

CCL2002.01.08

At a Special Meeting of **COLEHILL PARISH COUNCIL** held at COLEHILL MEMORIAL HALL on **8 JANUARY 2002**.

PRESENT

Cllr J Bell, Chairman

Cllrs G Divall, Mrs J Dover, J Gooch, J Greenwood, T Holloway, J Horwood,
J Hurst, K Johnson, A Marsh, E Phillips, D Wallace

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr D Packer, EDDC

APOLOGIES

Cllrs. B. Jackson, J Warren.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

About 60 residents attended to voice their opposition to the proposal by DCC to close Colehill Library. In view of the numbers attending it was necessary to transfer to the main Hall for the ‘open’ session of the meeting so that all representations could be heard.

Attached to these Minutes at Appendix 1 is a full note of the points raised by Members of the public. At the conclusion of the open session, a petition, one of two circulating in the Parish, was handed to the Parish Council. It contained 690 signatures demanding that this vital public facility should remain.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the Public for attending and assured them that their comments would be noted and DCC advised.

The Parish Council Meeting commenced at 21.00hrs in the Hall Committee Room

287 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

288 CLOSURE OF COLEHILL BRANCH LIBRARY

Parish Council Members supported all that had been said during the open session of the meeting. It was felt that the use of figures could be misleading, as it was understood that use of Colehill library had in fact increased in recent months. The Library was viewed as a ‘service’ and people tended to use the network of branches from time to time

The introduction of IT facilities at Colehill was vital to the future of the Library and this was in line with the Government’s policy for extended E-government with 100% of local government services accessible to the public via computer by 2005.

At their meeting on 2 January, East Dorset District Council had given full support to retention of the Library as a vital community facility.

The Chairman read a draft letter to the Leader of DCC in response to the proposed library closure. Preliminary consideration was given to ways in which the Parish Council might co-operate with DCC Corporate Services Department to further promote usage of the Library.

It was understood that a number of residents would be attending the DCC Committee on 16 January. Cllrs Mrs Dover and Don Wallace undertook to make enquiries regarding the possibility of addressing the County Committee under DCC Standing Orders.

RESOLVED that :-

1. The draft letter submitted by the Chairman be approved and forwarded to the Leader of Dorset County Council forthwith.
2. Councillor Don Wallace be requested to represent, in the strongest terms, the views of the meeting and to present the petition containing 690 signatures to the meeting of DCC Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 January

The Meeting ended at 21.25hrs.

CHAIRMAN

MEETING NOTES

APPENDIX 1

At the **Colehill Parish Council meeting on 8 January 2002** called especially on hearing of the County Council's possible closure of the Colehill Branch Library, over 60 residents attended.

In accordance with our policy, before formally opening the meeting, the Chairman invited the visitors to address the Councillors. He explained that the County Council had affirmed that the possibility of closing the library was only to be debated by the Corporate Services Committee and that, contrary to some press and radio comments, no decision had yet been made.

Representations presented by members of the public demanded that the Parish Council should strongly press the Dorset County Council not only to retain the current Library service in Colehill but to expand it to provide even more facilities (e.g. internet and reference works).

The following points were raised and are listed in no specific order of weight.

1. The population of Colehill exceeds that of Wimborne yet the library is the only facility in the Parish supported by the County Council.
2. The centre of population of Colehill is certainly in excess of 2 miles by road from the library at Wimborne. In addition, it is known that people living further afield in adjacent Parishes (e.g. Ferndown, Holt etc) also use the Colehill Library due to its easy access.
3. The current bus fare to Wimborne is £1.80 and the bus stop in the town is some distance from the library.
4. There are no car parking facilities close to Wimborne Library. The nearest car park at the rear of Safeway's, is very limited and is usually full with shoppers' cars. A larger alternative is the Allendale car park, some ¼ mile away. Both have 40p minimum parking fees. Parking at Colehill library is simple, non-congested and ideal for wheel-chair access.
5. The library is not only used by 'book borrowers' but also by children researching projects for homework and by mothers encouraging little ones with reading. Please note that our Library has 4 schools and 2 elderly persons units in close proximity.
6. Due to its easy access the WRVS Book Services uses the Colehill Library.
7. The library was opened over 25 years ago and has been maintained in good order. It replaced the mobile service offered at that time.
8. A very limited mobile service of 2 hours per month has been offered by the County Librarian to replace the static library. This was rejected as unacceptable and inadequate for school studies.
9. The County Librarian has suggested that books were looking 'old'. In fact, everyone present at the meeting claimed that the stock of books was in

splendid condition, even those offered for sale were invariably in good order. There appeared to be no problems in obtaining recently published new titles.

10. Should residents attempt to reach Wimborne for their library service in spite of the wider problems involved, very real additional traffic will cause increased pollution of the environment contrary to the Government's 'Green' policy and guidelines.
11. Loss of a library facility reduces the attractiveness of Colehill and devalues property.
12. The Library Service raised the problem of security. It was felt that the addition of a couple of IT stations would make little difference when added to the current value of books, videos, photocopier, Librarian's PCs etc.
13. Introduction of IT facilities was in line with the Government's policy for extending E-government with 100% of local government services accessible to the public via computer by 2005.
14. A number of residents offered to assist voluntarily in manning the library, possibly by the formation of a 'Friends of Colehill Library Group'. This could effect very real savings towards the cost reduction of £20k sought by the library service.
15. The Parish Council has undertaken to liase with the DCC Corporate Services Directorate to seek ways of increasing the library issues and reducing the costs involved in maximising the library benefits given to the residents.

9 January 2002