

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF THE PARISH OF COLEHILL - 2026

At the Annual Town Meeting of COLEHILL PARISH held via at Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre (The Reef) on 7 April 2026, at 6.00pm.

IN ATTENDANCE – 14 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 Town Meeting and pointed out that this was not a Council meeting, but a meeting of residents.

MINUTES The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 April 2025, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

CHAIRS REPORT

“As Chair, it is always a privilege to reflect on the work of the council and the community we serve. Over the past year we have seen both challenges and achievements, and it is worth taking a moment to recognise the efforts of everyone who contributes to the life of our town.

I am a fan of the BBC series *Villages by the Sea*, presented by Ben Robinson, which explores the history of coastal communities around the United Kingdom. One of the themes that comes through clearly is that while landscapes and industries shape a place, it is ultimately the people — and their resilience over time — that define it.

That observation feels particularly relevant to Colehill. Many residents care deeply about the place where they live. They value its character and environment, and they are understandably protective of what remains of the Green Belt and their immediate environment. Because of this, proposals for change can sometimes generate strong views.

When residents come to speak at our meetings, many are stepping outside their comfort zone. Public speaking is not something most people do regularly, and council meetings can feel formal and unfamiliar. Often residents have spent a great deal of time preparing what they want to say. It is therefore important that we listen respectfully, even when we may not agree with the points being made. Maintaining that respectful atmosphere is essential if we are to retain public confidence in the council and in our decision-making.

Looking ahead, the council will continue to face a number of challenges particularly around the Local Plan. Addressing those challenges will require us to work together constructively and to remain focused on our shared objective of serving the community.

I would like to thank the Clerk and her Deputy. They deal with a constant flow of enquiries from residents and work extremely hard behind the scenes to ensure that meetings, events and day-to-day operations run smoothly. Their work is very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank fellow councillors for the time and commitment they give to the role and their support to me as Chair. It is not always an easy responsibility. I am particularly grateful to those councillors who chair committees or represent the council on external organisations and boards. However, every councillor contributes to the work of the council, and its effectiveness depends on that collective effort.

Over the past year there have been several positive developments.

One recent success has been the cricket club initiative, which has attracted an encouraging level of interest and participation from the local community.

Our VE Day/Lamps of Peace event was also a very moving occasion and demonstrated how community events can bring residents together to reflect and commemorate our shared history. The work of Emma to inscribe the name of every serviceman on a candle was a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made. The involvement of local schoolchildren and The Reef youth club added to the sense of occasion.

In September 2025 the council achieved the **Silver Local Council Award**. This is an important milestone. It recognises strong governance, transparency, community engagement and a commitment to continuous improvement. It demonstrates that the council operates well beyond the basic legal requirements in the way it serves residents and manages public resources.

Another significant step was the decision in December 2025 to rebrand from **Colehill Parish Council** to **Colehill Town Council**. This better reflects the size and character of the community and helps reinforce Colehill's identity as a town. It also supports our aim of maintaining the important Green Belt separation between Colehill and neighbouring areas such as Wimborne and Ferndown, while strengthening our ability to have a voice on our future.

The council has also continued to invest in community facilities and public spaces. Improvements have been made to areas such as Oliver's Park, including the installation of new play equipment and the Fields in Trust plaque. We have also funded improvements to paths and benches and have used the Community Infrastructure Levy funding to support projects that benefit residents. Our Dales Drive Telephone Box library has been a great success.

Community engagement remains a priority. During the year we have held councillor drop-in sessions, supported community and seasonal events, and worked with local youth groups and conservation initiatives, including litter-picking activities and our 'bulbs for verges' initiative.

Finally, the council continues to support local organisations through grants and other assistance. This includes community groups, charities and local events, as well as valued facilities such as the village hall and the library.

All of this reflects the continuing commitment of the council to supporting and strengthening the community we serve. I would like to thank councillors, staff, volunteers and residents for their contributions over the past year, and I look forward to continuing that work together in the year ahead.

Thank you."

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:

Planet Wimborne
Colehill Community Library
Colehill Girl Guides
Citizens Advice Bureau
Colehill Cricket Club

Colehill and Wimborne Youth and Community Centre

MATTERS RAISED BY PARISH RESIDENTS – OPEN FORUM

No items were raised.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 7:01 pm.