

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. Gloucestershire County Council is on track to achieve its target of planting one million trees by 2030

A vision of a thriving network of sustainably managed trees and woodland around the county is being developed, supported by funding from the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust.

A total of 66,000 trees have been planted during the last two planting seasons by the county council, including trees planted to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

More than 40 different sites around the county have been used, involving nearly 100 volunteers and officers. These projects enable the public to play a key part in planting trees while providing many benefits to the community, including bringing people together, having a positive impact on mental health and encouraging outdoor activities.

Trees also create habitats for wildlife, offering protection and shelter along with nutrition from fruits, nuts and seeds.

Plans are now being made for the winter planting season from October 2022 and next year, when we aim to plant over 100,000 more trees.

A 'Gloucestershire Tree Warden Scheme' is being set up, in partnership with the Tree Council, to bring everyone together who has a shared interest in looking after trees.

It aims to build on the current network of fantastic volunteer tree champions, so more trees can be planted and cared for.

To find out more about the Tree Warden Scheme and sign up, please email glosclimate@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

More land is also needed around the county for tree planting. If you have a possible planting project, or have land that could be used, you can [submit your expression of interest here](#).

3. Employment and Skills Hub successfully supporting residents

The hub has a physical base in Gloucester but also provides services online, in communities, and over the phone for those looking to retrain, upskill or gain employment.

The service provides a central source of information and specialist coaches who can work with residents to provide practical support or information either through the hub programmes or one of their partner organisations. A tailored package and ongoing support is made available whether the resident needs training, a new career, advice, support, an apprenticeship including residents who may need specialist support to help them get into work. The only criteria to access the service is to be a Gloucestershire resident.

Since September, 172 people have benefited from the hub services and 35 have used specialist services to help them into work. Specialist services are available through the hub including Forwards Employment Service who help people with disabilities and the Gloucestershire GEM Project delivered by 30 partners across the county. The team also work with young people in education to help them in their transition into work.

As part of the visit the county council's Adult Education service was also showcased – which the hub regularly refers to. This fantastic service offers a myriad of different courses from upskilling people in technology and software to maths, first aid or even learning life skills like cookery or gardening and online buying and selling. Adult Education supports some of the hardest to reach learners across the whole of the county helping them reach their full potential. Adult education in Gloucestershire is funded exclusively from central government.

Since July, Adult Education has supported 2,147 people through 481 community-based courses and 1156 learners through our Accredited Skills and Apprenticeships provision via 165 different courses. Most recently they have increased their ESOL (English to Speakers of Other languages) provision to support Ukrainian refugees settling into the local areas with 437 individual learners benefiting from this particular training.

<https://youtu.be/QDud8VurOas>

4. Launching a brand-new online volunteering service in Gloucestershire

Go Volunteer Glos, the digital home of volunteering in Gloucestershire, was launched on 1st June 2022, the first day of national Volunteers Week. It's a brand-new free website for local people aged 16 plus who are looking to offer their time as a volunteer and for organisations, charities and community groups needing volunteers.

Using GoVolunteerGlos.org is the simplest way to find volunteering opportunities - no matter what your interest is – anything from dog walking for an elderly person to creating a new community garden to fundraising.

People wanting to volunteer in Gloucestershire will now be able to use the website to match their skills, interests, location, and availability to the perfect volunteering role. That role could be helping at a one-off event right through to a regular commitment.

For those new to volunteering there are so many benefits for you, as well as the people and causes being helped. You could have the opportunity to gain new skills, make friends, or get to know your community. Whether you want to volunteer from home or get out in the community and meet new people, GoVolunteerGlos.org has something for everyone.

5. Know your plastics and help increase recycling rates

The campaign has been launched by the Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership, which is made up of Gloucestershire County Council and the district councils and aims to increase the amount of plastic that is recycled correct at kerbside.

Each district has its own processors and methods for separating and processing plastic recycling, meaning that types of plastic suitable for collection are different in each district.

With many different types of plastics sold, it can be confusing to know which types can and cannot be recycled locally. Understandably, some people resort to putting plastics in their bin hoping they can be recycled, known as “wish-cycling”. However, this can result in extra sorting costs and lower quality materials.

The campaign will focus on questions that residents might have about plastic recycling, such as whether plastic items need to be washed and squashed, are black plastics accepted and should lids be left on or taken off bottles.

Some tips to get you started include:

- Always wash your recycling - dirty items are not able to be picked up by automated plastic sorting machines
- Many items like plastic bags, salad bags and crisp packets can't be added to your kerbside recycling, but they can be recycled at some supermarkets – find your nearest place here: www.recyclenow.com/recycling-locator?rlw-stream=16
- Check your local district guidance for details about what can be recycled in your area or the Gloucestershire Recycles website – www.gloucestershirerecycles.com/plastics/

You can find out more about the campaign and share hints and tips on plastic recycling by looking out for #GreenerGloucestershire on social media.

6. At a meeting on 22 June, the county council's Cabinet approved to receive £2.6 million of funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for adult education provision

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-june-2022/council-set-to-receive-26m-of-adult-education-funding/>

7. Have your say on the long-term future of cycling in Gloucestershire

By working with Sustrans, a charity that looks after the national cycling network, the county council wants to identify a potential long-term strategic cycling network across the county. This network would aim to connect people and places across the county with safe and accessible routes for everyone.

A better-connected cycling network across the county would enable more people to get on their bikes and switch to an active mode of transport.

Improved cycling facilities is a part of the council's commitment to working to help create a Greener Gloucestershire.

The council is committed to encouraging cycling by both improving facilities and promoting cycling wherever possible. This includes the recent promotion of the Women's Tour and Tour of Britain, which saw the women's race come to the county earlier this month with the men's race following on 9 September.

Investment has also been made into the Gloucester to Cheltenham Cycle Route which is over 50 per cent complete and will be finished in 2023. This forms part of the proposed 26-mile cycle spine stretching from Stroud to Bishop's Cleeve.

Views from residents will help form the long-term ambitions for cycling in the county. In addition to wanting to hear from cyclists about their experiences, the county council is keen to understand any potential barriers to residents getting on their bikes.

To give their views, residents can visit one of the following workshops:

- Moreton-in-Marsh – 3pm-7pm, Tuesday, 5 July, Redesdale Hall, High Street, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0BA
- Dursley – 3pm-7pm, Wednesday, 6 July, The Dursley Community Centre, Rednock Drive, Dursley, GL11 4BX
- Tewkesbury – 3pm-7pm, Monday, 11 July, Tewkesbury Town Hall, High Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5AL
- Newent – 3pm-7pm, Tuesday, 12 July, Newent Memorial Hall, 209 Bury Lane, Newent, GL18 1PT
- An online survey will also be available soon if you are unable to attend the workshops.

8. Support for families over the summer holidays

Families who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals can now register for the summer Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) funded by the Department for Education. Now in its second year, the programme is going from strength to strength, and last year provided over 26,377 HAF activity sessions for children to enjoy and nutritious food through hampers and meals.

This summer, using grant funding, the council is once again able to extend fun holiday activities to all children and young people in the county, through its Holiday Activities Programme (HAP).

Both the HAF and HAP programmes will run for four weeks from 1 – 26 August and families can register from today. Activities include drama, various sports, art, and crafts as well as ticketed attractions. More information is available at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf.

Families eligible for benefits-related free school meals can also apply for Holiday Food Hampers and Holiday Free School Meal vouchers. More information about the hampers can be found here www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf.

Holiday Free School Meal vouchers are available to cover the remaining two weeks of the summer holidays when the HAF isn't running. Parents will receive £30 per child (£15 per week, per child) from reception to year 11. Applications are open now and will close at midday on 12 July. Find out more at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/holiday-school-meal-vouchers/

Families who need additional support can apply to the [Household Support Fund](#) which supports households in the most need with food, energy and water bills and other essential items.

9. Education Inclusion Strategy and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy approved by cabinet

The Education Inclusion Strategy and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy set out a blueprint for how the council intends to improve the outcomes and life experiences of children and young people as they move into adulthood.

The number of children who need help and support because they have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or they struggle to cope with life at school, continues to rise.

Earlier this year Gloucestershire County Council ran a five-week public engagement exercise to seek views on the draft plans which set out the vision of how to deliver services from 2022-2025. Those giving feedback were asked to consider the council's vision for SEND and Inclusion, its proposed ways of working and the priorities set out within strategies.

The strategies set out nine priorities and share core messages with the Department for Education's SEND Green Paper – they include: improving access to education for specific groups, effective working with other agencies, swift access to support when it's needed and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Each of the priorities sets out what the council will do to improve the services and support it offers. This will involve measures such as:

- Ensuring schools and other settings receive the consistent advice and support they need
- Developing digital solutions to increase collaboration between, parents, schools and other agencies
- Adopting a more individual personalised approach to the way the Local Area communicates and provides support for children and young people with SEND
- Mapping mental health support services available to children and young people

Both strategies, which include the full list of priorities and the work that will be carried out to embed them can be viewed [here](#)

Thanks
Vernon

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