

# COLEFORD PARISH PLAN

Welcome to  
COLEFORD



2009 - 2019



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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Parish Plan for Coleford has taken over two years to complete. Many hours of free time have been given to produce this document (see Acknowledgements). The benefit of the Plan is that many of the needs of the Parish have been identified, enabling a list of aims and projects to be drawn up. This is an ever evolving document, and some of the needs are already being, or have been addressed, including:

- Change to the shops in the village
- The promise of 28 Affordable houses in the next 2 years
- New litter bins being erected in the village
- A Feasibility Study for a Community building
- New seats are being erected in the village

Nothing stands still and with a changing world and needs constantly changing this Plan is recognised by Mendip District Council and adopted by the Parish Council as a document to be used and updated when required. It gives the village the mandate to prove there is a particular 'need' and therefore provides tremendous support to any groups requesting funding to address a project highlighted within the document.

The process of drawing up the Plan has been an interesting one, with many different views being expressed by the residents of the Parish, some expected, others surprising, most constructive and informative.

However, the overall aim is to enhance Coleford as a place to live, to create an environment where individuals and business can prosper and to support and encourage communities and individuals to improve and enjoy their quality of life.

A copy of this Plan is available to every household in the village, free of charge, hard copies will be available or a copy can be downloaded from the village website – [www.colefordsomerset.org](http://www.colefordsomerset.org)

The Plan is full of information and, I believe, a quality document (see Funding Acknowledgements).

On behalf of everyone involved I hope you enjoy reading the Plan and find it of interest. As mentioned before the Plan is an evolving document and I am sure if you would like to help with any of the projects in the future your contribution would be most welcomed and appreciated.

Thank you all for being involved.

Phil Ham  
Chairman  
Coleford Parish Plan Steering Group



Church Street – Chris Osborne

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Why a Parish Plan?

- To provide a 'snap shot' of life in the Parish today that will become a historical record for the future.
- To consult the community and identify what people value and want to preserve in the Parish and also what they would like to change.
- To find ways to improve the Parish and the lives of those who live and work in it, and turn those ideas into an Action Plan.
- To define the actions required to enhance the living environment and the quality of life for those living within the Parish.

How useful will it be?

A Parish Plan does not have any statutory powers. However:

- Plans often influence district/county councils when they are making decisions.
- Plans can be used to influence inspectors during public enquiries or other disputes.
- Plans should be used by district/county councils when they draw up future policy.

***The main benefit is that the Plan will help the community to focus on key issues affecting it and help drive projects forward to remedy the issues identified.***



**No Parking - Steve Dempster**

## 1.2 The Consultation Process/Methodology

To progress the development of the Plan, a Committee was established comprising those people from the community who had volunteered to assist in the Plan's development.

A grant from DEFRA was applied for and achieved in April 2007.

The first meeting of the Coleford Parish Plan Steering Committee was held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007. At this meeting a constitution was drafted and officers elected. The committee was set up to be independent of any other committee in the Parish but with a line of reporting to the Parish Council. The Committee has continued to meet on a regular basis.

The role of the Steering Committee was, firstly, to identify the wishes of the community for the Parish and, secondly, to raise money to cover the development and printing costs of the Parish Plan.

The Steering Committee therefore had to establish if there were community wishes and accurately determine the level of interest in the issues raised. A 'Call for Ideas' leaflet was distributed to every household in the Parish during August/September 2007 with a collection point put in each retail & public house outlet. From the response of this leaflet a detailed Questionnaire was developed which contained both an adult and youth section and gave the opportunity for all to express their views.

The Questionnaires were delivered to every household in the Parish during January 2008. The level of response to the Questionnaire was very encouraging and the results were presented to the community at an Open Day on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The Open Day was well attended and various people expressed their satisfaction both with the Questionnaire and the way in which the survey had been conducted.

The analysis of the answers of the Questionnaire was undertaken by Aqueous Publications – 60,000 answers plus – the outcome being of great interest.

The table below shows that over 50% of all occupied households responded to the survey and therefore the results can be considered a true reflection of the wishes of the majority of the residents of the Parish.

Number of Questionnaires issued to occupied premises	900
Number of Questionnaires returned	460
Percentage of Questionnaires returned	52%

### Funding

In order to raise funds to produce the Plan, a photo competition was held and the 12 best pictures chosen were used to produce a village calendar. A Barn Dance was held, and there was a stand with a chocolate fountain at the local Bank Holiday Fun Day at the King's Head Inn.

## 1.3 Geography and History of the Parish

Coleford is set in beautiful countryside in the east Mendip hills - Frome is 6 miles, Radstock 5 miles and Shepton Mallet 7 miles, with easy access via country roads.

The population is approx 2,700. The village is a local centre for services including shops, a garage, a primary school, and a medical centre. There are many village organisations and a strong sense of community. The village has a fascinating history with local sites of industrial archaeology, many of these sites can be seen from the sixty well-maintained footpaths in and around the Parish.

Coleford was listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Colford, meaning the hill ford, possibly from the Old French col and ford, or alternatively the coal ford, a ford over which charcoal was carried.

The village once had several coal mines as part of the now closed Somerset coalfield. Just north of Coleford there were the collieries of Newbury and Mackintosh. Mackintosh opened in 1867 but closed in 1919, due to flooding. The Natural Stone Products factory is built on the site of Newbury Colliery. This pit started around the beginning of the 19th century and closed in 1927. The Coal Barton mine was the scene of a firedamp explosion which killed nine miners in 1869.

The Anglican Parish Church of The Holy Trinity was built in 1831 by J. Sperring. The Methodist Chapel is a little more recent having been built in 1865.



**View of Coleford across the Valley - Sarah Ilott**

Stone Age man may have lived and hunted around Coleford. A Stone Age axe was found in Highbury in 1926 and a long barrow was built near Chamborough Farm.

There are numerous Iron Age forts in neighbouring villages, and many field names in Coleford indicate Roman and Saxon activity. A map from Saxon times called the Mells stream Melneecombe and Harris Vale/Newbury – Beverebroc. Luckington Manor (Lokyinton) is recorded in the Domesday book and existed before the Norman Conquest. In Medieval times Luckington Manor became a Nunnery and the Great Hall still exists. The Knights Templars had a chapel near Page House Farm, Old Newbury.

Nineteen seams of coal of the lower coal measures came to the surface in Coleford. Nine of these seams were large enough to be worth mining. There was a rapid development of Bell Pits after 1500, especially Lipyeate and Orypitts Lane, Newbury. Other adit (drift) mines were dug on the north side of the Mells stream. In Roman times coal from Stratton Common was burnt at the temple of Minerva in Bath. It is logical that miners worked their way towards Coleford.

Most small mines attracted a small settlement, and the 1837 map shows these hamlets following the surface line of the prosperous coal seams. These seams came near to, or at the surface from upper Vobster, through Old Newbury, Lipyeate in a loop to Kilmersdon Common; or from Stock Hill through Highbury in a loop to Bullocks Hill.

While the men and boys worked the coal a cottage industry of stocking and glove making existed in the homes. The wool was cleaned from the products of a number of Fulling Mills in Coleford. Farming of animals and grain was also important and other water powered mills ground the grain into flour.

As the coal mines got deeper and grew in size associated industries developed such as rope making and carting. Transport routes also improved with the building of a Turnpike road from Coleford to Soho and on to Frome. Plans to build a canal were also submitted to Parliament around 1790.

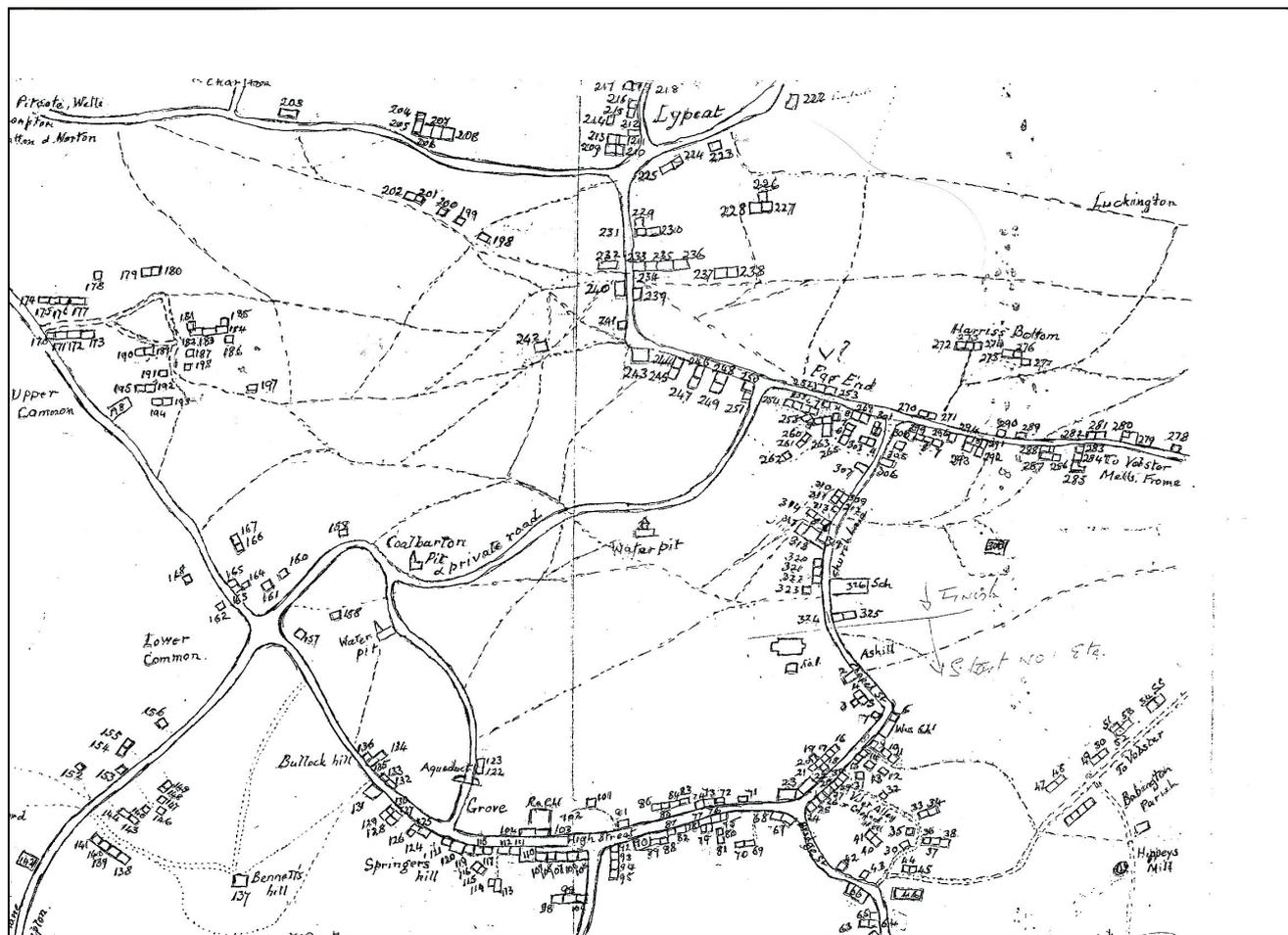


**Coke Ovens - Drawn by David Higgs**

Fussells, and others, invested in the Somerset & Dorset canal before the Napoleonic Wars, but work ceased during the war and was not resumed afterwards. A lack of money and the development of the steam engine put paid to further progress. The aqueduct in Coleford is a fine example of the work done in the 1790's and large parts of the canal bed are still visible at Ham and to the south of Preacher's Vale.

In 1837 a census was taken in Coleford in preparation of the representation of the Peoples Act 1838. Every house was numbered and the head of family and the number of occupants was listed. Many of the names on this list still exist in Coleford today.

The 1837 hand written map (shown below), and the hamlets where small mines were worked can be seen:-



After 1850 the smaller mines closed – especially the three Ringing Pits under the Highbury Playing Field, Moons Pit and others in Highbury. Every so often a shaft collapses in the village to expose some of these long forgotten mines.

The larger pits at Coal Barton, Mackintosh (closed 1917) and Newbury (closed 1927) lasted longer. In 1933 the drift mine at Charmborough was the last new mine to be opened in Somerset. In 1947 the mine was taken over by the NCB and closed in the same year. It thus had the distinction of being the last mine to be opened in Somerset and the first to be closed by the NCB.

Coleford had its own weekly newspaper. The Somerset Telegraph was printed and published in Highbury. In February 1876 the paper carried reports about the digging of the first channel tunnel (that was actually started near Folkestone). It also recorded the story of a miner's wife who lost her fingers while handling a detonator brought home by her husband.

At about this time two church schools were started in Coleford, and the village had many small shops and at least seven drinking houses. The village population was over 1,200.

A railway branch line was built from Mells Road Station to Newbury and there were plans to extend this line to the Somerset and Dorset line at Emborough.

The Miners Strike in 1926 brought much hardship to the miners of Coleford. Families went hungry and unemployed miners pulled a large cart to Cheddar to collect food, given by the farmers of that area.

Coleford remained part of the Parish of Kilmersdon until the Parish Church was built in the 1850's and it obtained its own Parish Council in 1946.

Coleford had its own secondary school, but this closed when the children were transported to the new Writhlington School in 1958.

Since the 1950's housing estates grew off Highbury Street and Anchor Road bringing today's population to 2,700.

The village's most famous visitor was John Wesley, who preached to the miners in the field behind the Methodist Church in the 1790's. Another well known villager was W.M. Jones who wrote the Jarger Beelsh books in the Coleford dialect.

There have been numerous detailed studies into the history of coalmining in the village including the visits of John Wesley and the growth of Methodism amongst miners; the building of the Parish Church and the building of the Somerset & Dorset canal.

#### Historic Sites:-

- Luckington Manor Farm
- Flour Mill – Lower Coleford
- Local history of neighbouring villages
- Coal Mines – Ring o' Bells, Mackintosh (a few bricks remain on the surface as well as the spoil heap), & Newbury (some original brick buildings remain, as well as the listed Winding House)
- Huckyduck (Aqueduct)
- Coke Ovens
- Somerset Coal Canal
- Packsaddle Bridge
- Newbury House (Farleigh College)

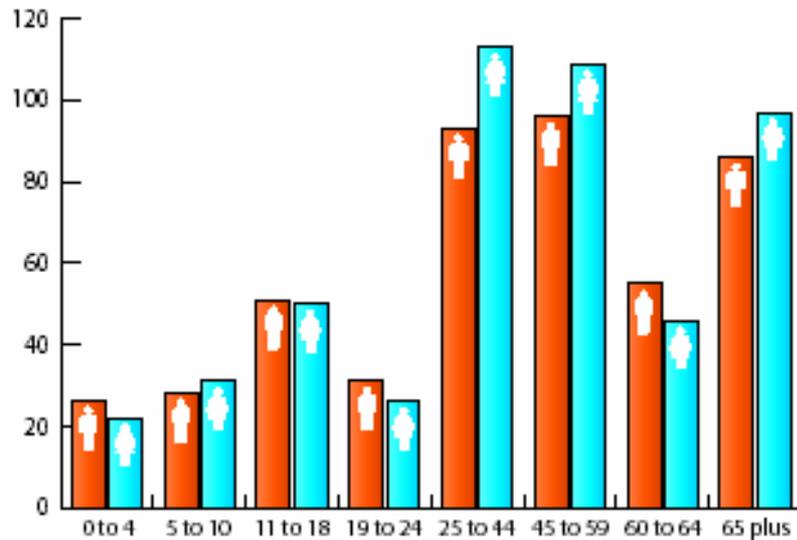
#### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Historical articles in 'On The Map' to promote interest and knowledge.*
- 2) *Conservation of Lower (Old) Coleford*

## 2. THE SURVEY

### 2.1 Population & Demographics

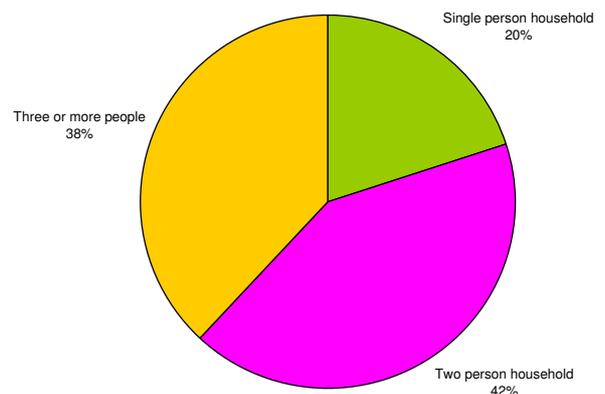
According to the recent survey carried out, 158 of the 373 homes referred to in the completed questionnaires were 2-person households, representing over 42%. 19% of respondents live alone, and 38% live in homes with 2 or more other people. Figure 1 below demonstrates the breakdown of age and gender in respondent's households.



Number of respondents in each age group, separated by gender

#### Household sizes in the Parish

The Parish has a massively ageing population in that there will be a larger percentage of older people in the future therefore the facilities in the village will need to change to reflect this, such as improvements to public transport links, better access to facilities, and more inclusive activities.



#### AIMS:

- 1) To encourage the younger generations to stay in the village by:
  - a) Providing affordable housing
  - b) Encouraging employment in the village
  - c) Encourage self build of houses through 'community self build'
- 2) Make Coleford a place where the younger generations want to live

## 2.2 Parish Affairs & Information

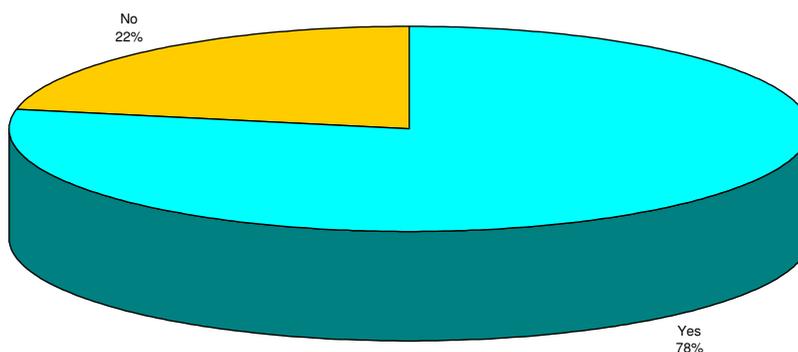
There are three official means of communicating information about the activities within the Parish of Coleford. These are; the monthly publication 'On the Map', which is jointly produced by the C of E churches in Coleford and Holcombe and includes information about the local councils, local groups and activities, the official Coleford website [www.colefordsomerset.org](http://www.colefordsomerset.org) which includes lots of detail about the area, and the four local notice boards, where Council minutes and details about meetings are posted, along with notices from local groups and so on. However, there are a number of changes which could be introduced to improve the communication of Parish information to local residents.

The majority of residents in the area (77%) feel confident about how to contact a Parish Councillor, should they need to do so. Over half the people questioned would like to see more Parish information available via the internet – this area is currently being addressed by the development of the new official Coleford website – please see address above.

With regards to representation of the community on the Parish Council, 85% of respondents would like a youth representative on the Council in one form or another. This is a significant number and the issue should be high on the list of priorities for the Council for the future.

Almost as many residents (78%) feel that there should be a welcome pack provided for newcomers to the area, this could include information about the local shops and services, groups and activities, information on Council services such as the timetable for waste collection, information on recycling facilities, contact details for the PCSO and Parish Council and so on.

**Number of respondents who feel that the village should provide newcomers with a welcome pack**



There were many suggestions for improvements to communications within the Parish, including putting the 'On the Map' newsletter online - (65% of people within Coleford have internet access, compared to the European average of 48%) - and the introduction of special newsletters for the older members of the community as well as the Youth.

## **AIMS:**

- 1) *Improve website and make people aware of it – use it more.*
- 2) *Welcome packs for new residents.*
- 3) *Use of 'On the Map' better to advertise events.*
- 4) *Look at Youth representative within village via Parish Council i.e. slot at beginning of meeting or portfolio holder for Council or both?*

## **COLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council is the tier of local government closest to the people. A Parish Council represents the concerns of the local community. It is an elected body made up of local people representing the interests of the community.

Parish councils are statutory bodies. Members are elected for a term of four years and councils are funded principally by an annual precept. Income and expenditure for the next financial year are calculated in the form of estimates. The net amount (the precept) is added to council tax, collected by the county, borough or district council (principal authorities) and, in the case of Coleford Parish Council, is paid in one instalment every April. Parish Councils can apply for other funding such as grants and funding awards, but they do not receive funds direct from central government, as principal authorities do.

In 1946 the Highbury and Coleford settlements were reorganised into one civil Parish. To reflect the growth in population it was decided that the appropriate number of Councillors would be 13 and these are elected every four years. In the event that there are insufficient candidates the vacancies are filled by co-option by those who have been elected. All the various details are to be found on [www.colefordsomerset.org](http://www.colefordsomerset.org)

The duties of the Council are mostly to advise the larger authorities when things ought to be done more suitably for the benefit of the village and all who live here.

The Parish Council is allocated a small honorarium to assist nominated volunteers acting as Footpath Wardens who report on the condition of registered public rights of way. They can also help, here and there, with the cutting back of obstructing growth. The Council has had great help from the Mendip Ramblers who have quite voluntarily undertaken the upkeep and repair of stiles and kissing gates with some assistance from the Somerset Rights of Way Officer.

In one important area the Parish Council has the power and responsibility of dealing with the provision of recreation areas. The Highbury Playing Fields were gifted to the Parish and the Councillors act as Trustees. The other areas have been purchased by the Parish Council at various times – the earliest being the Lower Coleford Playing Fields and the Church Street Gardens and more recently the Play spaces at Roman Way and Goodeaves Close as well as the open spaces behind Beacon View and at the corner of Beacon View and Anchor Road where the Council commissioned the erection of the village name sign.

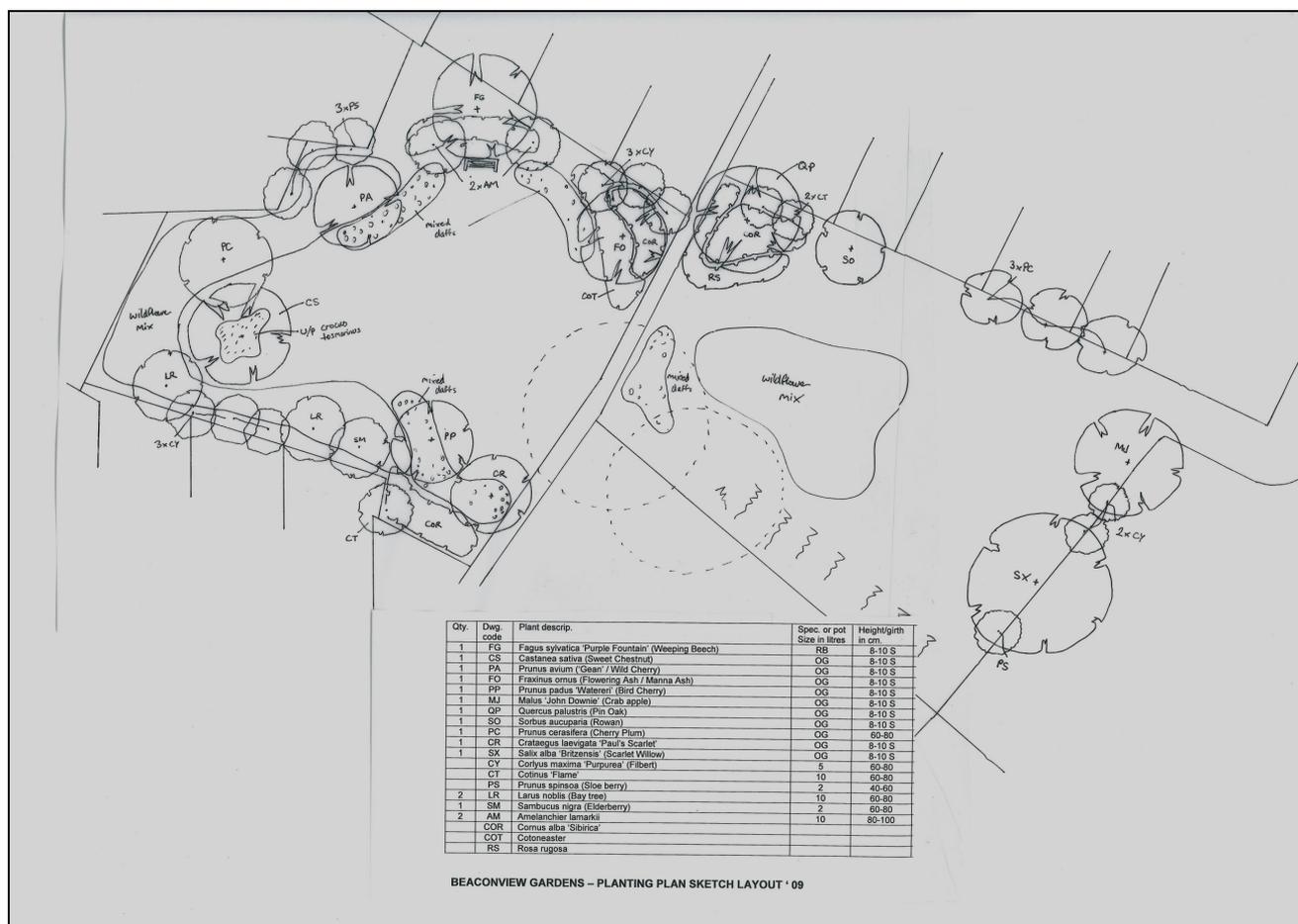
The Council owns and maintains the Changing Rooms and the hard surface courts at Highbury and the children's play equipment there and at Lower Coleford, Roman Way and Goodeaves.

The Parish Council is an Allotment Authority with allotments at Goodeaves albeit on a small scale and should a resident want to take on a small plot to grow their own vegetables the Council has the duty to make provision for them where possible in the village.

At this time the village does not have its own Hall. Various bodies own and operate halls such as the British Legion, the Holy Trinity Church, the Methodist Church and of course the Bishop Henderson County Primary School. Two public houses also have rooms available for events.

The Parish Council owns and maintains a number of public seats and modern style litter bins, which the District Council are responsible for emptying.

The Parish Council owns and operates the Cemetery within Coleford and considers all the requests for burial and memorials there.



*"I can remember the announcement by the Prime Minister that we were at war with Germany. When I started work at Stratton-on-the-Fosse my dad used to meet me on his bike. I always knew it was Dad as the front wheel of his bike wobbled. My Dad was also the local undertaker and often my job was to order the furniture for the coffins i.e. lining full, robe cushion, handles and nameplates."*

Ida Allen

## 2.3 Village Design and Planning

Coleford does not yet have a “Design Statement “ document but it was clear from comments made both in response to the questionnaire and at the Parish Plan Open Day, that villagers have strong feelings about protecting and enhancing the visual appearance of the village.

Although many new houses have been built over the twentieth century, particularly as offshoots of Anchor Road and Highbury Street, much of the old village remains intact, including a number of listed buildings. These are spread around the village but are concentrated in the area known as Lower (or Old) Coleford where the picturesque Church Street descends steeply towards the Mells Stream and the old settlement.

Up until the First World War, almost every building in the village was built of stone, the majority of the domestic buildings being of random or coursed rubble with tiled roofs. Most have stone window surrounds although brick is also in evidence. Brick was unusual for complete buildings until the late C19th. The more formal buildings, such as the Old Rectory, Coleford House, or the Methodist Chapel, are of dressed stone. Many buildings were later rendered and colour-washed.



From the 394 questionnaire responses to this question, 102 houses are pre-1900 (with 37 pre 1800), 55 were built between 1900 and 1950 with 207 houses being constructed post-1950.

Few of the post-1950 buildings show much sympathy for the materials of the original village, even those built by the local authority, partly because of cost and partly because of fashion, though developments of the mid 1960's and later show a marked preference for the use of reconstituted stone (a local product). In terms of planning there was a preference for "infilling" and a number of villagers have commented on this.



On the Open Day, villagers were shown photographs of all parts of the Parish reminding them of the variety of the visual environment and asked to make comments on what they saw. Some of the comments included praise for the older buildings in the village, the identification of some areas which could be improved by the addition of pots of plants and the like, and comments that new build houses should include more traditional materials to be in keeping with existing properties.

One particular question asked whether there should be a conservation area in the Parish; these are some of the responses:

- Yes – Lower/Old Coleford
- Yes, where the listed buildings are
- The Huckyduck
- The Mill, Mill Lane
- Support the extension of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

It was interesting to note that while there is support for the protection of areas of the village, some residents stated that care should be taken not to split the village in any way.

Some of the more recent developments have shown a more sympathetic use of materials.



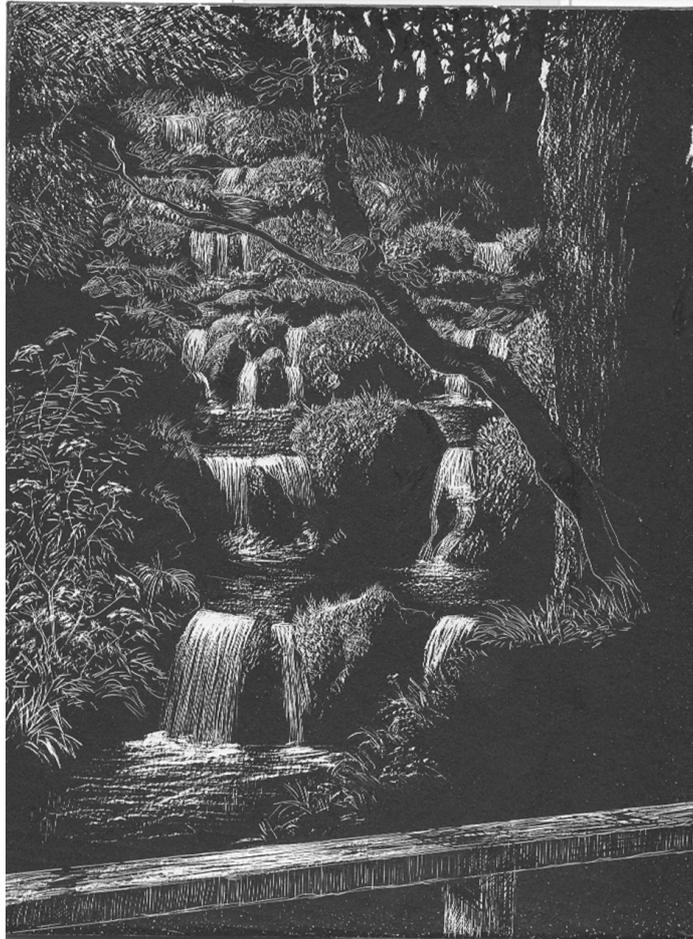
**Photos in this section taken by Tony Mayell**

## Comments on appearance of village

With regards to the overall appearance of the village, residents had some suggestions about how the area could be made more visually appealing and welcoming. These included the removal of overhead electricity cables, the planting of more trees, introduction of planted pots and hanging baskets and the tidying up of public areas and some private areas. Some residents also feel that there has been too much infill development within the village leading to a cramped feel to the area – while this cannot be undone, some comments suggested this should be taken into consideration when viewing planning applications in the future.

### **AIMS:**

1. *Look at forming a Conservation group for the Parish*
2. *Install planted pots and baskets to soften some areas of the village*
3. *Tidy public spaces and encourage private residents to do same*
4. *Consider planning applications for new developments with respect to infill issues and use of traditional building styles and materials, where appropriate*



**Tufa Falls - Drawn by David Higgs**

*“Pop down the wood and get a clothes post Ter’ – this was a responsible job to chop down one of Jack Button’s trees! The thought of wielding a short bill hook deep in to the flesh of a stout tree was better than digging the garden”*

*Terry Acker Howell*

## 2.4 Education

Results from the questionnaire regarding the broad spectrum of education available to Coleford gave varying results. The vast majority of responses regarding Pre-School, Nursery, Primary and Secondary schooling were happy with the facilities available.

Within the village, Pre-School and Nursery Facilities along with a variety of other parent and child services are available at Bishop Henderson Primary School and also the Link Children's Centre which is situated on the same site. Similar services are also available in various villages within close proximity to Coleford.

The Link Children's Centre, situated in Farley Dell has varying activities throughout Monday to Friday providing a variety of services to children and also supports young parents and parents-to-be. The Link works closely with Bishop Henderson School ensuring a smooth transition from pre-school through to primary education and also encouraging parental involvement in the children's education.



Bishop Henderson Primary School, also situated in Farley Dell provides a caring learning environment for children aged from 3 – 11 with experienced staff working together to ensure that each child acquires the knowledge and skills to develop their unique talents whilst achieving the highest possible standards.

Recent successes of the School include the achievement of the Healthy Schools Award and the Active Mark which recognizes commitment to good health and high quality PE. Also in 2009 the Year 6 children won the Threshold Poetry Prize for the 'Best School' in the South West region.



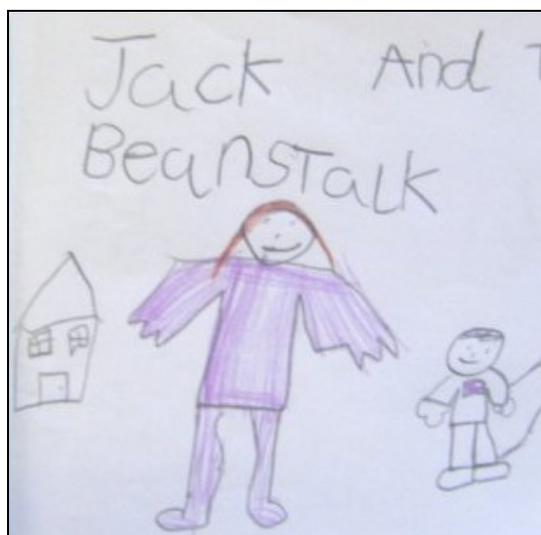
Two Advanced Skills Teachers at the school have developed an innovative Guided reading programme, which has been well received both throughout the county and nationally. In addition, an Early Years Unit opened in 2009 linking the Nursery and Reception Class which was recognised as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, this is housed in spacious purpose-built accommodation.

The two main Schools supplying secondary education are Writhlington and Norton Hill. Writhlington is situated approximately 6 miles away with Norton Hill being approximately 5 miles away, with school transport provided by both schools, picking up at various points through the village. Writhlington is currently undergoing a £25m rebuild programme that is due for completion early in 2010. Additional secondary education is also available in surrounding towns and villages, although school transport is not provided for these establishments.

People who responded to the Questionnaire felt that the Parish was not adequately served by Child Minders, Day Care, Holiday Play Schemes and Adult Learning Facilities.

**AIMS:**

- 1) *Set up Holiday Play Schemes and co-ordinate them*
- 2) *Adult Learning opportunities*
- 3) *Promote local education facilities to all the Parish*



## 2.5 Health, Disability & Access, Care In The Community

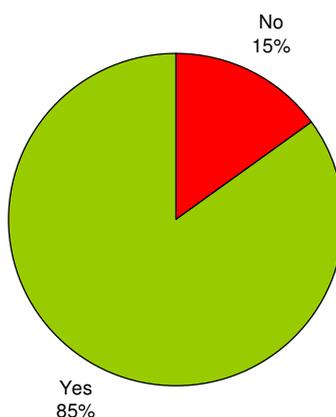
### ***MENDIP COUNTRY PRACTICE***



Coleford has its own medical practice, which serves not only the Parish but also a number of other villages in the area. The practice is a five doctor dispensing practice with a list size of approx. 5,200 patients. It is long established as a training practice regularly having GP Registrars (trainee doctors) attached to it. The surgery is open Monday to Friday, 8.00am – 6.30pm. Routine surgeries run daily with one doctor being designated duty doctor (on-call) each day and holding an emergency surgery in the evening. The practice is fully computerised and has an integrated 'EMIS' system which holds all computerised patient records. Appointments can be booked usually 4-6 weeks in advance, and any patient needing an urgent appointment will be seen the same day.

The Centre's website ([www.mendipcp.co.uk](http://www.mendipcp.co.uk)) offers patients the opportunity to book appointments on-line, order repeat medication, and more recently the ability to view their medical record. There is also a booklet available outlining the services offered.

Are you satisfied with the healthcare in the Parish?

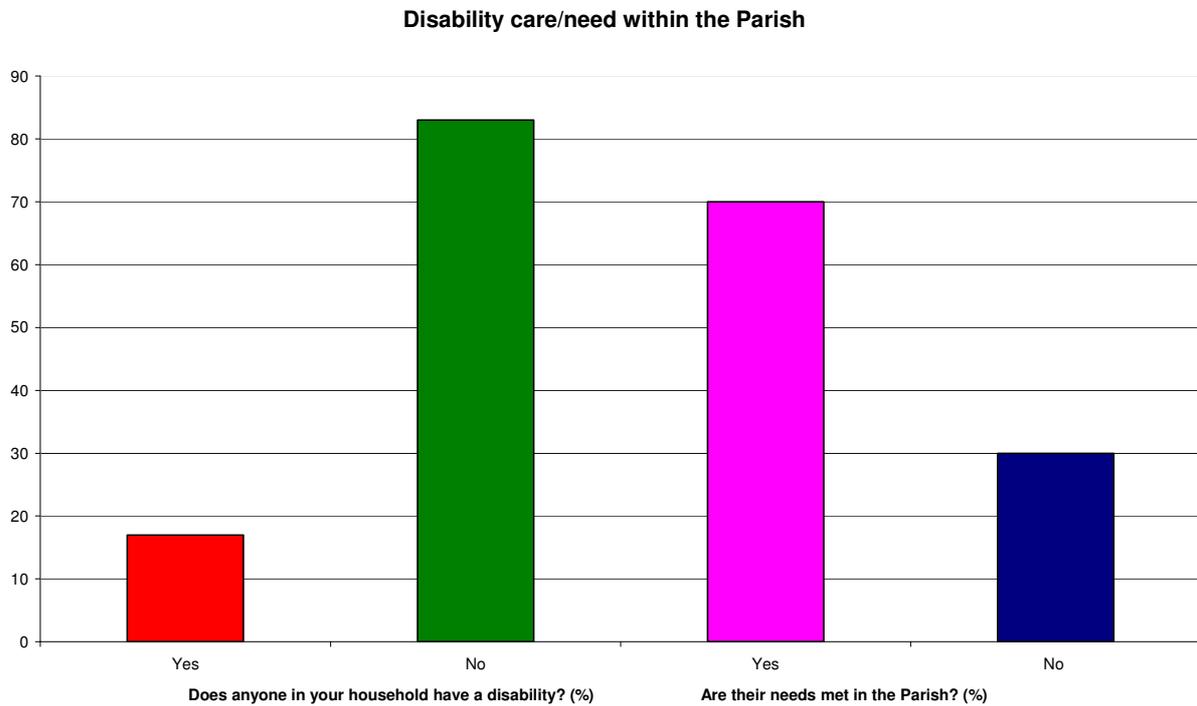


However, there were some comments regarding how the healthcare could be improved, including waiting time for appointments too long; appointments not kept to time; longer appointments needed for specialist services, such as the midwife and speech therapist; Saturday and evening opening hours for the surgery and pharmacy; improvements needed to out of hours care, as response times can be very long.

The Practice are aware of the issues raised and will use these comments to further improve the service.

## Disability & Access

The Parish Supports the need to assist, where possible, all of our residents who have a disability in achieving the best possible quality of life in the Parish.



From the Questionnaire the following points were highlighted:

- Pavements made level and brighter street lights.
- Disabled bay by shops/Hairdressers or pub and lowered kerbsides for those with crutches.
- Better, cheaper public transport such as dial a ride or help with own transport.
- The church hall needs disability access.
- More homes for wheelchair users with locations available with the Parish.
- To keep parked cars off pavements for wheelchair users.

The most common complaint of the disabled is the lack of pavements in the Parish and many cars are parked partially on the pavements, forcing pedestrians to walk into traffic to pass.

### **AIMS:**

- 1) *The Link Children's Centre are hoping to be able to deliver some facilities & services for the under 5's with disabilities.*
- 2) *Investigate a Dial & Ride service for the Parish.*
- 3) *Review disabled parking provisions.*
- 4) *Put forward suggestions for disabled access to Church Hall.*
- 5) *Investigate lower kerb sides.*
- 6) *Ensure regular contact with PCSO regarding cars parked on pavements.*
- 7) *Consider the needs of the disabled and elderly in provision of facilities within the Parish i.e. lunch club*

## 2.6 Religion

There are four religious buildings all situated within or on the edge of Coleford Parish. They are:

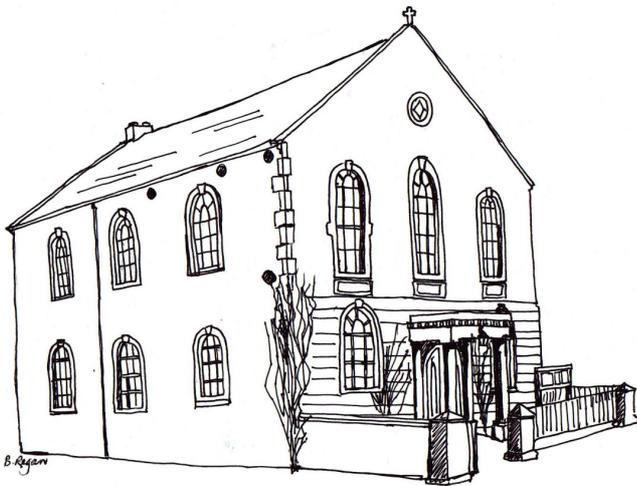
### ***Holy Trinity Church***

Holy Trinity Church is situated in Church Street. Coleford is part of what is called a benefice together with St Andrew's Church in Holcombe. The Church was built in 1831, prior to this the parishioners had to walk down to the Church in Kilmersdon, and even coffins were taken (man handled) over the "coffin path". Now the village cemetery is alongside the Church and churchyard.

Details of the times of services and other meetings are available from the Church.



### ***The Methodist Chapel***



Methodism has been long established in Coleford. The first gathering took place in 1745. John Wesley was particularly fond of the village. He visited the area more than twenty times during his ministry, and spoke affectionately of 'the honest colliers of Coleford'.

The present Methodist Chapel was completed in 1865, next door to the Methodist Sunday School building, which was erected in 1845 on Church Street (now a private residence). For many years the Sunday School building was also used to house a day school for village children.

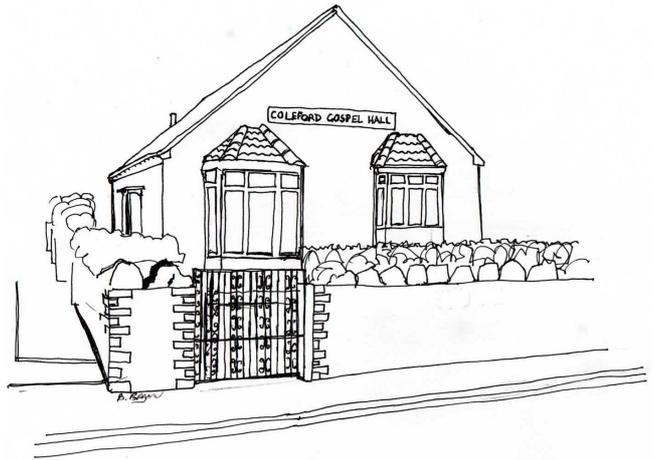
By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Coleford had become a regional centre for Methodism and its influence radiated through Somerset.

Details of the times of services and other meetings are available from outside the Chapel.

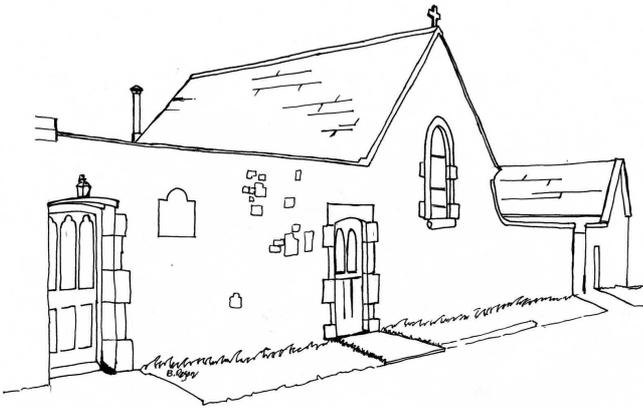
## ***Coleford Gospel Hall***

From the earliest records it is shown that the work being carried out from the Hall was commenced by a small group of Christians in the early 1920's. The meetings took place first of all in the corrugated iron hut on Highbury Cross and from January 1984 in the present premises just across the road.

Details of the times of services and other meetings are available from outside the Meeting House.



## ***St Cuthbert's Catholic Church***



St Cuthbert's was originally the Coach House of Flint House. After the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, Flint House was owned by Major & Mrs Leadbitter, who were Catholics. Flint House was used for Mass until the congregation became too big. In 1925 the Coach House was converted into the chapel. In the 1930's a cottage next door was used as a "club", when war broke out evacuees used this as a school.

At the end of the war, the Leadbitters moved to Bournemouth and Flint House was bought by the Arbuthnots. The Leadbitters forgot to make the cottage over to the Church so the Arbuthnots knocked it down and built a bungalow for their cook.

Mass is said every Sunday at 9am

*"Bread was delivered by the Co-Op with horse and cart, the payment was made using bread tokens. Milk was delivered by Mrs Button from Holcombe who filled your jug at the door"*

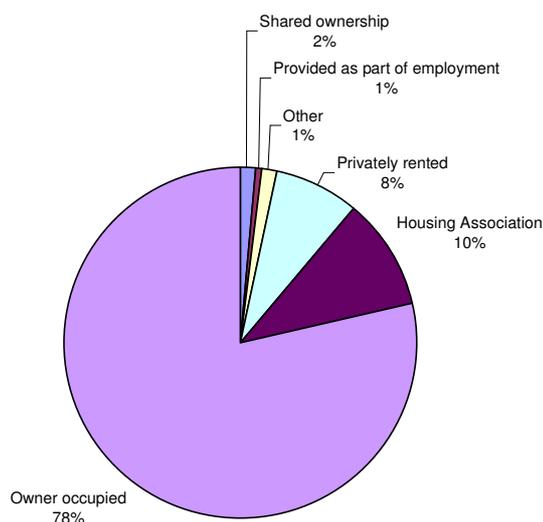
*Stuart Coles*

## 2.7 Housing

The Parish Plan identifies that there is a need for affordable housing in the village. There is a risk that younger people will leave the village to find cheaper homes, which will result in an increasingly ageing population within the village. These are the two age groups that tend to need affordable housing. The Plan has also shown that 80% of houses in Coleford are privately owned against the national average of 69%. The lack of affordable housing is being addressed to the tune of 28 homes of different sizes to be built starting in 2009 at Goodeaves. This is probably not enough to correct the situation fully. The planning and building of new homes in the village is under consultation with Mendip District Council. (\*see *Business & Employment*)

The Plan has also found that the village contains a lot of older houses that are of historical importance especially in Lower Coleford where it could be an idea to form a conservation area.

**Breakdown of dwelling types in Coleford**



### ***Douglas Yates Court***

Douglas Yates Court is a Housing 21 sheltered housing scheme for older people based in the village of Coleford.

Douglas Yates Court offers independent living with support in place through a resident Court Manager living on site who is there to offer assistance. This may include maximising income, ensuring tenants are receiving their full entitlement of income through benefits and other means, and the setting up of care packages both through Housing 21 and external agencies.

Douglas Yates Court consists of both 2 person one bedroom apartments on 2 levels and 1 person studio apartments. All apartments have their own kitchen and newly refurbished bathroom.

Douglas Yates Court has an active social life and events include bingo, quizzes, outings and lunches. Residents can join in as much or as little as they wish. The activities are open to all.

## ***Mendip Housing***

Mendip Housing are planning to build new homes in Coleford, investing more than £3 million over two years to build 28 family homes to rent to local people.

Mendip Housing are proud and excited to be working in partnership with the Parish Council, Mendip District Council and the landowner to help local people find an affordable place to make a home.

It's all part of their work providing decent homes, and neighbourhoods, for people who need them.

### **Affordable Housing Site Layout**



65% of respondents felt Coleford needs affordable housing with 49% saying 3 bedroom affordable housing most suitable.

### ***AIMS:***

- 1) Affordable housing to be built to encourage shared ownership.*
- 2) Need to look at the balance of age differentiation in village.*
- 3) Why are the young leaving – jobs, housing, price of houses*

## 2.8 Communications

There are many forms of communication available to communities, ranging from the most modern of internet based websites though to the most basic of the spoken word and through the Questionnaire, it is clear that most Coleford residents feels that communication needs to be improved throughout the whole spectrum.

### Telecommunication

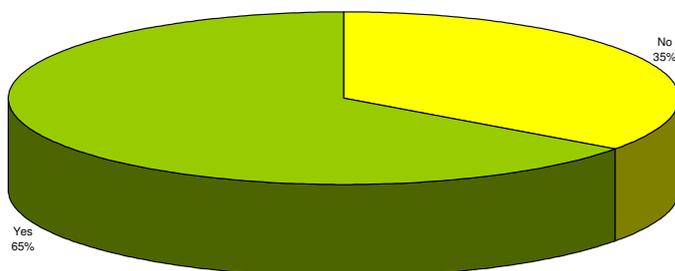
Normal landline communications such as British Telecom are available to all households, and all the major mobile communication companies have coverage of the village, although the entire village does not receive good mobile reception, especially Lower Coleford.

### Internet

Broadband is available via various service providers, both through landline and mobile service providers although due to the distance from the exchange and the patchy mobile network, transfer speeds vary dramatically depending on location within the village.

65% of respondents to the questionnaire benefit from internet access, against a European average of 48%, representing a strong uptake of the technology. 56% of respondents requested that Parish Information be made available via this medium (see below)

Percentage of respondents with/without internet access



### Parish Website

Many respondents requested that information be available via a Parish Website and this has now been set up – [www.colefordsomerset.org](http://www.colefordsomerset.org).

A number of ideas were received as to what villagers would like to see included on the site. These included information on local clubs and organisations, religious centres, arts and crafts in the village, a notice board, information on local businesses and services, a gallery section, plus various other ideas.

The Website also provides a point of information for the Parish Council, with Newsletters, council minutes, a list of Councillors and contact information.

To make the Website successful the support of the community is needed. Village organisations need to supply their details and keep them up to date. This can be done via the contact page on the website or direct to the Parish Clerk.

## Notice boards

A number of respondents requested additional Notice boards to those already situated throughout the village although it is acknowledged in the Questionnaire that these are sometimes vandalised and are normally overcrowded. New guidelines as to use of Notice Boards have been attached to the board outside the post office.

## Newsletters and Leaflets

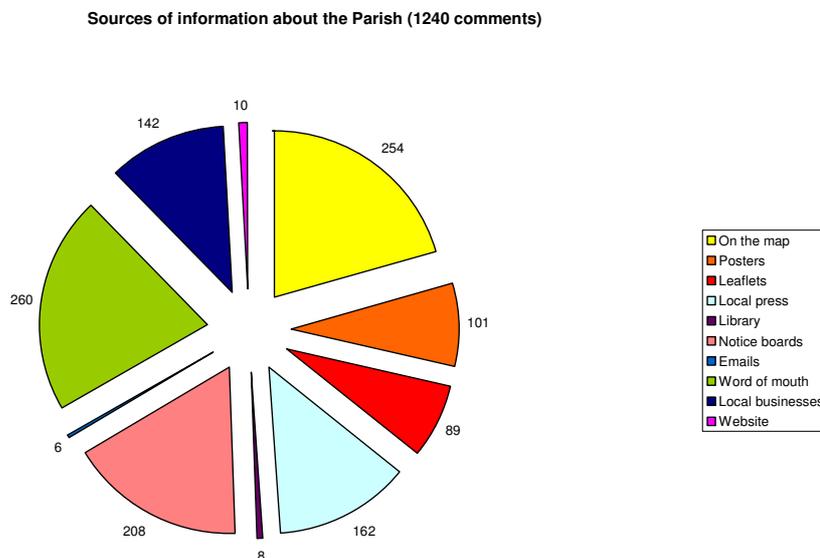
A common request from respondents was for information to be supplied via leaflet drops or a Village Newsletter. "On The Map" is a Church and Community magazine for both Coleford and Holcombe. It is normally produced eleven times a year and has a circulation of 700 copies for both villages, with many more readers. Many Village organisations send in regular reports and forthcoming events.

## Parish Council

Information regarding the work of the Parish Council was requested by a number of respondents, this is now available on the Parish website. Also a Youth Parish Council was suggested, which is being considered.

## Parish Information and Welcome Pack

Some respondents to the questionnaire suggested a Village Welcome/Information Pack for new members of the parish.



## **AIMS:**

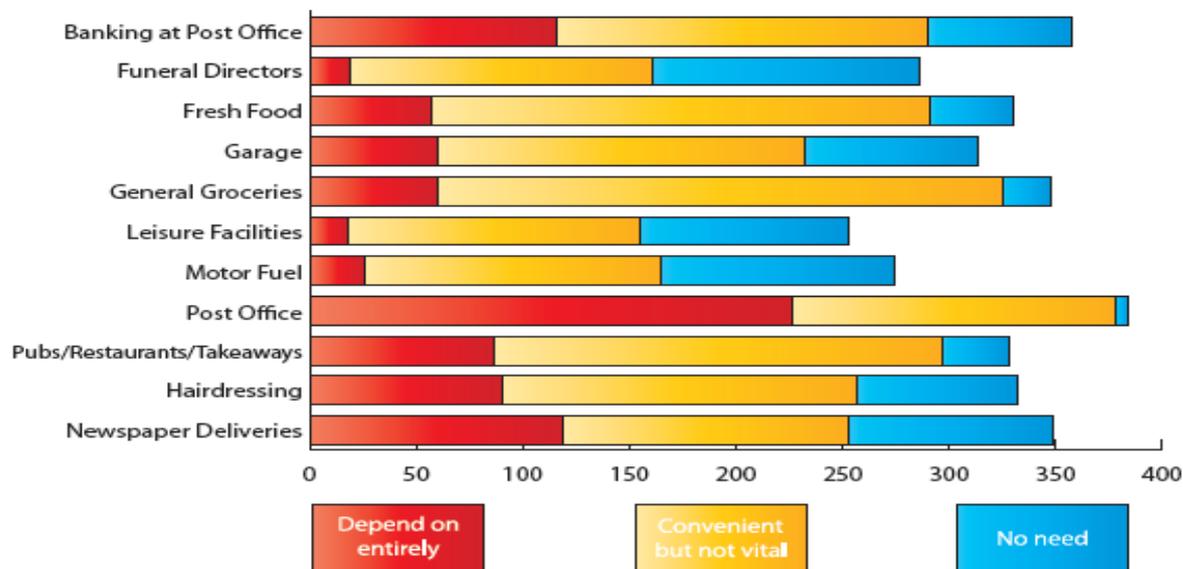
- 1) *Introduce a Welcome Pack for new residents.*
- 2) *Improve mobile & broadband communication by lobbying service providers.*
- 3) *Investigate the possibility of providing a Newsletter.*
- 4) *Improve the website and make people aware of it.*
- 5) *Promote use of 'On The Map'.*
- 6) *Investigate possibilities for a Youth Representative on Parish Council.*

## 2.9 Amenities

### Shops and Services

Local shops and services are largely seen as convenient to the respondents of the Questionnaire, with the Post Office standing out as the only facility which most people depend upon.

*Facilities currently available:*



**“Levels of need felt by respondents concerning certain local services”**

Since the Questionnaire was completed and the results analysed, there have been significant changes to the village shopping facilities. Both the village shop and the post office have changed hands, with both being refurbished, one as a convenience store and the other as a mini supermarket. Both are busy and there appears to be a welcome move for local residents to use the stores in preference to travelling approximately 5.5 miles to the nearest supermarket

The Post Office is seen as the most vital service in the community and this position has been strengthened by the closing of Holcombe Post Office. Many villagers depend on the Post Office for banking services and this became critical during the recent severe weather, highlighting the importance of this facility for those residents not able to visit larger towns.

16% of residents use a home delivery service for groceries – this figure is almost twice the national average, reflecting the difficulties many have with transport. It remains to be seen whether the new stores will affect this.

### *AIMS:*

- 1) *Encourage people to use local businesses*
- 2) *Develop schemes to encourage local spend*
- 3) *Develop business network*

## Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau – Coleford Parish Service

Mendip CAB provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

The Bureau's aim is to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The Bureau provides advice on debt, benefits, housing, employment, relationship and family matters, health, education, discrimination, immigration and the law.

The Bureau has offices in all five Mendip towns and has a mobile that visits the villages. This includes Coleford on a Monday morning, when the mobile parks in the British Legion Car Park.

In addition to the core service, clients in Coleford also benefit from the Bureau's specialist projects:-

- Legal Services Franchise – this provides specialist welfare benefits work for clients who qualify for Legal Aid.
- FIF (Financial Inclusion Fund) Project – this provides debt advice to low income families with young children and works with the Link Centre.
- Debt Worker – funded by Wessex Water this provides help for other debt clients with multiple debts.
- Home visiting service for people who are housebound.
- Representation at appeal tribunals.
- Homelessness Prevention Debt Project – provides help with financial problems to people presenting at homeless to Mendip District Council.
- GP Surgery Outreach including the Coleford surgery on a Tuesday afternoon.

During a typical year the Bureau helps approximately 150 different Coleford residents who contact the Bureau over 400 times with over 180 different issues.

## 2.10 Village Activities

### ***Coleford Athletic Football Club***

Coleford Athletic Football Club was founded in 1890 and has been based in Coleford ever since. The aim of the club is to give young people the opportunity to play in an organised sport and learn respect for others.

The club has two Saturday teams playing in the Mid Somerset League, players range from 16 to 39 years of age. The 1st team are in the Premier Division, the Reserves play in Division 2.

Since 1950 the club have been Premier League champions on 8 occasions, KO cup winners 6 times, runners-up 8 times and have won the Charity Cup 3 times.

Home games are played on Highbury Playing fields, which include recently updated changing rooms for home and away teams and the referee. Refreshments for both teams, match officials and supporters are provided by the Royal British Legion.



The club is run by a Committee of six officers plus the two team managers, and the club is financed by players' subscriptions and fund raising – the club has some very keen supporters, whose help in this area is invaluable.

The club hopes as many youngsters in and around Coleford are given the opportunity to take part in sport and learn a sense of responsibility on and off the field of play.

### ***Cribbage and Skittles***

Coleford has 3 licensed premises providing facilities for two of the old pub favourites of Cribbage and Skittles. The Kings Head, The Eagle and The British Legion all have Skittle Alleys which are well supported by local Coleford teams and also Teams from other local Villages. Match nights vary depending on the various Leagues and Tournaments so anyone interested in joining an existing team or starting a new team would need to contact one of the establishments direct.

The Frome and District Crib league is organised from the Kings Head and games are played home and away in the Frome Area by the 3 teams on Tuesday Evenings. The Kings Head also has a team entered in the Midsomer Norton League which plays on Thursday Evenings home and away in the Midsomer Norton area.



With most “Pub Games” receiving less support than in previous years, new team members would always be made very welcome!

### ***The Children’s Society***

The Children’s Society is a church charity caring for poor and deprived children in Britain and abroad. They have been involved in trying to help children living on the streets and involved in drugs and crime in recent years.

There are no house to house collections but people volunteer to keep a box in their homes in which to collect odd coins (lots of copper!). Once a year Shirley Kite empties them and counts all the money. At the bank very patient staff weigh it and credit it to the Society. Last year over £500 was collected.

### ***Huckyduck Carnival Club***

The Club (HCC) was founded in 1977 back in the days when Coleford enjoyed a village week culminating in a grand parade on the Saturday from Farley Dell to Highbury Playing Fields. Today, HCC competes in the Somerset County Guy Fawkes Carnival Circuit held in seven Somerset towns in November.

The club is made up of approximately 40 members, with ages ranging from early teens to mid 60’s. Members are welcomed from within the village and the surrounding area, though the newest Associate Member lives in South West Ireland!



The club’s greatest triumphs have been; in 1977 with ‘Showbiz Spectacular’ and in 2002 with ‘Runaway Toys’ – both entries winning the overall County Championship and the highly coveted ‘Starkey, Knight & Ford’ County Cup.

Last year’s entry, ‘Narnia’ won the County Tableau Class – another great achievement.

During the past 30 years the club has always been very proud to represent the village and looks forward to doing so again at this year’s carnival season.

### ***Luckington Carnival Club***

Luckington Carnival Club was formed in 1979 by Ken & Kath Selway, Les Parfitt with his two sons, Neil & Alan, and a few more local Colefordians. The club was originally based at the Royal British Legion and was known in the first two years as The Legionnaires, but was later changed to Luckington Carnival Club to recognise Luckington Manor Farm, home to Ken & Kath Selway where the floats were built.



For the first entry into the county circuit the Club chose the theme, The Mighty Quinn, which was a tableaux entry. In the 1990's the Club managed to win the County Cup with their entry, Ship in a Bottle. The Club continued until 2005 with Tableaux entries then changed to Comic Features hoping to encourage new members to join. Luckington Carnival Club has never been a large club with membership averaging around 20 members over the years

Currently the Club is now based at Stratton on the Fosse Royal British Legion with the floats still being built at Luckington Manor Farm. Luckington hopes to still carry on competing in the county circuit for many years to come but are always looking for new members.

### ***Royal British Legion***

The Royal British Legion Hall was built in 1956, with an extension being added later to provide facilities for the Club. The Hall has recently been further improved by the addition of disabled access and toilet facilities. In its early years the Hall played host to many well known bands, even Lulu has performed there!

The Royal British Legion Hall is a members club which is managed by a Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee.

The Hall is regularly used by a number of local organisations during the year. Activities include weekly Bingo nights, the Annual Flower Show and performances from the village school and the theatre group.

### ***Mendip Shotokan Karate Club***

Shotokan Karate is one of the oldest and most popular styles of Karate in the world today. It was developed at the beginning of the last century by Master Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957) from the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.



The club teaches traditional Shotokan Karate and is affiliated to the JKAE (Japan Karate Association England). The club has been running for over 30 years and has had many successes locally, nationally and internationally. They meet at the British Legion Hall on Thursday evenings and welcome students from 6yrs–60yrs+, the only requirements being good character and a willingness to give one's best.

Students can train for a few sessions to decide whether karate is for them, then a JKAE licence is required in order to train. This provides membership benefits from the JKAE, eligibility to take grading exams and insurance for club members. Beginners should wear loose comfortable clothes; a Gi (karate suit) can be purchased if the student wishes to continue training.

## **CF5 Productions**

CF5 is an amateur dramatic group with a current membership of thirty aged from 16 to 80, the majority being based in Coleford. The group was formed in 2004, producing its own Christmas play at Holy Trinity and it has gone on from strength to strength performing such shows as; Pickwick, The Pyjama Game, and this year Dick Whittington, a pantomime.

The aim is to bring enjoyment to audiences and members at reasonable prices for all. Rehearsals take place every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the Church Hall. All new members will be warmly welcome.



## **Coleford And The Arts**

Coleford enjoys one of the most vibrant Arts scenes in Somerset with a large number of people participating in the Arts relative to the village population.

Artists, including the famous William Scott and Fred Yates, have been drawn here partly by the picturesque topography, a village of old stone houses tumbling down to a beautiful river valley.

The 2008 Somerset Arts week saw exhibitions by a number of Coleford artists who opened their studios for the event. These included David Parfitt, Emma Scott, Melanie Moulding and the George family, Andrew, Val & Alastair. Janette Kerr has also shown her work at her studio.

Besides visual artists and a ceramist, Nick Innes, there are also professional musicians, singers, choreographers and storytellers, together with an annual festival of Irish music and the theatre group.

For the millennium celebrations Janette Kerr acted as artist in residence for the village and for Bishop Henderson School. Many villagers produced images of their houses which were put together to produce the Millennium Map. Other villagers spent hours producing tapestries, which are now in the Methodist Chapel, and there was a young peoples' video project as well.



**Coleford Millennium Map**

### ***Tuesday Afternoon Club***

The Tuesday Afternoon Club is a friendly group for women which meets at Douglas Yates Court Lounge every other week at 2pm. It is an independent group and there are no age restrictions. Meetings involve talks and presentations either by local speakers or representatives of groups of charities. There are several trips out during the year. For example to visit local attractions or for meals. There is also a Christmas Carol Service afternoon with local singers and a visit to the Royal British Legion Hall for the Theatre Group's Annual Show. Transport for trips out is subsidised by Club funds and members subscriptions. Contact regarding meetings etc can be made on 01373 812988.

*"My mother and father ran the Anchor Inn. Customers in wintertime would heat the poker in the fire until red-hot and then put it in their cider to make it hot. They also would crack a raw egg into it and sometimes add ginger, and if things got going they would empty the water from the vase of Antirrhinums (Snapdragons) into their cider and call it Snapdragon Cider!"*

*Oriel Baber*

## 2.11 Employment

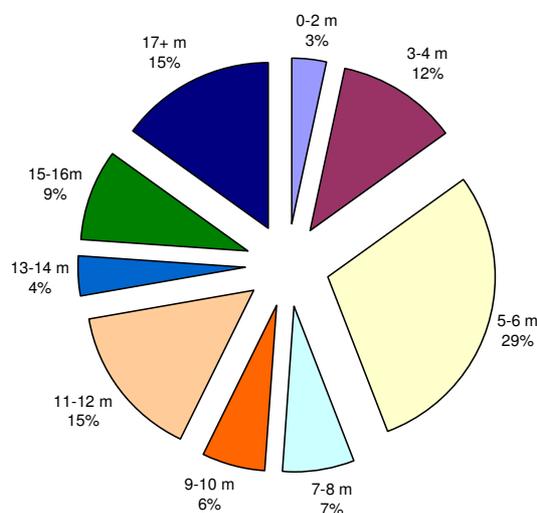
Historically, business and employment within the village has been centred on agriculture and coal mining. Agriculture is still important but employs few people due to mechanisation and to the fact it has become a world market driven industry. Coal mining was run down during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, finally closing in the area in 1947. Business within the parish is limited today, with the lowest percentage of people working within the parish boundaries of any parish in Mendip. Most people employed within the parish work in quarrying or related industries connected to aggregates and cement. The remainder of employment within the parish is service related, from builders to IT, with many people within the area being self employed or running small businesses. Due to the fact that most people within the parish travel some distance to work, the carbon footprint of Coleford is, in this respect, very poor, suggesting that the development of business/employment within the village should be encouraged. Any such development is currently restricted by the limited road access to the village (please see section on roads and highways)

The recent questionnaire showed that 54% of respondents are employed, 6% are unemployed and 40% are retired.

As previously mentioned, Coleford has the lowest level of employment within the village of any village in Mendip, at 17%.

The following graph shows the distances people from the area travel to work on a daily basis:

**Distance travelled to work outside Parish (miles)**



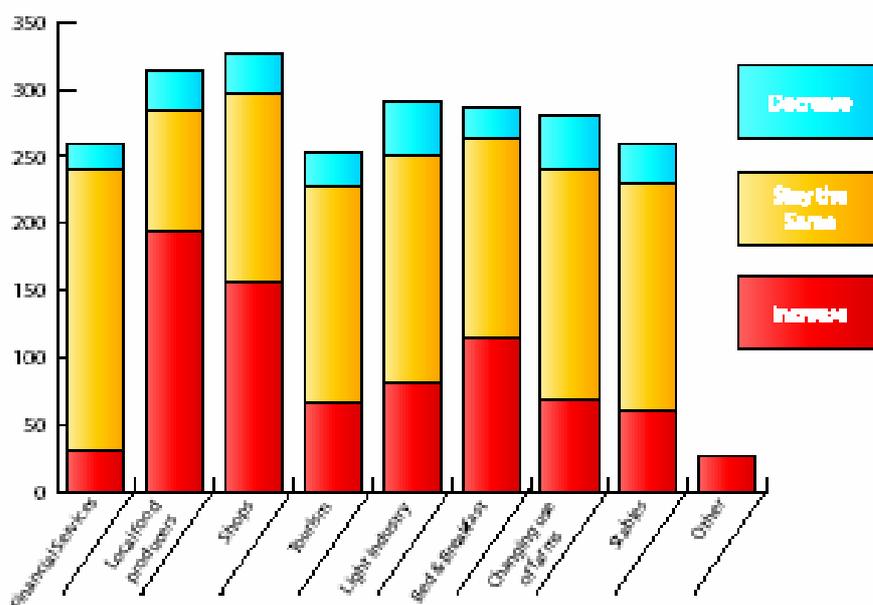
This graph shows that 29% of respondents travel between 5 and 6 miles to work, this correlates with the nearest sizeable towns of Frome and Midsomer Norton. 15% of people travel between 11 and 12 miles to work; this could indicate residents who work in the nearest cities, Bath and Wells. Finally, the same number of residents travel more than 17 miles to work each day – this group includes those from the area who work in Bristol.

The distances travelled to work range from 2 to 32 miles each way, although there are one or two people who travel around the UK and overseas, these have been discounted to avoid an unrealistic skew to the figures. The average distance travelled by commuters from the village is 10.6 miles.

Of the 17% of the respondents who work in the village, these people work in a wide range of businesses, including: builders, farmers, carpet fitters and re-upholsterers, garage and MOT workers, garden centre staff, shop staff, haulage contractors, heating engineers, design company employees, administrator for Farmers Market Ltd, domestic cleaners, IT consultants, haulage and grounds works staff, music and arts facilitators, artists, painter and decorators, PR and communications workers, transport staff, cleaning products distributors, holiday lets/accommodation managers, concrete products producers and carpenters. This shows a wide diversity of employment in a small community.

People who work in the parish find that there are a number of issues affecting further development of their businesses, and they would find the following useful:

- A business network.
- Encouragement for people to use local businesses, including schemes to help people spend in local shops and discourage travel.
- A wider variety of business premises.
- Skilled workers
- Advice on running a small business in a rural community
- Improved road network
- Childcare for staff
- More land set aside for business development
- Improved car parking
- Planning issues
- Better public transport to encourage people to come to Coleford
- Training resources
- Tax concessions



**Respondents' preferences on business development in the Parish by type**

People who don't work in the village were also asked to comment on how they felt business and commerce could be encouraged locally and to state what services they would like to see within Coleford. Their answers included the following:

- Better shops (this has already changed in the village, with both retail outlets being recently refurbished and re-stocked)
- Hardware type shop
- Arts centre
- Farm shop/bakery
- Nursery/child care
- Leisure facilities
- Café

**AIMS:**

- 1) *Develop a business network.*
- 2) *Encourage light industry.*
- 3) *Encourage working from home, IT*
- 4) *Schemes to encourage people to spend money locally.*
- 5) *Benefits mean school, surgery, shop and businesses flourish.*

*“My greatest memories of working in the Pits were the comradeship which you will never find anywhere else; like all mining villages Coleford was a place where everybody helped everyone else”*

*Robin Thompson*

## 2.12 Crime & Disorder

In addition to the national police service the Parish has a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), who is funded in part by Somerset County Council and Avon & Somerset Constabulary in addition to Home Office funding.

PCSOs extend the service the Constabulary can provide to the community and they support front line policing in non-confrontational roles. Their main role is foot patrol and being highly visible in communities.

90% (354) of respondents feel safe or very safe in the Parish.

The major concerns highlighted in the Questionnaire are:

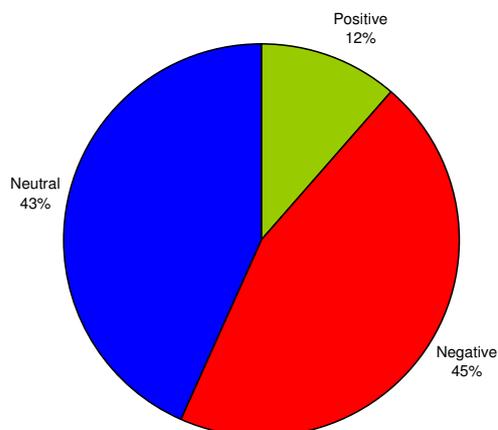
- Anti-social behaviour
- Burglary and theft

Some residents also feel there is a lack of police presence in the Parish at times, and by far the most popular suggestion for improving crime and safety is to increase police presence, via foot patrols, especially in the evenings and at weekends.

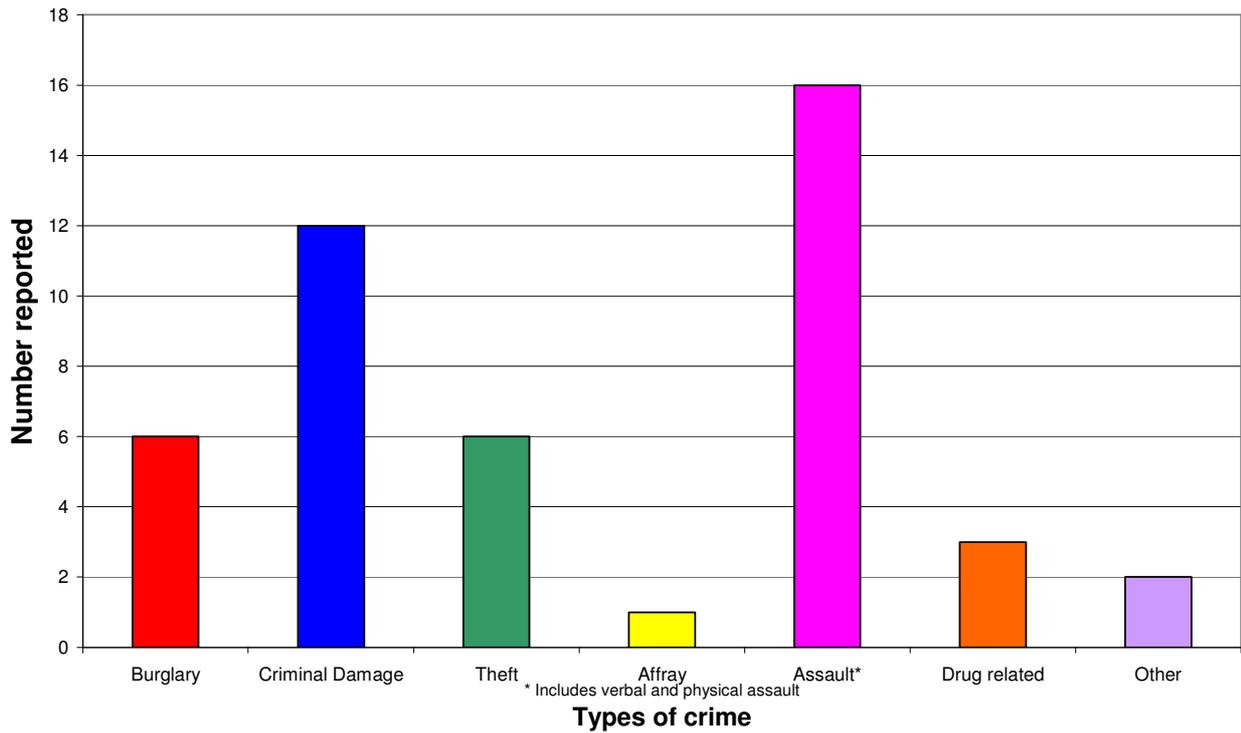
In addition to the concerns about lack of police presence in the parish, some residents also have concerns about the lack of street lights in various areas and the presence of groups of youths in Coleford.

Of the respondents who commented on the frequency of the police patrols in the Parish, 12% responded positively, commenting that the presence is adequate or good. 45% responded negatively, stating, for example, that the frequency of police patrols within the area should be increased, although few commented why this should be the case. The final 43% of respondents submitted neutral comments - they weren't aware of the police within the area, or hadn't noticed them.

**Responses to question about frequency of police patrols within Parish**



## Crimes reported in Coleford in 2008



### AIMS:

- 1) Encourage greater visibility of PCSO within the community.
- 2) Look into developing Neighbourhood Watch and Speed Watch schemes.

*“On a Friday night, once a month, Mrs Shepherd (the timber merchants wife) and I would go to the Miners Hall to the pictures. Our Sunday School had an outing once a year to the seaside (Weymouth), another outing was a Mystery Tour in the evening.”*

*Daphne Coles*

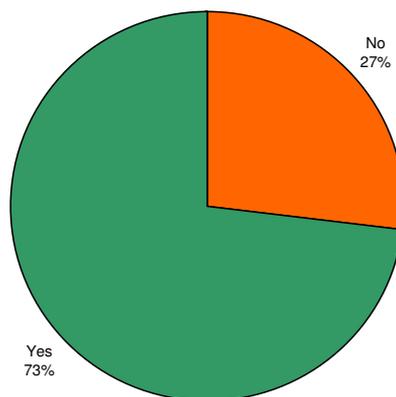
## 2.13 Community Buildings

Coleford has several buildings available for use by the community including the Church Hall, Youth Centre, Scout Hall, and Royal British Legion Building but none are owned by the community. A large majority of residents (73%) feel that the Parish would benefit from a new purpose-built community hall. Suggested uses for the hall include:-

- Sports activities
- Various clubs/organisations for youth
- Social events
- Childcare groups
- Luncheon club
- Day Centre for the elderly
- Café

It is felt that a wide range of activities could be catered for which would help to bring the community together and provide services needed by the residents of the Parish

**Volume of respondents who would like a purpose built community hall**

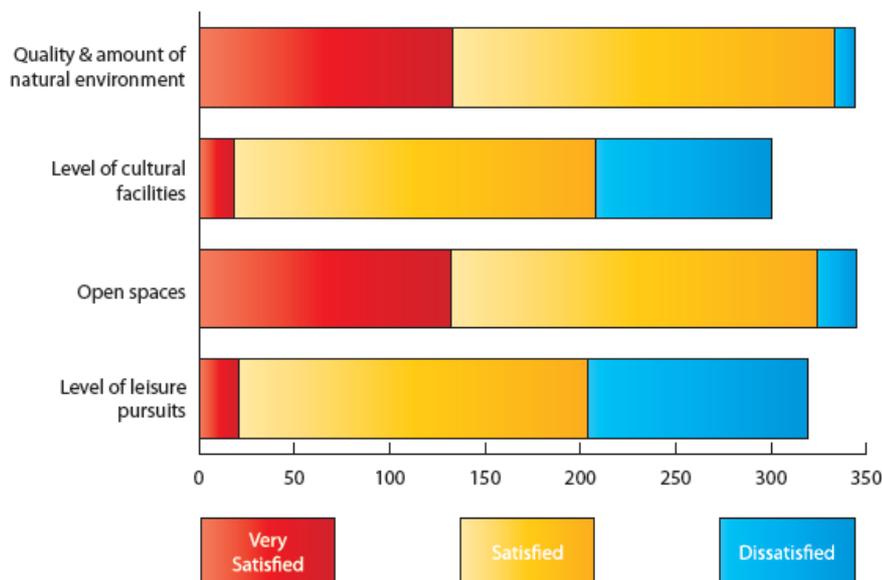


### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Produce a Feasibility Study*
- 2) *Investigate possible funding*
- 3) *Create a User and Management Business Plan*

## 2.14 Local Environment & Wildlife

The responses to the Questionnaire showed that many respondents valued the natural environment, wildlife and open spaces. There was some dissatisfaction with cultural facilities and leisure pursuits and this may correlate with the desire expressed by so many for a community hall.



Coleford is blessed with many wonderful footpaths and these are well used. 80% of respondents know where they are, and 75% feel they are well maintained.

With regards to general environment noise pollution was not a general concern, although 158 people found road traffic noise a problem. Litter, however was considered a problem by 66% (245) of the respondents, many of whom found that this was a serious problem in particular locations.

Issues raised included:

- Bins not emptied regularly
- Lack of dog waste bins
- Broken glass in playing fields, around pubs and on pavements
- Spilt rubbish on the way to the tip
- Dumped items on Maggs Wood – long term problem

It was felt that regularly emptied bins would be appreciated at:

- Preachers Vale Green
- Chip shop
- Playing fields
- Highbury Street bus stop
- Lipyeate Cross post box
- British Legion
- Post Office
- Church Street
- School

99% of respondents recycle, but many would like to see plastics and cardboard collection from homes.

The other major environmental issue was that of pedestrian safety with 62% concerned about their own safety.

### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Improve number of litter bins*
- 2) *Organise regular litter picks*
- 3) *Educate children at Bishop Henderson about litter*



**Footpath, Bullocks Hill - Drawn by David Higgs**

### ***Coleford Wildlife Group***

Coleford Wildlife Group was born out of the Coleford Millennium Project (CMP) which was formed in 1996. The Group has generated much interest through the monthly walks and various projects.

The principal project is the butterfly and wildflower reserve adjacent to the lower playing field in Church Street, Coleford. This site now boasts one of Somerset's largest colonies of the rare small blue butterfly and features in the book "50 Butterfly Walks in Somerset".

A large wildlife pond has been created in the grounds of Bishop Henderson School and a book has been published on the wildlife of the area.

Meetings are held every eight weeks on a Monday evening at the Methodist Chapel and there are monthly organised walks, exploring different aspects of the region's wildlife.

The butterfly bank and the pond require some annual maintenance, which is carried out by group members.

## 2.15 Footpaths & Roads

There are three types of footpaths identified within the area:

1. Pavements which follow the roads within the Parish
2. Hard paths – shortcuts through residential areas connecting various parts of the village
3. Public rights of Way (referred to here as footpaths) across the Parish, via countryside and built up areas

With regards to the use of pavements within Coleford, according to the questionnaire, 62% of residents feel safe as a pedestrian, while 38% did not. Of those who responded, many commented on the issues concerning safety on the pavements, the main issues are shown in the graph below.



### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Improve pavements within the village, especially with regards to providing safe routes to school*
- 2) *Enforce better parking, stop vehicles obstructing the pavements*
- 3) *Control the speed of traffic through the village*
- 4) *Look into installing a pedestrian crossing in the area of Alfords Ridge and The Crescent, to allow access to the playing fields and Goodeaves area*

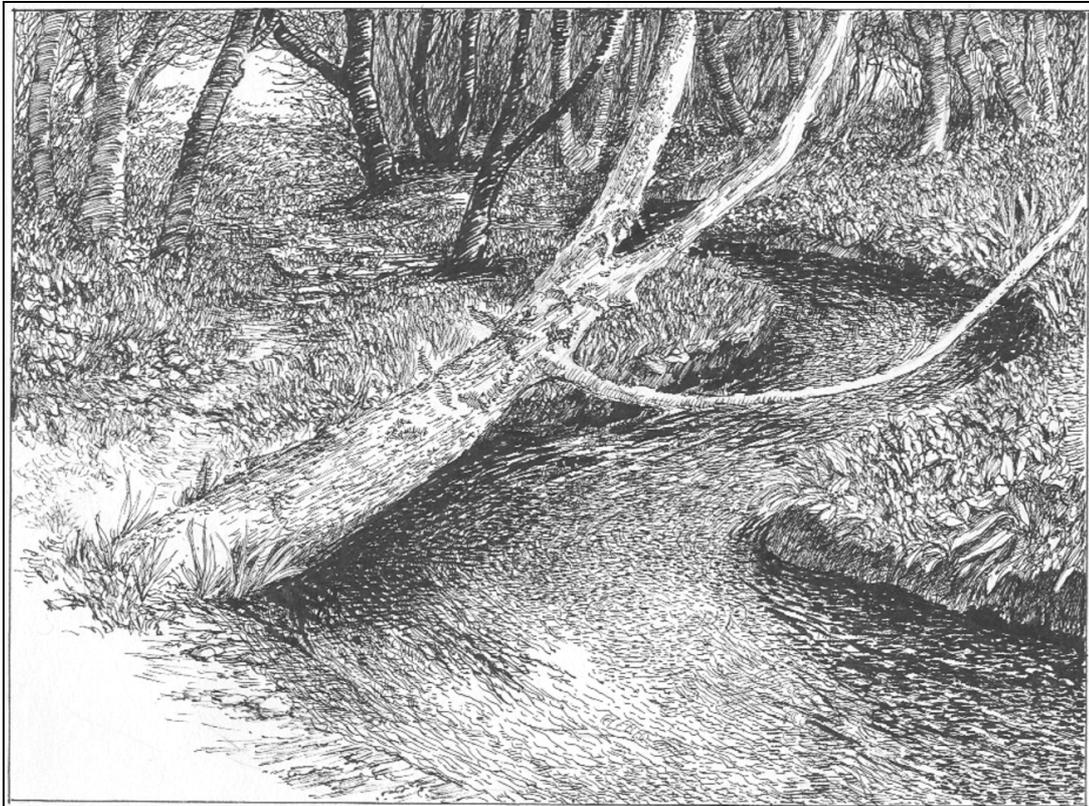


## ***Mendip Ramblers***

Mendip Ramblers is a local group of the Ramblers' Association. The Group holds a walking festival each year centred on one or two parishes within the Mendip District Council area. The festival is a culmination of the work done by Mendip Ramblers' Working Party. It publicises the work that has been done and encourages walkers to use reopened and restored pathways.

The Working Party works closely with Mendip District Council (MDC) Rights of Way Department to maintain footpaths throughout the MDC area. The work consists of path clearance, stile erection and repairs, bridge building, erection of kissing gates, erection of marker posts and ensuring that footpaths are adequately way-marked. The group also carries out footpath surveys to determine the 'ease of use' of footpaths and identifies what work needs to be done to bring the footpath up to that standard.

The Working Party goes out every Tuesday, come rain or shine, working on average from 09:30 to 16:00.



**Mells Stream – Drawn by David Higgs**

## ROADS:-

The village of Coleford is accessed by minor roads leading from Shepton Mallet, Frome and Radstock.



The most used road is that used by the local bus company to connect Radstock and Frome, namely Highbury Street and Anchor Road. Most of the housing estates in the village lead off this road. The other main streets are Church Street and High Street.

From the Questionnaire 226 people thought the direction signs to Coleford were adequate. However, 149 disagreed – this is a sufficient number that this should be addressed in the final plan.

Many comments were received stating that any further development within the village should not be encouraged before better road access has been developed for the village. Charmborough Lane has been identified as the area that needs addressing more than any other. Other suggestions were as follows:-

- All forms of traffic calming – speed cameras, humps, one way passing points
- Parking – stop double parking
- Yellow lines at Church Street/Highbury Street junction
- Stop parking in areas where there is no footpath/pavement
- Restrict size of lorries using the village
- Time zones (limit hours) for use of lorries
- Lorries only to use the village for access
- Signage “unsuitable road for large vehicles” in narrow areas of the village
- Signs for school by Farleigh College
- Much better policing of roads – speeding, parking, dangerous driving
- Better area for school children to catch school buses

### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Find ways for people to park off street where possible – to use existing parking – and if possible to provide parking – enforcement.*
- 2) *Encourage more policing.*
- 3) *Investigate Traffic calming measures.*
- 4) *Improve signage to village.*
- 5) *Look at lorry usage – produce plan that could be adopted.*



## 2.16 Tourism

Tourism within Coleford is currently limited, although there is scope for development. As previously mentioned, the Parish is blessed with a high number of footpaths which cross the local countryside and link Coleford to neighbouring parishes, including three reputed to be the source of well-known nursery rhymes – Jack and Jill in Kilmersdon, Little Jack Horner in Mells and Ring o Roses in Holcombe. These footpaths are very well maintained and signposted, thanks to the local Ramblers group, and the Parish benefits from two footpath wardens who regularly patrol the paths, keeping them free from vegetation and reporting any faults to the to the Parish Council and MDC Rights of Way Department.

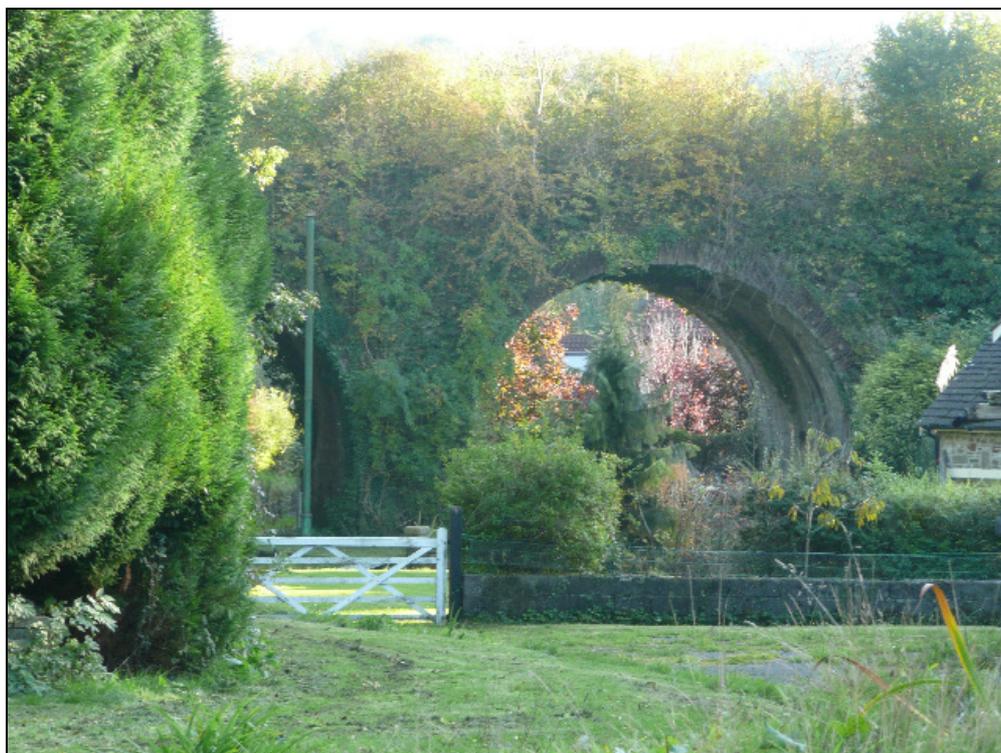
There are visible remains of a famous unfinished engineering project, the Somerset & Dorset Canal aqueduct, known locally as the 'Huckyduck', which was abandoned in 1803.

The Parish also has a small number of holiday lets – it could be proposed that these could be promoted along with the footpaths, particularly those that lead to historical points of interest. Suggestions include online maps of the footpath network, information sheets detailing circular walks of varying length and walks that lead to local points of interest. These walks could be tied in with local pubs for refreshment, or even the community hall, should this include a café or similar facility.

In addition, the village also takes an active part in the annual Somerset Arts Week, with a number of local artists residing in the Parish opening their doors to the general public.

### **AIMS:**

- 1. Greater promotion of local footpaths, via leaflets and online maps*
- 2. Promotion of holiday lets within the village*



**Huckyduck – Tony Mayell**

## 2.17 Facilities for Young People

Coleford has a thriving Youth community and strives to provide services and activities for the younger members of the Parish.

The recent survey included a separate Youth Questionnaire and there was a good response, both in terms of numbers who responded and their comments about living in the Parish.

70% of the respondents are positive about their future and career prospects, and 85% of respondents would like to see a youth representative on the Parish Council to add their voice to the development of the Parish. A number of young respondents would like to see a Youth Magazine for news relevant to them regarding clubs and services etc.

However, as expected, an overwhelming 91% of the youth in the area feel that there is not enough for young people to do in the Parish. A range of facilities had been suggested to the younger parish members in order to gauge their level of interest, these were:-

- Swimming
- Music Club
- Cycling Track
- Skate Park
- Drama Club
- Football
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Library/study area with computers
- Coffee Shop

A Cycle Track & Skate Park were the two most popular choices for activities.

With regards to getting around and out and about, 47% of the young people in Coleford use public transport, this would rise to 59% if the service was more flexible, regular and cost effective. 46% rely on their parents for their transport needs.

### **AIMS:**

- 1) *Include needs of the Youth within new community building*
- 2) *Investigate a BMX/Cycle Park*
- 3) *Investigate a Youth Representative on the Parish Council*
- 4) *Introduce a Youth Newsletter*
- 5) *Investigate a Skate Park*
- 6) *Investigate a Junior Drama Club*

## **Coleford Youth Club**

There has been a Youth Club for around 45 years in the village, firstly run by volunteers and latterly by Somerset County Council Youth Service. The Youth Club is situated in an old building on Church Street and the interior was recently refurbished to include a kitchen and sitting room. This has been good for the young people as they can now cook their own food and chill out in some comfort. The leaders at the Club are bringing in new ideas, planned activities, including the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, band and DJ nights, street dance, five-a-side football competitions and a chance for young people to gain a certificate in First Aid.



The Youth Centre is currently open one night a week, Mondays 7pm – 9.30pm and is funded and run by youth workers from East Mendip Local Service Team. Further funding is available for staffing to facilitate an extra night or visits or trips for the club. At time of writing vacancies were being advertised. The Club has 58 registered young members, with a core of fifteen to twenty members who attend regularly. The age of members ranges from 13 to 18.

Coleford Youth Club is a valuable asset to the young people and wider community of Coleford. It offers young people an informal and friendly place where they can relax and build friendships with their peers. Due to there being limited public transport in and out of Coleford, young people can often feel isolated. This Club aims to empower young people by offering information and informal education opportunities, which will allow them to make their own informed decisions and help their journey from childhood to adulthood.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Coleford Scout Group**

1<sup>st</sup> Coleford Scout Group is currently made up of 9 Beavers, 4 Cubs and 9 Scouts, both male and female.



Last year the Scouts were very busy, and started the year with a weekend spent at Gilwell Park in Essex on a national Winter Camp with 3,000 Scouts and Explorer Camps. Apart from the weather it was a fun weekend with a wide range of activities on offer. To celebrate the Group's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday a "Family Camp" was held over the Easter weekend, which allowed Mums and Dads, as well as siblings, to experience the joys of Scout Camp! This was a great success and it is hoped that this type of camp will be repeated over the coming years.

A Patrol of Scouts attended the County Competition Camp, where they were judged on their standard of camping, coming third in the County, and also winning the District Trophy.

Recently both the Cubs and the Scouts attended the County Centenary Camp where the camping skills were tested by the weather, all survived the night, and everyone enjoyed the weekend. Later in the year was the Frome District Centenary Camp, which was attended by the Cubs and Scouts. This was an interesting and exciting weekend, with the theme of pantomimes, where the Scout Leaders were found to be running around dressed as the cast from *Wind in the Willows*!

At the end of the year the Scouts attended the “County Challenge” which was an evening where they competed with other Scouts from the County on a number of Scout based activities and then camped over night.

In between all the camps, the Scouts meet each Thursday evening at 7.30pm and the Cubs and Beavers on Friday evenings at 6.30pm, taking part in a wide range of activities, both indoor and outdoor depending on the time of year. The Leaders aim to offer a balanced but wide ranging programme which teaches the young people life skills which will hopefully be useful in the future, and also allows them to have loads of fun!

### ***Play Rangers***

Play Rangers enhance opportunities for children and young people to play. They provide resources and encourage positive risk taking and build relationships which enables the children and young people to feel safe and able to explore both themselves and the world around them, through their freely chosen play. All children and young people have a right to access rich and stimulating environments. Play Rangers work in relation to current legislative framework and meet the Every Child Matters outcomes. Play Rangers put the fun back into play.



Play Rangers work in public spaces within communities, to enable children to play freely outdoors, encouraging them to use the sessions in the way that they choose, which might include den building, sports, nature trails and adventurous play.

Play Rangers is a service funded by Mendip District Council with Big Lottery money. The Children’s charity Barnardo’s South West manages the Play Ranger service, and all project workers are trained and police checked. Play Rangers work with children over the age of 5 in their leisure time.

The Play Rangers meet at Highbury Playing Fields on Fridays between 4pm-6pm. These are open access activities (i.e. the Rangers help children to play but parents remain responsible for their children whilst at Play Rangers).

## **Army Cadet Force**

The Army Cadet Force is a voluntary uniformed youth organisation, sponsored by the Ministry of Defence. The aim of the Army Cadet Force is to inspire young people to achieve success in Life with a spirit of service to the Queen, their country and their local community, and to develop in them the qualities of a good citizen.



The ACF is run on military style guidelines, and offers a full training syllabus designed to help young people to become good citizens and responsible members of the community. They offer various activities, along with friendship, discipline and leadership. There are many qualifications available from recognised bodies including Duke of Edinburgh scheme and BTEC which awards a First Diploma in Public Services, (equivalent of four GCSEs at Grades A\* to C).

Coleford Platoon forms part of Normandy Company and parades every Wednesday evening from 7pm –9:30pm at the Youth Club. Cadets undertake a range of activities each week from map & compass skills, fieldcraft, weapons training and drill, turnout and shooting on a regular basis. Cadets also attend a number of Company weekend camps and events and a two week summer camp each August. Additionally a range of advanced courses are available ranging from sport and shooting through to leadership, signals, fieldcraft and methods of instruction. Many foreign visits are also available.

More information can be found at [www.somersetacf.org.uk](http://www.somersetacf.org.uk)

*“The Scout Group was formed back in the sixties. There was the Drama Group and the Scouts Drama – who could forget ‘Good King Wencelas calling for his Skinheads Three’! The drama groups flourished, latterly the CTG and now CF5.”*

*Ann Crawford*

# Acknowledgements

## Funding Sponsors

DEFRA  
Coleford Parish Council  
Mendip Housing

## Sponsors of Calendar:-

Jones Convenience Stores	Geoffrey Smith Estate Agents
Powerclean Products Ltd	AF Luke Agricultural Crop Spray Contractor
The Co-Operative – Coleford	The Miners Fishing Ponds
Brixey Auto Repairs Ltd	Vobster Quay
Curtis Ilott Funeral Directors	The King's Head Inn
Highbury Hair Salon	Stitch-Craftsmen Ltd

Steering Group Committee - Phil Ham, Tony Mayell, Tanya Chapman, Val Horler, Claire Fleming, Libby Brodhurst, Mark & Nicola Brooks, Margaret Wasem, Felicity White, Craig Jamieson, Sue & Simon Noble, Bob & Liz Dickaty, Robin Thompson, Mike Cage, Angie Baxter, Anna Lebok, Andy Goulding, Bill Grant, Becky Morgan, Sheena Frost.

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