

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
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Newsletter for March 2023

Planning

[2023/0159/FUL](#) - Erection of agricultural building. Land At 367873 151236 Charlton Road Holcombe Coleford Parish Council recommended approval.

[2023/0119/FUL](#) - Erection of a six bay industrial building Class Uses B2 and B8. Ash Farm, Charlton Road, Holcombe, Radstock
Coleford Parish Council recommended approval.



[2023/0251/FUL](#) – Erection of 1 dwelling house with disabled accessibility, carport & associated access. Land West of Leacham Cottages, Ham Hill, Holcombe
Coleford Parish Council recommended that the decision should be left to the planning officer.

The Community Review Project.

Over the last 6 months the working party had been working on the community review project to develop the survey, ensuring the questions selected were relevant to Coleford. The survey was well publicized on social media, by a leaflet drop and by meeting members of the public at different village groups. Residents then completed the survey online but help was given to ensure that everyone was able to take part. An open day was held at the Hub where people could come and complete the survey online with the support of volunteers.

The data was processed by Community Council for Somerset (who are supporting on the project) and the working party then started to give time to considering the information gleaned. A 57-page report which includes graphs and pictures has been compiled covering all the topics raised in the survey. From the report, an action plan has been put together. This has a dual purpose and shows that we have listened to those that took part in the survey and that we are considering the requests that have been made.

The next step is to help coordinate those actions. With the help of the parish council, existing village groups and potential new groups these actions can be tackled. The action list first needs to be prioritized to establish which can be completed, which are already done or underway and which might need funding. SALC will then be able to identify funding opportunities available. Some may be unachievable but will remain on the list and can be revisited in the future.

The working party do not feel that it is their place to finalize the list of actions and will therefore meet with a team of councillors to take this forward.

Community event 8th May



The Community Survey had highlighted that many people were unaware of what services and support groups were currently available in Coleford. The Big Help Out Day on bank holiday Monday May 8th would be an opportunity to showcase what is available in Coleford, for organisations to find volunteers to help support/run their group but also for them to get more members to join them to enjoy what they can offer. The Parish Council supports the proposal and agreed to fund the hall hire and refreshments for the event.

Litter pick

Thank you to those that gave up their time on the morning of Saturday 11th to litter pick the village. Lots of rubbish was gathered and we hope that you feel it looks better. A special thanks goes to the team of pickers that continue to pick all year round – we are extremely grateful to you for your continued efforts.

Coleford Climate and Environmental Group



Are you interested in considering what we can do to support the ecology and nature in our village and fight against climate change?

The Parish Council are seeking volunteers from the community to come together and form a village climate and environmental group. The group would lead on climate and environmental projects, liaising with Council for support. If you are interested, please get in touch on clerk@colefordpc.org.uk

Speed watch

Data gained from speed watch sessions will be critical in supporting future requests for traffic calming schemes. Volunteers have now been trained and will commence sessions once the weather allows but more volunteers are required. If you want to see speeding addressed in the village then please get in touch and join the team. Sessions will take place at random times to suit the volunteers and don't need to take up lots of time. Contact the Clerk for more information on

clerk@colefordpc.org.uk



Highways

The following issues have been reported to Somerset:

- Church St - dangerous water cover by Douglas Yates Court – reported by Highways to Bristol Water
- Mells Road – bridge parapet repair, in hand
- Drainage – raised highway appears to have resolved, Coleford PC to monitor.
- Charity Lane – Passing places now much more used with School expansion and several patches off the edge of the highway are seriously deep. To be filled by Highways.
- Dark Lane – main pothole north of Luckington Farm marked up. The worst sinking edges to be made up.
- Brewery Lane – had been inspected last week and qualifying damage marked up for repair at east end. Additional edge erosion by Brick House Farm also marked up.
- Dark Lane – pothole north of stream already marked up.
- Common Lane – several patches identified and marked up.
- Ham – very rough around junction with Common Lane but no specific potholes. Several potholes identified by Ham Farm at edge of utility trench and marked up. Drainage work seems to have cleared the flooding issue by the bridge.
- Stoke Bottom - flooding much reduced by drainage work. Serious edge erosion east of bridge and towards Stoke Bottom Farm marked up. Old barrier and signage to be removed. Several other potholes marked up also edge erosion towards the west end. Flooding still an issue at Fairy Cave junction, drain to be cleared out. The whole of the Lane is scheduled for surface dressing in the summer, this will pick up other repairs required, marking up started.

Other issues reported but not yet inspected by Highways:

- Charmborough Lane – rough edges still unsatisfactory at the 2 pinch points opposite Lipyeate House.
- Anchor Rd – water cover manhole sunk/loose just south of upper pedestrian crossing.
- New Co-op – requested to hasten approval of new dropped kerb length to the right and reinstatement of original height to the left.
- Highbury St – pothole reported 50 yards down from the Eagle.
- Street Lights – Some repaired but 2 still out.



Coleford Playing Field Orchard

We were thrilled to see so many turn out to the orchard planting event on the 26th February in Coleford playing field. A total of 15 fruit trees were planted (a mix of apple, pear and plum) and are a fabulous addition to the field. Thanks goes to Coleford Conservation group for taking the lead on this project.

Date of Next Meetings:

Parish Council meeting 12th April 2023 @ 7pm

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 clerk@colefordpc.org.uk

Check out the website www.colefordpc.org.uk/



Philip Ham

Cllr Ham reported that he and Cllr Clarke had consulted with Parishes within their ward to establish issues relating to the highways. 10 parishes have responded highlighting that the majority of the issues are pot hole repairs, white lining, twisted road signs etc. A meeting will take place with Sara Davis of Somerset Highways to establish how these issues can be addressed.

Somerset County Council Finances: Somerset County Council continues to show a significant projected overspend of £24.3 million as at Month 9, with the main areas Social Care causing the greatest overspends. The Revenue and Capital budgets for the new Somerset Council were proposed and debated at a Full Council meeting on the 22nd February 2023. There are significant challenges in delivering this budget given the current trend in overspend and the risk to some savings which are planned.

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. The last District and County Council meetings are currently being held with a civic service to mark the move to Unitary in Wells Cathedral on March 12th.

Debate not hate: Somerset County Council's last Full Council meeting saw members from all political parties voting to support a motion signing up the new Council -elected to the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign. The most recent Local Government Association (LGA) Councillor Census revealed seven in ten councillors reported experiencing abuse and intimidation within the last 12 months while one in 10 experienced abuse frequently. At the meeting, councillors agreed to work together on a cross-party basis to set an example of healthy debate and denounced abusive or threatening behaviour from anyone within the community on social media and in-person.

School Term dates 2024/5 and 2025/6: SCC has published two separate consultations: one for the 2024/5 and one for the 2025/26 academic years. Both consultations are particularly relevant to parents and carers with responsibility for school age children. The consultations run until the 17th March, with results being published in April this year.

Independent Living Centres: The Somerset Independent Living Centres are filled with useful technology and equipment designed to make daily living at home easier for anyone who may need support living independently, such as older people, or people of any age with disabilities, sensory impairments, or health conditions. There are two such centres in Somerset, one in Wellington and the other in Shepton Mallet. Members of the public can book a free appointment to visit the centre by calling 0300 123 2224 or email adults@somerset.gov.uk

Step Up to Social Work: Somerset's 'Step Up to Social Work' programme offers an opportunity to train for a career in social work and receive a tax-free bursary of almost £20,000. Successful completion of the 14-month training programme leads to a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work, enabling students to apply to register as a Social Worker. Recruitment for the programme is open now, with assessments scheduled for June and July 2023, with a January 2024 study start date. The programme runs once every two years, dependent on Government funding. Applications can be made via www.susw.eu-careers.pocketrecruiter.com

Domestic Abuse: Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service helpline took 301 calls from people between the age of 16 – 20-year-olds since April last year, compared to 128 in 2021/22 – a nearly three times increase. Proportionately young people experience the highest rates of domestic abuse of any age group. It is estimated that 1 in 5 children are exposed to domestic abuse. Young people can find support by calling on 0800 69 49 999 or at www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk.

Secondary School Places: Figures show that 4,785 secondary school applications were received this year compared to 4,866 in 2022. In total, **92.8% (down from 94.8% last year)** of children received a place at their first preference school, with **98.12% (down from 98.35% last year)** offered one of their top three choices.

Somerset Community Awards: Community heroes from across Somerset were recognised at the latest Somerset County Council Chair's Award for Service to the Community. The awards-giving has been an annual event for many years and this year's ceremony at Taunton Rugby Club was attended by 140 people, including 43 nominees from across Somerset. The award recipients were nominated by their parish and town councils for recognition of their outstanding contribution to their communities.

Route 1 Advocacy: Somerset County Council's Route1 Advocacy service is seeking Advocates and Independent Visitors to spend quality time with young people and help transform their lives. The independent visitor role involves taking a long-term interest in the life of a young person in care – something which many of them have never experienced. Trained volunteers are matched with a child in care and provide an invaluable service, one which is potentially life-changing for the young person involved, and even for the volunteer themselves. Advocacy is a short-term commitment, in which new advocates attend an additional 2 days of training before being added to a 'bank' of volunteer advocates, to be contacted when needed. Full training is provided by Route 1 Advocacy. To find out more about the roles and apply, please visit: <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/route1>

Highways 1: The B3191 at Cleeve Hill near Watchet is set to remain closed indefinitely for safety reasons. Detailed inspections have revealed further cliff movement is inevitable and it will be impossible to safely reopen the road without major intervention which will require significant funding, currently unavailable to the Council.

Highways 2: Somerset County Council has announced that its bid for funding the Ashcott/Walton bypass has been unsuccessful despite the narrow route and volume of passing traffic, including large numbers of HGVs. Alternative funding is currently not available.

Mendip District Council



District Cllr Ham confirmed that this would be the last time he spoke as a Mendip District Councillor after 16 years due to the arrival of the Unitary Council on the 1st April 2023. During that time, he had shared the role with other district councillors, of late Alan Townsend. As the elected unitary councillor, he will continue to report for Somerset.

Cllr Townsend did not attend but sent the following report:

Local Plan – an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council was called on 9-2-23 by the Opposition to request an explanation of the circumstances which have cost the Council some £60,000 in its unsuccessful defence of a Judicial Review of its failings on Local Plan Part 2. The JR specifically related to the mis-handling of the allocation of 505 dwellings in the north east of the district. Additional questions were asked about the failure to produce a 5-year housing land supply and what the programme was to rectify the shortfall. The effects of this failure are evident with 3 sites within a few miles of here, Gladman at Coleford, White Post and now Stoke, all being approved on greenfield sites not designated in LPP2 despite massive opposition. A new Local Plan has to be in place by 31-3-2028 - that's 5 years away, does this mean another 5 years exposure to unwanted development? The final Full Council meeting of Mendip DC on 27th February made no mention of the Local Plan problems.

White Post – the Planning Board on 15th March will be reconsidering the application for 270 houses immediately to the south of the existing built-up limit. Although the site was removed from the Local Plan by the Judicial Review it will be difficult to argue that the development would cause Significant and Demonstrable harm as the site immediately behind the White Post was approved at appeal.

Anchor Road surveying – no reply from Mendip asking whether this was part of a Planning Pre-application, possibly for housing in the Anchor Rd/Brewery Lane field.

Enforcement – Mendip Enforcement reacted rapidly to the report of extensive groundworks being carried out to the west of Great House Farm at Leigh. Contact was made with the landowners who agreed to halt work pending the submission of a planning application.