

Parish Council of Coleford

Gallant Hill Farm, Foxcote, Radstock, BA3 5YB
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Newsletter for February 2024

Planning

2024/0163/OUT - Land at Anchor Road, Lipyeate, Coleford, Radstock

Outline application for the erection of up to 75 dwellings, associated infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity enhancements, all matters reserved except for access from Anchor Road.

After hearing the concerns of the residents who attended the public meeting on the 14th February, the Parish Council voted to refuse the application on the basis that Coleford was already over provisioned, the village is not sustainable and the infrastructure is not adequate to support another large development. There will be a huge impact visually and on wildlife. The sewerage system is already failing and there is evidence of flooding to a neighbouring property. The Council said that they did not have the funds to fight the application in the same way that they did for Gladman application and that the public may choose to set up a JustGiving fundraising page to cover the cost of instructing a planning consultant which would be in the region of £3-4K for the initial consultation.

2024/0185/FUL – Asgarth, Highbury Street, Coleford, Radstock. Extension to the existing property in the form of a rear extension, front porch and raising of the ridge height. Change of use to a residential two storey, two-bedroom dwelling.

After considering the plans the council voted in favour of refusing the application on the basis that there would be a loss of privacy and light to neighbouring properties and the proposed plans were not in keeping with those in the surrounding area.



Somerset Councils disposal of assets including land at Stockhill Court

On 28th January the Parish Council sent a letter to Somerset Council which highlighted the reasons why the land at Stockhill should not be sold. On the 5th February Somerset Council replied stating they would be proceeding with the sale and on the 13th February an email with links to the auctioneer's website showing details of the plots had been received. The guide price for each plot is £25K. It was agreed that another letter would be sent expressing concern that the financial benefit gained by Somerset Council would be minimal when taking into consideration legal fees and the impact of the sale on the neighbouring residents.



PCSO

PCSO's William Mortimer and Louise Perry will be holding drop-in sessions at the Hub on 19th February and 18th March from 10am to 12noon to allow members of the parish the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

Allotments:

There are now only 4 plots unallocated at the new Coleford allotments. If you are interested in growing your own produce this year then please contact the Clerk on clerk@colefordpc.org.uk

Highways

The following items were reported and have been acknowledged by Somerset Highways (SH):

- Anchor Rd approaching Brewery Lane - surface degradation to be inspected.
- Brewery Lane - SH were requested to inspect for edge erosion along the first 200 yards on the nearside.
- Cherry Gardens Lane - several potholes between Owls Nest and Luckington Cross to be checked. Also at dip before Cherry Garden Farm blocked drain to be cleared.

- Hoares Lane - drainage works in hand at bottom end. At top end the higher levels of the field either side make it impossible to keep the Lane clear.
- Dark Lane - subsidence beyond first bend pushes vehicles towards utility pole, building up level requested. Several potholes to be checked. Build up of material in highway to be cleared. At southern dip edge erosion to be addressed, also edge markers required.
- Newbury School - flooding is unable to drain off the highway in front of the school because the ditch on the north side is not clear. Coleford PC to investigate with landowner.
- Charity Lane, flooding beyond Tinkers Lane junction. Some clearance work done by SH, run off and sink drainage to the north to be investigated with the landowner by Coleford PC.
- Charity Lane/Mells Rd junction - drainage work largely successful, some obstruction from material eroded onto highway, kerbing work in hand.
- Mells Rd south of Vobster Quay exit - two patches of edge erosion on nearside to be checked.
- Bridge parapet beyond Vobster Cross - original damage reported by SH to bridge specialists, to be hastened as there appears to be some further movement of the masonry.
- The 'Hollow' - surface breaking up by triangular cover halfway up on nearside then 50 yards around bend pothole to be checked.



**Somerset
Council**

Somerset Council report

Somerset Cllr Philip Ham reported that:

2024/5 Council Budget: Despite recent increased Government funding the scale of the Council's financial woes in Somerset have been set out in papers to the Executive meeting due to be held on 7th February. In the papers a budget gap of £36.6m for 2024/5 is predicted to increase to £147.9m in 2026/7 if no actions are taken. Without taking these actions the Council will have no choice other to issue a Section 114 (bankruptcy) notice. Consequently, the Council is proposing over 260 cuts (or fee increases) to service funding in 2024/5 including:

- Closure of five recycling centres
- Removal of historic open space and burial ground grants to Parishes
- Cancellation of RNLI Lifeguard contract
- Removal of all School Crossing Patrols
- Reduction in road safety budget
- Closure of all public owned toilets
- Cessation of funding for Citizens Advice local assistance programme
- Closure of Tourist Information and Visitor Centres
- Proposal to cease the Mobile Library service.
- Review of subsidies for contracted bus services
- Increased Crematorium charges

A full list of cuts to funding for services can be found at

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s24438/Appendix%20-%20Detailed%20List%20of%20Savings%20Proposals.pdf>

Local nature recovery strategy: Somerset Council has launched an online survey to shape the county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which will provide a single vision for nature recovery in Somerset. The work is funded by Defra and local authorities throughout England have been appointed to lead the work. The Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will set out local priorities and actions for restoring and creating habitats. It will identify the locations most suitable for nature restoration, and the places where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits such as carbon sequestration, flood regulation, and access to nature-rich spaces for health and wellbeing. For more information visit www.somerset.gov.uk/lnrs

Voter registration: Residents in Somerset are encouraged to make sure they are ready to vote in elections – both local and Parliamentary. The next scheduled elections in Somerset are for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon and Somerset on Thursday 2 May 2024. Everyone who votes must be on the electoral register and for those unsure if they are registered, the Electoral Services team 0300 123 2224 will be able to help. Voters also may need to update their details if they have moved house or changed their name. This can be done via: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/register-vote-and-update-your-details>

Taunton Park and Ride: Somerset Council has awarded a new contract to run Taunton’s Park and Ride service to Stagecoach Southwest following a successful tendering bid. The Southwest-based operator will run buses Monday to Saturday from the Silk Mills and Gateway sites from 12 February 2024, taking over from First Bus South. The cost of a ticket will remain just £1 for any single journey but the frequency will change to every 20 minutes.

Highways (1): Cross Rifles Junction, Bridgwater: The Council has reviewed plans to deliver a major infrastructure project at the A38/39 roundabout near the Cross Rifles pub and Sainsburys and made a decision to replace it with a new proposal which will require significant less disruption for residents and road users. Somerset Council has circa £10 million in Levelling Up funds from Government for the whole A38 corridor which includes both this junction and the Dunball junction near the M5. The decision enables the Council to now focus more of the funding on the Dunball scheme which has the most urgent capacity and safety issues.

Highways (2): Roadworks Offences Broadband provider Truespeed Communications Ltd has been hit with fines and charges totalling more than £34k after pleading guilty to five offences in Somerset. Truespeed admitted failing to install proper traffic management and guarding broken and excavated road surfaces to ensure the safety of pedestrians on a number of occasions, in breach of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

Date of Next Meetings:

28th February 2024 – Planning meeting

13th March 2024 - Parish Council meeting



If you have any issues that you would like to bring to the Parish Council’s attention, please contact the Clerk on 07971 516916 or email clerk@colefordpc.org.uk Check out the website www.colefordpc.org.uk

Philip Ham