

Parish Council of Coleford

Miss V Watts
Clerk to the Council
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428
Email: clerk@colefordpco.org.uk

Gallant Hill Farm
Foxcote
Radstock
BA3 5YB

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 14th January 2026

Present Cllr Ham (Chairman) Allen, Banks, Bell, Douglas-Burke, Evans, Fisher, Pearce, Swords and Townsend.

In attendance Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke and 5 members of the public present
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

Presentation by Kirsty Campbell on the Coleford Food Store

Kirsty explained that the Coleford Food store currently comprises of 5 volunteers but this could be increased to 6 to help manage the work. Delivery of food parcels has now taken place. Over Christmas they issued 14 hampers and even a Christmas tree which had been provided by Ammerdown House. It is hoped that next Christmas this can be extended to more people.

The store is covering Coleford, Holcombe and the neighbouring village and are taking referrals from Mendip Country Practice, Citizens Advice, Bishop Henderson School and Mendip Connections. The group are currently working out of the church hall on a Friday 2.30pm til 4.30 and @ The Hub on a Monday from 1pm - 2.30pm. During these times people are welcome to drop off donations and collect if previously arranged. Donations are also accepted at the Mendip Country Practice.

Lack of storage space is an issue and they currently have no fridge so can only take tins and dried food. In the future they would like to open a community larder to allow them to take fresh produce. If anyone has any suggestions on somewhere that can offer more room please get in touch.

Anyone in need of support should contact one of the referral groups mentioned above who will be happy to advise. Further information can be found in the Coleford and Holcombe Community Magazine and on the Facebook page

The Chairman thanked Kirsty for giving the presentation. He also thanked Amanda for starting up the group, Deborah for her continued commitment and to Wainwrights Quarry for the initial funding.

1. Public Forum

- 1.1 A resident raised concern over the amount Somerset Council were having to pay to make safe trees which had been highlighted in tree surveys. The Chair explained that all Councils had a responsibility for ensuring that trees located on their land are safe. Coleford Tree survey will be considered later in the meeting.
- 1.2 Cllr Banks had notified the Council that the Unknown soldier located next to the Coleford sign near the entrance to Beacon View has had the rifle bent and snapped off. Cllr Banks has managed to repair it but is disappointed that this is the 3rd time that it has happened. It was agreed that the Clerk would mention this to the PCSO and ask them to keep an eye out for any antisocial behaviour in that area.

2. **Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)**
Cllr Paterson sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.
3. **Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting**
 - 3.1 It was agreed that a general dispensation for all Councillors to discuss and vote on the precept and setting the budget should be allowed on the basis that as residents they have a pecuniary interest as they pay council tax. Without the dispensation the meetings could not function.
 - 3.2 As a representative for the PCC Cllr Townsend declared an interest in agenda item 15.3 – whether the Parish Council should take on the church grass cutting in 2026/27.
 - 3.3 The trustees for The Hub, Cllr Ham, Banks and Townsend declared an interest in agenda item 15.4 – whether the Parish Council should pay half of the hall hire for the Climate group to meet at the Hub.
 - 3.4 As a representative of the Climate group, Cllr Moulding also declared an interest in 15.4

4. **Approve the minutes from the meetings held on the 10th December 2025**

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

Vote: 7 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstention

5. **Actions arising from the minutes**

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

6. **Co-option of Councillors**

The Council currently has one vacancy which we need to fill. Councillors to spread the word and the Clerk to actively promote the role.

Action: Clerk to advertise the role.

7. **Reports from:**

- 7.1 Somerset Council – The written report had been shared with all Councillors and is displayed on the Parish Council website for perusal.
- 7.2 PCSO - The written report had been shared with all Councillors and is displayed on the Parish Council website for perusal. During December there were 2 cases of violence against person recorded.
- 7.3 Climate Action Group – Cllr Moulding explained that the group are running a lantern making workshop which can be used as part of the village Wassail ceremony which if its hoped will encourage children to become more involved in the climate group.
- 7.4 Coleford Shedders –Chris came to the meeting and said that the number of new members continues to grow. The committee from @ the Hub have made an offer to the group to extend the shed at the front of the building which the Shedders would like to accept.

The Shedders have been busy mending the tables in the Hub and have started planning the renovation of the Parish Council phone box at Careys Mead. Chris asked what colour the Council would like it painted – Parish Council to decide.

Action: Agenda item to decide what colour to paint the phone box

8. Planning Applications

8.1 2025/2250/HSE - 15 Newbury Cottages, Newbury Hill, Coleford, Radstock.

First floor extension to side elevation.

All Councillors had the opportunity to consider the plans prior to the meeting. After discussion, Cllr Evans proposed that the application be recommended for approval which was seconded by Cllr Pearce.

Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention

9. Planning updates

9.1 Planning update – The Clerk shared the spreadsheet showing which applications have been approved or refused.

9.2 Stockhill building plots – Somerset Councillors Philip Ham and Barry Clarke wrote to Somerset Planning department expressing their concern over the application and why it should be refused. A response was received stating that they have refused the application. The new owner of the plots has since been in touch to say that he has no access to the plots or parking spaces. The question is why did Somerset sell them as building plots?

9.3 There are 2 applications which will be considered at the next planning meeting

9.4 Ilos Energy – a letter has been received notifying the Council of a proposed solar development on land southwest of Cherry Garden Farm – The site is a total of 31 hectares.

Action: Clerk to contact Ilos Energy to invite them to come and give a presentation to the Council and the community so that we can understand the proposal

9.5 2025//1770/PIP - Rope Walk, Notice of Appeal – Notification of appeal has been received. A draft letter to be prepared and circulated for consideration at next meeting. The original submission from PC should accompany agreed letter at the next meeting.

10. Consider the response to the Freedom of Information request to Somerset Planning to provide information relating to how much it has cost council tax payers on the Local Plan, Limited Update for the 505

The response from Somerset Council was shared with Councillors, it stated that some of the information was not available with them as it dates back before the Unitary was formed but did give the breakdown of external costs. After discussion it was agreed that Cllr Townsend would draft a response and circulate to all for approval at next meeting.

Action: Cllr Townsend to prepare draft response

11. Highways including:

11.1 Councillor update

Cllr Townsend confirmed that the following issues were reported to Somerset Council:

- Fallen trees/hedges - good to see clearance work done at Vobster
- Highbury St - dropped drain and surround
- Charlton Lane junction - stones on road
- Halecombe - deep depressions and potholes beyond quarry entrance
- Shepton Mallet - potholes reported at Downside and Fosse Lane
- Owls Nest - long pothole reported
- Cherry Gardens Lane - potholes and edge erosion along whole length
- Charlton Rd junction with B3159 - Give Way lines invisible
- Charlton Park Road to Haydon - potholes along whole length
- It was noted that the sign at the entrance to Beacon View is bent and grubby. Cllr Townsend asked if we could get it repaired.

Action: Clerk to ask Coleford Sheddars if they could repair the sign.

11.2 Report of any new issues

- Cllr Ham to chase up Somerset Highways Engineer Sara Davies for a response to the Clerks request for appropriate sites for Speed Indicator Devices.

Action: Cllr Ham to action

- Cllr Moulding reported that there is a broken bridge on the footpath from the top of High Street / Springer Hill to Holcombe

Action: Clerk to report to Somerset Rights of Way

- Cllr Bell asked if we can press to get a reduced speed limit implemented at Newbury school. The road also needs to be resurfaced.

Action: Cllr Ham to make a request to Somerset Highways Engineer Sara Davies

- Pot hole near Glasses Farm in Holcombe

Action: Cllr Townsend to report to Somerset Highways

- Repaint request for 'Keep clear' on the road next to the old Co-op.

Action: Cllr Ham to make a request to Somerset Highways Engineer Sara Davies

- The missing no entry sign needs to be replaced at the Royal British Legion Coleford.

Action: Clerk to make a request to the RBL

- Temporary Road Closure: ttro495359E - Charlton Road, Holcombe and Coleford
The works are expected to commence on 12th February 2026 and last for 6 hours (09:30 - 15:30) to enable Openreach to carry out pole testing works.

12 Consider 2025 tree survey

Clerk to share the survey with all Councillors and seek quote to complete all of the work for presentation at the next meeting

Action: Share report and seek quotes. Agenda item for next meeting

13 Update on Community Car Scheme

After discussion it was agreed that Cllr Townsend would draft a letter to be sent to our neighbouring Parish Councils to establish if they would consider getting involved in the project and consulting their villages to see if there is the demand for the Community Car Scheme that is perceived.

Action: Share report and seek quotes. Agenda item for next meeting

14 Discuss village Christmas tree for 2026

The Parish Council was pleased to hear that the Hub committee are keen to take on the Christmas lights which had been purchased by the PC in 2024 and will use them for a village Christmas tree and community event.

15 Finance

15.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation – The Clerk had prepared the bank reconciliation which one of the Councillors will check before the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to ensure the reconciliation is checked

15.2 Discuss and agree application for funding from the Halecombe Quarry Community Fund

The Clerk proposed that the Council should submit an application for funding towards the cost of 2 new goals with integrated basket ball hoops for use in the hardcourts. Once work to level the playing field begins it will become a more valuable area for young people to play football and exercise. The total cost is likely to be in the region of £10K and match funding would be required from the Parish Council to increase the chances of the grant being awarded in full. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Swords that an application for £5K would be submitted. and the Parish Council would match fund.

Vote 11 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to seek quote and submit application. Agenda item for the next meeting

15.3 Discuss whether we should budget for a grant towards the church grass cutting in 2026/27.

When issued in August it was agreed it was a one-off award.

A request for £2700 had been requested on behalf of the PCC for the cost of cutting the church yard grass. After much discussion it was proposed by Cllr Allen and seconded by Cllr Swords that 50% of the cost namely £1350 be paid as a one-off payment for church yard grass cutting for the duration of the financial year 2026/27

Vote 6 For, 2 Against and 3 Abstention

Action: Clerk to add to the budget for 2026/27 as a grant

15.4 Consider the requests from the Climate Group for the Parish Council to pay half of the hall hire for the group to meet at the Hub

Cllrs Ham, Banks, Townsend and Moulding declared an interest and did not take part in the discussion or vote.

Cllr Pearce proposed and Cllr Bell seconded that the Parish Council should cover the cost of 6 meetings at a cost of £144 per year.

Vote 6 For, 0 Against and 4 (dec Int) plus 1 Abstention

Action: Clerk to add to the budget for 2026/27 as a grant

15.5 Consider and agree quote for installation of the new defibrillator cabinet at Kings Head Inn £70 + VAT agreed

15.6 Agree budget and precept for 2026/27

It was agreed that the Clerk would clarify the discrepancy on bottom line for 3rd Qtr review and revisit at next meeting.

Action: Clerk to check report and make an agenda item for the next meeting

15.7 Agree payment of WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliancy check @ £45.00

It was agreed that Western Web should complete the compliancy check.

Action: Clerk to notify the company

15.8 Accounts approved for payments:

The following payments were presented for payment:

V Watts – Expenses	£ 39.50
HMRC	£ 194.37
Western Web - WCAG 2.2 Level AA compliancy check	£ 54.00
Coleford Conservation Volunteers – Allotment overpayment	£ 1.00
Alvian Ltd – Goodeaves playground repairs	£3689.30
AF Denning – Installation of defibrillator at Kings head	£ 84.00
Topsy bins x 2 @ £188.32 per bin inc VAT	£ 376.65

It was agreed that all payments should be paid with electronic payments rather than by cheque. The Clerk will set up the payments which will then be authorized by Cllr Banks and Cllr Townsend.

Vote 11 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

Action: Clerk to set up the payments

The Clerk informed the Council that in conjunction with the Chairman it had been agreed that the payment of the following invoice should be paid on 23/12/25 as it was overdue from Spring 2025:

LvW Highways – Review of Highway for planning app 2024/0163	£342.00
---	---------

Vote 11 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention

15.9 Notification of monthly payments made by standing order

The following payments are made by monthly standing order:

V Watts – Salary	£1181.64
Somerset Council – Clerk Pension	£ 365.23
LSJ Gardening services – Grass Cutting	£1527.48
EDF – Electricity at the Changing Rooms	£ 33.04

16 Meetings to attend / attended

18/01/26 – Butterfly Bank Project – winter clearance and tidy up

31/01/26 – Native Nursery Tree open Morning @ Coleford Allotments next to Vobster Quay

02/02/26 – Bus Strategy meeting – Cllr Moulding to attend

Coleford Conservation Volunteers shared the programme of events

SALC Training dates – Councillors to confirm the attendance at Data Protection training

17 Correspondence

11/01/26 – Swift Nest Box Project

18 Date of Next Meetings:

28th January 2026 Planning meeting

11th February 2026 Parish Council meeting

The meeting finished 10.08pm