

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 10th January 2024

Present Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Allen, Banks, Barrett, Bell, Douglas-Burke, Evans, Paterson, Pearce, Moulding, Townsend and West

In attendance: 12 members of the public present.
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. **Public Forum**

- 1.1 Concern was expressed over the public consultation launched by Rainier to introduce their outline plans for Land off Anchor Road, Coleford for 75 new homes, including 30% affordable homes, alongside significant areas of public open space and play areas.

All present agreed that they had the same concerns as those raised for the Gladman application but maybe some even more significant.

A member of the parish asked whether Somerset Council had found the 505-house shortfall. Cllr Ham said that he believed this had been resolved but it has not yet been signed off. The 5-year supply has not yet been resolved.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

- 1.2 A member of the public highlighted that two potholes on Vobster hill needed to be filled plus there were two at Ham which had been marked but not yet repaired.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset Highways

- 1.3 A member of the public reported that there are 10 drains from Stockhill House to the Vobster village sign on both sides of the road, 8 of the 10 are blocked and 4 of that 8 are barely visible.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset Highways

- 1.4 Cllr Evans asked if the Royal United Hospital bus was still running from the Odd Down Park and Ride.

Action: Clerk to research

- 1.5 Cllr Evans confirmed that Aqua power have jet washed the bench at Roman Way, which was much appreciated.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Drescher, Somerset Cllr Parry Clarke and PCSO Will Mortimer which were accepted by the Chair.

3. **Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting**

Cllr Allen declared an interest in Agenda item 11.4 – Payments

4. **Agree the minutes from the meeting held on 8th and 22nd November and 13th December 2023**
The minutes had been circulated to all Councilors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Pearce that they were accurate and should be approved.

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to upload to the website

5. **Actions from the minutes**

All actions had been completed or would be dealt with 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 Allen, Douglas-Burke and West would complete the template and bring back to the January meeting.

Action: Agenda item for February

- The Clerk stated that both Somerset Rights of Way and Somerset Highways have confirmed that they did not instal the safety barriers on the footpath between Mendip Vale and Farley Dell. It was agreed that Cllr Allen would prepare a specification of works so that quotes could be sought to lay tarmac and grant funding

Action: Cllr Allen to prepare a specification of work to tarmac the path

- The Clerk confirmed that the memorial inspection was due to be completed which would be an opportunity to undertake a thorough inspections of the cemetery. The Clerk will agree a date for the working party to meet and conduct the inspection.

Action: Agenda item for a future meeting.

- Health & Well Being grant – Clerk and Cllr Ham to meet with Ann Diment to discuss what is required for the large grant applications.

Action: Clerk to progress

- Cllrs Pearce and Ham to speak with potential contractors in order to get quotes for the ground work to create the car park.

Action: Cllrs Pearce and Ham to contact contractors for groundwork

- Cllr Ham and Cllr Pearce to consider if there was sufficient space within the deer fenced area at the new allotments for the trees to grow on.

Action: Cllr Ham & Pearce to consider location for Tree Nursery

6. **Reports**

6.1 Somerset Council

Somerset Cllr Philip Ham reported that:

- There have been lots of conversations around the current financial emergency at Somerset Council. There is currently a consultation running which is giving the public the opportunity to have their say on the 2024/25 budget.
- Wainwrights Quarry have applied for an extension to increase the footprint of the quarry up towards the Waggon and Horses at Doultling. This currently out for consultation.
- Hansons have removed Asham Woods from the Westdown Quarry application. There is a public open day at Whatley Quarry on the 18th January 2024 from 10am and 8pm giving members of the public the chance to consider the amendments made to the application.

- Wiltshire Council are looking to stop HGV traffic from traveling through Maiden Bradley, Corsley and Chapmanslade which will have a massive effect on all the local quarries.

The following written report had been circulated:

Council's Financial Position: As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government announced a 6.1% increase in Core Spending Power for Somerset Council. The provisional settlement is less than being forecast mainly due to reductions in Service Grant and New Homes Bonus but partially offset by a higher than forecast increase in Social Care Grant. In November, Somerset Council's Executive declared a financial emergency with a projected budget gap of £100m for 2024/25. The Council is currently inviting the public to have their say on finances and council services. The consultation is open to everyone and can be found at www.somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/budget-consultation-2024-2025/ or can be completed in libraries across Somerset. The consultation closes on 22 January.

End of Charges for DIY Waste: Following a recent change of Government legislation current charges for disposing of construction and demolition materials including: asbestos, plasterboard, hardcore and rubble from household DIY projects have been removed. Each calendar month every household will be able to take up to eight, 50 litre sacks (or equivalent 2m sheets of asbestos or plasterboard) free of charge to a recycling site over a maximum of four visits in a month. Households will need to pre-book trips to dispose of this DIY waste, telling the council the amount of material they are disposing (up to 8x50 litre sacks per month) and the number of times they will need to visit (up to four visits per month). Disposal of asbestos, plasterboard or hardcore/rubble in excess of the free allowance can be paid for online.

Changes to waste collection days: Somerset Council recycling and rubbish collection days change for more than 120,000 households in western parts of the county in February. New collection routes are being introduced for homes in the former Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton areas, as well as a small part of South Somerset. This means many homes in these areas will have a change in collection days from the week beginning Monday 12 February 2024. Changes will be made for the rest of the county later in the year. If a household's collection days are changing, they will receive a letter in early January making this clear. This will be followed by a service guide – including a collection day calendar – arriving near the end of January.

Phosphate Mitigation: The Government has awarded Somerset Council £9.6m of funding to deliver phosphate mitigation measures which will unlock the delivery of new homes across the area and provide for long term nature recovery. The funding will be used to expand the Council's existing phosphate credit scheme and deliver both interim and long-term phosphate mitigation measures including the use of new energy efficient water processing technology trialled at the Fivehead Wastewater Treatment Works near Taunton earlier this year.

Health Research Grant: The National Institute for Health and Care Research has awarded Somerset £5m over five years to form a Health Determinants Research Collaboration – a new research partnership to improve health and reduce health inequalities across the county. Somerset's HDRC, which is expected to launch in January 2024, will focus on the building blocks of good health such as housing, education and the physical environment to tackle the root causes of health inequalities and wider deprivation. Through the programme, the council will involve communities in applying evidence about the building blocks of health to local decisions, and in doing new research where there is not enough evidence.

The Range: A Taunton superstore has been fined £960,000, reduced to £640,000 for an early guilty plea, for food hygiene offences following a successful prosecution by Somerset Council. Guilty pleas were entered by CDS (Superstores International) Ltd, operating as The Range Home and Leisure at Hankridge, Taunton, for seven food hygiene offences in September 2023. An Emergency Hygiene Prohibition Notice was served in August 2022 to prohibit the business selling food for human consumption. During monitoring visits made to the premises, it was found that food was being sold in contravention to the Order which could have caused an imminent risk to health.

School Appeals Panel Members: Somerset Council is looking for new volunteers to become Independent Panel Members for School Appeals. Independent Panels hear and decide on admission, exclusion and transport issues for maintained schools and Academy schools in Somerset. A panel meets when a parent or school lodges an appeal against a decision related to a child's education. These panels are independent of Somerset Council and the governing bodies of the school. The Panels meet online so there is no need to travel, and applications are welcome from across Somerset. No qualifications are needed and full training is provided. For more information, and to apply, please visit www.assemblevolunteers.somerset.gov.uk/opportunities/50638-independent-school-appeals-panels-member-2023-07-17 or email neil.milne@somerset.gov.uk

6.2 PCSO

A report showing crime statistics for the village had been received and circulated to all Councillors. PCSO William Mortimer will be holding a monthly drop-in session at the Hub on 22nd January, 19th February, 18th March from 10am to 12noon to allow members of the parish the opportunity to discuss their concerns.

Action: Clerk to promote

7 **Planning**

There were none.

8. **Planning updates**

Cllr Townsend reported that he had received a copy of the Highways department report which had been sent to the planning officer who was dealing with the Allotment car park application. It made some recommendations that it was felt were excessive.

It was agreed that Cllr Townsend would write to the planning officer to counter the points made.

Action: Cllr Townsend the draft letter. Clerk to provide a full update on outstanding planning applications at the next meeting.

9. **Discuss Somerset Councils disposal of assets including land at Stockhill Court**

The Clerk read out a letter which had been written by Cllr Ham in response to Somerset Council regarding the disposal of the land at Stockhill. The letter highlighted the reasons why the land should not be sold. It was proposed by Cllr Paterson and seconded by Cllr Bell that the letter should be sent from Coleford Parish Council to Duncan Sharkey, Bill Revans, Ross Wyke, Bob Filmer, David Fothergill and The Leveller.

Action: Clerk to draft and send letter.

10 **Highways including:**

10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend confirmed that the following items reported to Somerset Highways:

- Stockhill - the potholes on the left leaving the village have got worse. Cllr Townsend to chase Highways again
- Springers Hill - Reports of pothole issues but yet to be investigated.
- Flooding – The village escaped the worst of the flooding although Charity Lane is a particular concern.
- Church St - the mystery of the missing 7.5-ton limit sign was explained by Highways who gave approval for its temporary removal during the build
- Kilmersdon - potholes in Ames Lane were a particular concern to TiP runners who use it weekly and have been filled since Cllr Townsend's request.
- Highway Safety Records - we finally have a response from Mr Devanny where he now admits that their records show 7 accidents on "Anchor Rd" in the last 3 years, including 2 defined as "Death/Injury". We need to establish how the data held by the Police is made available in the planning process. This is particularly relevant with the new Anchor Rd planning proposal, but

may also have implications for the Gladman decision where highway safety was not considered an issue. We asked for a site meeting, we must pursue this.

Action: Cllr Townsend to draft a response to Mr Devanny's letter

10.2 Report of any new issues to be reported

There were no new reports.

11 Finance

11.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Bell to sign the reconciliation prior to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to meet Cllr Bell

11.2 Discuss and agree 3rd Quarter Budget Review for 2023/24

It was agreed that this would be signed off at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

11.3 Discuss and agree the Budget and Precept for 2024/25

After reviewing the draft budget, it was provisionally agreed that an increase of at least 15% would be required which equated to £58,150. The Clerk will update and share the Tax base spreadsheet to include how an increase of 18% and 20% would impact on a Band D homeowner. The decision on the precept will be made at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

11.4 Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC - National Insurance	£152.19
V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 35.00
V Watts – Musgrove Willow	£135.25
LSJ Gardening Services – 2 nd cut for hedge contract	£498.00
LSJ Gardening Services – VAT for monthly invoice	£207.62
Nippers Tippers – Fence repairs & notice board area clearance	£ 94.00
Ministry of Play - Coleford Play equipment graffiti removal & cleaning	£942.00
PATA Payroll – Quarter invoice	£ 46.15
M A Baber - Table Tennis Grant	£250.00
Reads Agri-services – Rain water harvesting	£ 58.07
Les Allen – Goodeaves Notice board & removal of board at Pump track	£135.00
Somerset Pension Fund – balance from pay award not paid by standing order	£ 18.71
V Watts – balance from pay award not paid by standing order	£ 42.94
RJP Electrics T/A A F Denning – Changing room electric upgrade	£2400.00
(Not to be paid until the test certificate had been received)	

It was agreed that all of the payments should be approved. Cheques were signed by Cllr Ham, Banks and the Clerk.

Vote: 11 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention

Cllr Allen declared an interest and did not take part in the vote

12. Consider quotes received for Grass and Hedge cutting contracts 2024-26

The Clerk confirmed that despite approaching 12 contractors, only two quotes had been received. The Clerk opened the sealed envelopes and read out the quotes received for both the grass and hedge cutting contracts.

It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Douglas-Burke that the Clerk should ask LSJ Gardening Services if he would reduce the grass cutting contract annual total by £500 to £14K. The hedge cutting contract was accepted.

Action: Clerk to liaise with LSJ Gardening Services and sign contract if agreed.

13. Discuss and agree the charge to Coleford Athletic Football Club for use of Highbury Changing Rooms for 2023-24

The Clerk explained that the electrical work had been completed but the contractor was back tomorrow to complete the tests and provide the certificate.

The playing season started in September 2023 and will finish in April 2024 (8 months). It was suggested that the Club should pay the following reduced charge:

6 sessions at £95.55 (includes a 30% reduction)	£573.30
2 sessions at £136.50	£273.00
Total due for the 2023/24 season	£846.30

It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Ham that the Club should be asked to pay a total annual charge should be £846.30

Vote: 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention

14. Allotments:

- 14.1 Agree location of the tree nursery project at Coleford Allotment - This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for next meeting

- 14.2 Update on Coleford allotments – It was agreed that the Clerk would notify the Coleford village allotment holders of the 10% increase to rent which will take effect in January 2025. Goodeaves allotment holders eligible for concessionary rates will be applied for invoice for the next year.

- 14.3 Discuss and agree whether to allow more non-residents to take plots – The Clerk confirmed that there were 12 plots unallocated and currently 7 plots rented to non-residents. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Moulding and seconded by Cllr Allen that the unallocated plots should be offered to other non-residents.

Action: Clerk to progress

- 14.4 Consider quotes received for the car park ground works and select contractor – Cllr Ham and Pearce to seek quotes.

Action: Cllr Ham & Pearce to progress. Agenda item for the next meeting

15. Review Cemetery rules

Clerk to complete the review.

Action: Agenda item for the February meeting

16. Discuss prospect of having a Christmas Tree for December 2024

Cllr Allen explained that the management team at the Royal British Legion might be receptive to having a temporary Christmas Tree located on the lawn outside the building. The Clerk to write to formally make the request and source lights for the appropriately sized tree.

Action: Clerk to write to the RBL team to ask if they would host the Christmas Tree

17. Update on the Emergency Plan for Coleford

Cllr Douglas-Burke explained that this had not yet been progressed.

Action: Agenda item for February meeting

18. Meetings to attend or attended

11th January 2024 @ 7pm – Local Community Network. Shepton Mallet Council Chambers or via Teams.

Action: Cllr Townsend and Pearce to attend

28th January 2024 from 10am to 1pm – Tree planting at Coleford Allotments. Open to all.

7th February 2024 9.45am until 2.45pm – Community payback to start.

Action: Cllr Evans to host.

19. Correspondence

8th January 2024 – Email received from Turley promoting the Rainier development off Anchor Road, Coleford for 75 houses. Consultation ends 22nd January 2024.

Action: Clerk to respond confirming receipt and advise we will promote.

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

There were none.

21. Date of Next Meetings:

24th January 2024 – Planning meeting

14th February 2024 - Parish Council meeting

The meeting finished at 22.30hrs