

CLERKS REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024

Councils' Website Provider



The screenshot shows the Bibury Parish Council website. The header includes the council name, a tagline 'Serving the people of Bibury', and contact details for the Clerk, Mrs Irena Litton. A navigation menu on the left lists various services and meetings. The main content area features a large image of a village street, a 'Latest News' section with a link to a budget consultation, and an 'A-Z of Services' index on the right.

The Councils' website provider 2Commune, contacted me in January to say that they were in dispute with the software providers Cuttlefish and as a result would be ceasing to provide their hosting services wef March 2024. As I have committed in excess to over 250 hours work on developing and updating this website, I was very concerned at this news. I immediately contacted Cuttlefish to ascertain the position and if it was possible to continue with the currently website directly from them. Thankfully, they said this was possible and they have now taken over 2Commune, so I have signed a new contract with Cuttlefish with no additional fees or costs to be incurred. One very relieved Clerk!

Vehicle Recording Camera – I have sent a further email to the Community Speedwatch Project Officer Kat Dean, to ask for an update. It was agreed that a VRC camera would be provided free of charge and it was also agreed with Gloucestershire Highways that they will install a pole outside Randalls Cottage for the camera to be mounted.

Post Box, Outside Glebe House. The damaged post box has been reported to Royal Mail, who have provided me with a reference number. I am awaiting a response from their restoration department. As well as an update on when the wall and post box will be repaired, I am asking if a temporary box can be supplied to serve those who reside in that area.



Gloucestershire County Council have just launched a Greener Gloucestershire climate change community fund!

The fund is targeted at projects that help reduce carbon emissions **and** spread the word about ways to reduce emissions.

The fund can deliver grants of up to £4,999 to eligible groups. The closing date for applications is the 26th February. This is a short application window as we have very limited funds available.

Full details are available on our website here <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/greener-gloucestershire-climate-dashboard/influencing-others/greener-gloucestershire-community-fund/>

If you have any questions please read the website and application form carefully to see if you can find the relevant information and then email glosclimate@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Parking Survey Jan 2024

Cotswold District Council's 2010 Car Parking Strategy was updated in 2016 to recognise the need for increased parking across the district. However, since the creation of the strategy, many factors have influenced transport and parking behaviours, such as the climate agenda, the Coronavirus pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the wider economy. Yet the demand for parking remains.

We are now in the process of reviewing our current strategy, to ensure it is making best use of Council assets and meeting the needs of you, our customers, now and in the future.

We really value your feedback. If you could spare time to take part in our short car park survey, we can capture what is important to you, and ensure our services are meeting your needs.

The survey is designed for you to give feedback by individual car park, if you want to tell us about more than one car park please complete a survey for each.

[Take the survey](#)

15 January 2024 - 26 February 2024

Cotswold District Local Plan Update and Cirencester Town Center Masterplan Consultation is now LIVE

Cotswold District Council is updating its adopted Local Plan to make it “Green to the Core”. The adopted Local Plan covers a period from 2011 to 2031. The Council is also considering development needs up to 2041 and options for how these may be delivered. During this period the Council also is consulting upon a draft Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document for Cirencester Central Area (a town centre masterplan).

The consultation period will run from:

**MASTERPLAN: 1 February until 17 March 2024 (11:59pm); and
LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: 1 February until 24 March 2024 (11:59pm)**

This is a Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. It builds on the consultation responses we received in 2022 at the previous ‘Issues and Options’ stage of plan-making. The consultation also responds to changes in national guidance and new evidence base studies undertaken to inform the Local Plan Update.

The consultation consists of:

- updated Local Plan policies;
- A vision, objectives and development strategy topic paper that starts the process of how the council addresses development needs to 2041;
- A Call for Sites that invites people to indicate available land that can deliver development needs up to 2041. This can include land for housing, employment, renewable energy, green spaces, nature, etc.
- An 'initial ideas' consultation document that starts the process for developing a Framework Masterplan for Cirencester Town Centre.
- An interim Integrated Impact Assessment will support the consultation and will include an appraisal of the development strategy options and the draft policies. This will be available from 9 February.

You can read the documents and submit comments at your.cotswold.gov.uk

The document and supporting evidence can also be viewed and downloaded via the Council's website at:

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

Changes to parliamentary boundaries across the Cotswold District to come into effect for next General Election

The [Boundary Commission for England](#) has completed a review of Parliamentary constituencies which will impact communities in the Cotswold District at the next General Election.

Changes to the Parliamentary boundaries mean that Cotswold District will now form part of two parliamentary constituencies, rather than the one it currently does.

1. **North Cotswolds constituency** (70,915 voters) will be formed of Cotswold, Tewkesbury and Stroud district wards.
2. **South Cotswolds constituency** (72,856 voters) will be formed of the Cotswold and Wiltshire local authority areas and one ward (Kingswood) from the Stroud district.

The Boundary Commission started their review in 2021 and the changes were approved at the end of 2023 meaning they will come into effect for the next General Election. The two-year review process included a number of statutory public consultations, where more than 60,000 representations were made.

The changes do not affect the boundaries for any wards for council elections and will have no impact on council services.

The full report from the Boundary Commission including the final recommendations can be found

here: <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/>

Cotswold District Council's Returning Officer and Chief Executive, Robert Weaver, said: "Although these changes alter the Parliamentary constituency that you live in, they do not affect which council area you live in, nor the services you receive. Your councillors will remain the same and it will not affect future council elections.

"At the next general election, all registered voters will be sent information saying which parliamentary constituency they are part of, and residents can look up their new constituencies on the Boundary Commission website."

Maps can be found via the links below:

- [North Cotswolds constituency](#)
- [South Cotswolds constituency](#)
- [Interactive Map - use the layers to add the existing constituencies and final recommendations.](#)

Every constituency must contain between 69,724 and 77,062 electors. The number of constituencies in England has increased from 533 to 543 and the number of constituencies in the South West has increased from 55 to 58.



Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswolds shares tips for how to save money on your energy bills

As people across Stroud and Cotswolds Districts face another winter of high energy bills, Citizens Advice shares how small changes can make a big difference when it comes to saving energy and lowering costs.

The charity has teamed up with the Energy Saving Trust to share advice on getting help if you are struggling with energy bills and tips on how to cut energy costs around the home.

People can make simple changes to save money on their energy bills and don't need to wait until the colder months to do so. These include:

- Washing clothes at 30°C could save around £15 per year - and reducing the number of wash cycles by one per week could save a further £15.
- Reducing shower time to four minutes could save a typical household as much as £75 a year.
- Swapping one bath a week for a four-minute shower could save an average of £17 a year.
- Avoiding overfilling the kettle could save around £12 a year on electricity.
- Draught-proofing windows and doors will help your home feel warmer and could save around £50 a year on bills.
- Turning appliances off at the wall/plug when you're not using them could save an average of £60 a year.
- Turning the thermostat down by 1°C could save around £115 a year.

Installing a Smart Meter can help people get better control of their energy use and budgets. Smart meters come with an In-home Display Unit (IHD) that shows how much you're using and its cost, almost as you use it – in real time. The government has instructed all energy suppliers to offer households a smart meter by 2025. You don't have to have one but may benefit from reduced tariffs with some suppliers. The government estimates that customers with smart meters save an average of £50 a year.

Check you're getting all the support you're entitled to...

Lifestyle changes won't be possible for everyone and may not be enough to cover the hole in household budgets caused by higher prices, so Citizens Advice is also urging people to check they're getting all the support they're entitled to. This could include:

- Checking what benefits you're entitled to by using a benefits calculator
- Warm Home Discount — a £150 annual discount if you get certain benefits
- Cold weather payments — payments if you get certain benefits and the weather is extremely cold
- Grants from your energy supplier — to help you pay off debts you may owe

For more information, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk

If you owe money to your energy supplier, you should speak to them as soon as possible. They're responsible for helping you find a way to pay your bills.

Elizabeth Hall, Chief Officer of Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts said:

"We know lots of people are worried about how they'll cover their energy bills this winter. So it's important people know what support they're entitled to and how to cut back on energy costs where they can. Every day we hear from people who are already doing everything they can, but sky-high costs mean it's simply not enough. We want to remind anyone struggling they're not alone, if you need support managing your bills, please contact us."

If you cannot access the website or need further help you can contact Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts on 0808 800 0510 or 0808 800 0511 Monday to Thursday, or Email us using the form on our website (www.citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk).

**Could your
Winter Fuel
Payment
help people
in need?**



Donate to Pay Warmth Forward

If you feel you don't need your Winter Fuel Payment, donate it to the Severn Wye Pay Warmth Forward scheme.

We'll use it to get radiators and electric blankets to vulnerable people in your area with no heat this winter.

Find out more and donate
severnwye.org.uk/donate



Energy, sustainability and wellbeing now, and for the future.