

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428
Email: clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com

In line with government guidance and recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable, it was agreed that this meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting using Zoom video technology.

Minutes of the Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday the 9th December 2020

1. Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Banks, Barrett, Conn, Evans, Pearce, Townsend and Turner. There was 1 member of the public attended.

2. Public Forum

1. Cllr Evans had received a request from a parishioner for a mirror to be installed opposite Beacon View to aid access onto Coal Barton. After discussion it was agreed that Cllr Evans would speak with the resident to establish if this could be done by agreement with a private landowner.

Action – Cllr Evans to speak with the resident

2. Cllr Evans reported that the untaxed vehicles which had been parking in the region of Lawrence Road have now relocated to the Royal British Legion car park. Cllr Evans highlighted that there could be implications for the Legion management if the vehicles are involved in an accident. Cllr Ham said that the management team were aware and are dealing with the problem.
3. Cllr Barret asked if the Preachers Vale signage could be improved to show which direction the house numbers go. The Clerk would raise this with the Mendip District Council.

Action – Clerk to request signage improvement with Mendip District Council

3. Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Cllrs Drescher and Hanney had both sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

4. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

5. Approve Minutes of last Parish Council meetings held on the 11th and 25th November 2020

Both sets of minutes had been circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. It was proposed that they were accurate and reflected the meetings and should therefore both be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

6. Matters arising

All matter arising had been completed or would be discussed later in the meeting apart from:

1. Clerk to follow up the enquiry with the land registry to establish land owners at Beacon View
2. Cllr Ham and the Clerk to complete the application form for the Loss of Income fund before the planning meeting

3. Beacon View ditch – The Contractor returned with his digger, located the drainage pipe which he rodded to enable the pipe to flow freely. Now that the hedge line and ditch has been cleared, the area is so much tidier and should prevent future fly tipping and with some management the ground which had become overgrown with brambles and nettles could be reseeded.
4. Clerk to seek volunteer or contractor to repair the door handle to the telephone box. Establish if the electricity supply can be utilized.

Action – Clerk to action outstanding matters arising

7. Co-option of Councillor

The Council had received 2 applications for co-option, Mr Nick Harding and Mrs Melanie Moulding. Mr Harding had not attended due to personal circumstances. Mrs Moulding attended, introduced herself and explained that she would like to become more involved with the village life again having in the past been both a Coleford Parish Councillor and a Mendip District Councillor.

Mrs Moulding then left the meeting whilst a discussion took place. The Clerk read out both applications and there was much debate with both applicants having many qualities which would make them good Councillors. A vote was taken with the majority in favour of co-opting Mr Harding as Councillor.

The Clerk rang to notify Mrs Moulding that she had not been successful but thanked her for applying and hoped that she would consider applying for any future vacancies.

Action – Clerk to ensure that the acceptance of office is completed and the register of interest form is completed and sent to Mendip District Council.

8. Reports

a) PCSO

A report for the Frome Rural Beat North had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It gave the crime statistics / recorded crime for the whole of the beat between 1st – 30th November as follows;

- Anti-social behavior - 8
- Bicycle theft - 1
- Burglary - 7
- Drugs - 2
- Other theft - 5
- Public order - 7
- Vehicle crime - 1

Poaching, speeding, theft / non dwelling burglary and fly tipping were noted as the current priorities.

The Beat Team contact details are as follows:

- Beat manager – PC 2673 David Cohen, David.Cohen@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
- PCSO 9011 Russell Ford, Mobile – 07547658018, Russell.ford@avonandsomerset.police.uk
- PCSO 8118 Dan Beck, Daniel.Beck@avonandsomerset.police.uk

b) County Councillor

Covid-19 Restrictions: Revised Government regulations mean that Somerset will enter Tier 2 restrictions on from December 2nd. The main requirements of this Tier are:

- No mixing of households indoors, excl. support bubbles. Max of 6 outdoors.
- Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants.
- Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.
- Retail, indoor leisure, accommodation, hairdressers, places of worship will all be able to open
- Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities will remain open

Tiers and regulations will be reviewed again on December 16th and full details found at www.gov.uk/guidance/full-list-of-local-restriction-tiers-by-area

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 27th November, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 5,110 (up from 2,738 on 1st Nov) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 228 (208). The rate per 100,000 currently stands at 99.1 for Somerset with Mendip at 138.4, Sedgemoor at 115.3, South Somerset 89.1 and SW&T at 67.7. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 3% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.0 and 1.3. It is vitally important to remember at all times the Hands-Face-Space message.

Christmas bubble guidance: Here are the main points to be aware of:

- You can travel between tiers and UK nations to and from your Christmas bubble between **23rd and 27th December**.
- Once at your destination you should follow [rules in that tier](#).
- **Three households** can form a Christmas bubble together.
- You can only be in one and cannot change your Christmas bubble.
- You can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces.
- You can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to the rules in the tier where you are staying.
- If someone is in your Christmas bubble, you can visit each other's homes and stay overnight.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

2021 Primary School Places: Applications for Primary School places in 2021 need to be made through Somerset County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions The deadline for submissions is Friday, 15 January 2021.

Christmas shopping online: Somerset's Trading Standards are advising online consumers to only buy from 'reputable' traders. The COVID-19 lockdowns have led to a rise in consumer spending online and 87 per cent of UK consumers are estimated to have purchased a product online. The public spends around £2bn a week on online purchases. A new information video if is available to explain how issues and problems can be dealt with <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dA75JeXrcu0>

Domestic Abuse: During the first three months of lockdown, Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service saw over 10,000 people reach out for information and help to their website – an increase of more than 8,000 in the same period during the previous year. Covid-19 has exacerbated the problem for both male and female victims, with lockdown increasing the amount of time they spend at home with their abuser, potentially escalating the threat of domestic abuse and restricting their freedom. Help can be accessed by calling 0800 6949 999 or if someone is in immediate danger by calling 999.

One Somerset: The final supporting submissions for One Somerset will be sent to the Secretary of State, MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT by 9th December. It is then expected that he will carry out consultation in Spring 2021 and make a decision in early summer. Further details can be found at www.onesomerset.org.uk

Export Growth Plan: Somerset County Council are raising awareness of the new opportunities emerging for local companies to export goods and services. The South West is one of three areas chosen in the UK to benefit from the Export Growth Plan funding with a range of support. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is offering one-to-one engagement with businesses where specialists can provide support for companies who want to export goods. This can be accessed by emailing DITSW@mobile.trade.gov.uk

Climate Emergency Strategy: The five councils in Somerset have given the green light to implement the recently launched plan for Somerset to go carbon neutral by 2030. The Somerset-wide Climate Emergency Strategy considers how climate change will impact the County of Somerset and describes some of the key actions to tackle our carbon emissions including developing an energy plan for the County, developing an electric vehicle strategy, Improving walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, improving resilience to climate change impact such

as flooding and working with businesses and residents to reduce their own emissions. A copy of the approved strategy can be found at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency>

c) District Councillors

PLANNING - The 25th November Planning Board approved the application for a single dwelling by 61 Mendip Vale. They agreed to the District Cllrs request for a Construction Management Plan to try to limit the impact of the build phase on the neighbours.

As mentioned last month, Mendip has the problem of excessive Phosphate levels on protected (Ramsar) sites on the Levels. At the moment applications for some 1500 houses are on hold. Mendip have asked Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to get a grip of Natural England who appear to have imposed the ban without consultation. We are assured that the ban on new building on sites that drain into the Levels will not have an effect on building elsewhere, but of course there is nothing to stop speculative applications.

Local Plan Part 2 Examination – this concluded last week. The requirement for an additional 505 dwellings in the north east of the District was the main issue. Gladman did not take part in the hearing or seek to promote Anchor Road as an alternative. Coleford was not discussed and at no point was it suggested it should be included. This gives some grounds for optimism. The Inspector will produce his report in January and if he recommends any changes to the 5 sites proposed there will be a further consultation with a target of issuing the final report in April.

Gladman – over 250 objections recorded and over 500 signatures on the Petition. The Mendip website is up again, and it has reinstated all the detail from the previous application. The additional landscape information promised by Gladman has still not been received. District Cllr Townsend has queried Mendip Planning Office and asked if there is a drop dead date for it. Their reply was that they hoped to receive it in the next few weeks! We note there is still no direct reply from Wessex Water – District Cllr Townsend has asked them for a statement of their position given the issues we have. Still no response from Mendip on the Elm Tree TPO request. District Cllr Ham is trying repeatedly to get County Highways up here for a site visit – this is crucial. District Cllr Townsend suggested that we ask the Clerk to make the formal response giving our objection to Mendip in summary on the formal form with a statement that the full objection will follow, just to get the marker down. Our full response would then follow after the landscape/highways/sewerage information is received. On the Highways front Mary Pearce is doing valuable survey work to record what residents actual travel/shopping habits are to give us an evidence base to counter Gladman’s imaginative Travel Plan.

MENDIP SOCIAL HOUSING - Cabinet’s decision to sell 5 sites to Aster to develop some 160 social houses was referred to Scrutiny to review whether the Council had obtained best value for money by only going to Aster. Residents of Frome were outraged that the Easthill site had been chosen without consultation or recognition of its unique ecology. Street and Glastonbury had also not been consulted. The Scrutiny Meeting on 16th November was prevented from having a full discussion on the issues as the Council Leader and officers simply wanted to refer it back to Cabinet. At this point District Cllr Ham resigned as Chairman as for the 3rd time this year Scrutiny had been prevented from giving full examination of key issues. Subsequent discussion has focused on the legality of challenging a decision made by Cabinet. A Motion is being prepared for Full Council next week to put the programme on hold until full consultation and exposure of all issues has been resolved. Meanwhile over £400k has been spent on getting this far.

UNITARY REORGANISATION - On 3rd December a special meeting of Full Council voted to promote the case for Stronger Somerset to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is the proposal for 2 councils, East and West Somerset, to replace the existing structure.

MENDIP FINANCES - The year end forecast is for a deficit of £2.2M from the Budget spend of £17.1M. The interim budget for next year shows a deficit of £1.2M but there are many issues still to be resolved. A statement is expected on 17th December from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on local government finances for next year. Meanwhile much officer time is being dedicated to issuing the government relief funding to local retail and hospitality – some £20M so far.

MENDIP COUNTRY PRACTICE – An email had been received from the practice which stated that as far as patients waiting outside –the surgery had carried out a risk assessment and the size of gazebo that would be needed in order for patients to observe government guidelines on social distancing would be huge, there is no place suitable to put strong enough anchorage and therefore it is likely to be blown away with the weather frequently

experienced at the surgery. It would also need to be erected and dismantled every day and they do not have the staff capacity to carry this out.

The practice stated that as we are living in unprecedented times and like all businesses are following government guidelines on social distancing and therefore limit the number of people in the building. This does mean as per other business, such as the pharmacy, the local Co-op, and other shops, people have to wait outside. They ask that patients are patient and do not take their frustration out on reception and dispensary staff. Recently there have been several incidents of rudeness to staff, who are only doing their job and trying to keep patients and staff safe by abiding by government guidelines.

Patients should only be attending the surgery for a booked face to face appointment or to collect medication or a prescription from dispensary, all other matters should be dealt with either via email or telephone. The surgery recognizes that it can be difficult to get through on the phone and there is a long message to get through before the menu choice. They would encourage any patient who is able, to sign up to online access or to use the email addresses on our website for any query which is non-urgent. Furthermore if they know the choice they want to make on the telephone they can bypass the message by pressing the number choice directly.

9. Planning Applications

2020/2006/FUL - Erection of 4 x glamping holiday lets

Luckington Gables Lipyeate Cross To Luckington Cross Newbury Frome BA11 3RQ

Cllr Ham declared an interest in this application and will not take part in the discussion or vote.

All Councillors had considered the plans for the abovementioned application prior to the meeting. Concern was raised that the units will be buried into the ground to create humps. The hobbit houses along with the decking area housing hot tubs is not sympathetic to the surroundings and not environmentally friendly.

The lanes accessing the site are very narrow on substandard roads with the entrance close to the crossroads. There is a large car parking area which seems larger than required. It states that a septic tank would be installed for each unit. It was noted that there are already two stable blocks already converted to holiday lets. Councillors felt that this application would be over development of the site and not in keeping with the area.

Cllr Conn proposed and Cllr Turner seconded that the Council should object to proposal for the following reasons:

1. Traffic and road safety due to the narrow and bending local roads
2. Unsympathetic design of units and decks which will be visible in the open countryside
3. Intensification of development in the open countryside
4. Proposal to use septic tanks

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions (1 x District Councillor and 1 with interest declared)

10. Planning updates

1. Westdown Quarry – consultation by Hanson

A leaflet drop had been completed by Hansons to local villages to conduct their own consultation. An email had been received from Mells Parish Council asking if Coleford Parish Council would like to send a representative to a meeting to discuss the issues and implement a long term strategic plan to alleviate the additional impacts these new applications will have on the local communities.

Cllr Conn asked if this consultation was part of a strategic plan for the future. Cllr Ham said that he thought that Hansons were testing public opinion which would help them to decide how to proceed in the future.

2. 2020/1264/OTS – Land adjacent to 61 Mendip Vale, Coleford, Radstock

Application for outline planning permission with some matters reserved for the erection of a detached dwelling with details of access and layout.
Mendip District Council approved with conditions

3. 2020/2201/OTS - Gladmans

Cllr Townsend said that Wessex Water have responded. It states that if the proposal receives permission they will undertake full sewerage appraisal. In this instance they are likely to recommend attenuation of foul flows on site (within a new or upgraded pumping station) and a pumped discharge to a point of connection on the public foul sewer network that will not exceed the capacity of the downstream sewer system. Their regulatory framework dictates that new development should not pay to fix any existing issues. Any improvements required as a result of new development are paid for by an infrastructure charge levy on new development. The Clerk will circulate the letter to all Councillors for consideration.

Cllr Townsend confirmed that there is still no landscaping impact report. The Planning Officer said that he hoped it would be received in the next few weeks. To date there are 250 objections posted on the planning website with over 500 signatures on the petition.

Cllr Ham is working on trying to get Somerset Highways to attend.

Cllr Townsend proposed and Cllr Conn seconded that the Parish Council should submit a reply to the Planning office giving a brief response and stating that the Council objects to the application but a full response will be provided once the landscape report has been received and reviewed.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to work with Cllr Townsend to produce an initial response to the Planning Office

It was noted that the demolition work has commenced at Crossways Garage for the Coop

11. Update on Highways including:

Flooding on Mells Station Road has been reported. This is a historic problem with probably a blocked drain under the road but a simple cut out from the bank may be a partial solution. Flooding at Stoke Bottom has also been reported.

There is still yet to be a site visit from Sara Davis of Somerset Highways to discuss HGV issues here and at Whitehole Lane.

Road closure – interesting that when Brewery Lane was closed traffic from Coleford was again not diverted along Charmborough Lane but along the unbelievably dangerous Dark Lane.

Parking – The Pharmacy have raised a petition to garner support for some sort of parking restriction in front of the shop. The Council would be keen to work with them to explain the history of the issue and the Small Improvement Scheme currently being progressed through County Highways.

Cllr Townsend suggested that we should write to the pharmacy.

Action: Clerk to write to the pharmacy

12. Finance

a) Discuss and agree Budget for Precept 2021/22

The Clerk had circulated the spreadsheet prior to the meeting which showed a draft budget along with calculations showing how any change in precept would impact on Parishioners. It was noted that the total expenditure less predicted income was £55K. Last year's precept was £44K which leaves a difference of £11K. The figures did not include any grant funding which could be forthcoming for any projects embarked upon. All Councillors agreed that if the budget was to remain as shown that any overspend would need to be funded from the bank reserves which were healthy.

Councillors were encouraged to give this some thought ahead of the January meeting when a decision would need to be made on what Precept should be requested.

Cllr Evans asked if the Clerk would deliver a hard copy of the spreadsheet as he was unable to print.

**Action: Agenda item for January meeting
Deliver copy of spreadsheet to Cllr Evans**

b) Accounts approved for payments

The following invoices were produced for payment:

- V Watts - Clerk expenses £67.48
- HMRC – National Insurance - £15.52
- SALC training: GDPR - £25.00
- Ben Windel – Ditch work at Beacon View - £600.00
- Ben Windel – Various jobs - £233.42
- TIP - £200.00

It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Banks that the payments should be made.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to ensure cheques are signed and sent out

13. Environment committee

The Clerk had provided Cllr Evans with a list showing all grit bins, litter bins and street furniture. Cllr Evans had completed an inspection and confirmed that all items were in reasonable condition but some items will need a coat of preservative in the near future. Cllr Evans will put together a schedule for refurbishment.

Action: Cllr Evans to progress

14. Update on the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund bid

Cllr Conn confirmed that there had been some positive responses as a result of the consultation however there had only been a few volunteers that had come forward with offers of support. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with a representative of Coleford Athletic Football Club and had asked that they consider the proposed plans and notify the Clerk if they wished to make comment.

It was proposed by Cllr Conn and seconded by Cllr Ham that the application be progressed and submitted for the grant funding to fulfil the project.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against 0 Abstentions

Cllr Conn explained that the deadline for submission is 12th January 2021 but it is proposed that the application be complete by the 5th January. Cllr Conn said that there were a few items that needed to be completed namely:

Cllr Conn said that he had already made good progress on the application but would appreciate if other Councillors would be prepared read through and check that all is in order. Cllrs Ham and Townsend agreed to take on this role.

Cllr Conn said ran through a checklist for costings which will need to be sought:

- Outdoor gym – To include installation cost etc if required. Cllr Drescher and the Clerk to progress
- Hard standing – Cllr Ham and the Clerk to action
- Fencing – Cllr Ham to provide quotes
- Gates – Cllr Ham to provide quotes
- Water supply Wessex Water and Installation – The water supply runs under the playing field in the area where the allotments would be sited. The quote recently received for Goodeaves could be used. Cllr Ham and the Clerk to progress.

Action: Cllr Conn, Townsend, Ham, Drescher and the Clerk to progress

15. Update of Royal British Legion (Coleford) Asset of Community Value

Cllr Ham confirmed that the form has been completed and he has spoken with Mendip District Council on what to do next. Letters of support from organisations that have used the Legion within the last 3 years are needed – as many as possible. It was agreed that the working party would help to coordinate this. The intention is to have this completed by New Year ready for submission at Mendip District Council.

Action: Working party to progress

16. Review quotes for re fencing the Hard Courts and astro turf type surface

The Clerk read out the quotes that had been received for replacement of just the wire and quotes to replace wire and posts.

Cllr Ham said that he had received a call from one of the youth football club parents who was keen to explore the costs of replacing the current surface with one that could be used for football as well as tennis, basketball etc. She had already obtained information about potential surface and explored the possibility of grant funding.

It was therefore agreed that this would be an agenda item for the January meeting.

Action: Agenda item for January

17. Review re-opening of the Changing rooms

Clerk has instructed the cleaners to complete the deep clean as soon as possible and has had a conversation with the Football club representative on completing the required risk assessments for the reopening of the changing rooms in line with the Football Association and Government guidelines.

Action: Working party to progress Action:

18. Discuss Orchard Close allotment tenancy agreements

Cllr Ham confirmed that he had sought advice and it is understood that if we are creating new allotments then there should be no issue with disposing of these pieces of land.

19. Discuss quotes for rain water harvesting at Goodeaves allotments

This will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for January

20. Discuss requirements for new Allotments

The Clerk confirmed that 23 letters had been sent to local landowners asking if they have land which could be rented or purchased for use as allotments. So far there has been one positive response offering a parcel of land at Upper Vobster, which could be well suited. It was agreed that more time should be allowed to establish if other sites are forthcoming

Action: Agenda item for January meeting.

21. Review future in person Council meetings

It was agreed that the January meeting will take place using Zoom.

22. Correspondence

Somerset Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting 16/12/20 @ 6pm – Cllr Evans to attend virtually

CPRE newsletter – To be passed to Cllr Townsend

Elan City regarding Speed indicator devices - To be passed to Cllr Townsend & Cllr Ham

War Memorial Trust Newsletter - To be passed to Cllr Banks

23. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

Youth Shelter – The work has been completed and the shelter is now ready for installation. Cllr Ham to arrange transport and site the shelter in the most appropriate direction near to the Pump Track as marked on the Climate Fund plan.

Action: Cllr Ham to action

24. Date of Next Meetings:

Wed 13th January 2021 Parish Council meeting

Wed 27th January 2021 Planning Meeting