

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE PARISH OF COLEHILL - 2025

At the Annual Parish Meeting of COLEHILL PARISH held via at Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre (The Reef) on 8 April 2025, at 6.00pm.

IN ATTENDANCE – 20 residents including Cllr Clare Davison.

As the Chair of the Council Cllr Clare Davison was in attendance, she Chaired the meeting. She welcomed everybody to the Annual Parish Meeting and pointed out that this was not a Council meeting, but a meeting of residents.

CHAIRS REPORT

“This Annual Report is designed to give you an overview of the good things that the Council has achieved as well as some of the challenges in the pipeline. In his Chair’s speech in 2011, KD talked about community and the importance of fostering and strengthening a spirit of community here in Colehill. I know that view still stands with the Council today. So how have we done?

I do believe that collectively we have continued to be forward thinking in promoting the interests and well-being of the people of Colehill where we can. We have recognised that we need to do more to promote the work of the Parish Council and to public consciousness with positive stories. To this end, we continue to be proactive in keeping our website and noticeboards up to date and in good order.

In reviewing my record of the events and meetings that I have attended as part of my duties as Chair, I see these have included attendances at ‘The big Conversation’ held by Dorset Council in Wimborne; a forum to discuss future proposals for Parish Councils at Corfe Mullen; the Civic Day in Wimborne; zoom training sessions; the Remembrance Service at Wimborne Minster and at the War Memorial in Colehill; and the Council drop-in session – to pick out just a few. These events have always provided me with a valuable opportunity to meet up with fellow Councillors and Chairs of other parishes to explore new avenues to develop our work.

Some of our most successful projects and events this year have included: the joyous Children’s Christmas Party, held in the village hall, with Cllr Nigel Bridle as Father Christmas; the success of our tree giveaways and the support the Library gave us with the most recent giveaway; the significant and ongoing improvements to Olivers Park and The Dirt (where significant sums of money have been invested); the wild flower verge planting (as part of our bio-diversity strategy); the continued success of our Blister Pack recycling scheme; the Council Conservation and Litter pick day; the Christmas tree light up at St Michael’s Church and the Remembrance Sunday in Colehill. The list of such events and projects is extensive and as I write this Report we are making plans to mark the VE Day celebrations with a Parish Council Quiz and Beacon Lighting providing two further opportunities for the Council to engage with its parishioners and particularly its young people.

There are many other updates I could share. Ongoing work continues around more routine but essential work regarding the maintenance of our street furniture; bus shelters; the grit boxes; the defibrillators; the telephone kiosk in Dales Drive and the War Memorial which was given a deep clean this year.

There is no doubt in my mind that the public do look to the Parish Council for support and guidance, particularly when it comes to planning and highways issues. The ongoing and upcoming developments around us and within the parish are clearly deeply affecting parishioners. The proposal for an Aldi supermarket at Canford Bottom is a case in point.

Serious concerns around planning and highways that are raised when the public attends our planning meetings include: the visual appearance of new developments; the retention of green spaces; overdevelopment; risks to public safety - and increased and speeding traffic.

The Council has played its small part in the planning process as a consultee, meeting regularly to discuss planning applications. We believe we have contributed to refusals and rethinks by the Council's Planning Officers. However, we remain dismayed that so often planning notices fail to be appropriately displayed and we continue to play our part in bringing this to the attention of Planning Case Officers. While we may not always achieve the outcomes we hope for, we remain committed to representing the best interests of our village.

We have had some success with highway issues following persistent follow-up to the relevant authorities by Council members. These include the reduction in the speed limit on Northleigh Lane and the improvements to Beaucroft Lane after a long period of road closure. We have been proactive in ensuring that public views are sought before any proposals to implement 20mph speed limits are adopted. We use data provided by SID, our Speed Indicator Device, to inform our views.

An enormous amount of time and effort goes into ensuring our Council woodland is maintained safely and is storm resistant. We have always provided a rapid response to any issues raised to ensure the woodlands under our protection remain safe. We know from feedback from residents that these woodlands are a valued community asset. I am very grateful to those Councillors who regularly inspect our open spaces and playgrounds to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and in line with current legal requirements. This takes time to do.

The Council's finances are managed carefully by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. A very detailed discussion takes place at Council meetings around the Precept and the Council's expenditure. This Committee has also been instrumental in ensuring that the Council's policies, procedures and risk assessments remain fit for purpose. This work is detailed and time-consuming and I am grateful to the Committee for its input. A significant proportion of our income is redistributed in the form of grants to local organisations and we remain committed to supporting various local groups through grants where we can. The full details of these are in the more detailed Report.

Sadly, this year we lost one of our valued Councillors, Michael Gibbs, to a sudden illness. We have missed his contribution to the work of the Council particularly as Chair of Highways and the Environment and his representation on the Fair Trade group. Four Council members were able to attend his funeral at the Woodland Burial Ground and I was pleased to be able to pay tribute to his considerable contribution as a Councillor.

The good news is that 2 additional Councillors have joined us this year and we look forward to working with them to take forward our plans for 2025/6.

We are also delighted that one of our Councillors – Cllr Andy Todd - is now 'twin-hatted' and able to keep us in touch with developments at Dorset Council level particularly around the Local Plan.

Finally, I am grateful to Zoe, our Clerk, and her Deputy, Emma, for their dedication to the work of the Council and their commitment to Colehill. Much of their work goes unnoticed and it's not unusual for them to be called up at late notice to deal with an emergency.

My thanks to the members of the Council who give up so much of their time making things happen and particularly to those that serve as Parish Council representatives on several local management committees and interest groups including The Reef, our local Youth and Community Group, where we are committed to remaining at the core of this important feature for the young people of Colehill.

Thank you for your support. It's a privilege to serve as Chair."

MINUTES The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 April 2024, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

GRANT AID RECIPIENTS REPORTS

Representatives from the following organisations attended and gave verbal reports in what has been happening in their group over the last year and what their grant aid money has been spent on:

Colehill Community Library
Planet Wimborne
Colehill Girl Guides
Citizens Advice Bureau
Colehill Village Hall
Colehill and Wimborne Youth and Community Centre

MATTERS RAISED BY PARISH RESIDENTS – OPEN FORUM

One resident raised an issue with drug use in Colehill recently as well as shoplifting. Cllr Davison explained that she will link the resident with the Dorset Councillor Andy Todd.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 7:27 pm.