

PARISH OF COSSINGTON

The 2025 Annual Parish Meeting was held in the Village Hall, Middle Road, Cossington on Monday, 14th April 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:- Councillor Ms G. Terry (Chairman)

Councillors J. Clasby, M.F. Dare, E. Ingram, J. Stradling and Mrs L. Woodward with 1 member of the public.

Apology for absence received from Councillors P. Blundell and Somerset Councillor M. Healey.

1. Annual Report

The Chairman presented a report upon the activities of the Parish Council during 2024/25, a copy of which is appended to the signed copy of these Minutes.

She thanked the other Members of the Parish Council and the Clerk for their valuable work throughout the year.

2. Somerset Councillors

Neither Member was present.

3. Reports from Village Organisations

Councillor Dare had nothing to report in respect of the Village Hall Committee. Councillor Clasby reported that 2024/25 had been a quiet year in respect of Neighbourhood Watch and Councillor Stradling gave an update on the Cossington Community Wood. Tree planting had taken place and work was underway to increase water storage. Consideration would be given to the creation of a surfaced pathway from the car park to the wood.

4. Questions and Answers

There were no questions from the public.

The Meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman

APPENDIX - COSSINGTON APM April 2025

CHAIRMAN's REPORT 2024/25 – SUMMARY NOTES

Introduction

Frustrating Year

- Felt the impact of Somerset Council reorganisations
- Local Authority doing less – Parish Councils expected to do more
- Reduction in Parish Council powers in some areas

Local Community Networks

- Although we have attended all full meetings and they are better structured, they generally continue to be poorly attended (typically, no more than 8 out of the 23 member parishes attending meetings). Their effectiveness has been questioned but a clear purpose and value is still to materialise
- A new more locally relevant LCN was tabled (in conjunction with Woolavington) – told such changes would not be considered for another year at least
- Somerset Council have put in additional support - and appointed a new more proactive LCN coordinator (Emmaline Kay) – resulting in meetings being more structured than the previous year
- Participated as part of the Highways Working Group – allowing access to data not otherwise available (relating to gullies)
- Next meeting full LCN Meeting – Cossington, April 23rd

Village Maintenance items

- Usual reporting of fly tipping, road defects, monitoring of dog fouling
- Somerset Council investigated suspected sewage in ditches in Brent Road– no evidence but will be kept under review
- Flood risk – purchase of two long-handed rakes to assist in clearing blocked access to main watercourse – but not in time to prevent overnight water build-up due to an unexpected heavy overnight downpour at the end of October
- The new Highways standards for “on-urgent” repairs and gulley clearance have come into force – access to gulley data via Kier (through the LCN) and subsequent discussions with Highways have hopefully resulted in flood risk areas of Cossington being treated more favourably than originally proposed.
- The school clock has been restored to operational status

Finance

- Conducted through normal Procedures, Governance and External Audit
- Exceptional rise in precept.
 - Only agreed a after thorough assessment of impact on residents – minimal (less than £2 per month for band D)
 - Purpose – external highways contingency considering the new Highways standards, urgent major Playing Field repairs and maintenance

- Change in suppliers (e.g. Playing Field grass cutting and bin emptying) due to Somerset Council service changes

Planning

- Year started with finding out indirectly that Parish Council powers in planning matters had been reduced with applications for which an objection being lodged now being able to be approved without going to the Development Committee.
- 11 planning applications including one to be discussed in the meeting that follows) and one in Woolavington – which had a greater impact on Cossington residents.
- Frustrations with planning enforcement – a particular planning violation first reported a year ago had received no substantial response despite several follow-ups (raised with MP Ashley Fox on a recent visit)
- Attended two preliminary sessions for the launch of the new Somerset Local Plan (adoption scheduled for 2028)

Playing Field

- See Saw replacement at start of year
- Urgent repairs necessary to car park fence and path – and maintenance to shelter and goalposts
- Continued and Increased use by Archery Group, “Home” for Sustrans Rangers
- Concern from encroachment from neighbouring sites to the west but at least the boundary has now been fully fenced
- Community Wood – tree and bale planting, planning a wildflower meadow, a number of community days had taken place
- Future use for Vets’ dog show and possible rounders group hire

Cossington in Bloom

- 2024 followed the same format as the 2023 successful event with addition CIB Extra categories. However, this year the attendance at the prizegiving event was disappointing.

And Finally

- Duties carried out with fairness, openness and integrity – governed by our Standing Orders and Code of Conduct
- Thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors and Clerk for their work throughout the year

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Special Meeting of Cossington Parish Council was held in the Village Hall, Cossington on Monday, 14th April 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

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

Apology for absence received from Councillor P. Blundell and Somerset Councillor M. Healey.

99. Interests

Members had no interests to disclose.

100. Finance

The following payments were authorised

DD	EDF Energy	playing field electricity	£17.70
001089	GWB Services	grass cutting and maintenance work	£1,258.80
001090	Parish Clerk	payroll & sundry payment reimbursement	£210.00

In view of the excessively large increase in the affiliation fee, it was also agreed not to renew the Parish Council's membership of the Somerset Association of Local Councils for 2025/26.

101. 2024/25 Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2024/25 and a list of assets were formally approved.

102. Annual Governance Statement

The Council agreed the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 as required by the External Auditors.

103. 2024/25 Accounting Statement

The 2024/25 Accounting Statement required by the External Auditors was formally approved.

104. Exempt Authority

It was agreed to declare that Cossington Parish Council is an exempt authority within the definition contained in the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

105. Planning Applications

The following new planning application was considered

22/25/00001 – Conversion of stable building into two holiday lets and erection of replacement stable building with menage, The Pollards, Middle Road – Mr & Mrs J. Hadley – raise no objection.

The MP and his Chief of Staff had recently visited the playing field, accompanied by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to review the unauthorised increase of mobile homes on adjoining land. A suspected planning violation had been reported a year ago with no material response from Somerset Council despite several reminders. It was agreed that, considering the above and the MP's advice, to attempt to escalate the matter through Somerset Council's formal complaint procedure.

106. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting be held on Monday, 12th May 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman