

# Parish Council of Coleford

---

Miss V Watts  
Clerk to the Council  
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428  
Email: [clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com](mailto:clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com)

Gallant Hill Farm  
Foxcote  
Radstock  
BA3 5YB

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Present** Cllr Ham, (Chairman presiding) Allen, Banks, Barrett, Evans, Moulding, Pearce Paterson, and West

In attendance: 32 members of the public present.  
PCSO Will Mortimer and Louise Perry  
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

### 1. Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Cllr Bell, Cllr Drescher, Cllr Douglas-Burke, Cllr Townsend and Somerset Cllr Clarke sent apologies which were accepted by the Chairman.

### 2. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

The Chairman explained that the agenda order would be changed so the PCSO report and planning applications could be brought forward. Members of the public would be given an opportunity to speak prior to the Council considering the applications.

### 3. PCSO

PCSO Will Mortimer and Louise Perry attended the meeting and explained their role and how they are regularly patrolling the parish when on shift to give a visible presence. Drop-in session is being held at the Hub on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February and 18<sup>th</sup> March between 10am and 12noon giving residents the opportunity to meet with the PCSO's who will be able to advise on crime prevention and staying safe. It was stressed that non urgent incidents should be reported via the 101 service as it helps to generate a full profile of the issues affecting the village. A crime reference number will be given which can then be used to obtain updates in the future.

### 4. Planning Applications

#### 4.1 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

The Clerk confirmed that an extension to the consultation period has been allowed by Somerset Council with the new deadline being the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The following points were raised by members of the public:

1. The sewage system is already backing up at the Green causing a nuisance to residents and that's without the added pressure of the approved Gladman development.
2. It is being proposed that the highway would be narrowed to accommodate a pavement but this is contrary to the Gladman's application which has to widen the road.
3. Will the number of houses from the approved Gladman application be taken into account by the planning officer when considering this application even if they have not

been built? The Chair confirmed that the information would be available to the planning officer when considering the abovementioned application.

4. It was asked if the Council had information relating to the number of lorries that would be required to build the proposed development and over what period of time it would take. The Chair said that a detailed travel plan would be required at the full planning application stage. Cllr Allen explained that the development next to Midsomer Norton Rugby Club was for 70 houses and has been under construction for 3 years and is not yet complete.
5. The application is proposed outside the village development line, where will it stop? Cllr Ham said that the Gladman site bordered the line, the same as this one does.
6. Surface water flooding is a real issue for a house adjoining the site. Wessex Water has been out to look at the issue and is yet to establish the cause. The proposed application plans to store surface water and then push it through Lipyeate towards Kilmersdon. It also looks to remove the hedgerow which could damage the existing culverts.

The Council highlighted the following reasons why the application should be refused:

#### Planning policy

- Coleford already over provisioned
- Visual impact on the landscape

#### Coleford is not sustainable

- Highways not sufficient for the increased volume of traffic. Already accidents recorded and blockages when larger vehicles meet on narrow sections of the road.
- Inadequate public transport
- Walking/cycling is dangerous
- Employment locally is extremely limited

#### Visual impact

- Dark skies
- Coalescing with Lipyeate, not Holcombe
- Open countryside
- Incongruous
- Urbanisation, more than doubles the Gladman harm
- Visibility splay hedgerow removal

#### Concern of the sewerage system

- Local connection
- Capacity of sump
- Combined effects with Gladman
- Already overflowing through back gardens, throughout the village
- Capacity of overloaded sewage works

#### Biodiversity

- birds, deers, amphibians, bats
- How measured/proved/enforced

#### Surface water drainage

- From site
- Culvert under Rose Marie drive and new pavement

There is historic interest at the site and mine workings

It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr West that the application be recommended for refusal for the abovementioned reasons.

**Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor)**

It was agreed that the Council did not have the funds to fight the application in the same way that they did for the 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.

***Actions: The Clerk will to submit the response***

4.2 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.

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. A member of the public expressed concern over the impact the proposed extension would have on their property.

It was proposed by Cllr Barrett and seconded by Cllr Evans that the application should be refused on the basis that there would be a loss of privacy and light to neighbouring properties and that the proposed development was not in keeping with those in the surrounding area. It was also agreed that the Clerk would highlight that there was concern over the suitability for creating a second storey with the existing footings.

**Vote: 8 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor)**

***Actions: The Clerk will to submit the response***

**5. Planning updates including enforcement issues**

- 5.1 Update on land at Stockhill Court - The Clerk confirmed that 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 5<sup>th</sup> February Somerset Council replied stating they would be proceeding with the sale and on the 13<sup>th</sup> 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. The Parish Council does not have the funds to consider purchasing the land but 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.

***Action: Clerk to write to Somerset Council regarding land at Stockhill***

- 5.2 Coleford allotment car park application - There had been no news despite the determination date having passed.

***Action: Clerk to contact the planning officer for an update on the allotment car park.***

- 5.3 Leveling of Highbury Playing Field – The planning officer had contacted the Clerk to say that they had not consulted Sport England as a consultee which was a requirement for such an application. They would have 21 days to comment which will be 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. It is hoped that a decision would then be made at that point.

**6. Public Forum**

A member of the public expressed concern over an incident whereby a resident had dialed 999 only to be told that they did not have the access code for the defibrillator located outside the co-op. The Clerk explained that the unit is checked weekly and is registered with the Circuit and has on numerous occasions been accessed successfully. The Clerk had made contact with the Circuit who confirmed everything was in order. It was suggested that for peace of mind the Clerk telephones 999 to establish if they have the code.

*Action: Clerk to contact the emergency services to check access code is correct. Clerk to set up a defibrillator training session.*

**7. Approve the minutes from the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior the meeting. It was agreed that both sets of minutes accurately reflected the meeting and should be signed by the Chair.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention**

*Actions: The Clerk to post on the website.*

**8. Actions arising from the minutes**

All actions had been completed or would be discussed as an agenda item later in 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 March*

- The Clerk stated that both Somerset Rights of Way and Somerset Highways have confirmed that they did not install 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.*

- **Review Cemetery rules**

Clerk to complete the review.

*Action: Agenda item for the February meeting*

- **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*

- **Discuss whether to remove or replace the bin outside Church Hall.**

It was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Evans that the bin should be removed.

*Action: Clerk to seek quotes for the removal of the bin*

- It was noted that the grit bin at Careys Mead had been damaged.

*Action: Clerk to investigate*

- Cllr Ham said after consideration he proposed that the request made by a member of the public to decorate the old tree in the field adjacent to the Highbury playing field should

not be allowed on the basis that the risk outweighed the benefit. A letter would be sent to explain why this could not be progressed.

**Action:** Clerk to draft a letter to explain the decision.

## 9. Somerset Council Reports

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 7<sup>th</sup> 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%207%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/lhrs](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/lhrs)

**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.

## 10. Highways including:

### 10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend did not attend but emailed that 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. Buildup 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.

### 10.2 Report of any new issues to be reported

There were no new items to report.

## 11. Finance

### 11.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had prepared the reconciliation which will be checked by a Councillor prior to the next meeting.

### 11.2 Consider applying for Health & Wellbeing grant from Somerset Association of Local Councils

Cllr Ham. Cllr Pearce and the Clerk had met with Ann Diment of Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) regarding submitting an application for a Health and Well being

grant of up to £35K. Initial discussion has revealed that the following projects could be incorporated:

- Creation of accessible beds and compost toilet
- Creation of shelter from the existing container to allow workshops to take place
- Mindfulness sessions
- Cookery classes to promote healthy eating incorporating using home grown produce
- Creation of a Men Shed group

All Councillors agreed that an application should be developed with the support of SALC

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention**

***Actions: The Clerk to work on the application.***

- 11.3 Consider quotes to purchase dog poo bags for the 2 x dispensers in the village  
The Clerk confirmed that 1000 waste bags for the dispenser units would cost £42.20 plus VAT. It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr West that the bags should be purchased.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions**

***Action: Clerk to purchase the bags.***

- 11.4 Accounts approved for payments:  
The following invoices were presented for payment:

HMRC	£148.53
V Watts – expenses	£ 43.45
Royal British Legion Coleford – Hall Hire	£ 25.00

Cllr Banks proposed and Cllr Paterson seconded that the payments should be made.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions**

## **12. Allotments**

- 12.1 Agree location of the tree nursery project at Coleford Allotment  
Cllr Pearce and Ham considered the best site for the Tree Nursery to be the triangle in the North corner of the field. The Clerk will notify the Coleford Conservation Volunteers (CCV) of the agreed location.

**Action: Clerk to notify CCV**

- 12.1 Update on number of allotments allocated  
The Clerk confirmed that to date there are a total of 56 plots let which includes some half plots. 4 have been hand back but are already re let. There are currently 4 plots not let but 3 people interested but not yet paid. The Clerk will continue to promote until they are all allocated.

- 12.3 Consider quotes received for the car park ground works and select contractor  
Cllr Pearce and Ham continue to seek quotes for the ground work to create the car park at the allotments. It was agreed that the availability of when the work could be completed was important and should be provided as part of the quote.

**Action: Cllr Pearce & Ham to seek quotes and lead times. Agenda item for the next meeting**



12.4 Consider options for toilets at the allotments

It was agreed that the Clerk would get quotes for a portaloos to be installed at the field until the compost toilet had been purchased and was operational.

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

**13. Meetings to attend or attended**

26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 from 2 – 4pm at Mendip Hub in Shepton Mallet. Cllr Townsend to attend  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 time TBC – Shepton LCN. Cllr Pearce to attend

**14. Correspondence**

Mendip Neighbourhood Policing – Invitation for comments on how the neighbourhood policing team can help assist the communities during the Glastonbury Festival. No action required.

Report from Coleford Youth Club circulated to all Councillors – No action required.

Request for Community Herbal Garden. Clerk to discuss requirements and bring to the next Parish Council meeting.

*Action: Clerk to seek more information*

**15. Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion**

There were none.

**16. Date of Next Meetings:**

28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – Planning meeting

13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 - Parish Council meeting