



No 22 - November 2018

PARISH COUNCIL – Its Role and Powers

Following various recent conversations with residents, we thought it worthwhile summarising the Parish Council's role and powers.

We, like all other Parish and Town Councils in England, play a small but important part in local government.

We have the power to carry out maintenance works on those areas for which we are responsible – and to initiate and support local projects which are of benefit to the Parish. Our assets include the Playing Field and its equipment, the Locks Way and Middle Road Triangles, the Bus Shelter and Noticeboard (both in Middle Road)

We are also an official consultee of the Local Authority for local planning applications – although we do not have the final say on the outcome. This rests with the Sedgemoor District Council Development Committee.

The Parish Council has no specific powers in areas that are specifically assigned to other government bodies (e.g. County Highways for Roads and Transport matters). However, we do regularly report and follow-up on identified issues with the relevant bodies - who have the final say as to whether remedial action is warranted and when it takes place.

Improvement projects in such areas are more difficult – particularly in the current financial climate. Whilst the Parish Council can help, any potential project requires a compelling justification with comprehensive and detailed evidence of related issues and demonstrable widespread community support. Traffic speed control and parking issues have consistently featured high on the list of resident concerns, so we will be looking to resurrect the idea of a Roads and Traffic Working Group in the new year to give focus to this particular area.

The main source of Parish Council funds comes from an annual precept raised as a small percentage of local residents' council tax bills. Additional funding for specific projects can sometimes be obtained from government grants, as with recent flood prevention works. However, such funding is becoming scarcer and more difficult to obtain. We are indebted to certain individuals, local businesses and "The Village People" who have helped the Parish Council fund certain projects either directly or indirectly. We also occasionally benefit from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from the Local Authority for new dwellings in the Parish.

The Parish Council also currently provides grants to local bodies such as the Village Hall and Neighbourhood Watch. Our accounts are published on our website.

****Affordable Housing - Stage Two Registration Reminder ****

In late 2017 we carried out the first stage of a Housing Needs survey. Questionnaires were sent to all households in the village – with around 25% responding. One of the main purposes of the survey was to establish the official local need for affordable housing over the next few years – an important consideration in planning policy. This was to be done through a confidential formal Stage Two "Expression of Needs" process between the registrant and Sedgemoor District Council.

In Stage One there were several responses indicating a potential need for affordable housing for the respondent or a family member. However, none have gone on to complete Stage Two to pursue their interest – which means that the official affordable housing requirement for Cossington currently stands at ZERO.

If you or a family member are likely to have an affordable housing need over the next five years (even if you did not respond to Stage One of the survey) then get in touch with Nick Draper at Sedgemoor District Council's Affordable Housing Team (*e-mail: nick.draper@sedgemoor.gov.uk, tel: 01278 435773*) to get an Expression of Interest Form or to find out more. A form can also be downloaded or completed on-line at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/affordablehousing.

As previously mentioned, Stage Two is a confidential process with Sedgemoor District Council. We get to see the total numbers – but have no access to or knowledge of registrant details.

Cossington in Bloom – 2018 Results

The annual village Flower Show took a break this year – so prizegiving for the Cossington In Bloom contest took place at special Family Day at the Village Hall on 2nd September. All front gardens visible to the public were automatically entered with prizes being decided by an experienced independent judge in July. Prize winners are shown below – with the first prize winners having their names engraved on the relevant cups and all receiving a

commemoration certificate. Prizes of garden vouchers were also awarded to the Overall Best in Show (*) and Overall Runner-Up (**). Prize-winners were:

- **Best Small Garden:** 1st - Mr & Mrs Clarke, 18 Middle Road; 2nd - Mrs Teakle, 16, Bell Lane; 3rd - Mrs Skinner, 9 Trivetts Way
- **Most Colourful Garden:** 1st - Mr & Mrs Bell, Brookhayes Farm, Bell Lane (** Overall Runner-Up), 2nd – Mr & Mrs. Whitelock, April Rise, Manor Close; 3rd - Mr Stone, Manor Barn, Manor Road
- **Best Kept Garden:** 1st - Mr & Mrs Kemmish, Conifers, Middle Road; 2nd - Mr & Mrs Trunks, The Borie, Middle Road; 3rd – Mrs. Offer, The Old Post Office, Manor Road
- **Best Tub / Basket Display:** 1st - Mr & Mrs Baker, Chantmarle, Bell Lane (* Overall Winner); 2nd - Mr Clasby, Summerhayes, Walnut Lane; 3rd - Mr & Mrs Watts, 7 Park Crescent

The well-attended Family Day also included a "Cossington's Got Talent" competition which was won by Jess Ingram with her fine rendition of "Tightrope" (from the film "The Greatest Showman"). Our thanks are due to "The Village People" for staging this event at short notice. Their next event is a **New Year's Eve Party** at the Village Hall. See the noticeboards and local press for more information.

New ideas for Cossington in Bloom 2019 are already being considered

Roads and Traffic News

Speeding through the village and careless parking continue to be a major area of concern – as also highlighted in recent village surveys. We will therefore be looking to resurrect the idea of a Roads and Traffic working group in Spring to provide the necessary focus on this issue. Look out for more information in the new year.

The introduction of mobile speed camera monitoring along Middle Road has been further delayed because of speed signs being obscured by overgrown hedging on the approach. This has now been resolved with the help of adjacent landowners and we are hoping monitoring can commence soon – with possible extensions to other village trouble spots.

The new village nameplates on the Middle Road, Manor Road and Brent Road approaches have been well received. Unfortunately, the one in Brent road has recently been damaged beyond repair, either by careless hedge cutting or vandalism. A replacement is being sought (probably at our expense).

In Short

- **Parish Council News Alerts –Village Tidiness** – Unfortunately there have been several instances of fly-tipping in and around the village roads and at the Playing Field. These have duly been reported to Sedgemoor Clean Surroundings for clearance action. Petty littering has also been an issue which has been alleviated by Councillor Dare's voluntary litter-pick round (with occasional help from others). Dog fouling, whilst not reaching epidemic proportions, continues to be an unpleasant and thoughtless issue which needs to be monitored and reduced
- **Playing Field** – Following the annual independent inspection, several improvements and adjustments have been carried out. The climbing wall on the trim trail has also been removed due to wear creating a potential safety risk.
- **Cossington Villagers Group Facebook Page** – a village Facebook page has been launched, which, like those in other villages, aims to provide a village-wide information and communication resource. This is a private initiative not connected to any particular organization or body – but which promises to be of benefit to the whole community. To find out more, look for the noticeboard flyers and the news article on our website – or contact Joe Stradling (*tel: 01278 722932, e-mail:joe_strad@hotmail.com*)

The Parish Council (website: www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk)			
George Terry (<i>Chairman</i>)	☎ 01278 723646	Joe Stradling (<i>Vice-Chairman</i>)	☎ 01278 722932
John Clasby	☎ 01278 722411	Martin Dare	☎ 07811 867433
Nigel Downing	☎ 01278 723552	Edward Ingram	☎ 01278 722289
Lynn Woodward	☎ 01458 840404		
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. You can also subscribe to the Parish Council's **e-mail News Alerts service** by e-mailing info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk with a Subject of "Subscribe". Subscription is free and confidential – and only your e-mail address is required.