

# Parish Council of Coleford

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## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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

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

### 1. Public Forum

1.1 It was reported that the footpath to the rear of Goodeaves Close has become overgrown with brambles again making it impassable. The payback team have cleared it in the past but on this occasion the landowner had indicated that he would address the problem, but it has not been done yet.

*Action: Cllr Ham will contact the landowner*

1.2 The hedge between Careys Mead and Church Street is still over hanging the footpath.

*Action: Clerk to send letter requesting it be cut to the resident.*

1.3 There is a loose kerb on the left as you enter Beacon View which needs to be repaired.

*Action: Cllr Townsend to request repair with Somerset Highways*

1.4 The Vobster hill road closure was poorly organized with no diversion signs when first closed. The proposed diversion route sent traffic via the single-track lanes which caused chaos.

*Action: Cllr Townsend to raise with Somerset Highways*

1.5 The bollards at the vehicular entrance to Beacon View green are damaged and the hedge is overgrown. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

*Action: Agenda item for the next meeting*

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

Cllr Bell, Barrett, Douglas-Burke, Drescher, 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

Cllr Ham declared an interest in planning application 2024/1337/FUL.

### 4. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 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 3 Abstentions**

*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 to seek 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 Alvian had managed to find chains to fit the nest swing but it would cost an additional £135. Councillors agreed that the order should be placed as the additional cost would be reflected in a longer life.

*Action: Clerk to place the order*

- The Clerk confirmed that quotes to relocate the dog waste bin at Mendip View had been received, which will be passed to the resident who wants the bin relocated. If accepted, the Clerk will confirm the agreed location.

## 6. Reports

### 7.1 Somerset Council

Somerset Cllr Ham and Cllr Clarke circulated the following report:

**Winter Fuel Payments:** The announcement by the new Labour Government to stop paying Winter Fuel Payments to those pensioners not receiving Pension Credits will impact over 110,000 residents in Somerset. This together with the rise in the fuel cap will have a significant impact upon a large proportion of them.

**Commercial Investments:** Somerset Council has completed the sale of another Commercial Investment - its property at Aztec West, Bristol. The building is one of many commercial assets that the Council is disposing of as part of its property rationalisation programme established in response to the financial emergency. Other commercial assets recently sold include the Steelite factory in Stoke-on-Trent and Howdens in Bromsgrove.

**Bridgwater Golden Mile:** Work on Bridgwater's Celebration Mile has now commenced. The pedestrian and cycle route will connect the railway station and the Northgate Docks which are also in line for regeneration. Both are funded by money from the Government through the Bridgwater Town Deal. The closure of Eastover is expected to be in place until November when construction moves to the next phase. The scheme aims to re-energise the centre of Bridgwater by improving footfall and encouraging visitors to spend more time in the town centre. The route will include coordinated quality public realm materials, street furniture, shared surfaces, paving, lighting, street trees, interpretative material, public art, and improved wayfinding.

**Reducing carbon emissions:** Somerset Council is encouraging businesses to reduce their carbon emissions by registering for the Go Green Scheme. Part of the scheme will enable businesses to take advantage of a free carbon reduction plan, which will improve energy efficiency and is likely to reduce running costs. The Go Green Scheme is funded by the UK Government to support businesses transition to a cleaner, greener economy. A tailored report then sets out the current energy usage, the alterations and support needed to achieve the predicted energy reduction. To find out more about the Go Green Scheme and to register interest visit <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/net-zero-for-business/> and scroll down to the Sustainability Audit.

**Trading Standards:** Businesses across Somerset are being warned that they are putting their livelihoods at risk by not asking for identification when selling age-restricted goods such as vapes, tobacco and alcohol. This follows the prosecution of a shopkeeper from Bridgwater who has been ordered to pay more than £3,500 after being caught selling vapes to a 15-year-old girl. The girl was in fact a volunteer in a test purchasing exercise on behalf of the Trading Standards Service.

**Evercreech recycling centre open day:** As part of this year’s Heritage Open Days SUEZ recycling and recovery UK will be providing another look behind the scenes at a recycling facility in Somerset. Evercreech Materials Recycling Facility will be open to the public for a series of free tours in September. Not normally open to members of the public, the open day gives a unique opportunity to go behind the scenes. Tours will be taking place on Saturday, 14 September, every hour from 10am, with the last tour at 2pm. Entry is free but visitors must book in advance to avoid disappointment on the day. Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/heritage-open-day-evercreech-household-recycling-sorting-facility-tickets-976107793687>

**Walk for life:** The third annual ‘Walk for Life’ event, aimed at raising awareness of suicide prevention, is being held on Saturday 7 September. The walk starts at 10:30am at the Quaker Meeting House in Taunton and will pass through Taunton Town Centre, stopping in Vivary Park at the “Afterlife” bench to lay flowers to commemorate loved ones who have died by suicide. Participants can download a free back sign from <https://walkforalife.org.uk> to personalise in remembrance of a loved one or collect one on the day. The event is run in support of World Suicide Prevention Day which occurs annually on 10 September and this year’s theme, ‘Change the Narrative’, encourages open discussions about mental health and suicide to break the stigma and foster understanding and support.

**Green Flag Awards:** Four of the Councils managed open spaces have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award for 2024 – Ham Hill, Yeovil Country Park, Wellington Park and Blenheim Gardens in Minehead. Somerset Council had taken the decision not to enter their parks into the Green Flag Award competition this year due to budget constraints but the four which retained their green flag status were entered by local voluntary groups and Minehead Town Council.

**On Your Bike:** A new initiative with SUEZ and charity, On Your Bike means that bikes collected via the council’s bulky collection service will now be donated to On Your Bike. Bikes are often collected and although previously recycled as scrap metal, they will now go to new homes. On Your Bike is based in Bridgwater and Taunton with an aim to train and support those in the community who have suffered social exclusion, have physical disabilities or mental health issues. This includes ex-service personnel, refugees, ex-offenders, homeless and long term unemployed. Bikes that are donated to On Your Bike are then refurbished and sold in their Bridgwater and Taunton shops. All funds generated go back into local projects. During the first month On Your Bike received more than 25 bikes.

**Fostering:** With over 600 children in care and fewer than 200 in-house Foster homes more people are needed to come forward to train as foster carers. More information can be found at [www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk](http://www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk) or by calling 0800 587 9900.

7.2

### PCSO

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

30<sup>th</sup> September  
28<sup>th</sup> October

25<sup>th</sup> November  
23<sup>rd</sup> December

There is no need to make an appointment just drop in to discuss any crime prevention or policing matters.

7.3

### Climate Action Group

Cllr Moulding explained that the presentation on the 9<sup>th</sup> September by Eco All Together was well attended. The evening gave an introduction into Adaptation, showing ways that the village can work towards being carbon zero. There will be 5 further training sessions.

Cllr Moulding had responded to James Smithers of Bus Partnership who had shared a potential new timetable, which provided a bus service later into the evening and at the weekends for Coleford. Cllr Moulding had voiced that a link to Radstock was important as users could then easily access other key locations direct like Bath and Bristol.

A Steering Group visited Wedmore who have implemented great schemes which have helped them to become carbon neutral. Cllr Moulding suggested some of the Parish Councillors should visit to see what can be achieved.

7. **Planning Applications**

2024/1337/FUL - Creation of sensory garden to rear, Newbury Manor School, Tinkers Lane, Newbury, Frome

Cllr Ham declared an interest in the application. All Councillors had considered the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion it was proposed that the application should be recommended for approval.

It was agreed that Clerk would notify the planning officer that Newbury Cottage, which is the adjacent to the proposed garden, was not listed on the consultee list and they should be consulted.

**Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention (Somerset Councillor & declared an interest)**

*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 next meeting.

*Action: Clerk to circulate. Agenda item for next meeting*

9. **Discuss the email received from Somerset Council dated 11<sup>th</sup> July regarding grass cutting of Somerset owned land from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025 and agree a response**

This will be discussed at the next LCN meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 which can then be fed back to the Parish Council at the next meeting.

*Action: Agenda item for the October meeting*

10. **Highways including:**

10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend submitted the following report:

**Issues in our Parish:**

Charmborough Lane – Major incident reported around 8-30 on 6<sup>th</sup> September. An HGV and a van met on a narrow stretch, neither would/could reverse so the van half mounted the bank and scraped its way all along the side of the HGV. No injuries reported so will not appear on any database. BUT the road was blocked for 15 minutes, people were late for school, work, appointments.

Anchor Road – We have reports of 3 cars being scraped at Upper Merryfield, ducks killed and a cat killed. Residents are concerned at speeding and ask whether Speedwatch or other measures could help.

The Clerk confirmed that she would be seeking more volunteers for Speedwatch as it cannot run effectively with only 3 members. There was a discussion around the AutoSpeedWatch (ASW) system and whether it could be used in Coleford.

*Action: Clerk to seek information on how the police use ASW data. Agenda item for next meeting*

It was agreed that these issues would be reported to Somerset Highways to reinforce the cases we have already made about Highway Safety.

*Action: Cllr Townsend to draft a letter for Somerset Highways*

**Other issues:**

Leigh on Mendip - with the recent heavy rains concern had been raised about the flood that appears across the road at the entrance to the old Barnclose Quarry. Although not in Coleford many residents use the road. It was asked if the Council should discuss the issue with Leigh Parish Council to see if they have action in hand? Cllr Ham said that Leigh on Mendip Parish Council are already dealing with the issue.

Beacon Cross – the response from Highways was not as positive as hoped. It was asked if the Council should discuss the issue with Oakhill Parish and also the quarries to reinforce the case for urgent action.

Cllr Ham said that this is an agenda item for the next LCN.

Dark Lane – Unbelievable that this was given as the official diversion route for the recent closure at Vobster. It was already agreed earlier in the meeting that this would be addressed with Somerset Highways.

Kings Head Bridge repair, Lipyeate Cross repairs and Charmborough Lane edge markers – update awaited from Highways.

10.2 Consider whether to be involved in the Somerset Council Enhanced Highway Maintenance (EHM) Pilot scheme

The Clerk had shared the information received regarding the scheme to all Councillors. It was agreed that there would be no further action at this point.

10.3 Report of any new issues to be reported

There were none raised.

The Clerk asked all Councillors to check their local grit bins and report back the level of grit and if possible, the What 3 Words location.

***Action: All Councillors to notify the Clerk of grit bin***

**11. Update on Allotments**

11.1 Update on installation of compostable toilet for the allotments

The gravel is now banked up to the ramp and platform to reduce risk of falling. The ventilation system and urinal drain will be completed within the week. The flooring, privacy screen, new door lock and closing mechanism need to be completed internally and items like sawdust and cleaning product etc also need to be purchased before it can be opened.

***Action: Clerk to purchase required materials. Cllr Pearce to liaise with volunteer regarding work***

11.2 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***

**12. Finance**

12.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was checked by Cllr Paterson and found to be in order.

12.2 Consider/Agree the options for Christmas Tree and lights

The Clerk presented three quotes ranging from £100 to £500. After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should purchase the mid-range for £359.70 by Connect Pro sufficient for a 10ft tree. Cllr Ham said that he would take on the responsibility for sourcing a tree. How the light switch on will be conducted will be agreed at the next meeting.

***Action: Clerk to purchase the lights. Arranging the Light Switch on event to be an agenda item for October meeting***

12.3 Decide whether to sign letter of authority to Utility Aid to seek best prices for electricity & water supply

The Clerk had shared information from Utility Aid who are recommended by Somerset and National Association of Local Councils. It was agreed that the letter of Authority should be signed to find best prices for the utility bills for the changing rooms.

***Action: Clerk to progress***

- 12.4 Consider Website Accessibility Compliance - WCAG 2.2 and Gov.uk domains  
The Clerk advised that there would be no cost to have the website reviewed by the web provider WesternWeb to ensure that it remains compliant. It was also agreed that the council will continue with the .org.uk domain as the .gov.uk was not a requirement at this point and this should be included in the budget for it to be changed in future.

**Action: Clerk to notify WesternWeb**

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

V Watts - Clerks Expenses: Fuel / Materials	£272.41
HMRC	£102.87
Somerset Playing Field Association – Annual membership	£ 15.00
SALC – Training	£ 35.00
WesternWeb – Domain and hosting website	£306.00
Water 2 Business – part payment for changing rooms	£160.00

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

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

13. **Update on the Health & Wellbeing grant application-**  
The Working party continue to progress with the application.

**Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.**

14. **Consider proposal on how to address unwanted bonfires in the village**  
The Council had received an email on how to tackle the alleged increase in bonfires in the Coleford/Holcombe area. It was suggested that the parish council should purchase a shredder along with heavy duty bags that could be lent out to parishioners to dispose of their garden waste. The shredded material could then be composted at the Vobster allotments for all to use.

After discussion it was agreed that managing the health and safety aspects would be a concern.

**Action: Clerk to respond to the member of the public**

15. **Consider seeking a volunteer for the Somerset Strimmer Scheme**  
The Clerk to promote the scheme and seek a volunteer.

**Action: Clerk to promote**

Cllr Allen left at 21.10hrs

16. **Meetings to attend**  
18/09/24 @ 10am – Halecombe Quarry Liaison and Community Fund committee meeting. Cllr Townsend and Pearce to attend  
24/09/24 – SUEZ Recycling open day @ Evercreech – Cllr Barret & Banks to attend  
29/09/24@ 7pm – Eco Together. Everyone invited  
30/09/24 – Shepton LCN. Cllr Townsend and Pearce to attend

17. **Correspondence**  
08/09/24 – Email asking if the Council will be hosting a Warm Space again this year. The Council and Hub committee are considering options.

20/08/24 – Email from Senior Planning Policy Officer to say that Somerset Council will be making comment on the NPPF Consultation but won't be combining comments from other organisations.

05/09/24 - Pitch levelling – An email received from Pennys. Meeting to be arranged with Tracey, Tom and Nick Dunn from Pennys along with the Football Club and Parish Council representatives

**Action: Clerk to arrange meeting**

22/08/24 – Request to buy land currently rented for allotments. The Council will look into this and respond directly.

***Action: Clerk to write to all Orchard Close allotment holders to notify them that this is being looked into***

**Date of Next Meetings:**

25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Planning meeting

9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.38hrs