

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
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Newsletter for March 2021

VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKING SCHEME



We are fortunate to have some volunteers that are regularly clearing litter from around the village for which the Parish Council are extremely grateful – Thank you! Their impact is great, but they cannot cover the whole area. Two of the volunteers have said that they would like to recruit some additional volunteers. Each volunteer would choose an area to pick and the times when they would do this. The volunteers would be independent of the Parish Council but provided with the equipment required to clear their chosen area at a time convenient to them. If you want to get involved, please email clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com

OUR POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Our Beat Team contact details are as follows:

Beat manager – PC 2673 David Cohen, David.Cohen@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 9011 Russell Ford, Mobile – 07547658018, Russell.ford@avonandsomerset.police.uk

PCSO 8118 Dan Beck, Daniel.Beck@avonandsomerset.police.uk

PLANNING

2021/0372/FUL - Windy Ridge, Tinkers Lane, Newbury, Frome, BA11 3RG

Change of use from agricultural land to residential garden (C3), proposed extension to existing bungalow and erection of agricultural barn.

Coleford Parish Council had no objection to the extension of the house or the conversion of the garden, but could not see the justification for the agricultural barn. The Parish Council would also want to see that a proper examination of the trees on site be completed to ensure that they are protected during the development.

DOG FOULING

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to make it clear that dog walking is NOT allowed on any part of Highbury Playing Field. The map below shows the footpath which dog walkers are able to access with dogs on lead - The path does not cross any part of the main field or football pitch.

Please do not use the Playing Field to exercise dogs!

Please do not allow your dog to run free whilst walking to the Footpath!



Mendip Enforcement have confirmed that any one identified as allowing their dog to foul anywhere in the village, will be contacted and runs the risk of being fined.

HIGHWAYS

The following issues have been reported to Somerset Highways:

- Potholes by the 30 sign at Stockhill, Potholes on Dark Lane and Lawrence Rd,
- Gullies by the Rose and Crown and High St.

- The reported defective light on the pedestrian crossing by the old Post Office is still not working.
- Stoke Bottom – Flooding at Fairy Cave junction now cleared as requested, significant edge erosion remains which Highways are taking up again with Penny’s Hauliers.

The following items were raised to be reported by Cllr Townsend:

- The potholes on Dark Lane are getting worse and have not as yet been marked for repair despite being reported.
- Spring water has started to run down the highway near the entrance to Cherry Garden Farm. It was questioned whether this has recently surfaced due to the extensive tipping onto the wet land at Springwater Farm which could have adjusted the water flow?
- The wall bordering Charmborough Lane is leaning in towards the road.



St Cuthberts (Out) Parish Council had been in touch seeking support of their request to Somerset County Council to make changes to the junction of Old Frome Road and the A37, which is particularly dangerous for all users. Cllr Ham explained that the Old Frome Road had been subject to a Small Improvement Scheme which is in the later stages of completion. This had seen signage and lining improved to highlight dangerous points along the route which includes the abovementioned junction. In the past there has been discussion with local quarries and haulage companies to see if they would be prepared to help fund the installation of a new roundabout with Somerset County Council but talks eventually stalled. A roundabout would cost in the region of £1 million pounds but would solve the problems at the junction. It was agreed that Coleford Parish Council would support the request.

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING & ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

The current legislation allowing Parish Councils to meet virtually is due to end on the 6th May meaning that face to face meetings would have to commence. The advice from the National Association of Local Councils is for the Annual meeting of the Parish and the Annual Parish Council meeting to be held virtually before that deadline. It was agreed that Annual meeting of the Parish will be held virtually on the 28th April (as already agreed) but the Annual Parish Council (APC) meeting will be brought forward a week to take place on the 5th of May. The regular monthly Parish Council meeting would take place on the same night after the APC to which all Councillors agreed.



Date of Next Meetings:

Wed 24 th March 2021	Planning Meeting
Wed 14 th April 2021	Parish Council meeting
Wed 28 th April 2021	Annual meeting of the Parish
Wed 5 th May 2021	Annual Parish Council meeting followed by the monthly Parish Council 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 COUNCIL REPORT

County Cllr Ham had circulated the following report:

Pre-8th March Covid-19 Restrictions: Currently residents must stay at home, they must not leave, or be outside of their home except where necessary. They cannot leave to meet socially with anyone they do not live with or are not in a support bubble with. Residents should not travel outside their local area.

Road Map out of lockdown: From 8 March - All schools will open with outdoor after-school sports and activities allowed. Recreation in an outdoor public spaces will be allowed between two people, meaning they would be allowed to sit down for a coffee, drink or picnic. From 29 March - Outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households will be allowed including gatherings in private gardens. Outdoor sports facilities such as tennis or basketball courts will reopen and organised adult and children's sport, such as grassroots football, will also Return.

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 26th February the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 18,890 (up from 16,417 on 29th January) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 722 (469). The rate per 100,000 stands at 71.5 for Somerset with Mendip at 63.2, Sedgemoor at 113.7, South Somerset 64.2 and SW&T at 52.2. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 1% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.6 and 0.9. It is vitally important to remember, even those who have had a jab, to observe Hands-Face-Space at all times.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number is 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: Teams across the wider health and care system have worked round the clock at 13 GP-led community vaccination sites, two hospital hubs, two large vaccination centres (Taunton Racecourse and the Bath and West Showground) plus four local pharmacy sites. As a result Somerset has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing 194,938 having received at least their first vaccination in the County or 42% of the 16+ population. Only Dorset at 44% are above Somerset in the list of County vaccination rates.

Somerset County Council Finances: SCC recently approved the budget for 2021/22 including an additional £10.2m investment into adult social care services, an additional £9m into children's services, £6.5m on climate emergency projects, and £130m in major infrastructure schemes such as roads and schools with £74m of new projects approved. A new £10.8m Emergency Fund has been established for activities to combat coronavirus and its impacts. Importantly the budget also includes a commitment to continue the extended Free School Meals provision for vulnerable families over the Easter holidays.

Great Western Freeport: Somerset has played a key role in the bid to develop a new Great Western Freeport – an area designed to create conditions for inward investment, business growth and job creation. The Government wants to create up to 10 Freeports around the UK, and partners including the West of England Combined Authority have submitted plans to create a Great Western Freeport. The area would include Bristol Port, the Gravity Campus (Junction 21 Enterprise Area) and Avonmouth. Gravity would focus on clean growth and attracting hi-tech companies manufacturing electric cars, artificial intelligence, and robotics. It is expected to create approximately 4,000 jobs.

Step up to social work: Somerset County Council is opening the recruitment round for aspiring social workers across the region to join the 14-month Step Up to Social Work programme, to provide training for hundreds more children and family social workers to support children and families most in need. Of the 58 places being offered across the region, 12 are being offered in Somerset. Students receive a bursary during the duration of the programme to support them whilst in training. To date eighteen new social workers have qualified in Somerset with a further ten due this year. The Step Up programme runs every two years. Applications are open until 7 April 2021.

Investing in communities: Two new Enterprise Centres have joined the Somerset network with the completion and handover of purpose-built units in Wells and Wiveliscombe thanks to Somerset County Council and partners. The Wiveliscombe centre, offers 10 two-person offices and seven small light industrial units suitable for a solo or two-person business. The centre in Cathedral Park, Wells, has 10 two-person offices and two four-person offices. It has a further five industrial units that would suit 1 to 2 people per unit.

Additional funding for Citizens Advice: During the coronavirus pandemic, Citizens Advice in Somerset have stepped up the services offered through their freephone advice line, with face-to-face appointments and drop-ins scaled back. The charities are expecting demand for services to rise exponentially over the next 12 months; particularly as the furlough scheme ends and eviction proceedings recommence. Up to £400k extra funding from Somerset County Council will be used to develop and sustain the County-wide service, to extend opening hours, and to increase capacity for the inevitable increase in demand.

One Somerset: The government has begun a public consultation into changing the way local councils work in Somerset including the County Council's ambition to replace the county's five existing councils with a simple, single unitary model. This would end confusion for residents, remove waste and duplication, and free up funding to invest in vital public services. It would also offer more powers for local Town and Parish Councils and one strong voice to lobby for funding and support. To take part in the Government's consultation visit <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Townsend and Cllr Ham gave the following report:

PLANNING - The 17-2-21 Planning Board approved an application for 6 dwellings at Writhlington outside development limits and the Board, encouraged by Mendip's lawyer, did not take on board that significant weighting may now be given to the Emerging Local Plan Part 2 because of its advanced progress. Our planning consultant will be seriously questioning this when Gladman's repeat application for 63 houses on Anchor Rd comes before the 17th March Planning Board. The applicant's attempt to demonstrate that a few trees will cover any harm to the landscape is seen by many to be unconvincing. There are nearly 300 public objections recorded on the Mendip site. Highways and Sustainability issues remain important. Meanwhile the appeal by Gladman against the original refusal has still not formally started.

FULL COUNCIL 22/02/21 - Mendip's year end budget deficit is now forecast at £1.4M which will be funded from reserves. The Finance Officer has produced a balanced budget next year which will result in a £5 a year or 3.1% rise for a Band D property. This was approved by Full Council. Little progress has been made on the capital investment programme which is required to provide an income to maintain services for future years. It was confirmed that all Mendip employees will receive at least the National Living Wage.

A new Arts for All fund of £40k has been agreed, through savings in the MDC travel budget.

It was agreed Mendip should submit a proposal to Government for us to trial a Universal Basic Income. It was confirmed that the County Council elections scheduled for May 2021 will be postponed for a year to allow the unitary proposals to be concluded.

CABINET 01/03/21 – Mendip District Council reviewed a comprehensive proposal for the Multi User Path strategy. This aims to produce safe pathways between all major centres in the District and complete the Somerset Circular Route. The Strawberry Line and Frome Missing Link are seen as important sections. Landowner issues are critical. There appear to be no immediate benefits in our area.

Cabinet also noted that the barriers on Gypsy Lane, Frome have now been removed, opening the door to a revival of the previous gross fly tipping activities. MDC incurred clean-up costs of over £50k every year in the past. A new strategy has yet to emerge.