

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 Wednesday 12th April 2023

Present

Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Barrett, Banks, Evans, Pearce, Paterson and Townsend

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

1. Public Forum

1. A member of the public was concerned that they had not been notified by the Planning department of an application for a dwelling on land adjacent to their land, which had subsequently been passed. Other neighbouring residents had been notified but they had not been consulted. They were concerned that there were anomalies within the application and since work had started there had been breaches of the planning conditions with respect to accessing the site within specified hours. It was suggested that the resident communicates with the head of Somerset Planning, Julie Reader-Sullivan as concerning the planning process and the enforcement office regarding the breach of conditions.
2. It was reported that work on cutting the hedge back outside 13 Fairfield had started.
3. It was asked if Coleford will be receiving a Speed Indicator Device like the one installed on Holcombe Hill. It was mentioned that Coleford speed watch will be completing session in the first instance to gather data to establish to what extent speeding is an issue. More speed watch members would be appreciated as there are currently only 3 members.
4. It was noted that a new drainage grate had been installed on Bullocks Hill. The member of the public wanted to know if there was an issue with drainage in that area. Councillors were unaware of any issues.
5. A member of the public asked what was holding up the completion of the pavement outside the new shop. Cllr Townsend said that a non-material amendment relating to the pavement had been submitted and approved by the planning office so it was likely that this would enable the work to be completed.
6. The bin at Preachers Vale is full. The Clerk confirmed that the contractor is dealing with the relocation of the bin, which should be completed soon.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Bell, Drescher and West which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

4. Agree the minutes

The minutes from the Parish Council meetings held on the 11th and 22nd March and 5th April 2023 had been circulated to all Councilors prior to the meeting. It was agreed that they accurately reflected the meetings and should all be approved.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to website

5. Actions from the minutes

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

- 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

- Cllr Evans confirmed that the streetlights on Church Street and over the junction outside the Co-op are still off.
- It was asked whether there was an update on the fence installed adjacent to the junction of Preachers Vale.

Action: Cllr Townsend to action both points

- The Clerk had received information from Land Registry which showed the registered plots, that lie adjacent to the wall which runs along the footpath behind the Kings Head public house. Cllr Evans will liaise with the Clerk to confirm which part of the wall is a concern so that the owner can be established.

Action: Cllr Evans to liaise with the Clerk to establish who owns the wall

- Clerk would draft an agreement passing the ownership of the container from CRG to Coleford Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to draft the agreement

- Now that a speed watch group has formed the parish is eligible to apply for funding from Avon and Somerset Police towards a speed indicator device (SID). The Clerk will complete the application.

Action: Clerk to apply for SID funding

6. Co-option of Councilor,

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

7. Planning Applications

2023/0431/FUL Change of use from white land to residential garden.

Westhayes Springers Hill Coleford Radstock

All Councillors had considered the application prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Barrett that the application should be refused on the basis that the Bio-diversity checklist does not appear to have been completed correctly and is lacking information.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the planning office

8. Planning updates including enforcement issue

Clerk to report at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

9. Reports

1. PCSO – No report had been received.

2. Somerset Council – Cllr Ham provided the following report:

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, the new Council came into being on 1st April 2023. Somerset Council replaces the four District Councils and County Council providing a range of over 500 services. Both a single point of telephone or website contacts are available on 0300 123 2224 or www.somerset.gov.uk

Somerset County Council Finances: Somerset County Council continues to show a significant projected overspend of £24.3 as at Month 9 (the latest figures available), with the main areas of Social Care causing the greatest overspends. There remain significant challenges in delivering the new Somerset Council budget given the current trend in overspend and the risk to some savings which are planned.

Covid-19 Spring Booster: As COVID-19 continues to infect thousands of people every week, over-75s and those with weakened immune systems will be offered a further dose of the vaccine this spring. The vaccine offers the best protection against the virus but immunity wanes over time. The NHS plan will offer spring boosters to eligible members of the public from between 17 April and 30 June 2023.

Younger drivers: Somerset Council is backing a major new campaign aimed at younger drivers to raise awareness of the dangers of excessive speed on rural roads. A quarter of incidents involving fatalities or serious injuries on Somerset's rural roads involve younger drivers. The Department for Transport launched its Think! campaign earlier this month on video and radio. The adverts underline key messages around taking care, reducing speed, and respecting the road layout, particularly on rural roads. Visit www.somersetroadsafety.org to find out more about initiatives and courses.

Online Support for Carers: Somerset Council has recently launched a three-month pilot project with Mobilise, an online business created by carers to help unpaid carers get the support they are entitled to. Mobilise will work directly with the existing commissioned Carers Service, including the Community Council for Somerset Agents, to ensure that targeted information will be given to carers and their families. This will include a range of online support including individual support calls – seven days a week. The Mobilise service is free for residents of Somerset and can be accessed via <https://support.mobilise.co.uk/somerset>

Housing Support Scheme: A new scheme to support people leaving hospital and returning to their own homes is demonstrating the advantage of bringing services together in the new unitary Somerset Council. The headline benefit of the scheme, is the provision of stairlifts on loan, cutting through the processing of the Disabled Facilities Grant. The loan gets Somerset residents back into their own homes while the grant is processed. The policy, includes support for insulation, help for essential repairs for residents on means-tested benefits and support to make homes dementia friendly. The new Council services will be accessible through www.somerset.gov.uk

Lettings Agents: Trading Standards is reminding letting agents of their legal obligation to protect money they are holding on behalf of a client after a tribunal upheld an £8,000 fine imposed on a firm. Somerset Trading Standards imposed the fine on a Frome letting agent, after they had repeatedly ignored advice to obtain Client Money Protection that protects landlords' and tenants' money held by a letting agent. The Client Money Protection Schemes protect the money of both the landlord and tenant in the event of the insolvency of the agent.

New Free School: Somerset Council has been successful in its application to the Department for Education (DfE) to open a new free school, one of 33 new free special schools nationally. The school in Wells is expected to open in three to four years and will provide 64 places for children aged 9 to 16 years. Free schools are funded by the Government and run independently of the Council. The school will be easily accessible to students from Street, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Frome and Cheddar.

10. Discuss whether the bus service could be improved for Coleford residents

Cllr Ham and Cllr Paterson continue to attend meetings to progress how this might be achieved.

11. Highways including:

1. Councillor update – Cllr Townsend provided the following report:

Items reported but still outstanding:

- Charmborough Lane opposite Lipyeate House
- Brewery Lane - edge erosion just after junction, pothole opposite Oaklands
- Stockhill - edge erosion coming into village by 30 signs.

Works completed:

- pothole below Eagle
- potholes on Hippys Lane
- Stoke Bottom - major making good works before top dressing, shows what can be done!

New concern:

- Holcombe Cross - another accident reported, the third in 16 months.

2. Report of any new issues to be reported:

- The area around Ham junction is particularly bad after years of patching and needs top dressing.
- The pot hole outside Rope Walk is yet to be repaired

Action: Cllr Townsend to report

Cllr Ham confirmed that he had spent 4 hours with Sara Davies of Somerset Highways considering white lining, pot holes and signage for 10 parishes. There was much discussion regarding the Coleford issues. Sara has agreed to consider the list and report back on what can be done with the Somerset budget available.

The Clerk reported that Damien Devanny had responded to our letter requesting the number of accidents that were on record for Charmborough Lane. There were 5 non injury and 1 with slight injury recorded since 2013. Cllr Ham confirmed that it had become apparent that the Council can make a freedom of information request for the police records showing attendance at accidents or could approach the insurance companies, although this could be a lengthy process.

12. Finance

1. Bank Reconciliation

The reconciliation had been prepared by the Clerk and will be checked by Cllr Bell prior to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to action

2. Consider quotes for removal of the ash tree and work on the beech tree at the allotment adjacent to the Coleford playing field

The Clerk had sourced 3 quotes to complete the tree work identified within the tree survey dated November 2022. After consideration it was proposed by Cllr Ham that the quote from Isaac Gregory for £900 should be accepted which was seconded by Cllr Allen.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the contractor

3. Review and approve the year end accounts 2022/23

The Clerk shared the year-end report which showed the actual figures alongside the budgeted amount with the difference shown as a monetary value and a percentage. After receipts of £71,621.60 and payments of £61,342.65 the remaining bank balance was £48,923.73 however when you take into account the ring-fenced grants and earmarked reserves, we have the following balance:

Food Bank grant	£ 1,281.99
Climate Emergency grant	£16,349.58
Capital projects (Hardcourt fence and pitch levelling)	£10,000.00
5 months running cost contingency	<u>£20,656.00</u>
Balance	<u>£ 636.16</u>

The Clerk explained that as part of the annual return an explanation would need to be given for any variance of 15% on this year's figures when compared to last year. This will be provided to all Councillors at the next meeting when we consider the Annual return.

After running through the report line by line it was noted that a couple of amendments would be required and it was agreed that the amended report would be presented at the next meeting for approval.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

4. Review and Agree Reserved Funds

It was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Paterson that the ring-fenced grants and earmarked reserves as mentioned above should be agreed.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

5. Consider & approve section 1 Audit - Annual Governance statement 2022/23

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

6. Consider & approve section 2 Audit - Accounting statements 2022/23

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

7. Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC - National Insurance	£ 122.02
V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 186.40
PATA Payroll Services	£ 73.75
Mary Pearce – Material for Community Event	£ 29.06
Darren Haines – Printing Flyer for Pitch Levelling	£ 19.00
The Hub – Hall hire	£ 480.00
Citizen Advice Mendip – Donation	£1000.00
Steve Pitt – Removal of fence and floodlights at the hard court	£2100.00
Geeking It Simple – Anti-virus software for Clerks laptop	£ 39.60

It was agreed that all payments should be made and that the cheques would be signed.

Vote: 8 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

13. Update on the Allotments

Cllr Ham and Pearce have signed the lease before a solicitor who is now dealing with registering the land with the Land Registry. A key has been obtained for the gate padlock, the field has been topped and Cllr Pearce, Ham and Allen have marked out the fence alignment.

1. Pricing structure - At the recent working party meeting it was agreed that the allotment licence should run from 15th January each year and be renewed annually. The following options were also discussed and unanimously agreed.

- The base charge for standard 21m x 6m allotments to be set at £60/annum
- Discount to £40/annum for persons 65 years and older and people on benefits.
- In the first year the rent to be discounted to £30 if taken before 1st Sept 23 and £15 if taken after 1st Sept 23.

It was also agreed that it was essential for water to be available as soon as possible but it was decided that the installation of a Compost Loo should be revisited in a few months' time.

Cllr Barrett proposed and Cllr Allen seconded that the pricing structure proposed by the working party would be agreed.

Vote: 8 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

2. Allotments rules / regulations

During the working party meeting Cllr Pearce read out all of the Allotment rules (Licensee's obligations) that are set out in the allotment licence to occupy. It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Paterson that the Allotment rules (Licensee's obligations) should be agreed and that further rules to cover additional points like the use of a communal shed and water usage should also be supplied.

Vote: 8 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to prepare a document to promote the allotments to include the plan with the shed, pricing, licence terms (renewed yearly on the 15/1 each year), payment up front, Plots allocated on 1st come 1st served basis. Both conventional and organic plots available.

Agenda items for next meeting: Allotment signage and Planning permission for car park.

14. **Playing Fields and Play equipment**

1. Consider quote to remove graffiti from play tower & picnic bench and moss from the safety surfaces at Coleford play area

The Clerk confirmed that one quote had been received. Further quotes to be sought and bought to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to seek further quotes. Agenda item for the next meeting.

15. **Discuss the advertising boards currently located at the corner of Highbury Playing Field**

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would seek a quote to replace the signage with a new improved version. This could then be presented to the businesses at Newbury Works for them to fund the costs. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to obtain quotes. Agenda item for the next meeting.

16. **Meetings to attend or attended**

The quarry has offered to provide support by closing Charmborough road to enable the council to organise a safe Litter pick on 22/04/23 at 10am. Those volunteering should meet safely at the junction of Brewery Lane.

Action: The Clerk to promote the event, order the litter picking kit and arrange the collection of the litter.

SALC Training – the Clerk has signed up for 4 online training sessions covering:

1. Engaging with young people,
2. Social Media skills,
3. Data Protection for Councilors,
4. Recruiting and retaining Councilors

Cost is £35 per session which will take place virtually. The cost of the training will be split with Cranmore & Holcombe.

The Big Help Out – Monday 8th May 10 – 2pm at the Royal British Legion – Coleford.
All Councilors to help to spread the word.

17. Correspondence

- Countryside Charity magazine – Passed to Cllr Townsend
- Age UK Somerset

Action: Clerk to promote request for Volunteers and events

- Request from a member of the public that Holcombe and Coleford should start recording details for accidents on Charmborough Lane and Brewery Lane.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

- Request to address the inconsiderate parking at Underhill.

Action: Cllr Ham has raised with Somerset Highways and a response should be received in the next couple of weeks.

18. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion

There were none.

19. Date of Next Meetings:

26th April 2023 – Planning meeting

17th May 2023 - Annual meeting of the Parish Council meeting @ 7pm

The usual monthly meeting to follow on thereafter

The meeting finished at 22.41hrs