

Coberley Parish Council Annual Assembly May 2014

Chairman's Report

Highlights

- **A417 Loop** - Declared support for A417 Loop Scheme.
 - Carefully-considered decision made only after in-depth enquiries - concerns over potential impact and implications on local community/environment (AONB), visibility, safety, access to/from other roads, etc; assuring ourselves that other potential solutions would not be viable alternatives at this stage.
 - Concluded optimum solution available to urgently-needed A417 'Missing Link'.

Would remove pinch-points at Cowley roundabout, Nettleton Bottom and Air Balloon roundabout;

provide safer access from arterial roads.

Proposed topography will ensure villages and settlements are protected from visual and noise impact of new road and

impact on AONB would be kept to minimum.

GCC & consultant provided detailed & informative 'drive-through' of proposal.

Would expect proposed scheme to bring about considerable reduction in rat-running of commuter traffic through Coberley and neighbouring parishes and create safer access for traffic at Birdlip and Leckhampton Hill road junctions.

Now in Highways Agency Route Based Strategy and await decision regarding Government funding in March 2015.

- **Plaque has been erected at Seven Springs**, acknowledging the financial support for the dry stone wall restoration, given by the 4 sponsoring organisations* and providing information on this local landmark.
 - Grateful to Cotswold Voluntary Wardens for their work in erecting the plaque, tidying the area (and for repairing the parish notice boards)

(*Cotswolds Conservation Board/Countryside Fund; Friends of the Cotswolds; Gloucestershire Highways; National Grid)

- Applied for some of **WW I commemoration funding** from CDC – Proposal is to place plaque on base of sun dial in memory of all parishioners who fought in WW I and to list the 32 names.
- **Welcomed new Councillor** - Sarah Webster, as a co-opted member onto the Council – following resignation of David Plews in August last year.
- Statement re **election of Chair and Vice Chair** for 2014/5 (Duncan McGaw – Chair; Dan Powell – Vice Chair)

Finance highlights

- Year-end 2013/4: **Within Budget; Surplus in Bank & Building Society accounts**
- Significant activity: **Insurance claim** to cover kiosk repair costs: £250 outstanding against claim until excess recovered; Additional funds allocated to **winter grit bins** as start of upgrade programme
- **Precept amount held at £4350** for 2014/5 (as last year)
- **Budget for 2014/5 £4345** (same level as last year)

Full accounts can be viewed upon request to the Clerk to the Council

Major planning & environmental issues

- **Hartley Lane traveller site:** Owner was granted an appeal to remain on the land for 3 years as no provision of suitable sites has been made by CDC for travellers since 2007. Conditions were applied which owner is in process of complying with. Application for 3rd set of stables has been declined.
- **The Paddock, Ullenwood:** Continued to cause local residents great concern, questioning ultimate intentions on site. CDC decided not to take enforcement action against further work carried out without permission, but agreed to monitor future activity. Application for continuation of rail track refused, but gravel track permitted.
- **Korrin Farm:** In Cowley Parish, but impacts Coberley residents. Retrospective planning application for residential caravan. Refused.
- **Salad Bowl:** Local concerns over paraphernalia dumped on site and fires. Pressed for action by CDC and Environment Agency. Resulted in owner given 12-month community penalty, ordered to pay Environmental Agency costs and informed by judge that likely to receive prison sentence if further offence. Site now appears tidy.

Other issues

- **Winter resilience:** Well-stocked for last winter (took full quota of back-up stocks and all parish bins topped up). Mild winter meant stocks not used. Embarked on programme in 2013/4 to place more grit bins in necessary locations and upgrade open bins to purpose-made lidded bins throughout parish over a period of years. Allowance made in budget.
- **Litter:** Have continued to combat litter problem around Parish, working with CDC, which has been responsive to alerts. Main problem areas have been Leckhampton Hill road, A436 lay-by, Coberley lane, village. Need residents to monitor and report general littering and fly-tipping.

- **Speed & parking in Coberley village:**
 - **Speed survey** carried out as part of Cllr Hodgkinson's funding for special highways projects after some concerns were raised by parishioners. 3 monitors placed in the village. The results showed speed and volume of traffic was low. Discussed possible signage but unanimous decision was that there is no need. Will continue to monitor situation.
 - Residents expressed **concern at school traffic** – speeds, parking, litter. Although PC has no direct jurisdiction, met with school head to explore solutions. Most approaches (traffic calming, signs, speed restrictions, restricted access) unlikely due to cost, legal issues or local impact. Head writes to parents and includes reminders in newsletters, but would prefer direct, immediate communication with residents on problems as they arise. PC recommended direct liaison between residents and school but continues mediation to facilitate improved communications and continues to explore other avenues for solution.

- **Highways issues:** Regular communication & meetings with local Highways' representatives addressing road surfaces (potholes), visibility and safety measures at junctions, road signage. Ongoing process.

- As part of CDC Community Governance Review in 2012/13, **requested Parish boundary review** of narrow strip on southern edge of Parish between Lower Cockleford and Park Farm (between Parish boundary in south and A435). More natural fit with Parish of Cowley. Await decision from CDC still.

- **Parish Emergency Plan and Response Team** now in place, approved by GCC/CDC. Mike Cuttall agreed to head up. Has installed defibrillator at Ullenwood Court, & kindly made available to Parish. Any additional volunteers welcome. Briefing of volunteers planned in near future.

- On higher level, have participated in **GRCC-facilitated dialogues** between parish & town councils and GCC Cabinet Leads, RoadSafety Partnership, Highways to address concerns on highways maintenance, speeding & other road safety issues around County.