



2023 – 2024 Annual Report

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COUNCIL DETAILS

Members

As at 31st March 2024, the Council is constituted as follows:

Cllr Nigel Bridle (*Chair*)
Cllr Clare Davison (*Highways, Planning and the Environment Committee Chair*)
Cllr Ann Edwards
Cllr Leslie Gibson (*Vice Chair*) (*Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair*)
Cllr KD Johnson
Cllr Mark Keniston
Cllr Ken Murgatroyd
Cllr Andrew Todd (*Finance and General Purposes Committee Vice Chair*)
Cllr Emma Urquhart
Cllr Janet Dover
Cllr Michael Gibbs (*Highways, Planning and the Environment Committee Vice Chair*)

As at 31st March 2024, the Council has 5 vacancies and has continued efforts to recruit new councillors through campaigns on its website and social media. The Council also held an open morning on 23rd March as an opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a councillor to speak to current councillors about the role.

Meetings

Full Council meetings and Committee meetings are held on Tuesday evenings in the Betty Webster committee room, Colehill Village Hall. Full Council meetings take place every other month. Meetings of the Highways, Plans & the Environment Committee are approximately every 5 weeks and meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee are approximately every 6 to 7 weeks.

All agendas are published on the Council's website and on a local noticeboard. The Council's website includes a full list of meeting dates for the year along with contact details for the Clerk should a member of the public wish to make representations at a meeting. The full calendar of meeting dates is also published on 7 local noticeboards.

Staff & administration

The Council has 1 full time member of staff, Zoe Caddy, Clerk to the Council and one part time Assistant Clerk, Emma Cross.

The Clerk is home based with both landline and mobile numbers published on the Council's website on which she is contactable from 8.30 to 12.30pm Monday to Friday. The Assistant Clerk works between home and an office at The Reef Community Centre.

Councillor responsibilities

To ensure the effective running of the Council, the Council allocates a number of individual councillors / Officers to specific duties. Individuals in these positions report any issues or concerns back to the Council. This year the roles were appointed to the following councillors:

Parish Rights of Way Liaison Officer	Cllr Clare Davison Deputy – Cllr KD Johnson
Parish Tree Warden	Cllr Nigel Bridle Deputy – Cllr Emma Urquhart
Parish Traveller Communities Liaison Officer	Cllr Nigel Bridle
Historic Environment Liaison Officer	Cllr Emma Urquhart
School Liaison Representative	Cllr Emma Urquhart
Press Officer	Cllr Leslie Gibson
Editorial Board	Cllr Leslie Gibson Clerk
Speed Indicator Device Volunteers	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Leslie Gibson

St Michael's Dirt Inspectors	Cllr Michael Gibbs Cllr Emma Urquhart
Oliver's Park Play Area Inspectors	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Leslie Gibson Clerk
Bench Inspectors	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Emma Urquhart Cllr Michael Gibbs Cllr Clare Davison Cllr Leslie Gibson
Grit bin Inspectors	Clerk Cllr Nigel Bridle Cllr Michael Gibbs Cllr Leslie Gibson Cllr KD Johnson

Website & social media

The Council has a website (www.colehill.gov.uk) and a Facebook page which are maintained and updated by the Clerk and Cllr Leslie Gibson in his capacity as Press Officer. The website and Facebook page are used to update residents on the Council's activities and to provide key information about the Parish.

Councillor details

Each councillor has a profile page on the Council website which includes their Council email address and a telephone/home address where they have consented for such details to be publicised. Councillor profile pages also include a link to their register of interests available on the Dorset Council website.

Policies & Procedures

Copies of the Council's policies are published on the Council's website and are reviewed in accordance with a review cycle. Policy reviews are led by Cllr KD Johnson and Cllr Leslie Gibson who make recommendations to the Council or reviewing sub-committee on any amendments.

PLANNING MATTERS

Colehill Parish Council are a 'statutory consultee' for planning applications. This means Dorset Council as our local planning authority must inform us of any planning applications affecting our parish and take our views into account when making decisions on those planning applications.

The Council reviews all planning applications received and, if considered appropriate, will submit comments to the Planning Officer in the same way that any individual may do via Dorset Council's planning site.

In most cases Dorset Council no longer directly notify residents of planning applications submitted by their neighbours, and the Council is also aware that the site notices issued by Dorset Council are not always displayed correctly. Consequently, to help improve transparency for Parish residents, the Council has established a page on the Council's website to share details of all planning applications received with links to the Dorset Council website for residents to submit comments should they wish to.

Where consultation timescales allow, the Council schedules planning applications for discussion at the next appropriate meeting, normally a meeting of the Highways, Plans & the Environment Committee (HPE) where residents can attend to discuss applications with councillors.

During 2023/24 the Council considered 75 planning applications, 62 of which were passed, 8 refused and 5 withdrawn. The Council objected to 6 applications which went on to get approved and supported 3 applications which were refused.

COMMITTEES

Highways, Plans & the Environment Committee

Highways, Plans & the Environment Committee meets approximately 10 times a year and considers matters relating to: Highways including highways safety; street furniture; Planning including undertaking the council's role as a statutory consultee for planning applications; matters relating to Tree Preservation Orders; Environment including: climate emergency actions, land management plans for Council owned land. Residents are invited to contact the Clerk if they would like a specific planning application discussed.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Finance and General Purposes Committee meets approximately 7 times a year and recommends to the Council the management of the Parish Council's finances, authorises payment of accounts, prepares the Council's budget, recommends to Council any revisions and extensions of its financial policy, considers grant applications and considers all matters not falling within the province of other Committees.

COUNCIL ASSETS

The Parish Council owns several areas of woodland, known as Triangle Wood, Kyrchil Corner, Coombes Wood and Merrifield Corner. These areas are maintained by Councillor KD Johnson, together with a small number of volunteers. Conservation workdays are held regularly throughout the year and volunteers are always needed.

Triangle Wood is the largest area and is well used by dog walkers and children. It lies between Colehill Lane, Smugglers Lane and Wimborne Road. The other three woods, although not as large as Triangle Wood, all contribute to the amenity and wildlife, particularly as they lie beside rights of way. The trees are regularly inspected by an arboriculturist, who highlights any tree work that is required.

Kyrchil Corner is located at Kyrchil Way, almost opposite the Co-op in Middlehill Road, Coombes Wood is in Smugglers Lane, next to the Vicarage, and Merrifield Corner is by Smugglers Lane, almost opposite the Vicarage. St Michael's Dirt is located at Coombes Wood.

The Council carries out ongoing professional tree inspections and tree works as per the Woodland Risk Assessment and in response to any concerns raised.

Coombes Wood

Address: off Smugglers Lane, Colehill
Ownership: Owned, title number DT285722
Usage: Trails for BMX & mountain bikes

Kyrchil Corner

Address: off Kyrchill Way, Colehill
Ownership: Owned, title number DT285722
Usage: Open space

Merrifield Wood

Address: off Smugglers Lane, Colehill
Ownership: Owned, title number DT285722
Usage: Open space

Triangle Wood

Address: Triangular woodland surrounded by Colehill Lane, Wimborne Road and Middlehill Road, Colehill
Ownership: Owned, title number DT285722
Usage: Open space

Churchmoor Copse

Address: off Cutlers Place, Colehill

Ownership: Owned, title number DT336183

Usage: Semi-ancient woodland

- This year the paths within Churchmoor Copse have undergone maintenance work to improve their definition.

Oliver's Park Field & Play area

Address: off Cutlers Place, Colehill

Ownership: Field owned and play area is leased from Dorset Council, title number DT336183

Usage: Field and play area

- The Council has continued to undertake inspections of the playground equipment as per the Oliver's Park Risk Assessment.
- This year the Council received a donation of a noticeboard which the Council refurbished and had installed in Oliver's Park.
- One of the Council's biggest achievements of the year has been its work to refurbish Oliver's Park Playground. The Council undertook a public consultation on what equipment should be installed in the playground through the website and face-to-face discussions in schools. The works took place in February 2024 and the Playground was reopened the same month.
- This year the Council planted a wild flower bed which has been very well received by residents.



Wimborne Cemetery

During this year the Council decided to cease involvement in the Wimborne Cemetery JMC as it was recognised that management by one Council going forward would enable more efficiency and Wimborne Town Council were in a better position to do so due to its geographic location and their resources. An agreement was reached regarding resident internment rates.

Benches

The Council has 14 public benches positions around the parish. This year the Council has undertaken maintenance including on the following benches: Oliver's Park, Wimborne Rd West and Pharmacy.

Noticeboards

The Council maintains 7 noticeboards throughout the Parish to ensure that residents, who may not use social media, can be kept up to date with local events and Council meetings. This year the Council replaced a dilapidated and rotten noticeboard at Leigh Lane with a custom made oak noticeboard.



War Memorial

The Council has a war memorial at Fiveways at the end of Triangle Woods which it maintains and is used in Remembrance Sunday Services.

Speed Indicator Device

The Council owns and maintains a Speed Indicator Device which is moved between three locations.

Dales Drive Telephone Box

This year the Council adopted a telephone box on Dales Drive. The Council held a public consultation through its website and promoted on social media to allow local residents to decide what the telephone box should be used for going forward. Residents decided that the telephone box should be used as a book library. The Council is now seeking contractors to undertake the required work to convert it.



FINANCES

Accounts

The Council's opening balance for 2023/2024 was £199,831. During the financial year the Council was in receipt of a total income of £191,816. The total expenditure for 2023/2024 was £289,002, leaving a closing balance of £102,645

Spending was broadly in line with budget planning save for money spent on the Oliver's Park Playground refurbishment which was paid for from reserves.

Precept

The Precept is the figure which a town or parish Council ask the local authority to collect from their residents alongside the Council tax.

During 2023/24 the precept was £125,534.19. The Council has reviewed the precept and resolved that it will be £127,500 for 2024/25.

COMMUNITY

Grants

During 2023/24, the following grants and payments were made by the Council in response to applications submitted by organisations.

Organisation	Sum awarded
Colehill Community Library	11,000.00
Streetlight Project	1,000.00
Colehill Village Hall	10,000.00
Hayeswood First School Association	150.00
Planet Wimborne	75.00
Vision Wimborne Dial-a-ride	500.00
Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck	4,500.00



Community Bus

The Council jointly funds the Number 88 Community Bus service with Wimborne Minster Town Council. The service runs on Tuesday, Thursdays and Fridays and provides a circular route linking Colehill with Wimborne, Kingston Lacy and Sturminster Marshall. This year the Council contributed £3,472.50.

The Council part funds this service because the route services roads within Colehill which aren't served by any other bus routes.

Councillor Representatives

The Council has representatives on a number of local management committees and interest groups which both ensures that the Council is kept up to date of the needs of the local community and provides support to these organisations. This year the representatives have been:

Wimborne Cemetery Joint Management Committee	Cllr Nigel Bridle Cllr Emma Urquhart
East Dorset Environment Partnership	Cllr Clare Davison Deputy – Cllr Emma Urquhart
The Greathed Charity Trustees	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Emma Urquhart
DAPTC – Eastern Area Committee & Larger Councils Committee	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Andy Todd
Wimborne and District PACT Panel	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Ken Murgatroyd
Village Hall Management Committee	Cllr Ann Edwards
Fairtrade Representative	Cllr Michael Gibbs
Colehill Community Library	Cllr Nigel Bridle Cllr Andy Todd
Wimborne History Festival	Cllr Emma Urquhart
Home Watch Representative	Cllr KD Johnson

The Reef, Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre

Towards the end of 2022 a proposal was made by the previous trustees of The Reef to consider if the Council we would consider taking over running the building and the associated youth club, as the previous trustees wanted to retire. The Council agreed to this with effect from 31st March 2023 and, during the course of this year, has obtained legal advice on the transfer of the charity and the running of the charity as a separate entity to the Council.

The Council is the sole member of the charity and currently appoints 5 Councillors to act as the charity trustees and as directors to manage The Reef.

The Reef is a modern building, with great facilities, and provides many exciting opportunities to improve the range of youth activities for Colehill, Wimborne and the surrounding area, as well as providing additional services and facilities for our wider community.



Defibrillator

The Council maintains two defibrillators which are positioned at The Reef Community Centre and One Stop for use by local residents.

Library Christmas Tree

The Council Chair choose to use part of the Chair's Allowance budget to purchase a rooted Christmas tree to be installed outside the library.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Resident's Christmas Party

The Council once again organised a Christmas party for residents which was held on 20th December 2023 at Colehill Village Hall and was attended by 65 local children along with family members. The annual party has become a key event in the local calendar.

To ensure that local residents benefit from this event the Council sells tickets from Colehill Library rather than online. The party provides a low-cost Christmas event for primary school aged children at which each child receives a food box, a present from Santa and gets to enjoy entertainment.

Remembrance Sunday

The Council marked Remembrance Sunday with a parade and service from St Michael's church to the Colehill War Memorial. The service was attended by St Michael's Church Representatives, uniformed groups, school representatives, civic services representatives and Councillors. It is an important opportunity for the local community to come together to mark Remembrance Sunday.



Coronation Party – 8th May 2023

The Council organised an event held at The Reef Youth & Community Centre to celebrate the coronation. The event was aimed at children with entertainment from Jamie Jigsaw and was very popular with local residents.

Coronation celebrations

In addition to our Coronation Party, the Council also held a very well attended quiz night at the village hall and provided free party packs to groups holding street parties across the Parish.



ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



Blister pack recycling project

This year the Council commenced a blister pack recycling project to enable local residents to recycle blister packs which cannot be recycled with household recycling. The boxes are situated at The Reef being a location where residents can pull up easily to drop their recycling off.

Tree giveaway

On 25th November 2023, the Council held a tree giveaway providing trees to residents free of charge to plant on the verge outside their properties.



Bird and bat boxes

This year the Council has installed 14 bird boxes around the Colehill Memorial Hall and 7 bat boxes within the Copse at Four Wells Road where there is extensive bat activity. The Council has also given 3 bug hotels to local schools.