

Coberley Parish Council Annual Assembly 22 May 2025

Chair's Report

Review of Coberley Parish Council's (CPC) key activities from 30 May 2024 to 22 May 2025.

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

Personnel

In March, CPC co-opted **Cllr Paul Beynon**, thereby filling the vacancy left by the resignation of Cllr Joanne Marshall in January 2024. Sadly, **Cllr Louise Lowe** resigned in January 2025 due to other commitments. As a result, and as there were no requests for election from parishioners, CPC is seeking to co-opt a new member to return to its full complement of five.

The Council thanks Louise for her service and for her support to the Parish community.

Finance

- **Parish Council finances remain in a healthy state**
- **2024-2025 expenditure remained within budget.**
- **Precept for 2025-2026 increased to £10,250 (from £10,000)** to reflect required budget for increasing staff costs, insurance and asset maintenance costs.
- **Significant financial activity in 2024-2025:** Salary of Clerk to the Council and related costs (principal expenditure), insurance, maintenance of assets including defibrillator, grit bins and mowing 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.

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.

There are several issues in the Parish which CPC has 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 regularly forwarded to GCC for updates. Reports are listed on the Parish Council website. CPC also maintains close communication with National Highways and its contractor, Kier Transportation, regarding the **A417 Missing Link project**.

- Key areas of attention have been the **A436 and the Ullenwood/Cowley crossroads** - design and engineering safety solutions and speed limit reduction being pursued. This year saw a number of crashes on this stretch of road, in particular the fatal incident in July 2024, which emphasise the urgent need for implementation of major safety measures. CPC has noted that average speed cameras are to be installed on the A436 between Seven Springs and the Frogmill. CPC considers this to be a precedent for cameras to be installed on the section from Seven Springs to Air Balloon roundabout, but it is thought that this is unlikely to be considered until the Missing Link work is complete. GCC has carried out work to mitigate flooding near Oxford Cottages; **Coberley village** - Surface water drainage. Speeds through village. Large volume of traffic cutting through when A436 closed/congested. 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. During the construction phase 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 to monitor progress specific to Coberley Parish. **Key areas of concern raised: New Ullenwood junction roundabout; Leckhampton Hill Road; A436; Ullenwood/Cowley crossroads; Ullenwood Manor Road; Hartley Lane; Noise and air pollution** during construction and when in operation; **Surface water drainage** at Ullenwood roundabout.

GCC Highways now carry out regular monitoring of traffic speeds and volume on the minor roads peripheral to the Missing Link work. Data is reviewed with CPC.

CPC and GCC Highways have been pressing to make a joint bid for **Designated Funding** from National Highways since mid-2022 to improve safety at Ullenwood/Cowley A436 crossroads. Having been advised during this last year that all current designated funding has been spent, CPC and GCC continue to press for information on what future funding may become available, and when, in order to position ourselves to submit a bid. Whatever the outcome, CPC will 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 on the A436 and adjoining roads.
- The closure of the A435 Charlton Hill for several months last year, together with the disruption caused by the A417 Missing Link work, has seriously impacted **Ullenwood Manor Road and Hartley Lane** in terms of “rat-running”. There has been considerable damage to verges on Hartley lane and CPC is 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. Similarly with Ullenwood Manor Road, which has become even more popular as a cut-through for traffic heading west to avoid the tail-backs on the A436 towards the Air Balloon roundabout. CPC continues to press GCC Highways on these matters.
- 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 has undertaken replacement of various damaged **salt/grit bins** around the Parish. Further work is required.

Assets

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. The major structural work (roof) will be carried out by professional contractors in the coming months. Volunteer help will subsequently be welcomed to carry out minor works and refurbishment.

The **bench** located beside the spring at the foot of the village has been refurbished.

CPC is in the process of refurbishing/replacing the parish noticeboards. Having been donated a noticeboard by Birdlip, Cllr Bullock is kindly restoring it to replace the existing dilapidated notice board in Coberley village. Subsequently, it is hoped that the board at Ullenwood (adjacent to Barbers Wood) can be restored. Failing that, it will be replaced. A larger board is required at Salterley Grange.

Other Issues

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. This role is fulfilled by Cllr Chris Bullock.

CPC encourages parishioners to make use of its web site for information on the Council and its activities and to make enquiries: **Parish web site (www.coberleyparish.co.uk)**.

CPC is most grateful to Coberley School for allowing use of its Hall to conduct meetings throughout the year.

Cllr Duncan McGaw
Chair – Coberley Parish Council
22 May 2025