

CAWS Chair Report June 2022

CAWS has had a very busy year with a range of new initiatives and projects as well as discharging some of its more traditional activities. A particular theme over the last year has been working harder to engage with our local communities and I hope you will see this in some of my report below and in the other reports you will hear this evening.

CAWS is grateful for the continuing support of MWPC and in particular representation on our committee, financial support such as the recent grant approval for our Jubilee Fair, and continuing advice and information to support our various activities, especially during those periods of tighter Covid controls in the last 12 months.

In terms of **governance**, we have launched a new constitution during the year that aims to increase community engagement and extend the reach of some of our community-based projects. These new arrangements are bedding in well and as a consequence we have seen new committee members joining, had a deeper engagement with residents than in the past on topics such as planning, and we are starting to implement new initiatives some of which are mentioned below.

The **Community Emergency Response Group** continues to provide an excellent service to the community applying the necessary skill, expertise and action to avoid repeated damage to homes and other community facilities that we have seen in prior years. We are lucky to have them and thank them sincerely for their continued focus on keeping our risk areas in focus and managed, as well as giving of their own time to respond in emergency situations at short notice. You will hear more about the activities of the CEG from Peter Harrison later in the meeting.

Our **Speedwatch** team have also done some sterling work in the year although this has been hampered a little recently due to some health issues. We are incredibly grateful for all their work nevertheless and in particular the investment in training. You might have seen in Connect and Melksham News that Kirsty Jamieson has recently taken over as Speedwatch coordinator from Richard and Elizabeth Bean who have been actively involved in the programme for over 10 years. CAWS is incredibly grateful for Richard and Elizabeth's leadership in the programme and is delighted that they will continue to be involved. Thank you Richard and Elizabeth and welcome Kirsty!

CAWS has been more active in **planning** issues that might have an impact on our communities. We were pleased to see the Neighborhood Plan published (with some of our comments considered) and that this is now setting the tone for development in our area. We have also been active in encouraging our residents to comment on the project to update the Neighborhood Plan and with particular regard to the nomination of Open Green Spaces. We were also pleased to have been able to represent the views of the community in consultation regarding development in First Lane in Whitley, the Local Plan and the proposed bypass.

Regarding the proposed **bypass**, we are very concerned about the increase in the *volume* of vehicles in our area, and despite the sterling efforts of our Speedwatch team, the increase in *speeding* traffic particularly Shaw Hill and Corsham Road. We believe these increases are due in part, to the restrictions on Cleveland Bridge and Clean Air initiatives in Bath, and general congestion on the A350. Given the considerable continuing support in our communities for a A350 bypass, CAWS continues to lobby for an early decision on the scheme.

Our **Phone Box Library** on Top Lane has proved very popular especially during periods on Covid restrictions in the year and we have continued to review options for the Phone Box on Corsham Road opposite the school.

Our **litter pick** in April was well supported and the next one is being planned for September. Keep your eyes open for the date and please do come along and support the initiative. We have also initiated in the year a new CAWS project on upgrading **Broadband** although it is true to say that this has been a challenge regarding the local government funding/support arrangements. More on this from Dan Pike later this evening.

And finally, I must mention our **Jubilee Fair** that took place on 4 June 2022. This was 9 months in the planning and, for a while, was at risk of being a complete washout! However it was a magnificent success with excellent attendance, fantastic feedback, and over £4,500 raised for community projects. My husband will talk a bit more about the event later in the Agenda.

So in **summary** its been a busy but successful year. I have been honoured and proud to be Chair part of this fantastic community group over the last 12 months and I look forward to continuing to be involved one way or another – we will be electing a new committee and officers tonight! Thank you for your support over the last 12 months.

Pippa