

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER No 16

February 2016

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 16th 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. 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.

More information including full details of meeting times, agendas and minutes can be found on the Parish notice board in Middle Road, opposite the old school and on the Parish Council's web-site at www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk

VILLAGE COMMUNITY SURVEY

*Please complete and return the enclosed form by **8th March***

The last community survey took place back in 2006. A lot has happened since then so we are now conducting a new one – which you can take part in by completing and returning the enclosed form by 8th March.

We hope the new survey will help inform us of what residents feel is important for the village's future - and thus help prioritise future initiatives relating to issues such as housing, recreation, transport, employment and other village amenities. The form has been designed so that you can either complete it quickly by simply ticking boxes – or go into detail on certain issues if you so wish. Feel free to use additional sheets if you need more space.

Completed forms can be returned in any one of three ways in the blue envelope provided – either to the Village Hall postbox (to the left of the main entrance), to any of the Parish Councillors listed above or to either of the special grey postboxes situated by the Royal Mail boxes in Middle Road and Brent Road for the survey's duration.

It is important that we get a good response for the survey to provide any real benefit so please help us to help you by taking part. As an incentive, all identifiable responses will be included in the **Prize Draw** for £50 of garden vouchers. All returns will be treated confidentially but you have the option of responding anonymously if you so wish – although this would mean you would miss out on the prize draw. If you need an additional form for any reason, then you can copy the one supplied or download a copy from our website.

A summary of the survey results will be provided to all residents. Those who provide their contact details will also receive a personal response to any particular issues raised.

Big Tree Stone

As you most probably have seen the stone monolith on the site of the famous Big Tree of Cossington has now been completed. The 3m high piece of Welsh Pennant sandstone was hoisted into place in September and the surround dressed with purple slate chippings. The Portland stone plaque relief depicting a young growing Elm tree was inserted in the stone in December and should weather down nicely over the coming years to provide a fitting contrast to the Pennant sandstone.

Finishing touches have been the small plaque at the base recognising the kind donation of the stone by the Stradling family and the resurfacing of the seated surround.

More about the “Big Tree” (history, legend and photos) can be found under the “About Cossington” link on our website's homepage,

Playing Field

The 29th August saw the successful return of the annual village fete to the Playing Field. Blessed by good weather, the event was attended by around 300 people and raised over £600.

Some maintenance and repair to play equipment (wobble board and roundabout) has recently been carried out in accordance with the rigorous health and safety audit which takes place each year. You'd be surprised how much even the simplest of repairs costs to adequately meet current health and safety standards. A single basketball hoop has recently been installed in the concrete "tennis court" area and we are hoping to complete the installation of a quarter-pipe skateboard ramp shortly.

Access improvements have also been made to the gate east of the car park – and new clearer aluminium signage for dog walker guidance is being introduced.

A caravan was dumped in the car park at 2.14 p.m. (yes, in broad daylight) on Mon 1st Feb by two men in a white van. Photographic evidence has been passed to the relevant authorities. There has also been an issue with unauthorised metal detecting on the field. If you have any information on either matter, then please let us know.

Highways

Progress with Highways issues in and around the village has been frustrating due to resource issues within Somerset County Council Highways who are responsible for such matters. Other Parishes in the district have been similarly affected

We continue to diligently report and chase any highways issues seen or reported – but it always helps if, when reporting an issue, you can provide supporting photos of the issue and/or details of any incidents that may have arisen as a result. An obvious safety hazard will normally be dealt with promptly.

You can also report an issue directly to Highways in addition to ourselves through the County Council website or by contacting the Roads and Transport team on **Tel: 0300 1232224, e-mail: roadsandtransportSD@somerset.gov.uk**.

Local Plan Review

Sedgemoor District Council recently launched the first consultation phase of the five-year review of its Local Plan – the key document for development approach, targets and policy across the district.

Consultation for this stage was supported by events run by the Local Authority in neighbouring villages including Edington and Woolavington. backed up by comprehensive information available on-line.

The key purpose of the consultation was to obtain public feedback on initial outline proposals and ideas - some of which were, at this stage, quite sketchy. Cossington was proposed as a Tier 4 Settlement – “a sustainable location for small-scale local growth that meets local needs”. This is very similar to its existing status as an “Other Sustainable Settlement”. There was also some realignment of the village development boundary proposed along with some new, albeit somewhat vague, ideas on self-build projects.

The next consultation phase is scheduled for around June / July 2016 when a full-blown proposed draft version of the revised Local Plan should be available. Finalisation is not expected until sometime in in 2017. A copy of our consultation response can be found on the news item on our website.

In Short

- **First Aid Training** –has been put on hold for now due to delays regarding the new Red Cross scheme and lack of declared interest from residents.
- **Cossington in Bloom** – this year, categories for this popular village competition will include small and large rear gardens in addition to front gardens. Entry will be by application and details announced by the Cossington Village Fayre organizing committee in due course.
- **Cossington's Village Agent – Alex Ward** - The village agent scheme is run by the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) to help bridge the gap between vulnerable individuals and organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs. Village agents are paid, part time, and highly trained - living in the parish clusters they support. If Alex could be of assistance, then contact him on **Tel: 07746 332897** or **e-mail: alex@somersetccc.org.uk**.
- **Flood Group** –has continued with its twice-yearly inspections - carrying out any necessary watercourse clearance work and reporting any potential issues to the relevant authorities to ensure we are prepared for any extreme weather conditions – such as that which caused localized flooding around the Triangle in November 2012.
- **Cossington School** –no further news on the future of the school site although some grounds maintenance work has recently been carried out and the school crossing sign and lights have been removed.
- **Dog Fouling** – issues of dog fouling left on verges and public paths have recently been reported in the village (particularly Millmoot Lane, Trivetts Way and around the Village Hall). It is illegal not to clean up after your dog and these careless and irresponsible acts by a minority will be closely monitored and action escalated if necessary.