

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER No 19

May 2017

The Parish Council (website: www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk)			
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Welcome to our 19th 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 Bridge School, and on the Parish Council's web-site.

New Planning Policies and Targets - The Sedgemoor Local Plan

The Sedgemoor Planning Policies and Targets are currently in the final stages of a five-year review with the second public consultation period having been completed in March. The proposals will be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval – with full adoption expected around Spring 2018.

In the proposals, Cossington has been categorised as a Tier 4 settlement – very similar to its current status of an “Other Sustainable Settlement” where the emphasis is on small scale growth to meet local needs. Cossington is one of ten Tier 4 settlements, which are collectively targeted to deliver 280 new homes by 2032 – under 2 a year per settlement on average.

There have been some relatively minor extensions to the village development boundary, some tightening up of the district-wide policies for exceptional development outside the development boundary and some new proposals to support small scale self-build initiatives for those with a local connection and need.

For more information see www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/LocalPlan

Housing Needs Assessment for Cossington

The new Local Plan places a major emphasis on delivering affordable housing across the district. It is proposed that that any major housing developments (10 dwellings or more) in a Tier 4 settlement like Cossington should consist of at least half of affordable housing to meet defined local (village) needs.

Local affordable housing needs must be established through an official Sedgemoor sponsored housing needs assessment. The last assessment in Cossington was completed in 2006 and is now well out of date.

Since late last year we have been working with Sedgemoor on a new assessment. However, we are proposing a new approach which will not only encompass affordable housing but also seek residents' views on village housing in general. This will help us determine if it is worthwhile pursuing other local housing-related initiatives such as developing a neighbourhood plan to give more local control over development.

The new approach has caused some delays at the Sedgemoor end – but we are hoping to issue the survey with the next newsletter due at the end of October. It will be supported by a drop-in session at the village hall which will be able to provide more information regarding affordable housing and planning policy in general.

Cossington in Bloom – 2017 details

The popular Cossington in Bloom contest returns this year so get your front gardens in good shape in time for judging which will commence with shortlisting around the end of June / early July. There is no need to enter – all front gardens visible to the public are automatically considered.

Prize Categories for 2017 are Best Small Garden / Garden Area, Most Colourful Garden, Best Kept Garden and Best Tub / Hanging Basket Display.

The Bridge School are now firmly established as part of the village so there will also be prizes for their pupils based on art /handiwork themes – just as there used to be for the old primary school.

Category Winners will be announced at the village flower show on Sat.12th August and will have their names engraved on the trophies displayed in the Village Hall. The winners and runners up will also receive a commemoration certificate.

A Reminder to Dog Owners

There has been a noticeable increase in dog ownership in the village over recent years. Dogs bring enjoyment to many, and the majority of owners are responsible. However, there are a few who are not so diligent and create a problem for others. Dog owners, please remember the following:

- **Dog Fouling:** Leaving your dog's mess anywhere accessible to the public is unsightly, a health hazard and against the law regardless of whether it is on public or private land or whether or not it is in a bag. Offenders are liable to prosecution. The situation isn't as bad in Cossington as in other areas, partly due to some of the more conscientious residents picking up mess left by thoughtless owners. Please dispose of your dog's mess responsibly by preferably taking it home or depositing it, bagged and sealed, in one of the public waste bins
- **Private Land:** Some local land owners allow walkers and dog owners to walk on their land despite there being no recognized public right of way. Remember that you have no legal rights to walk there – it is at the landowners discretion. Dogs should be kept under control at all times, taking special care where there is work going on and/or around livestock and crops. Law regarding dog fouling applies here as well as on public land.

In the next few months we plan to include a section for dog owners in both the Welcome Pack provided to new residents and on our website. This will include a map of local public footpaths and other nearby walks of interest.

Playing Field Update

Improvements to the Playing Field have continued with a basket swing being installed to replace the old one due to damage and general wear and tear. This was enabled by grant funding.

The 2016 Village Survey revealed a requirement for a better path between the car park and the play area / Sustrans cycle path. A stone and gravel path has consequently been installed to make access easier and drier. This was quite an expensive job. Plans for the skateboard ramp have therefore been put on hold for the time being. The Playing Field committee are grateful for a £1,500 contribution received from "The Village People" which was raised from recent successful events.

Following the demise of Red Tile FC last season, Woolavington FC have recently assumed use of the football pitch. They have been proactive in helping with a number of minor improvements and general maintenance. We understand their use is likely to continue into next season.

Roads and Traffic Working Group

Issues relating to Roads and Traffic came out as the biggest general concern to Cossington residents in the 2016 survey. It was therefore disappointing to see that requests for volunteers to help with the proposed Roads and Traffic Working Group drew a complete blank. The idea has therefore been put on hold for the time being.

We will continue to report any road and traffic issues to County Highways as they arise although, for organisational and resource reasons, getting satisfactory action is proving difficult. From the reactions of other Parishes to a recent presentation by County Highways we are not alone with such problems.

Parish Council News Alerts

Following the 2016 survey we started an email-based Parish Council news alerts system. There are currently 61 residents who subscribe to the service. Subscription is free –all you need to do to subscribe is to send an e-mail to info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk with a subject of "Subscribe". No other personal information is required. You can cancel your subscription at any time.

In Short

- **The Bridge School** – After months of preparatory work, The Bridge School opened in January and is now in full swing. A very interesting and informative open day for residents was held shortly after opening.
- **Telecommunications Mast** – The planning application for a mobile telecommunications mast for Vodafone and Telefonica (O2) at the eastern parish boundary has been approved and developments are awaited. This will hopefully result in much needed mobile phone coverage in the village
- **Parking and Traffic** – A number of minor incidents have been reported relating to parked cars blocking visibility at road junctions and inhibiting access. Please remember to park in a position which avoids such issues. Persistent issues can be reported to the local PCSO (Police Community Support Officer), Lora Bray (7528), who will take appropriate action. Lora's contact details are Email: lora.bray@avonandsomerset.police.uk, Mobile 07825 125099.