

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter for June 2021

Planning

[2021/1163/LBC](#) - Replacement of all external windows and doors with like for like on the main dwellinghouse. Brick House Farm, Brewery Lane, Holcombe
Coleford Parish Council agreed that although there was no objection in principle the decision should be left to the Planning Officer.

We have heard that the Gladmans Appeal will start on 18th August 2021 and could last up to 4 days, further details to follow.

Allotments at Highbury

The Parish Council have received representations against the proposal to create allotments at the bottom corner of Highbury Playing Field. All points raised will be considered prior to any decisions being made.

Highways

Councillors met with Somerset Highways Engineer Charlie Higgins and reported the following items:

- 1) HGV signage, Dark Lane and approaches
- 2) Potholes, south end of Cherry Gardens Lane
- 3) Charmborough Lane - edge erosion
- 4) Stoke Bottom, potholes, edge erosion
- 5) Soho, junction signage
- 6) Anchor Rd footpath, SIS
- 7) Co-op junction, SIS
- 8) Holcombe, Duke of Cumberland, signage, Barlake Lane obstruction
- 9) Verge Cutting, Charmborough Lane to Charlton Rd, plus Mells straight
- 10) Ham Hill, potholes various
- 11) Stockhill, overhanging foliage.
- 12) Farley Dell, hidden signage
- 13) Drain jetting

It was confirmed that the verges on the A and B roads are currently being cut with the C and D roads due to be completed by the end of July. An emergency order to cut back the hedge/verge at the junction of Charmborough Lane and Charlton Road had should result in the verge being cut within 24 hours.

Rural drains are to be cleared twice yearly. If you see any that are blocked then please report them. This can be done via the Somerset County Council website under 'Report a problem on the road'. The link is: <https://services.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/?issue=POT&serviceCode=HRI>

The Highways engineer reviewed the overhanging trees on the Vobster to Coleford Road but did not consider this to be a concern at present.

It was reported that the speed limit sign on Doors Hill was obscured by foliage and has been hit causing it to twist around the post.

Update on Goodeaves Playground

The Insurance claim for the vandalized slide and play trail has been settled and the payment of £1841 has been received in the bank. The PCSO had provided letters of apology from each of the young people and it is hoped that they have learnt a valuable lesson from the incident. It was noted that the Police had taken the incident seriously and followed it through with extensive investigation and worked with the youths to hopefully make them understand the implications of their actions on the wider community.

After numerous reports of young people climbing on the high timber roof of the play tower the Council have agreed that roof should be removed to reduce the risk of injury. The contractor has been notified and it is hoped that all of the work will be carried out soon.

Finance

The Parish Council agreed to support the following requests:

Reading Ready Scheme - £300 awarded to support two schemes which will be run during the summer holidays. The first will help prepare children for school in September and the second will help children to brush up on their skills learnt during their first year at school which may have been affected by the pandemic. There will be 4 to 6 children per group which will run 5 days a week for 6 – 8 weeks.

Bishop Henderson School - £500 will go towards the creation of a spiritual garden which will mark the 50th Anniversary of the school.

Book about Coleford - £250 will go towards the cost of printing this well researched book about the village. A copy of the book will be held at Somerset Heritage Centre at Taunton, Frome Library, Bishop Henderson School, The Royal British Legion, The Kings Head and the Eagle. The book will also be available online.

Update on the Grass cutting contract

The Parish Council is disappointed that the chosen contractor was unable to fulfill the contract which has left us well into the season with long grass and no one to cut it. Using 2 contractors for different areas, we have now managed to get one cut to all areas. The Clerk has been speaking with the contractors that tendered earlier in the year but due to commitments for the year it has proved difficult but negotiations are continuing and it is hoped that a contractor will be secured soon so that regular cuts can resume.

Grants Available

Halecombe Quarry Community Fund is now open to support projects within the parishes of Leigh on Mendip, Coleford, Mellis and Whatley. Any questions about completing the Application Form should be directed to the Administrator at halecombequarryfund@gmail.com or 07815 608169. The deadline is 31st July 2021.

Mendip District Council has launched 2 funds:

- 1 There is a total of £50,000 for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund, where community organisations can apply for up to £2,000 to fund eco projects.
- 2 The Communities Fund will help project ideas that improve and support communities. This fund is worth £350,000 in total and groups can apply for up to £2,000 for smaller projects or up to £30,000 for larger schemes.

The Parish Council website <https://www.colefordsomerset.info/notices> has further information about both grants.

Date of Next Meetings:

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 Council report

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

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 28th May the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 20,455 (up from 20,272 on 30th April) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 800 (796). The rate per 100,000 stands at 5.5 for Somerset with Mendip at 5.2, Sedgemoor at 8.9, South Somerset 3.6 and SW&T at 5.2. The number of total deaths across the County is currently 8% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.8 and 1.1.

Despite significant progress and even those who have had both jabs it is vitally important to remember, to observe Hands-Face-Space and to Ventilate indoor areas at all times.

Road map out of lockdown: The final stage out of lockdown due on (or after) 21st June is subject to Government assessment on four key criteria:

- the vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- the assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants

By this date the Government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact and to reopen remaining premises, including nightclubs. The easing of restrictions on large events, performances and life events such as weddings will also be subject to the analysis of the outcomes from certain pilot events.

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 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 77.5% of the 16+ population. 246,983 (53.3%) have received their second dose. Take up rates of both doses is very high: 80+ (95.8%), 75-79 (100%), 70-74 (97.7%), 65-69 (86.2%), 60-64 (73.0%), 55-59 (50.4%) and 50-54 (47.4).

One Somerset: An announcement on the future of local government in Somerset is expected from the Government in late June/ early July. For more information visit: www.onesomerset.org.uk

Extra investment into Public Health: Somerset County Council (SCC) is allocating an additional £10m to embed public health across all areas of council services. The major investment will include £2m to support Somerset communities – helping address anxiety and those with mild mental health issues. £2m expanding Somerset’s expert health protection programme including controlling outbreaks, managing testing, providing localised contact tracing, and supporting businesses and communities. Some funding will be invested in research and work to improve local understanding of Covid and the changing needs of the Somerset. A further £500,000 will be made available for town and parish councils to help them reconnect with their communities by safely reopening facilities like halls, rooms and other sites with good prevention control measures in place.

Summer activities for Years 11: Somerset students heading from Year 11 into Year 12 will have access to a wide range of free exciting educational opportunities this summer. There is a mixture of virtual and face-to-face events and activities to choose from taking place across the county including Kilve Court, Charterhouse, and other key venues across Somerset. These will include team-building exercises and physical activities such as climbing and low-ropes, as well as wellbeing and ‘ready to study’ sessions. Registration is now live via: www.somersetworks.vfairs.com

Rights of Way: During the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a big rise in the number of people using the county’s 9,000 public rights of way across the network which totals 3,843 miles (6,186 km). This has meant a huge upsurge in the number of reports being received; at times double that from previous years. Through the Rights of Way team and nearly 400 volunteers the network’s ‘easy to use’ grading has risen to 85.7%, the highest since records began in 2003 when the percentage was just 39.2%. For anyone interested in helping the team you can find out more about at www.volunteering.somerset.gov.uk

Donate a toothbrush: National Smile Month (which runs to 17th June) is the world’s largest and longest-running campaign to promote better oral health. It aims to promote key tips and advice, helping keep everyone’s smile healthy. This year Somerset County Council is encouraging people to think about adding a

toothbrush and toothpaste when they donate food to their local Foodbanks. Poor oral health is largely preventable and good habits of brushing twice a day should be taught from when a baby's first tooth shows through.

New School for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Construction has finished on Polden Bower School, a brand new £23m Somerset County Council funded state-of-the-art school in Bridgwater which is clearly visible from the M5. The project is part of a wider SCC's programme to boost provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in the county and caters for 160 students aged 4-16 with complex needs. Primary aged children are due to start on site in June, with older children following in July so that they get the accustomed to their new environment before the start of the new school year in September 2021.

Winter Gritting Summary: In the 2020/21 winter season SCC's fleet of 23 gritters were needed on 66 occasions when freezing temperatures were forecast, treating around 900 miles of road each time to help prevent ice forming. This included additional gritting to ensure safe passage to vaccination and testing sites. The team covered 70,200 miles, a significant increase from previous years when they covered 44,000 miles in 2019/20 and 32,800 miles in 2018/19. The lowest road temperature was recorded at -6.1 degrees in the Mendip Hills on 10th February 2020.

Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Ham and Townsend submitted the following joint report:

UNITARY Poll - Following Mendip's Full Council decision to proceed with their poll despite the warnings of the Secretary of State the voting papers were sent out to all electors. Unfortunately, the document enclosed with the papers giving further information about the One Somerset option pointed electors to a spoof website containing inappropriate material condemning One Somerset and the Leader of Somerset County Council (SCC). The letter from the Secretary of State dated 24-5-21 describes the material as "offensive and contains sexist and derogatory depictions of women" and goes on to say that this "risks undermining the reputation of local government in this country". The leader of Mendip District Council (MDC) explained that it was the fault of bad proof reading by SCC, who had nothing to do with the poll, and also by their independent contractors for apparently not spotting the omission of 2 words which by pure coincidence led electors to the spoof site.

The result of the poll was published on 7-6-21 with voters electing by 2 to 1 to select the Stronger Somerset option for 2 separate unitaries, East and West Somerset. However, on a turnout of 26% this means that only 1 in 6 electors in the county voted for this option. The decision of the Secretary of State is expected shortly.

UNITARY Meeting - A further meeting was chaired by Frome Town Council on 25-5-21. Progress was made in completing the Matrix of activities to be covered and the level at which they should be managed. Key issues were: the willingness and ability of lower levels to manage services, the allocation of funding to cover services, the allocation of assets e.g., car parks, how to engage our communities in the process, what can we learn from neighbouring unitaries such as Wiltshire and Dorset. Coleford PC may wish to set up a Unitary working group to provide a focus for this work.

PLANNING - The Inspector's Final report on Local Plan Part 2 was due at the end of April, then May, now we are told it is July. Mendip have been queried on this and they believe it is nothing sinister, probably a temporary reallocation of work for our Inspector. It is still scheduled for adoption by Mendip at September's Full Council meeting. We still have no date for the hearing of the Gladman appeal and the Springwater Farm appeal has not reached a Start date yet.

RECYCLING - Recent complaints about missed collections have been referred to Mendip's Group Manager for Neighbourhood Services for investigation.

CARBON NEUTRAL - Mendip's Cabinet on 7-6-21 reviewed the propose indictive Pathway to Carbon Neutral by 2030. The report conceded that the most realistic prospect would be to achieve a 30% reduction from current levels. Further reductions would require significant government intervention. Even to achieve the 30% figure would require the erection of 31 x 450ft high 2.5MW wind turbines in the district. As the Mendips are the windiest location in the district this could see one placed every half mile between Masbury and Norton St Philip.