

Parish Council of Coleford

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 10th April 2024

Present Cllr Ham, (Chairman presiding) Allen, Evans, Moulding and Townsend

In attendance 2 members of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

- 1.1 Mr Joe Pearce of J F Pearce & Sons Haulage and Mr Brian Davies of Stowell's Concrete attended the meeting and highlighted that the temporary weight restrictions implemented at centre of Stoke St Michael were impacting both financially and environmentally due to the diversion, which increases the journey from 3 miles to 9 and puts more pressure on other neighbouring villages. Mr Davis explained that business had been quiet for the first quarter of this year but if it picks up it will be more noticeable for those living in neighbouring villages.

They had attended a Stoke St Michael Parish Council meeting and it was apparent that Councillors would like to see the restriction made permanent, however they have agreed to put that on hold for the time being.

Mr Davis and Mr Pearce were keen to ensure that all of the neighbouring parishes were aware of the issue and how it will impact on their village if the permanent weight restriction is implemented.

- 1.2 It was reported that the hedge which borders the footpath next to the Highbury car park needs to be cut back.

Action: Clerk to write to the land owner and the Somerset Council requesting it be cut.

- 1.3 There is a VW van without tax parked in the Orchard Close parking bays.

Action: Clerk to request that it be removed

- 1.4 Cllr Townsend said that he had been invited to join the Holcombe planning development group which held its first meeting this week. As part of the discussion, it was agreed that representative would be invited from Coleford and Stoke St Michael Parish Councils.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting 'Decide on whether Coleford Parish Council would like to be involved'

- 1.5 The rail at the bottom corner of the playing field has been broken. Clerk to seek quotes to repair.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

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

Cllr Barrett, Bell, Drescher, Douglas-Burke, Pearce, Paterson and West had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

Cllr Allen declared an interest in Agenda item 12.4 payments.

4. Approve the minutes from the meeting held on 13th March 2024

The Clerk had circulated the minutes to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Townsend that the minutes accurately reflected the meetings and should be sign by the Chair.

Vote 5 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to the website

5. Actions arising from the minutes

All actions had been completed or would feature later in the agenda apart from:

- 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

- It was agreed that developing the emergency plan would be put on hold until later in the year.
- Cllr Allen has sought specification and quotes to improve the footpath between Mendip Vale and Farley Dell.

Action: Agenda item once the information has been received

- The Clerk confirmed that the memorial inspection was due to be completed which would be an opportunity to undertake a thorough inspections of the cemetery. The Clerk will agree a date for the working party to meet and conduct the inspection.

Action: Agenda item for a future meeting.

- **Review Cemetery rules**

Clerk to complete the review after the inspection has been completed.

Action: Agenda item for a future meeting

- **Discuss prospect of having a Christmas Tree for December 2024**

The Clerk has sent a letter and email to the management team at the Royal British Legion asking if they might be receptive to having a temporary Christmas Tree located on the lawn outside the building.

Action: Cllr Allen to provide a different email address to resend the letter to RBL and source lights for the appropriately sized tree.

- The Clerk confirmed that the grit bin at Careys Mead had been damaged. No further action at this point

- Update on Coleford allotments

It was agreed that a working party meeting was required to discuss the installation of further water stations, water supply for the orchard and to review whether there are other issues that need to be addressed.

Action: Clerk to liaise with working party suitable date to meet

6. Reports

6.1 Somerset Council - Somerset Councillors Philip Ham and Barry Clarke circulated the following report:

Mendip local plan consultation: Following a High Court Order to make amendments to the Mendip Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) Somerset Council is undertaking a formal consultation to review and reconsider housing sites for at least 505 dwellings in the Mendip area. The consultation runs until 12 April 2024 and as the Council is making changes to a development plan, proposed sites are subject to formal consultation before submission for public examination. The consultation only makes proposals in the former Mendip District (Somerset East) area and is intended to ensure that views of statutory consultees, communities and other stakeholders are captured and considered. More information can be accessed at <https://sومersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/mendip-local-plan-part-ii-limited-update-reg-18/>

Somerset Road Safety: Tragically, 30 people died while travelling on Somerset's roads in 2023 – nearly 43 per cent up on the figure for 2022 and the highest number of fatalities in 10 years. According to Avon and Somerset Police 76 per cent of the collisions involve one or more of the following five behaviours: Intoxicated driving, (drink or drugs); Careless or inconsiderate driving; Excessive Speed; Mobile phone use or distraction or failing to wear a seatbelt. Of the 30 fatal casualties, 11 were car drivers, 12 motorcyclists, four were car passengers, and three were pedestrians.

Britain in Bloom: Established by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), the Britain in Bloom initiative celebrates the best of community gardening. This year Yeovil in Bloom is a finalist of the Large Town category, after winning gold in the St Bridget Cup at the South West in Bloom Awards 2023. Glastonbury in Bloom is a finalist of the Town category, following their success at winning gold in the Preece Cup in last year's regional awards and Cannington in Bloom is a finalist of the Large Village category, following their win of the Cox Cup in the 2023 regional awards.

New electric buses: Twenty-five new electric buses are being funded by a £2.2 million grant from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Zero Emission Bus Regional Area scheme, along with a further £12.5million investment from Buses of Somerset. The electric buses will replace part of the current diesel fleet operating out of Hamilton Road depot and service the following routes 28 – Taunton to Minehead; 21 – Taunton to Bridgwater; 22 – Taunton to Wellington; 1 – Taunton Town Service and 2 – Taunton Town Service

Voter registration: Residents are being urged to register to vote and check their Voter ID so they can have their say on who represents them in the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner election. The deadline to register to vote is midnight on Tuesday 16 April. It takes just a few minutes to apply online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm Wednesday 17 April.

Purple chair scheme: Purple chairs are being installed in Somerset's libraries in Bridgwater, Chard, Frome, Glastonbury, Taunton, Williton and Yeovil to provide a safe space for women and girls to get information about health and wellbeing, as well as support and resources available to them including: Antenatal and postnatal care, breast cancer support, domestic abuse support, cervical screening, anti-social behaviour and harassment.

Additional funding for swimming pools: Somerset Council has been awarded £316,700 of grant funding from Phase 2 of the government’s Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF). The ringfenced money from Sport England and the National Lottery will be used to install new energy efficiency measures in four Somerset leisure centres – Wells, Chard, Yeovil and Frome. Somerset has previously been awarded £211,208 in 2023 as part of SPSF Phase 1 funding.

Digital Innovation Centre: The Firepool Centre for Digital Innovation is set to officially open its doors in Taunton. The centre has been made possible after successfully securing more than £7.3m of external ring-fenced funding including £3.6m investment from Somerset County Council secured ahead of the creation of the unitary council.

Former Bridgwater Hospital Site: Repair and maintenance works are being carried out on the former Bridgwater Hospital site at Salmon Parade in Bridgwater. The Grade II listed building, which has lain empty since 2014, will have a new lease of life as a state-of-the-art Somerset Academy for Health and Social Care. Former Sedgemoor District Council and its partners were successful in obtaining a £19.7million bid from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for project.

Go Green Scheme: Somerset Council has secured £100,000 from the Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support 150 eligible companies under the Go Green Scheme. This scheme helps businesses to understand their energy consumption and show how it can be reduced. The scheme offers free energy audits and support to develop individual, costed and prioritised sustainability plans. Further information on the Go Green Scheme ‘empowering Somerset businesses to go green’ is available at www.gogreenscheme.org.uk

Green Business Grants: These grants are available for Somerset based SME’s who already have sustainability plans in place. The aim of the grants is to provide financial assistance to take forward identified measures to reduce energy consumption and costs as well as carbon emissions. Grants can fund up to 50% of total eligible project costs, with the remainder funded by the applicant. Round 2 of the Green Business Grants is now open with an application deadline of 30 April 2024. If a grant is approved activity and expenditure will need to be completed by 30 November 2024. More information can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/funding-and-grants-for-business/>

6.2 PCSO – No report had been received.

7. **Planning Applications**

There were none.

8. **Planning updates including enforcement issues**

The Clerk presented updated records.

It was agreed that the Clerk would send the correspondence between the Parish Council and Avon and Somerset Police to the planning team dealing with the Rainier Application ref 2024/0163, highlighting that the most important Harm would be to Highway Safety. Our recommendation to Refuse specifically cites 14 Road Traffic incidents as detailed to us by Avon and Somerset Police over a period of 10 years on Anchor Rd/Charmborough Lane. All agreed that copies of their emails dated 7-3-23 and 5-1-24 should be sent to the Highway officers that are dealing with the response to the planning application.

Action: Clerk to send details to *Richard Wilkins the Lead Member for Transport and Digital, Mike O’Dowd-Jones Head of Service, Highways and Transport and Ros Wyke Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets*

2023/0492/FUL – Leveling of the playing field. Email received from Planning Officer confirming they are waiting for a response from the LLFA. Consultation ends 02/04/24 so they will chase them up so that a decision can be made.

9. Consider response to the Public Consultation on Local Plan Part II

A draft response had been circulated to all Councillors for consideration. It was agreed that no further amendments were required and it should be submitted.

Action: Clerk to send the response before the 12th April 2024

10. Highways including:

10.1 Councilor update – The following report had been received:

Stockhill - overhanging tree on south side reported and cleared. Edge erosion before 30mph sign coming into the village has been partially repaired but has got worse again and will be reported.

Brewery Lane - the dropped covers on north side have been made good but edge erosion on south side getting worse and have been reported again.

Charmborough Lane - patches of edge erosion made good on south side, also dropped drains on Charlton Rd junction and by Hackmead Farm made up.

20mph signs by school - Highways have been in contact with the school and they have set the flashing lights to work on a timer. Going north the logic for not having flashing lights was that the humped pedestrian crossing should already slow vehicles down. If we have evidence that this is not working, we are encouraged to go back to Highways.

10.2 Report of any new issues to be reported – It was reported that Charity Lane and Dark Lane are in need of repair along with the surface damage outside Hollow House on Vobster Hill.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report

11. Review Footpath report (South)

The Footpath officer for the South of the village submitted a report on all footpaths South of Highbury Street. All issues had been highlighted and the Clerk to send the report to the Rights of Way officer.

Action: Clerk to forward a copy to Somerset Rights of Way

12. Finance

12.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation – Cllr Allen checked the bank reconciliation and signed it as accurate.

12.2 Review the year end accounts for 2023/24

The Clerk had completed the year end reports which had been circulated to those present. It was agreed that the reports would be shared electronically and any comments would be sent to the Clerk. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting when it will be discussed and approved off.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

- 12.3 Update on the Health & Wellbeing grant application – Cllr Ham confirmed that a preliminary meeting had been held with a representative from Men’s Shed which had been extremely productive. Meetings have also been arranged with facilitators of other Health and Wellbeing classes, which could form part of the grant application. Cllr Ham and the Clerk will continue to develop the bid and report back at the next meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the grant application to Halecombe Quarry for £1500 towards the compostable toilet for the allotments had been successful. She raised concern that the grant needed to be spent within 6 months which highlighted that the balance needed to be found quickly. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek other funding sources and this element would not be included within the Health & Wellbeing grant.

Action: The Clerk to work seek other grant funding for the compostable toilet. Agenda item for the next meeting

- 12.4 Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC - National Insurance		£ 148.53
V Watts - Clerks Expenses		£ 54.20
Alison Carter – Footpath Warden (South)		£ 50.00
Les Allen – Labour for Rain water harvesting structure		£ 600.00
Reads Agriservices – Rain water harvesting structure	£202.50	} £1039.03
Reads Agriservices – Rain water harvesting structure	£176.53	
Reads Agriservices - Generator	£660.00	
Farm Forestry – Tree Guards		£ 189.60
Keith Evans – Payback expenses		£ 28.89
CPRE – Annual membership		£ 36.00
Citizens Advice Somerset – Donation		£1000.00
@ The Hub – Hire of the Hall		£ 636.00
Reads Agriservices - Rain water harvesting structure		£ 193.00
Reads Agriservices – Shed base for Food Bank shed		£ 59.23

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Evans that the payments should be approved.

Vote 4 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions

Cllr Allen did not vote as had declared an interest.

13. **Update on Allotments**

- 13.1 Agree provision of toilet facilities (Consider quotes for portaloo) – It was agreed that the Clerk would seek funding to cover the balance needed enable a compostable toilet to be purchased as a matter of urgency rather than hiring a temporary solution.

Action: Clerk to seek progress.

- 13.2 Consider request for land at Orchard Close to be sold to current tenants of the allotment garden – All allotment holders have paid the rent until January 2025. It was agreed that there would be no decision on whether the land would be sold until 2025.

Action: Clerk to respond to the enquiry

- 13.3 Update on the Tree Nursery project – A response had been received from the Coleford Conservation Volunteers (CCV) confirming the maximum size of the trees which would be growing at the allotments. After consideration it was agreed that the nursery will not impact on the other plots and should therefore go ahead at the preferred location.

Action: Clerk to notify CCV

14. Discuss whether to fund the relocation of the bench at Stockhill

The bench located on Somerset owned land at Stockhill has been offered to the Parish Council prior to the sale. The bench requires some maintenance but it was agreed that the offer should be accepted so that it can be removed, renovated and installed at an appropriate location at a later date. Representative from Stowells Concrete offered to provide the concrete base free of charge when required.

Action: Clerk to arrange for the bench to be removed

15. Meetings to attend or attended

16/04/24 @ 5.30pm – Heidelberg Quarry meeting. PH to attend

21/04/24 @ 2pm – Flower Show meeting @ The Hub

22/04/24 time TBC – Shape Mendip. Somerset Cllr Clarke to attend

29/04/24 @ 7pm – Local Community Network meeting @ Croscombe Village Hall

SALC training dates – Cllrs to notify the Clerk if they wish to attend.

24/04/24 @ 7.30pm – Nic Edwards to attend the next Parish Council meeting to give presentation about the role of the Village Agent

15/05/24 @ 7pm – Climate training on Zoom.

Action: Clerk to confirm that the Parish Council wishes to participate in the Climate training.

16. Correspondence

It was reported that the Post Office hours are changing. There will be no post office on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May but it will open on Tuesday 7th May from 10 til midday continuing each Tuesday thereafter.

Action: Clerk to publicise.

03/04/24 – Somerset Day takes place 11&12th of May ‘The Big Somerset Picnic’

Action: Clerk to promote the event

04/04/24 – South West Heritage Trust. Confirmation that Parish Council minutes dating from 2002 to 2022 have been deposited for safe keeping.

07/04/24 – Request to reinstate the bin outside the Church Hall.

Action: Clerk to respond and say that it will be considered. Agenda item for next meeting

CPRE Magazine – Passed to Cllr Townsend for review

09/04/24 – HM Prison & Probation Service. Request to sign Memorandum of understanding. Clerk to email to all councilors for consideration.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

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

There were none.

18. Date of Next Meetings:

8th May 2024

Annual Parish Council Meeting of Monthly Parish Council meeting

22nd May 2024

Planning meeting

The meeting ended at 21.47hrs