

## County Councillor Report for May

### Grass Cutting by Highways

Whilst encouraging a “NO MOW “May You may have seen the highways tractors mowing the verges and junctions This is to ensure the safety of road users and maintain visibility at junctions ,GCC cut some areas at junctions and bends during the spring ,although the dates of cutting vary each year depending on the weather, and this year they began to carry out some of these small safety cuts during May.

Parish and district councils may also choose to cut grass verges during May. Later in the summer the Highways Department will carry out a full cut; a one-metre swathe on all roads. A list of dates and locations for the spring safety cut is available on the grass cutting page on GCC website under [Road maintenance | Highways \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/road-maintenance-highways)

### Community Wellbeing Service and the Future of Social Prescribing for the County

NHS Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council have carried out extensive engagement and evaluation of the Community Wellbeing Service (CWS) and the wider social prescribing offer in Gloucestershire over 18 months to understand how it is working in practice and to inform future developments.

Using the feedback and following an options appraisal, GCC concluded that a new social prescribing model is required to meet the needs of local people.

GCC will therefore not be recommissioning the CWS when the contract ends on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

GCC thanked the five local providers of the CWS in the county for their valued contribution in support of social prescribing over the last seven years. Local people will still be able to access social prescribing support from the service until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Since the CWS was first introduced in 2017, the concept and understanding of social prescribing has been constantly developing as it becomes a widely accepted way to support people with non-medical needs to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to their community.

There are now several ways in which local people can access social prescribing support, including via Social Prescribing Link Workers based in Primary Care Networks, and health and wellbeing coaches and care co-ordinators within practice teams.

In addition, other similar services, such as the Mental Health Support and Advice Service and care navigators/advisors working within local NHS and voluntary organisations for people with specific conditions, can signpost people to community support. **These services will remain in place.**

It's important that GCC make best use of our money and resources, including by investing more money into the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector who have local knowledge and trusted relationships with the people who need support, particularly in some of the most deprived areas of our county.

In the coming weeks and months, GCC will liaise closely with partners across the health, care, and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors to ensure local people are aware of how they can continue to access ongoing social prescribing support.

GCC do recognise that decommissioning the Community Wellbeing Service will have an impact on the five organisations who currently provide the service. Where roles may be at risk, we will work with providers and those employees who are affected to explore other employment opportunities in the community.

### **The Robin Bus Service**

Gloucestershire County Council are to launch the expansion of the innovative, on-demand bookable bus service – The Robin. Department for Transport (DfT) funding helped launch The Robin pilot, which currently operates in the Forest of Dean and the north Cotswolds. This service has proved successful, and the pilot is now expanding into parts of Tewkesbury, Berkeley Vale and the south Cotswolds.

Having looked at the detailed map which shows the area that the service will cover; it appears that my division of Bisley with Lypiatt and Painswick/Upton are not covered by the service, however I contacted the Cabinet Member for Bus Transport, Cllr Robinson who informed me that this will be kept under review. I will continue to raise the issue of the need for a responsive bus service within our communities to ensure the most isolated and rural villages can make use of public transport.

### **There is still time to have your say**

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) wants to hear the views and feedback of Gloucestershire communities, workforce and stakeholders on the proposals on proposed changes to the service, which would include an increase in fire cover in line with risk and demand across the county. **The consultation ends on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024.** For more information and to take part, please visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire-consultation](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire-consultation)

The proposals include an increase of 14 firefighters (including crew and watch managers) in the county, with the introduction of a new day shift station at Cinderford. There would also be a change to a 12-hour shift pattern to respond to emergencies and provide prevention and community safety as well as benefit the health and safety of firefighters **No decisions or changes to fire resources will be made until the public consultation has been concluded.** I will update in due course.

## **Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Celebrating Pride throughout the County**

They have already attended their first Pride event this year, which took place at the Imperial Gardens in Cheltenham on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May. At last year's Cheltenham Pride, GFRS received a 'Friend of Pride' award for their proactive approach to diversity and inclusion, which has been shown through their support for the LGBTQ+ community.

At each Pride event, the fire and rescue service crew will be visible with their Pride fire engine and will be available to provide fire safety advice. It is also a chance to ask questions to find out more about the role of a firefighter at GFRS, alongside other career opportunities.

GFRS will be attending the following Pride events later this year:

- Pride in Cirencester - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June
- Wotton Pride - Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June
- Stroud Pride - Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June
- Pride in Tetbury - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July
- Pride in Cinderford - Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July
- Pride in Tewkesbury - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August
- Dursley Pride – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August
- Pride in Gloucestershire - Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September

## **Gloucestershire Libraries are expanding their Library Choirs to reduce loneliness and isolation for the over 60yrs**

The service was first launched at Longlevens in November 2023, as part of a three-year Arts Council England (ACE) initiative focussing on Ageing with Creativity.

Now thanks to a successful National Lottery Awards for All funding application worth £16,400, the service can be rolled out to more communities following its success.

Choirs will be offered at Coleford and Tuffley libraries, starting in early July 2024. Each inclusive group invites people of all backgrounds to come together, celebrate the joy of singing and make new connections. There is no requirement for any previous singing experience or for an audition, everyone is welcome. An experienced choir leader will guide the group, ensuring that song choices are made together to reflect tastes and preferences.

For more information, please email [libraries.development@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:libraries.development@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or speak to your local library.

### **Full Council Meeting**

At the full council meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> May I was once again elected as Vice Chair of Gloucestershire County Council. Cllr Vernon Smith was also re-elected as Chair of the County Council. It is a huge honour to represent and promote the County.

### **Fix My Street**

Gloucestershire County Council Site Fix my street is proving popular for individuals to report an issue such as potholes, problems with lights, public foot paths etc. You can visit the GCC site. It is the front page. I am always happy to report. Please e mail me the problem and I will submit the issue.

Please contact me on 07766318854 or 01452 770928

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