

# Parish Council of Coleford

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## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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

**In attendance** Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke and 1 member of the public present  
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

### 1. Public Forum

- 1.1 The Chairman thanked Cllrs Banks and everyone involved with the Theatre Group who put on the excellent production of 'Keep Smiling Through' to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. The feedback from those that attended was extremely positive with the bonus of raising funds for SSAFA the Armed Forces charity.

*Action: Clerk to write a letter of thanks to The Theatre Group*

- 1.2 The Chairman thanked Cllr Banks, Swords and Townsend for organizing the installation and unveiling ceremony for the Unknown Woman in War. This was a timely addition to the village during the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of VE Day and acts as a fitting reminder of the part women played during wartime. The silhouette has been well received although there was disappointment that it was considerably smaller than the Tommy especially as they were both purchased from the Royal British Legion.

*Action: Cllr Banks to investigate whether the silhouette can be made taller*

It was noted that the Coleford sign at the junction of Beacon View has signs of rot and requires renovation.

*Action: Cllr Ham to seek quote for the sign to be taken down. Clerk to seek quotes for renovation.*

- 1.3 The Chairman thanked Cllr Pearce for his efforts in helping to set up the Community Shed for the village. The first meeting with the new committee and interested parishioners will take place next week Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 10am.
- 1.4 A member of the public asked if the Parish Council if they could help to publicise the armchair aerobic class known as Fun, Fit and Fab and the Healthy Eating course (no charge to attend) which is currently being run by the village health connector. Both classes would be of benefit to the health of many people in the village but are both under subscribed and in danger of folding. It was agreed that Cllr Douglas would contact Mendip Country Practice to find out more about the courses, how they are currently promoted and how we might help support them in raising awareness. Cllr Douglas-Burke to ask if they could provide a monthly report which could be shared at the Parish Council meetings to help promote such schemes.

*Action: Cllr Douglas to liaise with Mendip Country Practice.*

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

Cllr Allen, and PCSO Will Mortimer sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

**3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting**

Cllr Ham declared an interest in agenda item 13.4 – Payments.

**4. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 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:

An electronic copy of the emergency plan documents to be shared by Cllr Moulding. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

*Action: Clerk to share the emergency plan documents. Agenda item for next meeting.*

**6. Co-option of Councillors**

There are currently 2 vacancies but no applicants to consider. The Clerk suggested that a 'Meet the Parish Council' drop in event could be held to give parishioners the opportunity to find out more about the role of the Council to hopefully help fill the vacancies.

*Action: Clerk to continue to advertise the vacancies and consider drop in event. Agenda item for next meeting.*

**7. Reports**

**7.1 Somerset Council**

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

- The figures stated within the Council Tax letters that Social Care costs were incorrectly stated at 66% when in fact they were 74%
- Somerset Council are keen to enter into a reciprocal arrangement pairing with a town in Ukraine. It was questioned whether this was a scheme which the Council could afford to enter into given its financial status.
- It has become apparent that some Parish Councils have said that they will take on the responsibility for cutting Somerset owned grass but only if the asset is passed to them for £1. Somerset Cllr Clarke said that Somerset Council had also agreed to pay the legal costs. Cutting the grass when owned by the Parish doesn't help the financial burden but does make it more palatable.
- The LCN Highway group working party will reconvene 29<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm til 4pm. They last met in February 2024.
- Somerset Council are promoting the online system for reporting potholes and are encouraging members of the community to get involved and report direct via the website..
- Has a new source of funding which he will share by email as it might be of interest to Coleford Parish Council.
- Kier is contracted for maintaining the highway signs throughout the County but aren't doing it. Cllr Clarke will continue to press for action.

7.2 PCSO

A report had been received which showed that during the last month three crimes were recorded which include theft, a drug offence and one for arson. Regular patrols are taking place in the village, particularly in areas where reports of anti-social behaviour have been received, including Mackintosh View and the football club car park. After discussion with the PCSO it has been agreed that the gate at the entrance to Highbury Playing Field car park will be closed overnight for a period of time in an attempt to stop the anti-social behaviour.

***Action: The Clerk to liaise with the volunteer gate keepers to implement***

7.3 Climate Action Group

There are plans to seek grant funding to buy water butts for the community to purchase at a reduced price to capture rainwater. Cllr Moulding will report back to the Council once this project has been progressed.

7.4 Youth report

The Clerk had circulated the detailed report to all Councillors which was informative and will be added to the website for perusal.

***Action: Clerk to add report to the website.***

7.5 Footpath Warden report for North and South of the Village

The reports had been shared with all Councillors and the Somerset Rights of Way officer for consideration. If there are any actions which it is felt that can be actioned by the Community Payback team in the future then this should be taken forward for competition.

***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.***

**8. Planning Applications**

There were none.

**9. Planning updates**

9.1 Review previous applications

This will be updated by the Clerk for a future meeting.

9.2 Discuss and agree whether to instruct a Transport specialist to challenge the Rainier application

The appeal hearing will take place the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11 of June 2025. Somerset Council have already made the decision that they will not be defending the appeal on the basis that the harm is now more than outweighed by the housing shortfall, which was updated in December.

Many believe this is not sustainable for facilities and transport. With the lack of accident data on record, the roads are deemed safe. Advice had been sought from a Highway consultant recommended by CPRE on whether we are able to fight on the grounds of Highways knowing that there are multiple accidents that haven't made it onto the official accident data records. They reported back that after considering the information on file, that there would be no merit in employing a consultant to fight the appeal. He had spent 3hrs at £95 per hour. It was proposed by Cllr Ham and seconded by Cllr Pearce that this should be paid.

**Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention**

***Action: Cllr Townsend to request an invoice from the consultant***

It was asked how we are going to represent ourselves at the appeal. It was agreed that it was worth taking the angle that the cumulative effect of both applications would be great. It was also felt that we should highlight the importance of the inspector doing the highway inspection with a representative from the village.

It was noted that an application at Beckington was recently deferred on the basis that there had been significant overflows of sewage into the neighbouring river, which totaled 853 hours. In 2024 Coleford experienced 98 overflows of sewage into the river which totaled 1441 hours in total. During the planning process Wessex Water said that sewage was not considered an issue for the Rainier application yet for Gladman Wessex Water said that restriction would be required as they could not accommodate the demand. It is odd that there is such a discrepancy between the 2 applications.

After discussion it was agreed that the Council would draft a brief for the appeal and submit to the Planning Inspectorate in writing.

***Action: Cllr Townsend to draft a brief to be submitted. Agenda item for the planning meeting.***

Cllr Ham and Cllr Townsend would attend the appeal on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June and encouraged the presence of other members of the council or community to also attend.

9.3 Discuss Mendip Local Plan Part II – Consultation on Main Modifications

It was agreed that there was no formal response required to the consultation as it did not affect Coleford, however it was felt that the process had been a waste of time and money. It was suggested that the council should write to ask how much has been spent to date and how many houses have been found as a result of the consultation.

***Action: Cllr Townsend to draft the letter for the Clerk to send.***

**10. Highways including:**

10.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend said that the Council were encouraging use of the online reporting system at [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/)

Cllr Townsend asked if a list of Coleford highway issues could be prepared to raise at the LCN Highway meeting.

10.2 Report of any new issues

Cllr Moulding asked if a new street light could be installed at the lights to illuminate the steps and the bottom of Church Street.

***Action: Clerk to make a request***

The stretch of road between Anchor Road and Brewery Lane is particularly bad but Highways will not repair as they are not deep enough.

The manhole covers on route to Vobster from Stockhill are lower than the road surface and need to be addressed.

Cllr Evans requested white lining in Roman Way.

***Cllr Townsend left the meeting 21.06hrs***

**11. Update on the Coleford Menshed**

The meeting on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April was well attended and successful. A steering group was formed and they will hold their first meeting with the new Chairman on Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup> May at 10am. The Parish Council will now drop away as agreed and allow the group to stand alone.

***Action: The Clerk to ask the group to report back to the Council.***

**Discuss on the Coleford Allotments including make a decision on whether to purchase covers for the water tanks to prevent algae**

It was agreed that the Clerk should purchase 6 jackets for the water tanks to prevent algae forming in the tanks which blocks the pipes, at a cost of £10.80 each plus delivery.

**Vote 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions**

Cllr Ham has said that he could get an additional tank to be installed next to the orchard.

**Action: Clerk to purchase the jackets. Cllr Ham to source extra water tank.**

Cllr Allen is keen to get the tanks installed at the earliest opportunity

**12. Finance**

**13.1 Agree bank reconciliation**

The Clerk completed the bank reconciliation for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 which Cllr Paterson had checked and found to be in order.

**13.2 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: Agenda item for future meeting**

**13.3 Consider quote from Somerset Council for Bin Emptying - 6 litter bins and 3 dog waste bins to be emptied weekly**

It was agreed that the Council would accept the quote but wanted to pay the invoice quarterly on the basis that the Highbury bins may be out of action during the leveling process.

**Action: Clerk to speak with Somerset Council regarding payment terms**

**13.4 Accounts approved for payments:**

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts - Clerks Expenses	£ 139.13
HMRC – National Insurance & Tax due	£ 177.39
Viscount Asquith's 1999 Settlement Trust (Allotment rent)	£ 500.00
Philip Ham – Refreshments for Community Shed meeting	£ 50.00
Citizen Advice Somerset – Donation	£ 500.00
YMCA Brunel Group – Youth Club	£6,000.00
Read Agriservices – Highbury Car Park Fencing	£ 192.00
Read Agriservices – Highbury Car Park Fencing	£ 13.01
Steve Pitt – Installation of Car Park Fence & other jobs	£1,800.00
Read Agriservices –Fencing posts for the allotment	£ 115.20
SALC affiliation fees	£ 971.46
Philip Ham – Collection of Highbury car park fencing	£ 60.00
Philip Ham – Nuts and bolts for Highbury car park fencing	£ 43.67

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Banks that the payments should be made. Cllr Ham did not vote as he had declared an interest. The cheques were signed by Cllr Ham, Evans, Banks and the Clerk

**13. Meetings to attend / attended**

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

25/03/25 – Bus Users meeting. Cllr Douglas-Burke and Moulding attended the meeting. Cllr Douglas-Burke expressed an interest in applying for a grant from Somerset Council fund to purchase a speed indicator device, which was promoted at the meeting.

*Action: Cllr Douglas-Burke to share the details via email with the Clerk. If an application is submitted then it should be copied to Somerset Councilor Barry Clarke and Philip Ham.  
Agenda item for a future meeting*

**14. Correspondence**

Allotment magazine – Passed to Cllr Pearce who will then share with Cllr Moulding

CPRE newsletter – Passed to Cllr Ham who will then to Cllr Townsend

**15. Date of Next Meetings:**

28<sup>th</sup> May 2025                      Planning meeting

14<sup>th</sup> June 2025                     Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.49hrs