

## 1. Gloucestershire living with covid

Gloucestershire County Council also recognises the efforts of communities over the last two years and shares sincere thanks to the county for pulling together during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the same way as the Government is intending to remain able to respond to any new variant, Gloucestershire will remain ready to respond in a number of ways, including:

- Prepared to bring back Local Contact Tracing
- Prepared to carry out Targeted Community Testing
- Access mass surge testing if required
- Building resilience in our workforce in advance

More about our plans for living safely with covid can be found [here](#).

You can read the most recent government announcement at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

## 2. Council leader commits £1.5m to support levelling up in Gloucestershire

At a Levelling Up Conference held in Gloucester last week, County Council Leader, Mark Hawthorne announced an additional £1.5m to support communities to go further and achieve more. This builds on £2.5million already committed by the county council to support levelling up in Gloucestershire.

The conference, held at Quayside House, Gloucester was attended by more than 100 people, representing a range of Gloucestershire groups and organisations and was an opportunity for local leaders and decision makers to listen to what communities need from them and what, with a greater level of co-creation and design of services and process, can be delivered and achieved in neighbourhoods and local area.

Five community organisations were showcased at the conference. Each showcasing what they are doing to support levelling up in their communities:

[G11 Hub](#)

[Gloucester Community Building Collective](#)

[Grace Network](#)

[Fair shares community time banks](#)

[Matson, Robinswood and White City Community partnership](#)

Of the £2.5m already committed by the council, £500k was allocated to supporting a range of schemes and events to support market towns, which have all been brought together in an [online calendar](#). [A further £2m](#) was allocated equally (£40k each) across the county's 53 councillors to support communities recover and rebuild following covid-19.

## 3. £14.1 million active travel bid success for Gloucestershire

The delivery of the county council's ambitious 26-mile 'cycle spine' from Stroud to Bishops Cleeve has been given a real boost after the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed that Gloucestershire County Council will be awarded £14.1 million.

Funding has already been committed to a new flagship walking and cycling route along the B4063, linking Gloucester to Cheltenham. Now the full bid of £14,127,413 has been allocated by the DfT in the third tranche of the Active Travel Capital Fund, funding is available for the Gloucester Cycle Spine and Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve cycle route.

The county council is committed to tackling climate change and creating a Greener Gloucestershire and this investment in cycling and walking infrastructure will help us work towards these goals. Increased walking and cycling will improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions from transport, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.

#### **4. New fund launched to improve safety of county's roads**

A new fund has been launched to help create a greener, safer and healthier county, as part of a partnership between Gloucestershire County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The £600,000 Community Speedwatch Safety Fund will give communities the tools they need to combat speeding in their areas.

The fund aims to make the county's roads safer for the pedestrians, cyclists and motorists that use them.

Applications can be made for a range of measures, including Road Safety Officer support, speed surveys, 'Twenty is Plenty' wheelie bin stickers, vehicle activated signs to encourage drivers to slow down, and community speedwatch cameras.

Bids must be supported by the local county councillor and submitted by 31 August. For information on the fund, visit at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-community/the-community-speedwatch-fund/>

#### **5. M5 Junction 9 scheme gets £1.5 million funding boost**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has announced the award of £1.5 million to the county council to support its proposed M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme.

Find out more about the scheme at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/major-projects-list/m5-junction-9-and-a46-ashchurch-transport-scheme/](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/major-projects-list/m5-junction-9-and-a46-ashchurch-transport-scheme/)

#### **6. Council welcomes road safety policy review**

At the previous council meeting (18 May), councillors supported a motion welcoming the council's road safety policy review and backing a focus on consultation and local community involvement.

As part of the motion, councillors agreed:

- To ask officers to provide Environment Scrutiny and Fire and Rescue Scrutiny with a thorough briefing on recent accidents and their causations.
- To call on cabinet to ensure that communities and all levels of governance in Gloucestershire are thoroughly consulted on the refreshed Road Safety Policy.
- To call on cabinet to work with Environment Scrutiny and Fire and Rescue Scrutiny to develop a policy of ongoing dialogue with our residents to see road safety measures proactively installed in our communities.

## **7. Gloucestershire to host 2022 Women's Tour and Tour of Britain with council support**

On Wednesday, 8 June, stage three of the Women's Tour will begin in Tewkesbury and finish in Gloucester. The route will see the riders head west into the Forest of Dean before heading back west to finish in the heart of the cathedral city by Gloucester Docks.

This will be followed by stage six of the Tour of Britain, the UK's most prestigious men's cycle race, visiting the county on Friday, 9 September, with the race also starting in Tewkesbury and finishing in Gloucester. The riders will head east into the Cotswolds, before heading south, then coming up through the Stroud district, and finishing by Gloucester Docks.

The start and finish of both races will be separated by a little over ten miles, allowing fans to easily attend both on race day.

The council's commitment to supporting tourism and active travel will see it sponsor both races. It will be the first time either race has held a stage start and finish in Gloucestershire.

In the UK, ITV4 will exclusively broadcast all eight stages of the Tour of Britain live from start to finish, with a one-hour highlights show also shown each evening. The Women's Tour will also have highlights shown on ITV in the UK.

Coverage of both races will also be shown worldwide on Eurosport and GCN. For more details on Gloucestershire's Women's Tour stage, click [here](#). For more details on Gloucestershire's Tour of Britain stage, click [here](#).

Full road closures will be in operation at the start in Tewkesbury and the finish in Gloucester:

### **Tewkesbury**

- A38 High Street - Full road closure from Barton Street to Mythe Road from midnight on Tuesday, 7 June to 2pm on Wednesday, 8 June

## **8. Trial schemes to reduce school run traffic made permanent**

Two schools, Tewkesbury C of E Primary School and Warden Hill Primary School in Cheltenham, have been involved in the initiative since it was launched in November 2020. Rope Walk, at Tewkesbury, and Durham Close, by Warden Hill, are only open at school run times for those travelling by foot, bike or scooter, to create a safer, cleaner environment and encourage sustainable and healthier streets for all.

The School Streets are open to pedestrians, cyclists and those with exemptions, including local residents, emergency vehicles and Blue Badge holders, for a short period at the start and end of each school day. Residents are issued with permits ensuring they can enter and leave the street without restriction.

The road closures and any other waiting restrictions are implemented using a legal process called Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs), which includes consultation with the public. The county council's Thinktravel team has been working closely with the schools and local residents and the scheme has been kept under review throughout the 18-month process.

Feedback from the consultation revealed many families felt safer walking, scooting and cycling to school because of the reduction in traffic congestion and hazardous parking. It also highlighted concerns of residents of Durham Close about access, which council officers will follow up over the summer.

A decision to make the trial at both schools permanent has now been made under delegated powers by Philip Williams, Assistant Director of Traffic and Transport at Gloucestershire County Council, taking into account all feedback received.

You can [read the full report outlining the decision here](#).

The School Streets scheme at both locations will still be monitored and further consultation and engagement will continue with Warden Hill Primary School and local residents, ahead of the school's move into a new building on the existing school site in September 2022.

More [information about School Streets can be found here](#).

## **9. Council urgently seeks local foster carers**

Too often, due to a lack of local foster carers, children must move to live with a foster family far away from where they live, and brothers and sisters are separated.

In Gloucestershire, many more fostering households are needed to make sure every child that can't live with their birth family gets the care they need and is well supported within their community. We are calling for families, couples and individuals to contact us now for a no obligation chat about joining our fostering family, where assessment, training and extensive ongoing support is available to all foster carers.

Foster carers for children of all ages are sought, including those who are interested in caring for babies and toddlers, teenagers, and refugee children. Foster carers who can support brothers and sisters are particularly welcomed, as they make sure siblings can be cared for together and don't lose vital family connections.

Currently, there are over 840 children living with almost 240 foster families in Gloucestershire and the number of children coming into care keeps rising. The reasons children need foster families vary widely, including a parent's illness. Some children may have witnessed domestic violence or drug abuse; others may have been abused or neglected. These children need a nurturing family environment to help them to recover and thrive.

Some foster families look after children on a short-term basis, but for many, fostering offers a secure, permanent home. Local foster carers provide support and care in a family setting and enable children to stay in their community with everything that is familiar to them. This minimises further disruption to their lives by helping them stay in their school, close to their friends, and keep connections with other family members.

Whether you're employed or not, you live alone or as part of a family, if you're interested in fostering, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us now for a no obligation conversation to find out more about how we can support you to become a foster carer for Gloucestershire County Council. Please visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering) or call 01242 532654.

## **10. Gloucestershire cyclists to be paid as they peddle with mobile game**

As part of its strategy to promote cycling and active travel, the council is asking cyclists across the county to help us to improve our bike infrastructure by playing a mobile game that offers cash rewards.

The game encourages players to explore the county and keep fit, while also earning money in the process.

In a UK first, the council has teamed up with Finnish software startup, Crowdsorsa, to provide a crowdsourced data collection event to survey the condition of the county's cycling infrastructure.

The mobile game allows riders to collect virtual fruits and berries worth money, these are collected by recording video footage of the cycle routes ridden.

The survey will start at 10am on Thursday, 2 June, and anyone with a smartphone, bike and phone holder can take part.

The game shows users over 250 miles of cycling routes on a map, all covered with virtual fruit and berries, and the more of these they collect – the more money they earn. Each mile of cycle route has around £2.50 worth of objects to collect.

Anyone with a smartphone, a bike and a phone holder can take part in the survey. The Crowdsorsa mobile game can be downloaded for free from the App Store and Google Play. Within the app, there is a mission created for the Gloucestershire survey, which also features instructions for users.

## **11. Mark Preece appointed Chief Fire Officer**

He took over as the interim Chief Fire Officer in May last year, following the departure of Wayne Bowcock who left to become the new Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Mark has made strong progress on projects within the fire service during that time and the county council's appointments committee was unanimous in its decision to offer him the post permanently.

He joined GFRS as Assistant Chief Fire Officer in December 2019 and became Deputy Chief Fire Officer in November 2020. He co-ordinated the incredible COVID-19 response at GFRS and has driven forward the service's improvement journey.

Mark began his career with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service 30 years ago and has worked in a range of senior roles.

## **12. Public show their support for proposed M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme**

Following its statutory public consultation for proposed improvements to M5 Junction 10, Gloucestershire County Council has published a summary report of the main findings.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-may-2022/public-show-their-support-for-proposed-m5-junction-10-improvements-scheme/>

Thanks  
Vernon

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