**Pitchcombe Parish Council – Annual Parish Meeting 16 May 2024 - 7pm**

Welcome everyone – Good evening - good to see you. Thank you for coming. These meetings are held annually to assess if the PC is doing what residents wish, to give them an opportunity to speak to councillors and to make any useful suggestions they may have on village affairs.

**Changes in the Parish Council**

We are sad to be losing Cllr Richard Peason who has been with us for 3 years. His sound advice will be missed. Belinda Holder has sadly left us after nearly two and a half years as Clerk. She was very helpful. Her last meeting was on the 28 March 2024, and we are now very pleased to welcome our new Clerk, Tracy Slator who is fairly new to PC work but very able and will be advised by Roy Balgobin, Clerk of Painswick PC to whom we are grateful.

**TRO 5227/42**

2023/4 has again been busy for the PC. The main feature, as usual, was the progress, or rather lack of progress of the new TRO and wondering what would be included in the new TRO 40mph limit through the village. I am pleased to say that after having written of our dissatisfaction with the TRO process to Mark Hawthorne, Leader of GCC, that the new TRO is underway. This is at the Statutory Consultation stage, which is addressed to the PC only, asking for our views by 14 May 2024 as one, on the plan provided. It will be followed by the Formal Consultation to which anyone can respond. We have received the following information from Hannah Bassett-Louis of GCC TRO Department which we can pass on to you all.

**Gloucestershire County Council has recently drafted a new proposal plan for a 40mph speed limit along the A46 from Painswick to Stroud and along the A4173 from the Pitchcombe junction to just north of St John the Baptist Church, Pitchcombe.  The Parish Council has had sight of the plan and has submitted its comments.  Residents and members of the general public will have the opportunity to submit their comments during the next stage of the traffic regulation order consultation process which will be taking place in June 2024.  Notices will be placed along the roadside and in the local newspaper as well as on the County Council’s website.  The Parish Council encourages as many residents as possible to engage in this process.**

We had to change the date of today’s annual meeting due to the 14-day rule when, after an election, the AGM has to be held within 14 days. A new date and venue had to be found. Unfortunately, Cllr Sue Williams is unable to come this evening as she already had two other meetings to attend tonight. Hopefully we will have her up to date report. Without Sue’s support, we would have heard almost nothing from TROltd on progress on the new TRO which is running somewhat later than at first expected but it is very welcome. Residents living close to the junction feel that the changes to the white lining at the right turn to Gloucester have not made any difference and it has not helped slow traffic down for them when leaving their properties and emerging onto the A46.

We have made little progress with our request for the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Speedwatch Safety Fund VAS mobile camera, and we are now considered ineligible. Constant changes of staffing for the Fund have made life difficult as there was a lack of continuity with muddled meetings. We could not have used the system until a 40mph limit had been in place for a year, but we wished to register an interest as advised.

**Planning matters**

On the planning front there have been four applications for tree works and one TPO, one for a barn conversion and one application for works at Penlan, with various extensions, which was refused. We also have an application for a rebuild of a boundary wall and recently had an application for a replacement garage. The new bridge over the culvert in Wragg Castle lane was discussed at the last meeting and it was generally felt to be an asset as there is not much in the way of passing places in the lane and this bridge helps with that and with its main purpose which is the movement of cattle. Highways have been informed of the bridge construction. Residents of the lane were not pleased with the increase in traffic when the A46 was closed for 3 weeks as the lane served as a diversion for some, although it was technically closed by the Police.

**Stagecoach 62 Bus Service**

The Stagecoach 62 bus service to Gloucester is working better although the temporary bus stops at the junction and Resthaven need to be made permanent. GCC Integrated Transport Unit are working on these improvements and are waiting for funding. It helps if timetables are attached to the bus stop posts. The dangerous bus stop in the hedge by Resthaven has gone thank goodness.

**Bridleway to Whiteshill**

The Bridleway via Lurks Lane from Pitchcombe boundary to Whiteshill has been officially approved and a new smart BRIDLEWAY sign has been attached to the footpath sign at the top of the Pitch. Making this a through route is a work in progress, rather slow progress. Although it might not get used much, it would be a shame to lose it altogether as it will help to keep horses off the roads and provide another route for riders.

**Speed and Road Safety Issues**

Work on the A46 subsidence will continue when Highways have decided what needs to be done. It is currently being monitored. Updates are on: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/major-projects-list/a46-road-closure/>. We are very grateful to Cllr Sue Williams for her support in our efforts to get the speed limits on our “A” roads reduced and for her speedy action in response to other queries. The new 30mph section of road by Broadham will make the A46 safer particularly because of the huge puddle that forms there in bad weather as the drains are often blocked.

**Highways - The Wall and Laurel Hedge by Old Weavers**

I am pleased to say Highways seem to have made a good job of the repairs to the wall and it is looking good. If we have a dry summer, I hope those nearby can give the new plants some water. We are pleased to see Yakub Mulla of Highways has returned to his old role as Highways Manager for our area.

**Village Hall matters**

The smart new kitchen and facilities in the Village Hall will make it a more welcoming environment for village activities of which there are many, and of course PC meetings.

**Finance**

We have needed to raise the precept this year to keep in line with inflation and so that there is some money in the kitty for the unexpected.

**General**

We are always pleased to hear feedback and the views of all Pitchcombe residents, either informally, at meetings or via other routes. **Tracy Slator** and I have our details on the Pitchcombe website if you want to contact us. Finally, thank you to my fellow councillors and to Tracy for their help and support.

Philippa James, Chairman. Pitchcombe PC 10.5.24