

Parish Council of Coleford

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Gallant Hill Farm
Foxcote
Radstock
BA3 5YB

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 13th August 2025

Present Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding) Allen, Banks, Douglas-Burke, Evans, Fisher, Moulding, Paterson, Pearce 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 A member of the public questioned the quality of the reinstatement of the road after recent works in two places of the village, which differed substantially in the quality of finish.
- 1.2 A Councilor reported that there appeared to be a leak at the junction of Beacon View with Anchor Road. The Clerk confirm that it had been reported to Bristol Water and was scheduled for repair.
- 1.3 The hedge at the Old Gospel Hall had become overgrown and is overhanging the road. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the owner.

Action: Clerk to write a letter asking the owner to cut the hedge

- 1.4 Concern was raised over the quality of service between the Mendip Country Practice and the Chemist.

Action: Cllr Townsend to feedback at the next Patients meeting

- 1.5 A member of the public had recently responded to a fallen tree which had blocked Charmborough Lane. It was suggested that all landowners with fields adjacent to the road should be requested to address the issue of diseased trees and overgrown hedges.

Action: Clerk to write a letter of thanks. Cllr Townsend to ask Somerset Highways to contact the landowners and request that action be taken to address to trees.

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

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

3. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

Cllr Townsend declared an interest in agenda item 15.5 'Request for contribution towards grass cutting at Holy Trinity church'

4. Report from Coleford Shedders

Chris Palmer attended the meeting and said that the bank account was now set up which meant the group were now able to take subscriptions. The group had a presence at Colefest which has seen an increase in members.

The group have considered the list of projects suggested by the Council and are particularly interested in renovating the Memorial Gates at the entrance to Coleford Playing Field. It was agreed that the gate could be removed to complete the work. Materials would be required and it was agreed that a sum of up to £100 could be spent however more detailed costings should be provided to be agreed at the next meeting. A temporary barrier for the gate should be provided whilst the gates are removed.

Action: Agenda item for future meeting

The Sheddars also like the idea of renovating the old rocking horse and the making of planters for the 4 entrances to the village. It was agreed that the Sheddars would look at the location of the village signs to assess how much space there is for a display and submit a proposal for each location. Once this has been provided the Clerk will liaise with Somerset Council to establish if a license to install the planters will be required.

Action: Clerk to liaise with the Sheddars and Somerset Council regarding the installation of the planters.

It was agreed that the Council should agree a way to manage the budget / cost of materials with the Sheddars to ensure there is no delay but it is clear for both parties on what the process is.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

5. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on the 9th July 2025

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

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention

6. Actions arising from the minutes

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

- SC website does not recognise Cherry Gardens Lane or Charmborough Lane. The Council have tried before but can we have another go at Highways to get them to recognise both correct names. The confusion was Anchor Road does not help when trying to explain our issues with Highways.

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting

- The rainwater harvesting containers were now linked but will not fill until there was sufficient rain. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask a neighbour if they would consider filling the container with water for an agreed fee.

Action: Clerk to liaise with the neighbour

- It was agreed that Cllr Ham will arrange a meeting with Nataliya Wills the Local Community Network Link Officer for Somerset Council along with Cllr Douglas-Burke and Cllr Moulding.

Action: Cllr Ham to arrange meeting

- New dog waste bin

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: Agenda item for the next meeting

7. Co-option of Councillors

There were no applicants to consider.

8. Reports

7.1 Somerset Council report

The monthly report had been circulated and would be displayed on the parish website.

Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke gave the following report

- Emergency action has been implemented into the planning process, with all new applications being processed first and the older ones having to wait.
- Changes implemented in the planning process with view to speeding up the process. No Somerset Councillors will be consulted. Committees to be bypassed. Will give the parish Councillors more power.
- An urgent meeting has been called for 15th August with Wessex Water to discuss the sewerage issues in the local area.
- The Local Community Network will be meeting with Somerset Highways representatives on 21st August at Shape Mendip at 2pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

7.2 PCSO

Reports of dangerous parking at the junction of Preachers Vale and Carey's Mead. PCSO has confirmed that he will be educating drivers but if they persistently offend, they will be charged. During the last month there were 2 x Arson and criminal damage recorded.

7.3 Climate Action Group

Cllr Moulding reported that the grant funding to supply water butts has been secured. It has been agreed that once there are a certain number ordered the butts will be delivered to agreed location for people to collect on that day.

7.4 Youth Club

The latest report had been circulated to all councilors and was also displayed on the website. The club were in need of kitchen utensils. Any donations would be appreciated.

9. Planning Applications

9.1 2025/0199/HSE & 2025/0200/LBC The Old Mill, Hippys Farm Lane, Coleford Demolition of modern extension and construction of single storey extension and internal alterations

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Evans that the application should be refused on the basis that the extension is clad with timber and not stone like the original building and therefore detracts from the listed building.

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstention

Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer

9.2 2024/1898/REM Land South Of Suncroft, Coleford, Somerset

It was notified that no divisional members or neighbours had been consulted and no site notice has been displayed. It was suggested that the council demands that the application be referred to the planning board. There are extensive reasons why the application should not be approved and a detailed response should be submitted. The results of the meeting planned with Wessex Water will also need to be added. It was agreed that a holding letter will be sent with a detailed response being submitted after the Parish Council planning meeting.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention

Action: Clerk to draft a holding letter. Agenda item for the next meeting.

9.3 2025/1288/HSE - 2 Goodeaves Cottages Highbury Street Coleford

Erection of two storey rear extension & loft conversion to the rear.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Paterson that the application be approved providing the planning officer takes into consideration of whether the extension would be overbearing or reduce light into the neighbour's property.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention

Action: Clerk to notify the planning officer

9.4 Tree Preservation Order. East Coleford No.13 (2025) The Cottage, Stock Hill, Coleford, Radstock, BA3 5RR, Oak Tree (M1406). Consider supporting the temporary TPO in place for 6 months

The temporary application was issued on the 19th June. It was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Banks that the Council would support the current 6-month application and ask to be reconsulted at the end of that period with a view to making it permanent.

Vote: 6 For, 4 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to notify the tree officer

10. Planning updates

10.1 Consider whether to continue to contest the Rainier appeal APP/E3335/W/25///3358746

The council is unable to pursue a judicial review as it would cost a minimum of £20K to defend. It was agreed that the matter would not be closed.

11. Highways including:

11.1 Councilor update

Cllr Townsend gave the following report:

- Road names – Contact to be made with Somerset Highways to ask them to record the proper names for Charmborough Lane, Cherry Gardens Lane, and any other errors
- Parking - the PCSO has confirmed that they will be looking to address the dangerous parking at the junctions of Preachers Vale and Careys Mead as well as other junctions around the village.
- 20 mph Church St - residents have expressed concern. Agreed that this should be raised with Highways, again.
- Highways have repaired the Pedestrian Crossing by the old post office and the dropped drains by the old Co-op.
- Mendip Vale - the footpath between the two south wings is heavily weeded and also has several what looks like old post holes 6in by 6in and or 3 inches deep, potentially ankle twisting. Was there an ownership issue?
- Charmborough Lane - fallen tree reported and removed by member of the public.

11.2 Report of any new issues

Cllr Townsend said that Charmborough Lane needed to be litter picked. Cllr Ham said that he was sure that Wainwrights had committed to doing this earlier in the year.

Action: Cllr Townsend to contact Wainwrights to see if this could be progressed.

12 Finance

12.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Paterson had checked the bank reconciliation and signed to say that it was accurate.

12.2 Notification that EDF direct debit will be increasing from £16 to £33.04 on 10/07/25

EDF had given the council the opportunity to pay the balance of £68.86 which is currently outstanding on the account so that the direct debit could then remain at £16. It was agreed that the balance would be paid at the next meeting.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.

12.3 1st Quarter budget review & forecast for year end March 2026

The Clerk had shared the forecast for the 1st quarter prior to the meeting. All councilors agreed that the forecast was the best prediction at that moment but would be more relevant at the end of the second quarter.

Cllr Allen left the meeting

12.4 Agree transfer of funds from current account to savings account

After discussion it was agreed that £35K should be transferred to the savings account to maximize interest until required in the current account.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to draft letter to the bank requesting the transfer signed by 3 signatories

12.5 Consider the request to contribute towards the grass cutting at Holy Trinity church

Cllr Townsend declared an interest in this agenda item so did not take part in the discussion. The PCC had requested a grant of £1125 to help with the cost of the grass cutting for the rest of the season. The Clerk had sought guidance from Somerset Association of Local Councils who had confirmed that the Council was able to support such a request under the General power of competence. After discussion it was agreed that a grant of £1000 will be awarded as a one-off grant.

Vote: 6 For, 2 Against and 1 Abstention

Action: Cheque to be written at the next meeting.

12.6 Consider quotes for renovation of the Coleford Village sign

A quote had been received from an experienced restorer who said that to complete the restoration would cost between £150 and £200 which would include a careful clean and repainting of the border and wording.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Cllr Ham to provide a quote for a new post for when the sign is re-installed.

12.7 Consider quote for Water leak repair at Highbury Car Park

The Clerk had sought approval from Councilors and Chairman to accept the quote of £960 inc VAT from Preston Underground Water Services Ltd to repair the leak at Highbury playing field car park which was subject to a 14-day notice from Wessex Water. The quote was accepted and the work leak repaired on Monday 11th August but had not been tarmacked as they wanted the ground to dry out first. All agreed that the invoice should be paid.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Cheque to be written at the next meeting.

12.8 Consider whether to accept the National pay award for 2025/26 for the Clerk

It was agreed that the National pay award would be accepted and implemented with immediate effect.

Action: Clerk to prepare letter for the bank to amend the standing order for salary and pension

12.9 Accounts approved for payments

The following invoices were presented for payment:

V Watts – Expenses	£124.04
HMRC – National Insurance & tax	£177.39
Read Agriservices – Water fixings & generator cord	£111.05
Water 2 Business – Changing room water supply	£195.88
Playsafety Ltd – Annual play inspections	£504.00
Breakthrough Communications – Data Protection Toolkit	£594.00
SALC Councilor Training – Planning training	£ 30.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP – Audit fee	£378.00

Cllrs Banks, Townsend and Evans signed the cheques.

12.10 Notification of monthly payments made by standing order

The following invoices are paid during the month by standing order and direct debit:

V Watts – Clerks Salary	£1527.48
Somerset Council - Clerks Pension	£1152.90
LSJ Gardening Services – Ground maintenance	£ 353.88
EDF – Electricity Supply Changing rooms	£ 33.04

13 **Meetings to attend / attended**

17/09/25 @ 10am – National Allotment Society. Allotment officers Forum

21/08/25 @ 2pm – LCN at Shape Mendip with representatives from Somerset Highways in attendance

14 **Correspondence**

- Councils and Clerks magazine. Passed to Cllr Banks
- Somerset Community council – Notification that Coleford PC were not successful in their request for Rural Housing Needs. No action required.
- Crocs – Request for help with storage

Action: Clerk to suggest containers at old tip. Advise small grant application can be submitted for decision by Parish Council in November.

- PKF Littlejohn - Completion of audit

Action: VW to publish notice.

15 **Update on event at the Vobster allotments during National Allotment Week 11-17th August**

The allotment open day will take place of Saturday 16th August from 12noon til 3pm. Allan Cavill previously from the National Allotment Society and instrumental in the setting up of the allotments, has agreed to come and say a few words and take part in a question and answer session from those attending. Those attending are encouraged to bring a picnic but an ice cream has been confirmed for 1pm.

It was agreed that Councillors would meet at 2pm to put up the marquee. Cllr Pearce agreed to inspect the compost toilet which needed to be emptied.

16 **Discuss and agree whether to progress with the Strimmer scheme**

Clerk agreed that a volunteer has agreed to take on the role and will ensure that the appropriate forms are completed before finding a course that will need to be completed.

Action: Clerk to progress

17 Consider the 1st Draft of the Emergency plan

Cllr Moulding had shared a copy of the first draft of the emergency plan. All agreed that it was a good start but now needed to be further refined to ensure that all threads were approved by those involved.

Action: *Working party to progress*

18 Review & agree:

- 18.1 Results from Memorial Inspections
- 18.2 Cemetery Policy
- 18.3 Cemetery Rules
- 18.4 Cemetery Fees

It was agreed that this would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Action: *Agenda item for next meeting*

19 Date of Next Meetings:

27 th August 2025	Planning meeting
10 th September 2025	Parish Council meeting

The meeting ended at 21.55hrs