



### **e-UPDATE #103 - 23.10.2021**

Welcome to this latest update. It's a busy one!

I was delighted that we'll be getting additional funding of **£1,061,478** to ramp up efforts to tackle **Violence Against Women and Girls** in Gloucestershire. And I was pleased too to invite Michael Gove to view the new £3m, Government funded, cyber facility at GlosCol in Hesters Way.

I made the point that "levelling up" can't purely be about investing in the North of England (important though that no doubt is). There are parts of Cheltenham where investment is still needed to tackle deprivation and drive up local opportunities for young people - something I have a real passion for. So much progress has been made here at home in the last few years, through the new **Cyber Innovation Centre**, the **GlosCol Advanced Digital Academy** and massive transport infrastructure improvements, but there's more to do. I'll keep banging the drum.

Staying with GlosCol, I was delighted (if a little apprehensive...) to take the controls of a vast drilling machine, which is delivering a **£5m green ground-source heating system** for the college - backed by a Government grant of £3m.

There's information below about the opening of a new **employment and skills hub**, and the latest on the **A417 Air Balloon Project**.

More troublingly, I am concerned that Cheltenham has been affected by a COVID-19 lab error (see more below) which is now feeding through into a high number of positive tests. Public Health Gloucestershire expect the number to come down next week, but I've written to DHSC and others to press for an urgent investigation.

There's also an update below on the explanation I managed to extract from **Severn Trent** about the water outage recently which saw several Cheltenham schools close for the day.

Finally, thank you for the kind messages I received following the brutal killing of **Sir David Amess MP**. I am conscious that this will have dredged up painful memories - for Nigel Jones, the family of Cllr Andrew Pennington and many others. I am thinking of them all,

and have attached an article I wrote in the *Echo* below. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial, and you'll appreciate I cannot any substantive further comment until the proceedings have taken their course.

Thank you for reading.

Best wishes,



**Alex Chalk QC MP**

PS I was notified this morning that I have tested positive for COVID. I am symptom-free and was pinged by the app yesterday and advised to take a PCR test, which I duly did. My sincere apologies in advance for cancelling engagements while I'm in isolation. I'll be working at my computer as usual!

*In line with data protection regulations, Alex Chalk's office processes constituents' data for policy and casework purposes under the lawful basis of public task. In instances where this lawful basis is not sufficient and explicit consent is required, a member of staff will get in touch with you to establish consent. You can find the full privacy notice on Alex's website [HERE](#)*

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**SIR DAVID AMESS MP**



## HOUSE NOTES

# No knee-jerk reactions to David's death

**I** WANT to thank the many people in Cheltenham, including several readers of the Echo, for their kind messages of condolence and support following the brutal death of Sir David Amess.

The warm tributes that have been paid to David have reflected the man I knew - impish, fun, and kind to his bootstraps. I'll never forget the generosity he showed to me as the new Conservative candidate for Cheltenham in 2013, taking time out of his diary to invite me to Parliament to offer help and advice. And on my first appearance at the despatch box as a minister, he wrote me a lovely letter about my performance.

The tributes in Parliament were hilarious as well as poignant. I won't forget the story of David routinely introducing a parliamentary colleague at Southend fetes with the words: "This is James, my neighbour, who was recently released from prison". Or the story of the budgies and fish he kept in his Westminster office in defiance of the parliamentary authorities.

Although people have kindly asked after my safety, it really isn't me I'm worried about. I know the risks, and I accept them - to serve the town and the country I love.

Instead I am more concerned for my staff, who work so diligently behind the scenes.

So whilst face-to-face surgeries and meetings will continue as normal, we'll take sensible, modest, precautions.

There'll be no knee-jerk reactions, and I won't be soaking up police resources which could be better deployed elsewhere.

As well as my staff, the people I'm really thinking about right now are Nigel Jones and the family of Andrew Pennington.

This will be an unimaginably difficult time for them, and they are in my thoughts and prayers.

Thank you again. In closing, I recall the defiant advice of Tennyson, a one-time resident of St James' Square, Cheltenham, who urged in his poem Ulysses: 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.'

Let's do just that.

**Alex Chalk MP**

Member of  
Parliament for  
Cheltenham



## FALSE NEGATIVE PCR TEST UPDATE



### **ALEX DEMANDS ANSWERS OVER FALSE NEGATIVE PCR TESTS**

Cheltenham has been affected by a number of false negative PCR test results because of errors at a laboratory in Wolverhampton.

NHS Test and Trace estimate that around 400,000 samples were processed through the lab, but approximately 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October.

Alex has written to the Health Secretary and the UK Health Security Agency (formerly PHE) calling for an urgent investigation into what went wrong. He has been assured that is now proceeding at pace. Meanwhile, all of the services at the laboratory have been suspended.

Alex has also been in contact with the head of Public Health Gloucestershire (PHG). PHG have explained the county's case rate is expected to continue to rise steeply in the next few days before settling to a truer position of positive cases once those that have come forward for retesting have received results.

Other neighbouring areas also affected by the lab issue have seen similar increases, including South Glos and Swindon.

Commenting, Alex said:

*"It is essential that the investigation into the lab failures gets answers quickly. There will almost certainly have been additional community transmission here in Gloucestershire as a result of these errors, and that in turn will have increased the risk to individuals and added to the burdens on the local NHS and social care services.*

*That is unacceptable, and changes must be made urgently to ensure this can never happen again."*



#### **ALEX HOLDS SEVERN TRENT TO ACCOUNT OVER WATER OUTAGE**

After the water outage in Cheltenham on 30 September, which led to Bournside, Bettridge, Charlton Kings Junior, Balcarras, Belmont, Warden Hill Primary and Charlton Kings Infants having to close for the day, Alex contacted Severn Trent Water to demand an explanation.

They've now responded to him, stating that the root cause of the burst main was "a 2017 repair failing as a result of workmanship issues".

Whilst Alex praised STW for being frank about what went wrong, he stated it is "*clearly concerning that this major disruption was caused by a poor repair carried out so recently. STW need to raise their game*".

STW have assured Alex that they have now improved their repair standards to include additional protection to bolts and fittings, which will increase the lifespan of repairs, adding that “*we are not expecting any further issues*”.







[Alex pictured alongside the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice]

### **ALEX SWORN IN AS HM SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR ENGLAND & WALES**

Alex has been sworn in as HM Solicitor General for England and Wales in a ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice.

As Solicitor General, Alex is one of the two law officers and superintends the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office, as well as the Government Legal Department and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

The Solicitor General also carries out a number of functions in the public interest, such as considering unduly lenient sentences (Alex may refer sentences to the Court of Appeal and seek an additional penalty) and taking action when there has been a contempt of court.

Alex said: *"It is a privilege to be sworn in as Solicitor General for England and Wales and I thank everyone for their kind words since my appointment."*

*"There are important responsibilities that come with this unique role, and I look forward to working with the Attorney General to play my part in strengthening our precious justice system and upholding the rule of law."*

[Alex is the first Cheltenham MP to hold the office of Solicitor General.]



**£1,061,478 SECURED TO TARGET VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

Gloucestershire has been successful in securing £1,061,478 of Safer Streets government funding to specifically target Violence Against Women and Girls.

This is the third highest grant nationally for a force area, and the highest in the South West.

The money will go towards an anonymous reporting app, 18 mobile CCTV cameras for crime hotspots, boosting education programmes in schools to prevent unhealthy cultures from developing.

Alex said: "*This cash will make a real difference to women's safety in Gloucestershire and I am delighted we have secured it. I will be working with Chris Nelson, PCC for Gloucestershire to encourage CBC to bid for further Cheltenham-specific funding in the next round of funding.*

*"There have been really important changes over recent years: stalking has been made a crime (thanks to the brilliant campaigning work of Nick Gazzard), upskirting is now a specific offence, and sending revenge porn images has been outlawed. New offences of coercive control and non-fatal strangulation have been put onto the statute book; and I was proud to play a part in leading the Domestic Abuse Act through Parliament .*

*"But there's more work to do to make women in our county feel safe, and to bring perpetrators to justice."*

To report Cheltenham-specific concerns, please contact Alex on [alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk)

## ALEX'S SOLICITOR GENERAL ROUND-UP



### ALEX BIDS FAREWELL TO MINISTRY OF JUSTICE PRIVATE OFFICE TEAM

Following his appointment as HM Solicitor General for England & Wales, Alex is now working with a new team of civil servants.

To thank his former MOJ team for all their hard work, Alex met up with them at the Palace of Westminster (see photo above).

During their time together, Alex and his MoJ private office team were responsible for:

- Taking the **Domestic Abuse Bill** through the Commons and onto the statute book

- Introducing a groundbreaking new scheme to provide temporary, basic **accommodation for prison leavers** for twelve weeks to cut crime
- The expansion of the **Clink Kitchen Scheme** to a further 25 prisons by the end of the year to help thousands of offenders find jobs and turn their backs on crime
- An overhaul of the **unpaid work** that offenders are ordered to do as part of community service
- Recruiting **1,000 new trainee probation officers** – a record number for a single year in the history of probation
- The innovative **Acquisitive Crime GPS tagging project**



### **ALEX OUTLINES PLAN TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Alex was a guest speaker at a fringe event in Manchester in which he outlined the Government's strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Alex reflected on the tragic murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa and noted the following programme of work:

- Publishing the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, which will **increase support for victims and survivors, increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice and to reduce the prevalence of violence** against women and girls

- Introducing a **£5 Million 'Safety of Women at Night' Fund**, in addition to the Safer Streets Fund, that focuses on the **prevention of violence against women and girls in public spaces at night**, including in the night-time economy.
- The appointment of **two new Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champions**, to drive forward positive change and **tackle the problems faced by female passengers on public transport**
- Creation of a new online tool 'StreetSafe' to provide women and girls with a way to **anonymously and quickly pinpoint areas where they have felt unsafe and say why**
- Addressing and preventing male violence **through education including** issues such as **personal privacy, consent and challenging gender stereotypes.**

You can read more about the strategy [HERE](#).



### **ALEX PRESSES SFO TO SPEED UP INVESTIGATIONS**

Before entering Parliament Alex acted for the Serious Fraud Office to prosecute so-called multi-million pound international 'advance fee fraud'. Now he is responsible for superintending the work of that organisation.

Since the last update Alex has met with the SFO Director and members of the Serious Fraud Office's (SFO) Board to review the SFO's performance in tackling cases of fraud, bribery and corruption.

In one case, Petrofac Limited was ordered to pay GBP 77 million after the SFO secured convictions in its investigation into bribery and corruption at the Jersey-registered energy services company.



[Click the image above to watch Alex's short video].

### **ALEX LEADS DRIVE TO TACKLE HATE CRIME**

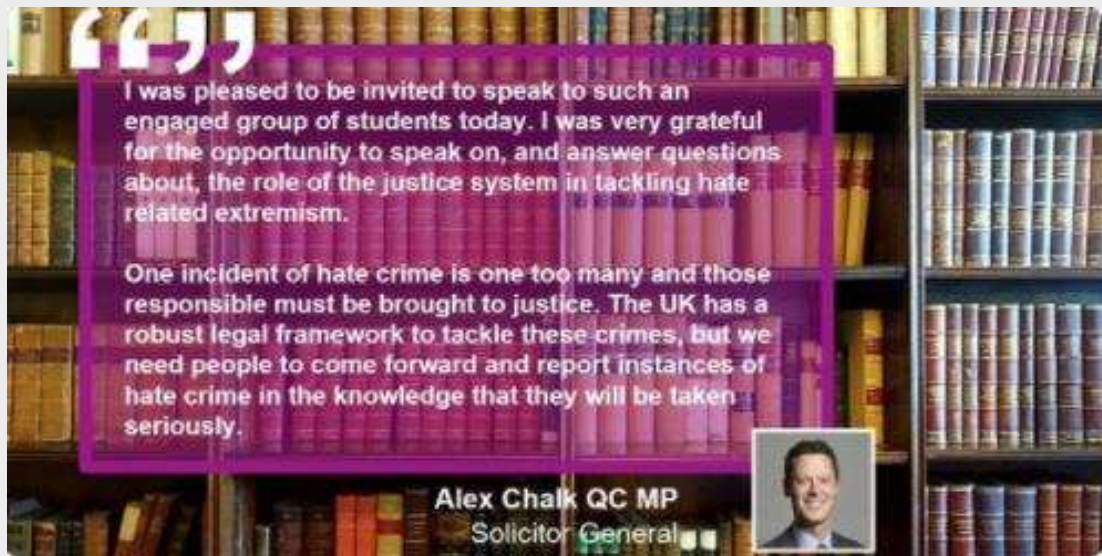
As part of National Hate Crime Awareness week, Alex outlined the further steps the Government would be taking to drive forward the Hate Crime Action Plan, first published in 2016.

Last year, the CPS prosecuted over 10,000 cases of alleged hate crime. Almost 80% of the sentences were increased because the judge agreed the crime was a hate crime.

Now the Government has instructed the Law Commission to carry out a wide-ranging review to identify any gaps within the current legislation and determine whether, in the light of recent cases, other protected characteristics should be added to hate crime law.

Alex said: *"People shouldn't have to live in fear of being targeted simply because of who they are, or who they love. So we're clear that offenders who commit hate crimes should expect to receive a higher sentence."*

*"Whilst we await the findings of a wide-ranging Law Commission's review, we remain committed to ensuring that those who commit hateful attacks feel the full force of the law."*



**ALEX**

### **MEETS WARWICK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Alex met Warwick University's Law, Politics and Philosophy (PPL) Society to discuss his role as one of the UK's Law Officers and what the Government is doing to tackle hate crime.

*Alex said: "I was pleased to be invited to speak to such an engaged group of students today. I was very grateful for the opportunity to speak on, and answer questions about, the role of the justice system in tackling hate related extremism."*



[Judges and members of the legal profession gathered at Westminster Abbey]

### **ALEX ATTENDS OPENING OF LEGAL YEAR AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY**

As HM Solicitor General for England & Wales, Alex joined judges and members of the legal profession at Westminster Abbey for a special service to mark the start of the legal year.

The annual service, which dates back to 1897, was conducted by the Dean of Westminster,

the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle.

Readings were given by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, the Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP; and the Right Honourable The Lord Burnett, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.

## CHELTENHAM UPDATES:



[Alex with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities at Glos Col]

### **LEVELLING-UP IN CHELTENHAM!**

Alex invited Michael Gove MP, the newly appointed Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to visit the new Advanced Digital Academy at Gloucestershire College in Hesters Way.

Alex asked him to visit this £3m, Government funded, facility because he wanted to impress



upon him why 'levelling up' is so important for places like Cheltenham.

Alex has previously described The Advanced Digital Academy as 'levelling up on steroids'.

There are wall screens depicting in real time the source and target of global cyber attacks, to the 'attack' and 'defend' rooms for capture the flag competitions, it is a state-of-the art facility for the local community.

It will be the base for the UK's first-ever GCHQ/NCSC-accredited cyber skills course, and Michael Gove received glowing feedback from the young people he met who were using the facility for apprenticeships and T-Levels in cyber.

*Alex said: "This investment is a major step forward in delivering the cyber vision for Cheltenham. When I first set out my plans for the town to be a tech hub in a speech in 2014, I was motivated by my drive to boost social mobility. I always knew the fast-growing cyber sector could help with the fight against deprivation, providing a better future for young people who may not have had the easiest start in life, but are prepared to work hard to fulfil their potential."*



[Alex addressing the Business Breakfast at Bournside]

### **ALEX SPEAKS OF 'BRIGHT FUTURE FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE' AT BOURNSIDE BUSINESS BREAKFAST**

Alex was guest speaker at a Business Breakfast organised at Cheltenham Bournside school recently.

Speaking to a room of local business leaders, students and local head teachers, Alex thanked local teachers for their hard work and resilience during the pandemic and spoke positively about Cheltenham's future.

He noted that just a year ago, over one third of Gloucestershire's working age population was on furlough, and mass unemployment loomed. Now, despite inevitable strains as the economy emerges from its hibernation, there are growing opportunities for Cheltenham's young people.

He pointed in particular to Gloucestershire College's Advanced Digital Academy, funded with £3m of Government cash, which now hosts the first ever NCSC/GCHQ cyber skills course in the UK.

Speaking after the event, Alex said: *"It was fantastic to be back at Bournside again with students, the new (ish!) head teacher and local business people. After £370m of Government support for Cheltenham during the pandemic, we can look to the future with confidence."*



**ALEX BACK AT BELMONT SPECIAL SCHOOL - WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTER**

Alex visited Belmont Special School with the Minister for Children and Families, Will Quince MP.

During the visit, Alex met with pupils, staff and the headteacher who emphasised the importance of mental wellbeing and developing life skills.

Alex also saw the new £350,000 soft playroom that was recently completed. It is the biggest project in Belmont's history and enables Belmont to continue to be able to support some of

Gloucestershire's most vulnerable children and young people.

Alex said: *"It was fantastic to visit Belmont School. There is such energy and positivity in this outstanding special school, and I am so grateful to the staff who work hard to give local children the best start in life. The new soft play area is amazing!"*



[Alex pictured with students and the principal of Glos Col]

### **ALEX BREAKS GROUND ON £5M ECO-PROJECT AT GLOS COL**

Alex was invited to take the controls of a heavy drilling machine which has started digging deep boreholes in the car park at Gloucestershire College.

It is all part of a major new project, **part-funded with a £3m grant from the Government**, to decarbonise the heating system of the Cheltenham GlosCol campus. The ground-source heat-pump works like a fridge in reverse, and uses heat from the earth to keep the buildings warm in winter.

Speaking at the event Alex said, *"I am delighted that the Government has made such a major contribution to this important project. Although in the UK we have slashed our emissions by 44% on 1990 levels, we need to go further. I am proud that it is innovative projects like these in Cheltenham which are helping us on our way to meet our Net Zero targets."*

To watch a video of Alex's speech at the event click [HERE](#).

To read the BBC's coverage of the event click [HERE](#).



Our new Household Support Fund allocates

**£3,692,483**  
*for* **GLOUCESTERSHIRE**



*Helping families meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities*

#### **MORE SUPPORT SECURED FOR CHELTENHAM'S VULNERABLE FAMILIES**

Alex has welcomed the additional funding awarded to help those most in need in Cheltenham as we enter winter.

Vulnerable households in Cheltenham will be able to access **£3,692,483** awarded to GCC to help them purchase essentials and cover every day costs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

This is in addition to the new employment and skills hub which has opened to further support the county's recovery.

The hub will act as a central source of information and specialist coaches will provide a tailored package of support.

Alex said: *"This targeted Household Support Fund is here to help those vulnerable households with essential costs.*

*"The new employment and skills hub will further ensure that Gloucestershire is well placed to rebuild. With over 36,000 job listings being advertised by businesses in Gloucestershire, I am*

*confident that opportunities exist for everyone."*



#### **ALEX HAILS SUCCESS OF CHELTENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

Alex congratulated the organisers of another successful Cheltenham Literature Festival - a Cheltenham institution that risked closure as a result of the Covid pandemic.

After lobbying behind the scenes, Alex was delighted that the Government stepped in with well over a million pounds from the Culture Recovery Fund to support the Lit Fest.

Alex attended an event with Lord Hague, Anne McElvoy and Lord Ricketts (former Permanent Secretary at the FCO) on how Britain should define itself on the world stage in the future, and listened to Danny Finkelstein and others discuss the current Biden presidency.

Alex also attended The David Vaisey Prize award ceremony. The David Vaisey Prize is awarded to libraries for schemes which encourage more people to read.

Bishop's Cleeve library were nominated for the award after it managed to get 4000 children in Gloucestershire reading as part of their summer reading challenge. They also rolled out a scheme providing reading packs - full of literary resources and books - for vulnerable children in the county.

Alex was interviewed on Times Radio whilst at the Festival. To listen to the interview, please click [HERE](#). (Alex's interview begins at 02.06)



[Alex in the Boeing 737 MAX FTD simulator with a trainee pilot]

### **FLYING HIGH WITH SKYBOURNE AIRLINE ACADEMY**

Alex met the next generation of Gloucestershire's pilots at Skybourne Airline Academy, a modern airline training school based at Gloucestershire Airport.

Skybourne has invested more than £10million in its 13,000 sq foot headquarters, aircraft and simulators.

During his visit, Alex experienced a flight in Skybourne's Boeing 737 MAX FTD simulator with a trainee pilot approaching the end of his Integrated Airline Transport Pilot Licence.

In July, the airline academy became the first UK pilot training school to place an order for an all-electric aircraft. Producing zero CO2 emissions and using clean, renewable energy; six eFlyer 2 and four eFlyer 4 planes will be added to its fleet.

Alex said: *"These past 18 months have been a challenging time for Skybourne's young trainees, but they have shown great resilience throughout the pandemic.*

*"After a dreadful period, the travel sector is unlocking again, and these young pilots can look to the future with increased confidence once again."*



**ALEX OPENS NEW OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT BETTRIDGE SCHOOL**

Alex was invited to officially open the new outdoor teaching classroom at Betteridge School.

Betteridge offer individualised, creative and exciting learning pathway for pupils between the ages of 2 and 19 within a safe and supportive environment.

Outdoor classrooms are proven to create a unique learning environment that boosts children's wellbeing. A recent study also found that it helps them to focus once they return to their indoor classroom.



During the event, Alex met with staff and teachers from Bettridge as well as a representative of the Ernest Cook Trust who work to inspire young people to achieve better educational and life outcomes by learning from the land.



[A section of the new cycle path between Cheltenham and Gloucester]

### **ALEX BACKS NEW CHELTENHAM TO GLOUCESTER CYCLE PATH**

Alex has backed GCC's new flagship cycle route on the B4063 between Cheltenham and Gloucester.

The six-mile route will include a footpath for pedestrians and a 'buffer' to separate cyclists from road traffic making it safer and more enjoyable. This was a key change made to the design following feedback from residents and industry specialists.

When finished, the path will stretch between Arle Court roundabout in west Cheltenham to London Road in Gloucester, via Staverton, Churchdown and Longlevens.

The new cycle path will provide a continuous off road route for cyclists of all ages and abilities, connecting with a new cycle path under construction along the A40 in Benhall and with the London Road cycle lanes completed last year in Kingsholm.

Alex said: *"I travel to the overwhelming majority of my appointments on my bike so I am delighted by the creation of the new Cheltenham-Gloucester cycle path.*

*Plans to make cycling safer are essential if we are to encourage more people onto bikes.*

*Investing in public transport, as well as walking and cycling are crucial to building a cleaner, greener, healthier future. With vision and common sense, an historic opportunity to improve*

*transport in Cheltenham can be seized."*



#### **A417 UPDATE**

As part of his ongoing meetings with Highways England, Alex has received a progress update on the A417 Missing Link Project.

Highways England have now confirmed that the Planning Inspectorate have issued a 'Rule 6' letter, which confirms its timetable for the project.

The project is now entering its 6 month examination period, which will include:

- A preliminary meeting to be held in two parts on 2 and 16 November
- Written answers submitted
- Two hearings in mid-January and late-February/ early-March
- Discussions between individuals, community groups, environmental groups and the Examining Authority
- Any Compulsory Acquisition hearings that are required

The examination period is due to end by 16 May 2022 and will be followed by the 'Recommendation and Decision' stage.

The Planning Inspectorate must prepare a report on the application to the Secretary of State, including a recommendation, within three months of the close of the six month Examination stage. The Secretary of State then has a further three months to make the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

Assuming the decision is to grant consent, there is a six week period in which the decision may be challenged in the High Court (Judicial Review).

The full timetable can be viewed [HERE](#).

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## ADDITIONAL UPDATES

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### ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE, ALEX HAS:

#### **As HM Solicitor General:**

- Held talks with the Treasury Solicitor's Department
- Met with HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate to discuss current and future priorities

#### **As Cheltenham's MP:**

- Attended a celebration at **St Gregory's** to thank all those who have acted as volunteers in the Church during the pandemic
- Visited the **Change Grow Live** drug recovery Hub on Alstone Lane
- Met with the director of the **Cheltenham International Film Festival** (Leslie Sheldon) to discuss its latest project to give oppressed women a voice
- Attended a concert in aid of **Air Ambulance UK** in Tewksbury Abbey
- Attended a rededication service for **Pip and Jim's church**
- Met Chief Inspector Roddy Gosden and new Neighbourhood Police Inspector Mike Yates at **Hesters Way police station** to discuss crime in Cheltenham
- Visited the **Portland Guest House**
- Attended the **PCC's roadshow** to hear people's views on policing and to discuss plans for putting more police on the front line

#### Received Briefings from:

- **NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group** about ongoing pandemic in Gloucestershire

- Secretary of State for Transport on **HGV drivers**
- The developers for the **West Cheltenham/Golden Valley development**

## ALEX IN THE COURTS

The Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme allows the public to invite the Attorney General's Office to refer a sentence to the Court of Appeal for being too lenient.

As Solicitor General, Alex will then make a decision (in accordance with the law) as to whether to make such a reference. In certain cases he may decide to present the case in court himself.

Since the last update, Alex has referred a number of cases to the Court of Appeal, including:

- 1) A sex offender who engaged in sexual communication with a child
- 2) A sex offender found guilty of one count of indecency with a child, two counts of indecent assault and one count of attempted rape
- 3) A sex offender who engaged in sexual activity in the presence of a child and raped a child under the age of 13
- 4) A man who violently attacked his partner over two days

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## IN THE MEDIA

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[Click the image above to watch Alex's brief interview on BBC news]

#### **SINCE THE LAST UPDATE:**

Alex has:

- (i) been interviewed by the **BBC** about women's safety
- (ii) been interviewed by **Times Radio** and **BBC Radio Gloucestershire** about the death of Sir David Amess
- (iii) written four articles for the **Cheltenham Post**
- (IV) written four articles for the **Gloucestershire Echo**, in which he:

1. Expressed his delight at the opening of the UK's first-ever GCHQ/NCSC-accredited cyber skills course at Glos Col [READ HERE.](#)
2. Welcomed the return of Cheltenham Literature Festival [READ HERE.](#)
3. Described the Advanced Digital Academy at Glos Col as 'levelling up on steroids' [READ HERE.](#)
4. Paid tribute to Sir David Amess. [READ HERE.](#)

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**COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD**



### **ALEX BACKS CHELTENHAM TO 'PLANT A TREE FOR THE JUBILEE'**

Alex is supporting Cheltenham residents, groups, schools and villages to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

Alex is encouraging Cheltenham residents to play their part to enhance the environment by planting trees during the official planting season between October to March.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

For more information and details on how to apply for trees, please click [HERE](#).



**GCC LOOKING FOR LAND FOR 360,000 TREES**

Gloucestershire County Council is looking for land in the county to help to plant one million trees by 2030, increasing woodland and tackling climate change.

The county council has recently been awarded £300k from the Woodland Trust for planting trees in the county and developing a programme to maintain them. The council is now looking for landowners to come forward and offer land to plant approximately 360,000 trees over the next three years.

If you would like to get involved, please contact the county council's climate change team on [glosclimate@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:glosclimate@gloucestershire.gov.uk)



### **HEROES! TEAM GUIDE DOGS 2021 CHALLENGE SUCCESS**

Cheltenham residents David Fahey and Ruth Carr have completed their Team Guide Dogs 2021 challenge - completing both the Cheltenham half and the London Marathon.

The runs were part of a wider fundraising campaign organised by the Twin Arrows golf society, Pat and Drena Cox and David Fahey. **The group have raised £75,000 over the past nine years for charities including the British Heart Foundation, Sue Ryder and the MND Association.**

This year, they are raising money for Guide Dogs. This is a charity close to Ruth's hearts as she lost her sight in her thirties. David acted as Ruth's guide runner.

They have already raised a fantastic £14,000 towards their target of £25,000. To find out more about the challenge or to donate please click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).



## **USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS**

### **Gloucestershire County Council**

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk)

01452 425000

### **Cheltenham Borough Council**

[www.cheltenham.gov.uk](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk)

01242 262626

### **Age UK Gloucestershire**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire)

01452 422660

### **Gloucestershire Abuse Support**

01452 726570

### **Citizens Advice Gloucestershire**

01452 527202

### **GRASAC (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)**

[www.glosrasac.org](http://www.glosrasac.org)

01452 305421



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