

Coberley Parish Council Annual Assembly 30 May 2024

Chair's Report

Review of Coberley Parish Council's (CPC) key activities from March 2023 to May 2024. (CPC was unable to hold a meeting in May 2023, following the election, as it had insufficient members to be quorate)

CPC has held 6 meetings in that period, including the meeting which immediately preceded this Assembly.

Personnel

Cllrs Dan Powell and David Carlton did not stand for re-election in the May 2023 election. **Cllr Chris Bullock** was subsequently elected later in May 2023. The council co-opted **Cllr Louise Lowe** in August 2023. Sadly, **Cllr Joanne Marshall** resigned in January 2024 for health reasons. CPC is seeking to co-opt a new member to return to its full complement of five.

The Council thanks Dan, Joanne and David for all that they have done for the Council during their many years of service and for their support to the Parish community.

Finance

- **Parish Council finances in healthy state**
- **2023/24 expenditure remained within budget.**
- **Precept for 2024/25 increased to £10,000 (from £9,350)** to reflect required budget for election costs*, increasing staff costs, insurance and asset maintenance costs.
- **Significant financial activity in 2023/24:** Salary of Clerk to the Council and related costs (principal expenditure), insurance, maintenance of village green.
- **Full set of Accounts and Transparency Code documentation** will, upon completion of end-of-year accounting, be available on the PC's website, or by request to Clerk at info@coberleyparish.co.uk.

(*Explanation of the new system of election charges was provided in the Chair's Report for 2022 <https://coberleyparish.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Chairs-Report-25-May-2022.pdf>)

Planning & Environmental issues

CPC monitors all planning applications and environmental matters relevant to the Parish with a balanced approach, taking account of the criteria upon which CDC Planning Department will assess applications.

Items of note during the period: **The Paddock, Ullenwood** (planning appeal); **Land north of Greenway Lane** (planning application and appeal) **Ian Coley Shooting Range** (licence application); **Close Farm Barn, Coberley** (landscaping and various other issues). Several outstanding issues in the Parish which CPC requested CDC to investigate which potentially require **planning or environmental enforcement attention**.

Highways & Road Safety issues

The Parish Council continually monitors parish roads (maintenance & safety aspects) and works with GCC Highways to achieve solutions. A **Highway Actions Report** is forwarded to GCC for updates ahead of each PC meeting. Reports are listed on the Parish Council website. CPC also maintains close communication with National Highways and its contractor, Kier, regarding the **A417 Missing Link project**.

- Key areas of attention have been **A436** (Ullenwood/Cowley crossroads; major lining and marking work completed, design and engineering safety solutions being pursued, speed limit reduction); **Coberley village** (Surface water drainage. Speeds through village. Large volume of traffic cutting through when A436 closed/congested and also during A435 Charlton Hill repair work. CPC is pressing for a 20mph zone to be imposed); **Leckhampton Hill Road** (Poor surface and unsuitability for current and predicted traffic volumes); Various **signage, road repair, road-marking, pavement, gating, trees and overgrown vegetation/sightline** issues across Parish.
- CPC remains engaged with the **A417 Missing Link** scheme progress to keep the issues it has raised to the fore, in particular, the impacts on peripheral roads in our Parish. Cllrs Piggott and McGaw represent CPC at the various communication and working groups. The scheme has entered the

construction phase and CPC is making every effort to ensure that parishioners have advance warning of road closures, diversions, highway modifications etc via the parish email network, community WhatsApp groups and the CPC web site. CPC has a **Statement of Common Ground** in place with National Highways (formerly Highways England) to monitor progress. **Key areas of concern raised: New Ullenwood junction roundabout; Leckhampton Hill Road; A436; Ullenwood/Cowley crossroads; Noise and air pollution** during construction and when in operation; **Surface water drainage** at Ullenwood roundabout.

CPC has been pressing for a joint bid for **Designated Funding** with GCC Highways since mid-2022 to improve safety at Ullenwood/Cowley A436 crossroads. Information received in recent days is that all designated funding has been spent. CPC will investigate this further and will, nevertheless, continue to work for the necessary improvements at this crossroads. CPC will continue to meet with National Highways, Kier (contractor), GCC and other local PCs on regular basis to closely monitor progress and address Parish concerns.

- **NO CRASH Road Safety group.** Cllr Piggott continues to represent CPC on this group which is chaired by Cllr Hodgkinson and focuses primarily on the A436 and adjoining roads.
- **A435 Charlton Hill closure for repair work.** In the early part of this reporting period until early September 2023 we experienced considerable problems in the parish due to traffic displacement from the closure of A435 Charlton Hill. CPC registered concern in advance of the project with GCC and its contractor at the impact of displaced traffic and requested mitigation. Cllr McGaw represented CPC at the various communication events and maintained regular communication throughout the project, drawing attention to specific issues and arranging for additional advisory signage to be located in key locations in an effort to deter cut-throughs and improve safety. We drew their attention to the considerable damage to verges on Hartley lane and are still pursuing repair to this. Unfortunately, it is clear that since the A435 work was completed, a significant proportion of traffic has continued to use Hartley Lane and Ullenwood Manor Road as cut-throughs to avoid congestion on the main routes.
- CPC maintains contact with GCC to ensure that **salt & grit bins** are refilled in Autumn and that small back-up stocks are held in the Parish.
- CPC is undertaking replacement of various damaged **salt/grit bins** around the Parish.

Other Issues

CPC continues to employ a **grass-cutting service** for the village green.

CPC is undertaking refurbishment of the **bus shelter** at the A435 Coberley Road junction and the **bench** located beside the spring at the foot of the village. Volunteer help will be welcomed as this progresses.

CPC is required to nominate a representative to the board of trustees of the **Arthur Connelly Trust**, a charity set up to relieve elderly persons resident in the Parish of Coberley who are in conditions of need, hardship, or distress. Cllr Chris Bullock was nominated to this role in August 2023, replacing former Cllr Powell.

CPC agreed to abandon a proposal to stage a **D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon event** in June 2024 when it was learnt that the venue previously used for the parish's beacon events was no longer available. Other opportunities for a **Parish-wide event** will be considered in due course.

CPC is planning to make **defibrillator training** available to parishioners to facilitate use of the defibrillator located in the village telephone kiosk.

Parish web site (www.coberleyparish.co.uk)

CPC encourages parishioners to make use of its web site for information on the Council and its activities and to make enquiries.

Cllr Duncan McGaw, Chair – Coberley Parish Council
30 May 2024