

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter for March 2022

Highways



White lining has been completed in many places locally and some works done at Stoke Bottom with more drainage work scheduled for later this month. There will be a meeting with Charlie Higgins of Somerset Highways next week to look at surfacing issues.

Allotments

The Parish Council continues with talks in an attempt to secure a field suitable for allotments. We remain optimistic that a positive outcome will be secured which will enable us to proceed.

Update on plans for the Queens Jubilee Celebration

A full schedule of events is listed below for the extended weekend to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee in Coleford. This will be an opportunity to get together with family and friends to enjoy this historic event.

Thursday 2nd June

1pm – 4.30pm

Organised Ramble starting & finishing at the Hub.
Cream teas and ice creams served after the event @ the Hub
The Children's Art Competition will be displayed @ the Hall and prize winners announced.

Friday 3rd June

10.30am – 12 noon

Coffee Morning at Coleford Church Hall with Coffee & cakes to be served

6pm – 1am

7 Decades of Live music & DJ at the Royal British Legion, Coleford. Fancy dress - Dress in the decade you were born

Saturday 4th June

12 noon - 8pm

Derby Day Screening & Live Music by The Shakespearos at the Beer Garden, Royal British Legion, Coleford.

8pm – 11pm

Party at the Palace, Screening of this star studded event at the Royal British Legion, Coleford.

Sunday 5th June

From 3pm

Times TBC

Live Music by 12 Bars Later Kings Head Public House

Residents are encouraged to get together with their neighbours to hold street parties



Pop the dates into your diary and keep an eye out for further details as they continue to be developed.



Date of Next Meetings:

23rd March 2022 – Planning meeting

13th April 2022 – Monthly meeting

If you have any issues that you would like to bring to the Parish Council's attention please contact the Clerk on 01749 880428 or email clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com Check out the website www.colefordsomerset.info

Philip Ham

Somerset County Council report

County Cllr Ham submitted the following report:



Coronavirus infection rates: The Government published its Living with Covid-19 report on 21st January 2022. Under the plan

- people with Covid are not legally required to self-isolate
 - however, guidance recommends that those who test positive stay at home and avoid contact with others for at least five full days
 - self-isolation support payments of £500 for those on low incomes have stopped
 - routine contact tracing has ended - people in contact with someone with Covid will no longer be advised to self-isolate or take daily tests
 - workers are not required to tell their employer if they need to self-isolate
 - face coverings are not mandatory but they are still "strongly encouraged"
- From 1 April:
- PCR and lateral flow Covid tests will no longer be free for most people
 - Covid passports will no longer be recommended, except for international travel
 - employers will no longer have to consider Covid as a separate risk when working out how to keep employees safe

Over-75s and people with a weakened immune system are also being offered an extra Covid booster jab this spring, six months after their previous dose.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

County Council Revenue Budget: Highlights of the 2022/23 Somerset budget include: An extra £18 million investment in Adults Social Care (13% increase), an extra £12 million invested in Children's Services (13% increase), an additional £8.4 million identified to invest in schools and £48 million in capital projects, including roads. Additionally, there is a major investment in supporting the commitment to create a zero carbon Somerset by 2030 with £7.8 million allocated to reduce energy use in council buildings and £1 million invested in the electrifying the council fleet and building a charging infrastructure in the county. The County Council's share of Council Tax is proposed to rise by a two per cent with a further one per cent rise under the social care precept. For a home rated Band D for Council Tax this is equivalent to a rise of 78p a week.

iAero: A new £10m aerospace centre in Yeovil dedicated to innovation, collaboration and sustainable aviation has officially opened. The iAero project, led by Somerset County Council, is a hub for collaboration and innovation on new products. It stands next door to world-leading aerospace company Leonardo UK Ltd, a key partner in the project. The centre will be the gateway for the aerospace industry to access small and medium enterprises who are looking to collaborate and innovate on new products.

Opportunity Boost Scheme: A new grant has been launched to help people in Somerset overcome financial barriers when seeking employment and returning to work. The Opportunity Boost Scheme will provide grants worth up to £500 to help with the cost associated progressing into work, such as transport costs, childcare, work clothes, learning resources and training courses. The funding for the scheme has been provided through the Somerset Recovery Fund, and the initiative is being delivered in partnership between Somerset County Council and Citizens Advice Somerset. To qualify, applicants must be aged 16 or over, not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking, and had a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000. For More information visit

www.westsomersetadvice.org.uk/?p=1380

Half Term and Easter food support: Somerset County Council is again working with schools to provide food vouchers to families eligible for Free School Meals to combat holiday hunger over the February half-term and Easter holidays. The Council has helped provide food vouchers to those children in need of support during the school holidays since October 2020, providing a much-needed boost to families who have felt the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The allocation for February half-term and Easter provides vouchers worth £15 per pupil for the week and includes additional funding so that schools can also allocate vouchers to families who are in need of support but do not qualify for Free School Meals.

Ukraine: In addition to flying the Ukrainian flag and lighting County Hall in Yellow and Blue the County Council are offering extra support to Ukrainian members of staff and residents in Somerset. The Council stands by, ready to support the national humanitarian aid effort to relocate refugees displaced by Russian aggression.



Mendip District Council report

District Cllr Ham and Townsend reported as follows:

Council Tax – At last week’s meeting of Full Council the motion to agree an increase of 3%, representing £5 a week for a Band D tax payer was agreed after much political grandstanding. The Special Expenses Rate is to be unchanged at £12.50.

Planning - The fears over the potential open door to any speculative housing application were only slightly calmed by the refusal at appeal for 95 houses at Chilcompton. Mendip’s A Team were able to convince the Inspector that Significant and Demonstrable Harm would have been caused by the impact on the character and appearance of the area as it would appear as an incongruous addition to the village. For some inexplicable reason he argued that this was not the case at Coleford. Also, there was an issue about school capacity. The public enquiry is now in progress against Mendip’s refusal of 75 dwellings for the site at Beauchamp’s Drive just behind the White Post. Unlike for the Coleford appeal, Mendip have again fielded an A Team. The application by Gladman for 250 houses at Writhlington includes some 30 in Mendip’s area not allocated in the Local Plan. The whole application is to be decided by BANES.

Mendip have issued a public consultation on the placing of Public Space Protection Orders to try to control the invasion of encampments around Glastonbury. In December 2021 there were close to 200 such illegals.

Mendip are requesting Council Tax payers to ensure there have direct Debits set up to make the payment of the energy rebate easier to manage.

Unitary Update

Cllr Ham said that following the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset the Structural Changes Order were approved by the House of Commons Committee on 23rd January and will now go before the Lords on or before 14th March. The first elections to the new authority together with Somerset Town and Parish elections will be held on 5th May 2022.