

COSSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Cossington Parish Council was held in the Village Hall, Cossington on Monday, 9th December 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

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

68. Interests

Members had no interests to disclose.

69. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th November 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

70. Reports of the Somerset Councillors

Somerset Councillor Healey referred to his monthly report which had been circulated and also to the large amount of road works in the area.

71. Local Community Networks

The next full meeting of the LCN would be held in January. Two meetings of the Highways and Transport Working Group had however recently taken place and had been attended by Councillor Clasby with representatives of the highway contractor, Kier also in attendance. Parish Councils would be able to hire Kier (or any other suitable contractor) to carry out additional work such as gully clearance not covered by the new reduced service levels for a specified fee. The LCN working group had suggested that Parishes review their precepts because of current uncertainties. It has been proposed to Kier that the free survey of Cossington gullies (as previously agreed) should take place in January.

72. Report from Organisations

Councillor Dare had nothing to report on behalf of the Village Hall Committee but appreciation was recorded of people who opened the Hall to provide hot drinks to residents affected by the recent storm. The Village Hall and Councillor Clasby had nothing to report in respect of Neighbourhood Watch.

73. Maintenance Items

It was agreed to report highway defects at Bell Lane and possible damage to the road surface on the A39 near Moon Cottage following a recent car fire. A road defect in Manor Road which had recently been reported had now been repaired but concerns were expressed regarding the longevity of the repair. The monitoring of dog fouling was continuing. In respect of drainage, the system in the village centre had coped well during a recent heavy storm. The two long-handled rakes recently purchased to help clear gratings during heavy rain should the need arise would be kept at strategically selected locations. Further work had taken place to the ditches in Brent Road by a third party but surface water from land upstream in Cossington Lane was still not entering the roadside ditches efficiently due to surface defects. There were no further reports regarding odours from the Brent Road ditches.

A residents meeting had taken place at Bridge School, details of which were outlined. The Bridge School premises department were looking into repairs and maintenance of the external school clock.

74. Finance

The following payments were authorised

DD	EDF Energy	playing field electricity	£19.73
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001080 Parish Clerk	payroll & sundry payment reimbursement	£339.24
001081 Cossington Village Hall	grant	£400.00
001082 Cossington PCC	grant	£50.00
001083 Cossington N. Watch	grant	£50.00

Competitive quotations for grass cutting during the 2025 season had been sought. It was agreed to accept a quotation received from GWB Services Ltd as they specialised in parish council work and it was considered that they would provide the best service and value for money.

Members gave further consideration to the Estimates for 2025/26. It was felt that an increase in the level of precept should take place to (a) enable some long outstanding projects to take place such as providing a new car park fence in the playing field and refurbishment of the playing field footpath and (b) to respond to the reduced Highways service levels, the impact of which is currently uncertain.

After discussion it was agreed that the parish precept be raised from £12,000 to £17,000 for 2025/26 which will result in an addition of less than £18 per annum (£1.80 per monthly payment) to the expected 2025/26 Somerset Council Tax increases for a typical band D property.

Open Meeting 8.15 p.m.

Flooding at the bottom of the hill at Bell Lane was discussed and the outstanding request for a cattle warning sign in the vicinity of Brookhayes Farm was again raised. It was agreed to send another reminder to County Highways regarding the signs.

Open Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

75. Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications to consider.

Somerset Council had advised that a shortage of qualified staff in the planning section and illness in the enforcement section had resulted in a delay in dealing with issues including the report lodged over six months ago relating to suspected contravention of Condition 4 of planning permission 54/23/00002 (Land at Green Paddock, Cossington Lane). Somerset Councillor Healey undertook to assist with progressing the investigation into this enforcement case.

76. Playing Field

It was noted that there had been some tree damage during the recent storm.

The Cossington Community Wood Group planned to have a new delivery of trees during January.

77. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting be held on Monday, 10th February 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

Chairman