



## **St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council**

### **Additional Comments in support of the application for village green registration: Bowring Close, Coxley, Wells, Somerset BA5 1RH**

Please find below the multiple reasons why St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council support the registering of two plots at Bowring Close, Coxley, as village greens:

#### **EXECUTIVE STATEMENT**

The Parish Council is assured that promoting the two plots of land at Bowring Close to Village Green status will enhance Somerset Council's green credentials, confirm to the public at large that the county council puts community values at the heart of its environmental policies, harkens to the needs of local populations, and puts community safety the priority when enacting its policies for providing sustainable and much needed community village greens.

The Parish Council for its part has the resources to provide regular ground maintenance, keep the areas in good repair, and provide any protective fencing as required and play / recreational health equipment. Four parish councillors live in easy reach of the land to ensure it reaches its full potential as Village Greens.

#### **NEED & USE OF THE AREA (Annex A)**

1. The space was intended to serve as municipal space when Bowring Close was constructed, in line with the then Somerset County Council & Wells Rural District ambitions for new housing developments.
2. There is historical and well-documented, widespread contemporary evidence from residents of the Close and its wider demographic that the plots have been in continual use as a play area / recreational and general community space since 1973. Please see Annex A for resident quotes.

3. The local residents feel strongly they were not given an opportunity to prepare a consultation when the land was put up for auction and therefore not able to celebrate or support the undeniable value of the two plots officially (until the Village Green application)

#### **LOCATION & SAFETY (Annex B)**

4. The linear nature of Coxley village is its division north-south by the busy A39. Crossing this main highway is difficult and hazardous due to inadequate crossing facilities (there is only one in a distance of 319m and the lack of a footway on the south side of the road due to the encroachment of the churchyard preventing the construction of a safe pedestrian path.
5. The locality has a mixed demographic and caters for young families and older residents – it serves 63 dwellings in the immediate vicinity (Vicarage Close, Church Road, Harters Hill Lane, Harters Close & Bowring Close) and a further 41 in the adjacent estate of The Vineyards, the residents and children of which have equally difficult access to alternative open and recreational space south of the A39).
6. The plots are in a residential area and easily accessible, protected, safe and open.
7. There are no other communal open space facilities south of the main A39. The nearest alternative open space is 943m away & involves crossing the busy A39, the only pedestrian crossing being 305m away.
8. The presence of community focal points – a notice board, dog waste bin & grit bins – shows the area is more than open space, it offers amenities for a wide community.
9. Pavement access along the A39, between Burcott & Mill Lane has narrowed with vegetation (to 800cm in places) and would not be accessible for a mobility scooter, single or larger child buggies and extremely vulnerable to children on bicycles. It is not wide enough for two individuals side by side.
10. The A39 is extremely busy with regular double-decker buses, freight & domestic vehicles. It is not suitable for young cyclists.

## **COST SAVINGS**

11. The Parish Council has already offered to include the plots in its play and recreational area maintenance & upkeep programme thereby relieving Somerset Council of the cost.

## **OPEN SPACE PROTECTION & BIODIVERSITY**

Somerset Council planning documents demonstrate the official planning support for open space protection. The Local Plan II, currently adopted by Somerset Council, identifies Development Policy 2 & 16 specifically as seeking to protect significant open space & green infrastructure:

“Creating, protecting and enhancing these spaces is a vital part of making neighbourhoods more attractive and more enjoyable places in which to live”.<sup>i</sup>

12. Somerset Council’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to be published in early 2025, aspires to involve local communities such as that around Bowring Close to “to foster a sense of local ownership, responsibility, and appreciation for biodiversity”<sup>ii</sup>. The two small Bowring Close plots, when designated as village greens, will provide additional space to engender these values.
13. The Parish Council is committed to protecting biodiversity & nature-rich spaces – the two plots are home to three pollinator-friendly blossoming fruit trees and a well-established sycamore tree providing food, shelter and security for the area’s variety of wildlife. The tree also provides a habitat for small mammals and bats.<sup>iii</sup>
14. The Council actively wish to protect the trees on the plot: a TPO has been made on one of these estimated to be 110 years old (application still in progress), another serves as a swing. Please see Annex C.

## **ANNEX A: Need & use of the area**

**Below are some extracts from residents, submitted as part of the original application:**

“One of the things that drew us to this location was the rural location and with having a small child a space for him to play with other children in the close. I have such fond memories growing up using a space like this in my own close that I wanted the same for my son. Over the last 3 years this has become a reality, with him making friends here, learning to walk, making daisy chains etc essentially being able to be a kid. But sadly if this land is sold this won't be the case.

I grew up in Coxley and have lots of special memories of playing around the close, including those bits of land

There's a lot more cars now and they drive fast around the estate. Where are the kids supposed to play together??

The nearest park is a walk along an already busy main road which I find personally so dangerous I refuse to let my children walk along it!

Over the summer my grandchildren who live out of area came to stay with me and have made friends with children here in Coxley due to the play area. It is unthinkable that children should have to cross the very busy Glastonbury Road to access the park....over the summer holidays both areas of land were a hive of activity for local kids and dog walkers

We live in Harters and having the green space around and close to home has improved not just the children's mental health but also ours as parents to know they have somewhere to play with friends. Or families will meet so adults can also have a social life as well as the children

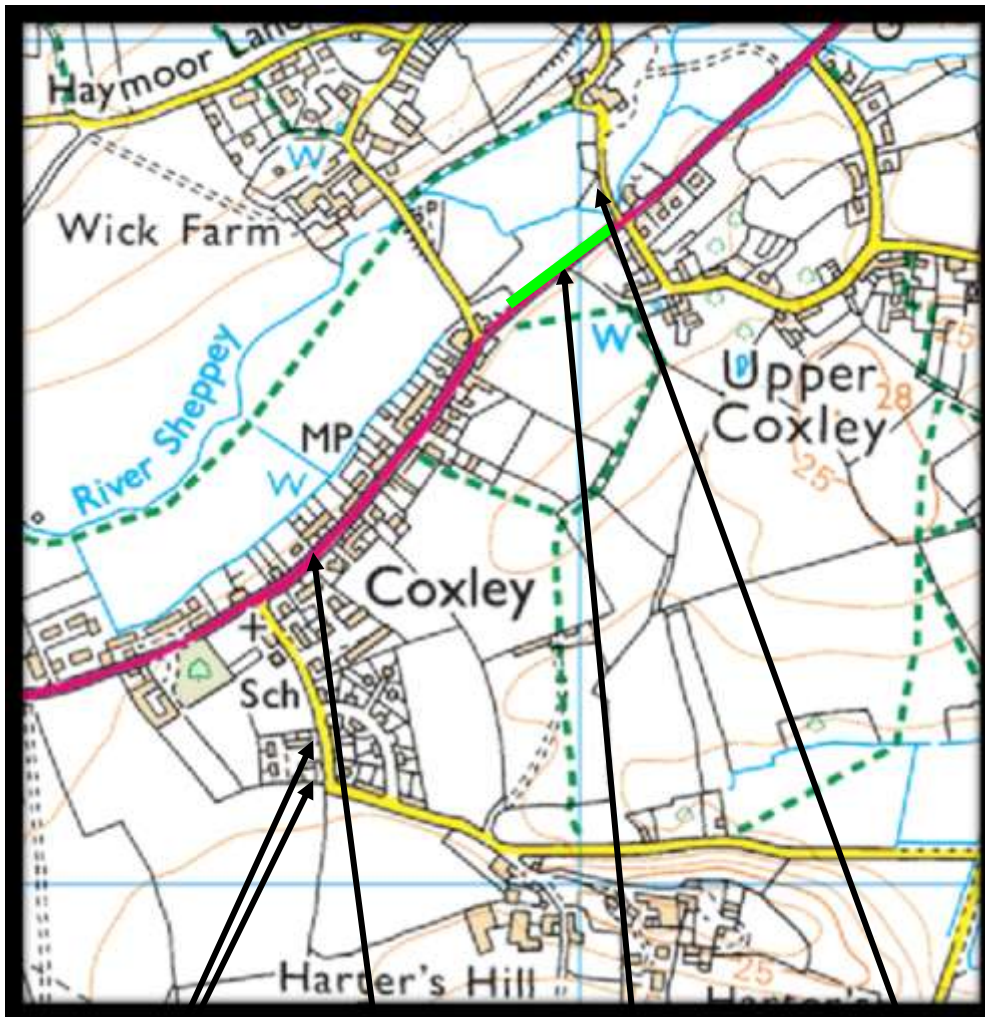
One of the reasons I chose this property was the outlook on to a grassy communal space ....These two spaces are the only place for children to play - the nearest park is a 15 minute walk across a busy main road

We do regularly walk this way and the kids enjoy the space to have a play on the swings and as mentioned above often meet other kids for a short play.

I know there is a playing field but that is right at the other end of the village, along a very busy main road. That is great for 2/3 hours of play but not for a half hour play before bedtime. This land is the only space for the children of Harters Close and Bowring Close to play.

The land next to number 1 Bowring Close that has the swings on it is a much used piece of land by the community, it's somewhere the local kids play, and the adults chat

## ANNEX B: Location & Safety



**Bowring Close:** 2 plots for which the village green application applies to.

**Pedestrian Crossing across A39**  
319m from entrance to Bowring Close

**Narrowed footpath, north side of A39:** 33-35in in parts  
See photo below

**Access to Coxley play area & playing field for wheeled vehicles**  
Distance: 870m



Photo: A39 between Burcott & Mill Lane, Coxley looking east. (Google Streetview 2021)

Speed Indicator Device Results for Coxley, 2022-present. All devices are located on the A39.

SID Location	Date	volume	% over 35mph
Coxley	10-20 April 2022	66,389	13.7
Coxley	16-27 May 2022	65,185	9.9
Coxley Two Rivers	4-12 July 2024	58,009	16.5
Coxley Church	28 Jul – 7 Aug 2022	55,540	9.43
Coxley Church	17-27 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	52,949	9.45
Coxley Village Hall	14-22 Dec 22	56,821	9.99
Coxley Two Rivers	12-18 February 2023	43,868	28.7
Coxley Church	27 Mar-5 Apr 2023	50,390	10.04
Coxley Two Rivers	19-26 June 2023	50,416	42.69
Coxley Church	10-17 July 2023	40,520	9.13
Coxley Two Rivers	24 Oct-3 <sup>rd</sup> Nov 2023	57,800	36.43
Coxley Church	8-15 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	38,643	10.56
Coxley Two Rivers	27 Mar-5 April 2024	55,426	39.72
Coxley Church	13-20 May 2024	39,371	8.4

## ANNEX C: Trees & swings at Bowring Close



<sup>i</sup> Mendip Local Plan II, pg 112.

<sup>ii</sup> [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), Somerset Council

<sup>iii</sup> Acer Pseudoplatanus – Sycamore tree profile – [The Woodland Trust](#)

---