

# Annual Report - Fairford & Lechlade Division

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT



It was a huge privilege to be elected as your new County Councillor in May to represent Fairford, Lechlade and the Villages division of Gloucestershire County Council for the next four years. My family have lived and farmed amongst you for over sixty years, so I feel fortunate to serve you.

I met a huge number of your out on your doorsteps but I am conscious that Covid meant that I could not meet you all. We live at Coneygar Farm, Quenington. I have spent the last 15 years advising the UK government in war zones around the world including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Nigeria and Mali. Whilst dad is still very much the boss on the farm the plan is for me to do more and more.

### **My Priorities**

Getting elected is like nothing I have ever done before and I certainly felt the weight of responsibility on my shoulders. I have prioritised:

1. Repairing our roads
2. Reducing speeding in our communities and driving through automated speed watch
3. Stopping the discharge of sewage into the rivers Coln & the Windrush
4. Working with our Police Commissioner to reduce rural crime
5. Better preparation for flooding
6. Helping communities to Build Back Better after the pandemic

I currently serve on the following communities:

- Chair Environment Scrutiny Committee
- Commons & Rights of Way Committee
- Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee
- Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

In addition, I was recently appointed as a Highways Customer Champion in recognition of my campaigning to improve things faster on our roads and give you a better experience when you engage with our Highways.

### **GCC Update**

The County-council part of Council Tax was pegged at a 2.99% increase. 1% of that being ring-fenced for Adult Social Care. Hopefully, this was considered an acceptable increase given the emerging inflation figures. This was probably the most positive funding-settlement from central government for a generation. This enables Adult Care and Children's Services Budgets to have realistic increases in funding given demographic pressures on both those services of around 10% growth per annum. Government was also true to its word and fully-funded the additional costs incurred due to Covid.

We're also investing more money into highways maintenance, fixing potholes and highways safety schemes, including a £30,000 a year Highways Local fund at the discretion of your county councillor.

A new four-year Capital programmes has also been confirmed of £100 million into roads resurfacing schemes, £145 million into new schools & refurbishment across the county and further investment in cycle routes and drainage schemes.

Excellent news, locally, that Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service will be retained within GCC and not hived-off to the Police. I think that adds significant protection to Fairford's Community Fire & Rescue Station and I want to thank the team for all that they do to keep us safe – we have had our fair share of visits from them on the farm!

Highways - can I please thank everyone for their continued patience when it comes to local roadworks. Traffic lights can be very frustrating but, ultimately, are necessary as we continue the major task of rebuilding and enhancing our local infrastructure - whether it be our roads, electric, water or gas supplies,

upgrading of broadband or cycle routes. Locally, I'm delighted that the county council has now completed the scheme in Kempsford and more will follow.

### **Delivering**

I'm pleased to have been able to secure grants recently from Gloucestershire County Council under the "Build Back Better" grant schemes, these include supporting:

- Construction of the exciting Fairford Skate Park
- Lechlade Music Festival
- Fairford Town Football Club
- Whelford Village Hall
- 1st Kempsford Rainbows
- Fairford library
- Quenington Brownies

I remain incredibly excited about supporting the construction of a Fairford-Lechlade Multi-Use Path and determined to find a way of making this happen. It is a fab way of reconnecting our communities, driving tourism and healthy living.

### **Flood Information**

Having lived on the banks of the Coln and seen the near miss in 2020 flooding is often on my mind. The county council website has recently been updated with a "Flood Guide". A "button" at the top of the home page on the GCC website, [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk) will take you through to comprehensive information about what to do if you are threatened by flood waters.

### **Tour of Britain**

In September the "Tour of Britain" cycle race comes to Gloucestershire. We have both a Start and Finish stage in the Men's race as well as part of the Women's race coming through too.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help in any way with any county-council related matter: [Dominic.Morris@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Dominic.Morris@gloucestershire.gov.uk)