

CUSOP PARISH NEWSLETTER

March 2018

Affordable Homes at Booker's Edge

Nine of the 25 new houses now being built at 'Booker's Edge' opposite Hay and Brecon Farmers will be "affordable homes", that is homes sold at less than the market price to local people who cannot afford to buy otherwise. The prices will be £106,200 for a two-bedroom house and £112,700 for a three-bedroom house – less than two thirds of the full market prices.

First choice for these houses will be given to people with local connections to Cusop. This means someone who:

- is or in the past was normally resident in Cusop, or
- is employed here, or
- has a family association here, or
- has a proven need to give support to or receive support from family members, or
- because of special circumstances.

If no one comes forward with such a connection to Cusop, the homes will be offered to people with similar connections to neighbouring Herefordshire parishes. The Parish Council has argued that this should include our neighbours across the border (ie Hay, Llanigon and Clyro), but we do not yet know whether Herefordshire Council will agree to this. Of course some people in those communities will have Cusop connections anyway.

Buyers will have to prove that they cannot afford to buy a house at full price. If they choose to sell on after a period of time, they will have to sell at the same discounted rate they bought at and the whole process starts again, ie the new buyer must have a local connection, not be able to buy at full price, etc.

This is a rare chance for local people who cannot otherwise afford it to 'get on the property ladder'. There will be a fairly short window for bidding for them, probably starting sometime in April. But do not wait until then – you can start now by obtaining an information pack, either directly from the site manager at Booker's Edge or by asking the Herefordshire Council Housing Officer Hayley Crane to send you one (email hcrane@herefordshire.gov.uk or phone 01432 261919). The pack will give you all the information you need about bidding, obtaining mortgages etc.

Please don't think you won't stand a chance, or it's too complicated, or you won't be able to get a mortgage. These houses have to go to someone – and it could be you. And if you just know someone else who might qualify, then please tell them about it.

...and Community Money

As well as affordable housing, the developer of Booker's Edge must also provide Herefordshire Council with a pot of money to spend on additional community facilities. Some of this will be spent directly by Herefordshire on education, but the rest is intended for open spaces, sport and transport in the parish. There may be a bit of flexibility in defining these categories and the money should be spent on one-off improvements that are not likely to be funded any other way. The Parish Council will have a strong say in how this money is spent. As a first step the Council will be looking at improving pedestrian links between Booker's Edge and the rest of the Parish and also at possible improvements at the Village Hall and the Playing Field. If anyone has ideas for these or other possible uses, please let the Clerk know (contact details overleaf).

New Footpaths Officer

We have a new volunteer Footpaths Officer – Sharon Marsh who lives on Thirty Acres. Sharon is keen to get the paths in tip-top shape and is also interested in researching and re-instating forgotten public paths in the Parish. If you would like to help, or have any ideas or problems regarding the local network, then do contact Sharon – phone 822867.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be on **Wednesday 18th April, 7pm at the Village Hall**. This is a chance for all Cusop residents to hear what has been happening over the year, ask questions, and put forward issues for discussion. If there are any motions or issues you would like to see on the agenda, please contact the Clerk no later than Wednesday 4th April.

How the Light Gets In Festival

After a year's gap the Globe's 'How the Light Gets In' Festival is back and this year part of it will be held in Cusop – in the riverside field behind the Co-op. It will take place over the bank holiday weekend from Thursday 24th May to Monday 28th May. We understand that the range of activities in the field will be much the same as those the Globe provided in a field on the other side of the Wye at its last Festival in 2016. There will also be parking and camping in the field across the road from Huws Gray and the organisers hope to have a temporary pedestrian crossing in place. The Parish Council proposed that events at the riverside field should finish no later than midnight, but it turns out that the organisers had already obtained permission from Herefordshire Council to stay open until 3am. However, they say they will employ street marshalls and a security team to keep any disruption caused by people leaving events to a minimum. If you would like more information, or have anything you would like to raise with the organisers before or during the Festival, then do contact manager Mandy Houghton - phone 01497 821762, email mandy.houghton@globeathay.co.uk

Litter Bins

Last year the Parish Council faced increasing problems with the roadside litter bins – many were being stuffed with domestic rubbish etc for which they were never intended, with more dumped next to them. Views in the Parish were divided: some felt they were still very useful and better efforts should be made to empty them; others thought that the bins were unsightly and just attracted rubbish which could be taken home anyway. So, as an experiment the Council removed the bins for six months. This January the Council judged that the experiment had been a success – very little rubbish appeared where the bins had been – so they have now been removed for good.

Cusop Neighbourhood Plan

Cusop's draft Neighbourhood Plan received strong support at the referendum held last October. 34% of the Parish's electors turned out and 86.4% of them voted yes. As a result the Plan has now been formally adopted by Herefordshire Council as part of its planning policy for Cusop. From now on all planning applications in the Parish will have to take account of its policies. Copies of the Plan can be downloaded from www.cusop.net – go to NeighbourhoodPlan/About the Plan.

After the Neighbourhood Plan...

During consultation with residents about the Neighbourhood Plan, several concerns emerged that were not strictly about planning so could not go in the Plan, but the Parish Council made a note of them as ideas that might be followed up afterwards as separate community initiatives. Two of the most popular were **Conserving the Dulas Brook** and **Reducing Light Pollution**. Most people are keen to encourage both, although what to do and how to get it done will need some careful thinking. If anyone has useful ideas about these two initiatives, and better still is willing to get involved, please get in touch with the Clerk.