

ERMIN WARD

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JANUARY 2024

 @ErminWard

I post helpful information, including road closures for infrastructure repair etc., on my Ward Councillor Facebook page. Please could you mention this in your Parish News and Village Website. Underlined text is linked.

Cllr Julia Judd, Ermin Ward District Councillor

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Click [HERE](#) For **December 2023** calendar of meetings, Agendas, Reports Pack & Webcasts. There was no full Council meeting in December.

Tues 7 Dec	6pm	<a href="#">Cabinet</a>
Wed 13 Dec	2pm	<a href="#">Planning &amp; Licensing</a>
Thurs 21 Nov	2pm	<a href="#">Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street Trading Consent Matters)</a>

## CABINET DECISIONS 7 December 2023

Cabinet Agenda Reports Pack and Webcasts [HERE](#)

### **Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25**

Results of the public consultation on proposals for revising the current Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from 1 April 2024.

Cabinet: APPROVED the increase in Council Tax Support as detailed in paragraph 3.4 from 1 April 2024. APPROVED that any surplus in the Hardship Fund is transferred over to 2024/2025 for reasons detailed in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7. APPROVED the amendment to the Council Tax Support Policy as recommended in paragraph 3.8.

### **Increase in Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping, duty of care, littering and graffiti.**

New maximum level fines proposed by the Government to deter and punish the offences of littering, fly-tipping, householder duty of care, flyposting and the

distribution of free printed matter, and to seek approval to introduce these new fine levels.

Cabinet: AGREED to increase the fine levels to the maximum levels permissible as outlined in paragraph 3.4 as amended. AGREED an early payment discount as outlined in paragraph 3.4. AGREED to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to increase the fine levels as approved.

### **Delivery of Affordable Housing**

Outline the Council's aspiration for a more proactive approach to increasing the supply of affordable housing within the district, outline of how this can be achieved, and the resources required.

Cabinet: AGREED to explore innovative and proactive models to enhance the council's ability to increase the supply of affordable homes within the district.

### **Draft Cotswold Housing Strategy**

To seek approval to consult with partners and the public on a new five-year Cotswold Housing Strategy. The strategy directly responded to the Council's Corporate Plan that sought to address housing affordability and increase the supply of affordable housing.

Cabinet: APPROVED the draft Cotswold Housing Strategy for public consultation as presented at Annex A and B; and AGREED to delegate authority to the Forward Planning Manager to agree a questionnaire for the public consultation exercise and to make minor modifications to improve clarity.

### **Financial Performance Report**

To set out the latest budget monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year.

Cabinet: Reviewed and NOTED the financial position set out in this report. AGREED to endorse the recommendation in paragraph 9.3 that Cabinet continue to review in-year opportunities with Publica and Ubico to mitigate the forecast financial position. APPROVED the provisional transfer of £0.150m to the Treasury Management reserve. AGREED to establish a new earmarked reserve "Contract Smoothing" and APPROVED the provisional transfer of £0.255m from the General Fund Revenue Budget to the earmarked reserve.

### **Council Priority and Service Performance Report – 2023-24 Quarter Two**

To provide an update on progress on the Council's priorities and service performance.

Cabinet: NOTED the overall progress on the Council priorities and service performance for 2023-24 Q2

## PLANNING FEES

Planning fees are set centrally and they have remained static for 7 years. Following the planning white paper in 2021, revised Planning legislation came into force on 6 December 2023, to boost much needed resources into the planning system. Planning application fees have increased by 35% for large commercial, residential, industrial applications and major developments by 35%. Small residential applications have increased by 25%.

The Free Go provision has now been scrapped. There will now be a charge if small changes need to be made to an application, whether that application is withdrawn, refused or approved.

The Planning guarantee has been shortened to 16 weeks from 26 weeks. A time extension can be negotiated, for example if consultees don't respond in time, otherwise CDC will be liable to refund the fee. Eight and 13 weeks are the statutory targets.

In September each year, starting 1 April 2025, application fees will rise annually, linked to inflation (capped at 10%) to ensure fees keep up with required levels.

Applicants and agents are being advised to opt for pre-application advice and work is being done to ensure that this advice is of a high quality with a satisfactory negotiation protocol. Pre-application charges will be set locally and are currently under review. The Planning department income should rise to a level closer to the cover cost of recovery, which is to be welcomed.

The negotiation protocol is a statement that negotiation can take place where minor changes are to be done. But if the application has to be re-worked or withdrawn, or refused at an early stage - charges will be incurred. The Planning Guarantee makes it especially important that applications submitted in the first instance are good quality, reducing architect/agent costs to the applicants as they will not need to keep submitting revised drawings, plus the workload burden on planning officers will be greatly reduced.

[A guide to fees for Planning Applications](#)

## FLY TIPPING

I am delighted that CDC has accepted the proposal from the Government to increase the upper limits for various fixed penalty notices (FPNs).

This means that within Cotswold District:

- The maximum fine for fly-tipping will increase from £400 to £1,000
- The maximum fine for litter or graffiti will increase from £150 to £500
- The maximum fine those who breach their household waste duty of care will increase from £400 to £600.

This is a step in the right direction, but I would like to take it a step further, culprits should pay the whole cost of collection.

As you already reported, cameras have been installed in fly-tipping hotspots to capture any illegal activity such as a vehicle dumping waste, such as the corner at Elkstone where a regular was captured and the information has been passed on to the Police.

The Council have carried out multiple Stop and Search operations this year to advise traders of their trading responsibilities and to stop waste being fly-tipped or entering the domestic waste system incorrectly.

## CAN PARISH COUNCILS MAKE DONATIONS TO PCC'S?

Following a thorough investigation by one of my parishes, I thought I would share the outcome of a response from Sir Geoffrey's office with you.

Happily this resulted in a cheque being made out to the church in question, on or after 26 December.

This was a known grey area in the law, with two statutory provisions pointing in opposite directions. However, a provision to clarify the law can be found in the [Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#).

Previously, section 8 of the [Local Government Act 1894](#) provided that parish and town councils could not give funding to ecclesiastical charities. However, a provision in section 137 (3) of the [Local Government Act 1972](#) allows parish and town councils to give funding to charitable bodies. These conflicting provisions discouraged many parish councils from providing funding for churches, in case they attracted a legal challenge.

Section 82 of the [Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) inserts a provision into the 1894 Act, stating that "Nothing in this Part affects any powers, duties or liabilities conferred on a parish council by or under any other enactment (whenever passed or made)". This impacts on the provision in the 1894 Act, so as to bring it into line with the provision in the 1972 Act.

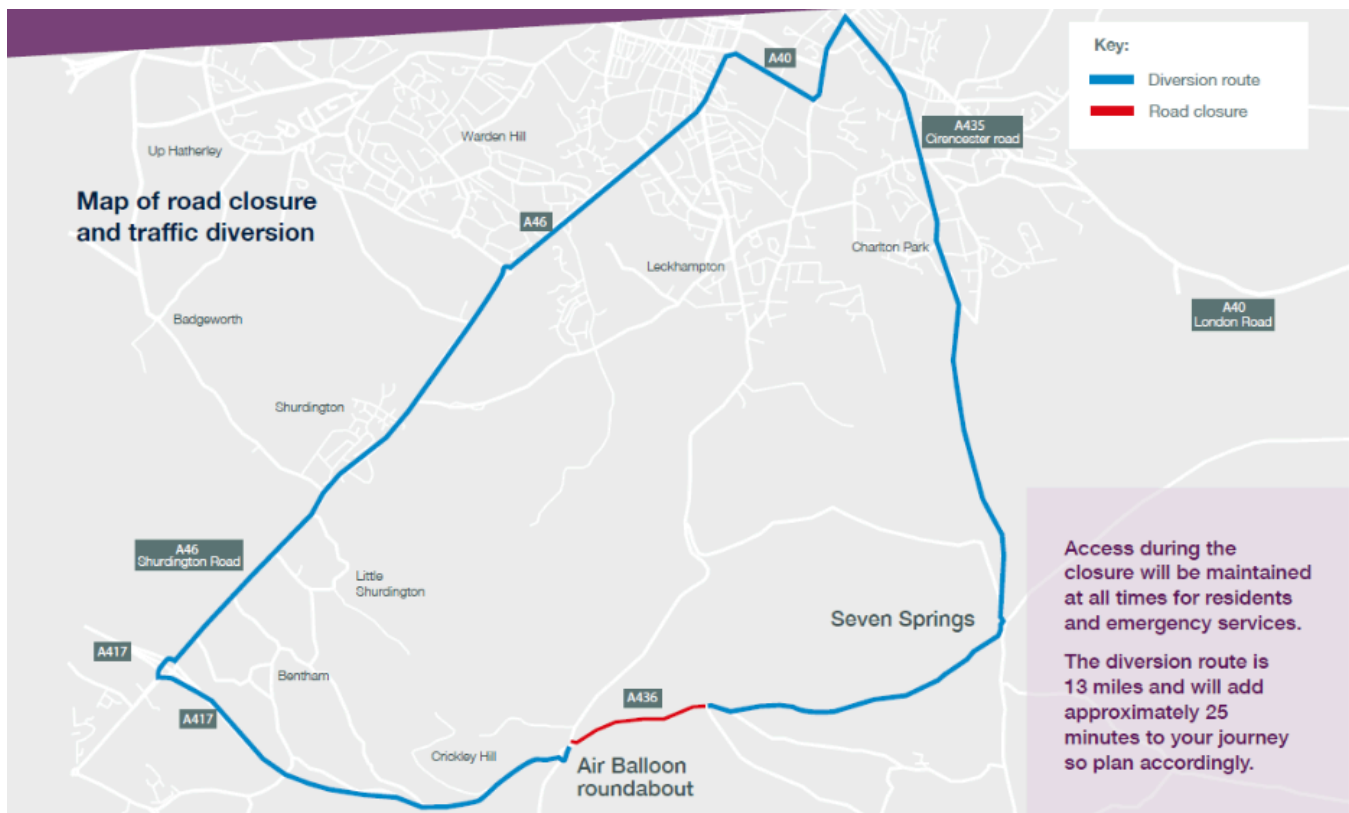
The constituent mentions the Bishop of Bristol. I believe that the Bishop of Bristol may have been involved in drafting an original amendment to the 2023 Bill as it went through the House of Lords, in order to address this issue. However, the amendment that was ultimately passed (and became section 82 of the 2023 Act) had Government support.

Section 255 of the 2023 Act states that section 82 comes into force two months after the 2023 Act receives Royal Assent. Royal Assent was given on 26 October 2023, meaning that section 82 comes into force on 26 December 2023.

Previously, this issue had been addressed by the [2017 Taylor Review](#), 'Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals'. Two detailed accounts of the issues can also be found on the Law and Religion blog, [one from March 2017](#) and [one from June 2020](#). The Church of England also published [a guidance note in March 2018](#).

## A417 MISSING LINK UPDATE

### A436 full weekend closure – rescheduled from November



On Friday 19 January, the A417 Missing Link project will start to create a new site entrance off the A436 near the Air Balloon roundabout. This work will provide easy access for site vehicles and heavy goods vehicles making deliveries to the new site offices and compound. It's been carefully located to help keep traffic moving and congestion to a minimum during the construction phase of the project. To keep everyone safe while a new site entrance is created, a small section of the A436 and the top of Leckhampton Hill will need to be closed whilst work is taking place, over one weekend to minimise disruption. The A417 will remain open in both directions but the A436 will not be accessible from the Air Balloon roundabout during this time.

### Full overnight closures on A417 in January 2024

On Monday 8 January, we will continue to work on the A417 overnight in both directions between the Air Balloon roundabout and A46 Brockworth junction. These closures will be in place between 9pm and 6am on:

Monday 8 – Friday 12 January

Monday 15 – Friday 19 January

Monday 22 – Friday 26 January

Monday 29 January – Friday 2 February

An approved diversion route will be in place via the A46, A40, A435 and A436 and has been agreed with Gloucestershire County Council. Please visit our website for more up-to-date information and the diversion route map.

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](http://www.trafficengland.com). We also publish a Road Closure Report, which includes a seven day look ahead of planned road closures, which we update twice daily, Monday to Friday except for bank holidays. You can find this at:

[www.nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/road-closure-report/](http://www.nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/road-closure-report/).

To find the latest information about local road closures managed by Gloucestershire County Council you should visit: [https://](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/)

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/)

If you have any questions, or if you would like to know more, please contact the A417 Communications Team on 0300 123 5000 or email:

[a417missinglinkatairballoon@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:a417missinglinkatairballoon@nationalhighways.co.uk)

### A417 Missing Link Business Forum Survey

National Highways have launched a short survey to capture insight about what business users want, and need, to know about the A417 Missing Link scheme as it

progresses through the construction phase. National Highways will use the feedback to help refresh the A417 Missing Link Business Forum. To take the survey, click [HERE](#)

## Discounted compost bins and water butts

Gloucestershire County Council have discounted water butts and compost bins available for Gloucestershire residents with more information here: [Choosing the right compost bin | Gloucestershire Recycles.](#) Compost bins from £10 and water butts from £15.

These are a great way to help make your garden more sustainable and keep the nutrients from your garden waste within your own garden.

## DEFRA New Round of Funding to Protect the Countryside

The Facilitation Fund is part of Countryside Stewardship. The Facilitation Fund supports individuals who act as facilitators to bring together groups of farmers, foresters and other land managers to improve environmental outcomes in their local area and is open for a new round of applicants to apply to become facilitators in 2024. This applicant's guide is for CS Facilitation Fund agreements that will start on 1 June 2024. Agreements will run for 3 years. The fund will close to applications on Monday 15 January 2024.

The £2.5 million scheme encourages collaboration and knowledge-sharing amongst the farming community in England. To apply, farmers, foresters and other land managers must submit plans showing how they will work together and share knowledge to protect and enhance their local environment. Each group can apply for up to £50,000 to deliver improvements.

This could include actions to:

- Increase biodiversity
- Improve water and air quality
- Expand woodland areas
- Improve natural flood management

For more information click [HERE](#)

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

Mon 8 Jan	4pm	<a href="#">Overview &amp; Scrutiny</a>
Wed 10 Jan	2pm	<a href="#">Planning &amp; Licensing</a>
Thurs 11 Jan	6pm	<a href="#">Cabinet</a>
Tues 23 Jan	2pm	<a href="#">Licensing Sub-Committee (Taxis, Private Hire, and Street Trading Consent Matters)</a>
Wed 24 Jan	2pm	<a href="#">Council</a>
Thurs 25 Jan	4pm	<a href="#">Audit &amp; Governance Committee</a>
Tues 30 Jan	4pm	<a href="#">Overview &amp; Scrutiny</a>