

COLN VALLEY WARD

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

AUGUST 2024

Cllr David Fowles, Ward District Councillor

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[Recent Committee Meetings](#) (underlined texts are linked to calendars of meetings with Agendas including Report Packs & Webcasts).

Wed 10 July	2pm	<u>Planning and Licensing Committee</u>
Mon 22 July	4pm	<u>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u>
Tues 23 July	4pm	<u>Audit & Governance</u>
Thurs 25 July	2pm	<u>Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire</u>
Thurs 25 July	6pm	<u>Cabinet</u>
Wed 31 July	6pm	<u>Council</u>

I share this link to the Members Questions put before the 31 July meeting as several very interesting questions were posed: The impact of tourism, social and affordable housing, missed bin collections, what the Leader intends to raise with the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government if or when he meets them, carbon footprint of 'Cotswold News', wind energy in the Cotswolds, the Old Station Building, commercial let arrangements for the Trinity Road offices, Planning Enforcement, training for Parish Councillors about the new planning protocol, flawed postal voting process and climate action plans. Click the link below to read the full questions and the responses:

<https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/documents/b5065/Member%20Questions%20-%20Written%20Responses%2031st-Jul-2024%2018.00%20Council.pdf?T=9>

CABINET DECISIONS

<https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/documents/g2271/Decisions%2025th-Jul-2024%2018.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>

- Issue(s) Arising from Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit and Governance
- Channel Choice and Telephone Access Update
- Continuation of Crowdfund Cotswold
- Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Four
- 2023-24 Final Revenue and Capital Outturn Report
- Discretionary Rate Relief in excess of £10,000
- On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme - Sites Decision
- Approval to award the contract for cleaning and maintenance of public toilets
- Publica Review - Detailed Transition Plan
- Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members
- Matters exempt from publication
- Decision on future regeneration of The Old Station and Memorial Cottages, Cirencester
- Exempt Annex for Agenda Item 12 - Discretionary Rate Relief in excess of £10,000
- Exempt Annex for Agenda Item 13 - On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme Sites Decision
- Exempt Annex for Agenda Item 14 - Public Conveniences Contract

PERMANENT RETENTION OF REVISED CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

In September 2023, the Council began trialling new opening hours for its customer services call centre, operating from 9am to 2pm instead of 9am to 5pm. It reduced the opening hours on quiet afternoons and increased operators on the phones during busy lunchtimes.

At the same time the Council invested more in its online services and maintained its 9am to 5pm in person service at the council offices, in Cirencester and Moreton-in-Marsh. The change is estimated to save £125,000 per annum. CDC will now permanently change its call centre opening hours having seen a significant increase in the use of online services and improvements in customer satisfaction.

SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED AT TRINITY ROAD OFFICES

Cotswold District Council's Trinity Road offices have had solar panels installed. The new solar system also includes a 130kWh battery storage unit which will increase the council's ability to use renewable energy beyond when the sun is shining and allow the Council to charge up overnight on cheap off-peak electricity from the grid.

The power generated by the panels is largely expected to meet, and at times exceed, the building's electricity needs during the summer, allowing the Council to sell any excess energy back to the grid. This income will help offset any topping-up of the electricity required from the grid during the cooler months, when the panels will generate less power.

The panels are likely to save the District Council in the region of £42,000 per year once installed. The cost of the installation is likely to be recovered in just over five years.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK A QUESTION TO THE COUNCIL?

A parish councillor recently asked for guidance on asking a question at a full Council Meeting, and I found that guidance for doing so on the Council website is lacking.

Firstly, inform democratic services democratic@cotswold.gov.uk that you intend to ask a question at full council, it helps them as the Chair will be notified. You do not have to disclose your question if you don't want to and you have one minute to pose it.

The general advice is that you keep your question tight and precise in order to get a good answer. After your question has been answered/addressed, you are allowed to ask one follow up question.

At the meeting, the Chairman will ask whether any members of the public present at the meeting wish to ask a question and he/she will decide on the order.

This is relevant guidance from the [Council's constitution](#):

10.1 Open forum questions at Council, Cabinet and Committees

- Members of the public may ask up to two oral spoken questions at Ordinary Meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees. A maximum period of fifteen minutes shall be allowed at any such meeting for open forum questions. Prior notice of oral questions is not required. The time limit for an oral question is one minute.
- The Chair will decide on the order of questioners at the meeting.
- Questions must relate to any matters in connection with which the Council, its Committees or the Cabinet, has powers or duties, or which affects the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District.
- Questions must be addressed to a Cabinet Member or the Chair of Council or a Committee or Sub-Committee. If the person asking the question does not identify the Member they wish to put the question to, the Chair will decide which Member should respond, having regard to the subject matter of the question.

- An answer to an oral question may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated within 10 working days of the date of the meeting to the questioner. The a written response will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

If the Chair believes, at any time, that the questioner misconducts themselves by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or by wilfully obstructing the business of the Council, the Chair may move that the questions may not be further heard.

No discussion will take place on any question, but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to Council, Cabinet or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee. Once seconded, such a motion will be voted on without discussion”.

Public questions from the public are held near the beginning of the meeting within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than one minute each and relate to issues under the Council's remit. At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Report a breach of planning regulation [HERE](#)

The Conservative Group recently requested information about Enforcement in the Council, and asked about the officer whose temporary contract ran out on 1st April but was due to be renewed. A reply was received from another officer who is apparently the only enforcement person on duty. The Interim Senior Enforcement Officer, wasn't available. The new Principal Enforcement Officer was out of the office and due back around the 12th of August. Some cases are being handled by the Interim Development Management Manager.

Councillor Tony Slater asked a question to Councillor Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services at Council on 31 July:

The CDC Local Enforcement Plan 2022 states that "Planning Enforcement is a vital function of the Council's overall planning strategy and service. It underpins the planning decisions and policies of the Council, while helping protect the district's built and natural environments."

Although performance against targets is not included in the quarterly performance figures, it is clear, and acknowledged on the CDC website, that despite their best efforts the enforcement team faces huge challenges in providing an effective service across the district due to a critical lack of resources. It is acknowledged that the transition of Publica back to CDC has the potential to attract suitable candidates, but this in itself will not resolve the issue. Please can you advise what actions the administration is taking locally to resolve the shortage of skilled staff in the department and will you pledge to include statistical information in the quarterly performance report against the published targets in the Enforcement Plan?

REPLY: We will be reviewing the Local Enforcement Plan in Autumn 2024 which will include considering whether quarterly reporting on performance within the Planning Enforcement Team would be appropriate and if so which measures should be included.

It is widely recognised that there is currently a national shortage of trained and experienced Planning Enforcement Officers. It is hoped as the member recognises that returning planning and planning enforcement to the Council, will aid recruitment and retention. In addition, the Council has is taking the opportunity to support career development from within, that will hopefully provide the next generation of planning enforcement officers.

Cllr Slater asked a secondary question at Council regarding my research in 2022 about suggesting Enforcement as an alternative career to Army Veterans. Their training would be covered by the Forces Charity. Cllr Layton welcomed the idea and I have forwarded all my notes and emails regarding that research - let's hope this time it does not get kicked into the long grass!

FOOD COMPOSTING

The [Gloucestershire Recycles](#) team have been running a food waste campaign, encouraging residents to reduce food waste and to recycle.

9.5 million tonnes of food is wasted in the UK each year, emitting the equivalent of 10 million cars in greenhouse gases (or 1 in 3 cars on UK roads). 70% of food waste happens in people's homes, meaning we can make real change and do our bit to

help the environment. This new [short animated video](#) 📺 explains why it's important to use the food waste recycling service, and what happens to it.

Discounted compost bins: All compost bins available at Getcomposting.com are reduced by £15 to Gloucestershire County Council residents. This discount is limited to one per household and is for Gloucestershire residents only.

FREE CAR PARKING IN CIRENCESTER

Did you know that on the weekends and on Bank Holidays, free parking is available at St James Place Headquarters on Old Tetbury Road (GL7 1FP)? This is the open air carpark on the Old Tetbury Road, on the left just before the Leisure Centre.

Also at weekends and Bank Holidays, there is free parking at the [CDC offices in Trinity Road](#), and at [Queen Street](#) (just off Victoria Road).

A417 MISSING LINK PROJECT UPDATE

The closure of the A436 has caused chaos in Cowley and Coberley. The problem is that Google Maps are sending traffic from both the A425 and A417 via these tiny roads. This has been reported to Kier, National Highways and Gloucestershire Highways, asking them to address the Google Maps reporting and managing.

The foundation piling works at Shab Valley have progressed and piling has now started at Stockwell to prepare for the Stockwell overpass. Having completed the earthworks in the area, the support columns are being built for the Gloucestershire Way Crossing. Work is also progressing well at Grove Farm, with drainage mats being laid in preparation for further work.

The Cowley Roundabout contraflow, which was introduced at the beginning of the month, is proving effective and traffic is flowing well with no delays reported. This is necessary so we can create a safe working space as they start to build Cowley junction, where the new section of the A417 will tie into the existing carriageway. The project has also maintained its status as an Ultra Site under the [Considerate Contractors Scheme](#).



Closure of Barrow Wake viewpoint car park – July 2024 to March 2025. They are building a new dry-stone wall and installing drainage at Barrow Wake viewpoint.

To complete the work safely, they have closed Barrow Wake viewpoint car park until March 2025. Local businesses will remain open as normal.

Anyone wishing to visit the local area should use alternative parking options. Please be aware there may be parking changes at alternative car parks.

Closure of Leckhampton Hill – Monday 5 August to Sunday 22 September

They'll be closing Leckhampton Hill from Monday 5 August to Sunday 22 September.

The closure will allow them to undertake work on the road.

- Phase 1 will see work taking place at Ullenwood Cricket Club with no disruption to the travelling public.
- Phase 2 will run from Monday 5 August to Sunday 25 August. During this phase, Leckhampton Hill will be closed just past Crickley Hill to the junction of Ullenwood Manor Road. You will not be able to access Ullenwood Manor Road from the A436 as there will be a hard closure at this point to stop large volumes of traffic using an unsuitable road past National Star College and residents.
- During phase 3, the road will be closed from the new temporary roundabout at the Leckhampton Hill junction to the entrance of Crickley Hill. This closure will be in place from Tuesday 27 August to Sunday 22 September.

To access Crickley Hill, National Star College and Cotswold Hills Golf Club please follow signed diversions.

You can find more information about diversion routes and access on [our webpage](#).
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All roadworks and planned road closures on motorways and major A roads, including the A417, are published on the Traffic England website: www.trafficengland.com. Road Closure Reports, which includes a seven day look ahead of planned road closures, are updated twice daily, Monday to Friday except for bank holidays: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/road-closure-report/.

To find the latest information about local road closures, please visit: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/>.

Webpage: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a417-missing-link/

Email: A417MissingLink@nationalhighways.co.uk

Phone: 0300 123 5000

X: @HighwaysSWEST

Facebook: @HighwaysSWEST

WASTE COLLECTIONS

- [CHECK YOUR BIN DAY](#)
- [REPORT A MISSED COLLECTION](#)

In the July monthly update, we reported that the waste collection days would change from 24 June, the reason for the change is for great efficiency. Since then 60% of households have a new waste collection day and/or collections may be at a different times during the day and times of the week. An introductory flyer was sent to those affected by the changes at the end of May and followed up with a new waste calendar and letter explaining what the changes meant for those households. During the changeover, 28% of those having a collection day change were predicted to experience a delay. 17% of households were warned that they would have to wait longer than 12 working days between their main collections as they move over to their new schedule. To support these households, an additional collection of waste and recycling, and garden waste for those who subscribe, was arranged.

Ubico is the Teckel company employed by the Cotswold District Council to collect all household waste for residents in the Cotswolds. CDC obviously works with them to see if efficiencies can be made, from the procurement of vehicles and in this case, a revised route timetable. Just like in 2020 when a new system was introduced, there have been properties which have been missed out, because the driver may be unfamiliar with the route, or the vehicle becomes full, contrary to expectation.

Please continue to notify CDC if your collections are not being carried out according to your schedule. It would be very helpful to have good information about missed collections, such as:

- The address of the property (ies) including postcode (this would only be used to feed back to Ubico, it will NOT be used for other data collection)
- The date of the expected waste collection. This link is to waste services on the CDC website with the revised calendar and reporting tool:
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/>
- The type of waste which has not been collected
- Details of how the report was made - i.e. portal, email or phone.

Hopefully things will settle and collections will be regular and reliable, but I do appreciate how annoying it is to people when the system is not working. Please continue to let me know if more collections are missed.

Containers missed by week

Count of Ward	Column Labels					Grand Total	No Properties
Row Labels	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Grand Total	No Properties
Abbey	142	45	25	5	43	260	1273
Blockley	15	8	9	10	21	63	1393
Bourton Vale	73	14	58	12	39	196	1373
Bourton Village	40	11	85	2	51	189	1606
Campden and Vale	99	14	55	13	58	239	3113
Chedworth and Churn Valley	64	105	17	46	17	249	1146
Chesterton	16	1	8	7	5	37	1053
Coln Valley	55	16	10	22	27	130	1270
Ermin	209	220	87	108	8	632	1205
Fairford North	29	5	37		27	98	1131
Fosseridge		54	1	19	3	77	1393
Four Acres	11	1	6		11	29	963
Grumbolds Ash with Avening	23	83	53	53	46	258	1195
Kemble	9	48	6	12	2	77	1389
Lechlade, Kempsford and Fairford South	101	20	57	10	21	209	3018
Moreton East	10	38	2	36	2	88	1602
Moreton West	1	94		51	1	147	1361
New Mills	8	2	7	1	13	31	1093
Northleach	20	49	2	43	9	123	1442
Sandywell	61	50	88	113	2	314	1274
Siddington and Cerney Rural	7	32	4	19	3	65	1555
South Cerney Village	1	50	1	13		65	1255
St Michael's	87	1	84		23	195	1417
Stow	51	22	24	13	33	143	1594
Stratton	72	115	23	29	1	240	1201
Tetbury East and Rural	9	64	63	35	19	190	1454
Tetbury Town	5	4	5		1	15	1166
Tetbury with Upton	1	12	30	35	42	120	1107
The Ampneys and Hampton	32	33	3	65	8	141	1263
The Beeches	20		4		1	25	1256
The Rissingtons	1	8		17	1	27	1132
Watermoor	69	2	44	4	23	142	1507
Grand Total	1341	1221	898	793	561	4814	45200

[Forthcoming Committee Meetings](#) (underlined texts are linked)

Wed 9 August 2pm

[Planning and Licensing Committee](#)

Thurs 22 August 2pm

[Licensing Sub-Committee \(Taxis, Private Hire\)](#)

There is no Cabinet nor Full Council meeting in August.