

# Upper Rissington Parish Council

17th March 2025

## Report from GCC Cllr. Mark MacKenzie-Charrington

- Local Road Closures:  
Great Rissington, Church Lane by Gigaclear 09.00 – 16.00, 21<sup>st</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025  
Church Westcote – Thames Water 31<sup>st</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025
- The government is moving towards decentralising and creating Unitary Authorities across the country. This will mean that the 6 District Councils in the county will be absorbed under the County Council. It's all very early days and it might not be in place before May 2028. Initially the county needs to present to government their proposal by 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025. It could be for 2 unitary authorities, east & west Gloucestershire, or simply one. Final detailed proposals need to be with the Minister by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 for consideration. Whichever route the county takes it will require significant work and cooperation with the 6 District Councils to get it all together by the end of November. There will then be the period of amalgamating the many authorities for the investing by May 2028. In the meanwhile, there will be new elections for the unitary council in May 2027.

The next stage is to establish a Mayoral system with a minimum population of 1.5m. To achieve critical mass, we will need to merge with adjacent authorities. This could be with Herefordshire & Worcestershire, West Oxfordshire or even with the existing West of England unitary.

It was announced at the end of last week that the 1<sup>st</sup> May County Council elections will go ahead as previously proposed. Some eastern and southern counties are to be fast tracked to unitary status and will be delaying their elections by a year.

- The Cotswold is the safest place to live in Gloucestershire, according to a nation-wide survey by the Police Federation. Not surprisingly Gloucester, Cheltenham & Stroud were the areas of highest crime. The figures, excluding fraud show 48.9 crimes were recorded per 1,000 of population, the equivalent of 1 in every 20 people. The Cotswolds stands 288<sup>th</sup> for non-fraud crime in the country, with Westminster the area of highest crime rates.
- Care and support for adults in Gloucestershire – the Adult Social Care Team are promoting the services that are available to adults with disabilities, mental health issues or age-related challenges to help people to stay safe and independent. Contact details are found at: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care) Tel: 01452 426868
- During the last financial year more than 130 roads comprising over 100 miles of roads were resurfaced. During the coming year a further £10m will be invested, with rural roads being a priority. From the end of April, the spray injection patching machines will be seen in action, covering more that double the area of traditional working. A Roadmender will also be out and about repairing damaged surfaces with a waterproof surface using recycled tyres.
- A new 200 place special needs school is to be built at Alstone Croft by Arle Road in Cheltenham at a cost of £20m. This will be on top of the committed £50m on other special needs schools since 2022
- Do you want to become an 'on call firefighter'? Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service is actively promoting to get more recruits into the service. Those interested see the link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire/recruitment-at-gloucestershire-fire-and-rescue-service/firefighter-on-call/>

- GCC Budget 2025/26 that has been approved by Cabinet revealed with an uplift of £32.7m or 2.99% and 2% increase in adult social care, to almost £650m. These proposals will add £6.65 per month to band D properties.. Details include:

A further £10m towards the £100m highways budget, with an emphasis of targeting rural roads.  
 Extra funding towards SEND education, with a new £16.5m school in Gloucester for 200 students.  
 General improvement and increase in capacity for schools with £12.4m investment.  
 Three new adult care homes at £7.5m and further funding in future years. £13m of improvements to Waste Recycling Centres.

- Responsibilities of Riparian Owners – landowners of ditches and watercourses. Considering recent heavy rains, it's important to remind people of their obligations.
  1. Maintain watercourses and to clear obstructions.
  2. Maintain the banks & bed of watercourses (including trees and shrubs on the banks) and any flood defences.
  3. To accept the natural flow from upstream neighbours and transfer downstream without obstruction, pollution or diversion
  4. Maintain any approved structures on your stretch of watercourse, including culverts, weirs & mill gates.
- *'Made in Gloucestershire'* is being reinvigorated to encourage our rural food & drink producers, as well as business, to get out there under the banner that promotes the best of our county. Details on the GCC website.
- **Cheltenham Festival 2025** from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> March. The County Council has teamed up with the race organisers to provide special parking and transport arrangements over the 4 days. For £15 you can park, for the day, at the new, 1,000 vehicle, Arle Court Transport Hub, close to GCHQ and up to 5 people can take a shuttle bus to and from the racecourse. These will start at 09.15 – 14.30 with returns between 16.00 – 19.30. To improve traffic, flow all roadworks in the area will be suspended for the period.
- GCC Trading Standards officers have seized about £5,000 worth of illegal and counterfeit tobacco and vapes from a single trader. The haul included 488 packets of cigarettes, 110 pouches of tobacco and 137 vapes.
- Beware speeding around the A417 Air Ballon roadworks. New average speed cameras have been set up on the A46 Brockworth junction and the A417. Weekend closure from 23.00 on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to 06.00 Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Those interested in learning about this significant civil engineering project can do so on Tuesdays & Wednesdays, between 10.00 & 14.00 without prior appointment. Head to A417 Project Office, Birdlip GL4 8JX. What3words: **shaped. quietest. payback**

MM-C/11th March 2025