

# Parish Council of Coleford

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## Newsletter for March 2025

### Parish Councillor vacancies

We currently have 2 Councillor vacancies. Are you passionate about Coleford?  
Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the council?  
Do you have concerns about a specific issue & want to do something about it?

We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect their community to put themselves forward for co-option to the Parish Council. If you would like to find out more about the role of the Councillor and the work that the Council does, then please contact the Parish Clerk on 07971 516916 or email [clerk@colefordpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@colefordpc.org.uk)

### Somerset Council

Somerset Councillor Philip Ham reported that the Somerset budget has been agreed for 2025/26. This resulted in the Council tax being increased by 7.5% which is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rise in the country. A £50 million capitalisation agreement and selling of assets to provide everyday spending was also approved. The Budget gap forecast is even bigger next year standing at £110 million.

Planning – New rules around policies for housing has resulted in Somerset Council taking legal opinion before fighting appeals. If the advice is poor or difficult they will not fight appeals, which is what happened at the Kilmersdon / White Post development.

Cllr Ham tried to get an appointment with the planning officer dealing with the Rainer appeal but it is hoped this will happen in the next week.

LCN's are not working as planned. Lots of talk, no outcomes and little action. Next meeting planned for 28/04/25 but still no agenda agreed.

Cllr Ham confirmed he had recently met with Somerset Highways Engineer Sara Davies. They are currently pushing hard for 30mph in Vobster, which is currently being scrutinized for implementation as well as rumble strips at Newbury School, streetlighting in village and the bridge at the bottom of the village as well as many other issues throughout the division.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> March, Cllr Ham attended 3 quarry meetings.

- Halecombe Quarry confirmed that production was currently down by 20%. Approx. £4,500 was awarded from the Community Fund awarded during this round of funding.
- Wainwrights are expecting a decision in September on their planning permission to extend Stoke Quarry at Moons Hill. This will ensure they have continued access and will safeguard operations until 2057, protecting local jobs and helping to contribute to local economy. The quarry team have offered to litter pick Charmborough Lane, which will be arranged.
- Torr have rebranded and are now named Holcan rather than Aggregate Industries.

Somerset has been awarded £9 million to deal with the phosphate problem in the County. Kings Counsel opinion is that Natural England have over reacted to the issue which has already shown signs of the water improving. New building in these areas have halted until things improved or Phosphate Credits are obtained. (Approx £35K per credit). This is holding up the building of 18,000 houses with planning permission.

Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke added that there will be a consultation on parking charges coming soon. Information on surface dressing for Somerset has been shared.

## **PCSO**

The report for March showed that there had been 2 crimes in Coleford. PCSO Will Mortimer raised concern regarding anti-social behaviour at Highbury Playing Field car park which will be discussed in more detail with the Parish Council to find a resolution.

## **Planning**

2025/0280/FUL - Change of use from 1-bedroom annexe to 1-bedroom holiday let accommodation. Tan Farm, Common Lane, Holcombe

The Parish Council recommended the application for approval subject to clarification on the status of the second access which has been created but not shown on the planning application.

Appeal APP/E3335/W/25/3358746 - 2024/0163/OUT - Land at Anchor Road, Coleford

It was agreed that the Parish Councils objections would be submitted to the planning inspectorate by the 25<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Highways**

All highway and lighting items reported at the last meeting were actioned. The dropped drains on Charlton Road have been sorted.

It is disappointing that there is still no date for the Local Community Network Highways Working Group meeting but a date has been set to meet with Somerset Highway Engineer Charlie Higgins on the 3rd April for a meeting to discuss the issues within the village.

## **Update on the Coleford Menshed**

The meeting took place on 01/03/25 with the Hub full of people interested to hear about the Sheds. Partick Abrahams an ambassador from Men's Shed attended and gave a presentation on the concept of the shed and what it can bring to the community and answered questions. 16 people completed a questionnaire to confirm their interest in setting up a shed and advising their areas of interest. Refreshments were provided which were well received.

The meeting had demonstrated that there was good interest in a community shed and it was agreed that the Parish Council should continue to facilitate setting up the men's shed as a community asset to be run and managed by Shedder completely separate from the Parish Council.

The next stage is to set up a steering group and to have it in place by end April 25. This group would work through the set up processes with the help and guidance of the Men's Sheds Association.

## **Date of Next Meetings:**

9<sup>th</sup> April 2025                      Parish Council meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025                    Planning meeting