

# Parish Council of Coleford

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## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Present** Cllr Townsend (Acting Chairman) Allen (Part), Bell, Douglas-Burke (Part), Evans, Fisher, Moulding, Paterson and Pearce

**In attendance** 2 members of the public present  
The Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes

The Chairman, Cllr Ham had given apologies so Cllr Townsend stood in as acting Chair for the meeting.

### 1. Public Forum

1.1 Concerns were raised regarding the condition of a zebra crossing near the school on Anchor Road. Cllr Townsend confirmed that this had already been reported to the Somerset Highways. Cllr Evans stated that the other crossing was also in poor condition.

*Action: Cllr Townsend to inspect and report if appropriate.*

1.2 A parishioner asked if the Parish Council would be submitting comments to the Neighbourhood Plan Framework consultation. The Clerk confirmed that there is a Teams meeting hosted by Somerset Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 from 4pm til 5.30pm. The meeting will cover, the Local Plan, Local Transport Delivery Plan and the Connectivity Study. The Council agreed to submit comments to the consultation.

*Action: It is hoped that a Councilor will attend. Agenda item for next meeting.*

1.3 A member of the public asked if we would be speaking with the company proposing the Solar Farm at Lipyate. The Clerk explained that a letter regarding the Solar Farm proposal had been received from Tyler Hill Consulting. They would like to engage with the Council and the Parishioners to gather initial views and comments about the project. It was agreed that an invitation would be sent inviting them to the Annual Parish Meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> March.

*Action: Clerk to invite to the APM. Agenda item for APM.*

1.4 Cllr Swords would like to photograph the Coleford Allotments across the year from January to December 2026 exploring how the plots and environment change across the year. Portraits of allotment holders in their plots would be taken by consent and interviews conducted as to what they enjoy about the allotments, what they're growing, health benefits etc. This would culminate in an exhibition at the Hub, a small book and a calendar for sale at Christmas with proceeds going towards the allotments. Councilors agreed that this would be an exciting project which they all supported providing allotment holders are given the opportunity not to be included if they so wish.

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

Cllr Ham, Banks and Swords sent apologies which were accepted by the acting Chair.

*Cllr Allen arrived at the meeting 19.17hrs*

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

There were none.

### 4. Approve the minutes from the meetings held on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

The Clerk had circulated the draft minutes to all Councillors. Cllr Moulding requested that item 11.2 should be amended to show that the Wassail was organised by a group specifically formed to host the event and not the Climate Action group. It was proposed by Cllr Pearce and seconded by Cllr Allen that the amendment should be made and the minutes duly signed as they accurately reflected the meetings.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention**

### 5. Actions arising from the minutes

All actions were completed or would be dealt with as agenda items during the meeting.

### 6 Co-option of Councillors

The Clerk said there had been some interest which she would progress.

*Action: Clerk to progress*

### 7. Reports from:

7.1 Somerset Council – The written report had been shared with all Councillors and is posted on the Parish Council website for perusal. The highlights were noted as:

- Council tax increase of 4.99% were agreed after Government rejected the request of 11%
- Government had concerns over Somerset Council Finances in response to their request for a £30 million of Exceptional Financial Support.
- Government to clear 90% of Somerset SEND deficit
- Concern of the cost of potholes and the repair standards
- Devolution and Wessex spatial strategy update
- Consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework
- Have your say on Green Lane proposals
- Dog control PSPOs review and consultation
- Residents invited to shape the future of Adult social care

Somerset Cllr Barry Clarke also added that:

- Nine planning enforcement officers are being recruited at Somerset Council
- Housing grants up to £1K are available until September.
- Transport funding of £2.5m allocated for buses.
- Road improvements and surveillance by the police are being undertaken on the Frome bypass to improve road safety.

7.2 PCSO - The report from PCSO Will Mortimer had been circulated and is available on the Parish Council website. During the month of February there was 1 report of Arson and Criminal Damage, 1 Burglary, 1 Non recordable and 5 cases of Violence against the person. The report included articles on:

- Protecting animals from catapult attacks
- Fly tipping, how to report it, who responds
- How to report suspicious activities in the Countryside
- Community Speedwatch

7.3 Climate Action Group – Cllr Moulding reported that the Coleford Climate Action Group on the 28th February, had a very enjoyable and successful ‘Seed & Plant swap’. They hope for this to become an annual event.

7.4 Coleford Shedders – There was no report.

## 8. Planning Applications

### 8.1 2024/1898/REM - Land South Of Suncroft, Anchor Road, Coleford

Reserved matters approval for details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline planning permission reference 2019/2345/OTS (Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for the erection of up to 63 dwellings). (Add/amended info. rec'd 18.02.2026).

All Councillors had considered the application. It was noted that the issues with sewage disposal are considered as material planning issue and should be highlighted. Cllr Moulding asked whether a digester would be appropriate for the site. Cllr Townsend asked if Cllr Moulding could research whether other housing developments have used such systems.

The following issues are yet to be addressed: Highways, the number of parking spaces, the lighting plan, the bat corridor still has a footpath running through it and there is still no new evidence relating to the coal mining shafts – only 1 has been located from the 6 which are known to be onsite. It would be a breach of health and safety if these were not found and addressed.

It was agreed that a draft response recommending refusal would be prepared by Councilors Ham and Townsend and circulated to all Councilors for comment prior to the submission deadline.

**Vote: 8 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention**

**Action: Clerk to share the draft response and submit once agreed by email**

### 8.2 2026/0346/TPO – Oak (T1) Remove dead trunk as per photograph (M1233)

41 Beacon View, Coleford, BA3 5PE

For notification only

***Cllr Douglas-Burke left the meeting***

## 9. Planning updates

Cllr Townsend said that a further response had been received from Somerset Council regarding our recent questions via the Freedom of Information request. They confirmed that the external costs of the Mendip Local Plan Part II totaled £228,500 External costs of the Judicial Review into adoption of the Local Plan Part II £60,000 and External costs of the Mendip Costs of the Mendip Local Plan Limited update £80,500 making a total £369,000. However, the Council have stated that they are not able to provide the internal costs. The Councillors were asked to read the full report and notify the Clerk if they felt there were any issues that needed to be raised.

It was noted that Coleford Parish Council had notified Somerset Council that there were sufficient developments to meet the 505 houses without the need of another call for sites.

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

## 10. Consider the draft of the Emergency plan

Cllr Moulding asked whether we should seek volunteers from each street within the village to complete CPR training to act as a first response contact in the event of an emergency. It was agreed that this would be raised as a topic at the Annual meeting of the parish.

**Action: Agenda item for the Annual Parish Meeting**

Cllr Townsend said that he had shared the current draft of the emergency plan with Mendip Country Practice for comment.

## **11. Highways including:**

### **11.1 Councillor update**

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

- Highbury St - Glen View sunk drain/pothole
- Lipyate - Hill Farm to Lipyate House - numerous edge erosions/potholes
- Cherry Gardens Lane - north of Lipyate Farmhouse - numerous edge erosions/potholes
- Dark Lane - north of Luckington Manor Farmhouse - numerous edge erosions/potholes
- Dark Lane - south of Luckington Manor Farmhouse - potholes and flooding
- Anchor Rd - Pedestrian crossing - hastener sent as it has deteriorated

Other issues:

- Road closure at Stockhill - 2 issues - at junction of Newbury Lane and Highbury St - Somerset Highways were requested to place No Waiting signs so HGVs from Newbury Works would have room to turn right. Also, the signage of Road Closed Ahead coming into Coleford was placed the village side of the Vobster Inn without saying where it was closed so vehicles were going past it up to Stockhill to the closure then having to turn round in the narrow lane. Somerset Highways were asked to correct the misplacement and sign proper Diversion route.
- Preachers Vale - assurance obtained from National Grid that their works there will not require any power cuts.

The Clerk read out a road closure notice for Lipyate from Bristol Water which is due to take place on 31<sup>st</sup> March for 3 days. Emergency vehicles or buses will not be given access. The diversion showed that traffic would be expected to use Church Street which everyone agreed was not acceptable and should be taken up with Somerset Highways.

***Action: Cllr Townsend to contact Somerset Highways to ask for traffic lights rather than closure.***

### **11.2 Report of any new issues**

The deep pot hole on Vobster Hill as you approach Stockhill needs repair. Cllr Townsend said that this has already reported but would continue to flag.

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

## **12 Update on Community Car Scheme**

A Community Car Scheme meeting will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> March from 3pm to 5pm in the Committee Rooms at Shape Offices in Shepton Mallet. This will be a hybrid meeting which will also be available to attend via Teams and will cover:

- 1 Actions and updates following last meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- 2 Mapping of transport schemes
- 3 Clarification of relationship between transport bodies
- 4 Coordination of support for Community car set up
- 5 Next steps and actions

It was agreed that in the absence of a Councillor being able to attend that a member of the public or representative from Mendip Country Practice would attend the meeting.

***Action: Confirm who will attend the meeting***

## **13 Review the decision for the colour of the Careys Mead telephone**

Due to a miscount of votes at the last meeting, the votes received from the members of the public were recounted along with the Parish Council which were now unanimously in favour of the telephone box being repainted red.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention**

***Action: Clerk to notify the Menshed who will complete the renovation work***

## 14 Finance

14.1 Agree Bank Reconciliation – The February bank reconciliation was agreed.

14.2 Consider quote for wood chipper for the use at the allotment during tree work  
A quote of £260 was presented from Somerset Hire for a tracked chipper for a weekend. It was proposed by Cllr Bell and seconded by Cllr Pearce that the quote be accepted for use at the Coleford Allotment during the tree work.

**Vote: 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention**

*Action: Clerk to arrange hire*

14.3 Accounts approved for payments:  
The following payments were presented for payment:

V Watts – Expenses	£53.46
SALC Intro to AI for Clerk	£45.00

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 either Cllrs Banks, Evans, Ham or Townsend.

**Vote 9 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstention**

*Action: Clerk to set up the payments for approval*

14.4 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

## 15 Meetings to attend / attended

10/03/26 from 3 – 5pm – Community Car scheme. On Teams & Committee Rooms, Shepton.  
11/03/26 @ 10am - Halecombe Quarry Liaison & Community Fund meeting  
11/03/26 @ 3pm - Wainwrights Quarry Liaison & Community Fund meeting  
11/03/26 @ 5.30pm - Torr Quarry Liaison & Community Fund meeting  
13/03/26 @ 10am – Virtual meeting South West Allotment Society  
22/03/26 10am – 3pm Coleford Conservation Volunteers Village Planter Project – meeting at the Highbury Playing Field  
27/04/26 Time and venue TBC - Shepton LCN

## 16 Correspondence

27/02/26 – Pennys have confirmed that they have found an appropriate site which should be ready to start at the end of March. Fencing will need to be erected at the playing field ahead of work starting. It was agreed that a meeting would be called with Pennys to discuss the process before the work starts.

*Action: Clerk to arrange the meeting*

03/03/26 – Email from a resident in response to notice that Pennys will be starting work. The points will be addressed at the meeting with Pennys and the resident will be kept informed.

*Action: Clerk acknowledge receipt and*

**17 Date of Next Meetings:**

21<sup>st</sup> March 2026 Annual Litter Pick @ 10am meeting at Highbury playing field car park.

*Action: Clerk to liaise with Wainwrights regarding the arrangements for the litter pick*

25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 Annual meeting of the Parish & Planning meeting

8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 Parish Council meeting

The meeting finished 9.00pm