

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB

Miss V Watts, Clerk to the Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th January 2023

Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Barrett, Bell, Drescher, Evans, Moulding, Paterson Pearce and Townsend

There were 12 members of the public present. The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

Public Forum

1. Three residents who own property adjoining Highbury playing field attended the meeting and asked questions relating to the proposed levelling of the playing field and voiced concern over the impact the work would have on the boundary wall, drainage, their privacy and the view across the field. The following points were clarified by the Council:
 - After the recent site meeting when physical markers were put in place to show where the actual levels of the pitch would be, it is proposed that the pitch be moved 5m across, away from the houses and up nearer to the hard courts to minimise the impact on the houses at the lower end of the field. Pennys are currently updating the plans with the new layout.
 - A drainage plan will have to be submitted as part of the application.
 - A management plan will form part of the planning application and will confirm working hours (It has been proposed that it will be 5 days a week between school hours). Access will be via Vobster and provisions will be in place to keep the roads clean during the project.
 - There will be no waste material tipped. The scheme would be done under a clear agreement. All imported soil would be greenfield sourced, subject to stringent quality control.
 - The planning application will cost in the region of £10K. Pennys have asked the Parish Council to contribute £2.5K to show commitment to the project. This will be reimbursed if the project goes ahead. This would be the only financial contribution that the Council would need to make to the project.
 - In 2004 Coleford Athletic Football Club received a quote of £164K to have the pitch levelled, which was clearly unattainable.
 - If the Council agrees to go ahead with the project, a planning application will be submitted to Mendip District Council Planning department who will consult neighbouring residents who along with any other interested parties will be able to either support or oppose the application. The Parish Council would publicise the application reference number once this is known.

A representative from the Coleford Athletic Football Club said that this would be a fantastic opportunity for the youth and adult teams and the Club fully supported the proposal. If the project does go ahead, they would expect the pitch to be out of action for 2 seasons to allow the work to be done and the new pitch to settle.

It was suggested by a resident that off road parking near the Christmas tree be considered as part of the project.

2. It was reported that the following street lights are currently not working:
 - The light on the wire outside the co-op
 - Preachers Vale light no 1
 - 4 on Lawrence Road
 - On the corner of Highbury Street

Action: Cllr Townsend to report

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Banks and Cllr West which were accepted by the Chair.

Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

Cllr Ham declared an interest in the planning application 2022/2490/FUL & 2022/2491/LBC Change of use from residential school (Class C2) to a day school, (Class F1) and internal alterations to first floor. Newbury Manor School, Tinkers Lane, Newbury.

Agree the minutes

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 14th December had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed that they accurately reflected the meeting and should be approved. Clerk to upload to website

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to website

Actions from the minutes

All actions had been completed or would be discussed as an agenda item during the meeting apart from:

1. It was noted that the notice board outside the piano shop was no longer as visible as it was when parishioners were visiting the post office and shop. It was agreed that the new co-op would be approached to establish if they would consider a new noticeboard outside the store.
Action: Clerk to write to the store manager at the earliest opportunity.
2. There has been a report of flooding at Beacon View. Water was coming from the drainage man hole cover and crossing the path, which has resulted in the soil being swept away from a neighbouring garden.
Action: Clerk to investigate.
3. Consider quote to repair the Youth Shelter at Highbury Shelter at Highbury Playing Field. It was agreed that Cllr Ham will arrange for the shelter to be removed from the field to explore the possibilities of re cladding the structure with rubber matting.
Action: Cllr Ham to action

Co-option of Councillors

There is currently one vacancy, which the Clerk will continue to advertise.

Planning Applications

2022/2490/FUL & 2022/2491/LBC Change of use from residential school (Class C2) to a day school, (Class F1) and internal alterations to first floor.
Newbury Manor School Tinkers Lane Newbury

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. It was noted that the school is currently at maximum capacity as a day school with only 2 students boarding so there should be no increase to the number of daily vehicles accessing the school. After discussion it was agreed that the decision should be left to the Conservation officer.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions (District Councillor and 1 Declared Interest)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning office.

There are concerns that the roads around the school are regularly used by the children and support staff as therapy and therefore Somerset Highways should ensure that the roads and passing places are suitably maintained.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset Highways

Planning updates including enforcement issue

The Clerk circulated a record of planning applications with the current status and decisions made by Mendip District Council planning officer.

It was noted that a newly submitted Highway report had been filed on application 2022/0979/FUL Upper Vobster Farm. Cllrs Ham and Townsend to review the report with Mells Parish Council to see if there are any contradictions.

Discuss and agree whether to submit the planning application for the levelling of the football pitch at Highbury playing field

After the considerable discussion during the public forum, it was proposed that Pennys should apply for planning permission to level the pitch.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to ensure that the application number is circulated once known

Discuss and agree response to Publication of Draft Supplementary Planning Document: Greenspace

Mendip District Council have responded to our letter and confirmed that the following locations had been missed from their list:

- Triangle at the southern corner of Beacon View
- All the green area at Stockhill and Goodeaves
- Newbury House multi sports pitches
- Church and the cemetery

It was agreed that they should be included apart from the multi sports pitches at Newbury House as they are no longer a sports field. The Church and cemetery should be listed separately as the cemetery is the responsibility of the Parish Council. The following locations should also be included:

- Green space lawn to the front of the Royal British Legion on Anchor Rd.
- The area to the east of Church St, the old Dorset and Somerset Canal

Action: Cllr Townsend to submit the response

Reports

11.1 PCSO – A generic report had been received and circulated. It did not mention Coleford specifically.

11.2 Somerset County Council – Cllr Ham gave the following report:

Somerset County Council Finances: Despite the latest Month 7 budget monitoring figures for Somerset County Council showing a projected overspend of £21.3m the decision was taken at the December Executive not to formally report Month 8 and instead report quarterly figures at Month 9.

Local Government Reorganisation: Following the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council across Somerset, vesting day for the new Unitary Council remains as 1st April 2023. Tier 2 (Director level) appointments are taking place during mid-January and Tier 3 before vesting day in March. Unfortunately, these appointments were due in last summer and the lengthy delay has created a significant risk to the programme delivery.

Single rate bus fares: Bus users in Somerset can now travel on most routes in the county for just £2 from January. The major fare cut is part of an initiative funded by the Government aimed at boosting bus use while helping passengers to save money as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, fueled in part by higher petrol and diesel prices. The £2 single fare is available from all participating operators from 1 January to 31 March. The initiative will apply to most routes in Somerset. The six operators involved are:

- Dartline
- Faresaver Buses
- First South West (Buses of Somerset)
- First West of England
- Hatch Green Coaches
- South West Coaches

Primary School Places: Applications for Primary School intake places for September 2023 close on 15th January 2023. Placements will be confirmed by the 17th April 2023 with any appeals needing to be received by 16th May 2023.

Annual Flu Vaccinations: Residents are again being reminded to protect their health and the health of people around them by getting their flu and Covid-19 vaccinations. If you're 50 and over, a frontline health or social care worker, pregnant, have a long-term health condition, or are a paid or unpaid carer, you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, and you can likely get the Covid-19 seasonal booster. Children aged 2-15 years old are also eligible for free flu vaccination, which is delivered through either their GP for pre-school and school for school age children – parents need to sign a consent form. If you are eligible, you can book your seasonal Covid-19 vaccine using <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/> or by calling 119

Dry January: Dry January is a national campaign to help individuals discover the many benefits of going alcohol-free, including the financial, physical, and medical benefits this can bring. Drinking alcohol is linked to more than 60 health conditions, including liver disease, high blood pressure, depression, and seven types of cancer. Every day in the UK, 20 people die as a result of their drinking. Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year-olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages. Annually, it is estimated that alcohol costs the NHS £3.5 billion in England alone. Residents can download an app or sign up at www.dryjanuary.org.uk

New Coroner for Somerset: Mrs Samantha Marsh has been appointed as the new Senior Coroner for Somerset. She has been in post as Acting Senior Coroner for Somerset since the retirement of Tony Williams in March 2022. Coroners are judicial office holders who are independently appointed by the County Council and are responsible for investigating deaths to find out how, when and where they occurred. Coroners will investigate a death if it was unnatural or suspicious, the cause of death is unknown or if the person died in any form of state detention, such as a prison or police custody.

Prosecution for road disruption: Virgin Media Ltd has been handed fines totaling more than £56k after being found guilty of five offences relating to roadworks which included failing to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Somerset County Council has brought successful prosecutions against Virgin Media Ltd. for offences occurring in Weacombe Road, Halsway, Gordon Terrace and Redgate Street Bridgwater. The fines against Virgin Media Ltd totalled £56,000.00, with costs of £6,711.41.

- 11.3 Mendip District Council – Cllr Townsend and Ham provided the following report:
Council meeting - Following the cancellation of the December Full Council Meeting and the 9th January Cabinet due to “lack of substantive business” the Scrutiny Board Meeting scheduled for 17th January has also been cancelled.

Planning Policy – The Local Plan Part 2 continues to fail to show a forward 5 year supply of housing land. The status of the Local Plan has been further eroded by the Judicial Review decision last month that the allocation of the additional 505 dwellings in the north east of the District had been incorrectly managed by both Mendip and the Examining Inspector. We await clarification from Mendip of the effects on the Local Plan and the costs incurred. An Emergency Meeting of Full Council has been requested.

Stoke St Michael – we still await the outcome of the appeal against Mendip’s refusal of 47 houses on Coalpit Lane.

Unitary update

Covered in the Somerset Report.

Update on the Community Review Project.

The data has been returned to the working party and there is a training session this week on what is to happen next. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

Highways including:

1. Councillor update – Cllr Townsend advised as follows:
Charmborough Lane - Despite 3 pothole repairs there are still issues by Lipyeate House. The root cause is the blockage to the culvert under the road and Highways have confirmed that the landowner will be undertaking the necessary works this week. Cllr Townsend has repeated his request to Highways that the material dragged into the road from the bank opposite be cleared back as it forces vehicles into the middle of the road at the blind bend. Further down towards Charlton Rd there are two major patches of edge erosion to be reported.

Tweed Farm - possible pothole at the entrance - to be checked.

Road Closures - we have advance notification of closures at Stockhill, The Mells road, and Brewery Lane.

Lighting - we have reports of 4 defective street lights in Preachers Vale, also opposite the Church.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report the streetlights

2. Report of any new issues to be reported:
Cllr Townsend to follow up on the request for white lining either side of the entrance to the Legion car park.

Action: Cllr Townsend to contact Sara Davies the Highways engineer

Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation
The reconciliation had been prepared by the Clerk and will be checked by a Councillor ahead of the next meeting.
2. Discuss and agree whether to underwrite the costs of the production of the new Parish Magazine for 2023
A request had been received from the Townsend Family asking if both Holcombe and Coleford Parish Councils would underwrite any loss in producing the new parish magazine in the first year up to a maximum of £1,061. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Drescher and Cllr Barrett seconded, that the Council would underwrite 50% of any loss in producing the parish magazine up to a maximum of £530.50 for the first year.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

3. Consider whether to appoint PATA Payroll to undertake payroll services
PATA Payroll had helped to calculate the amounts payable on the Clerks back pay. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Ham that PATA Payroll should be instructed to complete the monthly payroll rather than the Clerk, at a cost of £12.05 per month.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to complete the paperwork and return to PATA

4. Discuss and agree 3rd Quarter budget review for 2022/23
The Clerk circulated the spreadsheet showing the actual income and expenditure for the year to date ending 31/12/22 and the projected income and expenditure to year end 31/3/23. All agreed that the forecast looked realistic and would be signed by the Chair

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

5. Consider Budget and Precept for 2023/24
The Clerk had updated the draft budget for 2023/24 considered at the last meeting. There was discussion about the allocations proposed by the finance working party who had met prior to the meeting. It was proposed that the budget for income excluding precept would be £7302 and budget payments would be £54722.56. It was agreed that the precept would be set at £49574 which was a 5% increase on last year.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to submit the precept request

6. Accounts approved for payments:
The following invoices were presented for payment:

Water 2 business – Changing rooms	£ 94.89
Somerset County Council – Back pay for Pension	£ 922.60
HMRC - National Insurance	£1112.76
Idverde Ltd – Tree survey	£ 120.00
Darren Haine – Flyer for levelling of the Playing Field	£ 19.00

Its was agreed that that the cheques would be signed.

Vote: 10 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Update on the Allotments

4. Discuss access and parking
This will be carried forward to the next meeting as there had not yet been a response from the Estate manager.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

5. Approve and sign the lease
The lease is currently with the National Allotment Society legal team who are reviewing the content. This will be carried over to the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

6. Ratify the tenancy agreement
To be carried over to the next meeting

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

7. Consider and agree quotes for fencing materials
The Clerk informed Councillors of the 3 quotes received for the fencing materials. After discussion it was agreed that the quote of £3572.02 + VAT from Reads would be accepted. The order would be placed as soon as the lease is agreed and signed.

Vote: 10 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to place the order once the leased is signed

8. Consider and agree quotes for installation of fencing
The Clerk informed Councillors of the 4 quotes received for the fencing contractors. After discussion it was agreed that the quote of £3545.03 + VAT from Dave Marshall would be accepted. The order would be placed as soon as the lease is agreed and signed.

Vote: 10 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify contractor once the leased is signed

Cllr Paterson left the meeting 21.30hrs

Consider memorial application

An application had been received from Curtis Ilott for a memorial for Robert Dickaty. All Councillors agreed that the memorial should be approved.

Vote: 10 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Notify the applicant

Consider to declare a Climate Emergency and make a plan on how to address it

Cllr Moulding gave a detailed report on Climate Change and highlighted some of the schemes which had been implemented by other Towns and Parishes. After discussion it was agreed that more research would be sought to establish what other villages similar to Coleford have implemented.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Moulding to research local parishes. Agenda item for the next meeting

Meetings to attend or attended

12/01/23 open meeting at Whatley Quarry from 14.00 to 19.30hrs for an opportunity to view plans relating to the re-opening of Westdown Quarry. Will be held at Whatley Office

17/01/22 at 17.30hrs – Whatley Quarry liaison meeting at Whatley Office

Various dates for Somerset Association of Local Councils training events

Correspondence

War Memorial magazine – Cllr Townsend to take away to read.

Confirmation of Smart meter being installed at the Playing Field changing rooms

Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

There were none

Date of Next Meetings:

25th January 2023 @ 7pm for Planning Council meeting

8th February 2023 @ 7pm for Parish meeting

The meeting finished at 22.05hrs