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Outlook

Chairman's report. Part 1 and 1A to 7 to follow hopefully around 6.00am

From Philip Ham [redacted]>
Date Wed 18/11/2026 16:47
To Alan Townsend [redacted] Vickie Watts [redacted]k>

Coleford parish Council chairman report

Apologies for the lack of reports of a recent months, mainly due to ill health however feeling well again. Thank you for all your get well cards and messages. It was overwhelming but very much welcomed. As you have been able to keep up over over these months through the newsletter, you have heard and been able to keep up with all the actions in our parish.

However during these months I have been active and tried to solve or help with urgent problems concerning the highways (see the emails below). Somerset Council are almost being objective to our solutions (this is mainly due to the desperate state of the finances of the council) . In the past few weeks, the parish Council have purchased two fixed speed recording indicator devices which I hope will be in place by Christmas. I am also continuing to fight for a zebra type Crossing at Alfords Ridge, 20 mph speed limit in Vobster, moving of 30 mph signs in Leigh on Mendip and Kilmersdon.. an upgrade to the Coleford sewage works and a timeline for a new mains water system (the last pipes were installed in 1892 almost 134 years ago and made of cast iron). If you fell strongly about anything you have read especially in the emails below please contact me by email, letter or phone .This will be more evidence that I can attach to these URGENT matters.

Before I sign off for 2026, I would like to thank you all for your support and wish everyone a Christmas that you can enjoy too the best of your ability and a new year that will benefit everyone.

Best wishes for the festive season.

Philip ~~here~~. Ham

[redacted]
vickie [redacted]
Subject: Highways Poblems & Complaints

Dea[redacted]

We met on 27th May this year to discuss many highway problems in Barry Clarke & my division. Some of which we all agreed were URGENT.

NOTHING HAS HAPPENED (nearly 6months on)

I will list the Urgent ones first:-

1:- Charity Lane, Tinkers Lane, Hoares Land and Mells Road Junction/Charity Lane.

- No white line or warning at junction, why havent't they been renewed?
- No Slow signs or bend signs, why can't they be installed?
- Warn our rumble strips, why can't they be re-done?
- No speed restriction outside school, why?
- Horse riding including disabled children, Taxi's/HGV's/Farm Vehicles, Very High risk for all users!
- We and you have had letters of complaints saying we are risking children's lives by taking NO ACTION, WHY ?

2:- SPEEDING RESTRICTIONS/(PARKING IN CHURCH STREET) COLEFORD

- Better Signage
- Double Yellow Lines
- 20mph
- Better parking
- We have had several vehicles damaged
- We have had HGV's stuck with road blocked up to 24hrs
- Walls knocked down or damaged
- Recently a child trapped between a car and a wall, lucky to be alive
- Fire engines unable to reach the bottom of the village (could cause delays of 30minutes)

NO ACTION WHY ?

3:- Diversions for road works in the Coleford Area

- The diversions suggested are not suitable to Parish Council in always having to negotiate
- Not suitable for HGV's
- Quite often one leads into another and is totally confusing to non locals
- Road ahead closed often very misleading

NO IMPROVEMENTS (WE ARE A VERY RURAL AREA)!

4:- Charmborough Lane is becoming impossible, many locals won't use but causing 'rat runs' through other narrow lanes. Many accidents, vehicles can't pass causing up to 1-2hr delays.
NO RESPONSE YET AGAIN!

5:- Terry Hill Cross Roads B3139/A362

- More accidents happening very frequently
- More Complaints
- Drivers again avoiding the junction and using narrow lanes to reduce the 'risk and delays'

WHY NO ACTION OVER MANY YEARS?

6:-BEACON CROSS ROADS A37/OLD WELLS/FROME ROAD

- Many fatal accidents over many years
- Large number of accidents per year
- Long queues, lots of HGV's, some waiting up to 30minutes to cross or turn at the junction
- This is a heavy freight route and quarry HGV route
- Complaints from quarries and HGV haulage firms, - Driver, Fuel, Business costs and harm to the environment.
- This crossing suffers in bad weather i.e. snow, Ice, Fog and heavy rain.

AGAIN NO ACTION, OR UPDATE AFTER 20 YEARS OF COMPLAINING!!!

Please can we have some feedback as to why we are being ignored. What can be done, and when ? These issues cannot continue to be brushed under the carpet any longer.

THIS IS URGENT AS LIVE'S ARE AT RISK AND YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

Regards

Philip Ham
Barry Clarke Central & East Mendip Division

Subject: RE: Highways Poblems & Complaints

Dea Cllr Ham

Thank you for setting out these concerns. We will investigate the issues you have raised and provide a response on each of them.

I would, however, respectfully ask that the final comment that officers have "been warned" is avoided. Our teams are working through a very large number of demands for action across the county and, as part of that work, must assess the relative risks and priorities so that resources are directed to the areas of greatest need.

We will come back to you once the points you have raised have been reviewed.

Kind Regards

Mike O'Dowd-Jones
(He/Him)
Service Director Infrastructure and Transport
Somerset Council
[redacted]

A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset

Dear Mike,
Thank you for responding to Cllr Ham. I am sure that the comments at the end of the email were aimed at myself and not at junior officers who were copied in. Whilst I am fair game, I am sure that Cllr Ham will reflect and retract that statement, copying all who received the first email.

Kind regards

R Wilkins

Cllr Richard Wilkins
Lead Member for Highways & Transport
Somerset Council

From: Cllr Philip Ham [redacted]
Sent: 09 November 2026 14:18
To: Cllr Richard Wilkins [redacted] Mike O'Dowd-Jones [redacted]
Cc: Duncan Sharkey [redacted] Cllr Diogo Rodrigues [redacted] Cllr Barry Clarke [redacted]; vickie [redacted]
Subject: RE: Highways Poblems & Complaints

Hi All,
I am willing to retract the last statement of my email, and understand Mike O"Dowds comments, it was not aimed at anyone directly. It was in frustration that these matters had been risen and no feed back received.
The School mentioned is attended by 60+ children daily who all have 2 to 1attention and are all in special care needs, many of who are in , Somerset Council Care.I also know you have had complaints directed to the Coucil from local residents.
The Church Street issues also involve children, a play park, no pavements, narrow street, parked cars,bends, on a hill, not a good combination.
I did not wish tp upset anyone but I DO CARE ABOUT THE CHILREN IN THE PARISH OF COLEFORD.
Kind Regards,
Philip

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Subject: RE: Highways Poblems & Complaints

Good morning Cllr Ham

Richard has passed your enquiry on for direct response as Service Manager for the Traffic Engineering Team.

Whilst I appreciate your retraction of the statement, I must admit it was disappointing to read the content and tone of your email directed towards a member of my team. Sara works diligently and professionally to manage a significant volume of enquiries across the Mendip area and provides the best service possible within the resources available. In fact, some of these matters you raised already have some actions against them.

As Mike has already outlined, we are required to carefully assess and prioritise our workload to ensure that matters posing the greatest need or risk are addressed appropriately. While we understand that all concerns are important to those raising them, it is not possible to treat every enquiry as an immediate priority, and decisions on timescales must be made accordingly.

Having discussed the points raised with Sara, please see below answers the points raised in order:

1: Charity Lane, Tinkers Lane, Hoares Land and Mells Road Junction/Charity Lane.

The presence of a self-contained specialist school set back from the road, where pupils are primarily transported by car, does not in itself provide automatic justification for the introduction of traffic measures that you would see outside of mainstream schools where pupils walk and cycle. As with any highway intervention, whether a speed limit or warning sign, requests must be

assessed against relevant Department for Transport criteria to ensure a consistent and evidence-based approach, both within Somerset and nationally.

Having reviewed this location, the section of road in question does not meet the criteria for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. Similarly, given the existing road layout and geometry, the thresholds required for the provision of specific warning signs are not met. For these reasons, the Authority would not be able to support measures requested.

I am however advised that the junction markings are due for reinstatement, though our contractors have been prioritising our main road works throughout the summer before the winter salting commences.

2: SPEEDING RESTRICTIONS/(PARKING IN CHURCH STREET) COLEFORD

Sara is continually in dialogue with Vickie about various points in the village, and have covered the two main things below:

Speeding: Non-compliance is a Police matter though we have been supporting the Parish Council with their SID application. In respect of a 20mph speed limit, the Authority has supported several communities that have chosen to fund the design and implementation of 20mph schemes on roads that meet the relevant criteria. However, to date, no formal application has been received for Coleford.

Parking: The Parish Council have requested double yellow lines at the Church Street/Highbury Street junction as well as the bend at the Church Street/High Street junction. These proposals are on an amendment order due to be advertised later this year/early 2027. We appreciate this takes time, however due to the costs involved with the introduction of parking restrictions, which includes advertising costs, public consultation, and the legal sealing of the Traffic Regulation Order, we tend to submit an amendment to include multiple sites across the area.

3:- Diversions for road works in the Coleford Area (wording provided by our Street works department. For further engagement please email @StreetWorks)

Road closures are always a last resort, and as a highway authority we will always challenge the need for a closure and consider whether alternative traffic management can safely be used. However, where the available road width is insufficient to safely accommodate both the works and passing traffic, a closure can be unavoidable and may be legally required.

Where this happens, the formal diversion needs to be suitable for the traffic being diverted, including consideration of larger vehicles and any width, height or weight restrictions. We also recognise that motorists are free to choose their own alternative routes, which can unfortunately result in additional traffic on surrounding roads. In some areas the constraints of the local network can make it challenging as the choices of diversion routes can be limited, so we try

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to put in place controls, such as combining works, challenging durations or requesting works take place during the least busiest part of the day.

For planned closures we also seek to go beyond the basic notification process, engaging with school transport, public transport, councillors, parish or town councils and other affected stakeholders. While it is not possible to remove all disruption from essential works, the aim is to identify impacts early, provide clear information and minimise the effect on local communities as far as reasonably possible.

4:- Charmborough Lane

Understood to be a location of much controversy over planning and use of this lane. We have not been advised of any recent incidents and all appropriate signs and lines are in place.

5:- Terry Hill Cross Roads B3139/A362
6:-BEACON CROSS ROADS A37/OLD WELLS/FROME ROAD

Linking both points, as the response is broadly the same. Whilst our team maintains the existing signing and lining at these junctions on a more regular basis on behalf of the road safety team, both junctions have already been identified for future consideration. Nearby schemes at Whitnell Corner and Miners Arms have been as a result of such investigations.

In relation to Point 6 specifically, there is an active HGV Forum, chaired by Anna Meams, which I know Cllr Clarke attends. Through that forum, a range of concerns and potential improvements are regularly discussed. In addition, we are currently progressing a 40mph speed limit scheme, which we hope to implement during the current financial year.

Conclusion

Given the above, it is clear that most of the matters you have raised have either already been addressed or are actively being considered. It may therefore be worthwhile reviewing how information and updates provided by the authority to your communities are being relayed back to you as this does not appear to be fully reflected in the concerns that have been presented.

I hope this response has satisfactorily addressed the points raised. Whilst I am leave for two weeks today, Sara remains your point of contact for matters arising within your division. Given the nature of yesterday's email, I would also hope that you would consider responding to her directly.

Kind Regards

Gary Warren
Service Manager – Traffic Engineering, TROs and Events
Traffic Management, Road Safety and Parking

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Outlook

Urgent Highways action neeed

From Cllr Philip Ham [redacted]
Date Wed 18/11/2026 15:53
To Gary Warren [redacted] Sara Davis [redacted]
Charlie Higgins [redacted]
Cc vickie [redacted] Cllr Barry Clarke [redacted] Cllr
Diogo Rodrigues [redacted]; Cllr Richard Wilkins
[redacted]; Mike O'Dowd-Jones
[redacted] Cllr Dawn Denton
[redacted]; Duncan Sharkey [redacted]

Dear Mr Warren,
Thank you for your email dated 9/11/26 in reply to my email to Sara Davis that was also copied into others.After reading all your comments, we demand a site visit from yourself along with Sara and another traffic engineers you would wish to attend. The other attendees would be Parish councillors and some of those who have written to Somerset Council direct of whom are still awaiting replies. The visit would allow you to see with your own eyes the true situation in reality.
I have a good working relationship with Sara Davis and Charlie Higgins that has been built up over many years, and they both know I do not make a fuss or waste peoples time unless it is URGENT.
I was not impressed by your reply email. It was dismissive,lacking in facts, the truth and almost accusing me of knowing nothing.
(In fact I was deputy Cabinet member for highways under Harvey Siggs) and been a councillor for nearly 30 years.
I have other issues which I have not even mentioned yet like the zebra crossing on Highbury Street (started but not finished) The speed limit reduction in Vobster etc. Somersets Councils attitude to do nothing is obviously being driven by a directive to spend as little as possible for the rest of 26/27 financial year. I have been campaigning for TERRY HILL X ROADS for thirty years and the Beacon x roads for fifty years, yes some alterations have been done, but accidents are still very frequent at both junctions, I have worked with Haulage firms , all the Quarries,Parish Councils , chaired the LCN for 3 years and set up the working group that Anna Mearns now runs. I have also organised petitions and traffic counts. I felt deeply hurt when you said I was not up to speed with the situation.
I also believe that a 40 mph speed restriction will not work ,as it will make it harder for traffic exiting /cossing from the Wells/ Frome road.There is a very strong resistance against this proposal with momentum as I wite this email.
I am being told that unless you agree to site visits in the very near future that residents will take legal advice Ref To negligence to Safety of Residents and Children using the highway and involve the Press.
I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
Kind Regards
Cllr Philip Ham Mendio Central and East