

CDC: There was a rare outbreak of harmony at the March Full Council meeting, with nothing too controversial; Measures were put in place to adopt the government's new polices for empty properties, second and holiday homes. There will be exceptions and safeguards for specific events such as protracted probate cases, but in a nutshell these properties will be liable for a 100% surcharge on council tax payments. GCC and the Police Authority will receive the biggest share of the additional income, but CDC plan to add their portion to the Affordable Housing fund.

Another initiative that received unanimous support was the reintroduction of the CDC Unsung Hero award. This is in line with King Charlse's aim of encouraging volunteering in our communities. There will be 4 awards per full council meeting, and nominations are welcome from individuals and parishes.

Overview & Scrutiny: There was no O&S meeting this month as the reports were not ready.

Roads continue to be a big issue in the county and seem to be getting worse. Last summer I reported a stretch of lane from Cherington to the A433 – there were too many issues to report individually, and I insisted that an engineer looked at the whole stretch, and many holes were duly repaired. Having driven the lane again recently and nearly losing another tyre, I went back and counted 64 defects! However, Highways responded 'no fault found'. Needless to say, I will be pursuing this accordingly.

Regarding my own case of vehicle damage, I have now logged a County Court small claim, which GCC intend to defend.

GCC Highways have recently published the list of 150 roads that will be resurfaced in the next budgetary year – sadly there are very few in the south Cotswolds, and zero in the Grumbolds Ash area!

The Cabinet approved increases to car parking charges in the district, and have ended free parking on Sundays on most sites including Church St. in Tetbury.

River pollution is a big national topic currently, and I took the opportunity to look at the statistics for our little stream in Avening. We have a small sewage processing unit for the village which uses reed beds to purify the output, but I was staggered to see that there were **118 sewage spill incidents** (these are occurrences when raw sewage is pumped into the stream) in the last year. I have contacted Severn Trent to arrange a site visit for them to explain these terrible statistics and what they are doing to stop them.

Annual Parish Meetings are usually held in May – I'll be at most of these for Grumbold's Ash parishes so do pop along and say hello, or ask me a question.

Councillor Tony Slater

Cotswold District Council, Representing Grumbolds Ash with Avening.

email: Tony.slater@cotswold.gov.uk Tel: 07793669930

Other updates and information for Parish Councils:

HOW TO REPORT POTHOLES

I recommend using this link, especially if you have a smartphone and can take a photograph of the pothole and identify the exact position. It is more efficient than emailing the council as officers get a daily schedule of these alerts.

Gloucestershire County Council, report a pothole:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>

FIX MY STREET

Report, view, or discuss local problems like graffiti, fly tipping, broken paving slabs, or street lighting. This reports back to the appropriate Council: [LINK](#)

CAR PARKING CHARGE INCREASES

FROM 1 April 2024, Car Park charges increase, and Sunday Car Park charges will be at the following car parks:

Abbey Ground, Cirencester 12pm to 6pm

Beeches 10am to 6pm

Brewery 10am to 6pm

Forum 10am to 6pm

Leisure Centre 10am to 6pm

Old Station 10am to 6pm

Sheep Street 12pm to 6pm

Waterloo 10am to 6pm

Old Market Way, Moreton in Marsh 10am to 6pm

Church Street, Tetbury 12pm to 6pm

West Street, Tetbury 10am to 6pm

Maugersbury Rd, Stow on the Wold 10am to 6pm

Abbey Ground, Sheep Street and Church Street car parks are in close proximity to places of worship so

Sunday charging will not come into force until midday.

THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT TEAM

The current enforcement officer is a contractor and his contract ended at the end of March. Efforts are being undertaken to ensure there remains adequate short-term cover (i.e. extend his contract). Helpfully resources have been made available to recruit two permanent enforcement officers and these will be going out to be advertised soon. Also, a new assistant enforcement officer has been appointed.

Cotswold District Council Rural England Prosperity Fund

Community Infrastructure Capital Grants offer between 2K and 10K for improving community buildings. There are three application rounds, with deadlines of 23rd May, and 12th July. The application process is being administered by GRCC on behalf of the council. For information and advice about applying, please contact Grants and Admin Officer Louise Fletcher louisef@grcc.org.uk or call 01452 528491.

https://www.grcc.org.uk/news-events/news-events/post/278-cotswold-district-council-rural-england-prosperity-fund-community-infrastructure-capital-grants?fbclid=IwAR0Ms4hWz6-yc3qUInbB62N8h4wz34BcDNibmNHkvf-kvRhPGkGcfrA_tlo

Village Halls Small Grants Fund

Grants of between £2,000 and £5,000 are available for improvements to rural community buildings in England, as the latest part of the Queen's Jubilee grant fund released by DEFRA. These grants can cover up to

20% of project costs, and the fund is expected to stay open until December 2024. Applications are being administered by ACRE, the umbrella body for GRCC and the other 36 Rural Community Councils in England.

<https://acre.org.uk/village-halls-small-grants-fund/?fbclid=IwAR3fnc1VIVBSFK-MWsz11TW5ZYuG2DRaKRxnDunElufvdNM3J0rCdVlbnb8>

Are you ready for the elections?

Voters are encouraged to make sure they are registered and have photo ID ahead of the May Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Anyone applying to vote by post will need to provide their national insurance number as part of the application. If you have an existing postal vote arrangement, you will not need to apply again.

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=chris%20nelson>

Election Day Staff Needed At Cotswold District Council

Cotswold District Council is looking for temporary staff for election days, working 7.30am until 10pm, at polling stations and at the count. Pay is £180 to £250 per day, plus fees for attending training. For more information, please call Katrina Keylock on 01285 623227, or use the button below to email the electoral services department. EMAIL elections@cotswold.gov.uk