

The Gloucestershire Charter

Fifth edition



Local councils working together
for local people

A Charter between Gloucestershire County
Council and the parish and town councils
of Gloucestershire

SIGNATURES

We the undersigned declare our commitment to the Gloucestershire Charter and in so doing, aim to encourage the improvement of our good working practices and embrace the spirit of this agreement.

Chair/Clerk/Councillor for

_____ Parish/Town Council

Chief Executive, Gloucestershire County Council

Fifth Edition: June 2012

INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth 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, paying particular attention to improving consultation and communications about policies and decisions that may affect communities. There are three tiers of local government in Gloucestershire: Parish & town councils and parish meetings, the district, city or borough council and Gloucestershire County Council
- There are two hundred and sixty four parish and town councils within Gloucestershire, all playing a valuable role in the fabric of local life. Parish & town councillors and their clerks possess unique knowledge that can help the community planning and decision-making process
- This Charter has the full approval and commitment of the Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (GAPTC) and the support of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC)
- This Charter will continue to be monitored with a view to making further amendments as necessary.



PRINCIPLES OF WORKING TOGETHER

COMMUNICATIONS

- We will identify a senior officer to operate as ‘Liaison Officer’ to act as a first point of contact for help, information or concerns a local council may have within the parish
- We will inform all our staff of this council’s commitments and ensure that they abide by them
- We will send all local councils a copy of our parish & town council e-newsletter
- Parish & town councils will be invited to meetings, seminars and other events specifically arranged for their benefit.

COMMUNITY LED PLANNING

- We recognise the value of community led planning in encouraging local solutions to local issues. We will engage between the three tiers of local government before, during and following the development of community led plans.



County Council Commitments to Parish & Town Councils

ENGAGEMENT

- Councillors will endeavour to attend local council annual meetings (on their patch) and other meetings where practicable and will let the organiser know if they cannot be present. If a councillor cannot attend regularly, they will endeavour to make arrangements to meet by some other means. (This may be via a briefing – bullet points of current issues)
- We will adhere to statutory requirements for consultation and allow as much time as practicable within which local councils can respond
- We will make all reasonable attempts to attend meetings of local councils when requested to do so, in order to deal with specific issues
- We will coordinate consultation across the council to reduce duplication and maximise the use of limited resources
- We will invite local councils to awareness raising and stakeholder forums where these are used as an alternative way of engaging communities and will provide timely feedback on outcomes of these forums.

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 & 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 currently three elements of this offer:
 - :: **Community Action** – helping communities help themselves with our support and guidance
 - :: **Community Match** – match funding option for the high priority schemes within an area, and
 - :: **Community Top up** – a product list of enhanced services that can be purchased by the parish or town council.

For full details visit

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highwaysyourway

COMMUNICATIONS

- Chartered parish & town councils will be invited to quarterly meetings at which they may contribute to formation of policy and receive updates on topical issues and Gloucestershire Highways.

Parish & Town Council commitments

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 committee or the convening of extra council meetings to meet the consultation deadline
- We will provide contact details of the clerk to the county & district council. Bearing in mind that the clerk may only be employed on a part-time basis, the clerk will inform the county council of the most convenient times/days when contact can be made
- We will respond to community led planning consultations and invitations to participate either individually or collectively through the GAPTC
- We will seek to keep the public in our parish informed on local government matters and seek to assess public opinion through meetings, surveys and newsletters. Where applicable, 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 decisions to be made may be relevant to the county council
- We will endeavour to inform county councillors 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 make the request one month beforehand.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

SUSTAINABILITY

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

EQUALITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

In partnership with parish & town councils we 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

We welcome all feedback and aim to act quickly and efficiently to put things right if something goes wrong and use all customer feedback to improve services.



CONTACT DETAILS

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHARTER

Hester Hunt

01452 42 6563 or email

hester.hunt@gloucestershire.gov.uk

HIGHWAYS

General enquiries

08000 514514 or email

highways@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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.gloucester.gov.uk

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

01453 766321 or visit www.stroud.gov.uk

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

01694 295010 or visit www.tewkisbury.gov.uk

THE POLICE AUTHORITY

01242 276262 or visit
www.gloucestershirepoliceauthority.co.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY

(non emergency number)

101

NHS GLOUCESTERSHIRE

08456 598100 or email enquiries@glos.nhs.uk

GAVCA (GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ACTION)

01452 332424 or email admin@gavca.org.uk

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

