

COLERNE PARISH COUNCIL

THE PLAN

2014/15 – 2016/17

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Introduction

Welcome to Colerne Parish Council. This is our Plan – it sets out what we are going to do over a rolling three year period. The Plan takes into account the issues facing us and our ability to respond with the resources available. It makes clear there will be choices, and outlines how the Council will decide which issues to prioritise.

The Plan has been prepared by your parish councillors. It is essentially a planning tool to assist us with the practical decisions we have to take when we meet every month, supported by a review process that helps us, and you, look back on our performance. So, by publishing our Plan that sets out the work we do as a public body we can also help those that live, work or visit the parish to see what is being done on their behalf. However, this Corporate Plan is not the 'Parish Plan', and does not take the place of this comprehensive piece of consultative engagement that highlighted many facets of community life and expectations. Put simply, this Plan sets out the 'what, why, how, and when' at a more specific and operational level.

Context

This is our first Corporate Plan, prepared at a time of austerity across all of society when organisations that provide services to the community, be they public, private or voluntary are facing cost pressures and resource restrictions. The emphasis is on value for money, efficiencies, collaboration and accepting that some things just will not be possible. Through a planning process we can have a shared vision and direction, protect what is important and consider new ways of getting things done.

Although not new, encouraging others to help themselves and to not rely on things being done for them is as important as ever. The aspiration for Wiltshire has been set out elsewhere as 'building stronger and more resilient communities'. This means communities that can help themselves, that have the networks and resources to find local solutions to local problems, and have the means to ensure that wherever possible those that do need services can access them at a time and in a way that is most suitable.

For Colerne, the Parish Council, as the first tier of local government, is uniquely situated to provide the forum for understanding and supporting the needs of this community. It provides advocacy on behalf of its residents, uses linkages to other organisations to bring in services, or directly procures them itself. Liaison with Wiltshire Council happens at all levels. Day-to-day, the Council will seek solutions for the community, looking for skills and volunteers to make improvements to our surroundings or bringing particular neighbourhood issues to local attention to promote a better quality of life for all.

Above all, your Parish Council is here to help, support and encourage. This Plan tells you how.

The Planning Cycle

Planning (and performance) is a continuous process of gathering and assessing information, formulating actions, *carrying them out*, and then reviewing performance and gathering further information.



Of course at key stages one has to pause and reflect, and consider how the plan is evolving – and not just once per year, as the plan is relevant to every significant decision made.

Once specific actions have been agreed for the delivery of this Plan, they are entered on the Rolling Actions Register, which is monitored at every meeting of the Council.

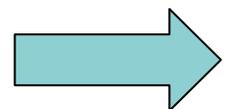
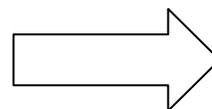
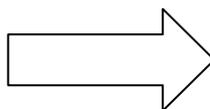
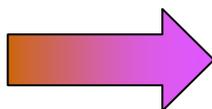
Linkages

This Plan is linked very closely to the allocation of resources – mostly financial, but also those of people’s time and energy. Our finance is almost entirely derived from the Council Tax system, which follows the financial year April to March. Our precept, or ‘demand’, placed upon the Council Tax system has to be declared every January, in order that Wiltshire Council can calculate the overall tax collection sums for each eligible household and produce the billing required.

Key dates

Therefore, this Plan will be drafted from October in each year, allowing it to evolve as the budget is also prepared, for final precept calculations in January. The Plan cycle will run from April to March, to match the funding available, and will be formally reviewed in April and October to assess achievements in the previous cycle, and progress in the current one.

October	November /December	January	February /March	April
look back, look forward	improve, prioritise	set precept	completion	review, resource



What is a parish council?

There are two sorts of parishes whose boundaries do not always coincide:

- the Ecclesiastical Parishes centred on an Anglican church with a parochial church council and,
- the Civil Parishes, which are part of local administration, having a parish (or town) council.

A civil parish is an independent local democratic unit for villages, smaller towns, and suburbs of urban areas. Each parish has a Parish (or Town) Meeting consisting of all its local government electors and most (where the electorate exceeds 200) have a Parish or Town Council. Over 13 million people live in such parishes, with just under 3,000 in the parish of Colerne.

The parish council is a small local authority. Its councillors are elected for four years at a time in the same way as for other councils. Bye-elections may be held to fill vacancies occurring between elections, or members may be co-opted onto the Council if no election is called. The council is the corporation of its village or town. In May each year the councillors choose a chairperson from amongst their number. In Colerne parish 13 councillors make up the Parish Council, which employs a part-time Clerk to manage administration.

What can we do?

Powers and Duties

Parish councils have a number of formal powers, set out in a wide range of legislation. A duty is something that a council **must** do, a power is something that it **may** do, if it so decides. A parish council cannot do anything that is not permitted in law.

Parish Councils in Wiltshire have lately become more significant, since District Councils have been removed and as a result the unitary authority, Wiltshire Council, could seem more remote. The parish councillors know the villages and can now (and increasingly often do) represent their views directly to other authorities like the Unitary Council and its Area Boards, Health Authorities, Police and Fire Authorities. They are entitled to be consulted on planning applications, which include work to listed buildings and on proposals in conservation areas, and are often consulted on such things as schools and roads. They put the parish's case at public inquiries. Recent moves from Government toward greater 'localism' are set to increase the role of Parish Councils even further, especially in the field of development control and planning.

Accountability

You elect its members every four years - the next time will be May 2013 - and you are entitled to go to the annual parish meeting (in May) which is the platform to celebrate the achievements of the community and to engage in the plans for its future. You can also go to any meeting of the Parish Council and meet the Council members, listen to their business and participate in Public Question Time. The accounts are strictly audited every year.

You can find out more about what we do, how we do it, and our meetings on the parish website at www.colerne-pc.gov.uk.

What do we do?

The Parish Council provides a number of direct services to the community, and acts as custodian to a number of assets held in the 'public name'.

Our principle assets are the Old School, Vicarage Lane; Public Conveniences, Quarry Lane; Green Lane Recreation Ground home to football teams and public events such as the Jubilee Celebrations, this is a large space - big enough for one football pitch, an Outdoor Gym and Running Track, a BMX track, Basketball practise area, a Mixed Use Games Area (MUGA) Court and two playgrounds for young people (one for juniors and a brand new one for seniors) and is often used by groups or families hiring the Pavilion; Martins Croft Play Ground; Bath Road Allotments (leased from Mr Gifford), Parish Wellhead and Pond Commons, Walmesley and War Memorial Gardens and Cross Tree. The Council has taken on the responsibility for maintenance, repairs and insurance for these facilities, including the seasonal cutting of the grass by a contractor. The management of all facilities is overseen by the Finance, Policy & Assets Management (FPAM) Committee, consisting of the chairs of all Parish Council Committees and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council.

The Council also rents out the Lower Hall of the Old School to Colerne Old School Playgroup, an independent charity with its own trustees. The Council financially supports this charity and the recently launched Community Café. In common with neighbouring parishes who act similarly, this Council makes substantial grants each year to community organisations (see Grants Policy). The Council also actively seeks additional donations and grants elsewhere for specific community projects.

Colerne Parish Council also own two bus shelters which it maintains along with a number of public benches around the parish, a water trough and other assets recorded on the Parish Assets Register.

Although Wiltshire Council is the Planning Authority, the Parish Council is consulted on each planning application made in the parish. Councillors consider planning applications at their meetings, and inform Wiltshire Council of their views. Colerne Parish Council has no direct powers in the field of planning control.

At each meeting of the Council, reports from Councillor Representatives on a variety of village organisations are received. Councillors seek to provide support where necessary, or requested, in order that local groups can continue to thrive. Reports are received of work undertaken by the local Cotswold Warden on footpaths and other rights of way, and any remedial work that may be required to them.

The council engages with parishioners, and responds to approaches made by parishioners, to achieve change which will prove beneficial to the community. e.g. Broadband Steering Group , Colerne Skateboard Park.

Meetings of the full Parish Council are held on the last Thursday of every month.

Finance, Policies and Assets Management (FPAM) and Colerne Old School Charity meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month bi-monthly.

Planning meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month followed by Highways & Rights of Way or Allotments & Recreation (alternate months).

Each meeting considers issues for our communities such as planning (for example, housing or tree felling) speeding and volume of traffic, inappropriate use of rights of way, crime and community safety, facilities for young people, or items of maintenance in the 'public realm' that need reporting to appropriate authorities. The Council can act as advocate for residents, a conduit for communicating information, and will liaise with appropriate departments of other public authorities to ensure that views, comments and necessary actions are dealt with.

What we have achieved during the last twelve months

During this time there have been several goals achieved and we have endeavoured to improve the ways in which we work to better serve our community. We have

- continued to up-date and modify all rules and procedures relating to the conduct and management of the Parish Council
- endeavoured to keep ourselves up-to-date with all new legislation affecting Parish Councils
- consulted the wider community on issues relating to the securing of community assets, commemoration of the anniversary of WWII
- considered over 80 planning applications
- continued to send representatives to meetings of associated organisations such as Corsham Area Transport Group (CATG), Corsham Area Board (CAB), Colerne Village Hall committee
- kept the community up to date with Parish Council business by placing information in the various noticeboards
- published information in the parish magazine every month
- continued to maintain the play equipment, sports pavilion, public toilets, the Old School and all community assets
- initiated talks on the future of Green Lane recreation ground

What do we want to do next?

The Parish Council will commence the Corporate Plan in *April* 2014. Many issues will take a number of years to resolve, or influence (some being beyond the timescale of this Corporate Plan) and all will require choices to be made for prioritisation.

The table below sets out the Plan for adoption by the Council, arranged over the next three years:

ISSUE	ACTION	Financial reference	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote, protect & improve our natural environment, encouraging its active enjoyment 	Support volunteer work parties	H6	✓	✓				
	Introduce additional benches & consider donations/memorials to achieve this	R4	✓	✓				
	Maintenance of community trees at recreation ground	R2	✓	✓				
	Maintenance of all council-owned trees & hedgerows	R4	✓	✓				

	Maintenance of war memorial & gardens	H11	✓	✓				
	Maintenance of Walmsley memorial & gardens	R9	✓	✓				
	Maintenance of wellhead & commons	H9 H10	✓	✓				
	Maintenance of all council-owned verges & open spaces	RA5	✓	✓				
Highways & transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discourage heavy vehicles ▪ support local transport initiatives ▪ monitor local road surfaces ▪ monitor road safety 	Continue to lobby Wiltshire Council re lorries using local country lanes	N/A	✓	✓				
	Monitor condition of bus shelters & consider refurbishment or extra provision	R9	✓	✓				
	Secure 6-monthly use of speed indicator device		✓	D				
	Encourage volunteers to carry out a community speed watch	GR	✓	✓				
	Consult Wiltshire Council on school transport provision		✓	A				
	Widen footpath from crossroads to the barracks	R6	✓	✓				
	Investigate school crossing options for the C151	R6	✓	✓				
	Maintain green lane area from recreation ground to gate on C151	H4	✓	✓				
	Resurface green lane from Cleaves Avenue to recreation ground entrance	H3	✓	A				
	Identify need for dropped kerbs throughout the parish	H5	✓	✓				
	Review road markings throughout parish	N/A	✓	✓				

Street scene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consider alternative service provision after reduction in services from Wiltshire Council ▪ encourage sustainable improvements in line with Neighbourhood Plan/Village Design Statement ▪ consider all planning applications in line with local planning policy 	Encourage colour & floral displays in public places	RA6	✓	✓				
	Involve the local school in the planting of green spaces	RA6	✓	✓				
	Work with the business community re brown signage		✓					
	Encourage residents with street frontages to maintain them	N/A	✓	✓				
	Maintain small open spaces (excluding recreation ground & Martin's Croft play area)	RA5 RA6	✓	✓				
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ascertain the need for low-cost housing 	Use the Neighbourhood Plan working group deploying new powers within the Localism Act 2011	N/A	✓	✓				
Facilities & well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote & enable socialisation & integration ▪ monitor services for the vulnerable in times of emergency ▪ improve communications, access to information 	Maintain links with current traders & licensees	N/A	✓	✓				
	Maintain services of snow wardens	H6	✓	✓				
	Influence wider take-up of digital technologies & communications	P4	✓	✓				
	Encourage provision & take-up of accessible sports & recreational facilities	N/A	✓	✓				
	Approach primary school for wider access to their facilities	N/A	✓	✓				
	Encourage school pupil engagement in local projects	N/A	✓	✓				
	Work with external partners to provide cultural accessibility	GR	✓	✓				

Playgrounds, allotments & open spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain, enhance & sustain these community assets for all age groups & as wide a range of abilities as possible 	Plan for future enhancement of junior playground	R2	✓	✓				
	Replace equipment in junior playground as required	R2	✓	✓				
	Provide benches around recreation ground	RA2	✓	A				
	Administer allotment holders' funds	RA7	✓	✓				
	Composting toilet at recreation ground	N/A	✓	✓				
	Poly tunnel on allotment area	N/A	✓	✓				
	Resurface MUGA court	RA4	✓	A				
	Regular inspection, maintenance & repair of play & exercise equipment on recreation ground	RA2 RA3	✓	✓				

Community & accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise awareness of the Parish Council, its role & access to it, how it consults & how to contribute to decisions & raise concerns 	Promote the council's approachability via monthly surgeries		✓	D				
	Consult with the community on topical issues of concern	N/A	✓	✓				
	Improve liaison with other local parish councils	N/A	✓	✓				
	Communicate & consult with parishioners at the Annual Parish Meeting	N/A	✓	✓				
	Maintain & expand the council's website	P4	✓	✓				
	Keep the Parish office & community rooms supplied with stationery, paper towels, etc.	P2 P5	✓	✓				
	Keep up to date by subscribing to relevant publications & websites	P3	✓	✓				
	Act within the prescribed legal requirements for audit	P6	✓	✓				
	Comply with required insurances	P7	✓	✓				
	Maintain reserve funding for elections	P8	✓	✓				

	Allocate grant monies to appropriate organisations	P9	✓	✓				
	Encourage the continued professional development (CPD) of staff & councillors	P10	✓	✓				
	Consider annually the National Joint Council for Local Development Services pay scale recommendations for clerks	P1 RA1 H1	✓	✓				
	Consider annually the National Joint Council for Local Development Services pay scale recommendations for other staff	R2 R3 R5 H2	✓	✓				

KEY

- A = achieved
- D = discontinued
- GR = General Reserves
- H = Highways/rights of way committee
- P = Personnel committee
- R = reserves
- RA = Recreation/Allotments committee

It was agreed at Parish Council to draw a line under this corporate plan at the end of March 2015 as all items listed will continue be given attention through the regular activities of the Council. A new plan to be drawn up outlining specific projects and financial projections

Review and performance

This Plan will remain under constant working review, and amendments made as a result of changes to the operating environment.

The Plan having been set in October of each year will be formally reviewed in April, as new resources are applied and then in October at the 6-month stage and to coincide with the mid-term financial statement, whilst also looking forward to the next plan year.

Each specific action arising for the current year is entered onto the Actions Register with performance reviewed at each meeting of the Council, and managed by the Clerk. Any planned activities requiring constant overview are monitored through the agenda setting process. Any risks arising are entered onto the Risk Register, which is reviewed bi-monthly by the FPAM Committee.

Current editions of The Plan and Risk Register will be published on the website.

COMMENTS

If you would like to comment on this Plan or any other matter concerning the Parish Council and its business, including consultations, you may contact us through the Clerk to the Parish Council:

Office of the Parish Clerk
The Old School
Vicarage Lane
Colerne
Wiltshire
SN14 8EL

colernepc@talktalk.net

01225 742207

The parish website is also available, holding our public documentation and links to many other organisations:

www.colerne-pc.gov.uk