



SIR GEOFFREY CLIFTON-BROWN  
MP FOR THE COTSWOLDS

## CHRISTMAS UPDATE 2020

*I would like to start by wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

This has been an extremely difficult year for everyone, and my thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones. My office has received thousands of emails each week since March, raising a range of difficulties being experienced by so many individuals and businesses through lockdown. I have been deeply conscious about the curtailing of people's liberties with lockdown measures, as well as the impact on jobs, businesses, education, and people's mental health.

As a result of this very difficult balance between curtailing the disease, and minimising the damage to people's lives and the economy, I voted against the Government in November as they introduced the full national lockdown. In the latest vote on Tiers I decided to abstain, partly because Gloucestershire Hospital is very stretched but mainly on the promise of low incident areas like the Cotswolds being disaggregated from higher areas like Gloucester, enabling the Cotswolds to move into a lower Tier. The vaccine rollout in the New Year is hopeful news.

Through lockdown 808,900 jobs in the South West have been supported through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Over 107,000 businesses received the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme and the Bounce Back Loans Scheme in the South West worth over £4 billion.



WITH THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, RANIL JAYAWARDENA MP, FOR A VISIT TO DUCHY HOME FARM



HERCULES SITE VISIT, IN SOUTH CERNEY WITH THEIR NEW TECHNOLOGY HIGH SUCTION MACHINES



TALKING TO THE PUPILS AT AMPNEY CRUCIS SCHOOL ABOUT WORK AS AN MP AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### BARN THEATRE LIVE SESSIONS

As soon as lockdown began, I set up, with the help of the Barn Theatre in Cirencester, a weekly live show to broadcast the latest advice and guidance from Government on Covid-19 and have Q&As with a panel of local experts. The shows were viewed by thousands of people and a great success. As part of the Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, the Cotswolds was awarded a total of £470,521 for The Barn Theatre Project and the Corinium Museum. I was instrumental in asking questions in Parliament to repeatedly lobbying Ministers. All shows are available to watch again on YouTube.

**The Agriculture Bill** has been working its way through Parliament. I am passionate about the countryside, for British farmers producing quality foods to the highest possible animal and environmental welfare standards and managing the countryside. After 40 years of EU control and compromising on agriculture policy to fit the needs of the 28 member states, this is an amazing opportunity to shape future farming to meet the need and ambitions of British consumers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I have regular meetings with the NFU, DEFRA, and local farmers to discuss the latest issues affecting the sector. I worked hard with colleagues to secure much needed support for dairy farmers throughout lockdown, with up to £10,000 made available to cover lost income.

**The Planning White Paper** outlines planning changes that would be the most significant event to affect the Cotswolds since WWII. My full submission to both consultations can be read on my website, where you can also watch my speech in the Planning and House Building debate. The building target algorithm would mean a staggering 188% increase in housing numbers for the Cotswolds, we must protect the unique vernacular of the Cotswolds while finding an effective solution to the housing affordability issue.

**Blood test services in the South Cotswolds** have been changed this year concerns regarding capacity to reach demand remain. I always found the service at Cirencester Hospital superb. I have been lobbying NHS Gloucestershire CCG

since February to restore the services. The letters I have received from the CCG are available on my website.

**Public Accounts Committee** has continued virtually this year. As Deputy Chair this influential committee with its twice-weekly sessions is a huge amount of work. Some of the most interesting inquiries this year have covered Improving Broadband, Whitehall Preparations for EU Exit, Readyng the NHS and Social Care for Covid-19, Management of the Magnox Contract, and Support of Exporters.

**The recent Spending Review** included infrastructure commitments for the Cotswolds. In particular the levelling-up fund and the feasibility study for the Cirencester light railway, the reconfirmation of the funding for the A417 and extra funding to improve gigabit broadband. I made recommendations for Cirencester light railway funding, a great step towards our ambitious environment goals by improving rural public transport.

**A417** progress continues and I have regular meetings with top Highways England officials. As per the timetable, HE plan to submit their proposals to the Planning Inspectorate for formal examination in 2021 and despite this change, are working towards a programme to commence in 2023, expected completion in 2025 or 2026. I will work hard to ensure this timetable does not slip.

For more information on the work I have done this year in Parliament and in the Cotswolds, or to sign up for my monthly e-newsletter, please visit my website.

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SPEAKING IN A  
WESTMINSTER  
HALL DEBATE  
AND A VISIT  
TO  
CIRENCESTER  
COLLEGE

