

Parish Council of Coleford

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Gallant Hill Farm
Foxcote
Radstock
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 12th June 2024

Present Cllr Ham, (Chairman presiding) Banks, Bell, Evans, Paterson, Pearce, Moulding, Townsend and West (Part)

In attendance 3 members of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

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

Cllr Allen, Barrett, Douglas-Burke, Drescher and Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

2. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

3. Planning Applications

3.1 2024/0795/FUL - Land At Ash Farm Charlton Road Coleford Radstock. Construction of ground mounted solar farm, battery energy storage, ancillary infrastructure, access, security fencing and landscape scheme.

The applicant and his representatives attended the meeting and gave an introduction to the scheme and highlighted how this application had changed from the previous presentation. The key changes are:

- Access has moved so it no longer has to pass through the business units
- The Southern boundary has moved away from some ancient woodland
- The battery storage has been moved away from the business units

It was confirmed that the construction of the site is expected to last 13 weeks. The transport and access statement confirms that construction traffic will only use Charlton Road and not Charmborough Lane. Once installed, the only traffic to the site will be for maintenance visits.

Security fencing (2.2m high) will be installed but will not be visible due to the natural hedging. Inward facing CCTV will be installed and if a person is detected a security officer would attend.

The site has a lifespan of 40 years, after which the panels will be decommissioned. If they wished to extend the period of the site it would be subject to the full planning process. The batteries should last 25 years at which point they would need to be replaced.

The applicant confirmed that if the site fails and was not working it has been written into the agreement that all equipment should be removed rather than being left until the end of the 40-year period.

The possibility of an annual fee to the Parish Council through a Section 106 agreement was discussed. This was something that may be considered, but would need to be discussed with a senior member of Tyler Hill Renewables.

After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Moulding and seconded by Cllr Bell that the application should be recommended for approval.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against and 2 Abstentions (1 x Somerset Councillor)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer

- 3.2 2024/0984/PAH - 4 Mendip View Highbury Street Coleford Radstock The erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 4.30 metres, with a maximum height of 3.87 metres and an eaves height of 3.87 metres.
This was sent to the Council for notification only

4. Public Forum

- 4.1 The following paths/areas are overgrown with stinging nettles and brambles:

- The surgery to Careys Mead
Action: Clerk to write to the landowner again and ask them to clear
- The Cinder track
Action: Clerk to write to Somerset Rights of Way to ask them to trim
- The notice board by the piano shop
Action: Cllr West to trim
- The bridleway at Newbury works is overgrown.
Action: Clerk to write to the owners and ask them to arrange for it to be cleared

- 4.2 The repair work completed at Lipyeate Cross on Brewery Lane is still inadequate and dangerous for cyclists and motorcyclists.

Action: Cllr Townsend to raise with Somerset Highways

5. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on 8th and 22nd May 2024

The minutes had been circulated to all. It was agreed that the minutes accurately reflected the meetings and should be signed by the Chair.

Action: Clerk to upload to the website

6. Actions arising from the minutes

All actions had been completed or would feature later in the agenda 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 has sought specification and quotes to improve the footpath between Mendip Vale and Farley Dell.
Action: Agenda item once the information has been received

- The Clerk confirmed that the memorial inspection was due to be completed, which would be an opportunity to undertake a thorough inspection 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 after the inspection has been completed.
Action: Agenda item for a future meeting
- A complaint had been received that the footpath which runs along the boundary of Goodeaves allotments had become overgrown. The Clerk had asked LSJ to quote to clear it although it could be a job for the Community payback team.
- *Action: Clerk to progress*
- **Discuss prospect of having a Christmas Tree for December 2024**
The Clerk has sent a letter and email to the management team at the Royal British Legion asking if they might be receptive to having a temporary Christmas Tree located on the lawn outside the building.
Action: Clerk to chase

Cllr West left the meeting

7. Reports

7.1 Somerset Council

The following report had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting:

Voluntary redundancies update: In total 201 applications for voluntary redundancy have been accepted by Somerset Council. Within this number are 49 voluntary redundancies, where costs to the council exceeded £100,000 each. The total cost of the voluntary redundancies is £12.8m with an expected ongoing wage bill reduction of £8.2m. The Council needs to save around £40m from the pay bill by reducing the number of staff and managers, including senior directors, approximately 25% of staff in total.

Compulsory redundancies update: The Council has launched a 45-day consultation on restructuring which could lead to a significant reduction in Executive and Service Directors. The consultation runs from mid-May to June with those being made redundant leaving the authority between November and March 2025. Consultation on restructuring and any consequent redundancies at lower tier levels will take place later in the summer.

General Election Voter Registration: For residents who have recently turned 18 or just moved home, it is important to act to ensure that they are registered to vote in the General Election. The deadline to register is midnight on Tuesday 18 June. Applications can be made on line at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm Wednesday 19 June. Those who are registered to vote at the polling station but do not have an accepted photo ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate before the deadline at 5pm on Wednesday 26 June via: www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate. The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is 5pm on Wednesday 26 June.

Safe disposal of small gas canisters: Due to the increasing number of gas canisters being put out with recycling, crews have had to manually check recycling ahead of the automated sorting process to avoid fires. This year alone, more than 1,000 gas canisters fires have been avoided. The small canisters, mainly used for camping gas stoves, are often mistakenly put in the kerbside recycling 'Bright Blue Bag'. The bag can be used to recycle empty aerosol bottles but should never be used to dispose of gas canisters. Gas canisters must be taken to a local household recycling site.

Call for sites to offset future developments: Somerset Council is seeking submissions of land for the potential delivery of phosphate mitigation schemes and Biodiversity Net Gain to support the delivery of new development in Somerset. The "call for sites" aims to gauge the level of

interest from landowners, land promoters and land managers, with sites put forward to be assessed through a transparent process and criteria. Prioritised phosphate mitigation sites will go on to negotiate a legal agreement and where eligible, a price for the Council to purchase the arising P-Credits using some of the £9.6m secured from the Government's Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund. Biodiversity Net Gain schemes will go on to negotiate a legal agreement, which can then be logged on the national biodiversity gain sites register, and then sold on to developers. Further information can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/environmental-call-for-sites/>

School Streets Trial: A trial aiming to reduce issues with parking and congestion around the schools and encourage more sustainable travel is starting with Otterhampton Primary school in Combwich, Bridgwater on 3 June. School Streets will be repeated across four other schools which are yet to be confirmed. The trial means there will be temporary road closures during school pick up and drop off outside the selected schools. There are two volunteer stewards to carry out the road closure with support of local PCSOs.

Road surface dressing: Somerset Council's new partner Kiely Bros are launching a programme of road repairs across the County's network this month. Kiely were awarded a four-year contract from 1 April to carry out a wide range of services, including surface dressing and will be introducing a new piece of machinery known as the Multipatcher, which is a vehicle that can carry out small scale surface dressing works, but also repair a range of other defects. Once preparation work is done, the surface treatments programme, which includes surface dressing, starts in July. Details of this year programme can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/surface-dressing/>

Volunteer to help Home Library Service Users: Volunteers are needed across Somerset to help keep a vital library lifeline thriving. The Home Library Service (HLS) is looking for people who can lead teams of volunteers in Bridgwater, Wellington, Yeovil, Frome, Chard and Crewkerne. The HLS is free and available to anyone who cannot visit a library in person – the housebound, carers, or people vulnerable because of their health. The Lead Volunteers liaise with Somerset Libraries, keep in touch with local volunteers and arrange cover for sickness, and use their local knowledge to support customers and the Home Library Service

Highways Fine for Nextfibre Networks: Broadband provider Nextfibre Networks Ltd has received fines and charges totalling more than £11k after pleading guilty to two offences in Somerset which magistrates said posed a danger to pedestrians. Somerset Council prosecuted the firm following works carried out in Bridgwater. Nextfibre Networks Ltd admitted failing to install proper traffic management to ensure the safety of pedestrians while working in two of the town's streets in breach of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. Along with the two charges in Somerset, Nextfibre Networks Ltd also pleaded guilty to nine similar charges in Devon and had to pay a total of £30k in fines and charges.

7.2 PCSO

The Clerk confirmed that the crime figures for Coleford had been received today and would be circulated to Councillors.

7.3 Climate Action Group

The Energy Help Cafe will be open at the Hub from 10am to 1pm on Sunday the 7th July to meet with members of the public to discuss different ways of improving their existing buildings to improve its energy efficiency, draughtproofing, Insulation, Damp and Condensation, grants and retrofit.

8. **Planning updates including enforcement issues**

The Clerk to give a report at the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

Cllr Ham stated that there were currently no enforcement officers.

9. **Update on the water leak at Highbury Playing Field Car Park**

The Clerk presented a quote of £650 plus VAT from a Bristol Water approved contractor. Other contractors had been reluctant to give a definitive quote as they did not know the extent of the work required until the job commenced. All Councillors agreed to accept the quote.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the contractor

10. **Highways including:**

10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend submitted the following report:

Items reported and/or chased with Highways were:-

- 31 Alfords Ridge - blocked drain
- Tinkers Lane - drainage
- Preachers Vale - overhanging trees at green space Kings Head bridge - severe damage to parapet Anchor Rd/Brewery Lane - inadequate repairs - Highways explain that only urgent safety defects were repaired, other items on list to be done.
- Stockhill - edge erosion/potholes
- Cherry Gardens Lane - potholes beyond Lipyeate Farmhouse.
- Church St - re-instatement of removed Weight Limit sign above Scout Hut

Plus others out of Parish but of concern:-

- Pitcot Lane - flooding/blocked drain by Barlake Farm
- Stoke St Michael - potholes on Moons Hill

10.2 Report of any new issues to be reported

An email had been received highlighting concern around the inconsiderate parking around Careys Mead / Highbury Street. No action required at this stage.

A response had been received to our letter dated 17/05/24 to Somerset Highways regarding the impact further development would have on the roads into Coleford. They confirmed that our comments had been taken into consideration when responding to the Raynier application but that they would not be arranging a meeting with the Parish Council. The letter said that they were waiting for further information from the applicant, which was confusing when a large document had recently been logged on the planning portal addressing highway issues.

It was agreed that a response would be sent to Somerset Highways, with a copy being sent to the planning department asking whether they are expecting further responses from the applicant.

Action: Clerk to draft and send the response

11. **Update on Allotments**

11.1 Update on installation of compostable toilet for the allotments

Ground work will start for the compostable toilet footings and installation of pipework for the additional water points on Friday 14th and Monday 17th June. The Clerk has placed the order with Woo-Woo. The delivery date will be confirmed once the footings are complete.

The Clerk has spoken with an allotment holder regarding building the cabin but is waiting for them to consider the detailed construction instructions. The Clerk to ask Dave Marshall if he would consider quoting for the job.

Action: Clerk to progress

11.2 Update on the installation of additional water points

As mentioned above pipework will be installed but connection to the additional storage tanks may take place at a later date.

11.3 Review of water pumping process including procedure notes and risk assessment

It was agreed that a trolley (maximum price of £50), should be purchased by the Clerk to enable the generator to be moved out of the container to an agreed location to complete the pumping. The generator can then be chained to the container to keep it safe during the process. The Clerk to complete the procedure notes and risk assessment for approval at the next meeting.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to purchase a trolley for £50 or under. Complete the procedure notes and risk assessment.

11.4 Agree purchase of a Foam Fire extinguisher, spill kit for container, googles and gloves

Clerk presented a quote for essential safety equipment which totaled £166.24 plus VAT.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to purchase essential safety kit.

11.5 Consider rules and safety measures for ponds on allotment plots

Cllr Pearce has sought advice from ROSPA and outlined the guidance points. After discussion the Council agreed that small ponds should be allowed but rules need to be in place to ensure they remain safe and compliant with our insurance policy. Cllr Pearce will present an initial draft for discussion and approval at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Pearce to draft. Agenda item for the next meeting

12. Finance

12.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk had prepared the bank reconciliation which would be checked by Cllr Paterson after the meeting.

12.2 Consider quote to repair the nest swing at Goodeaves play area

A quote had been received for repair. It was agreed other options would be considered to prevent the ropes from deteriorating again in the future.

Action: Clerk to research. Agenda item for the next meeting

12.3 Consider & approve the quote for the allotment insurance

The Clerk had received a quote from Chris Knott Insurance of £245.92 for renewal of the allotment insurance. The Clerk is waiting for a quote from Higos Insurance. It was agreed that the quote from Chris Knott would be accepted unless Higos is more competitive. The Clerk to accept one of the quotes to ensure cover is in place by the time of the renewal.

Action: Clerk to progress

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

The National Allotment Society	£ 66.00
V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 64.73
A Mason – Internal Audit fee	£ 52.50
Read Agri – Water fittings	£417.05
Chris Knott Insurance – Allotment Insurance	£245.92

It was agreed that the payments should be made. Cheques were signed by Cllr Ham, Townsend and Evans.

Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

13. Update on the Health & Wellbeing grant application

A working party meeting was held and each member was tasked with gathering quotes and researching different elements of the application. Another meeting will be arranged to progress the application.

Action: Meeting date to be arranged. Agenda item for the next meeting.

14. Correspondence

29/05/24 – Letter from newly elected Crime Commissioners for Avon and Somerset Police. It was agreed that Cllr Ham would ensure that the LCN seeks more engagement with the Parish Councils.

Date of Next Meetings:

26 th June 2024	Planning meeting
10 th July 2024	Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.53hrs