

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER No 15

July 2015

Members of the Parish Council

George Terry (Chairman)	West View, Manor Road	01278 723646
Joe Stradling (Vice-Chairman)	Millhayes, Bell Lane	722932
John Clasby	Summerhayes, Walnut Lane	722411
Martin Dare	20, Middle Road	07811 867433
Nigel Downing	Rose Cottage, Middle Road	01278 723552
Edward Ingram	12, Manor Close	722289
Lynn Woodward	The Lyntons, Station Road	-----
Parish Clerk , Richard Young	5 Channel Court, Burnham on Sea TA8 1NE	789859
District Councillor Alison Hamlin	10 Chapel Lane, East Huntspill	783798
County / District Councillor Mark Healey	31 Riverton Road, Puriton	683368

Welcome to our 15th biannual newsletter – The Parish Council forms an important part of Local Government comprising elected residents who carry out their responsibilities on a voluntary basis for the good of the community. All of the current members were re-elected to continue serving at the recent Local Elections. We meet in the Village Hall - usually at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month apart from January and August. The public are welcome to attend meetings where there is an opportunity to ask questions or raise issues at the designated open session. We pride ourselves on keeping the meetings open and inclusive for all attendees whilst maintaining our formal regulatory responsibilities.

Much more information including full details of meeting times, agendas and minutes can be found on the parish notice board in Middle Road, opposite the School and on the Parish Council's web-site at

www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk

Remembering the "Big Tree"

After much perseverance, progress has been made with the stone monolith to remember the famous Big Tree (pictured below right) - and we are well on our way towards completion. A suitable 4-ton piece of natural Welsh Pennant Sandstone has now been obtained – and foundations prepared for installation in the existing stone surround opposite the old school. There has been a lot of village interest and enthusiasm - so we are reproducing the most common questions below – along with answers.

How big will it be? – the monolith will sit at around 1.8m (6ft) high above the existing stone surround – 0.8m (2ft 8ins) wide and 0.6m (2ft) in depth.

Why couldn't local Blue Lias stone be used? – the structural properties of blue lias renders it unsuitable for stone monoliths of any reasonable size. Welsh Pennant was selected after discussions with quarries for a similar looking alternative.

Why has it taken so long? – mainly due to finding the right piece of stone. Natural blocks of a suitable size are only found occasionally during quarrying and it was important to be patient and wait for the right shape and size for the site rather than compromising. We rejected several examples until eventual success. It is also worth noting that installation is being done on a voluntary basis so it needs to be worked around day-to-day priorities like haymaking.

Who is paying for it? – Local farming family, the Stradlings, are kindly paying for it on behalf of the late Charles Stradling who did so much for the village.

Will there be any inscription on it? – No - it will just be a plain natural stone monolith with an inset plaque of white Portland stone containing a carved relief of a young elm tree. The existing metal plaque on the surround will be retained.



Playing Field News (and VILLAGE FETE – Sat. 29th August)

It has been a busy couple of months behind the scenes. Negotiations have been taking place with a local builder regarding the construction of a skate ramp, paid for by the community health and wellbeing grant. This will enable us to get a bespoke installation for the lowest cost rather than just making do with an 'off the shelf' ramp.

A basketball hoop, which was surplus to requirements, has been kindly donated by East Huntspill and is currently undergoing some light refurbishments before installation on the hardstanding area. A suggestion of an additional bench outside the children's play area to the entrance to the Sustrans path is currently being explored, so watch this space!

And finally – the return of *the Annual Village Fete!* Planning is well under way and the date for your diary is **Saturday 29th August** at the Playing Field from 12pm onwards. There will be fun for all the family, including games and competitions as well as food, drink and a selection of stalls. We look forward to seeing you there at what will hopefully be a fantastic day.

Dog Fouling

Dog excrement left in public areas is unpleasant and antisocial – and, in extreme cases, can cause disease. Most dog walkers in Cossington are considerate but there are some who let the side down. Particular recent problem areas have been around Mowground Lane and at the Cossington end of the Sustrans cycle path.



Remember - ***It is an offence to leave your dog's mess anywhere on or near an area freely accessible to the public. Please pick it up and dispose of it responsibly.*** The strange habit of dumping bagged dog mess in hedgerows or on roadside verges is thoughtless and only serves to provide a nice warm breeding ground for the worms which can carry disease whilst the bag decomposes. If you can't take it home, bagged dog waste can be disposed of in the dog waste bins at either end of the Sustrans Path or in the village public waste bins - so please be considerate for the benefit of everyone in the community!

Cossington School (update from Somerset County Council)

The redistribution and disposal of the contents has now been completed, with several local schools benefitting from the recycling of furniture, equipment and teaching resources. All paperwork has been removed and relevant documents have been archived. There were a few items of school uniform left in store and these will be donated to Oxfam for distribution abroad.

Potential alternative Educational uses for the building continue to be explored. No decision has yet been made on future use but other parts of the Education Service will be offered first refusal, followed by other County Services, before disposal is considered. In the meantime, the County Council has postponed a decision on whether to appoint a "guardian" to live in at the school whilst the future of the premises is being discussed.

Community Survey

The last community survey took place back in 2006 – with the last question asking what would you like to see in Cossington in 2015 to make the village a better place. A lot has happened since then so we will be looking to conduct a new survey around the turn of the year. A copy of the results of the 2006 survey can be found in the "News" section of our website for information – although the new one may have quite a different format.

The new survey should inform the Parish Council of what residents feel is important for the village's future - and will help prioritise future initiatives relating to issues such as housing, recreation, transport, employment and other village amenities.

In Short

- **First Aid Training** – we are currently talking to St Johns ambulance about a new scheme to provide first aid training for interested residents. More details will be available when the scheme is launched later in the year. Places may be limited so anyone who would like register their interest in advance should contact Lynn Woodward via e-mail at lynn@woodwardinsurance.co.uk or by phone 01458 844149.
- **Cossington Village Fayre (incorporating Cossington in Bloom)** – just a reminder that this annual event will take place at the Village Hall from 2.30 pm on Saturday 8th August. As usual, there will be the normal stalls, exhibitions and prize giving. For the first time there will also be a **free Village Scarecrow Competition** based on a TV character theme (entries to be displayed in your front garden for judging on Sunday 2nd August). Make sure the dates are in your diary! Contact Sue Hayes on 01278 722463 for more information and entry forms
- **Superfast Broadband** – Although the local network has been fully upgraded, a small number of villagers (particularly along Brent Road) are waiting for communication cabinet upgrades before they can take advantage of the improved service. Upgrades are being scheduled – see the OpenReach website to get the latest status on availability for your own address and phone number (www.superfast-openreach.co.uk).
- **Welcome Pack now On Line** – Just over two years ago we started producing welcome packs for new residents we were informed about. We have given out over 40 to date and just reformatted it so that it can now be downloaded in its entirety (less the sample copies of "The Link" and "Polden Post") from our website www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk. Just click on "Find out more about Cossington" to access it.
- **Mobile Library Changes** – changes to the County's mobile library service come into effect in August. Cossington visits will be on Thursday and will now only stop at Station Road from 11.50 am to 12.20 pm. Scheduled dates for 2015 are 6 Aug, 3rd Sept, 1st Aug, 29th Oct, 26th Nov and 14th Dec. More information is on our website and notice board.