next Meetings:

12th October 2022 for Parish Council meeting

The meeting finished approx. 22.30hrs