

# COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Cossington Parish Council was held in the Village Hall, Cossington on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillor Ms. G. Terry (Chairman), Councillors M.F. Dare, E. Ingram, J. Stradling and Mrs L. Woodward.

Apology for absence received from Councillors P. Blundell and J. Clasby and Somerset Councillor Suria Aujla.

## **65. Interests**

Members had no interests to disclose.

## **66. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **67. Reports of the Somerset Councillors**

Neither Member was present. Recent communications have highlighted issues with the lack of involvement of our Somerset Councillors in Parishes matters. This is becoming more important with the structure and operations of the new Somerset Council. Attempts will be made to address this with other Parishes in the Huntspill Division, who are experiencing similar issues.

Councillor Clasby had attended a recent Meeting of the Avalon and Poldens Local Community Network (LCN) when Somerset Council's budget shortfall was discussed. The next LCN meeting is scheduled for Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January (venue to be confirmed).

## **68. Report from Organisations**

Councillor Dare had nothing to report in respect of the Village Hall Committee. With regard to Neighbourhood Watch it was noted that PCSO Ben Simpkin had left the local beat and had been replaced by PCSO Tom Russell.

## **69. Maintenance Items**

A road defect at Cossington Level would be reported together with a further quantity of fly-tipping deposits at Cossington Level, Bell Lane and Combe Lane.

Regarding the recent flooding around the Triangle, it was reported that the previous flood prevention measures were initially effective but had rapidly become blocked by a large build-up of fallen leaves against the grills to the main watercourse during the persistent heavy rain. Standing water in the village centre quickly drained away when they were cleared. Clearance procedures would be reviewed with local residents. Water had also entered the school and they will be contacted regarding recommendations from the earlier flood group which had not been implemented – and may have helped prevent the problem. Thanks were due to the residents who marshalled traffic to help prevent further potential impacts of flood water. The monitoring of dog fouling was continuing.

County Highways had commenced the further work previously agreed to rectify the drainage issues in Brent Road. However, they could not guarantee that this would permanently resolve the surface water issue due to the unpredictable nature of underground natural springs. They had now replaced the single sided roundel with a double-sided roundel on the 30-mph repeater signpost at Middle Road.

The work in the vicinity of Footpath BW 37/14 to the south of Combe Lane would be kept under review until completion.

## **70. Finance**

a) The following payments were authorised

001053	GWB Services	grass cutting and maintenance	£504.60
001054	Parish Clerk	payroll & sundry payment reimbursement	£674.61

001055 Cossington Village Hall	grant	£400.00
001056 Cossington PCC	grant	£50.00
001057 Cossington N. Watch	grant	£50.00

b) Members gave consideration to the Estimates for 2024/25. It was likely that the Parish Council might have to incur more expenditure on maintenance work in the parish during 2024/25 in view of the financial situation facing Somerset Council. It was felt therefore that the precept should be increased for the first time in seven years to ensure sufficient balances were available. It was agreed that the estimates be approved and the precept for 2024/25 be fixed at £12,000, an increase of £1,000. A public consultation by Somerset County Council regarding the implications of their budget shortfall was imminent.

Open Meeting 7.50 p.m.

A member of the public raised issues relating to the relevance to Cossington of public footpath 37/14 and traveller sites as they are in Woolavington Parish. The Chairman pointed out that, as they had a greater impact on Cossington residents, Woolavington Parish Council were happy that Cossington took the lead on such matters.

Open Meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

### **71. Planning Applications**

The following planning application had been received

22/23/00011 – Erection of garden wall and demolition of existing wall, 2 Broderip – N. Moore – it was noted that permission had been granted by Somerset Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December as the official consultation period ended on 6<sup>th</sup> December. The Parish Council had sought an extension of the deadline to enable the application to be considered at the meeting but had no objection to the proposal.

It was reported that application 54/23/00002 – Change of use of land to enable formation of a four-pitch site for gypsies and travellers at Green Paddock, Cossington Lane – A. Smith would be considered by Somerset Council's Development North Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> December. The application had been revised from the original seven-pitch proposals but neither this Parish Council nor Woolavington Parish Council had been informed of the changes. Further representations had been made on behalf of both Parish Councils prior to the Committee Meeting.

### **72. Playing Field**

Councillor Stradling reported that he was awaiting a quotation for a replacement see-saw. He would also be in contact with the Archery Club in connection with their interest in renting the playing field hut.

Rachel Dyer and Piers Dyer gave a detailed presentation on work being undertaken at the Cossington Community Wood in the playing field which would provide a community space for all to access. Volunteers had met regularly on site and a wildflower meadow had been established. There were plans to increase biodiversity, plant species of trees able to cope with climate change and to introduce a community garden. Members of the Council would be invited to attend a Polden Environmental Network Seminar in Cossington Village Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

### **73. Cossington in Bloom**

The Chairman apologised for an error in the summary of results in the 2023 Competitions in her article which appeared in the Polden Post and The Link. The error concerned the winner of the Best Kept Garden category – which was Conifers, Middle Road – and the winner has received an apology. The full official results previously published on the noticeboard, Parish Council website and elsewhere are correct.

### **74. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next Meeting be held on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Chairman