

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER No 18

October 2016

The Parish Council (website: www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk)			
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Welcome to our 18th 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.

Below we have sought your views of, or interest in, a number of topics. If you are interested or can help, then please get in touch by *e-mail at info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk* or by telephone.

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

Community Survey Initiatives - Update

- **A Roads and Traffic Working Group** – Roads and Traffic-related matters were the most common causes of concern in survey responses so we will be forming a group to help provide focus on the many issues – led by John Clasby. We are looking for volunteers to take part in this small working group – with the aim of developing and implementing ideas for improving roads and traffic in and around the village, working with the relevant authorities. *If you are interested in getting involved and then e-mail info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk.* Roads and Traffic are county-wide issues. To achieve anything worthwhile here will not be easy - and will likely require imagination, hard work and diligence from the new team.
- **Housing Needs Survey** – a need for some affordable housing in the village was indicated in the Community Survey. The next step is to conduct a formal Housing Needs Assessment with the Local Authority. The survey would also include all local future housing needs (not just affordable) and could also form an important part of providing more local planning control in the future. Initial discussions have already taken place and a follow-up meeting is scheduled with the aim of kicking off the survey early in the new year. Sedgemoor's affordable housing manager, Duncan Harvey is due to present to the Parish Council meeting on 12th December.
- **Playing Field Improvements** – The Playing Field Committee have installed new benches and seating – and are assessing quotes for the improved access route from the car park to the play area. Work on a quarter-pipe skateboard ramp has been delayed until October due to contractor availability. Some replacement equipment for the play area is also being considered.
- **Communications** – Around November we will be trying out a new system to alert anyone who subscribes to significant Parish Council-related news or events. To start off we will automatically include everyone who supplied a valid e-mail address in their recent village survey returns. *If you would like to subscribe, then please send an e-mail to info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk* with the subject of "Subscribe". You can unsubscribe at any time by letting us know at the same e-mail address. This will not replace any of the current forms of communication which will continue unchanged.

Cossington in Bloom

The Parish Council's Cossington in Bloom Awards were presented at the end of the Annual Flower Show in the Village Hall on Saturday 13th August. The combined event was blessed with good weather and was a great success - largely down to the efforts of the organizing team and all those who attended and took part.

There were five categories for the garden competitions. Each front garden visible from the public highway assessed and an RHS judge toured the village and make their decisions during early July. Back gardens were also judged for the first time for those who had specifically entered. Results were as follows:

- **Best Small Front Garden** - Outright Winner: Mr. & Mrs. R. Twose (Barley Close)
- **Best Large Front Garden** - Winner: John Smith & Margaret Walker, (Polden Hills Veterinary Centre);
Runner-up: Geoffrey Cross & Dominique Vasseur (Manor Barton)

- **Best Small Back Garden** - Winner: Mr. R. Blanthorne (Trivetts Way); Runner-up: Mr. & Mrs. R. Twose (Barley Close)
- **Best Large Back Garden** - Outright Winner: Mr. & Mrs. M. Aldridge (Middle Road)
- **Best Hanging Baskets / Tub Collection** - Winner: Mr. & Mrs J. Willmouth (Walnut Lane); Runner-up: Geoffrey Cross & Dominique Vasseur (Manor Barton)

A Scarecrow Competition was also held with entries based on the theme of Pirates. As last year, judging was carried out by a scarecrow competition "veteran" from Queen Camel on 7th August. The results were:

1st - Carole Johnson (Middle Road); **2nd** - The Stradlings (Bell Lane); **3rd** - Julie Wilbourn (Manor Road)

Next year we are looking to replace the scarecrow competition with something of wider appeal to the village, perhaps aimed at younger entrants. *If you have any ideas, please e-mail info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk.*

The Bridge School Update

As mentioned in previously newsletters, The Bridge School will be moving into the old Cossington School as its new headquarters. The Bridge School is a pupil referral unit – and in addition to the school support and administration staff, the Cossington site will provide education for a small number of secondary-aged pupils with special medical needs and primary-aged pupils who need special attention.

You will have noticed work taking place on the site to get ready for the official opening – which has been delayed until early December. No major external changes are planned for the site's buildings or the site itself – although there will be some minor changes to the position and type of fencing. Most of the trees are protected by a preservation order – although a small unprotected Walnut tree may need to be removed for repositioning of the oil tank and a protected Sycamore is undergoing detailed examination for extent of disease.

The school will be arranging an open morning for village residents once it is up and running.

Local Plan Review Consultation

Sedgemoor District Council are currently due to launch the second major public consultation phase of the five-year review of its Local Plan around the start of January 2017 (delayed from October this year). This is the key document for planning and development strategy, targets and policy across the district.

This should provide the first sight of a full draft document following on from previous consultation late in 2015 which sought public opinion on some general principles for consideration – some of which were quite sketchy.

As previously, we would expect consultation to be supported by events run by the Local Authority in neighbouring villages, backed up by comprehensive information available on-line.

More information will appear on our website and on the noticeboard when available. The target timescale for adoption of the new plan is now early 2018.

In Short

- **NHS Health Checks in Cossington** – An event for free local (Cossington-based) NHS Health Checks for residents between the ages of 40 and 74 (subject to certain conditions) can be arranged if there is sufficient interest in the village. *To register your interest contact us at info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk or call Lynn Woodward.*
- **Asset of Community Value (ACV) application** – following an enquiry from a resident, we have applied to have the Red Tile listed as an ACV. If the application is successful it may provide some help to preserve the site from redevelopment in the future although this cannot be guaranteed.
- **Planters & Big Tree Stone** - To help keep the village looking good, several of the village roadside flower tubs have been replaced – with another due shortly. The two new tubs opposite the school were kindly donated by a resident. Our thanks are also due to the resident who varnished the bench around the Big Tree stone.
- **Speed Indicator Device (SID) Theft** - during the summer, the speed sign at the eastern end of Middle Road which occasionally supports a SID was vandalized and the SID unit (around £2,500 in value) was forcibly removed and stolen. The incident has been reported to the police by both ourselves and Somerset County Council Highways (with full tracking information provided) and is under investigation
- **Mobile Speed Cameras** – in response to resident enquiries we have arranged for police mobile speed camera monitoring in Middle Road - following sign-off of the Traffic Regulation Order by County Highways.
- **Mobile Library and Public Phone Box** - we have been informed that Somerset County Council Mobile Libraries intend to cease stopping at Station Road from December 2016 due to a lack of use of the service. The public phone box opposite the school is also earmarked for removal.
- **New Telecommunication Base Station Proposals** - there are proposals for a new mobile phone mast between Cossington and Chilton Polden – off Middle Road at the eastern edge of the Parish. They are in the pre-planning stage at the time of publication but could provide a solution to the poor mobile reception in most of Cossington. More details can be found on our website.