

Parish Council of Coleford

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January 2025 Newsletter

Kings New Years Honour List

Congratulations to Neil and Nicky Halford who each received an MBE for services to Charitable Fundraising for Children with an Illness after co-founding the charity Time is Precious in 2011. Since 2017 they have raised over £1.3m using the funds to help provide facilities in a number of hospitals in the area.

Co-option of Councillors

The Parish Council currently has 2 vacancies which we would like to fill. Are you passionate about your community? Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the council? Do you have concerns about a specific issue and want to do something about it? If this is you, then we need you. We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect their community to put themselves forward for election. Make a change and become a councilor – email the Parish Clerk on clerk@colefordpc.org.uk

Somerset Council

Cllr Ham reported that the new National Planning Policy Framework means that if refusing an application, the reasons must be strong and not just clear reasons. To refuse harm must greatly outweigh the benefits. The pressures on numbers along with our area having no phosphate limits, credits are very costly. The housing numbers have increased from 2669 per year to 3769 which is a 41% increase. The 5-year land supply was 3.55 years but is now only 2.2 years.

Boundary Changes – For the 2027 Somerset Elections there will be a reduction in the number of Councillors from 110 to 95, mainly one councilor per division. Coleford, Holcombe, Stratton on the Fosse and Kilmersdon would possibly be grouped together.

Budgets – The next 4 weeks are critical. There seems to be a small improvement in savings over the last 3 months figures but not enough to balance the budget. Will there be further cuts, intervention from Central Government, further redundancy and more sale of assets?

The Somerset report was circulated to all councilors and has been uploaded to the Parish Council website <https://www.colefordpc.org.uk/meetings.php>

Planning Updates

2024/1889/REM - Playing Field, Orchard Close, Coleford

The planning conditions have now been agreed. Pennys have stated that the next stage is to get a confirmed volume of import and also carry out a design statement and get this approved by the EHO, produce a Materials Management Plan and a site investigation report. They have already instructed the above to be carried out. Once actioned, Pennys will source soils to import. There are still some development works in Keyford, Frome which Pennys hope they can use as a source for material.

Highways update

The following points have been raised with Somerset Highways:

- Charity Lane junction is still flooding.

- There is water running across the road from Kilmersdon Common towards Ham. This was extremely icy during the recent cold snap and a member of the public did have a fall. It has been reported to the Environmental agency but needs to be raised with Highways again for action.
- Mells Parish Council are looking to seek approval from Somerset Highways to install a 30mph limit through Vobster.
- The flooding at Barns Close, Leigh on Mendip continues to be very bad, which results in a lot of ice once the temperature drops.
- Street lights are out in the Goodeaves
- The Highways Lighting Team confirmed that the faulty street lighting reported last month Anchor Rd/Brewery Lane will be repaired soon.

Update on Coleford Menshed

Cllr Pearce confirmed that a public meeting at the Hub has been planned for 1st March. Cllr Townsend has already put a brief notice of this in the December parish magazine but it will be further advertised in the January and February editions as well as on the notice boards and on social media. It is intended that food would be supplied and an attraction such as owls or falcons will be invited.

Finance

3rd Quarter Budget Review 2024/25

Councillors considered the budget reports which report showed that the total predicted forecast for income is £70,970.72 and for payments £65,263.32, which is a predicted underspend of £4,096.80.

Budget for 2025/26

The Councillors considered each line of the draft budget for 2025/26 and agreed that the predicted income of £4,027.00 with payments of £77,786.31 was realistic.

Precept for 2025/26

After agreeing the budget for 2025/26 there was a lengthy discussion on what level to set the precept. It was agreed that the precept should be set at £83,780. This would support the agreed budget and go some way to increasing the reserves which have become depleted in recent years. This would result in a charge of £2.13 per week for a Band D household, which would be an increase of 49p per week when compared to last year.

Date of Next Meetings:

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| 22 nd January 2025 | Planning meeting |
| 12 th February 2025 | Parish Council meeting |