

CUSOP PARISH NEWSLETTER

December 2016

Preparing for Floods

Most Cusop residents will already be well aware of the risks posed by flooding due to heavy rain (or thawing snow). With winter upon us the Parish Council suggests that residents review the risks and needs of their own properties.

The most obvious problem is river flooding, caused by a rise in the level of the Wye and the Dulas Brook. Only a few properties in Cusop are at risk. If you are not sure whether yours is one of them, phone Herefordshire Council or the Environment Agency to check. Or better still go to the gov.uk/check-flood-risk web page which also has a useful interactive map.

The more widespread problem is surface water flooding. This is usually caused by run-off from the land during heavy rain, and it can be made worse by blocked drains (private or public), high groundwater, and compacted or saturated ground. Given its hilly geography this is a particular problem for Cusop. Moreover, its impact is very unpredictable and can be very localised. So the Parish Council suggests that you assume that any property in the parish could be at risk.

The gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding web page provides important advice on preparations. Keeping a stock of sandbags or flood boards is only the most obvious. Do you know where to cut off your electricity or gas supplies? Is your insurance cover adequate? (Note: the Parish Council no longer holds a small stock of sandbags for distribution since Herefordshire Council withdrew funding for it.) Remember, the official position is that in the first instance it is the responsibility of each person to protect his or her life and property.

But please think of your neighbours too, especially if they are elderly or less than able-bodied. Would they need help with preparations or in an emergency, and could you or others in the community help them? (and Herefordshire Council may be able to help if they have special problems).

...and Snow and Ice

On the same theme, it would be a good idea to ensure you have a small stock of salt mixture to treat steps, paths and drives within your property in the event of snow or ice. Bags can be bought at builders merchants (Note: the salt mix in roadside bins is put there to treat the public roads and people are not supposed to take it to treat their own properties.)

Street Lights

After some delay Herefordshire Council is installing LEDs in our street lights to replace the old orange sodium lamps. LEDs are intended to save money and carbon emissions, but their new fittings also mask the light and prevent sideways glare. Unfortunately, in most places in Cusop the Council is installing the LEDs in the existing fittings, for technical reasons it seems. This means that there is still some sideways glare, although not as much because the light from LED 'bulbs' is more directional than the old sodium ones. On the other hand, some people find white light more disturbing than orange, especially if it is outside a bedroom window. If you are one of those, you can ask Herefordshire Council to put a shield on the offending light. Do let the Parish Council know if you have any problems (contact the Clerk – details below).

Report from St Mary's Church

The Church has undergone some major changes: the organ removed, the rotting floor replaced, ugly fluorescent lights replaced with spot-lights, a new organ in the chancel and a useful new space at the back of the church. Our thanks to Church Warden John Wilks for masterminding the project. We've had an increasing number of visitors and local groups attending our church, especially Cusop History Group / Hay Theatre Group's memorable Henry V weekend in July.

Cusop PCC is very grateful to all local volunteers who help with our God's Acre Project in the churchyard, clearing weeds, pruning trees, tidying up neglected graves and cutting the meadow with scythes. We also want to thank all the other volunteers who have cut down unwanted trees, helped re-surface the car park and all those kind people who have given up their time to form the new "Friends of St Mary's" Group to help support our beautiful church and churchyard.

We warmly welcome everyone during the Christmas season. On *Sunday 11th December at 8pm*, the Decibelles Choir will performing *Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols with Harp*. Our family-friendly *Candles and Carols Service* is on *Sunday 18th December at 4.00pm*. On *Christmas Day at 9.30am* Revd Paul Gill will lead a *Family Communion Service* - the perfect way to start Christmas Day and remind us of why we are celebrating Christmas. Do bring along your family and friends!

FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH Are you someone who doesn't necessarily attend services but loves the architecture and history of St Mary's Church and don't want to see it fall into disuse through lack of funding? It costs several thousand pounds a year just to keep the church open. Could you help by pledging a small donation on a monthly basis? Just £5 per month would make a real difference if enough people participate. If you would like to help in this way please ring Sandra on 820125 or Mark on 820404 for a simple standing order authority to sign.

Village Hall Events

Friday 23rd December at 7.30pm: Christmas Story Telling Evening with local raconteur Phil Smith. £5 per person to include Xmas pudding, mince pies and a glass of mulled wine (or feel free to bring your own drinks). Very popular, so booking essential – contact Alison 820152 or Jim 820705.

Saturday 31st December at 11.30am: New Year's Eve Lunch. See in the New Year as it happens on the other side of the world. Free event, open to Cusopians and their friends and family and also to friends of the Village Hall. Savoury dishes and mulled wine provided but you might like to bring a dessert or something to share.

Cusop History Group Events

Wednesday 28th December 2016 at 11am (note change of date): Peter Ford takes us on the *Armstrong Walk*. See the important places relating to the arrest 96 years ago of Cusop resident Major Armstrong for the murder of his wife. Starts at the Cheese Market and ends at Cusop Church with refreshments. Free for members as our Xmas present (£5 for non-members).

Saturday 14th January at 4.15pm in Cusop Village Hall: a free open session *Finding out more about Cusop History*. This will be an informal group session with an update on our research projects and a chance to share history and get involved.

Wednesday 1st February 2017: visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford hosted by Denise Derbyshire who will give us her insider's overview. This special trip is for members only, so please get in touch if you would like to come.

Visit <http://cusophistory.wix.com/> to see the latest information and our photos of historical Cusop. Email cusophistory@gmail.com or call Sue on 822523 for membership information.

Cusop Parish Development Plan

The six-week public consultation period for the draft Plan ended on 25th September. Every household in Cusop should have received a copy and had a chance to comment. Local businesses and landowners, neighbouring councils and other public bodies were also invited to comment. The Plan steering group is now considering all the comments received and possible amendments to the Plan and will put its advice to the Parish Council after Christmas. If the Council is happy the final Plan will be submitted to Herefordshire Council for adoption as official planning policy for the parish. But before adopting it, Herefordshire must arrange an independent examination of the Plan (and anyone can submit comments to this too) and then put it to a referendum of Cusop electors.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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