

Parish Council of Coleford

Miss V Watts
Clerk to the Council
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428
Email: clerk@colefordsomerset.org

Gallant Hill Farm
Foxcote
Radstock
BA3 5YB

Newsletter for August 2017

Somerset County Council report

County Cllr Ham reported that the recent visit to the Hinkley Point C construction site was overwhelming – the size, the build underground, infrastructure, security, the number of workers, provisions, procurement, companies involved is really quite something. It was a worthwhile visit and gave an insight into the scale of the project and how it will benefit the economy of the area.

Full council was different with a new set of Councillors and a new leader. Adult social care contract with Dimensions still taking time to settle in, change is always difficult and not well received. Another £18.6million is to be saved this year, but some of which has already been saved.

The sale of Council farms has been stopped until a further review by place scrutiny as they were still relying on 2010-2011 report which to some of us was way out of date. County Cllr Ham has been asked to join the Audit Committee, and attended his first meeting which covered the Pension fund and IT Security and the next challenges. Cllr Ham also attended the Somerset River Authority scrutiny meeting on 8th August.

Mendip District Council report

Cllr Philip Ham reported that as part of the Transformation team they have been looking for further acquisitions. Several have been lost out on by not being the highest bidder but the team look close to their first purchase and there are two other very interesting opportunities which have come forward recently. It is hoped that the plan for the site extension at Mendip District Council will be passed soon and work on the new library can begin.

Car Park strategic group met to discuss how the assets can be used better across Mendip, some are over used and others not. What else can we use them for? Is the charging rate right in every car park, do shop keepers and staff use car parks that customers should be using and many more?



The Shape Mendip Lottery is doing ok but could be doing better. You can buy your lottery ticket from the website www.shapemendiplottery.co.uk Please support Coleford @ The Hub by choosing them as your good cause, which will in turn help them to raise much needed funds.

A review was undertaken of the Shepton Mallet Sunday market with it being shut, July and August, but will start again in September on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

With the start of the Boyles Cross work starting in Frome a meeting was held with the retailers to find ways to help them through the constricted period.

Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Townsend reported

- At Full Council a number of re-allocations of duties were made. District Cllr Townsend remains on the Licensing Board and is also now a substitute member of the Planning and Scrutiny Boards.
- Hate Crime awareness – Councillors were given a training session on recognizing Hate Crime and what to do about it.
- At Cabinet the Rode Neighbourhood Plan was formally endorsed. Coleford PC may wish to review this and consider if Coleford could benefit from such a plan, noting that the process can take over four years and involve dedicated resources.

- Useful sessions were held with Mendip Housing. Firstly to work with Leigh on Mendip to understand how the recently awarded \$106 monies can be used to benefit affordable housing in the village. Secondly to progress the cause of the Coleford Housing Needs survey where negotiations are proceeding with a potential developer.
- The monthly meeting of the Keyrings Letting Agency highlighted yet again the drastic shortage of property for rent at the lower end of the market.

Decisions on Previous Planning Applications

2017/1519/PAH – 11 Coal Barton, Coleford

Single storey extension to rear of property to enlarge kitchen area

Mendip District Council decided that prior approval is not required



Planning Applications

2017/1927/FUL - Erection of detached 2 storey 4 bed dwelling

Land East Of Colbury House Anchor Road Coleford Frome Somerset

Holcombe Parish Council considered the application and recommended refusal on the basis that:

1. Could cause more parking issues on the highway where there is already a zebra crossing
2. There are safety concerns over the cars reversing from the proposed development out onto a highway which at peak times of the day are busy with children walking to and from school.
3. It will not fit in with the current street scene and will create a crowded façade.
4. It is over development of the site.

It was noted however that permission had previously been given for a dwelling on the site.

Progress report on BMX pump track

The Chairman thanked Cllr Gurd on completing the Sky Dive to help raise funds for the Coleford BMX pump track. It was confirmed that the total raised was now £2180 and hopefully there is more to come, which really is fantastic! If you would like to donate you can do so at: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/charles-gurd We still have a long way to go and every penny helps.



Cllr Conn has been investigating Grant Funding and has a real handle on what funds are available and has been going through the requirements of those funds before grants will be allocated. Things are looking very promising in that direction.

The Council considered the quotes received to install the new entrance to the Highbury Playing Field and the contract has been awarded to Steve Burdett who hopefully will start work later this month.

It would seem we can comfortably get a 100 metre pump track into the space allocated which takes the form of roughly an oval with a figure of 8 track within it, both contractors are suggesting much the same layout only the lumps and bumps will be of a different form, in a different configuration, will be higher/lower and in different places, otherwise principally similar ... we have decided for a finish on asphalt as being the most durable, least likely to be damaged over time, and most importantly, within our price range. The Council will continue to seek contractors able to deliver our track.

Coleford Defibrillator

The Council has been informed that the defibrillator from outside Coleford Co-operative had been unlocked using the key code but not returned, which is hugely disappointing. The Rotary Club are keen to replace the unit and are seeking a donation towards the cost. The Council will seek some reassurance that procedure could be changed to ensure that this wouldn't happen again.

Update on Butterfly bank clearance day

During 2017

1. Clearance of the dense bramble cover was completed on 14th January, by a large group of residents, plus Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) staff and volunteers.
2. In July, the Parish Council approved the purchase of hand tools namely three slashers, one pair of bypass loppers (for green wood) plus gloves, eye protectors and a sharpening stone. Storage of these items in the shed at the Hub is proposed.
3. On 23rd July, a small group endured steady rain to complete summer maintenance. This included clearing thistles and ragwort from half the bank and thinning the remainder, clearing the diagonal path across the bank and on through the woodland, and scything the long grass at the foot of the bank.
4. The work programme agreed by the Parish Council has been achieved to date, although this year the May and July summer clearance work was combined.

Future work programme

1. An event for children is planned for Tuesday 22nd August 2pm, with the new East Mendip Woodcraft Folk group (based in Coleford) and the theme will be insects. Some insect “sculptures” are likely to be made and hung in trees. We also hope to start building a “bug hotel” for wintering insects, at the top of the bank.
2. We are in touch with SWT and collecting seed locally, to increase the wild flowers growing on the bank. This will include scattering yellow rattle, to reduce the strength of grasses that compete with flowering plants. This species is common locally and plays a vital role in the best wild flower meadows eg Edford Meadows Somerset Wildlife Trust reserve and meadows south of the river at Coleford.
3. The next main winter clearance has been set for Sunday 14th January 2018. Now that the main mass of brambles has been cleared, cutting back new growth needs to be done yearly, but will not be a very big task. SWT have offered to help again.
4. At these events, we hope to promote a local conservation group, working with the Parish Council.



Trees

At the top of the open butterfly bank there are a number of beech trees. These are attractive and appear to be in good condition, but they have some low branches that shade large areas. Removal of a few of these branches to “raise the crowns” of these trees would increase the sunlit area, without reducing the shaded section of the circular walk. This could be done as part of winter maintenance.

The big picture – why the Butterfly Bank is important

The Coleford area has lots of woodland and hedgerows. Some farmland is managed in a traditional manner, with low intensity grazing and limited use of chemicals.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is trying to identify existing areas in the county that link the main sites of wildlife importance, enabling animals and insects in particular to flourish outside “reserves” and increase their resilience. The Butterfly Bank has a part to play in this network.

Although the site is small, its adoption and improvement by the local community is a trail-blazer for achieving improvement. The Coleford project is referred to by the Trust in promoting other community action across Somerset. The Wildlife Trust has played a major part in the project and has offered further support.

Surveys of wild flowers have confirmed that more than 60 species are growing

Community pay back team



The Community Pay Back team recently visited and worked hard on clearing the entrance to the Coleford Playing field and the footpath which runs behind the Kings Head Inn collecting a large amount of rubbish.

The grit bin which had been on the corner at Underhill has been relocated to the top of the steps which appears to be a more appropriate location.

Materials have been purchased in preparation for the Community Pay Back team to repaint the play equipment and treat woodwork as a priority for days when the weather is fine.

Meetings to attend

PACT meeting – 19th September starting at 7pm at Mells Barn. Everyone is welcome.

Date of Next Meetings:

Tuesday 22nd August 2017

Wednesday 13th September 2017

Planning Meeting

Parish Council Meeting

