

NEWSLETTER

Issue N° 3

January 2021

Although not a CDC responsibility, we are all proud of Gloucestershire's exemplary vaccine roll out so far. As of 29 January, over 80,000 vaccines have been delivered and 91% of over 80's have received a first dose, the highest rate in the country.

District Councillors have a duty to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of the Councillor's Code of Conduct. With elections approaching, Parish Councils are prohibited from circulating political publicity. This newsletter intends to uphold the spirit and integrity of both statements.

The Planning & Licencing Committee Meeting held on the 13 January 2021 was sparse. There were only three items and two of those were procedural concerning Works to Trees on Council owned ground.

The Council Meeting held on 20 January 2021 was also sparse. Again there were only three items for decision and they were also all procedural and listed below.

Don't forget that Council welcomes questions from the public. Your question should not take longer than two minutes and relate to issues under the Council's remit. If you would like to ask a question, please liaise with your District Councillor or contact Democratic Services no later than 5pm the working day before the Council Meeting.

democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

The next Council Meeting will be held on 24 February 2021 at 6pm.

Postal Voting

Elections for Gloucestershire County Council and for the Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as for parish and town councils, are set to take place on Thursday 6 May. If they do go ahead, it will be more important than ever before that people are registered for postal voting. Please encourage people to register here:

[Electoral Commission](#)

Dapibus neque lacus vel elit

COUNCIL MEETING

20 JANUARY 2021

The Council Meeting had only three Items for Decision:

- Terms of Reference - Crime & Disorder Committee
- Adoption of Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct
- Appointment of Interim Returning Officer & Electoral Registration Officer

Questions and Motions

CASH PAYMENTS FOR CAR PARKING

Cllr Tony Berry asked for the total income expected from parking in the year ending 2021 and the percentage of the total in 2019/20 paid in cash.

- In 2019-20 - 72% of car parking payments were paid in cash
- 2020/1 budgeted income from parking £2,461,000
- Cost to Council for cash parking £35,000 + vandalism costs total £57k
- Cost to Council for new 'cashless' scheme £66,000
- If 2% of the budget was lost because people avoid shopping in Cotswold towns because they can no longer pay by cash or don't want to use an App or card, parking income would be reduced by £48,000.
- Local businesses would suffer
- 900 people signed a petition objecting to a rise in car parking charges in 2020.

****STOP PRESS** CDC ANNOUNCEMENT - 1 FEB 2021**

We have decided to remove the option of paying by cash in all Cotswold District car parks this year to protect our environment and reduce crime. The change will come in from 1st March 2021 in the following car parks.

Phase (a) 1st March 2021, Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Mangersbury Road, Stow-on-the-Wold and Beeches Car Park Cirencester.

Phase (c) In August 2021, Forum, Sheep Street and Waterloo Cirencester and West Street, Tetbury and Old Market Way, Moreton in Marsh.

Phase (d) In October 2021, Brewery, Cirencester, Church Street and The Chipping, Tetbury and Chipping Campden.

Car park users will be able to use our new and improved payment system, PaybyPhone, which is used across the country and allows people to pay by making a quick phone call or by using the app. The pay and display machines remain in place and will continue to take card payments meaning users will still have many payment options.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Cllr Stephen Hirst questioned Cllr Clive Webster, cabinet member for the Planning Department, about service levels in the planning department, as they are suffering owing to a depletion in the numbers of staff in this Department.

He was informed that there was a process of advertising to fill these vacancies and 'I acknowledge that the Development Management service would benefit from a thorough review and in that regard I have also asked the Managing Director of Publica, Mr. Jan Britton, to lead a review of the Development Management Service. I do not necessarily agree with the premise of your question that issues are solely due to vacancies or employee numbers. There may be other factors such as systems or processes, ICT or the approach to customer service.'

FLY-TIPPING - MOTION ACTIVATED CAMERAS

A motion put forward by Cllr Tony Berry and seconded by Cllr Julia Judd for Council to purchase motion activated cameras of good quality to support efforts to catch fly-tippers. This has been deferred as an item for the next Council meeting as there is a cost to the Council.

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

Councillor Julian Beale asked Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills about progress with analysis of Applications and Payments made under the latest Business Grants Discretionary programme.'

The response was: 'I fully acknowledge the importance of getting cash out to businesses as quickly as possible and Cllr Evemy and I have worked with Officers to establish a process which is as easy as possible. We are keeping businesses up to date through communications including our Business Matters Newsletter'.

*Business Grants payments dating back to November/December 2020 have yet to be paid (at the time of writing - 29 January), causing strain to local businesses who have to meet overhead commitments. Neighbouring Councils have paid grants out, often within days of receiving the funds from the central government. Below is an email from the CDC dated 29 January 2021.

I can assure you that both Councillors and Officers at Cotswold District Council fully understand and empathise with the devastating impact of the Covid-19 national and local restrictions on our businesses. Indeed the impact upon the Council itself has been significant.

We are responsible for awarding grants in compliance with the grant conditions and guidance which is set by the Government. If we fail to do this, the Government will expect Cotswold taxpayers to pick up the cost of any non-compliant grants. This is a significant risk to a District Council with a revenue budget of £12 million. As a Council we have to manage this risk and our Officers have designed a process

which balances the requirements of the Government with the need to get grants out to businesses quickly. The reason for asking businesses to respond to our email was to ensure that we are issuing grants which are fully compliant with Government Guidance.

We are now processing email responses from businesses that have previously been awarded grants and assessing new grant applications. Our assessors are awarding the various grants which apply from November 2020 to mid Feb 2021 and will pay these as one payment. Payments will start to hit businesses bank accounts next week.

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/coronavirus-business-and-licensing/coronavirus-business-grants/>

NEW CDC POSITIONS - RECRUITED SINCE MAY 2019

Cllr Tony Berry asked what new positions have either been recruited or *planned to be recruited since May 2019 and the costs.

- Senior Infrastructure Delivery Officer
- Infrastructure Delivery Technician
- Head of Climate Action
- Economic Development
- Lead Landscape Officer
- Sustainable Transport Officer

Broadband and Mobile Networks

If you are in a mobile 'blackspot' or do not have access to fibre broadband, please let your District Councillor know.

CDC have a budget of £500,000 set aside for this.



- Affordable Housing Programme Delivery Manager
- Chief Executive, replacing Head of Paid Service

The annual cost of the above posts is £310,085 including employment costs such as pension and national insurance. This is in addition to the £300,000 cost on senior management restructure.

- *Since this meeting, CDC have advertised for another new post of 'Cabinet Support Officer' salary quoted as £31,000-£34,500.

FLOOD RESILIENCE MEETING

Friday, 5 March 2021 from 10:30 UTC-12:45 UTC

Price: free · Duration: 2 hr 15 min

Anyone - via ZOOM only

Chaired by Geoffrey Clifton-Brown and with officials from Thames Water, Environment Agency, Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council and Parish Councils.

This is an opportunity for residents to hear and ask questions of the continued flood resilience work taking place.

Please email Bettertonj@parliament.uk if you wish to participate and include any questions or concerns you would like to have discussed. A Zoom link invitation will be forwarded.

CDC have subsequently arranged a virtual flooding forum Q&A session chaired by Cotswold District Council. The meeting will be held online on Thursday 11 February at 6 pm.

<http://news.cotswold.gov.uk/.../cotswold-district-council...>

TO GET A COVID VACCINE YOU MUST BE REGISTERED WITH A GP

COVID vaccines are administered through the NHS. If you, or someone you know, is not registered with their local GP please contact your nearest surgery to register.

PLANNING COMMITTEE PROTOCOL & SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Featured in the November 2020 Newsletter, this has become a concern from some parishes already. The most important point to be aware of is that point three below, referrals to the planning committee must be made on *material planning considerations* and could be rejected by the Chair/Vice Chair.

Revisions proposed and approved at council include:

- Time management - public speaking limit of three minutes
- All members (councillors) must have basic training
- Referrals must be made on material planning considerations and could be rejected by the Chair/ Vice-Chair*
- Ward members should not represent the views of their town/ parish council during public speaking *

There are grave concerns over the starred items above. Planning is nuanced, material planning considerations considered by one person may not be by another. Officers' recommendations are sometimes overturned at the Planning Committee; under this revised mechanism, they may not get a hearing.

COTSWOLD WATER PARKS NOW SSSI

Natural England advised that they have re-notified the Cotswold Water Park Site of Special Scientific Interest, expanding it in some places (to quite a large extent) and also removing some small areas of land. The letter itself does not include any maps but if you follow the link in the letter to <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/cotswold-water-park/>, you will find the maps with the new boundaries there (there are two summary maps covering the east and west ends of the Water Park, supplemented by nine more detailed plans).

The extended designation has significant implications for development management decisions, planning policy and neighbourhood planning, and other functions as well.

If you have any questions of Cotswold District Council on this matter, please contact Sophia Price, our Heritage and Design Manager, on Sophia.price@publicagroup.uk

COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND NOW 'CROWDFUND COTSWOLD'

Cotswold District Council's current capital grant scheme, the Community Projects Fund, is coming to an end on 12 February 2021. The Council's annual £80,000 budget will be rolled into the Council's new Civic Crowdfunding Programme 'Crowdfund Cotswold' in partnership with Spacehive which sets an annual charge of £30,000. Parish Councils should have been invited to a presentation to launch this new project.