

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter August 2021

Councillor Resignation

It was with sadness that the Parish Council received Cllr Andy Conn's letter of resignation. Andy joined the Council in November 2015 and has been an excellent, pro-active member throughout that time and in recent years was also Vice Chairman. He was key in securing grant funding for the pump track, taking the lead on reviewing the Parish Plan and for implementing a regular maintenance plan to ensure the butterfly bank was a haven for wildlife and wild flowers. His knowledge and support will be greatly missed but we wish him the very best for future and hope that we will see him around the village.

During the meeting Cllr Pearce was elected as Vice Chairman and we welcome him to the role.

We now have a Councillor vacancy which we are keen to fill. Would you like to be part of the decision making, commenting on local planning applications, helping with community projects and generally making Coleford an even better place to live? For more information then please contact the Clerk on clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com



Highways including:

Anchor Rd 30 mph markings – The cross bar road markings at the entry to the village have become obliterated. Any speed reduction measures here are important and will be reported to Somerset Highways.

Bus Back Better feedback request - Cllr Ham has attended several meetings regarding how to improve the bus service within our parish with the funding available to the County. Feedback had been obtained from Parishioners via social media and the Clerk will feed this information back to the Bus Back Better team for them to process.

Coleford Play areas

The annual inspection reports have been completed and reviewed by Councillors. Generally, the equipment at the four play areas is in good order but during the meeting some minor repairs were authorised to ensure that they continue to meet the high standards required and extend the longevity of the equipment.



The Clerk undertakes weekly inspections at each site but if you should ever notice something is broken then please do call the Clerk on 07971 516916 to ensure that the issue is resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Wi-Fi at The Hub

This week as part of their agreed installation to the lower half of the village, Truespeed have installed broadband at The Hub. This service will allow internet access for all hall users free of charge which not only is an asset to the hall but will mean that they no longer have to pay the monthly payments which they have been to date.

The Queens Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend June 2022

Village groups and members of the public are invited to attend an open meeting on the 15th September at The Hub, Church Street starting at 7pm to discuss how the village can get together to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. Please come along and help to make this a memorable occasion





Date of Next Meetings:

8th September 2021 – Monthly 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

Mendip District Council Report

District Cllr Ham and Townsend provided the following report:

UNITARY - The Secretary of State has published his decision that the Unitary Council will be the One Somerset model covering the whole county rather than the Stronger Somerset proposal for separate East and West Somerset unitaries. The next legal steps are:

- Parliamentary approval to be arranged Dec-Jan
- Elections for new Unitary Council May 2022
- Unitary Council Vesting Day 1st April 2023



We need to consider the roles our parishes wish to take in the new Local Community Networks. Coleford are currently included in the preparatory matrix of responsibilities being prepared by Frome Town Council. We may wish to consider being involved in a rural Mendip grouping to avoid the possible risk of being dominated by Frome.

PLANNING - Last month's Planning Board considered 3 large applications for 345 houses on the Keyford side of Frome. The decision was deferred to give the developers the chance to improve their offers. If approved they will contribute significantly towards rectifying Mendip's 5-year housing shortfall. Members received a formal briefing from the developers of the 'Selwood Garden Community' which could bring a further 1700 houses to the south west corner of Frome. The formal application is imminent.

An application by Gladman for 90 houses at Chilcompton has been refused by Mendip at officer level without even going to the Planning Board.

Gladman appeal – this goes ahead on 18th August on a virtual basis. Invitations to take part or listen in have been issued by the Planning Inspectorate. We met with Mendip's new planning Team Leader who will lead the case for the defence. He has very rapidly got up to speed with the fundamental issues and led the Chilcompton case to refuse. The Parish Council case will be presented formally by our planning consultant Mark Reynolds, supported by ourselves. For the updated Local Plan Part 2 the Inspector's Final Report missed the re-scheduled date of the end of July, though formal adoption is still planned for the end of September. A draft document is expected in time for the Gladman appeal.

CABINET - Somerset Rivers Authority – The SRA was set up in 2015 to find better ways of tackling our flooding problems following the 2013/2014 disasters. We were presented with a paper which shows that funding is being directed not just at the Somerset Levels but also at the higher catchment areas and specific issues within Mendip.

Carbon Management Plan – A 90-page report was presented giving details of how Mendip is going to reduce its carbon footprint by 2030 and reduce our vulnerability to the threat of climate change. The paper was disappointing in that it states that we at our level can have an effect on climate change, which is clearly nonsense in a global context. What we can do is be seen to show a lead. Also, it gave no indication of what this will cost us in terms of deep house insulation, electric cars, ground/air source heating to name a few, and also the Council's own costs, payable by us. A Climate Action pledge card is available to help us focus our actions. Also, we may wish to consider procuring an EV charging station for the village

RECYCLING - SWP continue to have problems in Mendip, due largely to Covid and staff shortages.

Somerset County Council Reports



Coronavirus infection rates: As at 30th July the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 26,526 (up from 20,982 on 25th June) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 802. The rate per 100,000 stands at 206.9 (47.1) for Somerset with Mendip at 234.5 (40.7), Sedgemoor at 195.7 (74.7), South Somerset 214.4 (20.8) and SW&T at 187.0 (58.7). The number of total deaths across the County is currently 40% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.3 and 1.5.

Despite significant progress and even for 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: It is expected that the final lifting of restrictions including the need to self-isolate will be removed from 16th August 2021.

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 continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing over 93.7% of the adult population having had one dose of vaccine and 77.4% having had both doses. Work continues to encourage further take up particularly amongst younger adults and a real focus on ensuring the second vaccine to this group.

Local Government Reorganisation: The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has delivered his decision on which unitary council business cases met his three tests and will therefore be progressed through Parliament. A single unitary met all of his clear tests including the ability to improve local government and services.

It is expected that the orders will be laid before Parliament in the late Autumn and a vesting date of the new authority as April 2023. Work with partners will now commence to progress through the transition period.

Tick warning: With the warmer weather come ticks, which thrive in woodland, long grass and even urban parks. SCC has put together a ‘tick list’ to follow to reduce the risk of being bitten including: Walking on clearly defined paths, wearing light coloured clothing, using an insect repellent, wearing long trousers and long-sleeved tops to reduce the skin exposure and carrying out a regular tick check after outdoor activities. Being bitten by a tick doesn’t usually require hospital treatment but people are advised to dial NHS 111 if they start to feel unwell.

County-wide Bus Services: Following the Government’s announcement in March of the new National Bus Strategy – ‘Bus Back Better’ a £3 billion pot of funding is being made available to improve bus services across the country and Somerset County Council can bid for a share of this in partnership with operators. But first, the Council needs to know about residents’ experience and where the gaps in services are. You can take the survey at <https://somerset.inconsult.uk/somerset.bus.survey/consultationHome>

Reflections of the pandemic: The Somerset Library Service is inviting people to share their experiences of the last sixteen months, to be recorded for future generations. As part of ‘Reflections’, a county-wide creative response to the pandemic, libraries will host a series of free drop-in sessions throughout August and online via social media. The collaborative artwork and film will be given to the South West Heritage Trust as a ‘record’ of the experiences of Somerset people during the pandemic. The film and artwork will then be showcased at the evening ‘Reflections’ event to be held on the 10 September. This initiative forms part of Somerset Libraries’ response to initiative, funded by The BBC and Arts Council England.

Summer holidays school meals support: The Department of Work and Pensions has extended its Covid Local Support Grant, providing £1.4m to Somerset County Council who will use the grant to fund food vouchers worth £15 per week for children eligible for Free School Meals over the six-week Summer Holidays. SCC has been working to tackle holiday hunger during the pandemic, providing funding for food and vouchers over the October, February, and May half-term periods, as well as the Christmas and Easter holidays.

National Recognition: Somerset County Council has been shortlisted for three prestigious national awards in recognition of its work during the coronavirus pandemic. The categories include; ‘Best Workforce Transformation’ for its redeployment work during the pandemic, ‘Community Heroes’ for the work of Community Council for Somerset’s Village and Community Agents, and ‘Delivering Better Outcomes’ for Somerset’s Micro-providers, independent care providers who proved a lifeline for Somerset’s isolated rural population throughout the pandemic.