



Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Newsletter Spring 2020

Dear Resident

Welcome to the first issue of Cofton News for the new decade. I hope you are all managing to cope under the restrictions and difficulties caused by the Co-vid-19 outbreak. See inside for details of a support group which has been set up by a caring group of Cofton residents. The Parish Council will continue to function as best it can, but there will be changes to some of our meetings and I can confirm that the Annual Parish Assembly, due to be held in May, will not take place as planned.

Can I thank everyone who voted in the Referendum on the adoption of the Cofton Hackett and Lickey & Blackwell Neighbourhood Development Plan held on 12 December. I was delighted that 87% of those voting were in favour of the Plan being adopted by Bromsgrove District Council. This will give us a real say in future planning applications in our area and will enable us to safeguard many of those attributes that make Cofton Hackett such an attractive place in which to live.

Following the retirement of Keith Duncan last year, the Parish Council is one Councillor short of its full allocation. If you are interested in joining the Council and to have a say in the running of your local community, please contact either myself or our Clerk to find out what's involved in being a Councillor, or come along to observe one of our monthly Parish Council meetings in Cofton Village Hall. Contact details are on this newsletter or on our website.

Inside this newsletter you will find updates on many of the activities that Councillors are currently involved with. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all of the hard work they put in on your behalf.

Please take care of yourselves during these difficult times.

Roger Westbury
Chairman

MP and Councillors' contacts:

MP Sajid Javid – sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk

County Councillor Peter McDonald – pmcdonald2@worcestershires.gov.uk

District Councillor Richard Deeming – r.deeming@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Parish Councillors: Jennie Webb, Joan Fay, Claire Fryer, Mike Pattison, John Slack, Richard Deeming, Greg Cook

Chairman: Roger Westbury

Clerk: Andrew Billau clerk@coftonhackettpc.org
Tel: 07496 979153

Parish Councillors' contact details can be obtained via coftonhackettpc.org
or from the Clerk

Parish Council meetings are (generally) on the third Monday of every month (excluding August) at 7.30pm at Cofton Village Hall and are open to the public.



Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Watch Needs You!



We're making an appeal to local residents to join us. We have existed as a very successful Neighbourhood Watch organisation for about 18 years with a proven track record of assisting the Police in tackling local crime. However, membership is now down significantly, despite Cofton Hackett swelling in population as a consequence of the new development on the old MG Rover site.

For the last few years we have had difficulty finding local co-ordinators to cover some areas, which has made the tasks of collating information and circulating alerts much harder to do across the whole Parish. And this week we said goodbye to two retiring long-serving and dedicated members of the committee: our Treasurer and our Chairperson.

We need more local people to join the organisation as subscriber members, co-ordinators and committee members. We especially need a Treasurer, which is a key role in the organisation. Are you interested in keeping crime low in this area? Would you like to help your neighbours? Do you have any spare time? If so, we'd love to hear from you! We're especially keen to recruit co-ordinators from the new development, as this is where we have the least coverage; but wherever you live in Cofton Hackett, we would be delighted to hear from you.

The roles we need to fill are not onerous, and there will always be support from other committee members. Even if you only wish to become a member and not take on any roles, you will be very welcome. Our monthly meetings (which are not mandatory to attend) are usually quite lively social occasions, where you can make friends and feel more connected to your local community. The more members we have, the better the organisation will work. If we cannot maintain membership and fill the key roles, there is a possibility that we may have to wind up the organisation.

So the message is: "Your Neighbourhood Watch: Use it or lose it!"

If you would like to join in whatever capacity – or just wish to learn more about the organisation – please contact CHNW via our new email address: alerts@chnw.co.uk, or drop in at our next meeting, which is at 8.00pm on Thursday 2nd April at Rednal Social Club.

West Mercia Police Traffic Consultation

The subject of road safety is raised at most CHNW meetings. Despite the lowering of speed limits on some main roads, we still have too many instances of speeding and reckless driving, with near-misses and accidents becoming commonplace. However, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion has set out his approach for tackling this issue across the West Mercia area.

The PCC's new plan focuses on three key themes: reducing the number killed and seriously injured through prevention; increased enforcement; and offender rehabilitation and victim support. In order to deliver these, the Commissioner has increased funding in roads policing to improve visibility and enforcement on the roads. Funding will also be allocated to projects and interventions with the aim of reducing harm on the roads caused by those of most risk.

The Commissioner is keen to hear the views of the public to help shape and develop the final strategy, and *we urge all local residents to take part in the consultation*, which can be found at:

<https://www.surveygizmo.eu/s3/90214147/Road-Safety-Strategy-Consultation>.

The draft strategy can be viewed here: <https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL-Road-Safety-Strategy-for-consultation.pdf?x99795>.

The consultation closes on Friday 15th May.



<p>Due to the Covid-19 virus situation, we are having to temporarily suspend normal monthly Parish Council meetings. This also applies to the Annual Parish Assembly and the Annual Meeting, both due to be held in May. The Parish Council are investigating whether meetings could be held on-line, although we await guidance from the Government.</p>	<p>Parish Council Meeting Dates</p>
<p>Covid-19 Support Group</p>	<p>If you are self-isolating due to Covid-19, a group of Cofton residents have set up a support group, who can help with –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• picking up shopping• a friendly phone call• sending post• urgent supplies• emergency childcare <p>Just call 07735 760662 and leave a message or text and they will do their best to help – for free! Please contact them if you can help out too.</p>
<p>The annual meeting of Cofton Village Hall will take place (Covid-19 situation permitting) on 13th July at 8pm. All residents are invited</p>	<p>Cofton Village Hall Annual Public Meeting</p>
<p>One Step Out</p>	<p>Cofton Village Hall is keen to set up a regular, informal social event - probably on a weekday afternoon - for the whole community as part of an initiative called One Step Out. Anyone interested in helping to get this off the ground should contact Shelagh O'Loughlin by emailing her at shelagholoughlin@btinternet.com</p>
<p>We have been advised by Worcestershire County Council that all Parish Lengthsmen will not be allowed to work until current restrictions are relaxed. This also applies to the cutting of grass in our Parish, such as at the Play Area and Rose Hill Island. Please bear with us during these times.</p>	<p>Parish Lengthsman</p>



Highways, Open Spaces & Environment Report

Over the last few months there has been a consultation on the possibility of opening up a path to allow new allotment holders to access the land-locked allotment site behind The Grove and Oakfield Drive. The Parish Council, who own the allotment site, believe there is potential for up to nine new allotments on the site. St Modwen own the adjacent land and have indicated they are willing to enter into legal discussions about the transfer of a strip of land for access to the allotments to the Council. The pathway, once completed, will be used solely for the purpose of providing access for maintaining allotments. The boundary will remain securely fenced and locked to everyone except allotment holders. Section 106 monies will be used to help prepare and secure the pathway. This represents real progress.

A Land Asset review, plotting the land for which the Parish Council is responsible, is now complete. The review was undertaken with the help of Horton's solicitors and was deemed necessary because some of the existing Council documents were outdated.

Councillor Fay has successfully arranged for logs to be cleared from Lickey Coppice, following tree pruning work. Some residents believed these logs represented a potential traffic hazard.

Councillor Pattison has helped resolve the problem of raw sewage leaking from a manhole on Groveley Lane. The sewage was running across East Works Drive at the entrance to the Cofton Fields estate.

Regular, routine inspections of the Myhill Field play area have taken place and an annual ROSPA inspection is due to be implemented in March. The play area remains in good condition.

Essential tree pruning has occurred at the Myhill Allotments.

The constant upkeep of our aging street lamps continues. Please report any lamp you notice failing to our Clerk, contact details on this newsletter.

Cllr Mike Pattison and Cllr Joan Fay



Finance and General Purposes Report

The Parish Council has completed its budget planning for the next financial year (starting in April). A precept (the Parish Council's share of the Council Tax) request of £47,290 was submitted to Bromsgrove District Council in January. This represents an increase in the precept of £6,610 from the financial year 2019/20 and for a Band D household this represents an increase of £3.09 (8%) over the year. The Parish has seen an increase in the Tax Base (number of band D equivalent households) from 1,008.1 in 2019/20 to 1,088.5 in 2020/21.

In the next financial year, the Parish Council is budgeting for a total income of £100,140. In addition to the precept this includes rental income, grants, allowances plus the s106¹ contribution of £47,200 towards open space maintenance and improvement. It should be noted that we expected to receive the £47,200 s106 money in the financial year that has just ended but this did not materialize. We are hopeful of receiving it from Bromsgrove District Council this year.

We are anticipating spending just under £74,000 in the next financial year and therefore making a net contribution to our total reserves of approximately £26,000.

The new village hall (Cofton Village Hall) was completed and handed over to the Parish Council in the summer of 2019. The legal sale agreement and transfer documentation were completed in August and September. The PC leases the new hall to the charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) Cofton Village Hall who manage the routine running of the hall. The Parish Council has access to the new hall for public meetings, administrative meetings, storage space etc. As was anticipated in last year's budget, the Parish Council made a grant of £12,500 to the new hall as a contribution to the setup costs.

The tenants of the Mission Hall, owned by the Parish Council, surrendered their lease and vacated the property in December 2019. This has resulted in a loss of rental income and has also required the PC to invest in legal costs and some minor refurbishment of the property prior to the new tenants taking occupation in the spring.

Although we were hoping to have completed the Parish Council's asset review by this time, the legal aspects of acquiring the new Village Hall from St Modwen occupied more time and resource than was originally envisaged. We are hoping to get back on track with this in 2020.

Cllr John Slack

¹ Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), commonly known as s106 agreements, are a mechanism which make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, that would not otherwise be acceptable.



Annual Carol Service

The annual Chestnut Drive, Cofton Christmas Carol Service was held on Friday 20th December.

The rain stopped just in time, as neighbours and friends assembled to celebrate at this important time of year, singing carols and remembering the importance of the Christmas story, whilst sipping mulled wine and munching on mince pies.

As usual, Lucy, Sarah, Sara and Carol worked hard to organise refreshments and we appreciated Reverend Rob Fieldson's support in ensuring hymns were sung to full effect and giving us his time at such a busy time of year. Everyone, once again was very generous with charity donations which are always in aid of local needs, and we are pleased to announce that £285.00 was raised. This year the money is to be spent on supporting children in the student support centre at Waseley Hills High School, and we are looking at resources to support children who may have long term illnesses or social and emotional needs.

Many thanks to all involved in this superb charity event.

Joce Williams , Head of Year 7 and Associate Assistant Head (on behalf of Waseley Hills High School)





COFTON
VILLAGE HALL

HALL MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

After interviewing several excellent candidates, the Trustees are delighted to announce that Sam Chatterley (Chatterley LTD) has been appointed as the primary contact for managing the routine operations of Cofton Village Hall. He took-up the post from 1st February. Sam is already known to many of you as a local resident, organiser of the Stay and Play group, and volunteer bookings co-ordinator. He can be contacted on 07969 046430 or info@coftonvillagehall.org.

BOOKINGS

Availability checks, bookings and hire payments can now be made via the Cofton Village Hall website (coftonvillagehall.org) using the bookings link, these will be reviewed, amended or approved by the bookings team and Invoices generated.

Site inductions for hirers is now an essential part of the booking process for Health and Safety purposes, meaning access will not be granted to the site without it.

VOLUNTEERS

The Hall Manager is looking to recruit a group of volunteers to help support new and existing activities at the hall, whether you are happy to make tea, coffee or cakes, do a litter pick, do some basic maintenance or a bit of gardening he wants to hear from you. If you are keen and have some spare time, please contact Sam on 07969 046430 or email info@coftonvillagehall.org.

COVID-19

The outbreak of the coronavirus forced the temporary closure of the Village Hall and all planned classes, events and parties have now been cancelled until further notice. We're offering all users a full refund or the option to transfer payments to later bookings, this is a temporary amendment to the terms and conditions. If you wish to cancel a booking due to the virus outbreak, then you can do so by logging onto the website www.coftonvillagehall.org/rebooking.

The loss of income to the hall and regular hirers (most self-employed) will be challenging, so we plan to be up and running as soon as we're given the go-ahead. Keep up to date on what's happening at the hall on Facebook or on our website www.coftonvillagehall.org.

REGULAR GROUPS/CLASSES

	Day & Time
Toddler Ballet & Dance	Friday mornings 9.30am Nursery Ballet, 10am Disco Divas
Brownies	Monday evenings 5.45pm
Circuit Training with Hackett Health & Fitness	Saturday morning 9am
Slimming World	Wednesdays 9.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Yoga/Pilates with Holly	Mondays 9.30 & Wednesdays 9.00
Church Led Activities	Foundry, Second & Fourth Sunday of every month at 3pm.
Elizabeth Alexander Physiotherapy & Pilates	Monday 9-11pm and Tuesday 8-9pm
Cradle to Crayon- Dad led Stay & Play 1-4 yrs.	Thursdays 10am-12pm
Sewing Group	Thursdays 10-30-12.30 and 6-8pm
The Star Project (children's musical theatre)	Tuesdays 5-7pm
DNCE Fit with Carly	Thursday evenings 6.15-8.15pm
Craft & Cake	First Monday of every month, 7.30-10pm
Cantare Choir	Monday at 7.30pm
Zumba with Gemma	Tuesday 7pm
Baby Loss Peer Support Group	Every 3 rd Saturday of the month 10am – 1pm

Postponed



News from St Michael's Church

So what is happening in your local Church of England? We have a new Children's and Families Missioner, Caroline Mara, who runs our Sunday morning and mid-week children's groups, as well as contributing to Foundry. To find out about what goes on for children and young people, call Caroline on 07935 245244.

The evening service at St Michael's is now at 6.00pm throughout the year. A member of the congregation wrote: "Evensong at St Michael's is the highlight of my week. A lovely service in a lovely setting, it's the perfect way to unplug from the busy lives we all lead - if only for an hour. You get the chance to think quietly and mindfully about yourself, your faith and your relationship with the world. For these and many other reasons, I can't recommend Evensong highly enough. Give it a go!"

If you prefer something more informal and child friendly, try one of the following: Foundry at 3.00pm in Cofton Village Hall on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, 9.30am Sunday service with crèche and children's groups at St Andrew's, Messy Church for families with younger children at 3.00pm in the Parish Centre (usually 1st Sunday of the month, but not April 5: it's Good Friday morning instead)

You'll get information through your letter box about that and all the Easter services and events, so please come if you can. And remember that from Easter onwards, St Michael's is open to visitors every Sunday afternoon. So call in if you are walking by.

Our church Eco Group has plans to conserve and enhance the church yard and gave a presentation about it to a full church on March 1st. It was fascinating to hear about the history of the area, all the flora and fauna which inhabit the church yard, and plans for additional planting in future. It was also good to be able to offer refreshments to visitors and use the newly installed kitchen and toilet facilities.

Finally, a big thank you to all who came to the Christmas carol services and contributed to the collections for St Basil's work with homeless young people in Birmingham. A fantastic total of £4,600 (including gift aid) was raised which will make a real difference to struggling young lives.

The churches of the parish are well-used and welcoming, so please come and find out how they can help you in your journey of faith. And if you have enquiries about what goes on week by week or about baptisms, weddings, or funerals, visit the church website at www.standrewscofe.org.uk, or contact me on 0121 445 1269, or the Parish Office on 0121 447 7097.

*Rev Canon Rob Fieldson
Vicar of Cofton Hackett and Barnt Green*



St Andrew's Church, Sandhills Road B45 8NR
St Michael's Church, Cofton Church Lane B45 8BD
Foundry, Cofton Village Hall, East Works Drive, B45 8PD

www.standrewscofe.org.uk

