

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter for April 2018

Presentation by Mendip Housing on the Housing Needs Survey results

Nina Richards and Roisin McDermott from the Housing Development team at Mendip District Council came to speak about the Housing needs survey which they completed recently on behalf of Coleford Parish Council.

Roisin explained that the survey was sent out at the beginning of January for a 3 week period with the closing date being the 2nd of February. The survey was sent to 1060 households and was also available for completion online. 195 valid responses were received resulting in a response rate of 18.4%.

195 parishioners participated in the survey, representing 413 household members. The Enabling Team felt that an 18.4% response rate was reasonably strong from a rural community on a single issue and considering the survey was running in line with other district wide consultations. Of these households there was an equal majority of people aged between 41-54 years (41.5%) and 65-74 years (41.5%) followed by the youngest age bracket 0-16 years of age. The large majority of participants owned their own home with no mortgage (50.8%) and the most common house size for participants was a 3 bedroom home (39.5%).

30 respondents initially indicated a need for affordable housing, however following a closer consideration of their response forms there were 13 valid responses in need of affordable housing, having submitted relevant details of their need and providing consent to be contacted regarding future affordable housing. Of these valid 13 - 12 people specified Renting from a Housing Association as a preferred tenure and 1 person selected Older Person's Accommodation as the most suitable option for their housing needs. There was a clear preference for 2 and 3 bedroom bungalows and houses across all respondents.

The final question in the survey served as a 'catch all', allowing participants to express views on topics which might not have been included for example; transport, employment or community. It was evident that public transport links and infrastructure were of particular concern to Parishioners. The quality of roads and the high volume of traffic were highlighted several times, with many participants stating this should be a priority for the Parish Council as opposed to development and that anymore development would only exacerbate existing problems. In addition, many expressed that a lack of public transport and employment opportunities need to be addressed as a priority as this deters many young people from staying in the Parish

A copy of published report is available online at www.mendip.gov.uk/housingneedsurveys As the survey shows that there is a need for Affordable Housing the Parish Council could put out a call for sites, possibly outside the development line that could be progressed for affordable housing.

Co-option of Councillors

The Parish Council are pleased to have been able to co-opt three new Councillors at our recent meeting. We welcome Adam Drescher, Mark Barrett and Nick Harding. We look forward to working with them and hope that they will enjoy their new role within the village.

Post Office update

Stuart Hall from the Post Office had written to say that he was sorry that things were not happening as quickly as the Council and the Community would like. He went on to say that restoring a Post Office service, even temporarily by means of an outreach service is quite a complex matter with a range of factors needing to be discussed and agreed with any Postmaster that is interested in providing a service, which takes time.

Matt Walls the Network Operations Manager, is responsible for trying to find a long-term solution for the community. There are no mobile vehicles in the area that could be used to provide a visiting service to the village. The outreach services that already exist locally are provided in the form of a hosted visit to a local premises by a Postmaster, like the situation that Matt is exploring for Coleford.

Stuart Hall has confirmed that he will be able to attend the Annual Meeting of the Parish on Wednesday the 25th April to answer any questions that the Council and local residents have.

The Clerk had also emailed Matt Hall seeking answers to some questions which are listed below along with the answers that Matt has provided:

1. How has Mike (From Mells PO) got on with his investigations with the facilities/services at the Doctors surgery with a view to providing a temporary service?
Matt had visited Mike on Monday and discussed Coleford with him, Mike is going to contact the Doctors Surgery and The Hub to arrange to test the mobile kit. As soon as this is done he will let Matt know.
2. Has anyone contacted the people that run the Hub? If not, why not and who is responsible for making contact with them?
Mike has the contact details and the mobile kit to test so he will be in touch.
3. Who is responsible for putting a long term solution in place?
The long term solution is for the Area Network Change Manager to deliver. The new ANCM is Karen Averiss and Matt has discussed the case with her today.
4. What has been done to find a long term permanent solution?
The only long term solution is Post Office Local which needs to be within an established retailer which would be the current Coop or the proposed Coop. The current Radstock Coop have said they are not interested at this time, the new Coop as you know is not built yet. As there are no other retailers within Coleford there is no other PO Local opportunity. To provide a permanent solution at this stage would be to make the proposed Hosted solution (potentially operated by Mike) the permanent solution. This would then be a permanent Hosted service operating two visits a week for two hours each visit, a total of four hours.
5. I have heard about a mobile post office service (as in it's in a van) - is this an option?
The mobile kit Mike has at Mells is a portable computer system which he uses in village halls etc, this service is called a Hosted service. We do have mobile vans which operate at clusters of branches but there is not one close to Coleford.

The Parish Council will continue to keep up the pressure.

Decisions on Previous Applications

2017/0600/FUL - Demolition of existing garage building and development of proposed convenience and 1 dwelling house with associated external works (Amended description 29.06.17, Amended plans and additional information 07.08.17 and revised Planning statement 29.08.18),

Crossways Garage, Anchor Road, Coleford, BA3 5PG

Mendip District Council have approved with conditions

2017/3171/LBC - Proposed coping to boundary walls. Internal modifications to create home-work space, new en suite shower room and minor alteration. New porch on Kitchen door.

Hill Farm, Lipyeate Lane, Coleford, BA3 5FJ

Mendip District Council have approved with conditions

2017/3170/FUL - Proposed stone built garden store, coping to boundary walls and new porch on Kitchen door.
Hill Farm, Lipyeate Lane, Coleford, BA3 5FJ
Mendip District Council have approved with conditions

Coleford number 12-2018 Land at Kilmersdon Common Farm, Common Lane, Coleford
MDC TPO ref: M1351
Tree Preservation Order granted by Mendip District Council on 04/04/18

Progress report on BMX pump track

An inspection of the BMX Pump track has been completed by the working party and it was noted that there were some areas of wear to the macadam surface. Chris Rowe and Rob Wareham of Dirtkraft have been made aware of the situation and have confirmed that they will monitor the surface and repair when required which has been confirmed in the letter of guarantee.

Work has commenced on the new fence which borders the boundary between the playing field and Mr Philips farm buildings. It is anticipated that the job will be completed Saturday afternoon or Monday morning.

We would urge all parents and carers to insist that any youths using the BMX Pump Track are suitably kitted out with a safety helmet at the very minimum! That includes negotiating the roads to and from the track.

BMX Pump Track Signage

The wording for the safety signage and the commemorative plaque has been agreed and quotes are being sought from 3 companies. The working party have agreed the layout and names to be included on the commemorative plaque which includes the quarries and main donors. Cllr Ham proposed that Mrs Angela Yeoman, as the President of the Quarry Producers and of the Community Fund should be invited to undertake the official opening. It was agreed that Cllr Ham would invite Mrs Yeoman to take part in the formal opening on Saturday 2nd June 2018, which would allow sufficient time to notify the Sponsors, as required within the terms of grants.

Update on landscaping

The soil sample results had come back showing that the soil is surprisingly alkaline with a pH of 7.6. This is good news and means that a wider variety of wildflowers should grow at the site. The Geocor netting is expected to arrive imminently which will be installed to protect the planting, help to cover the pieces of glass, reduce the risk of soil erosion on the steeper banks and reduce mud transfer to the track.

Highways

At the recent meeting with Chris Betty of Somerset Highways it was established that SCC will be looking to erect a new advance junction warning sign and a SLOW marking at Soho, prior to Church Street junction from the Vobster direction, as requested.

It has been mentioned that Church Street is to be resurfaced with asphalt, with the road being closed for 3 days during the work. Cllr Pearce will ask SCC if the height of the road outside Douglas Yates could be improved whilst this is being done as the step is currently unacceptably high from road to pavement.

Dog Fouling in the village and what can be done about it

There is a sense of frustration and anger in the community regarding the dog owners who fail to clean up after their dogs. The Clerk has made contact with Ian Glover who is an enforcement officer for Mendip District Council with dog fouling as one of his responsibilities. It is hoped that it can be established how we can tackle and reduce the extent of this problem in our village.

On a positive note the Council is pleased to say that approval has been given for the installation of the new dog waste bin at Rope Walk Farm, Anchor Road. The land owner has kindly agreed to complete the installation in the agreed location for which the Council is grateful.

Date of Next Meetings:

Tuesday 25th April 2018

Planning Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish

Wednesday 9th May 2018

Annual Parish Council Meeting & Parish Council Meeting

The meeting dates are available on the Parish website. www.colefordsomerset.info

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

Please check out the website www.colefordsomerset.info

Philip Ham, Chairman

County Council Report for April

County Council Report

County Cllr Ham reported that the last month has seen the Bi-annual meeting of the Quarry liaison groups except Halecombe due to postponement until they have the amended planning application ready by the end of May / early June.

The Small improvement highways schemes - the assessments will not be known until late May.

Work starts on A block at Somerset County Hall next week so will effect meeting room availability and parking so if you are attending any meetings please check where they are being held!

We are expecting a re-shuffle of Cabinet and appointments next month so we are all anxious about what we may be doing.

Housing infrastructure fund: Government have announced that SCC have cleared a first hurdle on the way to securing £80m from Government from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) the partner authorities have been told that the bid will be taken on to the next stage.

The money is about making sure communities don't have to wait until new developments are underway or complete before they have the infrastructure they need including highways, schools, cycle routes and flood defences.

High speed broadband: Nearly 300,000 homes and businesses in rural areas now have access to superfast broadband thanks to Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS). This includes 118,000 in Somerset, according to analysis which has found that the total number of homes and businesses with access to CDS-provided superfast has risen to 298,900 with a further 38,000 being able to access improved broadband speeds. In addition, CDS-funded construction has started to provide a further 68,100 rural homes and businesses across the region with access to superfast networks by 2020.

Devolution: Representatives from 23 organisation across Devon and Somerset have agreed steps to drive up productivity at the recent first meeting of the Heart of South West (HotSW) Joint Committee. The inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee unanimously endorsed the productivity Strategy that has been taking shape over the last 2 years and aims to double productivity over 20 years. The Joint Committee is made up of Council Leaders and other lead representatives of county, unitary and district councils across Devon and Somerset along with Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, the Local Enterprise and local Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Library Consultation: Somerset residents have an extra 7 weeks to share their views on County Councils proposals for its libraries. The closing date for the consultation has been extended to Wednesday 13th June after listening to feedback from the consultation. Everyone is encouraged to review the additional information online at www.somerset.gov.uk/librariesconsultation or in any Somerset library.

District Council Reports for April

District Cllr Ham reported that the highlight of the month was the opening of the first changing places facility in Frome, the 1st in Mendip and only the 3rd in Somerset, the others being in Wellington and Crewkerne. A second one is planned to open in Wells in the next few weeks. These much needed facilities provide a safe and appropriate changing place for youths and adults with disability or special needs.

The Shape Mendip lottery had its first Birthday last month raising around £35K for Mendip Charities over the year. A little less than hoped for but a lot better than not bothering. The Hub in Coleford will receive around £180.

Combined Training with Members and Officers starts next week with a 2 day launch based on "Shape Our Future"

Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) MDC have been challenged in the High Court reference Berkeley / Gypsy Lane closure by the local farmer. The result of the hearing is pending.

District Cllr Townsend reported:

SCRUTINY - 26th March - Issues included: Presentation on Somerset Health and Well Being, covering emphasis on independent living, and noting the success at Frome where a holistic approach appears to have significantly reduced the level of A&E admissions for the elderly. We also reviewed the Council's strategy of commercial property investment to maintain our income. MDC have chosen to go down this path as it is a mature market and we have well respected advisers to minimise risk. Councillors were concerned that priority should be given to investing locally, but the strategy has to be one of securing the best commercial arrangements, so the local option would only be chosen if all other aspects were finely balanced. Corporate Equality Management was reviewed - there had been no complaints about MDC's performance in the last year.

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE - 27th March - We reviewed a complaint that a taxi driver had displayed offensive behaviour towards a member of the public. The decision was to effectively put him on probation for 12 months.

LICENSING BOARD - 28th March - The updated MDC Taxi Policy is out for review. Issues discussed included: applications from drivers 'out of area', personal presentation of drivers as 'ambassadors' for the District, and the use of audio or CCTV recording in cabs. We are still looking for ways increase the fees that Glastonbury Festival pays the Council to provide some sort of compensation for the massive disruption caused to our residents.

CABINET - 9th April - Cabinet are concerned that we are not engaging properly with residents and are looking at ways to improve. Rejuvenating the Parish Forums is one project and any suggestions welcome. The next one is Thursday 19th at which senior members of staff and Cabinet will be present for a question and answer session.

KEYRINGS LETTINGS DIRECTORS - 10th April - We have a slow trickle of new properties but not enough to meet demand at our level of the market. All new landlord enquiries welcome.