



e-UPDATE #111 - 12.06.23

Good afternoon! Welcome to this latest update.

I hope you had a good weekend. There was thunder and lightning in the air as I left Cheltenham yesterday to travel to Westminster. More stormy weather in Parliament today...

Back in Cheltenham, there are some important updates below. I invited the **German Ambassador** to our town last week to meet local modern languages and politics students. He was clearly very impressed by the Bournside, Pittville, St Edward's and Cheltenham College students he met - as he was by Cheltenham in general. Always nice to see!

I also met Cheltenham's **Hong Kongers** in Pittville Park, joined the **Ukrainian** Community at a fundraiser in Bethesda Methodist Church, and attended a service to mark 200 years of worship in **Cheltenham's Synagogue**.

There's positive news below about **Gloucestershire Constabulary** receiving a further **£774,000 of Government funding to tackle domestic abuse** following a successful bid from PCC Chris Nelson. The funding will be used to train frontline staff to spot early signs of domestic abuse and to encourage early interventions.

In my ministerial role, I announced that trolls who hide behind the anonymity of the internet to encourage others to cause themselves serious harm will face prosecution as part of an **overhaul of online safety laws**.

I am also pleased to report that the number of **prison leavers in employment** six months after release has more than **doubled** from 14% to 30% since April 2021. That's good for society, and good for the rehabilitation of offenders.

And I have also announced a ground-breaking new prisoner transfer arrangement with Albania which will see hundreds of Albanian nationals in prisons in England and Wales sent back to Albania.

And there's a potholes update of course!

Thank you for reading.

Best wishes,

Alex Chalk

Rt Hon Alex Chalk KC MP
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice



UPDATES



THE  TIMES

Today's sections ▾

Past six days

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Times Radio

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Catherine Baksi

Thursday June 01 2023,
12.01am, The Times

Law



Alex Chalk KC, left, before his swearing-in ceremony with Lord Burnett of Maldon, the lord chief justice, centre, and Sir Geoffrey Vos, master of the rolls

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

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Alex Chalk KC described the responsibility of being lord chancellor as “like carrying a Ming vase — ancient, priceless . . . but also fragile — and doing so whilst walking across a polished floor”.

[Richard Pohle, The Times]

G The Law Society Gazette

Chalk off to a good start at Justice

7 hours ago



[\[The Law Gazette\]](#)

ALEX SWORN IN AS LORD CHANCELLOR

Alex was officially sworn in as **Lord Chancellor at the Royal Courts of Justice**.

The swearing-in took place before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon; Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos; Senior President of Tribunals, Sir Keith Lindblom and Chancellor of the High Court, Sir Julian Flaux.

Please find below an extract from Alex's swearing-in speech:

"And so, as I sit here as your Lord Chancellor with responsibility for our justice system, I am aware of the responsibility I hold. It's like carrying a Ming vase – ancient, priceless... but also fragile – and doing so whilst walking across a polished floor.

"What access to justice and independence of the judiciary mean in practice is this: as you walk out of this court having lost, you know deep down that despite your disappointment you have been heard by judges of enormous intellect and unimpeachable integrity. And you have had a full and fair hearing.

It is difficult to overstate how precious that is."

Alex's swearing-in speech can be read in full [HERE](#). Local and national coverage of the swearing-in can found through the following links:

[The Times](#), [London Evening Standard](#), [The Law Gazette](#), [The Cheltenham Post](#), [Punchline Gloucester](#)





Miguel Berger ✓
@GermanAmbUK



A pleasure to visit [@AlexChalkChelt](#) MP in his beautiful constituency in Cheltenham and to talk with students from five schools hosted by [@CheltCollege](#).



ALEX WELCOMES GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO CHELTENHAM

Alex invited the **German ambassador** to the UK - Miguel Berger - to Cheltenham.

Alex gave Ambassador Berger a short tour of Cheltenham before attending a **Q&A at Cheltenham College** with pupils from Balcarras School, Pittville School and St Edward's who are studying German and International Relations.

Writing on Facebook, Alex said:

"Delighted to invite the German ambassador, Miguel Berger, to Cheltenham."

"A really good session with students from Balcarras School, Pitville School, St Edward's and Cheltenham College. Thank you to Cheltenham Education Partnership for coordinating."



£774,000 BOOST TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The **safety of women** is something Alex has campaigned energetically on in as Cheltenham's MP.

Alex led a successful campaign in Parliament to double the maximum sentence for stalking as well as serving on the Bill Committee which scrutinised the Upskirting Bill. **Alex was also the Minister responsible for leading the Domestic Abuse Bill through the House of Commons.**

So Alex has welcomed news that Gloucestershire Constabulary will receive a further **£774,000 in Government funding to tackle domestic abuse** following a successful bid from PCC Chris Nelson.

The funding boost will be used to train frontline officers, social workers, health care professionals, midwives and teachers to spot early signs of domestic abuse and to encourage early interventions.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).



ALEX INVITED TO PICNIC WITH CHELTENHAM HONG KONGERS

Alex was invited to join Cheltenham's **Hong Konger** community for a picnic in Pittville Park.

The community has come to the UK following the Communist Party crackdown in Hong Kong. They spoke so warmly about how grateful they are to have been offered safety and security in our country.

Writing on Facebook, Alex said:

"Hong Kongers in Cheltenham! Such a privilege to be invited to join this amazing community for their picnic in Pittville Park."



ALEX PRESENTS TROPHY AT CHELTENHAM YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE CUP FINAL

Alex presented the trophy at the **Under 16 Cheltenham & Gloucester League Cup final** at Cheltenham Town's Johnny Rocks stadium.

Alex is pictured above with the captain of the winning team Claines Cobras FC.



[Alex appeared on Good Morning Britain to discuss the new Albanian prisoner transfer scheme]

ALEX ANNOUNCES GROUND-BREAKING NEW ALBANIAN PRISONER TRANSFER ARRANGEMENT

Alex has announced that the UK and Albanian governments have agreed a ground-breaking arrangement that will see **hundreds of Albanian prisoners returned to their home country.**

Under the new arrangement, **Albanian nationals in prisons in England and Wales serving sentences of 4 years or more will be sent back to Albania to see out the remainder of their terms in Albanian prisons.**

Alex said:

"The public expects that foreign criminals should serve their sentences overseas – not in our prisons at the expense of the taxpayer.

"This deal will speed up the removal of these offenders and give victims confidence that serious criminals will continue to face justice and spend the remainder of their sentence

behind bars. Collaboration with our international partners is an essential part of making this possible."



COURT CIRCULAR

Court Circular: June 7, 2023

Buckingham Palace

7th June, 2023

The King this morning presented Honours at Buckingham Palace to members of the Army who were involved in the State Funeral of The late Queen Elizabeth II.

His Majesty received the Bishop of Blackburn (the Right Reverend Philip North) today who did homage upon his appointment.

The Rt Hon Alexander Chalk MP (Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice) administered the Oath.

The Bishop of Carlisle (Clerk of the Closet) was in attendance.

ALEX SWEARS IN NEW BISHOP BEFORE THE KING AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

In keeping with a ceremony that stretches back centuries, Alex attended Buckingham Palace to administer, in the presence of King Charles III, the Oath to the new Bishop of Blackburn.



ALEX VISITS BOURNSIDE SCHOOL

Alex was pleased to be invited to meet with Politics students and members of the School Parliament at **Bournside School**.

As well as hearing about the exciting projects that Bournside School Parliament are working

on, Alex answered questions on **Cheltenham A&E**, his **cyber vision for Cheltenham** and his role as **Lord Chancellor** and Secretary of State for Justice.



ALEX SUPPORTS CHELTENHAM STREET PASTORS

Alex was pleased to join **Cheltenham's Street Pastors** at their converted horsebox near the Prom to wish them well before their evening's work.

The Street Pastors are trained volunteers from local Cheltenham churches who are on patrol from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on a Friday and Saturday night to help keep people enjoying Cheltenham's night time economy safe.

Writing on Facebook, Alex said:

"Street Pastors on duty! Cheltenham's street pastors do an excellent job keeping people safe in the night time economy. It was great to pop down to the converted horse box near the Prom to wish the pastors well before their night's work."

To find out more information, please click [HERE](#).



[Alex met with business leaders dedicated to helping ex-prisoners get into work]



THOUSANDS MORE EX-PRISONERS IN WORK

The number of **prison leavers in employment** within six months has more than **doubled** from 14% to 30% since April 2021 following a major Government drive to reduce reoffending and plug labour shortages.

Alex officially opened a new workshop run by international logistics firm DHL at **HMP High**

Down to help boost education and training.

It will function as a DHL warehouse for sorting and picking goods to be shipped to other prisons across the country giving prisoners experience of managing the movement of stock within the warehouse and the processing of goods.

Alex said:

"Our drive to improve prison education and business links is helping cut crime, with more prisoners going straight into work on release than ever before.

"Helping reformed offenders kickstart a new, law-abiding career is a win-win - it makes our streets safer while providing businesses with the reliable staff they need to help drive the British economy."

You can watch a video of Alex's visit to HMP High Down by clicking [HERE](#).



ALEX MEETS CHELTENHAM APPRENTICES AT GE AEROSPACE

Alex was invited by GE Aerospace to view the **world-class engineering taking place here in**

Gloucestershire.

Alex also met with young Cheltenham apprentices who are working towards highly-skilled and rewarding careers in the aerospace industry.

Writing on Facebook, Alex said:

"A privilege to join these talented and enthusiastic apprentices at GE Aviation. Their hard work will ensure that Gloucestershire remains at the cutting edge of civilian and military aviation technology."

You can read Alex's Cheltenham Post column about his visit by clicking [HERE](#).



ALEX HOLDS TALKS WITH INDIAN JUSTICE MINISTER

Alex was pleased to meet his Indian counterpart Arjun Ram Meghwal for talks in London.

Alex and Minister Meghwal agreed to continue to work closely to **strengthen the close ties between our legal professions**, and deepen cooperation between our respective justice systems.

Alex also offered his sympathies on behalf of the British Government to the families of those that died in the train crash in Odisha last week.





BRAND NEW CHANGING ROOMS AND CAFE AT BURROW'S FIELD

Alex was delighted to be invited to visit **Leckhampton Rovers' new changing rooms and cafe** at Burrow's Field.

Leckhampton Rovers were awarded £428,000 in Government, Premier League and FA funding last year to help transform its Burrow's Field home. Alex was delighted to support LRFC bid for funding and is now supporting their bid for Severn Trent's Community Fund.

Writing on Facebook, Alex said:

*"Checking out Leckhampton Rovers' really impressive (and artistic!) new changing rooms at Burrow's Field. The DugOut cafe is now open to the public. Chris personally makes literally the *best* brownies I have ever tasted... Thanks Mark for inviting me down!"*



ALEX BACKS LAUNCH OF OPERATION MINSTER

Alex is backing the launch of **Operation Minister**.

Operation Minster is Cheltenham's first Heritage Watch scheme and is designed to protect Cheltenham's historical sites, monuments, buildings, and artefacts from heritage crime.

Operation Minster has been developed with Cheltenham Minster, Cheltenham Civic Society, Cheltenham Police and CBC and will enable people to report and share information on crime, suspicious behaviour, and damage they observe at heritage sites.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).



ALEX ANNOUNCES THAT TROLLS WHO ENCOURAGE SERIOUS SELF-HARM WILL FACE JAIL

Vile trolls who hide behind the anonymity on the internet to encourage others to cause themselves serious harm will face prosecution as part of **Alex's overhaul of online safety laws.**

The new overhaul will make it a crime to encourage someone to cause serious self-harm, regardless of whether or not victims go on to injure themselves. Those convicted face up to 5 years in prison.

Alex said:

"There is no place in our society for those who set out to deliberately encourage the serious self-harm of others. Our new law will send a clear message to these cowardly trolls that their behaviour is not acceptable.

"Building on the existing measures in the Online Safety Bill our changes will make it easier to convict these vile individuals and make the internet a better and safer place for everyone



GROT SPOT UPDATE

As part of his 'grot spot' campaign, Alex has pressed **CBC and GCC** to address local eyesores including potholes, blocked drains and graffiti.

Since the last update, the Highways Department have agreed to Alex's request for the following roads to be resurfaced:

- Parts of **Old Bath Road**
- Parts of **Shurdington Road**
- Parts of **Caernarvon Road**

In addition, potholes will be filled in The Park and Gloucester Road. Alex is also pressing for the **London Road near the junction with East End Road** to be fixed; the road surface is in a particularly poor condition.

To speed up logging of grotspots, could we please invite you to use the new '[Report a Grot Spot](#)' section of Alex's website to report problem areas. You can do so by clicking [HERE](#).



BOURNSIDE AND ROWANFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL RECEIVE 'CONDITION IMPROVEMENT FUND' BOOST

Bournside School and **Rowanfield Junior School** have both been awarded a grant from the Government's 'Condition Improvement Fund'.

The grants will enable Rowanfield Junior School to carry out **fire safety work** whilst Bournside will upgrade its **boiler** and **heating infrastructure** with a low carbon solution.

The funding is in addition to the extra £2.3 million already awarded directly to Cheltenham schools earlier this month.



Legal Aid Agency

ALEX EXTENDS ACCESS TO LEGAL SUPPORT TO MILLIONS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Alex has announced that **domestic abuse victims and children** are among millions more people who will now have access to legal aid.

The move will see over 6 million more vulnerable people able to access funded legal support as the Government pledges £25 million to boost the legal aid system every year.

It means domestic abuse victims on universal credit and seeking a protective order can access legal aid funding more easily without facing a means test.

Alex said:

"Widening access to legal aid secures justice and strengthens the rule of law."

"These changes mean more vulnerable people like domestic abuse victims will be able to access the protection of the courts."



[Alex planting a tree last year]

MAJOR BOOST TO TREE PLANTING IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Alex has welcomed news that Gloucestershire County Council has planted a further 130,006 trees this planting season.

This is another step closer to GCC's ambition to plant one million trees by 2030.

Alex is also backing GCC's plans to create a **green corridor for wildlife** by planting more than **3,000 trees** on a disused railway site between Bournside School and Canterbury Walk



[Reuters]

ALEX INTRODUCES BETTER SUPPORT FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES AND EYEWITNESSES OF HOMICIDE AND MAJOR INVESTMENT

Alex has announced that bereaved families and eyewitnesses of homicide or major criminal incidents like the Manchester Arena bombing will receive a new package of support.

The Homicide Service - which provides emotional and practical support to families bereaved by murder or manslaughter - will be extended to those who witness a homicide or major criminal incident across England and Wales.

Alex said:

"The Homicide Service provides vital support to the families of victims under the worst of circumstances – ensuring they have the emotional and practical help they need to cope with their loss.

"By expanding the service to include eyewitnesses and bereaved families of major incidents across England and Wales thousands more people will be able to access the support they need as early as possible."



ALEX VISITS SNARESBROOK CROWN COURT

Alex visited Snaresbrook Crown Court for his first official court visit as Lord Chancellor.

Alex viewed the latest technology used in court, and met with staff and thanked them for their hard work reducing the outstanding caseload.

As a barrister, Alex prosecuted serious crime at Snaresbrook - ranging from robbery to serious violence.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

Rape victims' personal records to be protected from unnecessary 'fishing expeditions'



Ministry of Justice

ALEX ANNOUNCES END TO INTRUSIVE FISHING EXPEDITIONS OF RAPE VICTIMS' THERAPY NOTES

Victims of rape **will no longer face unnecessary and invasive requests to access their therapy notes** or other personal records during the investigation stage.

For the first time, the law will clearly set out that **police should only request material that is absolutely necessary and proportionate** to ensure that vulnerable victims aren't put off seeking vital support.

This will end 'fishing expeditions' for information that can be irrelevant to the investigation and will help ensure vulnerable victims aren't put off reporting rape for fear that their notes could be used against them in court.

Alex said:

"This important reform will end invasive unnecessary requests for therapy notes for rape victims and give them the confidence to seek the help they need earlier, free from the fear that what they share in the process of healing could be weaponised against them."

ADDITIONAL UPDATES

ALSO SINCE THE LAST UPDATE, ALEX HAS:

- Held **constituency surgeries** to help constituents with casework, ranging from school placements, disabled parking and housing
- Attended **Cabinet in 10 Downing Street**
- Received a briefing from **NHS Gloucestershire** about recovery in planned operations, and preparations for winter
- Visited **PinPoint Media**
- Met with a constituent to discuss **cyber investment** in Cheltenham
- Met with the Cheltenham-based founders - and current UGlos students - of technology start up [*NearSocial*](#)
- Attended the **Lansdown Art Studios** preview open evening
- Attended the **Cheltenham Science Festival**
- Attended the **Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation 200 Years Celebratory Service** - to mark 200 years of worship in Cheltenham
- Invited to attend the **Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees** summer picnic
- Attended the **Circle 2 Success awards evening** at BPE Solicitors
- Received a briefing from **National Grid** about its Visual Impact Provision project in the Cotswolds National Landscape
- Met with the **Lead Nurse at Cheltenham College**

IN THE MEDIA

Alex appeared on GB News, Good Morning Britain, LBC and BBC Radio Gloucestershire to discuss the scheme to return **Albanian prisoners to serve their sentences in Albania**.

Click the hyperlinks below to watch.



[GB News]



[Good Morning Britain]



[LBC]



[BBC]

Catherine Baksi

Thursday June 01 2023,
12.01am, The Times

Law



Alex Chalk KC, left, before his swearing-in ceremony with Lord Burnett of Maldon, the lord chief justice, centre, and Sir Geoffrey Vos, master of the rolls

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Share    

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Alex Chalk KC described the responsibility of being lord chancellor as “like carrying a Ming vase — ancient, priceless . . . but also fragile — and doing so whilst walking across a polished floor”.

[Richard Pohle, The Times]

Leading judge welcomes seventh Tory Lord Chancellor in just under six years

Lord Burnett, the Lord Chief Justice, who is due to retire in the autumn, said he hoped Alex Chalk would be 'my last'.



[Jordan Pettit/ PA. [The Evening Standard](#)]

G The Law Society Gazette

Chalk off to a good start at Justice

7 hours ago



[[The Law Gazette](#)]

SINCE THE LAST UPDATE

Alex has also written three columns for the **Cheltenham Post and the Gloucestershire Echo**, in which he:

1. Paid tribute to Cheltenham's teachers. Read [HERE](#).
2. Stated that some of the best opportunities in the country for Cheltenham youngsters are

close to home. Read [HERE](#).

3. Stated he hoped that the Burrow's Field transformation will inspire Cheltenham's sport stars and philanthropists of the future. Read [HERE](#).

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Let's get Parham better again!



FUNDRAISER FOR CHELTENHAM RESIDENT PARHAM MANOUCHERY

Cheltenham resident Parham Manouchery is battling leukaemia.

Parham's family have set up a Go Fund Me page to raise £20,000 to fund the life saving treatment Ruxolitinib.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).



In association with the Friends of Hatherley Park

Cheltenham Silver Band

Presents

Brass in the Park

Hatherley Park, Bournside Road
Saturday 24th June 2023
3pm to 5pm

Free Concert

Live Brass Band Music

Face painting and 'you play brass'

Bring your Flags and a Picnic!

**Sing along
with our
Guest Vocalist**



**Featuring
The Last Night
of the Proms!**

BRASS IN THE PARK

Cheltenham Silver Band presents Brass in the Park at Hatherley Park on Saturday 24 June 3pm - 5pm.

The concert is free and features a sing along and The Last Night of the Proms!



EXPANSION TO £150 MILLION COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND

Even more community projects will be able to apply for funding through the government's expanded £150 million Community Ownership Fund.

The Community Ownership Fund enables communities to take ownership of assets at risk of closure. It has been expanded to include **sports clubs, music venues and historic buildings.**

For more information, please click [HERE](#).

Open Morning Cheltenham

Learn about what we do at CGL Cheltenham, meet the team and take a tour of our hub.

Date Wednesday 21st June 10am-1pm

Where? Bramery House, Alstone Lane,
Cheltenham, GL51 8HE

How do I book? No need to book, but for more
info please email kate.simmons@cgl.org.uk



CHANGE GROW LIVE - GLOUCESTERSHIRE DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICE OPEN MORNINGS

Change Grow Live (CGL) are holding a number of open mornings at each of its hubs throughout June and early July:

Wednesday 14th June – 10am-1pm GLOUCESTER HUB

Wednesday 21st June – 10am-1pm CHELTENHAM HUB

Wednesday 28th June – 10am-1pm STROUD HUB

Wednesday 5th July – 10am-1pm CINDERFORD HUB

CGL will give an overview of the service, tours of the hubs including treatment areas and will be able to answer questions about treatment, harm reduction, counselling, volunteering, service user involvement and recovery.

For more information, please click [HERE](#).

USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

Gloucestershire County Council

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

01452 425000

Cheltenham Borough Council

www.cheltenham.gov.uk

01242 262626

Age UK Gloucestershire

www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire

01452 422660

Gloucestershire Abuse Support

[Home - Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service \(GDASS\)](#)

01452 726570

Citizens Advice Gloucestershire

[Gloucester & District Citizens Advice Bureau \(gloscab.org.uk\)](http://gloscab.org.uk)

01452 527202

GRASAC (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)

www.glosrasac.org

01452 305421

Gloucestershire Older Drivers Forum

<https://olderdriversforum.com/Gloucestershire/>



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