



**BALCARRAS**  
From strength to strength

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the final newsletter of the year. By the time you read this we will probably have broken up for the summer holiday. I don't remember a more busy or hectic end of term in my 21 years as a teacher, but I have to say I have enjoyed it. So much has been going on in the school that it is difficult to capture it all in this newsletter.

Can I start by wishing you all a lovely summer holiday. I do hope that the jet stream budes a little so we can enjoy some more settled weather. On Saturday my family and I are heading to God's County (otherwise known as Yorkshire!) for a few days and I can hardly wait to be surrounded by the beauty of the Dales. Whatever your plans I hope you all have a nice time. May I thank you for all the support you have shown the school this year. It continues to be a real privilege to teach your children.

Keep up to date on all our news:

[WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK](http://WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK)

## FAREWELL TO STAFF

As ever the final day of term is tinged with sadness as we bid a fond farewell to several colleagues. Mr Douglas has been covering for us for some time in music and is leaving this summer. Miss Trapnell is leaving after completing a 1 year teaching post in PE and Miss Turner is also leaving having covered a similar position in English. Miss Baron is leaving the drama department after two years. We are losing two longstanding maths teachers in Miss Vandorpe and Mrs Marshall. On the support side of the school Miss Russo is leaving her post of MFL French Assistant after three years, Mr Potter is leaving his role as Performing Arts Technician and Mrs Bannister is leaving after 10 years as Head Chef in the canteen. We wish all of these colleagues well for the future.

## MY THANKS TO THE GOVERNORS AND TRUSTEES

I would like to publicly pay tribute to the Balcarras governors and the Trustees of the Balcarras Trust. Together they have given superb service to the school and the Trust and it is important to remember that they do so for free. As a Yorkshireman I always appreciate a good deal!

## A SPECIAL MENTION TO THE SUPPORT STAFF

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their work this year but in particular wanted to mention the school's support staff. The staff who work in catering, cleaning, IT support, administration, technician support, site management, data support, student support, TA Support and other areas do a wonderful job. Sometimes their work is slightly hidden from public view and I wanted to mention them specifically.

## ACTIVITIES WEEK 2023

I would like to thank all those staff who made Activities Week possible and particularly Mrs Massey for masterminding it all so brilliantly. It is quite something for a school to organise so many activities in such a short space of time. I would also like to pay tribute to the pupils who were an absolute delight throughout the week.

## CINEMA TRIP

Yesterday over 800 staff and pupils visited the cinema where there was a choice of five films on offer. I would like to thank the staff who supervised the pupils and Mr Davidson for organising the whole thing. Rather like with activities week the pupils were an absolute joy to be with.

## UNPARALLELED SPORTING SUCCESS

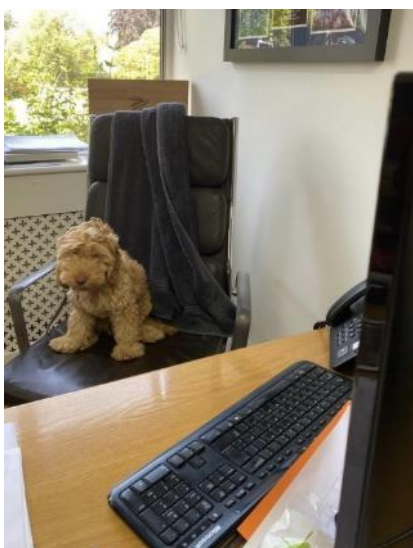
This year has been the most successful in the school's history in terms of trophies won and students participating in sport. On Tuesday this week we organised a photo of all the pupils who have been involved representing the school this year (Years 7 to 10). See below.



We also took photos of some of the winning teams including Year 7 and 8 Boys and Girls District Athletics. It is the first time in the history of the competition, which goes back to 1956, that Balcarras has won both events. We also took a photo of the Balcarras Golf Team who competed in the English School Golf Championships finishing 5<sup>th</sup> overall.

Well done to everyone who has represented the school.

## BUDDY THE SCHOOL DOG



As one valued school servant departs so another arrives. I had my first appraisal meeting with Buddy, the school dog this week. He is young and a tad giddy but I feel that he will learn and become a valued member of staff. Please see photo below of his first appraisal meeting.



## FAREWELL TO THE YAMAHA G5 GRAND PIANO

Today we held a special ceremony in the hall to decommission our Yamaha Grand Piano which has been the focal point of so many school concerts since it was installed here in 1996. Various students and staff played in 30 seconds slots. We reserved the final staff slot for Mrs Watts. It is fitting that she will be the last teacher to play this wonderful piano.

All good things must come to an end. However, as one chapter closes, so we look forward to the opening of another.

Our fundraising campaign for a new grand is almost complete but there is still time to get involved...see below.

Please click [here](#) for all the information about how you can help.



## HOUSE DANCE HIGHLIGHTS CONCERT

This year's House Dance was superb and the highlights concert on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July a real treat. Congratulations to everyone involved and particularly the winning house: Graveney. A big shout out also to Renée Peyman who won the Lewis Cup for the most outstanding contribution.

## VISIT TO GCHQ JEREMY NIBLETT, TEACHER OF PHYSICS



Anna, one of our year 11 students was given the rare opportunity to visit GCHQ as a guest of one of the directors. She joined a promising engineer from each of the town's secondary schools on a CEP (Cheltenham Educational Partnership) trip aiming to promote female leadership in engineering. I think she had a great time, but of course she has to be a bit careful when she talks about it!

## DUKE OF EDINBURGH GOLD JEREMY NIBLETT – GOLD EXPEDITION LEADER



This grim photo shows 18 desperate young people approaching the finish line of an exceptionally bleak Duke of Edinburgh Gold Practice Expedition in Dartmoor during activity week. Hats off to them, they managed to keep smiling for most of the time, and they all qualified to take part in an assessed expedition later on this summer.



## DUKE OF EDINBURGH VICKY BULL, DofE MANAGER

103 students completed their DofE Bronze expedition last weekend. They started out near Seven Springs and walked south to Caudle Green before swinging north to Birdlip. At camp Mr Butler and Mr Bull earned a Michelin Star by barbequing all the students a hotdog in stormy conditions. None of the sausages were cremated! On Sunday, students left camp early to avoid the heat and walked north-east to the finish at a car park on Leckhampton Hill. How joyous it was to see the elation on students faces knowing they'd finished! Conditions were hot and sticky and their bags heavy. Students did exceptionally well. A massive well done to all and a huge thank you to Mr Butler and staff who gave up their weekend, particularly Mrs Bull.





## MUSIC NEWS

### DAN ARMSTRONG & JANE WATTS, MUSIC DEPARTMENT



Midsummer Music on June 23<sup>rd</sup> was a resounding (!) success. There was such a variety of music on the two stages throughout the evening and everyone seems to have agreed that it was one of the best ever!

Huge thanks to everyone who made it possible: the Event Production Team headed up by Mrs Watts and Mr Armstrong, with Mr Douglas and our fantastic Visiting Music Teachers helping prepare performers and helping on the night (Mr King, Mrs Hopkins and Mrs Vacher). They were greatly helped in the run-up to the event and on the night by Year 13s Caleb Horne, Rachel Kimber and Jamie Mazzocchi who performed and presented as well as being on the organising team.

The Tech Team were superb – and the event simply couldn't happen without them. Headed up by alumni Oskar Brennan, Luke Drinkwater, Robbie McElroy, Tom McLaughlin and Matty Potter, there was also a magnificent amount of help from our student Tech Team

In addition, we'd like to thank the PTFA and Karen Mason, the Balcarras Site Team, Mr Bennett and Mr Burke for their amazing support...

Mostly, of course, we'd like to thank every single student who took part in this fantastic evening of music-making – and a big thanks to everyone who came along to enjoy the event and gave it such a festival feel!

Here's to MM24!

Special concert on 27<sup>th</sup> June at St. Mary's Church, Charlton Kings

We took part in a lovely concert during which we hosted a visiting church school choir from just outside Seattle in the USA. Balcarras ensembles opened the evening and gave us a wide variety of musical styles, all sounding beautiful in the church acoustic.

We were then treated to a recital of some of the pieces the American choir had brought on tour and it was a real privilege to hear them.

Everyone enjoyed the concert greatly and we all loved having the chance to meet the students, parents and teachers from the visiting school and chat to them during the day we were together.

Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard behind the scenes to make this happen!

Exam Successes

Congratulations to the following students and their teachers on these recent exam successes:

Karen Sykes - Trinity Clarinet Exams:

Emily Lavin Y7      Grade 4 - Merit  
Freya Boswell Y7      Grade 5 - Distinction

Jo Haslam - ABRSM Violin Exams

Holly Engelbrecht Y9      Grade 4 - Pass  
Alfie Lee Y10      Grade 5 - Merit  
Luca Borrás-White Y10      Grade 3 - Merit  
Alma Tillman Y7      Grade 1 - Pass  
Eliza Lacey Y8      Grade 2 - Pass  
Rosie Atkins YO1      Grade 3 - Pass

Jo Haslam - ABRSM Viola Exams

Martha Vacher Y9      Grade 5 - Pass

Victoria Burge - Trinity Cello Exams:

Emma Lythgoe Y10      Grade 6 - Merit

Nicola Hopkins - ABRSM Flute Exams

Darcey Hacker Y10      Grade 5 - Pass  
Smaira Bhandari Y7      Grade 2 - Pass

Tracey Vacher - ABRSM Piano Exams

Sebastian Hunter Y9      Grade 3 - Distinction  
Matthew Johnston Y7      Grade 2 - Distinction  
Emma Lythgoe Y10      Grade 5 - Merit  
Holly Engelbrecht Y9      Grade 4 - Merit  
Eddie Atkins Y9      Grade 2 - Merit

Tracey Vacher - ABRSM Piano Performance Grade

Zachary Soden Y8      Grade 2 merit

Hugo Li Y9 has also passed his Grade 8 ABRSM Piano with Merit

**YEAR 8,9 AND 10 P AND Q BANDS NEXT SCHOOL YEAR**  
**GARY TOWERS, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER**

**Year 8**

As pupils move into Year 8 and so are more familiar with the school, they mixed with others from across the year group for their teaching classes. In order to do this, pupils are placed randomly on the P or Q half of the year. This placement is checked by the Heads of House and the individual learning department to make sure it is appropriate. This means pupils will not be in their tutor groups for lessons. We do this to allow pupils to develop their social skills (working and interacting with new people) in a controlled classroom environment. Pupils remain in their tutor groups for tutor time and personal development lessons.

**Year 9**

Pupils in Year 9 are mixed with others from across the year group for their teaching classes. In order to do this, pupils are placed randomly on the P or Q half of the year. This placement is checked by the Heads of House and the individual learning department to make sure it is appropriate. The band they are in this year may be different from last year and this mixing is intentional.

This is to allow pupils to develop their social skills (working and interacting with new people) in a controlled classroom environment. Pupils remain in their tutor groups for tutor time and personal development lessons.



**Year 10**

For option subjects pupils will be taught in classes made up of pupils from across the Year group based on the options they have selected.

In core subjects pupils will be mixed with others from the same band they are in (P or Q). Pupils are placed randomly on the P or Q half of the year. This placement is checked by the Heads of House and the individual learning department to make sure it is appropriate. The band they are in this year may be different from last year and this mixing is intentional. This is to allow pupils to develop their social skills (working and interacting with new people) in a controlled classroom environment. Pupils remain in their tutor groups for tutor time and personal development lessons.

We would encourage parents to talk about this with their children over the summer. For most pupils the opportunity to work with a new group of people is exciting but some can be a little nervous.

**SEPTEMBER 2023 – UNIFORM**  
**NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER**

The summer is a great time to review pupils' uniforms and make sure all pupils are looking smart, ready for September.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, girls in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 will be required to wear the checked skirt.

Girls in Year 10 and Year 11 may still choose the grey skirt, but please check these are a good fit and not altered in any way. All skirts should be knee length, and if your daughter has grown since the skirt was purchased, the summer would be a good time to buy a new skirt.

Pupils will be back in "winter uniform" from September, so that means shirts tucked in, ties on smartly and top buttons done up. If your child's shirt is getting tight around the collar and the top button is hard to do up, the summer would be a good time to buy some new shirts.

Some shoe shops (Clarks, JD Sports and others) are putting shoes in their "School Shoes" section that do NOT meet the requirements for Balcarras. Please check with your House Head if in doubt. Black trainer-like shoes are not permitted at Balcarras.

**Make-up, jewellery and piercings**

This is a brief reminder to parents about the rules at Balcarras regarding make-up, hair and piercings. From the school's behaviour policy:

Hair	Hair should not be dyed. It should be smart, tidy and appropriate for school. There should be no braids and extreme hairstyles are not allowed. Hair should not have "tram lines", extreme changes in length or be shaved shorter than a number 2.
Make-up	Make up, nail varnish and false nails should not be worn by any student. False eye lashes or eye lash extensions are NOT permitted.
Pierced ears	Students with pierced ears are permitted to wear one small stud in the lower lobe of each ear. No sleepers.
Jewellery	One watch with a plain strap maybe worn. No other jewellery is permitted. <b>NOTE:</b> The following are not permitted. Any facial piercings, including nose studs. Stretch earrings or pins. Bangles, beaded, plastic or loom band bracelets. Festival or charity wrist bands. Any type of rings, bracelets or necklaces.

If, during the summer holidays, your child is having their hair dyed or their ear pierced at the top, please make sure that it is all returned to normal, and any piercings removed by the start of September.

## YEAR 7 SKIPATHON YEAR 7 TUTOR TEAM

The year 7 Skipathon was a great success with £540.38 raised which is being sent to Winston's Wish. Each tutor group planned an activity for the day as well as the skipping!





## EXAM RESULTS

### HEATHER HARRIS, EXAMS OFFICER

Year 13 – A-level results – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Year 11 – GCSE results – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Results will be emailed to pupils by 8:45am. All results will be emailed to the pupil's school email account (so make sure you can remember your password and still log on).

Paper copies of results can be collected from the Sixth Form Common Room at school, between 9:00am and 10:00am, on the dates above.

If you need to speak to a teacher about your results, teachers will be available in school between 9:00am and 11:00am on both Thursdays. These are always exciting and emotional events, and we look forward to seeing you in school to celebrate your results.

***PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO VISIT THE SCHOOL IN PERSON AND ARE ASKING SOMEONE TO COLLECT THESE ON YOUR BEHALF THIS REQUEST MUST BE DONE PRIOR TO RESULTS DAY - AN EMAIL CONFIRMING WHO WILL BE COLLECTING ON YOUR BEHALF IS FINE. COULD YOU PLEASE ASK YOUR NOMINATED PERSON TO BRING SOME PHOTO ID WITH THEM!***

[exams@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:exams@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

## ACTIVITIES WEEK – DT

### JEN SWANEPOEL, HEAD OF DT



During Activities Week, students taking part in the 'Design and Make' day produced a personalised keepsake box with laser cut decorations. It was lovely to see the wide range of themes - everything from sloths to 90s rom-coms! Mrs Swanepoel and Mr Gell.



## CLOTHES RECYCLING BIN

JON PEARCE – ECOCLUB, TEACHER OF GEOGRAPHY



As a school we have been looking at ways to improve our recycling.

After running some successful 'Swap shop' events for clothing we have now taken our clothes recycling on to the next level. We have installed a clothing recycling bin on the school site. This takes unwanted clothes and helps make the school money. This money is going to go back into green projects around the school.

Every year £140m worth of clothing ends up in landfill in the UK. By recycling this, this means that these items are reused, which means less use of energy and resources. If you would like to make a donation to this bin then send it in with your child, it can be found near the back beeches gate. We are after clean clothes, paired shoes and handbags.

## MFL KEY STAGE 3 ANTHEA BELL TRANSLATION EXCHANGE COMPETITION

FREDDY SEGUIN – HEAD OF MFL



This year, several of our pupils took part in the Anthea Bell Translation Exchange competition organised by Queen College, Oxford University. The college received over 15,000 entries from schools across the country and were extremely impressed with the levels of responses they received.

We are absolutely delighted to announce that **Edward Wheeler (7O1)** was the **winner for the South-West** area for his translation work! It involved translating a short section of *Le gardien du phare aime trop les oiseaux* by *Jacques Prévert* from French into English. A huge congratulations to Edward. It is wonderful to see a prestigious university valuing his work. **Félicitations !**

## MFL YEAR 7 FRENCH HOUSE SPELLING BEE

FREDDY SEGUIN – HEAD OF MFL



At the end of the Summer term, the MFL department hosted the final of our annual Year 7 French House Spelling Bee competition. Year 7s from every tutor group worked very hard, throughout the year, to learn up to 100 French words and how to spell them using the French alphabet. Weekly competitions were held in each Year 7 French class, with the highest scorers making it through to the stage 2 of the competition. Congratulations to all who took part. The field this year was very strong so we would also like to thank our 3 runners up : Bluebell Lee, Freya Boswell and Matthew Johnston.

This year's winner, **Edward Wheeler** (7O1), successfully spelt 25 words in a minute and won the trophy for Ottewell House! **Félicitations!**

### YOUNG ENTERPRISE INVISTA TRIP JACK GODDARD, TEACHER OF BUSINESS



On 3<sup>rd</sup> July the Young Enterprise team took a trip to the Invista factory in Brockworth. Once we arrived, we had a tour of the factory and laboratory, then a presentation by the supply and commercial team about future career opportunities. The students were amazed by the sheer size of the factory and the complicated process it takes to make the products there. We would like to say a big thank you to the team at Invista for organising the day and sponsoring/supporting the Young Enterprise team throughout the year.



## YEAR 7 TRIP TO NORMANDIE

### FREDDY SEGUIN – HEAD OF MFL

We left school very early on Tuesday and stopped on our way to Normandie at the Nausicaá sea centre in Boulogne-Sur-Mer to explore the plethora of (mostly sea) animals. Later, we arrived at our hotel in the small village of Port-en-Bessin, by then it was high time to go to bed and have some rest.

On the second day, we started at La Ferme de Billy, a cider/apple juice farm, where we explored the orchard and learnt how cider and apple juice is produced. After that, we went to Les Co-pains boulangerie where we had a unique chance to learn French vocabulary and create our own baguette. It was very entertaining and delicious. Finally, we drove to Arromanches where we watched a short film in a 360 museum about the D Day landing. We were also able to see the remains of the temporary harbour on the beach and memorials of the people who died. After dinner, we took part in a quiz on French culture.

The following day, we first visited the cathedral in Bayeux; after, we went to visit Le Mont St Michel where we walked around the abbey and bought souvenirs at the shops surrounding it. Finally, we went back to Bayeux to spend some time in the British war cemetery. It was an opportunity for some pupils to see the graves of relatives. We finished the day with a stop at a supermarket – a great opportunity to do some extra shopping.

On our last day, we woke up quite early and we made our way towards the North of France. Just before lunchtime, we stopped at the Bagatelle theme park to have fun on the rides. We had so much fun, it was great! Sadly, we soon had to go to the ferry terminals in order to go back to England.



Freya Boswell & Ellie Heppenstall



## YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE WEEK – JULY 2023

VICKY BULL &amp; JILL LEWIS, CAREERS



Year 10 students had a busy week on their work placements, the range of placements was very impressive from working with parrots to designing websites!

We have received great feedback from the organisations that kindly agreed to offer placements, saying how polite and well-mannered the students were. We are always looking for new placements for our students if this is something your organisation can offer, please contact the careers department – [careers@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:careers@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)  
We would like to thank parents, guardians, and the wider community for supporting this programme.



## YEAR 9 CAMP

### JACK GODDARD, TEACHER OF BUSINESS

During activities week the Year 9's travelled to Viney Hill (near Lydney) in the Forest of Dean and stay at a self-catering centre. The pupils camp in pre-erected canvas tents and had all the meals cooked for them by the amazing Chef Cullis.

During the week, pupils had the opportunity to experience:

- Mountain-Biking
- Canoeing on Mallards Pike Lake
- 'High-Ropes' with "Go Ape" near Mallards Pike
- Hiking
- Archery
- An Introduction to Bush Craft
- Rock Climbing / Abseiling / Caving at Symonds Yat

In the evenings pupils took part in various activities focusing on team building and leadership skills before relaxing in front of the campfire with their hot chocolate and biscuits. Despite the weather it was a brilliant week, and the pupils should be proud of themselves!

Thank you to all the staff that made the week so enjoyable.



## NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins  
[ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)

Alongside our @Balcarras Twitter you may also now follow Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Bule', with a horizontal line underneath.

Headteacher





**SUMMER 2023**

**CHELtenham ROCKS**

**SUMMER HOLIDAYS INSPIRATION**

A WHAT'S ON GUIDE FOR FAMILIES TO FIND THINGS TO DO IN THE LOCAL AREA

[www.cheltenhamrocks.co.uk](http://www.cheltenhamrocks.co.uk)

**SUMMER HOLIDAY FUN**

Summer is here and we are SO excited to be sharing with you all the brilliant days out, places to eat, events and the free events you can be doing over Gloucestershire this Summer holidays. Keep us in your pocket for daily inspiration and ideas!

We update our website daily with everything happening in Gloucestershire - You can also find us at Gloucester Rocks, Cirencester Rocks and Stroud Rocks

Visit our website to find out more

**FLOWER FIELDS AND WALKS**

We've added some new parks, walks and play areas to the website, so there are even more local places to explore this summer. Plus, don't forget those beautiful flower fields for those summer photos.

Click here to see our Flower Fields Article

Click here or follow the green Parks and Walks button on the website.

**HOLIDAY CLUBS**

If you're looking for last minute clubs or activity camps over the summer holidays, then we have you covered, you can find ideas in our Holiday Club article.

Click here to browse our Holiday Clubs guide


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Foster for Gloucestershire County Council

# Change the life of a local child



Gloucestershire County Council is looking for local people to foster Gloucestershire children of all ages.

If you are over 21 and have a spare room, we'd love to hear from you. In return you can expect excellent support, training and weekly allowances and fees.

If you'd like to find out more, ring our friendly Fostering Recruitment Team or chat to us at one of the events advertised on our website.

01242 532654  
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering  
Gloucestershire Fostering  
@FosteringGlos

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL FOSTER CARES FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

## Could you be a Homes for Ukraine champion?

Join the many generous Gloucestershire people who have opened their homes to those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

We need people who have a spare room or two, an annexe, or even another property, to house a Ukrainian family and help them rebuild their lives.

Hundreds of Ukrainian guests have so far regained their independence and settled in Gloucestershire with the help of our champion hosts, and here's how you can help:

- Sign up to express an interest in hosting. Find out more online or book an informal chat with the Gloucestershire Homes for Ukraine team.
- The Homes for Ukraine team would then let you know about guests who match your household.
- Meet the guests and get to know them before deciding whether to go ahead with hosting.

Hosting agreements are very flexible, and the Homes for Ukraine team are available to assist and advise you every step of the way.

All hosts receive payments of £600 per month to thank you for your help and to cover any additional household expenses. These payments are tax free, and hosting will not impact your council tax.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact us via [HFUTeam@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:HFUTeam@gloucestershire.gov.uk)



Register your interest today:

Visit <https://apply-to-offer-homes-for-ukraine.service.gov.uk> or scan the QR code to express your interest in becoming a Homes for Ukraine champion!

[HFUTeam@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:HFUTeam@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ukrainian-support](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ukrainian-support)

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL