

Parish Council of Coleford

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Newsletter for November 2021

Unitary Update

The Draft Structural Changes order provisions have been prepared but the timings of the first elections to the new unitary council are not yet agreed and could be in May 2022 or May 2023 and Ministers are considering the number of representations they have received on this issue.

The draft circulated to Councillors do not cover the date of the elections, although they do cover matters, such as the alignment of parish elections, which may require adjustment depending on the decision about the election date. It is envisaged that a decision will be made and announced as appropriate around the end of the month. The draft texts that were sent would provide that:

- The unitary council is to be named ‘Somerset Council’.
- The new unitary is to be a continuing authority – that is the body corporate of the existing county council with a new name and new membership.
- In the period until the first elections (whether May 2022 or May 2023), an implementation executive is to be the transitional decision-making body. The implementation executive is to have a membership of nine: the leader of Somerset County Council to be chair; four additional county council members and four members who are the leaders of the four district councils (with a May 2023 election those who were district council leaders on 31 March 2023 are to continue as members of the implementation executive until the executive ends with those May 2023 elections). There is to be provision for the councils to name substitute members of the executive.
- There is to be an officer team driving implementation with the chief executive of the county council as the Senior Responsible Officer and consisting additionally of the four district council chief executives, the county council section 151 officer, monitoring officer, and programme director; the team is to be responsible for specific workstreams within the programme.
- The new Somerset Council is to consist of 110 members in 55 wards, based on existing county divisions. With a May 2023 election this would be a fallback which would be actioned only if the delay does not result in different electoral arrangements being established for that election.



Frome Town Council is piloting a Local Community network with the key principles of collaboration and co design being paramount. No statutory parish responsibilities will be impacted by the onset of the unitary council or the LCNs. All parishes will have an equitable voice in the topics that are important and although Frome has a much bigger capacity in the staff team this is considered an asset available to all and in the first instance, they are happy to help coordinate and support the group to come together, to understand better the needs of our communities and begin to plot a way forward.

The unitary project team is keen for each of the four pilots to focus on one discrete topic, and in the Frome Area LCN it's been suggested that we explore the issues and opportunities for children, young people and their families.

It was decided to form a topic group comprising of interested Cllrs and clerks from parishes, Cllrs from MDC and SCC, practitioners and strategic leads, third sector partners – voluntary organisations, sports groups and others, interested residents and partners in the police, health and other services.

During the meeting common themes amongst those present were transport issues for young people, the ongoing impact of covid, a lack of activities and spaces – in particular for young people, a sense of isolation for families particularly young families and those new to an area. Work will be done by Frome TC staff to build on this and to work with colleagues in the county, schools, police, health and voluntary sector to build a clear evidence base for action. Others were invited to forward information on the experience of residents in

our area. Councils were encouraged to gather feedback from their own communities. The Frome staff will overlay this with the data available to the unity project team. This will lead on to the development of a topic area work plan that will address issues and harness the opportunities which we may choose to build on. The next meeting will take place on 15 November to take this forward.

Planning Applications

[2021/2159/HSE](#) - Erection of a dormer extension, 48 Farley Dell, Coleford, Radstock, BA3 5PJ

Coleford Parish Council recommended for approval.



[2021/2320/VRC](#) - Application to vary condition 4 (Service Management Plan) and remove condition 13 (Delivery times) of planning permission 2021/0083/VRC to allow additional time for deliveries.

Crossway Garage, Anchor Road, Coleford, Radstock, BA3 5PG

Coleford Parish Council recommended that the variation should be accepted.

Highways


Councillor Ham reported that he had spent a day with Highways Engineer Sara Davies driving around the ward. The following points were raised relating to Coleford:

- Preachers Vale – the white lines will be redone
- SIS outside Co-op – Sara Davies to review
- SIS school pavement has gone legal
- Underhill, warning signs of blind summit one lane traffic. White lining to prevent parking on the bend and at the entrance to the footpath.
- White lines to be redone in Farley Dell and outside the school
- New white lines at Brewery a Lane and Anchor road Surface noted.
- Rumble strips to be redone at entrance to the village
- Consider 20mph zone
- Weight limits on Dark Lane, Charity Lane, Cherry Gardens Lane

It was noted that the passing points on Charity Lane are very poor, which would be reported to the Highways department for improvement.

Small Grants 2021

Coleford Parish Council were pleased to be able to offer financial support to the following village groups:

	<u>Name of Group</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
	Coleford Knit & Natter Group	Wool for knitting for charity	£100.00
	1st Coleford Scout Group	Storage racking	£250.00
	Tuesday Afternoon	Coach travel	£240.00
	Coleford Circuits	Weights	£300.00
	Huckyduck Carnival Club	Pillar Drill	£450.00
	Coleford @ The Hub	Laminate floor	£385.00
	Theatre Group	Costume hire	£725.00
		Total	£2450

Dog fouling

The arrival of the darker nights can see an increase in incidents of dog fouling around the village. At the recent meeting it was agreed that the Council would purchase sacks for the dispensers at Church Street and Highbury Street so that there is a supply of bags readily available. Please grab a bag, pick up after your dog and place the bagged waste in one of the many bins around the village.

Potential site for new allotments

The Parish Council has looked at a field in Upper Vobster which has been offered as a potential site for allotments. The field is 4 acres, is flat with a bank to the north with security fence, with a road to the site with houses overlooking the field. It is understood that it is possible to allocate 10 allotments per acre or 30 allotments on the 3 acres with the potential of planting fruit trees on the remaining acre. The amount has not yet been decided and is dependent on demand. Main's water is adjacent to field.

We are now seeking the thoughts of members of the parish to establish what demand there is for allotments at the new site if it is to go ahead? Please email the Clerk on clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com or call 07971 516916 if you would be interested.

Update on the Gladman appeal and whether further action is required

Cllr Townsend gave an update on what has been going on since the last meeting. After consideration of information presented it was agreed that the Parish Council would fund the next stage of considering a Judicial Review at a cost of £1200 plus VAT.

Mark Reynolds of Context Planning had reviewed the Inspectors decision and had produced a brief which will now form part of the papers to be reviewed by lawyers at No 5 Chambers who will go through the case and draft advice as to whether we have a realistic opportunity of success at Judicial Review.

It was agreed that if there is a belief that there is a good case the Parish Council would have to ask the village for financial support to cover the costs of going to court, which is believed to be a minimum of £10k. An open meeting will be held at the Coleford Royal British Legion on Thursday 18th November at 1830 for 19.00 to gather support. It is hoped by then we will have more information from the lawyers but if not, the Council may need to ask for financial support on the basis that funds would be returned to people if we decided not to go ahead - time is tight since deadline for lodging case with court is 1st December. It is acknowledged that people may wish to donate and remain anonymous so a way to manage funds need to be agreed

Future Meetings:

24th November 2021 – Planning meeting

8th December 2021 – Monthly meeting

12th January 2022 – Monthly meeting

26th January 2022 – Planning 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

The Clerk had previously circulated the report from County Cllr Ham, as follows:

Coronavirus infection rates: As of 30th October, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 57,072 (33% up from 42,800 on 30th September) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 872. The rate per 100,000 stands at 709.7 (320.2) for Somerset with Mendip at 853.9 (379.8), Sedgemoor at 653.5 (292.3), South Somerset 668.3 (298.2) and SW&T at 713.0 (321.7). The number of total deaths across the County is currently 12% above the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.9 and 1.1. Infection rates in Somerset continue to be very high. It is therefore important even for those who have had both jabs to remember to observe Social Distancing and to always ventilate indoor areas.

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.

Vaccination programmes roll-out: Somerset continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing over 95.6% of the adult population having had one dose of vaccine and 91.9% having had both doses. Work is focusing on Children aged 12-15 years old and the third booster jab which is due 6 months after the second.

Local Government Reorganisation: Following the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now renamed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities DLUHC)) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset the transition programme, lead teams and governance structure have been agreed by all Councils. A LGR Joint Committee to oversee the transition has been approved by all five Councils and will sit for the first time on 5th November 2021. It is expected that statutory orders will be available in early November before being laid before Parliament in January 2022 with an agreed vesting date for the new authority as April 2023. Major investment in infrastructure: Major improvements to the A38 northern corridor heading into Bridgwater are a step closer after the Government approved a £10 million funding bid. Money from the Treasury's Levelling Up fund will help pay for more than £3.4 million worth of cycling and walking infrastructure along the entire corridor as well as a remodeled Dunball junction and significant improvements to the Canon/Cross Rifles junction. In the same announcement, £5 million was also approved from a separate fund to re-open a train station in Wellington.

Applications for school places 2022: All children starting school for the first time in September 2022, as well as those moving between infant and junior or first and middle school applications must be submitted between Monday 27 September 2021 and Saturday 15 January 2022. www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions

Young Carers Support Survey: The County Council are inviting young carers, their parents/guardians, schools and other professionals working with young carers in Somerset to complete short anonymous surveys by Sunday 21 November in order to gain a better understanding of the services and support provided across the county and how it could be improved. The electronic survey can be accessed via www.somerset.gov.uk/youngcarers (A young carer is anyone under the age of 18 who provides care for another person by taking on practical or emotional responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult).

Reaching Carbon Zero: Somerset County Council has approved major investment to help save hundreds of tonnes of carbon every year. Earlier this year, SCC successfully bid for £4.1m from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, to make public buildings more energy efficient. This and additional SCC funding will enable decarbonisation projects across several Council owned buildings, including Taunton Library, Yeovil Library, Frome Library, Glastonbury Hub, Milford Infants School, Chilthorne Domes School, and County Hall. Work will include the installation of heat pumps to either replace or supplement existing gas heating systems, replacing windows with double glazing, upgrading building insulation, improving building ventilation systems and installing solar panels. The implementation of these combined schemes is expected to reduce the carbon output of the property estate significantly and move the authority closer to its Carbon Zero target by 2030.

Making streets safer: Funding to help tackle violence against women and girls has been awarded to Somerset County Council. Working with North Somerset, SCC have made a successful joint bid to the Home Office Safer Streets Fund for £324,449. The bid presents an opportunity to work together in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) crimes across the area. The plan sets out a two-tiered approach involving: Prevent – to change behaviour and stop incidents occurring such as VAWG education and awareness in schools, communications campaigns, research and engagement within communities, and Protect – to strengthen the response where incidents are prevalent, such as a safe haven scheme and enhancing the CCTV network and street lighting.

Domestic abuse and modern slavery: New free online resources are available for both professionals and the public to help spot the signs and reduce the risk of becoming a victim of domestic abuse and modern slavery. Members of the public have free access to a set of modules providing guidance on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and modern slavery and what they can do to help. <https://somensetsurvivors.org.uk/somerset-survivors/support-for-a-friend-or-family-member/>