

Parish Council of Coleford

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 11th June 2025

Present Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Allen (Part), Banks, Bell, Douglas-Burke, Evans, Fisher, Paterson, Pearce, Moulding (Part) and Townsend.

In attendance Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke and 2 members of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1. Public Forum

- 1.1 It was suggested that the Parish Council writes a letter to the CEO of Wessex Water about the appalling state of the river Frome. During the night of 23rd April 2025, the sewage overflowed for 2 hours when demand would have been low - it had been raining but not heavily. If the system cannot cope during the night, what hope is there for the future with the increased demand?

Action: Cllr Townsend /Clerk to draft a letter

- 1.2 The Chair thanked everyone who took the time to attend and speak at the Rainier appeal hearing held at Council Chambers at Shepton Mallet on the 10th June.
- 1.3 Mendip Country Practice requested that the Parish Council helps to promote the free cookery courses being held at the practice. They also have plans to create an allotment which will provide produce for the food bank and the cookery classes and they are seeking someone to take the lead on the project.

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

Cllr Swords and PCSO Will Mortimer 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 the 14th and 28th May 2025

The Clerk had circulated the draft minutes for both meetings to all Councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Paterson and seconded by Cllr Pearce that the minutes accurately reflected the meeting and should be signed by the Chair.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention

5. Actions arising from the minutes

All actions were completed or would be dealt with as agenda items during the meeting apart from:

- Royal British Legion Woman at War silhouette
At a previous meeting it was agreed that Cllr Banks would investigate whether the silhouette could be made taller. After consideration all Councilors agreed that it should remain as purchased as adjustments could compromise the strength and longevity of the product.
- Footpath Warden report for North and South of the Village
Action: Cllr Sword as the Councilor for Footpaths and Rights of Way to consider the report to establish if the Payback team can complete any of the repairs listed.

- Discuss and agree whether to pay cost of training for the Strimmer Scheme

The Clerk outlined that Somerset Council will support Coleford Parish Council if we have a volunteer who is happy to complete the brush cutter training at the Parish Councils expense (Approx £160 + VAT). Once trained the volunteer would be covered by Somerset Councils insurance and would be able to share the strimmer currently held by a volunteer in Holcombe. It was agreed that the Clerk would discuss the scheme with the Coleford volunteer and the Holcombe volunteer to establish if this is something that could work for Coleford Parish Council

Action: Clerk to progress. Agenda item for future meeting

6. Co-option of Councillors

There were no applicants to consider.

7. Update on the Coleford Sheddars

Chris Palmer attended the meeting and gave the following report:

He thanked the Parish Council for their support in enabling the group to be created. The group have held 4 meetings and have 12 people regularly attending. They have agreed the constitution and have 4 trustees. They will be registering with the Menshed Association and with the Charity Commission. They now need to open a bank account so that membership can be increased and income generated. There are still things that need to be discussed and agreed:

- Rent for the shed
- Jobs for the Sheddars to complete – preferably inside jobs. Looking to arrange an awning.
- Would like to have a presence at Colefest. Clerk to pass on contact details
- Many of the Mensheds are linked to community gardens – would be interested if there was a piece of land that could be taken on as they do need more space.

Action: Parish Council to agree potential projects

8. Reports

8.1 Somerset Council

Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke had shared the Somerset monthly report which will be available on the website with the minutes. He also added:

- Losses on property sales are 7 million to date
- Somerset Council are advertising for a permanent Section 151 officer but there is no interest. They currently have a temp covering the position at great expense.
- Somerset Council are progressing with a cultural program with Ukraine – like a virtual twinning. Cllr Clarke question whether this was a good idea given the current climate.
- Local Community Networks will be reviewed later this year to establish how effective they are.
- Cllr Clarke invited the Council to report to him any planning issues that are currently at enforcement stage. They will then collate the info and present it to the Somerset CEO and Head of Planning for response.

Cllr Ham reported that:

- Somerset Council are going to completing a consultation on parking fees
- The Saxonvale development has fallen through and is now back on the open market

8.2 PCSO

There were 10 crimes recorded in the last month, 7 x violence against a person, 1 x theft, 1 x sexual offence and 1 x possession of a weapon. There was also an incident of 4 young people using industrial cylinders of Nitrous Oxide laughing gas at the shed next to the pump track which the police are dealing with.

8.3 Climate Action Group

The application for grant funding to buy water butts for the community has been submitted but they will not know until August whether it has been successful. Cllr Moulding said that they are also hoping to host a Climate Film Festival at the Hub on a Saturday in July.

9. **Planning Applications**

There were none.

10. **Planning updates**

The Rainier appeal took place on 11th June with approx. 12 members of the public and Parish council attending, some of whom spoke. Rainier sent a strong team of experts to support the appeal. Those that spoke against the appeal did a good job of highlighting the key points e.g. that it's not a sustainable location, the sewage system is already failing, highway concerns etc. It will be between 4 and 10 weeks before we know the decision of the Planning Inspectorate.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Planning Inspectorate to reiterate the main concerns.

Vote: 10 For 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to work with Councillors to produce the letter

**Cllr Allen arrived 20.30
Cllr Moulding left 20.32**

11. **Highways including:**

11.1 Councilor update

Cllr Townsend gave the following report:

There are major issues with the Street Lights in the village. The group at Lipyeate are still not working although we do have a new lamp post installed plus there are at least 7 out at Goodeaves, also possibly 3 between the Surgery and the Co-op, other sundries along Anchor Rd/Highbury Street. It was agreed that a comprehensive survey would be completed:

- Cllr Townsend to check Lipyeate down to Farley Dell
- Cllr Paterson to check Farley Dell and Anchor Road from Farley Dell to the Co-op
- Cllr Allen to check Mendip Way and Beacon View
- Cllr Fisher to check Highbury St from the Co-op to bottom of Highbury playing Field
- Cllr Evans to check Lawrence Road, Roman Way, Preachers Way
- Cllr Douglas-Burke to check from bottom of Highbury Playing field to Stockhill
- Cllr Moulding to check Church Street and High St

Action: Councillors to complete the review and send results to the Clerk for submission

The repairs completed at Anchor Rd and Brewery Lane are very poor and complaints from a cyclist and a mobility scooter user have been received.

Action: Cllr Townsend to report

11.2 Report of any new issues

A letter had been received from a member of the Parish who was concerned about the lack of progress on the bridge repair. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to seek an update on when it will be repaired.

Action: Clerk to write to the Service Manager for structures at Somerset Highways

12. Discuss and agree grass cutting of Somerset owned land

After discussion it was agreed that the quote of £7,080 to cut the Somerset owned land previously received from LSJ Gardening Services would be accepted.

Vote: 10 For 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the contractor

13. Update of bin emptying of Coleford owned bins

It was noted that the Parish Council will be invoiced quarterly by Somerset Council for emptying the bins which are located on Parish Council owned land.

Cllr Allen said he had been approached by member of the public who would like to see a dog waste bin installed at the bottom of Beacon View.

Action: Cllr Allen to send map showing the location for consideration. Agenda item for the next meeting

14. Discuss and agree whether to progress with the Strimmer scheme

This will be discussed at the next meeting as an agenda item.

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

15. Consider quote to renovate the Coleford Village sign

After discussion it was agreed that the quote of £120 to remove the village sign should be accepted on the basis that it be removed at the earliest opportunity. The sign will then be dismantled to establish what needs to be done to complete the renovation.

Vote 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Cllr to notify the contractors

16. Decide whether to host an event at the Vobster allotments during National Allotment Week 11-17th August

After discussion it was agreed that a working party of Cllr Ham, Moulding, Allen and Swords would meet to plan the event.

Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting date

17. Update on the water supply at Goodeaves allotments

The rainwater harvesting containers were now linked but would not fill until there was sufficient rain. The Clerk had received a generous offer of a trailer with 2 x 1000 litre containers which could be delivered and left at the allotments for the allotment holders to use over the summer allow the rainwater harvesting containers to fill.

It was agreed that Cllr Allen would meet with the person who made the offer to discuss where the trailer could be sited and how it could be kept safe during the time it was left.

Action: Clerk to arrange the meeting with Cllr Allen

18. Finance

18.1 Agree bank reconciliation

The Clerk completed the bank reconciliation which Cllr Paterson had checked and found to be in order.

18.2 Discuss and agree whether to continue with National Allotment Society membership

It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Allen that the membership should be renewed at a cost of £84.

Vote 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to send renewal and cheque

18.3 Discuss and agree Insurance for the Coleford Allotments

It was agreed that the Council would accept the quote of £260.92 for the allotment insurance.

Vote 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

Action: Clerk to notify the Insurer and send cheque

18.4 Accounts approved for payments:

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 48.96
HMRC – National Insurance & Tax due	£177.39
Coleford Rocks – Crocs – Grant for benches & tables	£100.00
PATA UK – Payroll services	£ 49.46
National Allotment Society – Annual membership	£ 84.00
Chris Knott Insurance – Annual allotment insurance	£260.92

It was proposed by Cllr Paterson and seconded by Cllr Allen that the payments should be made. The cheques were signed by Cllr Ham, Evans and Banks

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

19. Meetings to attend / attended

13/05/25 – Local Community Network. Cllr Pearce and Townsend attended

10/06/25 – Community Solutions meeting. Cllr Douglas-Burke attended and will share a report

10/06/25 – Rainier Appeal – Cllr Ham, Townsend, Banks, Bell & CPRE representative attended.

13/06/25 – Training informing of changes required to ensure compliance with GDPR – Clerk and Cllr Douglass-Burke to attend

20. Correspondence

10/06/25 – An email from a member of the parish had been received which stated that two solar lights left on a grave had become damaged and they wanted to know who was going to pay for them to be replaced. It was agreed that the Clerk would check the rules before replying but the general consensus was that the council should pay.

It was discussed whether the rules should be reviewed and promoted throughout the village to ensure that all cemetery visitors are aware of the restraints in place.

Action: Clerk to review rules and respond. Arrange a meeting to discuss and review the rules.

21. [Date of Next Meetings:

25th June 2025 Planning meeting

9th July 2025 Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.49hrs