

Parish Council of Coleford

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 14th August 2024

Present Cllr Ham, (Chairman presiding), Bell, Evans, Pearce, Moulding and Townsend.

In attendance No members of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

1.1 It was reported that an ash tree on Somerset land was dropping branches and causing concern to a resident in Mendip Vale.

Action: Cllr Ham will report to Somerset Council

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

Cllr Allen, Banks, Barrett, Douglas-Burke, Drescher, Paterson, West and PCSO Mortimer and Somerset Councillor Clarke had sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

4. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on 10th and 24th July 2024

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

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to upload to the website

5. 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

- It was asked what the building was which was being constructed behind the Cemetery.

Action: Clerk to investigate

- It was noted that the wall behind the Kings Head Public House needs attention.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Moulding regarding contacting the owner.

6. Reports

7.1 Somerset Council

Somerset Cllr Ham and Cllr Clarke circulated the following report:

Asset disposals: A report recommending the disposal of several Somerset Council assets to generate funds and help bridge an £80m funding gap in the current financial year and a £100m budget gap for 2025/2026 will be considered by the Councils Executive on 7 August. The report outlines proposals to dispose of a number of non-operational buildings and small parcels of land which hold development potential and also several high-profile assets including the Market House in Taunton, The Cornhill in Bridgwater, Land at Evercreech, Yeovil Small Business Centre, C Block - County Hall, Boden Mill Chard and St Mary's St Car Park in Taunton. The proposed sites have a combined estimated capital receipt range of £17m to £21m. However, information relating to individual asset disposals will remain commercially confidential.

Reduction in Council Tax support: Somerset residents are being encouraged to have their say on possible changes to a scheme which offers financial support to working age adults on low incomes. In November 2023, Somerset Council declared a financial emergency and agreed to several actions to reduce spending. This included a commitment to consult with the public on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. Council Tax Reduction is a discount offered for Council Taxpayers on low incomes. The proposed changes would only apply to working age adults – the support provided for pensioners would not be affected. It was initially proposed to consult on changes that could potentially save Somerset Council £6.4m a year. The options for consideration include reducing the maximum available discount from 100% to 75%. More information can be found at <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/ctr/> The consultation runs until 1 October, with any changes coming into effect from 1 April 2025.

Taunton Transport Hub: Taunton's former bus station site could be re-developed as a transport interchange under new proposals. The hub is part of Somerset's Bus Service Improvement plan and will offer a range of modern and sustainable transport options, including bus, coach, and bike parking. The project is funded by ring-fenced Government money. Residents can find out more and take part in the survey here <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/taunton-transport-hub/> The online engagement runs from 23 July to 17 September.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection - Serious Youth Violence: Between 20th and 24th May 2024, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation jointly inspected the Somerset area's multi-agency response to children over 10, who are at risk of, or affected by, serious youth violence in the county. The inspection found that partnership working between organisations is not effective in identifying, understanding or responding to the extent of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation of children in Somerset. The oversight of partnership working, led by the Safer Somerset Partnership and the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership lacks rigour, drive and challenge. Serious weaknesses in practice across organisations has meant that risks are not identified at the earliest opportunity. These issues were accepted by both partnerships during the inspection process and work began immediately to plan a more impactful approach. Improvement plans will be submitted to Ofsted by Safeguarding Children's Partnership, by 25th October 2024.

E Scooter trials halted: E-scooter services in three Somerset towns have been suspended with immediate effect by the operator. Mobility e-scooter trials in Taunton, Minehead and Yeovil, which have run since 2020, have been halted by the operator due to an unexpected supplier issue. The trials were due to continue until the end of May 2026 but whilst the service is suspended the scooters are being removed from town centres and users have been messaged. The initiative is a collaboration between DfT, Somerset Council and Zipp Mobility in Taunton and Minehead, with operator Zwings running the trial in Yeovil. (Zwings has now been amalgamated with Zipp Mobility).

Somerset Coast Festival: The Somerset and Exmoor Coastal Festival scheduled for September 21 to 29, is organised by the King Charles III England Coast Path team based at Somerset Council. As well as the 80 Miles in Eight Days walking challenge – starting at Brean Down and ending in Porlock via County Gate – this year's festival will include trail running events with a Marathon and a 100km Ultra Marathon on the penultimate day, September 28. Both trail running distances will finish with a lap of Brean Down, the 100km starting in Minehead and the marathon starting in Bridgwater. Among the highlights of this

year's event are a Fuse Fire and Light Trail in Bridgwater at the start on September 21 and an evening of shanty songs at Sparkhayes Campsite in Porlock on September 29, followed by a free Fire and Light night walk on Porlock Marshes to finish. Visit <https://somersecoastfestival.co.uk> for more information.

Government funded childcare for September: The Department for Education (DfE) is reminding eligible working parents in England making childcare arrangements for September 2024 that they need to apply by 31 August for the 15 hours childcare for their child aged 9 months old and 30 hours childcare for their 3 or 4 year old. Parents should visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working> to get their code and then share it with their childcare provider.

7.2 PCSO

PCSO Mortimer had sent his apologies. The Coleford drop-in sessions continue at the Hub on:

2nd September
30th September
28th October

25th November
23rd December

7.3 Climate Action Group

Cllr Moulding explained that the group are keen to do more to promote Retrofit. On the 9th September there will be a presentation by Eco All Together who will give an introduction into Adaptation, showing ways that the village can work towards being carbon zero.

7.4 Payback team

Cllr Evans reported that the group are not working as efficiently as they used to and despite giving them a list of work each visit its difficult to see any progress. Cllr Evans has decided to step down from the role and it was agreed that in the interim the Clerk would oversee the visits.

Action: *Clerk to liaise with the payback coordinator to feedback the Councils views.*

7.5 Youth Club

The YMCA manager had provided a quarterly update on the Coleford Youth Club which the Council acknowledged was supporting young people of Coleford and running well.

7. **Planning Applications**

7.1 2024/1278/HSE - Single storey rear extension. 4 Mendip View, Highbury Street, Coleford.

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed that the application should be refused on the basis that the extension is overbearing and restricts light into the neighbour's kitchen.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor)

Action: *Clerk to notify the planning officer*

7.2 2024/1301/HSE - Construction of single storey extension with pitched ultra roof. Green Acres, Lipyate, Coleford.

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed that it should be accepted on the basis that there were no planning reasons to refuse.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor)

Action: *Clerk to notify the planning officer*

7.3 2024/1299/VRC - Application to vary condition 19 (Use Class) and to remove conditions 10 (Acoustic Mitigation) and condition 17 (Occupancy) on consent 107987/022 (Conversion of outbuildings to form dwelling with studio (DEL) and doors. Page House Farm, Tinkers Lane, Newbury

All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed that the decision should be left to the planning officer providing, he satisfies himself that there will be no adverse effect on highway safety or impacts on the listed building. The Parish Council notes that the original permission for Page Barn related solely to 'Image Consultant Studio' and no other purposes within the use of Class B1A – Office use. We understand that there is a new classification Class E being proposed.

We would wish to be satisfied that this will not widen the scope of use to make it unacceptable in this location.

Vote: 5 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor)

Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer

8. Planning updates

The Clerk to circulate an up-to-date record of the planning decisions for the September meeting.

Action: Clerk to circulate. Agenda item for September

A letter responding to the Highways report on application 2024/0163/OUT and the response to the Local Plan consultation had been sent by the Clerk.

9. Discuss Somerset Councils options re charges for the emptying of litter and dog waste bins on parish-owned land for 2025/26 and agreed response

Somerset Council had written to outline future options re charges for the emptying of litter and dog waste bins on Parish owned land for the 2025/26 financial year.

At this stage they are asking each Parish Council to clarify:

- Total number of combined bins
- Type of bin and the What 3 Word location
- Which bins are Somerset owned and which are Parish Council owned.

Once this information has been received, they are looking to offer three options:

- A cost for Somerset Council to empty the bins (Guide price of £7.82 + VAT per collection)
- Devolve the bin emptying to the Parish Council
- Remove the bin.

Action: The Clerk to respond. Clerk to recirculate the letter from Somerset Council regarding Ground maintenance – Agenda item for September

10. Highways including:

10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend submitted the following report:

- 1) Stockhill - Good to see the extensive edge erosion in two locations made up after many requests, also a couple of potholes filled.
- 2) Lipyate Cross – disappointing that work has not started despite the notification of road closure. To be chased.
- 3) Charmborough Lane – I see the edge markers have disappeared at Craddock’s Bottom and wheel marks suggest a vehicle was very close to going over the edge. Replacements to be requested.
- 4) Beacon Cross - out of our Parish but yet another serious crash. This junction has for decades been a great concern to those of us who frequently use this route to Wells or Shepton. How do we raise the priority of a major improvement scheme here such as a roundabout noting the expensive improvements currently in progress at the much lesser used junction by the old Miners Arms near Priddy?
- 5) Dark Lane – note of thanks sent to Highways for the works carried out.

10.2 Report of any new issues to be reported

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Somerset Highways regarding improvements at Beacon Cross following the recent accident which resulted in a lengthy road closure.

Action: Cllr Townsend to draft a letter regarding

11. Update on Allotments

11.1 Update on installation of compostable toilet for the allotments

The cabin has been built, the wood treated, the inside varnished and the ramp has been created. The ventilation, guttering and some other smaller internal matters still need to be completed but excellent progress has been made. It was agreed that the Clerk should be authorized to purchase the items required to ensure the toilet is ready once it is finished.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent to the volunteers who worked on the cabin and the offer them having their 2 allotment plots rent free for 2 years. The letter would also list the outstanding jobs to give them the opportunity to say what they are happy to complete or not. A meeting with a Council representative to agree the future work should be arranged.

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to write letter of thanks notify the volunteers and thank those that quoted

11.2 Update on the installation of additional water points

Cllr Ham confirmed that Cllr Drescher would connect the additional storage tanks. Cllr Pearce has purchased the required fixings.

Action: Cllr Drescher to install the tanks

11.3 Review of water pumping procedure notes and risk assessment

The Clerk had prepared detailed instructions to support the training of volunteers on how to operate the generator along with a risk assessment. Councillors agreed that the documents were thorough and should be adopted providing the Insurance provider gives cover for the volunteers.

Action: Clerk to check with insurer and if they are content then training can commence

11.4 Consider rules and safety measures for ponds on allotment plots

Cllr Pearce to draft rules to cover the inclusion of ponds on the allotments 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

11.5 Discuss and agree maintenance for the orchard at Vobster and the Playing Field

LSJ Services have quote £50 to cut around the base of the fruit which was accepted by the Council.

Action: Clerk to instruct the Contractor to complete the work

12. Finance

12.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

Agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: Agenda item for September meeting

12.2 Consider/Agree the options for Christmas Tree and lights

The Clerk presented 3 quotes ranging from £100 to £500. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would speak with Crocs and the Legion to see if they all wish to be involved.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Crocs and the Legion. Agenda item for September

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

A chain has become disconnected on the nest swing so has been taken out of action. A quote had been received to replace the ropes and chain for £454 plus VAT. The Clerk mentioned that an alternative design may be a better option so would investigate if there was anything suitable for around the same price.

Action: Clerk to investigate.

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

V Watts - Clerks Expenses: Fuel / Stain & Varnish	£TBC
SALC - Annual membership	£678.77
Read Agriservices:	
Padlocks & chain (Inv 513322 & Cr 513357)	£107.74
Padlock (Inv 513357)	<u>£ 25.26</u>
	<u>£133.00</u>

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

Vote: 6 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

13. Consider Community Review Action Plan 2024

The Clerk had updated the review in June but a working party meeting was required to see if local groups were able to take any of the actions forward that have not yet been started.

Action: Working party meeting to be arranged

14. Update on the Health & Wellbeing grant application

A meeting is planned with the coordinator of SALC for this Friday, which will hopefully help the Council to progress with the application.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

15. Meetings to attend

16/08/24 @ 11am - Health & Well Being Grant app meeting via Teams

13/08/24 - Cllr Pearce and Ham attended the LCN meeting focusing on Emergency planning which was informative and should be discussed as an agenda item in the future

16. Correspondence

- 16.1 Resident has emailed asking for a quote to relocate the dog waste bin near to 65 Mendip Vale.

Action: Clerk to seek quote and pass on to the resident

- 16.2 Resident raised concern over an issue with bollards at Beacon View.

Action: Clerk to investigate

31/07/24 - Somerset Council Council Tax Reduction scheme – Survey has been shared via the website and social media

31/07/24 – Notification of Increase in charge to CVWG subscription. No action required

August 24 – TSB Notification of changes to Business Instant access accounts and not for profit organization current account Terms and conditions. Clerk to read

Allotment magazine – Clerk to take to the allotments

Date of Next Meetings:

No August Planning meeting

11th September 2024

Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 22.30hrs