



No 32 – May/June 2025

Cossington In Bloom 2025

Cossington In Bloom is the annual competition run by the Parish Council to recognise the efforts of those whose work on their front gardens greatly enhances the village outlook and appearance through the spring and summer months.

This year we will be getting back to basics – sticking to the four main garden categories for clarity, whilst speeding up the time from judging to the results being announced and improving the prizes for category winners.

The categories are:

- **BEST KEPT LARGER GARDEN** (*note: “Larger” means around 3m or over in depth*)
- **BEST KEPT SMALLER GARDEN** (*note: “Smaller” means under 3m depth*)
- **MOST COLOURFUL GARDEN**
- **BEST HANGING BASKET and TUB COLLECTION**

The judging will be carried out by experienced horticultural judges from outside the village. Their decisions are final. **THERE IS NO NEED TO ENTER** as all front gardens are eligible.

WORRIED THE JUDGE MIGHT MISS YOUR GARDEN? If your garden is a bit off the beaten track or you are worried it might be missed by the judge then please provide your details of your house address either by e-mail to info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk or by telephone to Clerk, Richard Young on 01278 789859 by Friday 20th June and we will ensure that it is included in the judge’s considerations. There is no need to state a particular category – that is up to the judge. This means that there is no need to have a separate “Hidden Gem” category this year.

WHAT IF YOU DON’T WANT YOUR GARDEN JUDGED? Again, just let us know with details of your address to info@cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk or by telephone to Clerk, Richard Young on 01278 789859 by Friday 20th June and we will ensure that this is passed on to the judge.

Prizes include certificates for all those placed in each category – with the category winners having their names engraved on the cups in the village hall and awarded an engraved presentation salver to keep. Those considered by the judge to be the Best in Show will also receive prizes of garden vouchers.

The results will be announced and awards presented on the final day of the Cossington Church 800th Anniversary Flower Festival – during **“The Big Breakfast” event on the morning of Saturday 19th July** at the Church. Many thanks to the Church Events Team for making this possible.

Judging will take place around the end of June. All those up for a prize will be notified in advance – more details soon. Good luck – and we hope to see you at “The Big Breakfast” in July.

Local Government Reorganisation

On 1st April 2023 the new unitary Somerset Local Authority, Somerset Council, started operation – replacing Somerset County Council – and four district councils (Sedgemoor, Mendip, Somerset West & Taunton, South Somerset) to form the new Somerset Council.

There continues to be confusion resulting from these changes and the associated cost cutting initiatives – all of which have led to a frustrating year. We have been particularly disappointed in the reduction of Parish Council influence in planning matters and the ineffectiveness of planning enforcement, the latter reportedly being due to resourcing issues which we have been assured are being addressed – whilst being reminded that planning enforcement is not a statutory requirement. Highways service levels have also seen a reduction with Parish Councils being expected to pay for any work over and above this through the “Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme”. The latter has partially been the reason for this year’s exceptional Parish Council precept increase – agreed only after thoroughly assessing the impact of the increase on resident’s council tax bills (less than £2 per month on a typical Band D property). The other main reason is urgent Playing Field maintenance work (see the Playing Field Section).

The precept still represents a very small amount of the overall Council Tax charge (around 2.5%) –It should be noted that there was no increase in the Cossington precept from 2017 to 2022 and any increases thereafter have, until now,

been minimal. Any expenditure in 2025/26 will go through the usual thorough and audited approval process. The precept level for 2026/27 will be considered in December.

Reduction of council services and unacceptable price increases has also led to finding new suppliers for Playing Field grass mowing and general bin emptying.

Work has commenced on a new Local Plan for the whole of Somerset, which is scheduled to come into force in 2028, with promised widespread public consultation.

One of the ways the new Local Authority envisaged operating across the different regions throughout the county was through 17 regional Local Community Networks (LCN). Cossington were assigned to the Avalon and Poldens LCN stretches from Cossington and Bawdrip at its western extremes over to Glastonbury and beyond to the east (including 23 Town and Parish Councils). Cossington Parish Council representatives have attended all five ~~its~~ LCN meetings but there currently appears to be no clear direction or plan of action yet emerging from the body. The geographical spread of the Avalon and Poldens and the disparate issues and priorities in the east and west of the region is a matter of concern. However, an alternative grouping we jointly proposed with Woolavington has been ruled out of consideration for the time being at least.

Cossington has been represented at all the associated Highways Working Group meetings which enabled access to some gully data which, following analysis and subsequent discussions with Highways, may help mitigate the impact of some of Highways' service level reductions mentioned above.

Playing Field & Community Wood

Community wood - Approximately half of the trees have now been planted, which mainly comprise fruit trees at this stage but also some fruit bushes at the lower end of the field. The vast majority are doing well, despite the dry spring. Many should bear fruits, including apples, pears and cherries this autumn, all available to village residents, free of charge. In the drive for sustainability, extra rainwater storage tanks have now been installed rather than having to rely on mains water. The bales are also doing well, with an abundance of mint and chard currently ready, and tomato, strawberries and potatoes also coming on nicely.

We have also appointed a contractor to renew the fence around the car park, as well as some repairs to the well-used footpath between the car park and the play area/Sustrans entrance, following a tender process. This is a major job that has been on the cards for several years, but repairs carried out by councillor Clasby have extended the life of the existing fence admirably. This new work should be completed by July. It is possible that there may be some disruption to car park access whilst the work is taking place.

Some other lesser maintenance work is also planned - including the repainting of the shelter by the play area.

In Short

- **Flood Mitigation** – Two long handled rakes have been purchased to assist in the clearance of leaves building up and blocking the watercourse around the Triangle in very heavy downpours and are stored on either side of the usual problem area.
- **Dog Fouling** – residents are reminded to deal with their dog's waste responsibly. This is something we monitor and, whilst most owners do, there have been more "disappointments" than usual with the advent of lighter evenings.

The Parish Council (website: www.cossingtonparishcouncil.org.uk)			
Georgia Terry (<i>Chair</i>)	☎ 01278 723646	Joe Stradling (<i>Vice-Chair</i>)	☎ 01278 722932
John Clasby	☎ 01278 722411	Martin Dare	☎ 07470 158713
Paul Blundell	☎ 01278 722986	Edward Ingram	☎ 01278 722289
Lynn Woodward	☎ 01458 840404		
Local Councillors		Parish Council Clerk & Main Contact	
Mark Healey	☎ 01278 723552	Richard Young, 5 Channel Court, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1NE	
Suria Aujla	☎ 07791 017192	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 on agenda items 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.