

Parish Council of Coleford

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January 2023 Newsletter

Levelling of Highbury Football Pitch

The Parish Council has been in discussion with Pennys regarding the levelling of the pitch. Residents in neighbouring properties had received an invitation to a public meeting and a subsequent meeting on the pitch where the proposed levels were marked out to help visualise the end result. Residents of property adjoining Highbury playing field raised concern over the impact the work would have on the boundary wall, drainage, their privacy and the view across the field. Arising from the public meeting and subsequent meeting the following points were clarified by the Council:

- 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 be submitted as part of the planning 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. 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.
- 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.



The Council voted in favour of submitting a planning application to level the pitch.

Councillor vacancies

We currently have a Councillor vacancy which we would like to fill. Being a Councillor is a varied and interesting role. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at Coleford Hub, Church Street at 7pm. Sometimes with second meeting 2 weeks later, but only if we have planning applications or other pressing matters that need addressing. We regularly discuss highways, planning and ongoing projects within the village. If you would like to know more about the role of the Councillor and what is involved then please do get in touch and I'll be happy to talk it through.

Parish Magazine

The Council is thrilled that the Townsend family have taken on the production of the Parish magazine. For the Council it's a valuable link to the community enabling us to reach parts of the community that may not access the internet or be able to attend meetings. It also provides information about what's going on as well as useful contacts for trade and services. Therefore, the Parish Councils has agreed to underwrite 50% of any loss in producing the new parish magazine in the first year up to a maximum of £530.50 for the first year. Good luck Team Townsend!

Finance

It's that time of year when the Council puts together the budget for 2023/24. There was much discussion about the budget allocations made harder than usual given the cost of living situation. The budget was agreed and as a result the Council will be submitting a Precept request to Somerset Council for £49574 which is a 5% increase on last year. This equates to a resident of a band D property paying £1.27 per week which is only 6 pence a week per household.



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

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.



There are concerns that the roads around the school are regularly used by the children and support staff as therapy. It was agreed that Somerset Highways would be informed and encouraged to ensure the roads and passing places are suitably maintained.

Publication of Draft Supplementary Planning Document: Greenspace

The Parish Council has requested that Mendip District Council include the following locations within their record of valued Greenspaces:

- Triangle at the southern corner of Beacon View
- All the green area at Stockhill and Goodeaves
- Church
- The cemetery
- 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

Highways

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.

Date of Next Meetings:

8th February 2023 @ 7pm for Parish meeting

22nd February 2023 @ 7pm for Planning Council meeting



Mendip District Council

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.

Somerset Council

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>

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.