

## North Nibley Parish Council County Councillor's Report

Prepared by Cllr Linda Cohen – March 3, 2023

### North Nibley

#### Bus Service

1. The 84/85 services (as are many others) are under threat. Our ability to affect the decision is complicated by the fact that the service is controlled and funded by West of England Combined Authority (WECA) rather than Gloucestershire County Council (GCC).

I have met with the Cabinet member at GCC to ask that he communicates with his opposite number to agree a plan to save the bus services and that GCC offers to work collaboratively to help fund the service. I have also requested that we are at the top of the list when the 'dial up' / community bus service is planned, now that the pilot has been successfully completed.

We have the support of David Redgewell who heads passenger campaign group South West Transport Network who like me asked questions specifically about the Wotton bus services at the County Council meeting. Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member has publicly given his undertaking to hold meetings to try and broke a deal. All the questions and answers can be found

here: [https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mgA.aspx?M=11188&LLL=0\\_](https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mgA.aspx?M=11188&LLL=0_)

I have set up an online petition and paper copies are available.

2. Road Safety

The Liberal Democrats secured an amendment for an additional £400,000 for road safety in this year's budget.

The existing GCC Road safety initiative is failing to meet the real needs of Wotton and the surrounding villages. I asked questions at the GCC meeting about why is was so difficult to secure 20mph zones and to implement the measures that are necessary to keep all our road and pavement users safe. We have taken advantage of all the schemes available to us to monitor speed and have invited officers to see first-hand the perilous journeys that some of our children need to make to get to school. There is more money in the new budget for the traffic regulation orders which allow for the implementation of 20 mph zones. I have also highlighted the work

undertaken by our neighbouring county Oxfordshire and suggested that the Cabinet talk to their opposite number to better understand how they are delivering such an effective programme.

### 3. Lengthsman Work

This is ongoing and includes hedge trimming, sign cleaning and general maintenance.

## General Update

### 1. Gloucestershire County Council Budget 23/24

A budget of £567 million was agreed, an increase of £46 million on 22/23 levels.

The budget will raise around £13.6 million to help fund services through a council tax increase of 2.99%. The national social care precept at 2% will also be applied to raise an additional £7.4 million to support vulnerable adults. Based on a band D property, this equates to a £6.04 monthly increase.

I personally pushed for an amendment for a further £75,000 to be spent on a 'spend to save' project which would look at the best practises of those county councils that have been successful with early intervention and preventative measures that have reduced the cost of children in care and the spending levels on Children's Services.

This is an area that is absolutely vital not only to ensure that every child in the county enjoys the care that we would expect for our own children but that we also protect all our other critical services including: maintaining roads, collecting waste, road safety, flood defences and public transport – all of which are at risk if we don't get a grip on the escalating cost of Children's Services.

### 2. Potholes

I would ask that residents continue to report any issue related to: potholes; lights, signals and signs; damage to pavement or kerb; road markings and stud issues trees, hedges and vegetation; drainage and flooding; spillages or obstructions on the road; Winter Maintenance - Grit and PROW - public footpaths & bridleways (not pavements).

issues can also be logged here:

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

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### **3. Have your say on healthy lifestyles service**

Gloucestershire County Council wants to hear your views on their proposed changes to the healthy lifestyle service.

As part of the council's legal duty to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and reduce health inequalities, they provide a [healthy lifestyles service that supports people to make changes like quitting smoking or losing weight](#).

The current contract comes to an end in March 2024 and the council wants to hear your feedback on their proposed changes for the new service starting on 1 April 2024.

Since the healthy lifestyles service was first put in place in 2017, there has been an increase in lifestyles support available to every adult in the county including the [NHS digital weight management programme](#) and the Community Wellbeing Service.

With this in mind, the council is proposing to change the weight management offer (currently a referral to Slimming World) to more bespoke, targeted support for those people who find it most difficult to benefit from mainstream services. The aim is to continue to work with community organisations to deliver personalised support alongside activities already available in their local community.

It was announced in September that [£3.6 million would be invested into a separate bespoke service for children and families](#), as recent data shows a significant increase in the number of young people that have obesity since the start of the pandemic. Without intervention, childhood obesity tends to carry on into adulthood and can cause serious health complications like heart disease and diabetes. The support for children is therefore not part of this consultation.

The consultation runs until Sunday 16 April. You can have your say by [taking part in the survey here](#).

### **4. New campaign to save energy costs and cut carbon**

An energy-saving campaign has been launched by Gloucestershire County Council aimed at helping residents to save money and carbon this winter.

The campaign, called 'Cutting costs and carbon', encourages people to see what they can do to reduce energy usage and make their homes more energy-efficient.

In the UK, around 22 per cent of the country's carbon emissions come from our homes - including emissions from heating, lighting and appliances.

According to the Energy Saving Trust (EST), the average household could save about £280 a year on its fuel bills by being more energy-efficient. This equates to more than a tonne of carbon emissions per household every year.

The campaign aims to save residents money by helping them reduce the amount of energy consumed in their homes by making simple changes or investing in low energy solutions.

It will run until the middle of March and focus on three different areas - measures which involve no cost, low cost and some cost. Some of the ideas include:

No cost:

- Turning boiler flow rates down - save an average of £100 a year
- Switching appliances off rather than leaving them on standby - save an average of £70 a year
- Turning the oven off 10 minutes before your food is ready - it will retain heat and continue cooking

Low cost:

- Radiator reflectors
- Draught excluders - save an average of £60 a year
- Secondary glazing

Some cost:

- Switching to LED lights - save up to £55 a year
- Renewable opportunities - save up to £455 a year
- Home insulation - save up to £355 a year

All costs taken from <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/energy-saving-advice/>

## **5. The Holiday Activities and Food Programme returns from 3 - 14 April**

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) is funded by the Department of Education, for children eligible for benefits related free school meals.

Families will be able to access up to four days of fun activities for free in their local area.

This spring, the line-up of enriching activities available includes family days out, sensory play, football, basketball, forest skills, gymnastics and much more.

Using grant funding, the county council and its district partners are also able to offer holiday activities which are available to all children and young people across the county, through its Holiday Activity Programme (HAP).

To find out what is happening in YOUR local area and when all activities are taking place, families can [follow their HAF district lead on social media for updates.](#)

Activity bookings will open on **Thursday 16 March.**

Parents and carers can make sure they are HAF ready by [signing up to the Children's Activity and Booking System \(CABS\).](#) Families who have registered previously will be automatically enrolled and do not need to sign up again.

More information is available for parents at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf).

Additional support will also be available for families through the [Holiday Free School Meal Vouchers scheme](#) which will be running again during the spring school holidays. Details will be available soon and families are encouraged to check [our website](#) regularly for updates.

## **6. Extra winter fuel payments for Homes for Ukraine hosts**

Gloucestershire County Council and local councils will continue to pay £125 per month to those hosting on the Homes for Ukraine scheme for February and March 2023.

Hosts involved in the scheme have already received a £125 payment to help cover increased energy costs for November and December 2022, and January 2023. The decision comes following the Government's extension of the Homes for Ukraine scheme for an additional year.

### **Could you become a host?**

Gloucestershire' Homes for Ukraine team is always looking for people who can offer a Ukrainian guest a safe place to stay under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The team are looking for people who might have a second home, rental property, annex, or spare rooms anywhere in Gloucestershire and particularly in the Cheltenham area. If you would be interested in supporting someone fleeing war for at least six months, please get in touch with the Homes for Ukraine team via [hfuteam@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:hfuteam@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

An optional tax-free 'thank you' payment of £350 per sponsoring household per month is also available to hosts who can accommodate one or more guests for up to

twelve months. This rises to £450 for months seven to twelve in Gloucestershire. After twelve months this 'thank you' payment is increased to £500 per household. The fuel payment extension of £125 per month for February and March 2023 is in addition to this.

Find out more online at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-community/ukrainian-support](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-community/ukrainian-support)

## 7. Contact

My contact details are [Linda.cohen@gloucestershire .gov.uk](mailto:Linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk), telephone: 07791 110906. If you would like to discuss any of the items included here or have any other issues or ideas please get in touch.