

Parish Council of Coleford

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In line with government guidance and recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable, it was agreed that this meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting using Zoom video technology.

Minutes of the Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday 5th May 2021

Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Barrett, Conn, Evans, Pearce, Townsend and Turner. 1 member of the public attended.

1. Public Forum

1. A resident raised concern over the height of the bund which has been created at Springwater Farm as well as the type of material that is being tipped. The landowner had indicated that the lorries would stop delivering to the site in July 2020 but it is still ongoing.

Action: Cllr Townsend and the Clerk to liaise and draft letters for both Planning Enforcement and the landowner.

- 2 Mrs Mary Pearce asked for the Councils support with running schooling schemes to support young children with reading. Although not seeking financial reward for her time she is seeking a grant of approx. £300 to cover the cost of the reading books. It is proposed that a small number of children would meet Mary at the preferred location of @ the Hub to read. Parents would remain with the child reducing any issues regarding safeguarding.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting. Information to be circulated to all Councillors

2. Cllr Barrett had been asked by a resident to highlight that there is a pile of rubble tipped at the edge of the river near to the old mill at the bottom of Coleford.

Action: Clerk to write to the environmental agency asking them to investigate.

3. Cllr Townsend expressed thanks to Cllr Drescher who voluntarily erected the British Legion Tommy to the lamp post at Beacon View. All Councillors agreed that it was a welcome addition to the village.

Action: Clerk to email a note of thanks

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

Cllr Drescher, Hanney and Banks had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

5. Declaration of Interest and Dispensation granted since last meeting

There were none.

6. Approve Minutes of Parish Council meetings held on the 28th April 2021

It was agreed that the minutes would be approved at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

7. Matters arising

It was agreed that all matters arising would be reviewed at the next meeting.

8. Reports

1. PCSO – No report had been received.

2. Somerset County Council 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

3. 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.

7. **Planning Applications**

There was none.

8. Planning updates

The Clerk read out a response from Mendip District Councils Enforcement office received in response to the Councils queries about 14 Roman Way. They confirmed that:

1. With regard to the removal of the tree and hedge, the Parish Council would need to speak with Charlotte Rogers who was the case officer. The application form states that 'no trees or hedges need to be removed or pruned to implement the proposal' and there are 'no trees/hedges on the property or on adjoining property within falling distance of the property'
2. The erection of the wall will require investigation if it exceeds 1 metre in height adjacent to a highway used by vehicular traffic or if permitted development rights have been removed; Planning Enforcement will investigate.
3. They confirmed that enforcement of the deeds or the security cameras would not be a matter for the planning authority.

Action: Clerk to Action

Cllr Townsend said that they had received notification from the planning officer that they wished to recommend approval of application 2020/2006/FUL for the erection of 4 glamping holiday lets at Luckington Gables, Lipyeate Cross to Luckington Cross, which was contrary to the decision of the Parish Council who recommended refusal. After considering the officers report they felt that there were not sufficient reasons to take the application to the planning board and therefore advised the officer to proceed with the approval.

Cllr Townsend confirmed that there was still no inspector appointed for the Gladman appeal and therefore, no date has been set for the hearing.

Cllr Townsend said that it is hoped that the Local Plan will be approved by September. However, there is an opinion that this should have been much sooner.

9. Update on Highways including:

There were no new issues reported by Councillors.

10. Finance

10.1 Consider & approve section 1 of the Audit - Annual Governance statement for 2020/21

The Clerk had circulated section 1 of the Annual Governance statement for consideration prior to the meeting. The Clerk then read out the questions within Section 1 of the Annual Governance statement 2020/21 with Councillors answering yes to all questions. It was agreed that the Chair should sign the section at the earliest opportunity.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

10.2 Consider & approve section 2 of the Audit - Accounting statements for 2020/21

The Clerk then read out Section 2 the Accounting statements for 2020/21 which had been completed using the figures for the previous financial year ending 2020 and year ending 2021. All Councillors present acknowledged that the page was completed correctly and agreed that the Chair and the Clerk should sign off the section at the earliest opportunity.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

The Clerk to ensure that the audit paperwork is submitted by the deadline and displayed on the notice boards and website to allow the electors an opportunity to examine the accounts.

10.3 Accounts approved for payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

BHIB Ltd – Annual Insurance	£802.94
A Mason – Internal Audit	£ 70.00

It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Conn that the invoices should be paid.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

11 Discuss how to proceed with potential project to update the Hard Courts with astro turf type surface

It was agreed that Cllr Allen, Cllr Ham, Cllr Drescher, Cllr Conn and the Clerk would meet virtually via Zoom during the week commencing 10th May with representatives of the Football Club to discuss the pros and cons of upgrading the hard courts to anew astro turf surface.

Action: Clerk to arrange a convenient date the w/c 10th May for virtual meeting

12 Update on the return of face-to-face meetings

After discussion it was agreed to postpone the Meeting of the Parish which was planned to take place in person on the 26th May. The new date will be Wednesday 21st July at 7pm when it is hoped that it will be safer for all attending. The Clerk to notify the village groups of the new date.

13 Meetings to attend or attended

Frome Town Council meeting to discuss Unitary Authority – Date to be confirmed.

Action: Agenda item for June

14 Correspondence

Open Spaces Society – Call to local councils to grant a green. Cllr Ham said that in his view, Fields in Trust may be more appropriate.

Action: Clerk to investigate for the Coleford Playing Field. Check Land Registry records. Agenda item for June meeting

15 Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

It was agreed that the quote received from Ben Windel of £150 to cut back the hedge and straighten the finger post sign at the junction of Highbury Street and Newbury Road should be accepted so that Chris Ingrem can complete the renovation.

Action: Clerk to inform Ben Windel of the decision. Fingerpost signs to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

It was noted that Somerset Day is being celebrated from the 8th to 15th May by flying the Somerset Flag across the County. There will be no action from Coleford Parish Council this year but it was agreed that the Council might want to install a flag pole in the corner of the Highbury playing field near the Christmas Tree.

Action: Agenda item for June

Action: It was agreed that the Council Tree Survey will be an agenda item for June.

16 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