

Councillor report for St Briavels Parish Council

11th May 2026

County News

Lib Dem administration chooses not to renew Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group

After two successful years, the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group. The group was involved with climate action and advocating for youth voices in County Council decisions. They played an important role in scrutinising the Council's climate strategies, action plans and budgets. However, following budget reviews, the administration has decided not to continue with the programme.

GCC Cabinet approves *Stronger Futures* plan

Stronger Futures is a council-wide programme designed to 'modernise' GCC and make sure it is LGR ready. The plan is structured around three clear workstreams—Technology, Third-Party Spend and Organisational Design—which intend to strengthen the Council's financial position, digital capability and organisational readiness. However, the Green Group has questioned the administrations decision to progress with Microsoft as a key partner, given [the security concerns being raised by other European countries.](#)

[Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service urges public to Be Water Aware as warmer weather approaches](#)

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) is urging people to take extra care in and around water as the weather starts to improve, as part of the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) annual Be Water Aware campaign.

[First communities announced for Gloucestershire's Safer Roads and Community 20s programme](#)

Gloucestershire County Council has today finalised the first communities to be brought forward as part of its new Safer Roads and Community 20s programme – a countywide initiative designed to improve road safety, support public health and help create nicer places to live.

[New Crisis and Resilience Fund to provide support to families in crisis](#)

Gloucestershire County Council has introduced the Crisis and Resilience Fund, a new programme providing support to families experiencing extreme hardship.

[County council set to back key bridge project to unlock Cotswold canal restoration](#)

Gloucestershire County Council is set to support a major step forward in the restoration of the Stroudwater Canal by approving a £1 million contribution towards replacing Walk Bridge near Whitminster.

County Council exploring all options to provide long-term future for Lydbrook Bridge

Gloucestershire County Council is exploring all options to secure a sustainable, long-term future for Lydbrook Bridge in the Forest of Dean, ensuring the best possible value for local residents.

LGR Update

- The core LGR portfolio team is now in place: Emily McGuinness has been appointed as the Portfolio Director and Simon Higgins as the LGR Strategic Adviser.
- The implementation programmes have now been 'stood up' with ongoing work to outline how and what each programme would deliver over the next few years, balancing ensuring that the authority(ies) was 'safe and legal' to deliver and ambition for its development over a number of years.
- The Portfolio Plan has begun to identify critical milestones and interdependencies.
- Newtrality had been commissioned to scope service transition activity, including helping with collecting baseline data from all seven councils.
- Councils are currently discussing options for joint scrutiny arrangements to be approved by the Gloucestershire Leaders group.

GCC Meetings

There was no Full Council meeting held in April. The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 13th May**.

Cabinet met on 22nd April. At the meeting, they voted to approve:

- The *Stronger Futures* plan (see above)
- The *Local Growth Plan*, the councils economic plan for the next ten years which seeks to increase economic growth through being "unequivocally pro-business" and leaning into Gloucestershire's "comparative advantage sectors" with growth potential, including cyber security, agritech and aerospace engineering.

The Greens question this approach. There is now unequivocal evidence that an economic strategy based on the pursuit of aggregate growth disproportionately benefits the rich and harms our natural environment. The Greens would instead pursue an economic strategy based on redistribution with investment targeted at industries with direct social and environmental benefit.

- The closure and disposal of Great Western Court Reablement Unit
- The Cotswold Canal Trust Stroudwater Renovation.
- Gloucestershire *Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan*.

I attended the Environment Scrutiny Committee and challenged the report with the following observations and questions. (Responses are awaited.)

- **The programme is too slow to move from planning to delivery**
- **There is no single body accountable for outcomes**
- **Rising fatalities are not adequately addressed**
- **the Action Plan is still missing**
- **delivery capacity is only now being put in place**
- **there is heavy reliance on enforcement without outcome evaluation**
- **the Vision Zero ambition is not matched by scale of intervention**
- **there is little performance transparency and scrutiny readiness**

- **What concrete casualty reductions can be attributed directly to the GRSP's work to date?**
- **If serious injuries or deaths continue to rise, which body is ultimately accountable—the Strategic Board, the County Council, or individual partners?**
- **Fatal collisions increased sharply in 2025. Why does the report not contain a formal analysis of the causes of this increase or a response plan to address it?**
- **The Needs Assessment identified 22 recommendations in 2025, yet the action plan is still in preparation. Why has implementation been so slow?**
- **Why was the need for a dedicated Coordinator not identified until over three years after the Partnership was launched? It indicates that GRSP lacked delivery capacity for a significant period.**
- **How does the Partnership know enforcement is actually reducing casualties rather than simply detecting offences?**
- **The Partnership endorses Vision Zero, yet most interventions described are education and enforcement rather than system-wide road design changes. Is the Partnership being realistic about what Vision Zero requires?**
- **In this report, there is no request for approval, challenge, endorsement of targets, or performance monitoring. Without the latter, how will we know whether progress is being made?**

My closing challenge question was “what will be observably safer on Gloucestershire’s roads in 12 months’ time because the GRSP exists?”

Full recordings of all meetings can be found [here](#).

FoDDC

The next Full Council meeting will be on 21st May. A motion asking to postpone the Biosphere initiative indefinitely is certain to be on the agenda.

Please contact me with any issues you think I can help with.

Kind regards,

chris.mcfarling@fdean.gov.uk

chris.mcfarling@gloucestershire.gov.uk