

Community Committee Report APCM 24TH May 2023

The Communities Committee for 2022-23 had 9 members, Cllrs. Nick Dring and Jane Atwood (Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively) along with Bernard Barton-Ancliffe, Karen Khazeni-Rad, Alan Porter, Liz Skelt, Mary Jordan, Richard Smith and Ian Yates. In addition, Cllr. Pierre Weinzweig made regular attendances to report on progress in connection with the Community Speed Watch group.

The year started with formative discussions concerning the redesign of the BMX track and visits were made to existing facilities at both Leckhampton and Bishops Cleeve. This proved to be a beneficial move and gave members a greater insight into what was possible within a given area, as well as some valuable initial feedback. In December, we held our first community engagement event, in order to hear directly from parishioners and potential users. This helped enormously in establishing a framework for the new design, as well as what would eventually become included within the tender document. We also invited a specialist in track construction to help guide us during this phase. At the time of writing, we have recently held a second user participation event, aimed at refining the eventual design and have also held a tender evaluation meeting, prior to making a recommendation to Full Council. Once completed, a combined Skate jam and BMX track opening party will take place. This is anticipated for summer / autumn.

During our October meeting, the launch of a warm spaces initiative was discussed, which would be funded by Tewkesbury Borough Council and administered by the Parish Council. In total, 5 locations applied for the grant and have since reported favourably on the take up of the initiative.

Towards the end of the year, an inspection was undertaken of all play areas which had benefited from new play equipment over the previous few months. This also resulted in the identification of certain parts of our facilities that still required remedial works and plans were put into place in partnership with one of our contractors to attend to these as well as rectify damage due to vandalism. It is extremely unfortunate that our community continues to suffer from such incidents, which affect many of our residents and directly impact on their enjoyment of our parks. We are taking steps to publicise these problems in an effort to raise awareness within the community and encourage people to take pride in their environment.

In January, we formed a working group to consider events / funding for the coming year, including a celebration event for the coronation of King Charles III. The group made recommendations to the Communities Committee, including Easter egg hunts, planting of trees to commemorate the coronation, funding of coronation street parties, as well as a 'picnic in the park' gathering in August. Concerning the coronation celebration, the decision was taken to work in partnership with other community organisations and volunteers, rather than organising additional activities in our own right. By offering financial assistance, our plan is for this to enhance the experiences on offer for parishioners over the coronation weekend, as well as consolidate the organisational efforts involved.

Churchdown Speed Watch (CSW)

This has been running for 8 months and was stimulated by the GCC release of the updated Road Safety Police. Our work is focused helping GCC achieve those aims. Our 2 active teams found that 20-25% drivers exceeded 35mph in a 30mph zone and 50% exceeded 25mph in a 20mph zone. The highest speed recorded was 61mph along Station Rd, which is a 30mph zone.

In addition, data is being gathered by HGCC to determine the effects of traffic movement and confirm the results gathered by CSW.

Pedestrian crossing

We are currently in discussions with GCC and Highways GCC with the aim of installing a pedestrian crossing on Parton Road. This would provide a safer crossing for residents to access the facilities/parks adjacent to the Council Offices, as well as providing a safer crossing for children and adults to the nearby nursery. It would also provide a safe place for residents in The Manor to cross the road, by means of a drop curb. Pupils leaving Churchdown Secondary School and Chosen Hill would also benefit by parents having the option to use the Parish Council Office car park, thereby also alleviating traffic congestion in the areas around our schools.

In a similar vein, we are also actively discussing the parking issues in general around Churchdown with the GCC Parking department.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Community Committee for their hard work and dedication in tackling a wide variety of issues, as well as debating and planning Parish Council initiatives within our boundary. From forming working groups and meeting with outside bodies, to liaising with our school communities, I believe that we have made some positive steps to establish a safe and varied environment in which our parishioners are proud to be part of.

Nick Dring

Chairman, Communities Committee.