

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter for August 2019

Footpath

The footpath FR8/9 which runs along the Leigh on Mendip side of the river, had been closed as the damaged footbridge was considered unsafe. Its great news that Somerset Rights of Way have completed the repair to the bridge so quickly and the footpath is again reopening so that the residents of Coleford can enjoy this walk.

Police report

PCSO Russell Ford provided the following report for Coleford for May - July are as follows;

- Dwelling burglaries – 0
- Non – dwelling Burglaries - 0
- Criminal Damage – 1
- Theft from a Motor Vehicle – 0
- Theft of a Vehicle - 0
- ASB – 6

Planning applications

2019/1736/HSE – Erection of a rear conservatory,
Buena Vista, Highbury Street, Coleford, BA3 5NS
Coleford Parish Council recommended that the application should be approved.

Highways Report

Verge Cutting – Cllr Townsend thanked Somerset Highways for cutting back at the Charmborough Lane/Charlton Rd junction, and also at the Terry Hill junction, but asked for higher priority to be given to rural junctions as a first cut at the end of July is too late and causes safety issues.

Douling Hill – Somerset highways explained that extensive footway working was necessary to allow for highway resurfacing. Cllr Townsend noted that the westbound queues on the A361 went back to the blind bends and asked for more advance signage or better light phasing.

Stoke Bottom – Cllr Townsend thanked Somerset Highways for the good work done at the Fairy Cave junction with a new drain on the inside and new run off on the outside of the bend. Further verge cutting for a critical sight line at the junction with the A367 was raised and has been actioned.

Stockhill – A drive down to Vobster showed no danger from overhanging branches at the time though it was clear that high vehicles tight into the verge could drag them out. It was asked if the landowners were known in the parish so that Somerset highways could contact them, bearing in mind the lower half of the road is in Mells parish.

Newbury Lane – The potential risks were highlighted during the recent visit due to the farm activities and nearby housing outside the 30 Limit. Somerset Highways advised that Coleford PC should contact Rebecca Davis at Taunton to request action.

Pavements at Careys Mead and Highbury St from Church St to the Barway – resurfacing is still scheduled for this Financial Year.

Church St – The works right up to the edges of the road had still not been completed. Somerset Highways are in negotiation with their contractor.

Surface Dressing – Cherry Gardens Lane and Charity Lane are both scheduled for August but are weather dependent.

Lipyeate Cross – The split in the surface of Brewery Lane was agreed to be a safety hazard along most of its length and immediately marked up for repair.

Charlton Rd – Somerset Highways had previously inspected the smooth skid prone sections and proposed a programme of ‘sand blasting’ to recover some of the grip. Surface re-dressing may have to follow.

Holcombe dropped kerbs – The request raised by the Holcombe Parish Council for dropped kerbs to allow disabled access to bus stops were investigated. A number of options were considered and these are to be conveyed by Cllr Townsend to the contact given by Somerset Highways.

Green Lane verges - I have contacted RM Penny again this morning. Remedial works to the verges should be undertaken within the next couple of weeks.

Flooding Issue at Ham – Somerset Highways confirmed they intend to undertake some minor drainage and resurfacing works later this year. The road will be closed to undertake the works. Site information boards and a letter drop to local residents will be carried out in advance of the works.

A Coleford resident had raised concern over the number of lorries using the Whitehole Hill road. This road was within Leigh on Mendip parish who were aware of the issues and were looking into it with the support of Cllr Townend

Defibrillator

The Parish Council has agreed to spend an additional £100 on one of the best defibrillators, the HeartSine Samaritan PAD 500. This unit helps to advise the user on how to undertake the most effective chest compression which other units do not do. Councilors felt that this would be money well spent. The new defibrillator will be installed at the Kings Head public house.

Upgrading of the Highbury football pitch

Work on improving the football pitch playing surface at Highbury has started with an application of a spray to reduce the weeds. Fertilizer and grass seed will soon be added and then the field will be rested for 6 weeks to allow the seeds to germinate and get the best start.

Date of Next Meetings:

Parish Council meeting, Wednesday 11th September 2019 at 7pm at the Hub on Church Street.

**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, Chairman

District and County Reports for Coleford and Holcombe

Somerset County Council Report

County Cllr Ham reported as follows:

Emotional and Mental Health Support - Somerset has been granted one million pounds over the next 3 years to deliver Emotional and Mental Health support for young people utilizing trailblazer mental health support teams across the country. This is part of a national drive to improve emotional support in schools and forms part of the Somerset Wellbeing Framework, ‘whole school approach’ to wellbeing and mental health. Initially 25 schools will receive support teams to work in the schools there will also be parent educational programmes provided by the voluntary sector.

Winter gritting – In the middle of summer heat the Highways gritting policy review has been completed and the first deliveries of salt for the forthcoming winter have started arriving at depots. This winter the County Council will be investing an extra £200,000 into the service and has taken on board the feedback to reassess all the criteria used to determine which roads will be gritted. This means an increase in the precautionary gritting network from approximately 720 miles to 900 miles of road, which will be treated every time ice or snow is forecast. A map of the routes can be found at <http://somersetnewsroom.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/winter-service-2019-2020.pdf>

County Finances Update – The 2018/19 statement of accounts for the County Council and the Somerset Pension Fund (which the County administers on behalf of all employer bodies) have both been given an unqualified opinion for these accounts. However, before the auditors can conclude their overall opinion, they are planning a little more work looking at the robustness of budgets for the ever-growing adult and children’s social care future demand. Regardless of the outcome of this work however, their

feedback fully recognizes the considerable progress made during the last `10 months to ensure sustainability on the County Councils finances.

Forecast school places – The new Education Infrastructure Growth Plan is now available www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-place-planning-infrastructure-growth-plan/ This plan outlines the approach to school place planning and expected demand across Somerset, broken down by School Organization Plan (SOP) areas.

Somerset Outdoor Activities – Kilve Court and the 3 other Somerset Support for Education Outdoor Centers have begun delivering exciting summer programmes for young people from across Somerset, from children’s activity days and 5-day residential camps to art, music and science events, there is something available for everyone. Visit www.sseoutdoors.co.uk for further information.

Reducing Flood Risk – SCC have bid for funding for schemes that will help the county adapt to climate change by reducing flood risk through natural flood management rather than engineering. The resulting ‘Co-adapt’ project will bring £2.53m from the European Regional Development Fund into Somerset over the next 3.5 years for the projects. The Somerset Flood Action Plan, drawn-up in the wake of the 2013/14 winter floods, in the face of climate change.

Library Outreach Services – The new Somerset Libraries Outreach vehicle was recently launched. The vehicle presents additional opportunities to showcase the diverse range of Somerset Library services with targeted activities for hard to reach communities throughout the county.

Higher Education courses – A fantastic new ‘Study Up@’ website has been launched to offer a one stop shop for students of all ages to find the right Higher Education course for them right here in Somerset. www.studyupsomersetscitt.co.uk

Free Business Training – Social enterprises, charities and co-operatives in Somerset can sign up for free bespoke training – plus a grant of £1200. SCC is supporting the free training between September 2019 and January 2020. SCC is providing match funding of £250,000 which will enable draw down of England European Regional Development Fund funding in recognition of the wider benefits of the programme.

Mendip District Council Report

District Cllr Townsend sent the following report:

Training – The Training programme continues, mainly aimed at new Councilors but an important update for older hands. Specific sessions covered Governance, Information Technology and Data protection, Local Government Finance, Role of Audit Committee, Neighborhood Services. Planning

Board 17-7-19 – The most significant item was the detailed plan submitted for the development of 200 houses at the west of Wells on the A371. The Board was highly critical of numerous aspects which will give us a series of objections we can raise if appropriate if the Gladman application at Anchor Rd does proceed.

Audit Committee 24-7-19 – The committee were presented with the Year End accounts and given a briefing on the review process that they are subject to, including the consolidation by our external contractor, the review by our Internal Auditor, finally the clearance by EY the External Auditor.

Local Plan Part 2 Inspector’s Examination – The public meeting in the Royal British Legion on 27th July confirmed the overwhelming opinion, previously stated by the Parish Council, that at the formal Examination we should strongly object to the Gladman proposal in the draft Local Plan for up to 70 houses on Anchor Rd. The day before the Examination we were advised that Gladman would not be appearing to defend their proposal. Mendip’s formal position is that the site is outside the existing Development Limit for the village and Mendip and Coleford are already achieving the housing numbers required by the existing Local Plan. Cllr Ham and Cllr Townsend nevertheless took the opportunity to express our objections to the Inspector, firstly endorsing Mendip’s position and secondly focusing on the infrastructure limitations, with transport and highways being the key issues. There is now cautious optimism about winning this round but a complete revision of the Local Plan commences in December so the Council must remain vigilant.

District Cllr Ham sent the following report:

Training – Many sessions are poorly attended and knowledge is mainly for newcomers.

Planning – Cllr Townsend and myself have referred Roger Philips application to the board as the planning officers wish was to refuse when the Parish Council recommended approval.

Audit Committee – Capita were late in producing the accounts and therefore the figures could not be checked in time to be signed off before the audit.

Scrutiny work – All 4 groups are working well with programmes, times and objectives all being produced by the end of August.

Phoenix Board – 4-hour meeting with very few decisions made – opportunities are being lost due to timeliness and lack of understanding; some items referred back to next cabinet meeting.

Wells to Frome Road – A public consultation was held at Leigh on Mendip village on Thursday 8th August. 45 people attended, 7 letters suggesting ideas and many notes were left to be included as part of the consultation process.