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Gazette

## Compensation for trader

by Claire Marshall

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**A TRADER has won his compensation claim against Gloucestershire Highways after the main shopping street in Wotton was closed with no notice.**

Gareth Kitchen, owner of Cookability, said he made the claim as a matter of principle after Long Street was shut over the busy period around Mother's Day without any warning.

Many traders were hit hard by the sudden road closure, which they said turned the area into a 'ghost town'.

Gift shops and florists were particularly badly hit with Mothering Sunday approaching and extra stock ordered in but no one to buy it.

"The lack of sufficient notice given by the council and the breaks in communication elsewhere had a noticeable effect on the town's trade," said Mr Kitchen, a member of Wotton

Chamber of Trade.

"This was not the first time recently that little or no notice of local road closures has been given so I decided that it was time to make a stand to protect our livelihoods.

"Had we been given the level of notice that statute demands then we could have made decisions on opening hours and staffing levels. We had staff standing around all day not doing anything."

It is not yet known how many other businesses in the town applied for compensation but it is thought this is the first successful claim. Mr Kitchen said he deliberately kept his claim to a 'modest figure' because he was aware that it would be paid from public funds, but declined to reveal the amount he received.

"I took great trouble to keep my claim of modest proportions as, after all, it is the taxpayers' money. It was a point of principle," he added.

"There is a positive outcome to all of this as I understand that as a result of this farcical situation



**Kristy and Gareth Kitchen of Cookability in Wotton-under-Edge with their letter from Gloucestershire County Council GSR640V10**

some of the council's procedures are to be amended for the future."

A spokeswoman for Gloucestershire County Council said: "Following considerable feedback from the public including businesses, Chamber of Trade and residents, we have reviewed our processes around how we notify people about planned works.

"The council is committed to keeping people informed and we have tightened up our systems to help people affected by future works understand what's planned."

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