

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428
Email: clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com

Newsletter for April and May 2021

We held the Annual Parish Council meeting. The following appointments were made for the forthcoming year:

Chairman Mr Philip Ham
Vice Chairman Mr Andy Conn

Formation of Working Parties within the Parish Council

Working Party	Lead Councillor	Team members
Playing Fields, Play Areas and Pump Track	Cllr Barrett	Cllrs Conn, Hanney, Harding and Drescher
Environment & Cemetery	Cllr Evans	Cllrs Turner, Harding, Allen and Townsend
Finance and Pay Review	Cllr Townsend	Cllrs Ham, Pearce, Conn and the Clerk
Small Grants	Cllr Banks	Cllr Conn and Evans

Lead Councillors

Public Footpaths /RoW	Cllr Barrett
Highways	Cllr Pearce and Townsend
Open Spaces and Trees	Cllr Harding and Barrett
Parish Plan	Cllr Conn
Young People	Cllr Ham and Banks

Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

@ The Hub	Cllrs Banks, Ham and Townsend
Bishop Henderson School & Children's Centre	Cllrs Drescher and Ham
Coleford Athletic Football Club	Cllr Drescher and Allen
PCSO & PACT	Cllr Banks
Somerset Association Local Council	Cllr Evans
Quarry Liaison Group	Cllr Conn and Turner
Coleford Revival Group	Cllr Ham, Harding, Barrett & Banks
Mendip Country Practice Patients Group	Cllr Townsend
PCC	Cllr Turner

Planning Applications

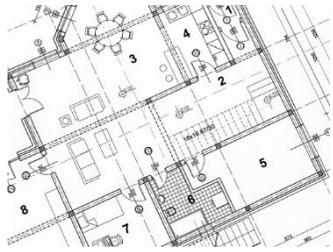
2021/0754/HSE - Spring Hill Cottage Springers Hill Coleford.

Removal of existing uPVC entrance lobby and replace with new entrance lobby and associated works.
Coleford Parish Council recommended approval.

Planning updates

The 17th March Planning Board rejected by 12 votes to 1 the repeat application by Gladmans for 63 houses on Anchor Rd, Coleford, ref 2020/2201. The sole reason for refusal was the same as for the previous application, the Harm to the Countryside caused by the Excessive Number of Dwellings. Highways, Sewerage and

Sustainability issues as strongly advocated by residents and the Parish Council were not considered to have sufficient weight.



The closing date for responses to the appeal against the refusal of the original application 2019/2345 was 13th April 2021. Our consultant submitted on our behalf a detailed dissection of the appellant's case that Harm to the Countryside was minimal and he also stressed that the application contradicted the Emerging Modified Local Plan Part 2 which should be given substantial weight. The Parish Council submitted a further document to attempt to bring back to the Inspector's attention our other issues of concern, i.e., Highways, Sewerage and Sustainability.

Mendip Planners also submitted their formal response, focusing solely on the original reason for refusal, i.e., Harm to the Countryside. The timescales for the appeal are uncertain. An Inspector has yet to be appointed. Our consultant's advice is that similar appeals are currently taking some 41 weeks from the Start Date, which takes us to Christmas.

Highways

Somerset Highways were advised of potholes at Stockhill, Dark Lane and Lawrence Rd, also blocked gullies by the Rose and Crown and High St, also flooding and potholes at Stoke Bottom, an apparent spring at Cherry Gardens and the wall leaning over the highway at Craddock's Bottom. Highways undertook to inspect all issues, but the only positive results appear to have been at Stockhill and Stoke Bottom where the flooding by the Fairy Cave junction has been cleared and all but one pothole made good.



Finance

The Parish Council accounts for the year end 31st March 2021 were presented for approval. The budget planned spend for the year was £55K with the actual sum totalling £52K which considering the pandemic was good to almost balance. The predicted income was £8K with the actual income at £4K. A VAT request has been lodged and payment is expected for the sum of £3K which would help to bridge the income gap. There was only a small amount of income from the changing rooms during the year due to pandemic. There are commitments which will roll over into the current year. The bank balance at 1st April 2020 was £44326.53 with a slight fall to £42586.33 at the year ending 31st March 2021 which was expected.

Update on Climate Emergency Fund Grant

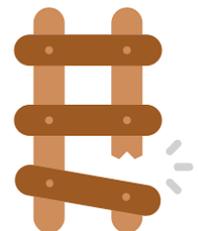
The Parish Council have been offered £16795 for part of the Climate Emergency Fund Grant application, namely the allotments and 2 orchard projects. Somerset County Council are proposing 2 or 3 payments in advance during the work. A record of all expenditure would need to be made for submission to support the project and how the money was spent. It was agreed that the offer of £16795 would be accepted subject to planning permission being approved for allotments. If permission is not given the project cannot go ahead.

Damage to play equipment at Goodeaves Play area

The spate of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at Goodeaves play area seems to have eased over the last 10 days. A quote had been received from Alvian Ltd to replace the slide with a stainless-steel version and repair the timber trail

To supply and fit 1 x Replacement Heavy-Duty Stainless-Steel slide £1378.00
Installation and disposal of old slide £750.00
1 x delivery £250.00 Total £2378.00 + Vat
Timber Trail - To supply and fit end timber £75.00

The quote has been sent with photographs to the Insurance company and it is hoped that the claim will be settled swiftly.



Alvian Ltd confirmed that the loose fixing on the basket swing was the result of the current dry spell rather than foul play and simply needs to be tightened which they have offered to complete when they are next on site at no charge.

Update on the return of face-to-face meetings

As of 7th May, legislation allowing Parish Councils to hold virtual meetings came to an end meaning that from that date, Parish business must take place Face to Face. For a period of time during May it conflicts with Government coronavirus guidance to stay safe. After discussion it was agreed that Meeting of the Parish which was planned to take place in person on the 26th May should be postponed. The new date will be Wednesday 21st July at 7pm when it is hoped that it will be safer for all wishing to attend.



Date of Next Meetings:

Wed 9 th June 2021	Meeting of the Parish Council
Wed 23 rd June 2021	Planning meeting
Wed 7 th July 2021	Meeting of the Parish Council
Wed 21 st July 2021	Annual Meeting of the Parish followed by the Planning meeting

If you have any issues that you would like to bring to the Parish Council's attention please contact the Clerk on 01749 880428 or email clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com Check out the website www.colefordsomerset.info

Philip Ham

Somerset County Councillor report

County Cllr Ham circulated the following report prior to the meeting:

Future Parish, Town and City Council meetings: The government announced on the 25th March that the Coronavirus regulations allowing for remote Parish, Town and City Council meetings would not be extended beyond 6th May 2021. A subsequent legal challenge launched by Hertfordshire County Council has failed in the High Court and effectively means that all Council meetings scheduled for the 7th May or later will now have to be held in public, face-to-face.

The Government have however launched a consultation on allowing remote or hybrid meetings on a permanent basis via their website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>

Road map out of lockdown: From 17th May most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors will be lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal. Indoors, the Rule of 6 or 2 households will apply. Most businesses but those in the highest risk sectors will be able to reopen including indoor hospitality. Venues will not have to serve a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks; nor will there be a curfew. Customers will, however, have to order, eat and drink while seated. Other locations to open include indoor entertainment such as cinemas and children's play areas; hotels, hostels and B&Bs; and indoor adult group sports and exercise classes. Up to 30 people will be able to attend weddings, receptions and wakes, as well as funerals. The final step of the road map is scheduled for June 21st

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 30th April the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 20,272 (up from 19,982 on 1st April) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 796 (787). The rate per 100,000 stands at 13.7 for Somerset with Mendip at 17.3, Sedgemoor at 17.0, South Somerset 10.7 and SW&T at 11.6. The number of total deaths across the County is currently 20% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.7 and 1.1.

It is vitally important to remember, even those who have had a jab, to observe Hands-Face-Space and to Ventilate indoor areas at all times.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

Vaccination programme roll-out: Somerset has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing 324,147 having received at least their first vaccination or 70% of the 16+ population. In addition, 151,528 have received their second dose. Take up rates across the County of the first dose remains very high: 80+ (98.7%), 75-79 (100%), 70-74 (99.7%), 65-69 (92.0%), 60-64 (97.4%), 55-59 (96.3%), 50-54 (90.8%) and 45-49 (61.2%).

One Somerset: The government's public consultation (the only guaranteed way for the public to have a say) into changing the way local councils work in Somerset ended on the 19th April. For more information visit: www.onesomerset.org.uk

Motorcycle Road Safety: Somerset County Council's road safety team, have launched Raise your Ride, an exciting new initiative for motorcyclists who make up only c.1-2% of traffic, but represent c.21-23% of all road casualties in the UK. The next Raise your Ride events are in Wellington on Sunday 23 May, Frome on Sunday 20 June and Yeovil on Sunday 5 September. The cost for the day is £45 per person. For more information visit www.somersetroadsafety.org/page/raise-your-ride/124/

Primary School places: This year more than 98 per cent of Somerset children were offered a primary school place at one of their top three choices, the County Council's latest school admission figures show. Of the 5,365 primary school applications received this year: 1st preference met – 94.58 per cent (5,074 applications), 2nd preference – 3.37 per cent (181 applications) and 3rd preference – 0.56 per cent (30 applications).

Care provider support: Somerset County Council have agreed an additional £8.6 million package for 2021/22 for Care providers to help them mitigate against the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The total includes a £4.5 million substantive fee increase, and a £4.1m additional one-off 3% Covid supplement paid as a lump sum at the beginning of the financial year to help providers with cash flow.

Kickstart work placements: Somerset County Council has partnered with local employers to offer 50 six-month work placements through the Kickstart Programme, and the vacancies are now live. There are a variety of placements available that could lead to permanent jobs including laboratory stewards, engineering assistants, teaching assistants, business administration roles, grounds assistants, Young People's Champions and more. The Kickstart Programme offers young people aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit the chance to land a six-month work placement, paid at national minimum wage for 25 hours per week. Details are available through the Young Persons work coach at their local job centre.

Coastal Story Walks: Somerset's seafaring heritage and lost legends are brought to life in a new set of 'story walks' being launched by the County Council. Created by local poet Chris Jelley, and brought to you by the Rights of Way Team, the set of 12 Story walks can be accessed by phone or tablet connecting walkers to the local landscape and history. The walks are between one and five km long and are set from Brean Down in the north to Minehead in the west. Simply go to the England Coast Path Story walks page <https://englandcoastpath.storywalks.info/>

Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme: Young people inspired by the recent media attention about the D of E charity are encouraged to get in touch to learn new skills, take part in physical activities and gain an award at the end. In addition, those who started an award at school, college or in a group such as Guides or Scouts, but didn't finish are also encouraged to get in touch. A Somerset Bursary Fund offers grants to enable disadvantaged young people in Somerset to complete a D of E programme. Those aged between 14-24 living in Somerset who would like to know more are encouraged to get in touch by emailing DofE@somerset.gov.uk

Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Ham and Townsend submitted the following joint report:

Full Council - An Extraordinary Meeting was held on 30th April to discuss the holding of a further poll on the Unitary proposals for the county. Many of us had already responded to the Consultation published under the Stronger Somerset banner (the blue tear off paper). The Secretary of State (S of S) had advised against a new poll on the basis that the proposed exercise “risks duplicating and detracting from the consultation to which thousands of people in Somerset have already responded” it would be “confusing” and inconsistent with his published timescales for decision making, i.e., before the summer recess. Mendip’s share of the costs will be some £65k plus officer time. In addition to the caveats from the S of S, there were warnings of its lawfulness, fairness, value for money and administration of the Council’s financial affairs. Warnings of a potential legal challenge with unquantified cost risk were received from Mendip’s Finance Officer and local lawyers, however a QC advised that such risks were low in his opinion. The Council therefore decided to proceed with the poll giving the 2 options of One Somerset or Stronger Somerset, i.e., separate East and West Somerset. It will take place between May and 4th June and will have postal and online options.

Unitary Plans - Cllrs Ham and Townsend and the Clerk attended a virtual meeting hosted by Frome Town Council on 28-4-21 to discuss with local parishes their views on the way ahead, assuming that one of the two unitary frameworks will be adopted. The principle of removing a level of local government was discussed, with its replacement by Local Community Networks (LCNs). The LCNs would be Town/Parish driven. Coleford Parish Council need to consider if they wish to be in an LCN including Frome, or if that would submerge us and a village grouping might work better. The first step is to draft a Matrix listing all the services currently provided by all levels of Councils and then suggest what services are provided at what level. A further meeting is planned for a months’ time.