



VILLAGE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY Stage 1 Results Summary

During November we instigated Stage 1 of a Housing Needs survey for Cossington, in conjunction with Sedgemoor District Council. Response forms were delivered to all village households with the last newsletter – backed up by a well-attended stand at the St. Mary’s Church Christmas Fayre and a presentation to a Cossington Friends and Neighbours meeting.

The purpose of the survey was to:

- Through Stage 1, obtain your views on future development (both general and affordable housing) to help determine if the Parish Council should investigate getting more local control on what happens and where
- Through Stage 2, determine the official local need for affordable housing over the next few years – an important consideration in planning policy. This is through a confidential “Expression of Needs” process between the applicant and Sedgemoor District Council.

The results of Stage 1 are summarised below with more detail available at www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk All subscribers to our e-mail alerts service will also receive more detailed information electronically (see overleaf for how to subscribe).

Responses - 78 completed forms were returned – about a quarter of those sent out (note: Sedgemoor usually only expect a 10% response). Over half of forms returned contained contact details. Our thanks are due to all residents who took the time and interest to take part.

General Housing - 60% of responses thought that Sedgemoor’s average new housing targets for a Tier 4 settlement (around 1 or 2 houses per year) are about right – with equal numbers thinking it was either too high or too low. Houses and Bungalows were much preferred to the other options – which included flats and sheltered housing – with a roughly equal importance to small (1/2 bedrooms) and average (3 bedrooms) dwellings. 4+ bedroom dwellings were generally thought to have little need. Regarding dwelling situation, individual houses and small clusters (less than 5 dwellings) were considered most important, followed by small developments (less than 10 houses). Large developments (10 houses or more) were generally unpopular.

Parking provision and control were the most frequently mentioned dependencies for new developments along with road maintenance, traffic speed control and A39 access visibility. Having a Village Shop / Post Office and maintaining an effective Public Transport service were also frequent comments

Affordable Housing - 88% of respondents thought that there should be at least some more affordable housing in Cossington – with no general preference as to who this should be for. 12 respondents thought they could have a personal need for affordable housing (6 within the next 5 years). In addition, 16 additional requirements were mentioned as being needed for family members (7 within the next 5 years). At the time of publication, no one from Cossington has submitted a Sedgemoor Stage 2 “Expression of Interest” response. This is a completely confidential process between the applicant and Sedgemoor District Council and is required for any stated need in Stage 1 to count towards the official affordable housing requirement for Cossington.

Anyone can contact Sedgemoor District Council’s Affordable Housing Team to request an Expression of Interest Form even if you did not respond to Stage 1 of the survey (telephone: 0300 303 7800, e-mail: affordable.housing@sedgemoor.gov.uk). Alternatively, a form can be downloaded and completed on-line at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/affordablehousing

What Next: Time will be given for the Stage 2 “Expressions of Interest” to filter through to Sedgemoor. Those non-anonymous respondents who declared an interest in affordable housing in Stage 1 will be reminded about a Stage 2 submission, if appropriate. The Parish Council will then consider the results to determine if there is any further work necessary. In the meantime, responses to Stage 1 will be borne in mind when responding to any new planning applications.

Other News

New Village Nameplates - Hopefully you will have seen the new village nameplates at the Manor Road and Brent Road approaches to the village. They look quite distinctive with the Big Tree image taken from a sketch by Parish Councillor Nigel Downing – based on a 1950's photo. The new signs used the old posts. A similar sign for the Middle Road approach has also been ordered but, as this needs new posts, is carried out by a different County Highways department and will take a little longer. The donation by the Village People towards the cost is much appreciated.



New Noticeboard - Following the collapse of the old noticeboard after over 30 years, a new one has been installed in the same location (opposite the School). The left-hand side has been made available for public use, as before, whilst the right-hand side is reserved for Parish Council use. The temporary noticeboard in the Middle Road bus shelter will be removed in due course.

Dog Fouling - With shorter hours of daylight, there has been an unwelcome increase in dog fouling around the village – including on pavements and in front of dwellings. As has often been said this is not only irresponsible, unhealthy and anti-social – but it also is illegal and carries heavy fines. We understand that some ad-hoc surveillance groups have been set up by long suffering residents to try and identify persistent offenders. The Parish Council will also be increasing its own surveillance measures as polite reminders have not proved as effective as we would have liked.

Traffic Speed Control - After over a year, County Highways have finally agreed to reissue a new TRO (Traffic Regulations Order) to enable Mobile Speed Camera monitoring to take place in Middle Road – replacing the one they lost in 2016. Our thanks are due to Somerset and Avon Police in helping resolve the situation. The police are ready to go as soon as the new TRO is ready.

Cossington In Bloom 2018 – We understand from the event organizers that there will not be a Cossington Flower Show this year. However, the popular Cossington In Bloom competition, where all front gardens in the village are automatically entered, **will take place as usual**. A suitable event for prizegiving is currently being discussed and more details, including information about the 2018 categories, will be announced soon

Proposed Woolavington Pharmacy – A license to open an independent Pharmacy at the old Co-op site in Woolavington was granted on appeal to Magna Health after previously being rejected by NHS England. This came as a surprise as the Parish Council were not made aware of the appeal. If this goes ahead then nearly all Cossington Residents would no longer be able to collect their prescriptions from the surgeries at Edington or Woolavington – with the surgery at Woolavington abandoning their plans for an on-site pharmacy. The freehold for the old Co-op site is owned by the District Council who are weighing up the relative merits of alternative proposals for the site lease – including a cross-Parish proposal being formulated for something likely to be of greater future benefit to the community.

Neighbourhood e-Watch - You would have recently received an information sheet regarding the new on-line information service regarding known local criminal activity in the area. You can register at www.e-watch.org.uk.

Subscription to Parish Council News - You can subscribe to the Parish Council's e-mail News Alerts service by sending an e-mail to info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk with a Subject of "Subscribe". Subscription is free and confidential – and only your e-mail address is required. There are currently 75 residents who subscribe..

The Parish Council (website: www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk)			
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Local Councillors		Parish Council Clerk & Main Contact	
Alison Hamlin (<i>District</i>)	☎ 01278 783798	Richard Young, 5 Channel Court, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1NE	
Mark Healey (<i>County / District</i>)	☎ 01278 723552	e-mail: woolavingtonpc@aol.com	☎ 01278 789859

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