



Colchester Newsletter

Hello Colchester!

Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of Colchester's newsletter, where we share exciting news, helpful tips and much more with our residents!

Photo by Felicia Marie

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Follow us on Social Media to see real-time updates on what we're up to!



CHECK THIS OUT!

Are you an amateur photographer in the making? We are looking to feature local photos of what's happening in Colchester!

Submit your photos to photos@colchester.ca and you will be entered to win a Colchester swag bag and could be featured in our next newsletter edition.

Be centred here.

From the Mayor's Desk

Colchester's Operating Budget 2024-25: Once again, I am proud to acknowledge that Colchester County Council has successfully approved our 2024-25 operating budget with no increases to the residential or commercial tax rates. See the article on the next page for more information.

Recognizing our Volunteers: National Volunteer Week 2024, April 14-20, had the theme "Every Moment Matters." It highlighted the importance of every volunteer and each contribution made at a time when we need support more than ever.

In Colchester, we have 17 volunteer fire brigades with over 500 volunteers, Colchester Ground Search and Rescue, multiple not-for-profit organizations, recreation facilities and community events, supported by our amazing volunteers. We have seen these volunteers excel in our communities during times of crisis, such as Hurricane Fiona; to support refugee families; give support to those grieving; and so much more. Your work is to be celebrated and appreciated.

This year, for the first time outside Halifax, the RECC will be hosting the Nova Scotia Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony. This is the 50th Anniversary of the event and it will be held on September 18, 2024.

We recognize our volunteers in Colchester County; we respect you and all that you do to provide essential services and support systems in our Colchester Community of Communities. Thank you!

April 18 and 19, 2020: The effects of this heartbreaking mass casualty and Canada's worst intended mass shooting, has impacted Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and HRM communities along with all communities in Nova Scotia, across Canada, into the United States and across many countries around the globe. We have just marked the fourth anniversary of this horrendous event.

The mental and physical effects of trauma from events such as this can go on for years, and often do. We see those effects in our Colchester communities and know trauma needs to be addressed on an ongoing, in-community, professional manner.

Most of all, we keep the families, co-workers, first responders, students, neighbours, relatives, and friends of every victim in our hearts and in our prayers.

Hearts Haven Memorial Park, Debert: This park was built in memory of Kristen Beaton and her unborn child and Heather O'Brien, both victims of the mass shooting in April, 2020. I mention this again, because the park was noted in our last newsletter, but the names of those being commemorated were not mentioned. My apologies for that.

Progress Monitoring Committee, Mass Casualty Commission Recommendations: A report on the Progress Monitoring Committee (PMC) was released May 1st for the first six months of the Committee's work. Unique to most public inquiries, the Committee was established to monitor the implementation of the MCC Report to ensure recommendations are acted upon. It includes representatives of the families who lost loved ones in the mass casualty, representatives from the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia, the RCMP, municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, law enforcement and other sectors, all of which bring expertise to the table.

As the member who represents the Municipalities of Colchester, Cumberland, and East Hants, it is indeed an honour and privilege to be part of this committee for the sake of improving our community safety and wellbeing. For more information on the Committee and its ongoing work, visit the following website: www.novascotia.ca/progress-monitoring-committee

Portapique Build-up Project: The grand opening of the Portapique Build-up Project is being held May 31, 2024, between 1:00 and 3:00 pm with a number of notable dignitaries as guest speakers and a ribbon-cutting to follow. This is an amazing project of hope and community support. If you have an opportunity to join the event on May 31st, please do so.

Housing in Colchester County: The Municipality of Colchester recognizes the housing crisis many of our communities are facing today. Several developers are interested in building in Colchester County. Our responsibility is to ensure there is proper infrastructure in place to provide essential services such as sewer and water. Our efficient Community Development and Public Works staff are working hard to determine the capacity of our current systems and whether they have to be expanded, building the infrastructure as needed, and budgeting for both.

In closing: A special note of congratulations to Ms. Annie Leslie, Tatamagouche, on the occasion of her 100th birthday, May 4th.

Enjoy our Nova Scotia springtime.
My kindest regards to all,
Christine Blair, Mayor

Budget Approved

Photo by Felicia Marie

Council Approves 2024/2025 Operating Budget - No Rate Increase

Colchester County Council approved its 2024/25 operating budget on April 25, 2024, with no increase to the residential or commercial tax rates. This is the sixth year of the last seven that the Municipality has been able to keep its rates the same, with just a half cent increase in 2019. Residential properties will continue to pay \$0.885 and commercial properties \$2.28, per 100 dollars of assessment as determined by Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC), the independent, not-for-profit organization that is responsible for assessing all property in Nova Scotia.

The balanced budget increased from \$38.7 Million last year to just over \$42 Million this year. An 8% increase in tax revenue from residential development and 14% increase in revenue from commercial development helped accommodate the larger budget without rate increases. "We are very fortunate that we've experienced record growth and development here in Colchester," says Mayor, Christine Blair. "By increasing our taxbase we can accommodate the rising costs we've experienced in recent years without having to increase our tax rates."

The budget supports the Municipality's quality, core programs and services, and continues to invest in critical infrastructure and economic development initiatives. Partnerships such as the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity (TCPEP), the Rath Eastlink Community Centre, as well as future housing initiatives are also included.

Numerous community organizations will again receive support through the County's extensive not-for-profit grant programs. "Council carefully reviews grant applications from dozens and dozens of community groups each year. These organizations, many volunteer-led, are critical to providing important services and facilities in our Municipality," added Mayor Blair. "We are pleased to support these dedicated groups that work so hard to make our communities better."

Each year the County's operating budget is set within a context of competing needs, requests, opportunities, and anticipated revenues. Some costs and revenue streams are not within the Municipality's control. Over 42% of taxes collected by the Municipality will be transferred to the Provincial Government for services such as schools, libraries, assessment services, and policing. This leaves the Municipality with \$24.9 million dollars to deliver County-wide services such as sewage treatment, solid waste management, environmental planning, and recreation services.

Costs for education went up \$973,000 this year while policing went up \$670,000, each contributing to the required mandatory payments to the Province which totalled \$17.3 Million. Retroactive pay for a new policing contract negotiated by the Federal government a number of years ago remains a concern. It is anticipated to result in increases to policing costs in the future.

"All and all, I want to thank Council and Staff for their tireless efforts in preparing this year's budget. I am especially pleased that it positions us well for maintaining quality services and future growth, without increasing the tax rates for our residents," concluded Mayor Blair.

Photo by Larry Burt



Recreation



The 18th Annual Bike Week takes place June 1st-9th with fun, free events, and helpful safe cycling tips! Check our website for details.

Join us on the trail on August 25th for breathtaking scenery and a fast, flat, and fun run! Register for the 5K, 10K, or Half Marathon at www.raceroster.com

Fun in the Sun Day Camps will be back in July and August. Each week is packed with fun outdoor games, group activities, sports, theme days and more to keep your kids active this summer. Check our website for locations and schedule.

Colchester County Trails...Pathways to Active Adventures!

Adventures await on the wonderful trails in Colchester County. With more than 100 km of walking and cycling trails to explore, our county has something for everyone. Walk to your heart's content along the seacoast. Hike to waterfalls in the hills. Run like the wind through the park. Bike where train whistles used to blow. Stroll beside wonderful wetlands. Relax by the brook or the bay. Explore a new trail this summer! To plan your next trail adventure, visit www.colchester.ca/trails and www.novascotiatrails.cioc.ca/

Note that some trails remain closed due to hurricane damage. Please check trail status before you leave home. When enjoying your outdoor adventure, please stay on designated trails, respect all posted signs and trail closures, respect other trail users, and keep your dog on leash. Happy Trails!



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/recreation
Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 5
Email: recreation@colchester.ca

Solid Waste

Solid Waste Closures & Curbside Collection Update!

The Balefill and Materials Recovery Facilities will be closed on Monday, July 1 for Canada Day and Monday, August 5 for the Civic Holiday.

Compost is available for sale year-round. The cost is \$35.00 per metric tonne or \$3 per bag.

Please Note: All garbage taken by residents to the Balefill Facility, whether residential or commercial, MUST be in clear bags or you will be asked to re-bag your material.

Cash, personal cheques or interac are accepted as payment at the scalehouse. Credit cards are NOT accepted.

Privacy Bag Limit Reminder

Curbside Limit Reminder: One residential household is allowed six (6) clear bags or (5) clear and (1) privacy bag curbside for collection.

The main reasons Colchester Solid Waste require residents to use clear bags for garbage is to:

- Safety for collection staff and Solid Waste staff
- Increase recycling and waste diversion. We can identify materials that we can divert from the landfill and get us closer to hit our 300kg/person target
- Remove hazardous waste/items from garbage

Recycle My Electronics Update

As of June 1, 2024, Recycle My Electronics will be expanding. What does this mean for residents? It means, more electronics will be banned from curbside collection, and will be required to be dropped off at your nearest Enviro-Depot. Recycling your end-of-life electronics is your opportunity to have a direct impact on the environment.

Visit www.colchester.ca/provincial-recycling to stay up to date with the changes.



What Is Recycled in Nova Scotia



Safe & Secure Recycling

Wipe your drives. Clean your SIM cards. Protect your privacy. Clear all personal information from smartphones, cell phones and electronics prior to drop off.

For additional program details, visit

recyclemyelectronics.ca/NS

Toll-Free Helpline: 1-877-462-8907



EPRA

Contact

Website: colchester.ca/garbage-and-recycling

Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 1

Email: helpline@colchester.ca





Colchester

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Municipal Dates & Meetings

May 2024

25

SAT

Community Paper Shredding Event

9:00 am - 12:00 noon, RECC parking lot

30

THURS

Council Meeting

6 PM

June 2024

04

TUES

Council Committee Meeting

6 PM

Presentation Meeting (on an as needed basis)

13

THURS

Council Committee Meeting

6 PM

15

SAT

Mobile HHW Drop Off

9:00 am - 1:00 pm, North Shore Recreation Centre

22

SAT

Mobile HHW Drop Off

9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Stewiacke Fire Hall

25

TUES

Council Meeting

6 PM

July 2024

01

MON

Municipal Office Closure

Canada Day Holiday

August 2024

01 **Municipal Office Closure**
MON Civic Holiday

06 **Council Committee Meeting** 6 PM
TUES Presentation Meeting (on an as needed basis)

15 **Council Committee Meeting** 6 PM
THURS

29 **Council Meeting** 6 PM
THURS

30 **Property Tax Bills Due**
FRI

September 2024

02 **Municipal Office Closure**
MON Labour Day Holiday

03 **Council Committee Meeting** 6 PM
TUES Presentation Meeting (on an as needed basis)

12 **Council Committee Meeting** 6 PM
THURS

14 **Community Paper Shredding Event**
SAT 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Stewiacke Fire Hall



Community Development

It's Building Season!

As spring unfolds, we welcome the onset of building season in our community. Whether you're considering a home renovation, constructing a new shed, or installing a pool, it's essential to stay informed about the permitting process. Our community development staff are here to assist you every step of the way, providing guidance and support as you navigate through the permit application process.

For more information visit:
colchester.ca/permits



Are You Paying Too Much for Energy?

It might be time to improve your home's energy efficiency. Check out the Cozy Colchester & Solar Colchester financing programs!

Contact us for more information and to book your FREE Home Energy Assessment. All loans are subject to a one-time administration fee.



Contact

(902) 920-0615
info@cozycolchester.ca
info@solarcolchester.ca

Plan It Colchester Project Update

Plan It Colchester is a project to develop a county-wide Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw for the Municipality of Colchester. Much of the Colchester is currently unplanned, resulting in an organic form of growth and development. With the recent population increase in Nova Scotia, there is growing pressure for new development. Without planning in place, communities have no say in where and how their communities grow and change!

In 2018, The Provincial Government passed Bill 58, requiring every municipality to develop and adopt planning that meets the minimum planning standards. This project will bring Colchester County into compliance with these regulations, while also presenting an important and exciting opportunity for residents to help shape the vision for the future of their communities!

The new Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw are currently being drafted by the project team and will be available for public review in late Spring. We will be conducting another round of public engagement during the Summer to hear your feedback on the draft documents!

The engagement will include:



Community Meetings



Online Zoning Map



Stakeholder Meetings



Fact Sheets

Stay Tuned for Details!
colchester.ca/plan-it-colchester

Contact

Website: colchester.ca/community-development
Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 4
Email: comdev@colchester.ca

Public Works

New Sewer Permit and Lateral Installation Fees

In 2013 when the Sewer Use Policy was approved, Council set a fee of \$3,500 for all new sewer lateral installations. This fee applies when a new single-family home or duplex is being built, and a new sewer connection must be installed by the County.

Lateral installation costs have risen significantly over the last 10 years due to high cost of materials, equipment, traffic control, and asphalt repairs. In 2023, the County installed 12 new sewer lateral connections ranging in cost from \$5,000 to \$12,000 per connection.

On March 27, 2024, Council updated their Municipal Fees Policy and the fee for a new sewer lateral connection was increased. Single family and duplex properties that do not have an existing sewer lateral from the main sewer line to their property line will now have to pay \$5,000 to \$7,000 for the County to install this section. A sewer permit fee of \$150 is also required for all new connections, and there is no longer a \$50 refund on this fee.

If you plan on building, and need more information on the cost of your lateral connection, please contact our Public Works Office.

Why Do I Need a Backflow Valve?

Have you ever experienced a flooded basement either from sewage or groundwater? If yes, did you know there are ways to protect yourself and your home from these backups? A backflow valve is a plumbing device that stops water and/or sewage from coming back up the pipes leaving your home. Once installed, these devices should be inspected yearly to make sure they are working correctly.

Installing a backflow valve on the sewer line leaving your home can help protect you in cases where the main sewer line under the street is blocked or is flowing very full. The backflow valve will close and prevent any main line sewage from travelling backwards into your home from the street.

A backflow valve on the drainpipe, where the footing drains from your foundation empties into the roadside ditch or other low spot, can help stop water from travelling back towards your foundation or basement during heavy rains. Contact your plumber for more information on the installation of a backflow valve.

Who Maintains My Road?

Now that the snow is gone, you likely have noticed the condition of the paved and gravel roads in your area. Not all roads are maintained by the County. In fact, the County only owns and maintains 24 kms of paved roads and 8 kms of gravel roads. The rest are either owned by the province or are privately owned.

One way to tell who maintains your road is by the colour of the road name sign. If it is Blue, it is County owned. If it is Green, it's owned by the Province under Nova Scotia Public Works and if it's white, it is privately owned and maintained by the residents on that road.

Some roads can have multiple owners so check out our "Who Maintains My Road" Interactive Map on our website at www.colchester.ca/roads-and-driveways by entering your civic address.



Contact

Website: colchester.ca/public-works
Phone: 902-897-3150 Option 2
Email: engineer@colchester.ca

Odds & Ends

Colchester Municipal Election - October 19, 2024

Municipal Election Day in Nova Scotia is October 19, 2024. This year Colchester residents will have the option of voting by telephone, internet, or by paper ballot within their District. Telephone and Internet voting is anticipated to be available from Monday, October 7, 2024, until 7pm on Saturday October 19, 2024, while paper ballot voting will take place on Election Day only. Electors will receive complete details and voting instructions by mail prior to the election this Fall.

Interested in running for Mayor or District Councillor?

Contact our administration office to register to receive more information on how to become a candidate by calling 902-897-3182.

Watch for more information on the 2024 Municipal Election coming soon to our website: <https://www.colchester.ca>



Willow Church Cemetery

The Willow Church Cemetery, established in 1781 and situated at 1778 Willow Church Road in Waugh's River, has been officially designated as a Municipal Heritage Property. The Society entrusted with the stewardship and maintenance of the cemetery proudly received their heritage plaque in early May.

Anticipating this recognition, the Society is now preparing to organize a series of activities aimed at raising awareness of the cemetery's rich historical significance and promoting their ongoing volunteer initiatives. Further details regarding these events will be available soon.

Congratulations are extended to the Willow Church Cemetery Society for their commendable achievement in preserving this important heritage site.



Councillor Mike Gregory presenting the plaque to Mrs. Annie Leslie and Mrs. Mildred MacDougall

Tax Office

Your 2024/25 Property Tax Bill(s) will be mailed out in mid-June and are due by August 30th, 2024. If you do not receive your bill by the end of June, please contact the Tax Office at 902-897-3150 Option 3.

Photo by Felicia Marie

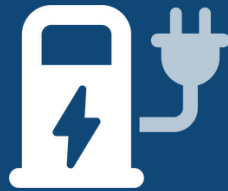
Electric Vehicle Charger Update

We're making it easier for you to go electric! The Municipality of Colchester has installed 12 electric vehicle chargers at seven locations across the County, with support from the Clean Foundation's EV Boost program. The stations are Level 2 "Flo" brand chargers and cost \$1.50 per hour to use.

Currently, an electric vehicle in Nova Scotia emits roughly half the carbon dioxide of a gas-powered car and becomes a cleaner option every day as the electricity grid transitions to renewable energy. Some EV models can also provide backup power to your home during outages.

Active Locations:

- Five Islands Lighthouse Park
- Acadia Avenue, Debert
- Tatamagouche Branch Library
- Fundy Discovery Site, Lower Truro
- Upper Stewiacke Co-op



Coming soon:

- Municipal Office (1 Church St, Truro)
- Don Henderson Memorial Sportsplex, Brookfield

To report any issues with the charging stations, please call (902) 897-3170 or email jbarris@colchester.ca.



Changes to Dog Tags

Changes are coming to our municipal dog tags system! Beginning May 1st, we are transitioning from annual tags to lifetime tags for your furry friends. This means no more yearly renewals. Residents can now conveniently purchase these lifetime tags online or at our Community Development Office. Each tag will cost \$25. This change aims to streamline the process and make it easier for pet owners to ensure their pets are properly identified. Thank you for your cooperation as we implement these improvements.



Tags can be purchased online at: colchester.ca/dog-tags



Municipal Wildlife Consultant, Mark Pulsifer

Bible Hill & Area Deer Study

The Municipality of Colchester recently hired Wildlife Consultant, Mark Pulsifer to gather data on the deer population in Bible Hill and surrounding area. The research is required by the Department of Natural Resources before a managed hunt can be considered as an option to help control the population. A plebiscite will be conducted in the fall for Districts 1, 5, 6, and 11, to determine if area residents are in favor of or opposed to a managed hunt if one were to be conducted in future as has been done in the Town of Truro in recent years.

Employment Opportunities

Discover exciting career paths with the Municipality of Colchester! We offer a diverse range of job opportunities tailored to match your skills and interests. Our workplace prides itself on fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where every team member feels valued and empowered to succeed. As we continue to expand, new job opportunities will arise, so be sure to stay tuned to our website for the latest updates! Join us and enjoy perks such as comprehensive benefits packages and professional development opportunities to help you thrive in your career journey.

Visit colchester.ca/news/jobs/ to view our current openings








Accessibility & Inclusion

Do you, or someone you know, have challenges accessing municipal information or services, or participating in programs or community engagement opportunities (for example a visual or hearing impairment, mobility, or cognitive challenge)?

Please contact Devin Trefry by calling 902-897-3182 or email dtrefry@colchester.ca to discuss ways that we may be able to accommodate or assist.



Connect With Us Online

-  Website: [Colchester.ca](https://colchester.ca)
-  Facebook: [@ColchesterNS](https://www.facebook.com/ColchesterNS)
-  Instagram: [@ColchesterCounty](https://www.instagram.com/ColchesterCounty)
-  LinkedIn: [@Municipality-of-Colchester](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Municipality-of-Colchester)
-  X: [@MunColchester](https://twitter.com/MunColchester)

Contact

Phone: 902-897-3150
Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
For evening and/ or weekend emergencies, call 902-897-3175