

District Councillor's Update for Blockley Parish Council, November 2024

Residents can contact me, Clare Turner, at Clare.Turner@cotswold.gov.uk

Privacy Statement

As a Councillor I may need to collect personal data to process constituents' requests for assistance or respond to their enquiries. As a Councillor I will only collect the personal data from constituents that is needed to provide them with relevant information, services or support. I will not give information about you to anyone else or use information about you for any other purpose, unless the law allows me to. Further privacy information see our Councillor Privacy Notice <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/support/privacy-and-data/service-privacy-notice/councillors-privacy-notice/>

1. One of my roles as a Cotswold District Councillor is to sit on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, where we provide constructive 'critical friend' challenges to decision making, amplify the voices and concerns of the public and contribute to driving improvement in public services and strategic decision-making. When creating the committee's workplan for this year, I made a request that we scrutinise the Council's strategic thinking around waste collection and I'm pleased to report that we did exactly that at during November's meeting. I posed questions on seven waste collection themes covering anticipated national policy changes and how they will impact the council (and consequently residents), plans for making waste collections greener than they currently are, and our district's contribution to waste incineration in the county.

There were some positive responses: research and planning for electric waste collection vehicles is already in progress and I was reassured that the carbon impacts of waste collection are factored into decision making.

I was disappointed, however, to learn that everything that gets put in our black bins is sent for incineration. Materials that could be reprocessed and used again are lost when incinerated, and the process produces harmful emissions. The fact that incineration with energy generation has frequently been portrayed as a green solution in the past (though not by Cotswold District Council) is troubling but recent press coverage has helped raise awareness of the downsides of this disposal route.

I also noted with disappointment that the contractual arrangements between the waste disposal authority (Gloucestershire County Council) and the incineration facility are not transparent to waste collection authorities like Cotswold District.

During the meeting, I shared my view that, for the benefit of our residents and our neighbours elsewhere in Gloucestershire, I'd like to see Cotswold District Council take every opportunity to push waste up the hierarchy (more reduce, reuse and repair before we even think about recycling and then disposal) and take more ownership of what's collected in black bins and how it's disposed of. And while our recycling rate in Cotswold District is good compared to other local authorities, it could be much better still!

You can read the full questions and responses in the public reports pack here (pages 99-103): <https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx...>

2. As the winter draws in and heating and other energy costs increase, CDC are encouraging residents to explore their support for those struggling with the cost of living. There's lots of useful information on the website and it's not just for those claiming benefits. Visit the

website here: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/help-if-you-re-struggling-with-the-cost-of-living/>

Full Council will be considering Council Tax support for 2025/2026 at our full council meeting next week (27/11/24).

3. I attended an interesting event in Moreton last month, which I forgot to report on to BPC. This was an engagement event in partnership with “Planning For Real” which gave residents an opportunity to share their priorities for Moreton and their aspirations for the future of their town. One of the outputs was a list of proposed names to join the working group that Council had previously agreed would explore a Strategy for development in Moreton. I will sit on this group along with Moreton district councillors and another neighbouring councillor. The working group has yet to meet however, much to the disappointment of the councillors and residents/community representatives involved. CDC have committed to an infrastructure first approach however, which is exactly what residents have been calling for.
https://news.cotswold.gov.uk/news/cotswold-district-council-commits-to-infrastructure-first-housing-developments?fbclid=IwY2xjawGpVE9leHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHaZv1PTWhoLy34ih69aRlxzV3hVcNKcNxLhvWL65AGzRcm94CFu5csYJOW_aem_ZRTleB4BbSqXCIM0JDRtPA
How this will be delivered remains to be seen.
4. CDC have added their voice to a joint letter led by the Rural Services Network urging the government to ensure fair funding for rural areas. Councils have come together to emphasise the need for fair resource allocation to sustain essential services in sparsely populated regions and unlock growth and prosperity in rural communities. Currently, rural councils receive significantly less funding per capita, placing pressure on local services and residents. Councils are calling for this imbalance to be addressed and for a fair funding settlement that reflects the unique challenges of rural communities.

Read the letter in full here <https://rsnonline.org.uk/.../rsn-letter-to-jim-mcmahon.pdf>
Find out more about the Rural Services Network here: <https://rsnonline.org.uk/page/what-is-the-rsn>
5. I was pleased to represent the District Council at our Remembrance services in both Blockley and Paxford earlier this month. Thank you to everyone involved in organising and delivering lovely services, as usual.
6. There has been a reshuffle in CDC’s cabinet, with one councillor leaving the cabinet following a serious road accident and another focusing on their County role. I don’t foresee any impacts on either Parish in my ward as a result, however.
7. I’ve been advocating for some energy efficiency improvements for Campden Leisure Centre and I hope to support some fundraising for a pool cover. It’s a complex set up because the school own the site and are responsible for maintenance but CDC deliver the day to day running via Active Leisure. A new manager, employed solely at Chipping Campden has been in post since September and there have been some definite improvements as a result, including cleanliness and staffing which had previously been of concern to local residents.

8. A quick reminder of the well-being event in Moreton-in-Marsh on 28th November (community builders encouraging asset based community development) is open to all.
9. Don't forget to nominate "Unsung Heroes" for recognition here:
<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/unsungheroes>