

Wyck Rissington Parish Council

Meeting 23rd March 2023

Report from GCC Cllr. Mark MacKenzie-Charrington

- The Holiday Activities and Food Program will once again return between 3rd – 14th April offering free healthy, holiday activities for families whose children are eligible for free school meals. Up to 4 days will be available over the period. The line-up will include family days out, sensory play, football, basketball, forest skill, gymnastics and more. Bookings will open on Thursday 16th March. Go on line to www.gloucestershire.gov.uk and then select Holiday Activity Program in the search area.
- Recycle your small electricals. The County Council is encouraging people to recycle rather than throwing away, so the valuable metals can be recovered and importantly reused. Put them out with your general recycling items or take them to your local depot – Fosse Cross. Large items such as washing machines will be taken at the local depot.
- Communities safer due to road safety fund. Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office the County Council is working hard to make our roads safer, whether walking, riding, cycling or driving.
- A sum of £600,000 has been made available for communities to apply for help. The process includes Road Safety Officer support for speed surveys, wheelie bin stickers, vehicle activated signs (VAS) and community Speedwatch cameras. 290 applications have been made for safety measures from 119 parishes in the first stage and 124 further applications from another 72 parishes. These are in the process of being verified and moving forward to implementing viable options.
- Major road closure. The A435 Charlton Hill will be closed from 20th March till the end of September. The road, between Charlton Kings and Seven Springs roundabout, Cheltenham has been suffering from landslips and ongoing movement for some years. To prevent further movement over 440m of road will need to be shored up with 12m sheet piles. The estimated cost is £3.5m.
- Council budget for 2023/24 was set at £596m on 15th February. This is an increase of £46m over the current budget.

A total of £235m has been added to the capital program for further investment benefiting all residents and business. Funding of £119m has been agreed to complete projects such as the Gloucester South-West Bypass, Arle Court Transport Hub, the 26 mile cycle and walking spine, and flood alleviation schemes in Nailsworth, Coleford and Pittville. Additional investment will be made with £21m for protection of vulnerable children and a further £20m supporting vulnerable adults and those with disabilities. The budget includes £44m for schools across the county, including a £9.9m new primary school in Bishop's Cleeve, £1.1m towards our libraries, and £4.4m to our Fire & Rescue Service, including £2.9m for new fire engines and equipment. Significant operational savings, totalling £32m, have been identified. Based upon a band D property, the increase will equate to £6.04 monthly.

- Nathaniel Hooton has been appointed as the new Deputy Chief Fire Officer. With 22 years' experience, he's coming from Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service where he was a strategic leader and incident commander. Previously he was with Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service.
- Looking for a new career – the GCC's Adult Social Care team are looking for new people to join them working in their Friendship Cafes. The recruitment team will be happy to hear from all those interested.. Use the link to learn more.
[hWps://thefriendshipcafe.com/contact-us](https://thefriendshipcafe.com/contact-us)
 - Extra winter fuel payments for Homes for Ukraine hosts. The GCC will extend making additional monthly payments of £125 to assist in combating increased costs during February and March 2023. The scheme was initially a 3 month period for November and December 2022 and January 2023. So far more than 1,300 people from the Ukraine have come to live in the county. Should people be interested in becoming hosts information can be found at:
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-community/ukrainian-support
- First mile of flagship B4063 cycle and pedestrian route is complete. This is a small part of the ambitious 26 mile, traffic free, route that will link Stroud to Bishop's Cleeve for enthusiastic walkers and cyclists. The completed section is from Pheasant Lane to the newly completed Arle Court transport hub, including the M5 overbridge at Staverton. The new link adds to the A40 cycle route of the West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme. Other sections currently under construction include from the M5 overbridge to Brickhampton Golf Course and on to the Elmbridge Court roundabout.
- 1st March was National Allocation Day – the day parents learnt where their children have been offered places at secondary school, starting in September 2023. Parents of primary age children will hear about allocations on 17th April. The current year moving up to secondary school is unusually large so special arrangements are being made for the increased numbers, which is unlikely to repeat next year. Nevertheless, suitable accommodation will be required throughout the year's as they progress through to students moving on to college or university. 6,772 Gloucestershire students are being offered secondary school places. Of these 83% will be at their 1st preference, 8% at their 2nd preference and 6% have not received a preference. Owing to the general cost of inflation fewer students are moving out of the state sector to the independent sector. 373 children have been offered in selective Grammar Schools, an uplift from 306 in 2022 and up 151 from 2021.

MM-C/ 16th March 2023