



2024 – 2025 Annual Report

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CHAIR'S REMARKS



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 North Leigh 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.

COUNCIL DETAILS

Members

As at 31st March 2025, the Council is constituted as follows:

Cllr Clare Davison (*Chair*) (*Highways, Planning and the Environment Committee Chair*)
Cllr Nigel Bridle
Cllr Ann Edwards
Cllr Leslie Gibson (*Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair*)
Cllr KD Johnson (*Vice Chair*)
Cllr Mark Keniston
Cllr Ken Murgatroyd (*Highways, Planning and the Environment Committee Vice Chair*)
Cllr Andrew Todd
Cllr Emma Urquhart (*Finance and General Purposes Committee Vice Chair*)
Cllr Patricia Gray
Cllr Susan Cowsill
Cllr Carol Butter
Cllr Richard Palmer

The Council would like to give special mention to Cllr Michael Gibbs who was a serving councillor when he very sadly passed away on 9th September 2024.

As at 31st March 2025, the Council has 3 vacancies and has continued efforts to recruit new councillors through campaigns on its website and social media and has had 2 co-opted members join this year. The Council also held an open morning on 26th March at Colehill Village Hall 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 Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Emma Urquhart Cllr Clare Davison
Speed Indicator Device Volunteers	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Leslie Gibson Cllr Nigel Bridle
St Michael's Dirt Inspectors	Cllr Clare Davison Cllr Susan Cowsill Clerk
Oliver's Park Play Area Inspectors	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Leslie Gibson Cllr Susan Cowsill Clerk
Bench Inspectors	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Emma Urquhart Cllr Clare Davison Cllr Leslie Gibson Cllr Susan Cowsill
Grit bin Inspectors	Clerk Cllr Nigel Bridle Cllr Leslie Gibson Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Susan Cowsill Cllr Urquhart

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.

The Council currently maintains 47 governance documents which are reviewed annually. In this year the Council has identified the need for and introduced the following new policies; Biodiversity & Environment, Equality & Diversity, Community Engagement and a Scheme of Delegation.

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 2024/25 the Council considered 40 planning applications, of which we objected to 10. During the same period Dorset Council passed 36 applications, 4 of which we had objected to, and refused 3 in accordance with our feedback.

ROAD SAFETY MATTERS

We know that road safety is important to our residents, both as pedestrians and road users. We act as a voice for the community, reporting issues to the highway authority and suggesting improvements.

Speed Indicator Device

We own and maintain a Speed Indicator Device (SID) which is moved regularly between three locations: Middlehill Road, Leigh Road and Wimborne Road. The SID captures data on the speed of vehicles which is shared with the police to inform their speed camera operations. We know from evidence provided from Dorset Council that the SID is effective at reducing traffic speed. This year we updated the solar panel installed at the Leigh Road site.

Pedestrian Crossings

We continue to liaise with Dorset Council to seek the installation of pedestrian crossing points at two locations on Middlehill Road, near Lonnen Road and near Cutlers Place. These locations were chosen following a public consultation in 2022, and have been assessed by Dorset Council as feasible sites based on road and pedestrian numbers.

20 mph Schemes

This year we consulted with the community on a 20mph scheme proposed for Burt's Hill and were successful in getting the scheme amended to reflect residents' feedback.

We know that our residents are particularly concerned about road safety in the vicinity of our schools and are currently engaging with Dorset Council to seek appropriate solutions that will make these areas safer.

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

The Council has continued to maintain Triangle Wood including the cutting back of vegetation which was encroaching on the pavement along Wimborne Road.

Churchmoor Copse

Address: off Cutlers Place, Colehill
Ownership: Owned, title number DT336183
Usage: Semi-ancient woodland

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.
- The Council has again planted a wild flower bed which has been very well received by residents.
- Installation of additional play bark

- Installation of a slide side panel.
- Filling in of holes under the table tennis table

The Council has re-established a working group to research and advise on any proposed projects and improvements to Olivers Park.

Benches

The Council has 14 public benches positioned around the parish which is maintains regularly.

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.



War Memorial

The Council has a war memorial at the junction of Colehill Lane and Wimborne Road which it maintains and is used in Remembrance Sunday Services. This year the Council engaged a contractor to carry out a deep clean of the memorial to ensure its preservation.

Dales Drive Telephone Box

The Council previously 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 has undertaken repair and redecoration works to the phone box and is now seeking a contractor to construct built in shelves to enable it to be used for books.



FINANCES

Accounts

The Council's opening balance for 2024/2025 was £102,645.25. During the financial year the Council was in receipt of a total income of £188,749.23. The total expenditure for 2024/2025 was £164,876.49, leaving a closing balance of £126,517.99.

Spending was broadly in line with budget planning.

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 2024/25 the precept was £127,500. The Council has reviewed the precept and resolved that it will be £138,500 for 2025/26 which is £45.51 for an average band D property and results in the average household paying an additional £3.20 compared to this year.

COMMUNITY

Grants

During 2024/25, the following grants and payments were made by the Council in response to applications submitted by organisations.

Organisation	Sum awarded
Colehill Community Library	£13,334.64
Colehill Village Hall	£12,000.00
Hayeswood First School Association	£1,000.00
Planet Wimborne	£100.00
Vision Wimborne Dial-a-ride	£500.00
Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck	£4,500.00
Colehill First School Association	£1,000
Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre	£5,000
Colehill Guides	£168.00



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 £4,500.00.

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

Councillor Representatives

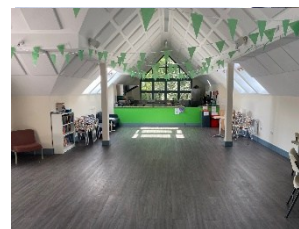
The Council has representatives on a number of local management committees and interest groups which both ensures that the Council is kept up to date of the needs of the local community and provides support to these organisations. This year the representatives have been:

East Dorset Environment Partnership	Cllr Clare Davison Deputy – Cllr Emma Urquhart
The Greathed Charity Trustees	Cllr KD Johnson Cllr Andy Todd
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 Cllr Emma Urquhart
Fairtrade Representative	Cllr KD Johnson
Colehill Community Library	Cllr Nigel Bridle Cllr Susan Cowsill
Wimborne History Festival	Cllr Emma Urquhart
Home Watch Representative	Cllr KD Johnson
Wimborne & Corfe Mullen Joint Working Group (new for 2024/25)	Cllr Emma Urquhart
Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre	Cllr Ann Edwards Cllr Carol Butter

The Reef, Colehill & Wimborne Youth & Community Centre

The Council is the sole member of the charity and currently appoints 4 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.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Resident's Christmas Party

The Council once again organised a Christmas party for residents which was held on 21st December 2024 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.

Councillor Drop in

On 26th March the Council held a councillor drop in at the Colehill Village Hall to both provide an opportunity for local residents to speak to members about any local issues they have and also enable anyone thinking about becoming a councillor to come and find out more information.



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.



D-DAY Landings 80th Anniversary

On 6th June the Council commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings with one of our residents, Mr Andy Urquhart, playing the last post and reveille at the Colehill War Memorial.



ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY



Blister pack recycling project

Following the success of this project when it was introduced last year, the Council has continued to fund 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 8th February, the Council held a tree giveaway providing trees to residents free of charge to plant on the verge outside their properties. This event was held alongside the Colehill Library book sale and also provided an opportunity for local residents to speak to members of the Council about any local issues.

Free Trees for Colehill Residents



As part of our action plan for the Climate Emergency, Colehill Parish Council are offering free trees to Colehill residents.

Collect from Colehill Library
2pm to 4pm Sat 8th February
(max 1 tree per household)

Raising alongside
Colehill Library
12th B'n-Holy
Handbook Sale
Buffs - Art and
craft stall - Audio
Tasty Tasty Cakes -
For a donation
to local charities
Shedding 10000



See the Council Council web site for further details www.colehill.gov.uk



Wild flower bed planting

During the works at Oliver's Play Park last year a strip of grass was churned up which gave rise to the idea of creating a wild flower bed that has been a huge success. The Council has again planted this flower bed this year along with a number of others which local residents have commented positively on.

Conservation day

As part of the Council's ongoing work to maintain the Parish, on 8th March the Council held a conservation and litter pick morning at Triangle Wood.

Litter Pick and Conservation Morning



On Saturday 8th March at Triangle Wood

Gloves, high viz vests, litter pickers
and sacks will be provided
Bring a full water/drink bottle

Meet at 10.30am at St Michael's
Middle School lay-by
Stay for as long as you like, but we finish
at 1pm.



Supervised children
welcome
For more information about the event
Email: info@colehill.gov.uk
Phone: 01202 588888



Fairtrade Pledge

The Council renewed its Fairtrade pledge to only purchase Fairtrade tea and coffee wherever possible.