

Parish Council of Coleford

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 11th November 2024

Present Cllr Ham, (Chairman presiding), Allen, Banks, Bell, Douglas-Burke, Evans, Moulding, Paterson, Pearce and Townsend.

In attendance 1 member of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

Cllr Townsend attended the recent Mendip Country Practice Patients meetings. It was reported that from now on 7 days' notice would be required for repeat prescriptions.

2. Resignations and Co-Option of Councillors

Sarah Swords had completed the consent to co-option form which had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Bell that Sarah should be co-opted.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Councillors were asked to spread the word about the role of the Councillor and put any potential candidates in touch with the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to ensure paperwork is signed by Cllr Swords & Council email is set up. Clerk to advertise vacancies.

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

Somerset Cllr Clarke all sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

4. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

Cllrs Ham, Moulding, Banks, Townsend declared an interest in the small grants applications as they are committee members for certain groups.

5. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on 10th October 2024

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. All Councillors agreed that the minutes were accurate and should be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against & 0 Abstentions

6. 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

7. Reports

7.1 Somerset Council – A report will be circulated to all Councillors.

A358 Dualling: A decision has been made by the Government to shelve the £328 million National Highways upgrade of the A358 between Ilminster and Junction 25 of the M5 at Taunton. Confirmation

came as the Chancellor announced a series of measures to balance the Government's books which included cancelling a number of rail and road infrastructure projects. The scheme to build a tunnel on a section of the A303 under Stonehenge was shelved in the summer.

Winter Fuel Payments: In a move to safeguard vulnerable older residents, Somerset Council overwhelmingly passed a motion to oppose the Government's changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance. The motion, brought forward by Conservative Leader, David Fothergill called for the government to reconsider its recent decision, which will see millions of pensioners lose vital support for heating this winter. The Council highlighted the vital role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping Somerset's 110,000 older residents afford heating during the colder months, preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas. The Council also pledged to raise awareness about Pension Credit uptake to ensure all eligible pensioners in Somerset receive the support they are entitled to and to work with Voluntary Charity Faith and Social Enterprise (VCSFE) partners to ensure a substantial portion of the Household Support Fund, is directed toward helping Somerset pensioners struggling with fuel poverty.

Mendip local plan: Somerset Council has submitted proposals to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to update the Mendip Local Plan Part II (LPP2) which runs to 2029. The LPP2 site allocations plan was adopted by the former Mendip District Council in December 2021 but was subject to a successful legal challenge. The Council has now met the Court deadline to submit proposals which identifies 9 sites capable of delivering 569 dwellings by 2028. A new Somerset wide plan is in preparation which will consider future housing sites after 2029.

Safeguarding adults: A series of recommendations have been made by the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) following the death of a resident. The recommendations were shared in a report which documents an elderly lady's life leading up to her death from a COVID-19 infection whilst being treated for injuries arising from an accident. There were also concerns about how money was being used. Highlighting weaknesses in the way agencies were able to communicate with the lady has been assessed and the information recorded and shared across the health and social care system, the report also makes various recommendations.

Wells Christmas Market: 'Christmas in Wells' will take place on Saturday 14th December, 9am-3pm, in Wells Market Place and on the Bishop's Palace Green featuring over 100 stalls.

Community Heroes: Forty-eight Community heroes and organisations from across Somerset have been recognised for their service with a Somerset Council Chair's Award. The awards were presented by the Somerset Council Chair at a ceremony in Taunton Rugby Football Club attended by the nominees and their guests. The award recipients were nominated by their city, town and parish councils in recognition of their outstanding contribution to their communities.

Recycling: Somerset Council has been given the green-light to roll out the collection of plastic bags and wrapping to more than 25,000 households. The county has been part of the national FlexCollect trial since May 2023 with around 3,500 residents in Frome having plastic bags and wrapping added to their weekly recycling collection. From October 2024 a further 25,000 residents in and around Wells, Draycott, Frome and Chilcompton will benefit from getting these hard to recycle plastics collected from home.

Dunball roundabout: Construction on the multi-million pound Dunball Roundabout (J23) scheme begins on the 11th November. The project will see the roundabout improved with signals introduced and the addition of a 'through about' lane which allows traffic to flow through the middle of it for greater capacity. This will ease peak traffic flow through this crucial route which links the town to Junction 23 of the M5, along with the Gravity Smart Campus in Puriton, site of the Agratas Gigafactory which is set to create 4,000 jobs.

Winter Gritting: Highways partner Kier are working to keep roads safe this winter with the gritter fleet ready to head out when freezing temperatures or snow are forecast. Road users need to be ready too for adverse conditions. As the winter season approaches, it is vital that you travel according to the conditions and your vehicle is suitably maintained. You can find out more on driving in adverse weather conditions here, from Somerset Council's Road Safety Team at www.somersetroadsafety.org Preparation of the Council's depots, and filling of its salt barns has taken place throughout the summer and the winter team will also be topping up gritting bins across Somerset.

Sale of Disposable Vapes: Under recently published legal guidance the sale of disposable vapes are to be made illegal from 1st June 2025. Whilst rechargeable vapes are a good way to give up tobacco smoking there has been increasing evidence that young people are using disposable vapes as a lifestyle choice. There are currently 5 million sold weekly, each of which contains a lithium battery which cause frequent fires in recycling trucks and centres. The move to ban disposable vapes has received widespread support from Teachers, Waste Contractors, Public Health and even the RSPCA who have been concerned about the impact of vape waste on wildlife.

- 7.2 PCSO – The crime report for Coleford showed that during the last month there had been 1 case of burglary and 1 public order offence. The next drop-in session will be run at the Hub on 25th November 2024 from 10am until 11am.
- 7.3 Climate Action Group – Cllr Moulding explained that some of the group members had attended training on how to be more environmentally friendly within our lives and how to deliver this information on to other members of the community. Topics covered a general overview, transport, food and energy. The group is still promoting how to improve insulation in houses.

Cllr Moulding continues to be involved with improving the bus service for the village.

8. **Planning Applications**

- 8.1 2024/1915/APP - Playing Field Orchard Close Coleford Frome Somerset
Approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (Design and Layout), 4 (Management and Maintenance Scheme) and 5 (Surface Water Drainage System) on planning consent 2023/0492/FUL (Improvements to playing field).

All Councillors had considered the details for the application prior to the meeting. The Chair explained that he, a representative for Coleford Athletic Football club, along with Cllr Allen and the Clerk met with Pennys and their planning agent to discuss how to satisfy the above conditions. The planning agent had put in a lot of time consulting with Sport England and Flood Authority to ensure that the submission for this application would have the best chance of success.

It was agreed that a response would be submitted to the Planning Officer recommending that the application should be approved.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to respond to the planning officer

- 8.2 2024/1898/REM - Land South Of Suncroft, Lipyeate Cross To Luckington Cross, Coleford
Reserved matters approval for details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission reference 2019/2345/OTS (Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for the erection of up to 63 dwellings).

In light of the amount of detail that needs to be considered (74 documents), it was agreed that an extension of 2 months would be requested to allow thorough consideration of the reserved matters before submitting our response. The Clerk to request a list of residents that had been consulted.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to respond to the planning officer. Agenda item for the November planning meeting.

9. **Planning updates**

The Clerk had shared an updated spreadsheet showing status of previous applications.

10. **Discuss response for the new Local Plan Consultation which is open 21/10 – 17/11**

It was agreed that there would be no response at this stage.

11. **Discuss quote received from our Contractor to cut the Somerset Council owned land within Coleford**

The Clerk had received a quote from our current contractor. It was agreed that this would be considered at the next meeting as part of the Budget 2025/26 discussion.

Action: To form part of the budget discussion at the November planning meeting

12. Highways including:

- 12.1 Councillor update – It was noted that the issues relating to flooding at the junction of Charity Lane had been resolved with repairs to the drainage.

Action: Clerk to thank the highways department for the work done.

- 12.2 Consider AutoSpeedWatch (ASW) and whether to purchase

The Clerk reported that the PCSO did visit the top repeat offenders which were highlighted by the ASW data from the Holcombe system, which it is hoped would act as a deterrent. It was agreed that the purchase of a ASW roadside unit (Approx cost £1000) would be discussed as part of the next budget.

Action: To form part of the budget discussion at the November planning meeting

- 12.3 Report of any new issues

The edge erosion on Anchor Road between the last house and the 30mph signage has still not been addressed.

Cllr Bell confirmed he had reported the pot holes and edge erosion on Tinkers Lane (Ref 826263)

Action: Cllr Townsend to pass on these issues to the Somerset Highways contact for action

13. Update on Allotments including:

- 13.1 Update on compostable toilet – The Clerk confirmed that the toilet was complete and ready for opening, apart from instructions which need to be displayed on the wall.

Action: The Clerk will open the toilet this weekend.

- 13.2 Consider rules and safety measures for ponds on allotment plots

Cllr Pearce had put together some rules for consideration. After much discussion it was agreed that these rules would be adopted. If the allotment holders choose to use the grate with no fence around the pond option, then a photograph would need to be taken and submitted to the insurance company for them to approve.

Action: Clerk to notify the allotment holders and ensure that all allotments are compliant

14. Finance

- 14.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation – Cllr Moulding reviewed and approved the reconciliation

- 14.2 Approve Small Grant applications for 2024/25 – Cllr Banks, Evans and Pearce considered the applications and recommended the following awards:

Cllr Banks, Townsend, and Ham declared an interest and did not vote on the Hub application.
Cllr Moulding declared an interest and did not vote on the Coleford Climate Action group application.

Name of Group	Total cost of project	Description	Sub-Committee Recommendation
Tuesday Afternoon Club	£300.00	Transport costs	£250.00
Friendship Friday Club	£590.00	Cooker and soup bowls	£200.00
Coleford Climate Action	£232.96	Items to help save money to be given to members for the community to help save money.	£200.00
Coleford Theatre Group	£1,000.00	Upgrading to LED spot lighting and costumes	£450.00
Fabulous, Fun and Fit	£280.00	Hall hire & refreshments	£200.00
Huckyduck Carnival Club	£300.00	Circular saw	£150.00
Coleford @ The Hub	£4,100.00	Hall hire to help Voluntary Orgs	£990.00
Coleford Knit & Natter	£60.00	New bamboo knitting needles	£60.00
Amount requested:	£6,862.96	Total	£2,500.00

After discussion it was proposed that the recommendations should be approved.

The vote on applications:

Tuesday Afternoon Club
Friendship Friday Club
Coleford Theatre Group

Fabulous, Fun and Fit
Huckyduck Carnival Club
Coleford Knit & Natter

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

For Coleford @ The Hub. Cllrs Ham, Banks and Townsend declared an interest and did not vote.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions

For Coleford Climate Action , Cllr Moulding declared an interest and did not vote.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the groups of the decision.

- 14.3 Consider quotes received from Utility Aid for electricity and water at Highbury Playing Field
It was agreed that the quote would be circulated to Cllr Ham and Cllr Allen along with the current suppliers offer of new tariff.

Action Clerk to share the tariffs. Agenda item for the Planning meeting

- 14.4 Consider quote to repair the bench at Roman Way play area
It was agreed that the quote from Contractor Darren Powles to renew the slats on the bench at Roman Way should be accepted.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the contractor

- 14.5 Agree rent for Coleford Athletic Football Club season 2024/25
The Clerk had circulated calculations to help establish a fair rent for the current playing season which took into account the fact that the first team have been playing at a different pitch to ensure that the club were not affected if the pitch levelling did take place during the season. As a result, it was proposed that a 3% increase should be added to the annual rent which would then be discounted to £500. It was proposed by Cllr Paterson and seconded by Cllr Allen that this should be accepted.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the football club.

- 14.6 Review 2nd Quarter Budget Review 2024/25
The reports for the second quarter budget review had been shared with all Councillors. After discussions it was agreed that the review showed the accounts to be in good position and should be approved. An updated forecast will be presented at the November planning meeting along with a draft budget for 2025/26.

Action: Clerk to provide updated forecast and budget for the November planning meeting

- 14.7 Consider new national pay scales and decide whether to adopt
The Council agreed to adopt the new pay scales from April 2024 as recommended by the National Association and to pay the back pay. Clerk to ask PATA the payroll provider to calculate the new amounts due for National Insurance, HMRC and Pension.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Ask PATA to make the calculation for new pay rate

14.8 Agree back pay due to Clerk due to underpayment

The Clerk explained that due to a change in National Insurance rate at the start of the financial year April 2024, the Clerks rate of pay had increased but the standing order had not been amended. Therefore, the Clerk had been underpaid to the sum of £366.88. Councillors agreed that the payment should be made

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

14.9 Consider Budget /Precept for 2025/26

This will be presented at the November planning meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the November planning meeting

14.10 Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 88.20
V Watts- Back pay due (Underpayment)	£ 366.88
HMRC – National Insurance & Tax due	£ 102.87
Alvian – Nest Swing repair	£ 134.40
Viscount Asquith's 1999 Settlement Trust - Allotment rent	£1000.00
Steve Pitt – Repair to post at the allotment	£ 117.45

Tuesday Afternoon Club – small grant	£250.00
Friendship Friday Club – small grant	£200.00
Coleford Climate Action – small grant	£200.00
Coleford Theatre Group – small grant	£450.00
Fabulous, Fun and Fit – small grant	£200.00
Huckyduck Carnival Club – small grant	£150.00
Coleford @ The Hub – small grant	£990.00
Coleford Knit & Natter– small grant	£ 60.00

It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Allen that the payments should be made:

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to make the payments

15. Update on the Health and Wellbeing grant application

It was agreed that the Parish Council would not proceed with the application but the Hub Committee will apply. The concept of a Menshed would be pursued and a public meeting held in the new year, with a view to a Coleford shed being formed.

Action: Agenda item for January

16. Update on whether to host a warm space this winter

The Clerk had approached many of the groups already prospering within the village. They in turn had consulted with their members regarding the need for a specific 'warm space' facility. The feedback to the Clerk was that the overriding belief was that such a facility would not be utilized as there were already 'warm spaces' being provided, with the welcoming groups which were already established and meeting on most days.

After discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council would not open the Hub, but would continue to monitor and respond if the situation changed. A list of the 'warm spaces' already running would be shared on village noticeboards, the community magazine, Mendip Country practice and the web.

Action: Clerk to advertise the groups already meeting within the village.

17. Update on the Christmas Light switch on

The Christmas lights switch on at the Royal British Legion (RBL) will take place on Friday the 29th November 2024. The new Christmas lights had been passed to Cllr Allen to give to the RBL committee. Cllr Ham to ensure the tree is delivered in the week before the event.

Action: Cllr Ham to supply tree prior to the event.

18. Meetings to attend

One.Network presentation – 19/11/24 from 6pm – 7pm via Teams – Any Councillors

CPRE AGM – 25/11/24 from 12.30pm to 4pm at Caryford Community Hall - Cllr Townsend to attend

19. Correspondence

- Citizen Advice Somerset – Request for grant funding.

Action: To form part of the budget discussion at the November planning meeting

- Promotion for Somerset Day – No action required
- Request for funding towards the Commonwealth War Memorial
Action: Agenda item for the next meeting
- Allotment magazine – To be taken to the allotments
- War Memorial newsletter – passed to Cllr Townsend

20. Date of Next Meetings:

27th November 2024 Planning meeting

11th December 2024 Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.30hrs