

The Gloucestershire Charter

Sixth edition



**Local councils working together
for local people**

A shared commitment between
Gloucestershire County Council
and the parish and town councils
of Gloucestershire

SIGNATURES

By signing the Gloucestershire Charter, we declare our commitment to embrace the spirit of this agreement and aim to encourage the continuous improvement of our good working practices.

Chair/Clerk/Councillor for

Parish/Town Council

Chief Executive, Gloucestershire County Council

Sixth Edition: July 2016

INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth version of the Charter which was originally published in April 2006.

- The overall aim of the Charter is to improve relationships between the tiers of local government in Gloucestershire, in particular by improving both consultation and communication about policies and decisions that may affect local communities.
- There are three tiers of local government in Gloucestershire: parish or town councils and parish meetings; city, district or borough councils; and Gloucestershire County Council.
- All two hundred and sixty four parish and town councils in Gloucestershire play a valuable role in the fabric of local life. Parish or town councillors and their clerks possess unrivalled knowledge that can help the process of community planning and decision-making.
- This Charter has the full approval and commitment of the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) and the support of the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC).
- The Charter will continue to be monitored and amended as necessary.



PRINCIPLES OF WORKING TOGETHER

County council commitments to parish & town councils

COMMUNICATIONS

- We will identify a senior officer to operate as ‘Liaison Officer’ to act as the first point of contact for parish or town councils, providing help and information or addressing concerns they may raise from within their communities.
- We will inform all staff of this council’s commitments under the Charter and ensure that they uphold them.
- We will keep all local councils informed by providing regular news updates.
- We will invite parish and town councils to meetings, seminars and other events specifically arranged for their benefit.

COMMUNITY LED PLANNING

- We recognise the value of Community Led Planning (CLP) in encouraging local solutions to local issues. We will engage with the other tiers of local government before, during and following the development of community led plans.



ENGAGEMENT

- County councillors will endeavour to attend local council annual meetings and other meetings where possible (within their division) and will let the organiser know if they cannot be present. If a councillor cannot attend regularly, they will endeavour to report current issues to the clerk in writing or by e-mail.
- We will adhere to statutory requirements for consultation and allow as much time as possible for local councils to respond.
- County council officers will make all reasonable attempts to attend meetings of local councils when requested, in order to deal with specific issues.
- We will coordinate consultation across the council to reduce duplication and to maximise the value of limited resources.
- We will invite local councils to forums for stakeholders or to raise awareness of particular issues. These forums are used as a way to engage communities. We will provide timely feedback on all outcomes.
- We will invite chartered parish and town councils to quarterly meetings at which they may contribute to the formation of policy and receive updates on topical issues including highways.



BIG COMMUNITY OFFER

- The county council is working with parish & town councils through the Big Community Offer. The Big Community Offer **“Highways - Your Way”** provides parish and town councils with the information and guidance to decide on the priorities for their area for highways. We will continue to provide the basic highways service and deal with emergencies as well as our planned maintenance.

There are three elements of this offer:

- :: **Community Action** – we give parish or town councils the support and tools to carry out work themselves within their community. For example snow wardens and grass-cutting.
- :: **Community Match** – if a parish or town council prioritises a scheme, we will match-fund the cost to enable this to be completed. Examples are safety schemes or resurfacing that is not included in the normal programme of work.
- :: **Community Top up** – we provide parish or town councils with a product list of services and items that they may purchase directly from us. Examples are extra gully-cleaning or traffic monitoring services.

Further information can be found at

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/highways-yourway

More information, including Amey Gloucestershire’s highways guide can be found at

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roadworks

All non-emergency highways issues (eg potholes, blocked drains, damaged road signs) can be reported online at:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit

Parish & town council commitments to the county council

ENGAGEMENT

- We will respond to consultations within the time limit specified in the consultation. We will put in place mechanisms, such as delegation to a sub-committee or convening additional council meetings, to meet the consultation deadline.
- We will provide contact details for the clerk (phone and e-mail) to both the county council and the local district or borough council. If the clerk is employed on a part-time basis, the clerk will advise the county council of the most convenient times/ days for making contact.
- We will respond to CLP consultations and invitations to participate, either individually or collectively, through the GAPTC.
- We will seek to keep the public in our parish or town informed on local government matters and seek to assess public opinion through meetings, surveys and newsletters. Where appropriate, we will make the results of major surveys available to the county council.
- We will endeavour to inform our county councillor of meetings in our parish or town, where discussions or decisions to be made may be relevant to the county council.
- We will endeavour to inform our county councillor of the dates of meetings as soon as they are set and will provide them with a copy of the agenda for each formal meeting, plus a copy of the last parish or town council meeting’s minutes, three clear days before the meeting. If we request an officer from the county council to attend a meeting we will endeavour to make the request one month beforehand.



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

SUSTAINABILITY

The county council and the parish and town councils will work together in partnership to promote sustainable, social, economic and environmental development for the benefit of their local communities, whilst seeking not to adversely affect the quality of life for future generations.

EQUALITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

The county council, in partnership with the parish and town councils, are determined to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Equality and diversity are at the heart of everything we do and we have a joint responsibility to ensure that everyone has equal access to our services. We recognise that we have an important role to play in ensuring that all members of our communities have a say in our future.

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The county council welcomes all feedback and aims to act quickly and efficiently to put things right if something goes wrong. The county council aims to use all feedback to improve its services.



CONTACT DETAILS

LIAISON OFFICER GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHARTER

David Hughes
01452 328093 or email
david.hughes@gloucestershire.gov.uk

HIGHWAYS

General enquiries
08000 514514 or email
gcchighways@amey.co.uk
or through GCC's **Report it** online system:
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit

GAPTC

Gloucestershire Association
of Parish & Town Councils
01452 883388 or email
advice@gaptc.org.uk

GRCC

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
01452 528491 or email
glosrcc@grcc.org.uk

CONTACT ADDRESSES

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

01242 262626 or visit www.cheltenham.gov.uk

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

01285 623000 or visit www.cotswold.gov.uk

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

01594 810000 or visit www.fdean.gov.uk

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

01452 396396 or visit www.glooucester.gov.uk

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

01453 766321 or visit www.stroud.gov.uk

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

01694 295010 or visit www.tewkesbury.gov.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY (non emergency number)

101

or e-mail 101@gloucestershire.police.uk

or report a crime online at

www.gloucestershire.police.uk/contact-us

NHS GLOUCESTERSHIRE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP (CCG)

0300 421 1500 or email GLCCG.enquiries@nhs.net

www.gloucestershireccg.nhs.uk

All these organisations are committed to working in partnership and to the principles of the Gloucestershire Compact and its Codes of Conduct.

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/COMPACT

