

Parish Council of Coleford

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Annual Parish Meeting held Tuesday 25th April 2017

Present

Cllr P Ham (Chairman)

Cllr Townsend, Conn, Gurd, Turner, Fisher, Neesam, Banks, Littlechild and Talbot and 15 members of the public.

1 Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Cllr Horler and Cllr Neesam both sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

2 Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting 26th April 2016

The minutes were produced and had been signed at the Parish Council meeting which followed last year's Annual Parish Meeting.

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Reports

4.1 Financial

The Clerk reported that Councillors agreed the end of year figures at our last full Council meeting, which showed the year-end figures in comparison with the budget set for the year.

We started this financial year 1st April 2016 with the combined bank balances of **£44,124.56** and ended at the higher amount of **£52,503.67** for year ending March 2017. This is a difference of **£8,379.11**

Our income inc Precept for this year was £42,009.40 against £38607.31 last year. A grant of £8000 was secured from Tesco's Bags for Life which went towards the replacement of the multi play equipment at Coleford Playing Field.

During the last financial year we have:

Replaced the multi play equipment at Coleford Playing Field	£10,775
Continued to support the Youth Club	£ 3900
Given Grants to a Village Groups totaling	£ 1,450
Replaced 2 showers in the changing rooms at Highbury Playing Field	£ 1,415
Brought a dog waste bin to be installed near Rope Walk & have continued to buy the bags for the 2 dispensers on Highbury Street and Church Street	£ 420
Bought a new bins for Preachers Vale	£ 295

Earmarked Reserves

BMX track - The parish council still has the £10K earmarked for the Skate board park. After consultation with parishioners it has been agreed to pursue a BMX track which will facilitate not only BMX fans but skate boarders and scooters. This is being actively progressed.

Street Furniture - At the March meeting the Council agreed to purchase an additional 5 litter bins, 5 grit bins and a new bench. Some will be used to replace damaged bins and others will fill gaps where it is believed there is a need for more. The order has been placed with delivery expected within the next week. Total price £1282.45.

We currently have the following amounts earmarked:

- £10,000 for the skate park.
- £ 1,282.45 for street furniture

Current bank balance	£52,503.67
Less earmarked reserves	<u>£11,282.45</u>
Available funds as at 01/04/17	<u>£41,221.22</u>

4.2 Chairman

Cllr Ham as Chairman gave the following report:

We have over the past year been a stable council only losing 1 Councillor due to non-attendance, but he is standing for UKIP in the West of England Mayor elections next week.

May I thank everyone for their work over the last year, we may not have achieved all of our ambitions but at least we stayed within budget. However, looking into the future all the maintenance needed especially for the play areas we increased the Precept for 2017/18 budget after long deliberation. During the year the pharmacy application has bounced around in different formats and the PC continues to disapprove of the application. The Inspectors report is expected mid-summer.

The village has suffered from a group of youths with anti-social behaviour, damage, hate crime and distressing the elderly. The Parish Council held a special meeting to bring this to a head involving the public, police, YMCA and us the Parish Council. The Community trigger was engaged by myself through MDC and has resulted in the police presence and time. One youth has been to court this week. This is not what we want for our village and it will not be tolerated.

Planning enforcement has been a topic pursued by the Parish Council – work is still in progress so probably the less said the better. Coleford Parish Council and MDC are not going to tolerate building without permission or buildings not to plan, it's just being unfair to those that do it properly. It should be treated as a criminal activity.

The youth club continues and helps the young persons of the village to mature and as funding for the youth club has dried up the Parish Council has helped with funding.

The CAB still does an enormous amount for the village – in fact more than any other village in Mendip. The Parish Council continues to support Mendip Citizen advice bureau to the tune of £1000 per year.

During the year we have given £1500 in grants to several village organisations which has helped them to succeed.

During the year the Butterfly bank at Coleford playing field has been cleared, new signage installed and a bonfire of the cuttings to celebrate the Queen's birthday.

At this point I would like to thank CRG for that they done and are doing for the community of Coleford – Village day, the Christmas tree, Pensioners meal, Halloween party, Quiz nights, Jumble sales, Sponsorships and all proceeds go back into the community. A big thank you to Phil Horler on his team.

Before I end the future looks good with Tony taking the Pump track forward with Colin sorting Coleford Athletic Football clubs future, Keith adding more litter and dog waste bins, salt boxes and benches. Alan continuing with highways and footpaths and others looking at emergency planning, Health checks by the NHS, upgrading the hardcourt area and play equipment, monitoring the butterfly bank just to mention a few projects.

I thank you all for putting yourselves forward to be parish councillors it is voluntary and I hope you feel some fulfilment for your efforts. To be a parish councillor for 25 years and to say that you have enjoyed it must mean that a great amount of thanks is in order. Yesterday I received Val Horlers resignation from the Council, I reluctantly accepted with sadness but thanked her for all of her efforts over all of those years and that she would be missed.

I could have written more but last of all can I thank Vickie from all of us for:

1. Keeping us in order
2. Making tea and coffee and bringing biscuits
3. Excellent agendas, minutes and financial records
4. Always being professional, friendly and helpful no matter what the time of day.

Thank you Vickie, thank you all.

4.3 District Councillor Reports

District Cllr Alan Townsend reported:

Cabinet Assistant – Cabinet decided to create four Cabinet Assistant posts to give a small group of Councillors the chance to get closer to the senior decision making processes and possibly create a chain of succession. I was fortunate enough to be selected as one and have been working with Cllr Parham principally on Finance issues and will now be working with PH on the Transformation Programme.

On the Finance front it was good to be close to the final budgeting process which saw Mendip deliver a small surplus in 16/17. The Mendip Council Tax increase this year has been held to 1.99% despite a further reduction in Central Government funding with no loss of services through a major programme of common procurement of services, pooling of resources and restructuring at Mendip. It was to their credit that the staff at Mendip responded so well to the changes. My mentor John Parham was invited to give a presentation to Government officials as one of the leading councils in the country in Council Tax management and collection.

The Council Management Team was subject to a Peer Review challenge by senior Local Government officials and Council Leaders involving face to face interviews and staff appraisals. At the wash up meeting staff and Councillors were praised for their positive attitude and performance.

Licensing Board- new Street Trading procedures agreed. Various sub-committee meetings held to resolve licensed premises and taxi issues

Car Parking working group – looking at revised parking fees structure. This is not a popular issue but a major revenue earner for the District.

Outside Bodies- major review to ensure Mendip are properly represented on related outside bodies, for example in my case:-

- Wainwrights Quarry Liaison – to understand and be involved with their expansion plans
- Halecombe Quarry Liaison – working with the quarry to secure full consultation and to minimise the impacts of their expansion plans
- Planning issues – supporting applicants and Parish Councils to ensure they get a fair hearing and taking cases to the Planning Board if necessary

- KeyRing Letting Agency – continuing role as a Director of Mendip’s Community Interest Company as we seek to provide accommodation at the bottom end of the market for those who might otherwise have to be housed expensively and with poor personal outcomes by Mendip in B&B. We still have a drastic shortfall of such properties.

District Cllr Philip Ham reported:

It’s been a very busy year at Mendip with Transformation being the buzz word. The year ended with around £900K surplus of budget and a useful figure to take into the next year as central government has reduced its payments by another 15% with the remaining 30% being reduced by 18/19 and 19/20.

During the year the Senior Leadership Team was reduced from 6 to 3, One Chief Executive and 2 Deputy Executives. The next level was reduced from 11 to 6 group managers. These 6 managers have now reorganised their teams.

During this time the old Capita contract has been renewed with 5 other councils. This includes all the work they did before plus some extra work including land charges, which has reduced from 50 days down to 7 days turn around. The Fusion Leisure contract has settled down and 4 million pounds plus of investment. This is all Transformation but this is only the beginning. We are developing the Shape Mendip Campus with more office space, a new Shepton Library, setting up ‘Boxworks’ an innovation new business hub for start-ups, looking at a new police response unit on the site.

A shared legal service with other Councils Taunton Deane, West Somerset and Somerset County Council. A Shape Mendip neighbourhood services including enforcement, police, fire, parking enforcement, ground care licensing so each group to undertake training so they can all issue tickets when they see rules being broken. It has been a job to pull this all together as portfolio holder for Transformation. It involves doing things differently, better, more cost effective event to making a profit. We are borrowing money from the Central Government bank loan at around 2% and re-let assets at around 7 to 8% this give a return that will help to fill the gap caused by the reduction of central funding. We have set up a building company and done a review of all the assets in all the 5 major towns. This will result in several projects over the next few years.

I am still involved with CAB, YMCA, Drainage board, Migrant workers, Syria refugees, Equalities, Gypsy and Travellers and of course planning.

4.4 Somerset County Councillor Report

County Cllr Ham reported:

Its 4 years done at Somerset County Council with elections next week for the next 4 years. I have decided to another stint if elected. Time has gone quickly and looking back much has been achieved although austerity has been a difficult element to deal with alongside the £350m debt costing £100K in interest alone per day!

We have the last Full Council of the quidendum tomorrow so I don’t have access to full reports yet.

After the flooding of 2013/14 we have set up the Somerset Rivers Authority and brought in £50m for flood prevention to date with a 20 year plan to make it safe for the future.

Education results are now amongst the best in the Country. 94% of pupils now go to a good or better infant, primary or secondary school. Plus increased £22m education funding due to pressure put on by SCC.

Major road schemes are being undertaken in Bridgwater, Yeovil and Taunton.

11,500 new businesses have started in Somerset in the last 4 years. 25,000 new jobs secured at Hinckley with £94m spent by the County on infrastructure. I have been involved in the completion of the minerals plan and now involved in the waste plan.

Most of my highways improvements are now complete although Stoke St Michael still looking into changing some detail. Wanstraw is being done now. Terry Hill crossroads is being improved in the next few months.

I have chaired the Quarry liaison meetings for all of the major quarries in our area. Many have expanded back to pre-2008 production and have applications in for expansion at the moment. We have had serious complaints around noise and vibration but things seemed to have settled down recently.

I have enjoyed being a County Councillor but covering 16 parishes is difficult if not almost impossible – but a challenge.

4.5 Young People

Mark Wilcox attended the meeting and started by thanking the Parish Council for their continued support. The group have been linking with the Parish council, parents and police and building good relationships. Local PCSO's have been linking with the club and attending sessions. They have been involved in a positive way by taking part in activities with young people or spending time with them over various sessions. This has had a really positive impact on young people and is beginning to break down barriers between young people and police officers. The group seems to be friendlier. Want to see young people transformed into good members of the community.

There is a good team of workers. One of our staff members who is currently studying mental health at university has been working on a project over the last three months with young people. She has been using different theories to create practical activities through play that have been adapted to the young person's age and needs. Young people have really enjoyed this and have been involved in evaluating and giving feedback to back up the studies being done. This Creative Play Project is currently an ongoing.

Cooking has become a more frequent activity and we have expanded the foods the young people are able to cook due to equipment and staffing as well as making healthy eating a topic to encourage young people to think about what they are eating and how they can be healthier. Young people have given positive feedback on this and on the quarterly feedback sheets, young people have frequently reported that cooking skills is something they have learnt and benefited from since being at the club. We have also delivered sessions on drug and alcohol awareness, online dangers, sexual health, money and budgeting, arts & crafts and sports activities.

A group of young people have been working with staff on ideas for a local village day event later in the year. Young people have decided to try get others involved to help promote the club and to raise funds for more equipment and resources. This is really positive as in previous events staff have taken lead due to little interest in being involved from young people. We are currently developing a plan of what young people will be doing on the day and how much involvement they will have.

Coleford Youth Club Strengths

1. Staff team have a passion for young people and their work in the clubs. We are fortunate to have good workers and volunteers.
2. Positive commendations from SCC reports on Coleford and all clubs.

3. Youth workers building positive trusted relationships with young people, youth club safe place for local young people to go, hopefully the word will get out into the wider community.
4. Again, a whole of community and organisational goodwill towards the Mendip YMCA as an organisation and its work. SCC and community groups hold MYMCA is a positive light and value the work it does.
5. Supportive Coleford Management Hub & Parish Council

Challenges

Due to the anti-social behaviour happening in the community, the youth club was affected as parents were stopping young people attending due to concerns over their safety. Although the behaviour was not happening during the sessions we ran, parents had concerns over the young people who have been behaving negatively in the community, coming on to youth club premises and being disruptive outside. We have been linking with the right people and have been working hard to build relationships and trust back with parents and residents in the community.

Way Forward

- Provide a creative programme, developed with the feedback of young people, as well as being up to date with young people's current needs. We want to ensure we are providing informal and formal learning opportunities within the programme.
- To continue to build on young people's involvement in Coleford Village Day and encourage them to take a lead in the event.
- Outreach with young people and positive activities out of the youth club premises.

5 Public Forum to include reports from other Village Organisations

5.1 Coleford Revival Group

Keith Wadley attended the meeting and explained that Coleford Revival Group are a community group whose main objectives are to provide support to existing groups and organise various events for the local community. Monthly meetings are held for general business and other subcommittee meetings for such things as events, funding and "The Colefordian" our community magazine.

Over the last year we have held the usual main events, Village Day and the Pensioner Meal, (these two events cost us around £6K) also Walk down memory lane. Halloween Disco and our Music Festival as well as other fund raising events.

The Christmas tree episode test our resolve but thanks to the community's encouragement it made us realise what we do is really appreciated and made us redecorate the tree. Other than that all events went well and all were well attended. We have received some great feedback for locals who have commented on how much they admire the effort that we put in to events to make them happen and bring the community together.

This year we made a big purchase of the shipping container, for storage. Although a big cost it should save money in the long run as the run-down garage we have been renting was costing £400 a year.

Since this time last year we have donated to the Coleford Theatre group, Freewheelers sometimes known as Blood bikes, Jamie Mines the chap from Frome who lost limbs at work, we combined with Time is Precious in a Charity Auction for Daryl Allindson who the NHS refused a second bone marrow transplant. I see on TV that Daryl is back at school this week!) We have also supplied football kit to the local under 7's team

For public information we continue to produce the quarterly community magazine "The Colefordian" alongside our web page www.colefordrevivalgroup.org and our Facebook page Coleford Revival Group – GRG.

We have been blessed with some great sponsors and are always looking for new ones. We are continually searching our various other ways of funding what we do. We hope to continue our work in the community for as long as our volunteers keep going and we remain financially viable.⁴

Everyone at CRG is a volunteer, no one takes a wage or payment. We do this to make Coleford a better place to live.

5.2 Robin Bradbury and the Local Bus Service

Robin Bradbury asked the Council if they could send a letter to the 184 bus operator who has maintained a good service and kept fairly well to the published times. They are Libra Travel at Buckland Dinham. The bus operators usually get a lot of stick but from my use of the service, every week to and from Frome, I think we get a good deal and they would appreciate a note to that effect. The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk would write to Libra Travel.

VW

Cllr Ham said that the Council will investigate the possibility of a Saturday bus service however funding will be an issue. The Parish Council may have to subsidise and possibly seek sponsorship.

5.3 Coleford Methodist Church

Mrs Mary Pearce gave the following report:

Coleford may not have been the birthplace of Methodism, but it certainly has played a big part in its past. Coleford adopted Methodism in 1745, just seven years after John Wesley's 'warmed heart' experience. You can see on the wall of this room, and all around how Methodism has left its mark on the village, not just in the old church and Sunday School in Church Street, but in the road named Preachers Vale, as Wesley obviously did not have a building to preach in. Preachers Vale overlooks the slopes where Wesley preached on many occasions. Once again Methodists do not have a building in Coleford to worship in, but we are still a warm and welcoming community.

We have a very good relationship with the Anglicans, so when we do need a formal church building for maybe a funeral, we can easily (and gratefully) borrow theirs.

We also support the Anglicans in activities like the recent Lent Lunches, where over £900 was raised for charities. We thank Clarissa for all of her support, for us, and for her work in the rest of the village too, including 'On the Map' which keeps people informed of most of the village activities.

We meet twice a month on Sundays at Eve Tuckers house in Mendip Vale. I think the biggest number we have had was about fifteen people, and the walls of the room just expanded to fit, although our usual numbers are about eight.

You may be aware that for administrative purposes Methodist churches are arranged in groups, called Circuits. So Coleford has always had close ties with Frome, Norton Down, Holcombe, Westfield and Midsomer Norton, and now we have been 'twinned' with Wedmore. So when we don't meet here in Coleford, we sometimes meet with old friends in other places.

We will share with Wedmore this summer when they celebrate their 200th anniversary. We, of course could celebrate 272 years of Methodist presence in Coleford, but we don't boast.

We also meet twice a month on Tuesdays in the lounge of Douglas Yates Court. Again our usual numbers are about eight, but most of this eight are different from our Sunday eight, so we reach out to more of the village than the numbers appear. We have recently have a new recruit, and will always welcome more. Recently we have missed our faithful pianist Ron Brewer, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

We are a small group now, but the Court Cafe, a very valuable activity, run by Myra Perry, had its beginnings in the Methodist Church, and we don't help organise the Lent Lunches any more, but we are still faithful supporters.

What is our future in Coleford?

We will continue to be a Methodist Presence even without a building. We will continue to provide fellowship to our faithful members and friends.

What is our future in Methodism?

We will continue to provide an inspiration to other churches that are wondering how they can continue to maintain their building, by showing that the church is not the building, but the people.

5.4 Tuesday Afternoon Club

Eileen Smith attended the meeting and gave the following report:

The Tuesday Afternoon Club meet every two weeks at the Royal British Legion and last for 2 hours. We have 34 paid up members but visitors are always welcome at any meeting.

We have 18 speaker meetings each year and six outings. Some of the speakers are quite expensive and also charge a travelling fee. Others we give a generous donation for a charity of their choice.

The committee feels that the club is an important facility for Coleford and a central meeting place for many older people. Although we welcome people of any age, but similar to many clubs younger people do not seem to join in and due to health reasons some members are not always able to attend.

We also make 6 outings a year all within a 35 mile radius. This year we booked Taunton, Weston Super Mare, Oakham Treasures, Portbury, Burnham on Sea, a boat trip at Bradford on Avon and the carol service at Wells Cathedral. We welcome non-members on any of these trips.

The coach transport is very expensive and we are not always able to cover the costs.

We are always very grateful for the Parish Councils grant towards transport and hope that this will continue if possible in the future.

5.5 Coleford Theatre Group

Henry Banks reported that the group meets in the village and is run not for profit to give entertainment to the residents of Coleford and the surrounding area. They meet on a Monday from 7.30pm until 9.30pm at the Royal British Legion. There are currently 22 adults and 14 children.

The main event costs a lot to put on so the group are always seeking funding raised through the murder mystery event, jumble sale, quiz night and the annual show.

Costume hire continues to be the main expense. The group have been using 4 microphones from the school but are keen to source their own and replace spot lights.

This year's pantomime will be Jack and the Beanstalk and will take place in November starting on Wednesday to Saturday.

5.6 Coleford Flower and Craft Show

Philip Ham reported that another successful show was held in 2016. It was the second very wet show in succession but spirits were high and the show was enjoyed by many.

The committee has decided to hold the show a week earlier this year back at the Royal British Legion. This was due to it previously being on the bank holiday and many of the committee could not do that weekend in 2017. It was also to do with the cost of the marquee and many savings could be made.

Good numbers of entries were received last year and the quality was the best seen for several years. The show was saddened by the loss of Carole Denning not long before the show. She was a very creative and admired exhibitor to which we now have a memorial cup in her name to be won each year.

The show is financially stable with sponsors and other activities allowing us to put on a good show with reasonable prize money. We would like to thank the Parish Council for its generous grant this year.

The schedules will be out in the next couple of weeks and hopefully we will see more exhibits in 2017 show. Good luck and thank you.

5.7 The Hub @ Coleford

The Hub has been running for 2.5 years now and is managed by a small committee and 3 directors. There is lots going on including Zumba, Yoga, Breakfast club, Nursery club and a chess club. There is a careers advice group showing interest in using the Hub. The Hall is also available for parties and receptions.

Work to upgrade the kitchen, cooker, sink, flooring (including in the toilets) and the outside drain are all in the process of being completed. It is hoped that the window will be upgraded in the future. It is hoped that the improvements to the catering facilities will generate more income.

The Hub is run to help to support the Youth Club with all profit channelled into the cost of keeping it running.

The committee is grateful to the Parish Council for its grant. It is hoped that it will soon become self-funding. The Mendip Shape Lottery was launched in March which has a £25K top prize. People can sign up to the lottery and support the Hub at the same time.

5.8 Public Forum

Mr John Allen asked the following questions:

1. Could the road outside of the Co-op be marked with double yellow lines to prevent parking? The cars using the shop would then have to use the parking area available in the Legion. It was explained that this has been investigated before on many occasions and there is no obvious solution at that junction. We will continue to monitor.
2. Charmborough Lane is in a terrible state with pot holes and severe damage to the edge of the highways. There was a recent incident when a recycle waggon was towed by a tow truck which meant that 3 cars had to reverse some way back causing delay. Cllr Townsend said that he is in regular touch with the Highways department regarding the condition of the road. Landowners have been approached in the past to ask if they would be prepared to give up some land to widen the road in parts but they were not agreeable. The Parish Council will continue to monitor and report issues with this road to the Highways department. AT
3. The footpath along Beacon View needs a light. There is also a drainage manhole cover that needs addressing as it is a hazard. Cllr Townsend agreed to investigate and action. AT

Mary Pearce said that the disabled access to the Co-op is a concern. Could a raised platform be the solution to slowing traffic and helping with disabled access to the shop? This will be investigated with the Highways department. AT