

CUSOP PARISH NEWSLETTER

March 2015

Parish Council Election Thursday 7th May

The term of office of the current Cusop Parish Councillors comes to an end in May and all six seats on the Council are up for election. If you know and care about the parish and would like to represent its interests when decisions are made, then do think about standing for the Council. It need not be time-consuming; It does not require special skills or experience and you don't have to belong to a political party. If you would like to know more about being a councillor, do speak to a current Councillor or to the Clerk (contact details at the end of this newsletter).

To stand you must be at least 18 and a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen. You must be on the Cusop electoral register, or occupy property in the parish, or have lived in the parish (or within three miles of it) or had your main place of work in it for the preceding 12 months. There are also certain restrictions: you must not be subject of a bankruptcy order, have been imprisoned for 3 months (including suspended sentences) or been found guilty of corrupt or illegal election practices.

If you decide to stand you need to be nominated by two people on the Cusop electoral register and the nomination form must be delivered by hand during office hours to the Electoral Services Office at Hereford Town Hall no later than 4pm on THURSDAY 9TH APRIL. The Office can start accepting forms from 23rd March and, if you get the form in early, the Office will check that you have filled it in correctly: if a form is rejected at the last minute you won't have time to re-submit it. You can get a nomination pack with all the necessary paperwork from the Clerk or from the Electoral Services Office. The Clerk also holds a copy of the Cusop electoral register if you want to check whether your nominees are on it.

If only six candidates or fewer stand for the six seats on the Council, they will automatically become councillors without an election. If there are more than six candidates, there will be an election which will take place on Thursday 7th May at the same time as the General Election and County Council Election.

If you have any queries about the process you can phone the Electoral Services Office on 01432 260107 or email them at elections@herefordshire.gov.uk

And make sure you can vote... The way you register to vote has changed.

Previously the head of a household was responsible for registering everyone who lived at an address. From June 2014 people must register as individuals.

The Electoral Services Office have been able to move most previously registered voters onto the new register automatically after checking their details, but for various reasons this has not been possible for a few people who should have received a letter explaining that they will have to re-register individually.

If you have had such a letter, or have any reason to think you are not registered and should be, then contact the Electoral Services Office on 01432 260107.

And if you have recently moved you must register to vote at your new address. You are not registered at a new property automatically, even if you pay council tax.

Cusop Parish Development Plan

You may have noticed that things have gone quiet about the new Cusop Plan since the Questionnaire delivered to every resident last spring. The Steering Group had been working on a draft Plan based on the Questionnaire feedback, but before Christmas decided to put further work 'on hold' until the future of the new Herefordshire County Plan was more certain. The Group feels that the Cusop Plan will be more effective if it ties in with the policies of the County Plan, but there are uncertainties about the latter: it is currently being examined by a Government Planning Inspector and a new County Council will be elected in May - both things that could lead to its being changed. As soon as this is resolved - we hope this summer - the Group will resume work.

Cusop History Group

What do you know about fossilised fish in the Dingle? Paul Robeson singing on the lawn at Ty Glyn? an American millionaire born at Nantyglasdwr? the meaning of the word Cusop? or a school at Pentre Higgen?

Earlier this year a few of us living in Cusop got together to share nuggets of historic value spanning centuries. We soon realised that we had in the making a Cusop History Group that could aim to uncover as much as possible about the history of the parish and, where it connects with Cusop, the history of adjoining communities such as Hay, Llanigon and Clifford.

Initially we are concentrating on parish history, but we hope eventually to cover other topics such as woodlands, geology, indeed anything that is worth recording for the future. We aim to publish the results for each project undertaken on the Cusop website, and so build a body of work over time. A successful example of a similar approach can be found on the Ewyas Lacy website (www.ewyaslacy.org.uk): this gives a flavour of what we are trying to do.

If you would like to take part, either by supplying information you hold or by taking on a project area, now or at a later date, please register your interest with Neville Jones (phone 01497 820398 - between 6pm and 8pm please) or John Wilks (email john.wilks01@btinternet.com)

As an introduction we are planning an exhibition of material so far accumulated - at the Village Hall over the weekend of 4/5th July. Do look in, bring along items of local interest or share your memories with the rest of the parish.

Cusop Website News

Alison Matthews has taken over from Sandra Sheldon as website administrator of cusop.net. Thanks are due to Sandra who has run the website since its inception in 2008. One of the first things Alison wants to tackle is creating a new website. The website providers will be withdrawing it later this year, so we need a replacement that takes advantage of modern website design and is more user-friendly and attractive. If you have any thoughts about this, especially about possible new features, Alison would like to hear from you (820152).

New Street Lights

Sometime this year Herefordshire Council will be replacing all the orange sodium street lights in the parish with new LED lights. These will give a gentler white light and the fittings will be shaped to reduce sideways glare and light pollution generally. It will be on a like-for-like basis: if there is an orange light now, it will be replaced by a new LED light on the same post.

For cost reasons there is little prospect of getting the Council to add new lights, or shift some of the existing ones - which is what some residents proposed during the Cusop Plan consultations. They might be willing to remove some completely, but the consultations suggested there would be no community consensus about this, especially on through-roads used by a variety of people. However, if there is a clear consensus of users, say in a cul-de-sac, that a light is not wanted, it may be possible to get the Council to remove it completely rather than replace it. If you think this could apply to a light near you, contact the Parish Clerk (details below).

Dog fouling

Just a reminder that dogs are not allowed on the Playing Field. There have been a few complaints about roaming dogs fouling it - not what you want where children play. So please keep your dogs under control and away from the Playing Field. And, if your dog leaves a mess elsewhere, such as on a pavement, bag it and dispose of it (you can put bagged dog mess in the yellow litter bins).

Reporting Potholes

You can now report potholes and other road defects directly to Herefordshire Council using their website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-it. It is easier than trying to get through to the Council by phone and quicker than going through the Parish Council. But if you have difficulties with it or prefer not to use the internet, you can still ask a Parish Councillor or the Clerk to deal with it especially if you think there is a bigger issue that the Parish Council ought to know about. Also, the Parish Council employs a Lengthsman who can do minor works like clearing obscuring vegetation or unblocking gullies without involving Herefordshire Council.

Report from the Village Hall Events Committee

Thanks to everybody who has supported our events in 2014 when we put on ten events which were all well received: quiz nights, bingo, a New Year's Eve lunch, storytelling evenings, a 'song & comedy' concert, and a summer barbecue. If you haven't already done so, please register on the cusop.net website so that you can be alerted to future events.

Our prime motive in putting on these events is to enable the people of Cusop to get together in a relaxed atmosphere and enjoy one another's company. And it seems to work! If you have any ideas for events that you'd like to see at the hall or if you'd like to be involved in helping us organise something, please let the Committee know: Paul Graves (822885), Alison Matthews (820152), Kate Hainge (820404), Sandra Sheldon (820125) and Jim Wesley (820705).

Here is our provisional programme for the rest of 2015:

14th March - *Bingo*

Early May - *Quiz*

Mid June - *Midsummer Storytelling*.

July - *Group walk from Village Hall and back for lunch at the Hall.*

August - *Cusop Day lunch at the Hall, maybe with a display of Arts and Crafts by Cusop residents; possibly a bake-a-cake or garden-on-a-plate competition too. Keep an eye on cusop.net or The Link / Wye Local for details.*

September - *Quiz*

30th October - *Pumpkin carving - one event for families, one for adults*

November - *Bingo*

December - *Christmas Storytelling and our New Year's Eve lunch*

Volunteer needed at the Village Hall

The Village Hall is a very popular venue for many events and activities. A 'bookings secretary' is needed to help the team by handling bookings - keeping an Excel spreadsheet diary, receiving bookings by email, post or phone, sending out invoices, and banking payments.

It is an essential role and takes up only about two days a month. If you might be able to help, Jim Wesley would be very happy to talk to you on 820705.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year the Annual Parish Meeting will be on the evening of Wednesday 15th April. If there are any subjects you would like to be on the agenda, please contact the Clerk by Monday 30th March at the very latest.

*Cusop Parish Council can be contacted via the Clerk - Ian Jardin at Burnside in Cusop Dingle.
Telephone 01497 820377 Email clerk@cusop.net*