

Town Councillors unopposed at Elections

Costessey was uncontested with 16 volunteer Town Councillors being nominated for 16 vacancies, (8 for New Costessey and 8 for Old Costessey). This meant that from 11,000 registered voters, there was no requirement for Town Council Elections on 7 May 2015. Only 18 Parishes were contested from 111 across the South Norfolk District that covers 350 sq. miles. The village of Hales near Loddon received a solitary nomination to represent a population of 500. For the District Council Elections, the Old Costessey Ward which includes Queen's Hills and Lodge Farm, with an electorate of nearly 7,000 had a 63.01% turnout, the second lowest turnout locally. New Costessey Ward had a turnout of 67.4%.

After four years as Chairman, Councillor Vivienne Bell stood down from the Town Council and we thank her for her dedication. She said it had been "A pleasure to have served the community" and she had only missed two Full Council meetings in four years. "New Members of the Council have a wealth of experience and are dedicated to achieving positive outcomes for the whole of Costessey over the next four years."

Councillor Tim East was unanimously elected as Chairman of Costessey Town Council. Tim has served as Town (formerly Parish) Councillor for 32 years. He is the current County Councillor having represented all of Costessey for the past 18 years. He retired from the District Council at the May elections after 32 years service to our community.

"Having lived in Costessey for 55 years, I'm really thrilled to be elected unanimously as the Town Council Chairman. With the many plans we have for Costessey, the next four years promise to be a really exciting time in the history of the community I love." There are no plans for the title of Town Mayor of Costessey.



Town Council Chairman Councillor Tim East wearing the Chain of Office that dates back to the creation of the Parish Council in 1894. He is pictured with Vice Chairman Councillor Patrick O'Connor.

Pictured left is an aerial view of West Costessey Hall and Queen's Hills.



Queen's Hills.... A New Parish?

After the May elections South Norfolk Council validated a petition from residents of Queen's Hills seeking to form a new parish council, separate from the rest of Costessey, which includes all of the homes built at the development since 2007, the Country Park, the newly built West Costessey Hall and associated sports pitches. South Norfolk Council will hold consultations on the viability of altering the existing boundary; they anticipate these will take place around August and September. They explained to representatives of the Residents Association that the whole of South Norfolk will be reviewed holistically in 2017, but the representatives requested this review be completed within a year. For more information see www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/democracy/6156.asp

Our Women's Institutes



New Costessey WI looking after the flower beds at Breckland Hall where they meet monthly on a Wednesday evening.

New Costessey Women's Institute will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in September with a buffet supper and entertainment by Susie Turner that will be themed for this special event.

The group is hoping former members will join them and has been busy sending out invitations. Have you got yours? They enjoy outings, meals out and a variety of speakers throughout the year. As often as possible they meet up with other Women's Institutes

Contact Brenda Thompson 01603 742298



Old Costessey WI meets at The Costessey Centre, Longwater Lane and looks after the flowers at the base of the village sign on Townhouse Road.

The first meeting of the OCWI was in 1939, where tea was 1d per cup and Jerusalem was sung at the close of each meeting. There was also a minimum age of 16. There is now no charge for tea. They do not sing Jerusalem at every meeting and there is no age limit.

Meetings are a mixture of WI business, usually concerning future activities both inside and outside the WI, speakers and socialising, with tea and biscuits. Activities include playing darts, ten pin bowling, Rummikub, walks, lunches, coffee mornings and trips out.

Contact Dini York (President) 01603 742098 or Christine Christopher (Treasurer) 01603 743008

This year the National Federation will be celebrating 100 years since its first meeting.

Annual Costessey Football Tournament



Over 1,000 children from 128 teams played in the annual Costessey Football fest at our Longwater Lane Grounds.

Costessey Town Council grounds staff worked with volunteers to prepare the pitches. Stalls included a BBQ, teas, cakes and a bouncy castle.

Boys' and girls' teams entered the annual June event. Costessey Sports Club's Trophy Cabinet is in the Rymarz Gallery at The Costessey Centre.

Costessey Town Council manage pitches and changing rooms at The Costessey Centre and Breckland Recreation Grounds. The newly-built West Costessey Hall also has changing rooms ready for when pitches at Queen's Hills are completed; a project being delivered by the developers

The contents on this page have been provided by the organisations to help them raise their profile in our community. Please contact the Town Council Office if you would like a feature.

Working in partnership to solve problems

We work with you to identify and tackle community concerns. Inconsiderate parking outside schools is common across the country. Enforcement and infrastructure improvements are not our responsibility, but we always lobby the relevant organisations and work with them when we can. Norfolk County Council offers all Local Councils the opportunity to bid for funds towards locally identified improvements annually.

Following successful bids for grant funding towards two bus shelters next

to the Roundwell Medical Centre and two trods on Folgate Lane; at the end of July wooden bollards will be placed on the verge at West End corner of Cleves Way.

The scheme is part funded by Costessey Town Council and supported by St Augustine's Catholic Primary School. Alternative parking for school users is at the Costessey Centre or Our Lady and St Walstans Catholic Church.



Road names... Who decides?

The Town Council is often asked by Developers for suggestions for new road names. The theme of Lord Nelson and the ships he commanded was used for Lodge Farm Phase One. Following on from this, the Council has decided to name new roads on Phase Two, after ships that sailed under Lord Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar.

Occasionally we decide to recognise people who have made a significant contribution to the community of Costessey. Recently we have agreed to name the roads at Queen's Hills after Peter Pulling, Ron Hill, Cecil Sparkes and David Whiskerd. The District Council checks that there is nothing too difficult to pronounce or cause confusion with other areas, and suggestions are normally approved.

Influence and investment by Costessey Town Council

Town Councillors have influenced Taylor Wimpey to widen the A1074, provide play areas/recreational space, allotments and a pavilion as part of a Planning Obligation. Costessey Town Council was successful with grant applications and a 25 year loan application to the Public Works Loans Board to build The Costessey Centre. We also lobbied Developers to upgrade play areas at Queen's Hills.

West Costessey Hall now has the Dinneen Hall & Denby Meeting Room named after retired Councillors Bill Dinneen and John Denby.

The £1 million plus hall was funded in the main by a £675,000 contribution from the developers, £100,000 grant from Norfolk County Council and the sale by Costessey Town Council of the former Youth Centre on Breckland Road, New Costessey and the former Parish Rooms on Townhouse Road.



West Costessey Hall opened 2014

Over £300,000 of Town Council funds was spent on West Costessey Hall including legal fees, design, development, delivery and fit-out, in the knowledge that this was the only way that residents would have a multi-purpose community facility to meet the needs of a neighbourhood as large as Queen's Hills. Original plans put forward by Developers were completely inadequate, so Town Councillors took on responsibility for all aspects of the project. These investments are examples of key decisions made by volunteer Councillors at public meetings. Costessey Town Council has delivered two community facilities within the space of four years and re-furbished Breckland Hall. Not many Parish or Town Councils would be in a position to financially support facilities paid for by the whole of Costessey.



The Costessey Centre (left) opened in 2010. The Owen Barnes Room (right) was part of a £120,000 refurbishment programme in 2014 at Breckland Hall (next door to Costessey Library)



Finance Report by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Costessey Parish Council became a Town Council on 6 January at minimal cost. Council made the decision to change status as it better reflects Costessey's size (we are larger than local market towns), and it gives a better impression of the wide-ranging activities undertaken by Council. It also improves the Council's standing when lobbying on behalf of its residents. There is no change whatsoever in its legal powers or duties as in law both town and parish councils are the first tier of local government.

Costessey Town Council provides many local services: in Costessey we manage 90 acres of open spaces including woodlands, allotments, playing fields and play parks with play equipment. We provide grit bins, litter bins, dog bins and benches and maintain bus shelters. We maintain the closed churchyard at St Edmund's and the cemetery in Longwater Lane and are the local burial authority. We own and maintain Breckland Hall, the Owen Barnes Room, and halls and meeting rooms at the Costessey Centre and West Costessey Hall. We provide substantially more services and facilities than many surrounding parishes and have nine members of staff, some part-time. However, our income is limited and mainly comes from hall & pitch hire, the Charity for managing their allotment rents and burial fees, then the difference is made up via the annual precept through our share of Council Tax.

End of year 2014-15

Overall the Council has remained in budget during the year. The accountants finalised the accounts for the end of year closedown on Thursday 30th April. The accounts will be audited by our internally appointed auditors and subsequently by Mazars, the externally appointed auditors.

West Costessey Hall was finally handed over to us in August and the landscaping of the grounds was done in the Autumn. The hall was funded by the sale of the Youth Centre in Breckland Road and the Parish Rooms in Townhouse Road, S106 developers' contributions through the planning process and a substantial amount from our Major Projects Earmarked Reserves. The final costs have not yet been calculated as we are continuing to fit out the building as necessary and half the retention is still to pay after the official snagging has been completed. We invited residents to view the hall at an official opening and our bookings have gradually increased since September.

In tandem with this new build we have refurbished Breckland Hall and Owen Barnes Room at a cost of £121,917, funded from the Major Projects Ear-marked Reserve, offset by two grants totalling £4,000, with a lovely mural of Costessey landmarks painted by National Citizen's Service youngsters organised by Lola Stafford Consulting, a Costessey-based social enterprise.

Residents now enjoy modern public facilities throughout Costessey. In general community Halls do not cover their costs and our halls are no exception; indeed utilities and rates at West Costessey Hall have proved to be more than anticipated.

As the Council's business increases year on year the office staff are extremely busy in dealing with the financial paperwork created by the business of hiring out rooms and pitches, co-ordinating burial arrangements and chasing debts.

I am delighted to welcome a new member of staff to our talented team, Debbie Bowles, who is our Meeter / Greeter at West Costessey Hall and lives on Queen's Hills. She is fitting in well and always willing to stand in at the Costessey Centre office if necessary.

Budget Requirements for 2015-16

Every Autumn the Council looks at its previous year's income & expenditure, the expected year-end totals and future commitments and sets the following year's budget. The Council is required to budget realistically and would be criticised by the auditors if it did not do so. The difference in our budgeted income and expenditure is made up by the precept, the amount collected through Council Tax divided by the tax base averaged out at Band D.

Currently central government is providing money to the District Council in the shape of a Precept Support Grant as the tax base was slashed two years ago year as an unwelcome and perhaps unforeseen effect of changing the Council Tax Benefit payments system. South Norfolk is continuing to pass on the grant in full to its parishes.

Finance Report by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (continued)

For four years Costessey was able to hold the Band D rate at the same level due to the new houses which had been built. In 2012-13 it was 1 penny lower at £99.60 than in 2010-11 & 2011-2012 (£99.61). Two years ago it was raised to £108.56 and last year we raised it to £110.41. I am delighted to say that this year we have held the Band D rate on a tax base of 4599, giving us a precept of £507,776 with a Precept Support Grant of £50,467. This is a 0% increase in Council Tax for 2015-16.

As the Council has reached the end of its current 4 year plan it has completed many of its planned projects. A few are continuing into this financial year and beyond: the extension to the cemetery in Longwater Lane for natural burials, refurbishment of the younger children's play area in Breckland Park, replacement notice boards, a new website, upgrading the MUGA to a family inclusive games area (FISA) plus working for Local Council Award Quality Gold accreditation.

Every year the Council sets money aside into ear-marked reserves to cover major capital projects in addition to its general reserve. Revenue costs have been reduced in this year's budget for Breckland Hall, Longwater recreation ground, the cemetery, and street furniture. The Council budgets realistically and hopes to be able to invest sensibly to maximise interest and increase income, though interest rates are still pitifully low.

As the Council continues to take on more premises, projects and tasks to provide better facilities for its growing population, Council will need more staff and equipment to look after the extra grounds, play areas and halls. Costessey Town Council will budget for this and will keep any future increases in Band D rate to a minimum.

Hilary Elias, April 2015

Outgoing Chairman's Report 2014/15

This is my fourth Report as Chairman of the Council. As reported in detail in Issue 74 (Spring 2015) of the Costessey Contact, Councillors unanimously resolved to change the status of Costessey to a Town Council. There are absolutely no costs attached to this resolution. Councillors also resolved to retain the position of Chairman instead of Mayor. I am proud and honoured to have been Chairman for the last four years with Councillor John Amis supporting as Vice Chairman along with an excellent team of Councillors and Council Staff.

The refurbishment of Breckland Hall and Owen Barnes Room has been completed. The improvements were paid for by a combination of 'earmarked reserves' and grants. Residents and hirers had a big input into the consultation process and everyone appears very happy with the results. Wherever possible the Council will endeavour to use local companies and trades people for work carried out on Council properties.

West Costessey Hall at Queen's Hills also opened in Autumn 2014 which is another stunning hall and meeting room for the use of all Costessey residents but especially the expanding community of Queen's Hills.

Planning permission for Lodge Farm Phase Two was granted in 2014. The new development will include a community building, allotments, sports pitches and a space for a new school, all to be provided by Developer contributions. Your Council is firmly of the belief that any new development should include the correct infrastructure to ensure new and existing residents are well served.

Community groups are the heart beat of Costessey. Thank you to the many existing groups and those who have come forward with ideas for new activities. A Cinema Club, Farmers Market and Costessey Memories to mention just a few new activities which have flourished and received Council support and grant funding.

The Conservation Area in The Street and West End has been enhanced and expanded. Councillor Tim East liaised with Conservation Officers at South Norfolk Council and the Costessey Centre hosted a consultation event for residents. A copy of the new Conservation Area Document is available to view at The Costessey Centre and the Library.

As the four year cycle of this Council comes to a close I would like to thank all retiring Councillors for their service, help and support. A new Council 'elect' is already in place to take Costessey forward for the next four years.

Councillor Allan Bedford who passed away in February this year will be sadly missed by the Council and by me personally. Allan loved Costessey and epitomised everything that we as Councillors and you as residents endeavour to achieve - making Costessey a good place to live.

Vivienne Bell, April 2015

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS - ALL WELCOME

All meetings of the council are open to the public. Full Council meetings take place approximately every three weeks and include a dedicated agenda item for public questions. Meetings begin promptly at 7pm and are held at The Costessey Centre on the first floor. Meeting agendas can be found on our notice boards and website. Committees and Working Group meetings are held as and when required.



SUPPORT FOR YOUTH WORK

Every year we allocate £6,000 to cover the cost of Youth Work in Costessey. The Cossey Posse meet at The Costessey Centre & The QUBE at West Costessey Hall. Pictured is Matthew Webster receiving a Certificate for voluntary work in our community from former Town Council Chairman Vivienne Bell. Sainsbury's provide the frames and meeting refreshments.



TOWN COUNCILLORS FOR COSTESSEY

John Amis 96, Olive Road 746665
Mark Bedford 32, Bottom Breck Close 749833
Stephen Burton 43, Sunny Close 510842
Gary Blundell 37, Kestrel Ave 741097
Sharon Blundell 37, Kestrel Ave 741097
Tim East 7, St Walstans Close 743241
(Town Council Chairman)
Libby Glover 78, Middleton Crescent 748374
David Gunby 15A, Grove Avenue 280651
Sheila Hannant 88, Longwater Lane 743444
Duncan Lister Holkham House, Townhouse Rd 271279
John Newby 6, Carr's Hill Close 746328
Patrick O'Connor 144, Gunton Lane 748339
(Town Council Vice-Chairman)
Reg Piesse 1, Longwater Lane 744233
Paul Cooper 47, Tower Close 747468
Helen Prochera 23, Bawburgh Lane
Alex Todd Sarum Hall, Hinshalwood Way 748400

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS FOR COSTESSEY

New Costessey Ward

John Amis 96, Olive Road 746665
Vivienne Bell St Mary's, 8 Smithdale Road 743366

Old Costessey Ward

Sharon Blundell 37, Kestrel Avenue 741097
Andrew Pond 11, Folly Road Wymondham 01953 607267

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR COSTESSEY

Tim East 7, St Walstans Close 743241

COUNCIL STAFF

Town Clerk - Hilary Elias
Deputy Clerk - Nigel Bailey
Clerk's Assistant - Margaret Vozza
Clerk's Assistant - Emma Savage
Meet & Greeter - Debbie Bowles
Head Groundsman - Barry Barber
Grounds Assistant - Aly Clarke

*Published by
Hilary Elias, Town Clerk, Costessey Town Council*



www.costessey.org.uk

Over the past few months we have been working with a locally based designer to develop a new website.

For a chance to win an ipod shuffle donated by Eastern Business Systems, send a recent picture you have taken whilst out and about in Costessey. You'll also need to navigate your way around the new website and answer a simple question. Send your picture with your answer and contact details by email to:

info@costessey.org

Closing date for entries 31 August 2015
Competition Term & Conditions apply.

The new website will be further developed to include more content to support community groups. Orbit Housing Association recognised the Town Council's ambitions to provide more information online and have awarded a £500 grant.

Please give us your feedback (good or bad) and contact us with pages you would like featured.

Win an iPod Shuffle

