

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
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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 the 10th March 2021

PRESENT

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

1. PUBLIC FORUM

- 1.1 The Clerk confirmed that she had received an email from Mr Chris Osborne stating that the hydrant on Anchor Road near Rope Walk had been repaired.
- 1.2 Cllr Evans had received a request for a small grit bin to be located at Beacon View next to where the new bollards had been recently installed. To be considered at a future meeting.

Action: Agenda item for April meeting

- 1.3 Cllr Pearce asked how members of the public could access the virtual planning board meeting. Cllr Townsend confirmed it was possible but he would need to seek instructions on how this could be completed.

Action: Cllr Townsend to establish how to join the virtual planning board meeting and circulate to Parish Councillors and via social media.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Hanney had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION GRANTED SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Cllr Ham declared an interest in Planning Application reference 2021/0372/FUL.

4. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 10TH & 24TH FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Conn that both sets accurately reflected the meeting and should therefore be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 11 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to ensure the minutes are signed and uploaded to the website

5. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising had been completed or would be discussed later in the meeting apart from:

The clerk confirmed that she had produced a draft letter addressing dog owners accessing Highbury Playing Field. It was agreed that 50 letters would be printed and hand delivered to the nearest properties. A copy of the letter would also be laminated and placed on each entrance to the field

The Clerk said that the new laptop had been purchased and it was hoped that the files would be transferred and set up next week. The Clerk asked if an antivirus package could be purchased from Geeking It Simple at a cost of £5 per month to ensure that security is not breached. Cllr Conn proposed and Cllr Ham seconded that this should be installed.

Vote: 11 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action Clerk to ensure that matters arising are completed

6. DISCUSS VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKING SCHEME AND HOW THE PARISH COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT

Cllr Conn welcomed Teresa Hopkins who along with Allison Still has been for some time regularly picking up litter around the village along with some other residents. Their impact is great, but they cannot cover the whole area. We are grateful to all of these volunteers and thank them for their ongoing commitment to the task

Cllr Allen arrived at 19.30hrs

Alison and Teresa have said that they would like to recruit some additional volunteers, using “The Coleford Echo” (Facebook page), other social media and, when possible, word of mouth. 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, and would therefore not be insured by the Parish Council, but would require: -

- a) The PC to supply equipment, namely litter pickers (@£5), hi viz vests (@£3), bags (@£1) and, if possible, bag hoops (@£8) – the estimated costs per item indicate that it would cost about £17 per head to equip a volunteer. However, the PC may be able to source items for less.
- b) The PC to allow volunteers to place collected litter in village litter bins, if they are not able to sort items for recycling. This is needed as general waste is now collected from households only every three weeks.

Health and safety considerations would be met by operating under 2 metre beach and street cleaning guidelines for Covid. They would work to a risk assessment to cover this and other hazards, such as sharps, glass, contamination and traffic.

It has been suggested that a litter picking event could be organised after “lock-down” restrictions are eased. This may be of interest to local youth groups and Duke of Edinburgh Award participants. However, if enough people respond to the call for volunteers, the need for this could be reduced.

The Parish Council were asked if they could lead on the following points: -

- a) providing an opportunity for residents to dispose of bulky waste that they have not been able to take to household recycling centers – for example a skip placed at the Stockhill end of the village for a weekend or week. This need not be delayed by Covid restrictions.
- b) planning a tidy up of the woodland between the Beacon View area and Kilmersdon Common – this would require volunteers to collect dumped waste as well as a skip, so would need to await the ending of Covid restrictions. Cllr Ham said that this was owned by Mendip District Council and it would be worth contacting them to see if they will arrange for the area to be cleared.

It was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Turner that Coleford Parish Council:

- i. Thanks Allison Still and Teresa Hopkins for their work and practical proposals. Subject to volunteers being recruited and the volunteer group providing evidence of a satisfactory risk assessment and guidance notes for volunteers,
- ii. authorises the clerk to provide equipment to the volunteer group as described above, subject to a budget limit of £200 for 2020 – 2021.
- iii. Agrees to the use of litter bins for litter collected by volunteers when this cannot be recycled and: -
- iv. Considers a community litter event when this would be possible and the impact of volunteers can be seen
- v. Considers the cost and any legal issues of providing a skip collection of bulky waste in the Stockhill area, with a view to arranging this for Easter or an alternative suitable date, with advertising via the notice boards and social media
- vi. Considers the provision of a skip and requesting volunteers for clearance of the wooded area between Beacon View and Kilmersdon Common, when Covid restrictions permit.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

It was agreed that consideration would be given to establish how Charmborough Lane could be safely litter picked maybe by using signage, a diversion or a rolling convoy to allow a safe working zone for those clearing the litter.

It was agreed that local businesses would be approached to see if they would be prepared to sponsor elements of the volunteer litter picking scheme.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Teresa and Allison to complete the actions above

Clerk to contact Mendip District Council to ask them to clear the woods between Beacon View and Kilmersdon Common which they own

Approach local business for sponsorship of the volunteer scheme

6. REPORTS

6.1 PCSO

A newsletter for the Frome Rural Beat North had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Poaching, speeding, theft / non dwelling burglary and fly tipping were noted as the current priorities.

The 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

6.2 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

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 space 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/>

6.3 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR 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.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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.

Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. Cllr Pearce said that he felt the substantial extension to the bungalow was not in character and the barn was not required for agricultural purposes. He was concerned that the request to extend the garden by changing from agricultural use to residential garden was creeping into the agricultural land - a previous request for this had been refused by Mendip Planning office in the past. Within the application the applicant had stated that no trees would be affected by the application, however Cllr Pearce felt that this was not the case and that the mature trees should be protected wherever possible.

Cllr Conn said that he believed the original bungalow was small and that the extension, which was to the rear of the property, would create a reasonable sized family home. This was echoed by Cllr Banks. The extension of the garden could actually be a benefit to the wildlife. He agreed with Cllr Pearce that any mature trees should be safeguarded. He assumed that the barn might be for equestrian use, but this was not clear.

It was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Turner that the 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.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 3 Abstentions (2 District Councillors)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer

8. PLANNING UPDATES

8.1 Request for TPO on the Elm at Lipyeate. The Clerk confirmed that an email had been received from Bo Walsh outlining why he would not be granting a TPO on the Elm at Lipyeate. Cllr Townsend said that he believed that The Tree Officer had been inconsistent with his view regarding the life expectancy of the tree and others in the Parish.

8.2 2020/2201/OTS - Outline planning application for the erection of up to 63 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS), a vehicular access point from Anchor Road. All matters reserved except for means of access (resubmission of 2019/2345/OTS) - Additional landscaping information received 18th January 2021. Land Off Anchor Road Lipyeate Cross to Luckington Cross, Coleford, Frome, Somerset Cllr Townsend confirmed that the application has been referred to the planning board meeting which would take place on the 17th March at 6pm as the planning officer had recommended approval.

The brochure used at the original board meeting will be updated to highlight key points and concerns.

Cllr Ham and Townsend will attend a meeting with Somerset highways at 2pm tomorrow (11/03/21) when it is hoped they will be able to show the real issues relating to Charmborough Lane and Anchor Road and why the development would seriously impact on the highway network around the village.

For the Board meeting Cllr Townsend said that Mark Reynolds of Context Planning would attend virtually to give a statement on policy and harm. As Ward Members Cllr Ham would cover highways and Cllr Townsend sustainability. Cllr Conn, as a village objector, will highlight points raised in Mendip District Council's recent Landscape Character Assessment plus other environmental implications.

Cllr Townsend explained that in the 2020/21 budget £5K had been allocated for professional fees of which £4100 has been spent to date. A further £2K has been allocated in the 2021/22 budget (starts 1st April 2021). Cllr Pearce proposed and Cllr Conn seconded that a further £1K should be allocated for the current financial year to ensure that there is enough to cover time spent by Planning Consultant Mark Reynolds of Context Planning to defend the application.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 3 Abstentions (2 District Councillors)

9. HIGHWAYS

9.1 Report of any new issues reported by Councillor

Cllr Townsend confirmed he had reported the following issues

- Potholes by the 30 signs 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 for Cllr Townsend to report:

- The potholes on Dark Lane are getting worse and have not as yet been marked for repair despite being reported.
- Water, possibly from a new spring 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.

9.2 Consider supporting the request from St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council asking for County Council to make vital improvements to the Old Frome Road and A37 junction.

The Clerk explained that an email had been received from St Cuthberts (Out) Parish Council seeking the parish Councils 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. 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 has seen signage and lining improved to highlight dangerous points along the route which includes the above-mentioned junction. Cllr Ham has worked with County Cllr Mike Pullin to speak 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. Cllr Townsend proposed that we support the motion which was seconded by Cllr Ham.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council

10. Finance

Accounts approved for payments

The following invoices were produced for payment:

Vickie Watts Clerk Expenses - **£140.00**
(Including payment to Geeking It Simple for laptop set up)
HMRC National Insurance - **£32.66**

It was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Banks that the payments should be made.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

11. UPDATE ON GRASS CUTTING AND HEDGE CUTTING CONTRACT

As agreed at the previous meeting the Clerk contacted the referees provided for Greenways. It transpired that for one Parish Council they emptied bins on a regular basis and the other was a small area of grass cutting. The Clerk was concerned that it would appear that they had limited proven experience of looking after a contract the size of Coleford.

The Clerk also spoke with the referees for Hill and Hill and gave very good feedback for both the quality of their work and reliability. After consultation with Cllr Ham and Cllr Conn it was agreed that both the Hedge and Grass cutting contract should be offered to Hill and Hill.

The Clerk spoke with Justin Hill, who in light of having recently secured the Cranmore Parish Council contract felt that the Coleford contract would be too much and could lead to their standards not being met.

After further consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair it was agreed that the Clerk would ask Idverde if they would be able to reconsider the price quoted for one particular part of the contract. They confirmed that they could not.

The Clerk had circulated an email received from Greenways earlier in the day which stated that they would offer a 5% discount off the overall price as goodwill and gesture. The combined total for Hedge and Grass Cutting had been confirmed as £5800.06 for both 2021 and 2022. A 5% reduction would make the total payable £5510.

After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Conn that the Clerk would meet with the representative of Greenways on site to discuss the contract to ensure that they understand the required level of standards and commitment. They would be offered a contract with a break clause after 1 year based on the price offered at the 5% discounted rate totalling £5510.

Action: Clerk to meet with Greenways to discuss standards of work expected and offer the contract

12. UPDATE ON ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (COLEFORD) ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Cllr Ham reported that Cllr Banks had reviewed the prepared application. There is talk within the village that if the Coleford British Legion had ever failed that it had been agreed it would be returned to the village. This was in light of the fact that there had been a large sum of money invested by Parishioners to fund the build. However, to date no supporting documentation had been found to support this claim. An application had been lodged with Land Registry to establish who is registered as owners of the asset. It was agreed that Cllr Ham would liaise with Ammerdown Estate to establish if they are able to clarify the position. This needs to be sorted.

Action: Cllr Ham to progress with Land Registry and Ammerdown Estate

13. REVIEW QUOTES FOR RE FENCING THE HARD COURTS AND ASTRO TURF TYPE SURFACE

This will be considered at the March planning meeting.

Action: Agenda item for April or March planning meeting

14. DISCUSS QUOTES FOR RAIN WATER HARVESTING AT GOODEAVES ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk confirmed that 3 allotment holders had expressed an interest in having a 1000 litre Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC) provided by the Parish Council, however all felt that a tap from the mains should be installed. Cllr Townsend confirmed that there was an IBC available free of charge at Leigh on Mendip allotments which we can collect.

The Clerk asked if a detailed quote could be obtained to bring mains from the pipe which is allegedly in the field which borders the Goodeaves allotments. It is understood that the landowner is currently in hospital and has been for some time and it may not be possible to ascertain whether permission would even be given to access the supply. It was agreed that Cllr Drescher would contact Haydon allotments to establish cost of installation and ongoing water charges for reference.

Action: Clerk to arrange collection / delivery of the IBC

Cllr Drescher to seek information from Haydon Allotments about installation and ongoing charges

15. CONSIDER MOVING THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING FORWARD BY A WEEK TO THE 5TH MAY 2021 SO THAT IT CAN BE HELD VIRTUALLY

The Clerk explained that 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 re-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. The Clerk therefore requested that the Annual meeting of the Parish is held on the 28th April (as already agreed) but the Annual Parish Council (APC) meeting 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.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to publicise in On the Map and on the Village Facebook page and website.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

- Mendip District Council email on Stronger Somerset proposal. Circulated to all Councillors. No action required.
- Sally Johnston – Pilates in the Park. Request to restart sessions in Coleford playing field on 07/04/21. Clerk to confirm approval.
- Time is Precious email thanking the Parish Council for its donation and updating on the work done by the Charity. No action required.
- Somerset Association of Local Councils training dates. Circulated to all Councillors who should confirm if they wish to attend.
- Letter from Myra Perry received notifying that she will no longer be running the Court Café. It is hoped that someone will take it over after Covid restrictions are lifted but nothing confirmed as yet. Clerk to write a letter of thanks to Myra and say that the cups bought from the Parish Grant can remain at Douglas Yates Court to be utilized by users of the community room.

Action: Clerk to write to Sally Johnston and Myra Perry

17. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

Cllr Conn said that the Parish Council should be notified soon on whether the grant application from the Somerset Climate Emergency fund had been successful. This should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the March planning meeting

18. Date of Next Meetings:

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| 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 |