

Report for 2013 Annual Parish Meeting. Water Park Ward Cllr Juliet Layton

Aside from the approx. 42 regular Parish Council meetings I try to attend a year, as you know I don't make absolutely every one, I also sit on the Planning Committee, and although not every Sites Inspection Briefing requires all the members, I do also try to attend all of them.

As a member of the Planning Committee we see a wide range of controversial applications, from large green field developments, to single dwellings in domestic gardens, with wind turbines and acres of photo voltaic panels, the ever recurring holiday home amendments and Lake 31's infill and water levels, in between. We also debate change of use applications; these could be retail to wine bar, warehouse to residences and many other combinations; the occasional breach of planning permission is also brought to Committee. Those of you who attend Planning meetings will know that it is very difficult to gauge the length of time an application will be debated before the committee vote on proposals and that vote can be disappointing for some, but I hope that when an application is heard both objectors and supporters feel that all aspects are aired and considered. Planning takes an immense amount of reading and research to understand exactly what is brought before us, and although each case has to be considered on its own merits it is necessary to know the historical planning approvals and amendments as well as the oft changing planning policies.

As well as that duty and Council and Cabinet meetings, I am involved in the A419 Noise Action Group campaign to reduce the level of noise from the 20 mile concrete section of the A419 which runs through the Cotswolds; villages in the Water Park ward which suffer from the incredible noise are Cerney Wick, Siddington, Preston and parts of South Cerney; the a419nag is made up from residents all along the concrete corridor who meet, usually in Latton, to discuss the campaign. With good local attendance including our MP and the media at Cerney Wick, the group recently launched the campaign website, www.a419nag.co.uk, where people can log their experiences of the noise and read the history of the road and the broken promises over the years for resurfacing.

Excessive rain in Nov, Dec brought massive problems and although I was involved I can only give credit to the amazing work done by locals and Parish Councillors who cleared culverts, dug spillways and helped residents over these times. For me the whole of Christmas morning was spent on the phone trying unsuccessfully to contact flood agencies, TW, CDC and most urgently Bromford housing association, not least the duty manager. The communities were let down by Thames Water and the inability to make contact with anyone over the Christmas period; there were vulnerable people whose Bromford houses were surrounded by flood water who were and still are being badly let down by Bromford housing association, expecting the elderly to live in house which are not fit for habitation. It is in these areas in which I also try and serve the community.

However the failings of communication highlighted by the floods over that time are still being addressed. We all know about the meetings between the agencies both at CDC and in public halls and the promises given, but the action is slow and despite the support of the MP, CC, DCs and PCs the credit has to go to the locals who have taken on TW; one man with the backing of all the Councillors and the MP, has succeed in getting TW to survey the sewage system in South Cerney, another local couple physically removed the fly tipped blockages in the culverts and dug escape routes for the flood waters. We pay CDC for this service and this is what we need to push to get as normal not just a knee jerk reaction to a crisis. Had the fly tipping been dealt with when first

reported there would not have been around 6 tyres, and armchair and numerous bales of straw blocking the ditch and culvert in Wickwater Lane, ergo one less flooded blocked road.

The fly tipping type phone call can be replicated in many areas and this can take a tremendous amount of Councillor time. For example someone contacts me about a problem, I contact CDC they say it is EA/TW/riparian owner, Highways etc etc; then follows the trail of calls, emails, wrong person, out of office replies. The problem gets reported eventually; next stage is follow up and hopefully success, although outcome is not always fed back. Yes these are my grievances, but they are shared by many and I am not only using this meeting as a platform to air them. Part of my concern at the multi agency meeting, which was held at CDC following the flooding, was about these difficulties in communication and I have also spoken and asked questions about this at Council meetings.

Another contentious document which is being looked into at present is the representations and recommendations of the Community Governance Review which came to Council in February. The parishes affected by these recommendations are Siddington and Preston where Cirencester have proposed to extend their own boundary to take in developed areas of these parishes and Somerford Keynes and Poole Keynes who are in agreement about their recommendations. The Local Government Boundary Commission will determine the review in 2013/14 and the 2015 elections will be conducted in accordance with changes agreed. These changes will also impact on District Warding which is also under review, the debate also involving single Member Wards as opposed to multi member wards which exist in some areas such as the Water Park.

Finally I continue the quest for safe passage for residents and holiday makers along Broadway Lane in South Cerney. I hope this will take the form of a shared pedestrian and cycle path but it depends on verge widths. I also suspect it will take a considerable amount of time to see any results. I hope that the cycle/footpaths on Broadway Lane and Station Road will be included in the Parish and Neighbourhood Plan along with '20 is Plenty' speed restriction in the village centre and around the school.