

Parish Council of Coleford

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Annual Parish Meeting held Wednesday 25th May 2022

1. Present

Cllr Philip Ham (Chairman presiding)

There were 16 members of the public present and the Parish Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes.

2. Apologies Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

There were none.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting 21st July 2021

The minutes were produced and had been circulated and on the website for review. There were agreed as an accurate copy and agreed that they should be by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's report

Cllr Ham reported that we resumed face to face meetings after a year ago after a long period of doing our business via zoom. We have had 21 meetings during the year with good debate and decisions consequently being made by a vote. We at present have 11 councillors with 2 vacancies. Last month Amy West joined the council to replace longstanding Cllr Colin Turner who had been very valuable to us over what we believe to be nearly 40 years. His local knowledge was commended or you will be missed but we must thank you for all his dedicated service that he is given to the community. It's also good to see Paul Bell and Annie Paterson getting involved during the year as new councillors.

Planning - The Gladman application off anchor road dominated the year. It was refused twice by the council then twice by the planning board at Mendip district council but in the end overturned by the planning inspector at appeal. We employed outside consultants and produced hundreds of pages of documents. We continue to challenge the planning conditions especially Somerset highways and sewage disposal. We also looked at many other applications during the year of which only 20 per cent were dealt with in time by the planning office. We also have several enforcement issues advise at the moment but due to GDPR roles they are unable to discuss once the complaint is live which is not helpful. Planning applications are not contentious, the planning likes its own set of rules which we have to observe at all times. I'd like to thank Alan Townsend for all his effort time and attention to detail on all our planning issues are especially on the Gladman application working with our consultant myself at all the meetings and the appeal. You could not have done more thank-you Alan.

Finance – Fighting Gladman was expensive for the council and money spent was far more than we have budgeted for. However, with prudent management savings where possible and a lot of hard work only a small amount of reserves were used to balance the books.

This year's budget is sound and with close monitoring by Vickie the clerk we will be able to serve the community through the next 12 months and keeping our reserves in place.

During the year we have awarded grants to many organizations. I must thank Cllr Banks for chairing the grants committee. We have again supported the Coleford youth club, the Scouts and other organisations some with monetary grants but others with technical and clerical help.

Traffic, parking and speeding – We are trying to get speed reduced in the village to 20 mph, permanent no parking outside the Co-op at the Church Street / Highbury Street junction. To stop bad parking on all junctions, on the bend at Underhill and for other dangerous areas. We are also looking at ways to best serve HGV's users by any only allowing certain routes. This is complicated and will need to consult during the year with parishioners before any decision can be made.

Environment – we started last year with a disaster as our grass cutting contractor lost a member of his team and was very unwell with covid. Jamie of LSJ Gardening services was the only person to take the job on at short notice stepped up and got us back on track. He was awarded the contracts and is doing a very good, professional job for our village. We have organized litter picks and also have litter champions who continue to regularly pick throughout the year. We maintain litter bins, dog waste bins and grit bins, benches, footpaths, graffiti removal etc. Cllr Evans does a super job in collating all the activities for the community payback team. The small things help our village to be what it is. Please support the litter pick this weekend, 'Clean for the Queen'

Other issues this year:

Local plan at Mendip – This does not protect villages like Coleford and no effort has been made to correct this quickly.

Unitary Council for Somerset - The election has taken place and the new council start 01/04/23 when all of the District councils and the Somerset council will stand as one. There have been 110 councillors elected to stand until 01/05/27.

Platinum Jubilee celebrations - This will take place in the 1st – 5th June 2022 and the parish council has been part of the group that has been putting together events to be held in Coleford.

The future:

We have been successful in a grant for more allotments. Our original site was not deemed appropriate to the parishioners. However, we believe we now have a site and this project hopefully will move forward in the coming months.

We have also obtained grants to improve the hard-court area at Highbury playing field. We have a sub-committee working on this and also improvements to the football pitch, which will be developed during the year. Councillors Pearce, Allen and Drescher have all been involved in these two projects and I'd like to thank them for their efforts.

With other things going on its going to be a busy year, difficult with the cost-of-living challenges and the effects of the Ukrainian war with Russia.

Before I end, I wish to thank all councillors for all of the work over the last 12 months, everyone has contributed and come up trumps to help us do the job we enjoy. Finally, I must thank Vickie are clerk for the brilliant work throughout the year from agendas, minutes, newsletters, play inspections, letter writing, meeting people, working with our contractors, keeping our financial records perfect.

Vickie, we know things have been difficult lately, but your strength will get you through and your pending bike ride of 125 miles for four consecutive days in Neils memory is a huge challenge for you but you will do. Please consider sponsoring Vickie for Neils charity. Thank you, Vickie,

6. Mendip District Council Report

District Cllr Townsend reported

Three main items to report for the year:

Unitary – The Secretary of State confirmed that it was the Government's wish for the 4 Districts and the County Council to be merged into one unitary authority, the New Somerset Council. He was not persuaded that the rival proposal for 2 separate unitaries, East and West Somerset, should proceed. The result of the election held on 5th May was:

Lib Dem 61
Conservative 36
Greens 5
Labour 5
Independent 3

The Councillors elected for our Mendip Central and East Ward are Philip Ham, and Barry Clarke from Doulting, both Conservatives. The first point of interest for us will be to establish bodies such as Local Community Networks at a working level beneath Full Council. Frome has taken a leading role as a pilot scheme. There are those who consider them to be too Frome-centric and believe a more rural Network would better serve our interests. Meanwhile Cllrs Ham and Townsend will remain as Ward Councillors for Mendip DC until it is dissolved on 31-3-23.

Covid – There has been considerable diversion of resource, firstly to support the Vaccination Centre at Shape Mendip, and secondly the administration of over £60M of central government funded Covid support grants. A long period of hybrid working has not helped working efficiency.

And most important to us here was Planning – The new Local Development Plan Part 2 was formally adopted by Mendip's Full Council in December 2021. It does not show a forward 5-year supply of housing land as Mendip failed to respond to the Government increasing the target numbers to combat the housing shortage. As a result, sites outside village development limits are vulnerable to speculative applications as we have experienced with the Gladman site on Anchor Rd. Despite massive efforts from residents, the Parish Council and Ward Members the Planning Inspector decided at appeal that objectors could not prove that significant and demonstrable harm would result. The barrister employed by the Parish Council could find no legal reason to contest the decision though he did agree that many of the judgements were very subjective. As Ward Members we felt let down throughout the process by Mendip, whose planners supported the application, and by County Highways who concluded there were no significant highways issues despite safety fears being expressed by over 80% of the 300 plus objectors. It is no consolation to us that a similar site by the White Post has just been approved at appeal. Mendip have no plan in place to rectify the 5-year housing land supply shortfall. Mendip also suffer from the banning of developments that could discharge nitrates and phosphates into environmentally sensitive wetlands on the Levels, putting further pressure to develop sites in the north- east of the district.

7. Somerset County Council report

County Cllr Philip Ham reported that the last five years have been a real experience. From a difficult financial state in 2017 we were close to a 141 Order from Central Government. Five years later we have approximately 90million in reserves and have been through two of the worst years in history with Covid 19. Somerset County Council staff were outstanding in the areas of adult social care, children's services and education, many swapping jobs to help the community to survive. It was agreed through parliamentary process that Somerset would become a Unitary council and two weeks ago the last County council election took place, with the elected forming the new unitary council in April 2023. Myself and Barry Clarke (from Doulling) were elected as the councillors for this area. A total of 110 councillors were elected. We had our first for a council meeting today and the work meant begins to merge five councils into one. I will update the parish council as things develop.

8. Coleford Youth Club

Mark Wilcox attended the meeting and reported that there were a total of 313 attendances at Coleford youth club with 26 young people regular members of the youth club.

Young People's Involvement:

- We were recently given some funding towards equipment. We consulted with young people in regards to what equipment and activities they would like, which we then purchased
- We have also consulted young people in terms of workshops, activities & our programme delivery. Young people selected what workshops & sessions they would like for this quarter
- Young people are regularly consulted regarding the tuck shop we provide
- Young people have participated positively in a range of activities weekly, including issue-based activities, cooking, sports, crafts and team games
- We have consulted with young people regarding the youth club delivery which included the running of the session's, activities and support we provide.
- Young people have been invited to our programme planning session after the Easter Half Term.
- Young people have had an input on the activity sessions and programme planning.
- Young people have been consulted in feedback regarding the sessions.
- Young people were consulted regarding changing the youth club session from a Tuesday to a Thursday evening.
- One of the older youth club members, has asked to become a peer leader when the club reopens and a young volunteer to help run the activities within the session which we are now working towards with them.
- Young people are continuously consulted regarding the delivery of our sessions and service.
- As we have been running the sessions outside, are planning has been slightly different and at times limited due to not having access to a building. However, young people are consulted weekly on what they would like to do the following sessions and what activities they would like to try. 09
- We have also consulted young people regarding programme planning and the activities they would like to see at the youth club when we are able to return. We do this weekly.
- Young people have discussed various fundraising ideas with us to raise money for youth club equipment and activities for when we can return to the club. This is an upcoming project they would like to do as a group. • We have also started to consult with young people regarding a potential community Project for Christmas.
- Prior to re-opening the club, we consulted young people through the weekly activity sessions at the park and young people of Coleford through detached youth work. We also had a specific session for programme planning with young people and we listened to what they have asked for by incorporating it into their programme.
- Young people were consulted on their Christmas party and took a lead in organising the event from the activities, clothing attire and food etc.
- The club is newly re-opened and developing. We will meet to programme plan for the next quarter, inviting young people along to share their ideas and suggestions.

Some of the activities delivered in the sessions & detached youth work:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Covid Advice and guidance
- Welfare check's
- Anti-social behaviour and the community
- Emotional health/mental health
- School support
- Careers
- Peer Leaders
- Signposting
- Community- Anti social behaviour
- Personal safety
- Environment- Recycling
- Healthy Relationships
- Healthy Friendships
- Healthy Eating
- Debates
- Celebrating Chinese New Year (culture)
- LGBTQ+
- Equality & Diversity
- Transition to Secondary School & Emotional support around this
- Community- Following damage to the new shelter for young people, we discussed this as a group and the impact that had.
- Young people did inform us of who was responsible for this. Various young people did show their frustrations with this and many said if they were to witness someone or a friend damaging property, they would ask them to stop or report to parents. We discussed the importance of looking after our community and how this was installed to benefit young people and the possibility of it being removed if it continued to be damaged.
- Fundraising Ideas
- Community Project
- Healthy Lifestyle- Sports and Team Games
- Team games/team building • Cooking
- Variety of craft activities
- Variety of sport activities
- Themed nights
- Taiko Drumming Workshop (external provider)

Priorities:

- Continuing to develop the club
- Art project with Somerset Art Works
- Fundraising event/project to raise funds for equipment/resources
- Increase young people's participation opportunities
- Young people's consultation
- Drugs Awareness- SDAS to attend the youth club and deliver sessions
- 2BU- to attend the youth club and deliver LGBTQ+ workshop. 1:1 support also to be provided for those who identify as a part of the LGBTQ+
- Be Internet Citizens- online safety workshops to be delivered (3 sessions in Coleford)- Certificated workshop for young people
- Link with other local services and organisations to attend the youth club, to further young people's opportunities and to support their individual needs
- PSCOS/local beat team to visit for positive interaction session
- Recruitment of volunteers & Relief youth workers
- Look into funding to support a day trip or residential for young people as this is not only something they would benefit from but have requested.
- Now we have a consistent group and attendance, we would like to develop a youth steering group.
- Community projects- supporting young people to feel more involved and a part of their community. To support young people to re-connect with their community.
- Continue to develop the club as we increase in members and to support the new members to transition
- Partnership work to provide an Arts project- now we have secured funding for this.
- To bring in specialist services and organisations to support young people with key issues such as mental health, drugs and alcohol etc.
- To create and deliver a programme designed by young people, to support their personal development and meet their needs.
- Promotion of the club & recruitment of new members
- To support young people, offering information, advice and guidance and signposting them to other services accordingly.

- To provide young people with the opportunity to have a say and feedback about our service delivery and how we can improve.

Case Study:

We have been supporting a new member who has recently joined the youth club. This young person left school a year ago and isn't currently in employment or education. This young person has been struggling with their mental health, impacted by isolation and not accessing opportunities. This young person has been struggling both socially and emotionally. Not only have we been supporting with this during the club sessions, but have signposted them to other services. We have been developing and building a trusted relationship with this young person, and have explored their interests and goals. From this, we have identified an interest in animal care and that they would like to attend a college. This young person needs support with applying for courses and finding a suitable college which we will be assisting with. Alongside this, we will continue to support around their mental health and social anxieties, to help with their transition back into education. We are also exploring local opportunities for them to access & to help support their health and wellbeing.

Again, we would like to thank Coleford PC and the Coleford Hub Management committee for their generous support and commitment in supporting local young people and YMCA Coleford youth club.

9. PCSO Report

No report was received.

10. Holy Trinity Church

At the start of the Church year, we were still grappling with the pandemic and our services were on zoom, which were excellent and we all know Clarissa put so much work into them. On the 4th April we held our first service in church socially distanced and no hymns although we all gathered outside after the service to sing what would have been the final hymn of the service.

Our AGM was held on the 2nd May and at this time still quite a few services and activities were held on zoom. On the 2nd July we held our first coffee morning to start raising funds again, and we raised £308.00 on that first occasion and everyone was really pleased to sit and chat after the period of isolation.

In October we were informed that the benefice was changing and that Kilmersdon would be joining Coleford and Holcombe, changes have been made and when there is a fifth Sunday in the month there is a joint service at one of the 3 churches. Various social events are now carried out between the 3 churches. Babington is also included in this benefice as this was part of Kilmersdon.

The Jenny Peplow concert held on the 26th November at Holy Trinity was a great success and raised £505.00.

The choir vestry was cleared of any oddments and a general tidy up completed. The gutters were cleared of debris as part of the annual maintenance. After our Quinquennial report it was decided that we would need to repair all the guttering, as during rainy periods the rain is running down the walls, unfortunately in more places than the report indicated. Quotes have now been obtained and we are now waiting to put it forward for a faculty.

During February the World Day of Prayer rehearsals took place with the service on the 4th March which was a great success mainly due to Gay, lots of thanks to her.

Lent courses started on the 8th March and went on to the 12th April.

The Lent lunches held at Coleford and Holcombe went from 11th March to the 22nd April. Coleford's charity this year was Julian house. We will continue to do the coffee mornings until the end of July and have a break for August and part of September. Coleford had a stall at the Holcombe gift day on the 14th May 2022 and raised £45.00

There will be a themed coffee morning for the Queen's jubilee on Friday 3rd June 2022.

11. @ The Hub

Cllr Ham reported that the hub is recovering after the covid pandemic. They are very proud of Dagmar (Dagaroo), Debbie Dando (Foodbank) and Mike Plypler (Post office) in doing their best during those dark days and keeping the hub active for the community. We continue to provide services for the community including the youth club, the community talking Café, hiring the hall to village groups and last year had a school for three days a week. During last year, after years of negotiations we have now got a 50-year maintenance lease. This means we can get grants easier to improve the premises like new flooring in the store room, new double-glazed windows, new led lighting, repairs to the perimeter wall, new barge boards and guttering and new surface in the car park. We would like to thank the parish council for their support and for using the hall for all of their meetings last year.

12. Armchair Movement

Mary Pearce reported that 'Armchair Movement' group meets at Douglas Yates Court. This originates from Japan and is the training of body and mind and is suitable for older people. More people need to attend and is hoped that the surgery will be able to highlight this to patients that could benefit.

13. Coleford Methodists

Mary Pearce reported that they have two meetings in Douglas Yates Court, one every other week on Tuesday afternoons, Tuesday Guild, and one on two Sundays a month, Sunday Service. Things are finally getting back to normal. Tuesday Guild was suspended during January and February of this year, then we had to cancel one meeting in March as there was covid in Douglas Yates Court. But now all should be 'plain sailing' for the rest of the year.

This is our programme for the rest of the year:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| April 12 th Karen Rawles | 26 th . Gwyneth Phillips |
| May 10 th Jim Short.** | 24 th Jackie James |
| June 7 th . Shirley Smith | 21 st . Trish Mugeridge |
| July 5 th . Rev. Den | 19 th Christmas in July |
| Aug. 2 nd . Gill Redmond | Peter and Dawn Foster |
| 30 th . Miriam and Chris Hare.** | |
| Sept. 6 th . ???? | 20 th . Karen Rawles |
| Oct. 4 th . Anna Auty | 18 th . Steve Derby |
| Nov. 1 st . Rev. Nigel Beardsley | 15 th .Rev. Margaret Crawshaw. ** |
| 29 th . Jacqueline Beardsley.** | |
| Dec. 13 th . ???? | |

** Charities.

Many thanks must go to Somerset Mendip Circuit for speakers, as well as Frome Wesley and other friends. We have around ten who attend most meetings, and a few others who no longer attend, but we keep in touch with. We had intended to have several trips out in the summer as we have had before, to Pilton and Rode Churches, but we suddenly had lots of speakers, and transport is becoming a problem now that few of us drive any more. We cordially invite all to join us.

Sunday Services. I was a little confused over Sunday Services. I thought that we had a shortage of ministers, maybe we do. Also, I can never predict how big the congregation will be. But we have a need for services in the village as there is no bus service at the weekend. So, I hatched a plan to use zoom services. This would give us the flexibility that we needed.

But after talking with Rev. Den, I have decided that for the time being we will have two services a month as usual. This will serve the community but be less hassle for me. So, we will continue with our light lunch at 12.30 for 1.00 followed by a service starting at 2.00. Again, all welcome.

14. Knit & Natter

We as a group of Villagers and Residents of DYC started meeting again in DYC Community Room in the last quarter of last year (2021). We are primarily a Social Group, who share and if required pass on our hobby to others.

We have 8 faithful members, 1 housebound member who knits at home, and past members who pop in when they can for a cuppa and a chat.

Although I organise the group, we all have a say as to how it is run. We have experienced knitters, and members who also crochet. Amongst our members we have a 92 yr old who knits hats for her daughter-in-law who works in a premature baby unit. Also, a lady who joined us just after lockdown who had never knitted before, and with the help and patience of two of our members is now knitting lap blankets and hats!

We were very grateful for The Grant we received from the Parish Council. We managed to purchase 2 batches of yarn and stock up our Coffee, Tea, and Sugar. This gave us a good start as our cupboard was bare. So far, from that yarn we have donated hats, scarfs, gloves, and ear-warmers to Julian House, baby hats to the Gospel Hall, and we have a batch of lap blankets to donate to Critchill Court, and some little blankets to donate to Happy Landings animal shelter in Shepton, and we still have yarn left over.

15. Coleford Theatre Group

Catherine Billing attended the meeting and reported as follows:

We started up again at the beginning of the year and were pleased to welcome some new faces, including some younger ones, alongside our long-standing members.

We initially had hopes of putting on an evening of entertainment to include a murder mystery and kids pantomime around May time. However, we were plagued with COVID cases and so that meant the idea had to be shelved...hopefully for another time in the future.

By March we had decided on a Panto - Alice in Wonderland - for our main show in November. Scripts were purchased, auditions held and cast selected. Our director Vicky has begun to take us through our paces, a start has been made on the design of the stage set, costumes are being organised and now it is full steam ahead to November 23rd, oh yes it is!!!!

16. Coleford Athletic Football Club

Darren Willis attended the meeting and reported that the adult team have had a great year and are currently standing at 3rd in the league. There are currently 4 youth teams with another team starting next season for 5yr olds which is providing fitness and fun on the football field for approx. 70 kids.

The hardcourts are in need of renovation. The CAFC teams are using all weather surfaces in Midsomer Norton for training and Leigh on Mendip for matches.

Thanks were given to the Parish Council for their support over the year.

17. Coleford Revival Group

The group are undecided on how to progress. They held a scaled down music event with a Beatles tribute act, and the at Christmas, Pensioners had the option of a meal or a hamper all of which was funded by donations or grants. There will be jubilee celebrations held at the Legion. Village day/Music Day will be combined and a Queen Tribute act has been booked and hopefully a fun fair.

Finances are reasonable but they will be fundraising for future events. More members are required. Thanks were given to the Parish Council for their support over the year.

18. Coleford flower and craft show

Emily Ham submitted the following report: This year show will be on Saturday, the 28th of August, 2022 at the Royal British Legion. This will be the 122nd show having missed the last two due to Covid 19. Schedules are now available and sponsors are being sought to support show. Many of these shows have failed in recent years but we are vibrant and extremely thankful to all that are helping us to put on the 122nd show. The schedules are free and have classes to suit all ages and many different sections. There are monetary prizes and over 50 cups to be won. This year we are also doing cream teas and ice cream for the platinum jubilee at The Hub next Thursday on the 2nd of June. We would also like to thank the parish council for their support over the years

19. Thursday Café at the Court

Mary Pearce reported that Malcolm Hall is taken over the running of the group which currently has 15 – 20 people attending.

Signed by the Chair of the 2023 Annual Parish meeting: _____

Held on 22nd March 2023