

## BODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### CHAIR'S REPORT – May 2022

This year's make up of Councillors and Parish Clerk has been a great success with commitment and enthusiasm being to the fore.

Our newest Councillor, James Metcalfe, and new Parish Clerk, Shelley Hinde, have added much needed 'youth' to our ranks!

The Council continues to work closely with our Borough and County Councillors and is grateful for the fact that both regularly attend our Council meetings.

The Council Budget for the next year has been agreed and, as a result, there has again been no increase in the Parish precept.

We have made progress both separately and working with other bodies in several areas:

#### **Gloucestershire CC Highways:**

- There has been a reluctant acceptance that Boddington Lane did not reach the required level of criteria to allow further progress on the possibility of electronic signage to emphasise the 30mph speed limit along this stretch of road. As a result, we had to resort to Plan B.
- Last year Councillor Hewlett worked diligently and successfully on Plan B liaising with suppliers to obtain quotes for the installation of village 'gates' on both approaches on Boddington Lane. Following official Highways approval, the 'gates' were installed in November in both of our desired locations – and they have been very well received by our Parishioners.
- The same cannot be said for the additional signs requesting that drivers reduce their speed. It is fair to say that these signs have received a mixed response – evenly split between those who like them and those who don't. Perhaps this was to be expected - it was a similar situation in the vote on their approval and installation – being just 3-2 in favour. However, like them or not, ultimately they are merely intended to highlight to speeding drivers that they should reduce their speed whilst driving along Boddington Lane.
- During the year, the Council continued to 'badger' GCC Highways to complete more and better patching to the road surface of Boddington Lane. Some of this was done in early Autumn.
- Boddington Lane has continued to take a real 'hammering' throughout the year as a consequence of increased traffic due to the closure of the bridge over the M5 at Staverton (the reopening of which was delayed from August 2021 to 'Spring' 2022 – which, of course, allows a sufficiently indeterminate period of time by which it will be reopened!) Regrettably, the increase in traffic has included vehicles of all sizes – despite weight limit signs being clearly displayed at both ends of the Lane. The overall increase in traffic coupled with larger vehicles ignoring the weight limit signs and local heavy, large farm vehicles legitimately going about their daily business has led to a severe deterioration in the road surface of the Lane. Regrettably, the linear patching has not held up as robustly as we would have liked – with clear evidence of it breaking up in a number of places within just a few months of the repair being completed. A refurbishment of the Lane has been 'promised' by Highways once the scheduled reopening of the M5 bridge has been completed. Time will tell if that

'promise' is kept – but the Council will be pressing for the much needed upgrade to the Lane's condition.

- Boddington Lane drainage problem - it is hoped that the drainage in Boddington Lane will be improved during the overall refurbishment of the Lane's road surface. Hopefully, this will take place prior to the next Annual Report....

#### **Joint Core Strategy (JCS):**

- The JCS involving Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury was approved in 2018 and continues to make gradual progress through the stages of its development.
- Each Borough has completed their own Plan to provide a second tier response, addressing any policy gaps, and providing a more local level of detail as necessary and appropriate.
- Using the Parish Council Forum set up in 2017, Boddington PC has access to the Tewkesbury Borough Plan – any details affecting our Parish will be displayed on our web site
- The Forum meets twice a year and comments made have been acknowledged by Tewkesbury BC.

**M5 Junction 10** – the decision has been made to make this a 4-way junction. A public consultation exercise was undertaken at the back end of 2020 and the suggestions made are being incorporated into the Plans by the Agents. As part of this scheme the A4019 will be improved and upgraded from Coombe Hill to the Kingsditch /Gallagher area of Cheltenham – plans can be viewed on the relevant web site. This 'new' 4-way Junction 10 is scheduled to be open in 2024.

**West Cheltenham development** – still not much progress to report here. The latest update confirms the proposal to build a new Link road from the Cyber park to the A4019 and on to Junction 10 of the M5. There are a number of differing opinions on the suitability/path of this Link road.

It is intended to build up to 500 houses within our Parish at Hayden along with up to 600 houses within Cheltenham Borough – the areas being adjacent to each other. This entire development will undoubtedly have a major impact on our Parish – in terms of both new houses and infrastructure.

**Litter pick** – there was a litter pick organised by Councillor Robins late 2021 which proved to be very successful and has been continued by individual Councillors on an ad hoc basis since then. The litter around the Parish has been greatly reduced as a result – which has been despite the efforts of less public spirited individuals who continue to throw litter from cars/trucks/bikes.

**Fly tipping** – continues to be a major irritation with 'popular' locations being regularly used by fly tippers. The offences are always reported to Tewkesbury Borough Council by individual Councillors and, generally, the collection by TBC's contractors (Ubico) has been very good.

**Parish Council website** – The Parish website is updated regularly with current news, plus Agendas and Minutes of each Parish Council meeting.

**Parish footpaths** – Councillor Lang continued to survey the footpaths within the Parish and he has done an excellent job of liaising with GCC and local land owners to ensure the Parish footpaths are well signposted, accessible and in good repair.

**Planning applications** – all applications within the Parish have been carefully considered and there have been no objections by the Council.

**St Mary Magdelene's Church, Boddington** – in November, the Council made a 2nd donation of £500 to be used specifically towards the repair of the church.

**Hedge cutting and drainage ditch clearance** – the Council would once again like to place on record our thanks to Boddington Estates for their efforts on both these works and to Sharon Thomas and Wilkins Farming at Barrow Farm for the hedge cutting.

**PCSO** - In Barrow, the apparent abandoning of a car with a missing number plate caused something of a stir but allowed some Parishioners to become acquainted with our new Police Community Support Officer – Ben Tylour, who is based at Tewkesbury Police Station. Ben was very helpful during the period of concern regarding the abandoned car. It is hoped Ben will be attending a Parish Council meeting when his commitments allow.

**Neighbourhood Watch** scheme – it was with delight to hear during the year that Nicola who lives at Elm Trees in Barrow has volunteered to take over and manage the Neighbourhood Watch scheme within the Parish. As I write, I have no details as to Nicola's plans but am looking forward to seeing this scheme become more prominent.

**And lastly:**

This is my fifth and final Chair's Report as I shall be standing down from the Parish Council at the end of May's meeting – the time has come to handover to younger Parishioners to utilise their greater energy levels!

MIKE HARRISON