

# Parish Council of Coleford

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Miss V Watts  
Clerk to the Council  
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428  
Email: [clerk@colefordpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@colefordpc.org.uk)

Gallant Hill Farm  
Foxcote  
Radstock  
BA3 5YB

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025

**Present** Cllr Ham (Chairman presiding), Banks, Bell, Douglas-Burke, Pearce and Townsend.

**In attendance** Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke and no members of the public present  
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

### 1. Public Forum

- 1.1 A member of the public raised concern over the drains being blocked near to the entrance to the Royal British Legion car park and outside of the Co-op. Water was also washing off of the Legion car park which culminated in foul smelling water backing up outside the co-op.

**Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset Highways**

- 1.2 Cllr Townsend raised the following points:

Stockhill – Cllr Townsend was invited by a resident to view and understand their highway concerns in what they considered to be the forgotten part of the village. The issues were:

- Speeding
- 30 limit signs covered
- Yellow strips eroded
- Drains were blocked
- Road width /hedge encroachment
- Hedges overhanging
- Ash die back in trees next to the highway
- Drain pothole
- Footpath blocked

LCN Highways Working Group - Several issues were raised from the meeting on 21st August:

- Relevant to the above concern about Speeding there were reports that AutoSpeedWatch was having a beneficial effect in other parishes, should Coleford consider the system? What is Holcombe's experience? Other options might be available in the absence of a Speedwatch Team. Regarding 20mph speed limits we were told that they have to be 'self-enforcing' - clarification needed.
- Stoke St Michael - culvert repair scheduled for October.
- Highway safety – Concerns were repeated that it appears to Coleford residents that 'nobody died, nobody cares'. Assurance was given that this is not the sole criterion and were encouraged to report any incident involving minor collisions or near misses. Scepticism on this assurance was not helped on hearing that the Withnell Cross Roads above Horrington was higher priority than the Beacon Cross.

**Action: General Highway update to be discussed as an Agenda item for the next meeting**

Padel - a popular game these days. Cllr Townsend asked if anyone had heard of any local demand for it and could the Highbury Hard Courts be used? Cllr Bell had experience of

playing local and suggested that it would be costly to convert the existing courts. It was agreed that as there had been no requests it would not be pursued at this point.

Mug shots- It was suggested to Cllr Townsend that photos of Councillors and the Clerk should appear in the public domain so we can be more accessible. Possibly on our Facebook page or in the Community Magazine

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

- 1.3 Dog bin next to Mendip Vale has become detached from the post but is still being emptied by Somerset Council however there have been complaints that it is not hygienic due to the path being used by children. The clerk has requested whether the bin could be replaced with a multi-use litter bin.

***Action: Clerk to follow up with Somerset Council***

- 1.4 The Clerk confirmed that due to some vegetables being stolen at the allotments a decision had been made to add a combination lock to the pedestrian gate and change the combinations on the other padlocks. This has been completed and the allotment holders all notified.
- 1.5 All Councillors were asked to check their local grit bins to establish if they need to be refilled. The deadline for notifying the Council is the 13<sup>th</sup> September.

***Action: All Cllrs to notify the Clerk***

- 1.6 An update received from the Coleford Conservation group was shared with all Councillors. The Clerk had thanked the group for the recent work done on the Butterfly bank and willow dome.

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

Cllr Evans and Fisher 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 6.11 'Payments to the PCC Church'

**4. Planning updates**

The Council had received notification of a minor variation of a Premises Licence for the new Co-operative Shop on Anchor Road. After discussion it was agreed that the decision should be left to the Licensing Officer.

Wessex Water – It was reported that the meeting with their Director of Infrastructure was not very productive. The main point of immediate relevance to us was their conviction that the diversion of surface water from foul drains is a solution to their problems. The applicability of this to Rainier needs close examination.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Wessex Water addressing the points discussed which would also be shared with the planning office.

***Action: Clerk to draft letter with Councillors***

Gladman - the response from Somerset Planning that two of the issues that we raised are Pre-commencement and not part of Reserved Matters does not address any of the substantive issues we raised. Least of all Consultation. Coal Mining is still a major unresolved concern as a resident has again pointed out to Planning.

**5. Review Annual Play Inspection report**

The working party had considered the inspection reports and advised that generally the play areas were in good order. The following items were highlighted:

#### Highbury Playing Field, BA3 5PS

1. Multi play tower – Pg 4 & 5. Timber roof, bridge and walls need replacing. Already have quotes to agree later in the meeting
2. Junior swing – Pg 9. Surface needs repair. Already have quotes to agree later in the meeting
3. 5 aside goal posts – Pg 15. Rusty and bits missing
4. Hard courts socket covers – Pg 17. Clerk to get quote.

#### Annual Inspection Goodeaves Close, BA3 5RP

1. Play trail - Pg 1. Post loose in the ground. Clerk to get quote.
2. Junior swings – Pg 17. Black mould on the top bar which could be a sign of decay. Clerk to get quote.

**Action:** – *Awaiting quotes to be agreed at the next meeting.*

It was agreed that the Working Party group would get together to discuss the long-term plans for the 4 play areas.

**Action:** *Clerk to arrange date for play area planning meeting*

### **6. Finance**

1. Agree how to manage budget for Coleford Sheddars projects

After discussion it was agreed that the Coleford Sheddars should provide quotes for the next 3 projects for the Council to consider and provide funding.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to discuss with the Sheddars*

2. Discuss whether to purchase a litter / rubbish bin for bottom of Beacon View  
This will be considered at the next meeting.

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

3. Consider quotes for timber repair of boundary fence at Highbury Play area  
Given the urgent nature of the fence repair, the Clerk and Chair agreed the quote of £101.10 from Nippers Garden Services so that the work could be completed without delay.  
Councillors agreed this had been a sensible action and the invoice should be paid.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to notify the contractor that the quote is accepted.*

4. Consider quotes for timber repair on Multi Play Tower at Highbury Play area  
The Council accepted the quote of £1205 plus VAT from Ministry of Play who were able to complete the work within the next couple of weeks.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to notify the contractor that the quote is accepted.*

5. Consider quotes for timber repair on Multi Play Tower and Trim Trail at Goodeaves Play area  
This will be considered at the next meeting.

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

6. Consider quotes for repair of safety surfaces under the swings at Highbury Play area  
The Council accepted the quote of £360 plus VAT from Ministry of Play who were able to complete the work within the next couple of weeks.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to notify the contractor that the quote is accepted.*

7. Consider purchase of 5L tin of bituminous black paint for removal of graffiti at pump track  
It was agreed that the Parish Council would purchase the paint for the volunteer to paint the graffiti at a cost of approx £25

**Action:** *Clerk to purchase the paint and deliver to the volunteer*

8. Consider quotes for new shower in home changing rooms  
This will be considered at the next meeting.

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

9. Consider quote to repair water leak in the Away changing rooms  
The Clerk presented a quote of £50 from Josh Scrivens to repair the leaking stop tap in the changing rooms. It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Banks that the quote should be accepted.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to notify the contractor that the quote is accepted.*

**7. Consider Online Banking with Unity Bank**

The Clerk had shared information about the benefits of Unity Bank which comes recommended by many other Parish Councils and the Somerset Association of Local Councils. There would be a monthly fee of £6 but it was agreed that the benefits including online banking with payments authorized by 3 signatories would be worth it.

**Action:** *Clerk to progress setting up the new account*

**8. Accounts approved for payments:**

The following invoices were presented for payment:

Nippers Garden Services - Fence repair @ Highbury	£ 101.10
Preston Underground Water Services Ltd – Leak repair at car park	£ 960.00
Coleford PCC - Grant for grass cutting	£1000.00
The Hub – Hall hire for April to August	£ 300.00

It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Banks that the payments should be made. The cheques were signed by Cllrs Banks, Townsend and Ham.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

**Action:** *Clerk to send cheques*

**9. Review & agree:**

1. Results from Memorial Inspections

The Clerk has completed the inspection and notified the next of kin for those that have issues. The Clerk will seek quotes to make repairs to those where there are no next of kins recorded.

**Action:** *Clerk to progress*

2. Cemetery Policy  
Agreed by all Councillors

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

*Action: Clerk to update the website and share with local undertakers*

3. Cemetery Rules  
Agreed by all Councillors

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

*Action: Clerk to update the website and share with local undertakers*

4. Cemetery Fees  
It was agreed that the fees would be increased by 10% from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September.

*Vote:6 For; 0 Against, 0 Abstention*

*Action: Clerk to update the website and share with local undertakers*

**10. Consider Memorial Application**

Clerk to seek more detail on the proposed inscription before approval.

*Action: Agenda item for the next meeting.*

**11. Date of Next Meetings:**

10 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Parish Council meeting
24 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Planning meeting

The meeting ended at 21.15hrs