

## CDC freezes council tax, garden waste licences and car parking charges yet again.

Members of Cotswold District Council have agreed a freeze on the authority's share of local residents' council tax payments for 2018/19, following a freeze for 2017/18 and 2016/17, a 5% cut in 2015/16, a 3% cut in 2014/15 and a 5% reduction in 2013/14. This means that the average band D charge for District services will remain at £126.40.

Taking into account the freeze for 2018/19, the actual amount being charged for a Band D council tax payer – without cutting frontline services – has been reduced by £17.98 per year (12%) over a period stretching back to 2010/11. Even more significantly, the £126.40 charge is on a par with what residents were paying back in 2005 and, taking the average annual inflation rate into account, represents a real terms reduction of about 45%, saving tax payers about £50 per year.

This is the 11th lowest District Council charge in the country and represents a rise from 63rd in the ratings just a few years ago.

The Council also agreed the following:

- Continuation of the freeze on parking charges at all CDC-owned car parks.
- Continuation of the freeze on the cost of garden waste licences.
- Extension of the 'free after 3 pm' parking scheme until the end of March 2019 at selected car parks across the District, including in Bourton-on-the-Water, Cirencester, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Tetbury.
- An initial allocation of up to £300,000 to extend the network of Electronic Vehicle Charging Points in the Cotswolds.



- Each Ward Member will receive an allocation of £1,000 to help fund local youth activities.
- No cuts to frontline services.

CDC Deputy Leader Cllr Nick Parsons commented:

"Nearly all the local authorities in the UK are increasing their share of the council tax bill, but I am delighted to say that we can maintain our price freeze in the Cotswolds. I am sure that residents will be very pleased to hear this news and traders should also benefit.

"Those working on behalf of the Council are always mindful of the need to keep our costs down, and I am extremely grateful for the efforts of the CDC staff as they continue to innovate and find savings without any detriment to our services. Working with partner councils, we are on target to share in collective savings of £5.6 million per year by 2020 – these savings are vital to ensure that we can continue to provide excellent value for money."

# Fairford & Lechlade Business Club Awards 2018

The Fairford & Lechlade Business Club (FLBC) Business Awards are going from strength to strength and the 2018 awards saw the panel of independent judges considering an unprecedented number of entries (59 in total).

At an impressive ceremony at Cotswold Hoburne (South Cerney), compered by Mark Cummings of BBC Radio Gloucestershire, the premier Business of the Year award – recognising a successful track record of excellence and achievement - went to Highworth-based Green Hills Cleaning run by Amy Bedford. Additionally, Business Person of the Year was presented to Andy Cole of Andy Cole Magic who took the opportunity to wow the audience of 120 business people by performing the most dangerous magic trick in the world – and left everyone completely gob-smacked!



*FLBC Business Award Winners 2018: (L to R) Darren Weeks, Lisa Weeks, Giuseppe Miliano, Becky Ackary, Maxine Hastings, Georgia Bayliss, Andy Cole & Amy Bedford*

Other winners included The Cotswold Chippy (New Business of the Year), who deliver good quality tasty food to local villages on a regular basis, and Sweetness & Pea (Most Innovative Business of the Year) who specialise in selling cloth nappies online plus other ethical and eco-friendly products. The Year 10 Business Student from Farmor's School was Lizzie Dawson, who impressed the judges by identifying a gap in the market for soft dog biscuits that are suitable for ageing dogs experiencing trouble with their teeth!

Last year, a new Hospitality Award was introduced in memory of Bob Warren, the late landlord of The Trout Inn, Lechlade. This enables the public to vote for the hospitality venue that best demonstrates the spirit of Bob – offering great hospitality, excellent customer service, a warm and a friendly atmosphere. Almost 30 venues were nominated, attracting a total of almost 600 votes. The clear winner was The Coffee Post, Fairford, which received nearly a third of the total number of votes.

Finally, the Howard Dowler Award is named in memory of a founder member of FLBC. The winner is chosen by the FLBC chair, Helen Webb to recognise an outstanding contribution in the community. Howard's son, Neil Dowler, presented the Award to Helen's chosen team - Giuseppe and Zeus from Colosseo Italian Ristorante, Fairford.

Attendees also enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a grand auction, skillfully conducted by Piers Critchlow from Moore, Allen & Innocent.

FLBC has thanked everyone for supporting the awards, including sponsors and donors of prizes (Lakes by yoo; Wrag Barn Golf Club; Cotswold Boat Hire; Voneus Broadband; Bluestone Insurance Services; RAFCTE (Air Tattoo); Fairford Roof Tiles; Hyperion House; The Marlborough Arms; The Cotswold Chippy; Morris Owen; Ripples Magazine; Wilts & Glos Standard; The Coffee Post).

# Upgrades on the way for Pay and Display Machines

The Council will soon be upgrading card-enabled pay and display machines at its car parks to comply with new regulations governing transaction methods, which come into effect in June 2018.

The upgrade to the machines will see the introduction of a card slot which does not require a PIN number and also a small plate which will enable contactless payment. Users will also be able to continue cash payments and payments by mobile phone.

Commenting on the change, Cllr Chris Hancock, the CDC Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships, said:

“These changes will ensure that we can accept payments in line with new legislative requirements regulating unattended chip and pin payments at pay and display machines.

“Paying to park by credit card is becoming increasingly popular and we expect that this trend will continue. In particular, contactless ‘wave and pay’ transactions should prove to be very popular as they are very quick and easy. Although this payment method only has an upper limit of £30 that is much more than our highest tariff - £12 for multiple days in the Beeches Car Park in Cirencester.”



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## 150 new car parking spaces proposed at Cirencester Rugby Club

Cotswold District Council's Parking Demand Board and Cirencester Rugby Club have joined forces to help meet the rising demand for parking spaces in the town. Both parties have entered into a formal agreement which - subject to planning consent - will see the development of land at the rugby club accommodate about 150 parking spaces.

Commenting on the formal agreement, Cllr Mark Harris, Chair of the Cirencester Parking Project, said:

“By joining forces with Cirencester Rugby Club we have a great opportunity to provide much needed extra parking at a site with easy access to the town centre. The Council would intend to operate the site for public parking from Monday to Friday and the Rugby Club would use it on weekends. Given the location of the Rugby Club, we believe that the newly created spaces would be best suited to permit-style parking for commuters, reducing the number of cars going in and out of the town centre. We will, of course, be consulting with local residents to discuss the best way to manage traffic flows in and out of the car park.”

Cllr Mark MacKenzie-Charrington, the Cotswold District Council Cabinet Member with oversight of Cirencester parking issues, added:

“If we get the go-ahead to deck the Waterloo Car Park we must find alternative spaces for parking during the construction phase. The Rugby Club option would go a long way to meeting that need. It is by far the most cost effective solution compared with other options that we have explored, including the rental of temporary decking to boost capacity in existing car parks.”

Cllr Chris Hancock, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships, was also fully supportive:

“Adding the Rugby Club site to our range of parking options would also help us develop an effective long-term strategy. This would focus on short stay at car parking in the heart of the town, medium stay at sites such as the Waterloo and long stay commuter parking at locations such as the Beeches car park and the Rugby Club.”

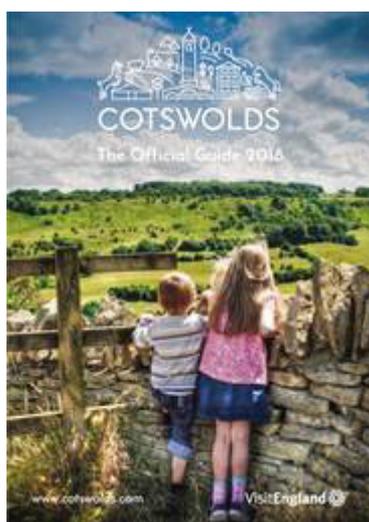
“Nick Theakston, President of Cirencester Rugby Club, concluded:

“We are fully behind this proposal and have secured formal agreement from our Members to enter into a lease agreement. Leasing our land would not just provide much needed parking for the town, but would also yield some very welcome income for the Rugby Club. The dedicated parking area created will present a great facility to accommodate our fans on match days and the hundreds of minis and youth rugby parents at the weekend; as well as enhancing our clubhouse entrance with a professional appearance,

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## Brand new look and focus for 2018

# Cotswolds Visitor Guide



The new 2018 Cotswolds Visitor Guide is now available on a far wider scale than in previous years, providing new ideas to tempt potential holidaymakers to the Cotswolds next year. With a print run of 200,000, and a smaller, handier A5 size, the new Cotswolds Visitor Guide will have a wide appeal both to people who think they know the Cotswolds and those who've never visited.

The publication is Cotswolds Tourism's main annual printed guide and provides a whole range of ideas for how to best enjoy the beautiful countryside, quintessential English towns and villages, as well as the huge array of fantastic places to stay and things to see and do.

For the first time, there'll be ideas about how visitors can create their perfect Cotswolds itinerary in a section titled, '48 hours in.' Other special features include seasonal highlights, top ten romantic moments, key events, shopping and eating out.

A new competition is included in the guide, supported by the Lygon Arms in Broadway, Batsford Arboretum and the Gloucestershire-Warwickshire Steam Railway – who reach a milestone this spring then they open their extended service to Broadway. As well as encouraging a greater pick up rate, the competition will also provide valuable data for Cotswolds Tourism, to help them understand the reach of the Visitor Guide and how it's used by visitors.

Sally Graff, from Cotswolds Tourism, said: “2018 has the potential to be a big year for both domestic and international tourism as the weak pound continues to encourage UK residents to 'staycate', and makes the UK a very attractive place to visit for overseas visitors. A royal wedding will also prove a big draw, with the Cotswolds' connection to the Royals, particularly for the lucrative USA market”.

The 2018 visitor guide is being marketed through Cotswolds Tourism's social media channels and the website [www.cotswolds.com](http://www.cotswolds.com) and is also being taken to all travel trade shows, overseas shows attended by our partners, and via the VisitEngland and VisitBritain partnership. To capitalise on the weak pound and Royal Wedding, 5000 copies of the guide will also be inserted into copies of Britain magazine, distributed in the USA.

For more information about the guide please contact Sally Graff on [sally.graff@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:sally.graff@cotswold.gov.uk) 01285 623050

# New report highlights boom time for tourism in Cotswolds

Tourism is booming across The Cotswolds, according to a newly published report which shows over 20 million days' worth of visits to the area and that total visitor-related business turnover during 2016 was in excess of one billion pounds.

The report, compiled by the South West Research Company Ltd, also showed that tourism was responsible for 8% of employment across the wider area - with businesses in the Cotswold District Council area reaching as high as 15% of employment - and is valuable evidence of the importance of the tourism industry.

During 2016 tourists spent over £373 million on accommodation within the area, another £157 million on local attractions and entertainments, and about £100m on travel. Other significant facts included the impact of tourism on local shopping and the food and drink sector with these being worth 18% and 22% of visitor spend respectively.



Reviewing the figures, Chris Jackson of Cotswolds Tourism Partnership commented:

“This is a valuable report which underlines the importance of tourism to the economic well-being of the Cotswolds and for all sectors of the local economy to work together to promote tourism. The South West Research Company also looked at tourism patterns and it was interesting to note the 12% increase in overseas staying visitors with increased spend at 9%. Working with all local authorities across the wider Cotswolds area under the Cotswolds Tourism partnership, the tourism sector must continue to adapt to meet visitors’ needs now and for the future. The partnership needs to market and promote the area to show visitors the hidden gems and experiences visitors may not know about; this can spread visitors across the lesser known towns which will continue to stimulate the local economy into the future.

“We are lucky to live and work here and, with businesses expanding and diversifying all the time, it helps us promote the Cotswolds as a surprising destination. We know it takes a lot to beat the Cotswolds as a great holiday destination for all ages – we’ve got magnificent countryside to explore, charming market towns to visit, a rich heritage and history to investigate, diverse cultural attractions and top quality sporting facilities, and year-round events.

“Cotswolds Tourism Partnership will continue to work with Visit England and Visit Britain to promote the area through trade shows, media visits and social media, and if any businesses in the wider tourism sector wish to get involved with us please see [www.cotswolds.com/partnership](http://www.cotswolds.com/partnership)

# New app makes it even easier to book a building control inspection

Booking building control site inspections with Cotswold District Council has become even easier, thanks to a new app which has just been launched.

Developed by Local Authority Building Control, the free app allows builders and householders to contact the Council's Building Control team at any time of the day, via a smart phone or tablet.

The app uses a Global Positioning System to pinpoint the site and the correct building control authority before sending the inspection request straight through to the Cotswold team.

Cllr Sue Coakley, the CDC Cabinet Member responsible for building control, welcomes this innovation:

"We are always looking for ways to make it easier and more convenient for people to contact us. Builders are often out on site early in the morning and will not have access to a computer, so being able to send an inspection appointment request immediately by phone is ideal for them."

The main purpose of building control is to ensure that regulations are followed so that health and safety is not compromised. Work is inspected on site and, depending on the project, covers structural safety, fire safety, damp resistance, suitable drainage, energy efficiency and electrical and gas safety.

Each year the Building Control team carries out around 5,000 inspections across the District. These vary from checking small projects such as replacement windows at domestic premises to larger-scale inspections for construction companies on housing development sites.

To install the app visit [www.labc.co.uk/app](http://www.labc.co.uk/app) or for more information email [building.control@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@cotswold.gov.uk) or phone 01285 623537



## Calendar

### **Cirencester Chamber of Commerce**

Meetings take place on second Wednesday of each month from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you would like to receive a regular reminder, send your details to [secretary@ccoc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ccoc.org.uk)

NOTE – The next edition of Business Matters will include a round-up of the Cirencester Chamber of Commerce Business Awards which take place on 13 May. Anyone who requires details prior to the event should contact [info@cirencesterchamber.org.uk](mailto:info@cirencesterchamber.org.uk)

### **Fairford and Lechlade Business Club**

Evening meetings are held at 7.30pm and breakfast meetings quarterly (March, June, September and December) at 8am on the fourth Thursday of the month. See [www.flbc.org.uk](http://www.flbc.org.uk) for details.

### **Tetbury Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

Committee meetings take place on Thursday evenings from 6.30 pm to 9 pm. Contact 01666 502436 for details or go to [www.tetburychamber.org.uk](http://www.tetburychamber.org.uk)

# Forthcoming Public meetings at Cotswold District Council

## **15 May**

Council meeting, Council Chamber, Cirencester

## **15 March, 19 April, 17 May**

Cabinet, Council Chamber, Cirencester

## **14 March, 11 April, 9 May**

Planning and Licensing Committee, Council Chamber, Cirencester

## **13 March**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Council Chamber, Cirencester

Please check [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk) for start times and agendas details/minutes

## **Training events**

For details of training and business support services provided by Gloucestershire Enterprise Ltd, see <http://www.glosterprise.co.uk/>

## **Don't forget!!!**

Please feel free to subscribe to the Cotswold District Council Business Matters Twitter account [@CDCBizmatters](https://twitter.com/CDCBizmatters) which features updates about relevant government initiatives, events, conferences, and training opportunities. We actively encourage local firms to use it as a platform for promoting their business and the number of followers is growing daily.

