

Bourton Vale Ward
District Councillor Report
July 2023

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CABINET - MONDAY 19 JUNE - 6pm

Cabinet APPROVED the Discretionary Rate Relief applications in respect of the Corinium Museum, Bourton Leisure Centre and Cotswold Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre). Business Rates Discretionary Relief (exceeding £10,000)

Cabinet reconsidered the original decision not to award a Discretionary Rate Relief submitted under S47; and APPROVED the relief of £1,404.53

Cabinet APPROVED the contract for external printing and postage from 1 August 2023 to Imail for a period of 3 plus 1 year

Cabinet APPROVED the write off of outstanding accounts totalling £11,384.40 (writing off of business rates debts in excess of £5,000).

Cabinet:

- 1) NOTED the improvement progress to date, and
- 2) APPROVED the changes detailed in paragraph 5.1

Update on progress against Phases I and II of the DM Improvement Programme and make recommendations for further improvements (Phase III), following the Planning Advisory Service report.

Cabinet

- 1) NOTED progress in delivering the Green Economic Growth
- 2) AGREED that a review and refresh of the Strategy is undertaken in light of progress 1 to date, the Administration's priorities following the elections in May 2023 and the emerging Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.
- 3) AGREED that future updates on the Green Economic Growth Strategy are dealt with via Member briefings rather than a report to Cabinet, unless a formal decision is required.

Matters Exempt from Publication: because the person mentioned was deceased, this report would be considered in public rather than private.

Cabinet APPROVED the write off of £7306.65 council tax debt in excess of £5,000 relating to an individual, as detailed within the report.

Council

There were no Council meetings in June.

Town and Parish Council forum - Cirencester 12 July (Now September date TBA)

You should have received an invitation and booking option to hear from the Leader about the Council's priorities and objectives following re-election. Unfortunately the original date of 12 July has had to be changed and a new date will be advised shortly.

The meeting will focus on the well-being of our communities and hear about innovative Town and Parish Council projects making a positive impact. In addition, we will look together at opportunities for local communities to manage their open and green spaces and all that this may entail.

There will be Q & A session as CDC wants these events to be as much about two-way communication as possible.

If your council has undertaken an exciting project, overcome a challenge or undertaken a new way of working and would like to share your experiences at a forum please contact jane.gibney@cotswold.gov.uk

SOLACE

<https://www.gloucestershire-pcc.gov.uk/stroud-council-joins-solace-anti-social-behaviour-scheme/>

Solace brings together a team of dedicated council case workers, police officers and PCSOs who work in partnership with communities to highlight and resolve complaints of high and medium level ASB as well as repeat incidents.

The rollout of the scheme has been championed by Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Chris Nelson, as part of his promise to tackle Anti-social behaviour in the county, and funded with money secured by the PCC from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund.

RURAL CRIME COMMUNITY MEETING

On Tuesday 27 June there was a Rural Crime Community Meeting at The Westwoods Centre, with the [Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire](#) and new Directions of Special Operations Paul Keasey and other ranked police officers. A new approach to rural crime is being introduced with more dedicated officers, trained in rural, wildlife and heritage crime and some fresh initiatives will be introduced. Many of you know that I have benefited from an astonishing response from various police teams in Ermin Ward, there is a heightened sense of positivity and determination from this team.

A417 UPDATE

Works are slightly ahead of schedule with Archaeological digs up at the Stockwell Farm new site. Alexandra & Angel field, done digs and now covered back over and is now a lay-down area.

Currently the main site is at Rushwood Kennels. Preliminary works ongoing throughout the project. Some overnight road closures standard practice maintenance works to test road quality and ash dieback work. Adder tagging and bat mitigation work is ongoing.

A Community Defibrillator was installed at the Green Dragon on 25 May, the new ones are much easier to use. More are planned.

Work on PRowS is to protect the right of the public to access and prevent obstruction. Zones are used for the construction process. Closure and diversion applications have to be put in 12 weeks prior and reviewed on 6 monthly basis. Quite a few PRowS will be closed permanently and new PRowS will be created. It is a popular destination for walkers and great efforts are being taken to keep PRowS open, with temporary crossings, new routes, temporary routes etc. I have the meeting notes and plans about the PRowS, let me know if you would like more information.

Actions from May around traffic flows and predictions yet to be presented. B4070 crossing could be outside the red line boundary, needs to be moved as on a bend. Work needs to be done under Permitted Development, Certificate of Lawfulness. Kier has launched an interactive web-based platform for the A417 missing link called Commonplace. This platform allows all stakeholders, residents and customers to have their say, or keep up to date with the project.

Third round of Community Ownership Fund launched

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-levelling-up-and-community-investments?mc_cid=f404f522f5&mc_eid=9720e6feff#the-community-ownership-fund-round-3

The Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched the third round of its £150 million Community Ownership Fund on 12 May 2023 and applications to bid for the funding opened on 31 May and close on 12 July.

Changes to the fund will make it easier for town and parish councils, voluntary and community groups to apply for funding to acquire important assets and run them for the benefit of the local community.

A summary of the key changes to the eligibility requirements for the relaunch of the fund include:

- Reducing the match funding* requirement (*the requirement for applicants to have raised equivalent amounts of the total applied for)
- Increasing the amount of funding all projects can bid for from £250,000 to £1 million

The government is providing funding over four years to support community groups in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets and amenities at risk of being lost such as community centres, parks, pubs and post office buildings.

The deadline for applications for this funding round is 12 July.

CHAIR AND PARISH COUNCILLORS TRAINING

Please take a look at this link which takes you directly to the GATPC parish councillor training calendar. Councillors benefit from and contribute more effectively if they have had some training, and will get more fulfilment from their role.

<https://www.gaptc.org.uk/training1.html?month=2023-06>

ENHANCEMENT OF CDC PLANNING SERVICE

In a recent press release Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services, said: “Planning services have seen a number of challenges in recent years. We had a surge in applications throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and our staff had to adapt to working from home. Having overcome these challenges, I am proud to announce significant improvements to our planning services.

“Over the past 18 months, our Development Management teams have worked hard to review planning services and put new measures in place to improve the customer experience and enhance team performance. These enhancements aim to ensure a seamless and efficient process for residents and uphold the council's commitment to delivering excellent public services.

“Planning Teams work towards a government target that requires 70% of applications be determined within 8 weeks or an agreed ‘Extension of Time’. Despite the evolving challenges we have faced since the pandemic and an increased number of applications, our Planning team's Performance has risen tremendously in the last year. Our scores for applications have increased from a low of 60% in Q1 2021/22 to recent scores of over 90% in Q3 23/24.

“I’m incredibly proud of the work our teams have done so far to improve our planning services and we will continue to make improvements to ensure high-quality services for our residents ”

Cotswold District Council's Development Management team have implemented the following measures to improve planning services for residents and ensure a superior experience:

Digital Transformation: The Council is embracing technology where possible to support automation and speed up application processes. The Development Management team is also working on digitising planning documents to modernise the planning process. Improvements are being made to the quality and range of information available on the Council website to support customers wanting to submit planning applications.

Streamlining Processes: A new service has been created specifically for the validation process. This new service is already cutting timescales by around 60%. The Council is also working with customers to agree on appropriate 'extensions of time' for relevant applications to ensure flexibility for customers and residents.

Recruitment: Cotswold District Council has extensively reviewed planning resources and how to attract the brightest new talent. To provide residents with the highest level of support and guidance, the council has expanded its team of planning professionals. These knowledgeable experts are readily available to assist residents at every stage of the planning process, aiming to ensure questions are promptly answered and concerns addressed.

Cotswold District Council is committed to providing a high-quality planning service. By empowering residents with user-friendly tools, expert guidance, and robust communication, the council aims to create an environment where residents can easily navigate the planning process and actively contribute to the district's growth and prosperity.

The council invites residents to explore the upgraded planning services and experience the enhanced customer journey firsthand. For more information and to access the improved planning services, visit: cotswold.gov.uk/planning