

Ward Report – for July 2020

From your local County Councillor - Barry Durkin

Brampton Abbots, Brockhampton with Much Fawley, How Caple, Kings Caple, Much Marcle, Upton Bishop and Woolhope.

Old Gore Ward

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents

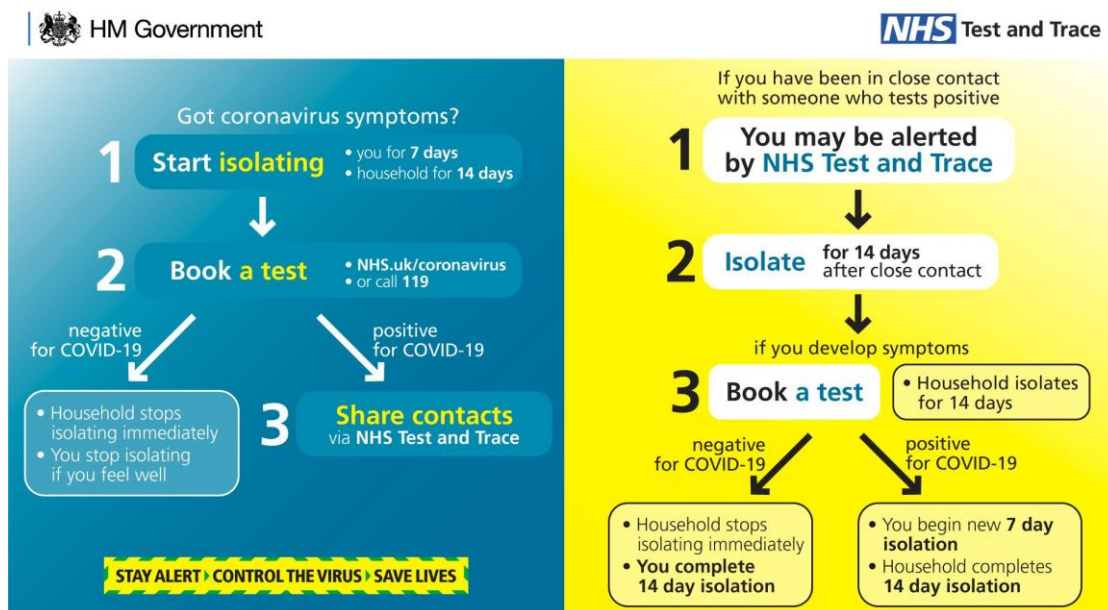
I believe that we should still be proactive in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our parishioners; and by us all becoming NICE NOSEY NEIGHBOURS.

The already a developed support network of friends and neighbours looking after their immediate community, informally within streets, hamlets and pockets of houses including Whatsapp and telephone contacts.

A big continuing thank you to everyone for looking out for your neighbours and the huge amount of random acts of kindness that are being done in our communities. If you can offer some support, are in need or know someone who is in need please feed into them.

Coming out of lockdown

You will be aware that there have been areas of the UK where a local lockdown has been re-imposed. The latter end of July was a concern with the managing of the containment, in Herefordshire, of a major outbreak of Covid-19 at Rook Row farm in Mathon, which Public Health England describe as the most complex outbreak that they have ever seen in the UK. It is the first major outbreak on a farm in the UK. However, in Herefordshire the incidence, currently, is low with no such further local lockdowns having to be imposed. There is national guidance on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test, how to get tested and the different types of test available on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).



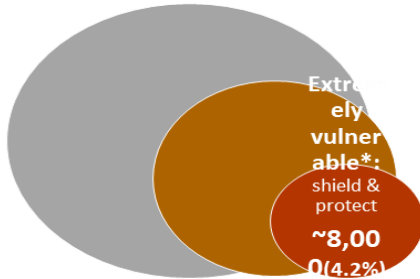
The good news is the unlocking is continuing with our pubs, cafes and restaurants re opening, also our local waste sites this month, following business pressure for free car parking and we all looked forward to a decent haircut !

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Probably the not so good news is the need for us all still to remember this virus has not gone away; with greater mobility of people we may now be at a high risk in this part of the country than at any time in the past few months.

So please respect distances and regulations, wear face masks and remember we still need to shield our most vulnerable.

The chart I think gives us a quick image of the problem in Herefordshire and in our parishes where we have a higher proportion in the two more vulnerable categories.

The grey area represents the total population of Herefordshire of circa 192,000 people.

The orange area the 56,000 of our Herefordshire population who are identified as vulnerable as being over 70 years old or having an underlying condition.

The red area the 8,000 of Herefordshire population which the government consider should be shielded and protected due to particular health concerns. The system of link co-ordinators in our communities were primary set up to protect the vulnerable people with many receiving letters from the NHS. My continued thanks to our co-ordinators and volunteers who are supporting our vulnerable people in the ward.

COVID 19 Outdoor Access Guidance

Please follow Government advice:

One outing for exercise per day - walk, run or cycle, alone or with members of your household.

Stay local – don't get in your car to drive to other areas.

Keep your distance - Stay at least 2 m away from other people when out and about, but do call a friendly greeting or give a wave.

Avoid contact – Avoid touching surfaces as far as possible. Use gloves or hand gel if you need to open gates.

Dogs need to be kept on a lead or under close control, do not let them approach others and as always pick up and remove all waste.

Remember it's lambing time, so give a wide berth to farms where possible, don't take dogs into fields with lambs or other young animals in them and avoid disturbing any wildlife or livestock.

Symptoms and what to do

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

To protect others, **do not** go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the [111 online coronavirus service](#) to find out what to do.

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

PROTECT YOURSELF ▶ PROTECT OTHERS ▶ BE KIND

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Ward and County Matters

I continue to work from home zooming my Parish councils, council and other officers and I use a background of a local landmark. I am meeting residents to address individual concerns and travel to Worcester to meet up with the Police Commissioner sitting on the Police and Crime Commissioner's Panel.

This is still a challenging time for us all so I do ask that everyone gives a little more thought to your actions and potential impact on others.

I was pleased to receive, at full council in July, a verbal apology at full council, from the cabinet member for highways and infrastructure concerning part of his misleading response to my question at the last cabinet meeting where he stated that 'if the council did not complete the active travel measures then the government would step in and do it for us'. There is no provision for the government to step in, but rather that the government would claw back some or all of the £20K allocated in the first tranche of funding. This statement made by the cabinet member was misleading for the residents of Herefordshire and merely served to promote the view that the council had no choice but to carry out their plans to the full. These plans were eventually modified – but not most - thanks to residents and businesses raising objections.

I'm afraid it is too often forgotten that one of the reasons our market towns exist is to act as a service center for the rural hinterland and its communities.

Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership

The Armed Forces Covenant is a **promise**, enshrined in law, that as a nation we accept that responsibility. It seeks to fulfil the promise through a combination of policies and projects focusing on key areas including: healthcare, education, accommodation, commercial disadvantage and employment. The Queen's Speech, which outlined legislative priorities that both veterans and serving personnel with a promise to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant **in law**,

The Armed Forces Covenant has provided everyday parity to our armed forces and their families since its introduction. It is this government's aim to build upon this great work, as such it will progress proposals to further incorporate the Covenant into law to minimise any disadvantage faced by the armed forces community due to the unique nature of military service.

Gold award for Herefordshire Council/Armed Forces Covenant Partnership

Herefordshire Council has, under the direction of Herefordshire Armed Force Covenant Partnership, been awarded the Gold award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

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This Ministry of Defence department encourages employers to support armed forces members and veterans and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the armed forces community, and align their values.

This award demonstrates that the council has proactively demonstrated their forces-friendly credentials as part of their recruiting and selection processes their commitment by employing at least one individual from the armed forces community and provide support to the Reserves; employing at least one Reservist.

Veterans self-build project Leominster

Leading housing association Stonewater worked with Community Self Build Agency (now part of Alabaré, a leading UK provider of supported housing) and The Royal British Legion to deliver a long-awaited community build development at Waterworks Lane in Leominster, Hereford.

Work on the innovative and exciting community housing development is almost complete, with plans to bring 19 brand-new homes to the area. The mixed development will consist of one to two-bedroom flats and one to three-bedroom houses, all available for affordable rent with a proportion of the properties allocated exclusively for ex-service personnel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqhdedk9vUY&feature=youtu.be>

Council continues progress towards ‘Better Ways of Working

With a large proportion of employees successfully working from home since March 2020 due to Covid-19, Herefordshire Council has agreed revised plans that support staff to work from locations across the county and reduce the number of offices in from alternative locations including market town multi-agency offices. In light of the effectiveness of these new arrangements revised plans were agreed that establish working from home as the default for the majority of council employees. Office space will be prioritised for services where essential for their work and meeting space will be available for collaborative working.

Mental health support is available if you need

For many of us the coronavirus outbreak means that we are spending more time indoors and away from our loved ones and this can have a detrimental effect on our mental health. I would encourage residents to follow five simple steps to help combat anxiety and loneliness and improve people’s mental health and wellbeing. The national campaign is led by the Mental Health Foundation and the theme this year is ‘kindness’ which is particularly poignant during a time where people are feeling disconnected from their friends and family and may be experiencing loneliness.

- Be active – Go for walk, cycle, spend time in the garden or participate in an online activity

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- Keep learning – Cook a new recipe or sign up to access Herefordshire’s online library services, for details visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries
- Connect – Speak to a family member on the phone or via video link
- Take notice – Take some time to yourself and be aware of the world around you
- Give – Help others, smile, say hello
- All whilst adhering to the latest government advice regarding social distancing, details of which can be found online www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Council leaders consider borrowing £4m to pay for flood repairs

Council administration are proposing to borrow more than £4m to pay for repairs to roads damaged during the February flooding and have called an extraordinary council virtual meeting on 4th August 2020.

The council had anticipated that central government would come forward with funding for this repair work. However, the total sum applied for has not been forthcoming, in entirety.

For example the B4224 road, from Fiddler’s Green to Fownhope, with a substantial part of it subsidising and also repairing the collapsed retaining wall is expected to be over £2.5M. Also, work to put right damage at Fownhope and various other sites total and addressing instability issues in Whitney-on-Wye bringing the total amount needed to £4,027,000.

Council launches parking review

Following a month of free parking in council car parks to support local businesses (charges resume Saturday 25 July), a county-wide review of parking charges has been launched

The review will look at the parking charges and concessions structure with a view to encouraging people to visit our towns and city centre while making the best use of the available spaces and reducing congestion. Local stakeholders will be asked for their input as part of the review, which is expected to be completed later this year.

Cllr John Harrington, Cabinet member for infrastructure and transport explains “It will always be necessary to have some parking charges – to control the availability of spaces and congestion in the very high demand areas and to encourage people to walk or cycle into town where they can.”

Phased reopening of libraries begins with the launch of a new service

‘Click and Collect’ service for books and green garden waste bags will be available from today at Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye libraries. As part of phased reopening plans, Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye libraries have launched a ‘Click and Collect’ service for pre-ordered books and green garden waste bags.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1016/phased_reopening_of_libraries_begins_with_the_launch_of_a_new_click_and_collect_service

Making more space to move around our towns and city safely

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As shops re-open, people return to work and more people visit Hereford and the market towns, the government has asked local authorities to introduce temporary measures (active travel measures) that give pedestrians and cyclists the space they need to maintain social distancing and travel safely.

The measures, have included using temporary barriers and signage to widen footways, some timed or partial road closures and dedicated cycle lanes, will allow more space to walk and cycle in busy areas. Speed reductions to 20mph on some streets will help pedestrians and cyclists feel safer where road space is shared. The temporary measures, which were introduced week beginning 20 July, are being funded by government Emergency Active Travel Funding, which has allocated £20,000 to Herefordshire to promote walking and cycling for short and local journeys. The temporary nature of the measures will allow them to be reviewed and additional funding is expected in the coming months to install further measures.

These measures have proved to be somewhat controversial as it is said that it is anti-business. The second tranche of payment from government has not yet been decided but will be up to the maximum of £160K.

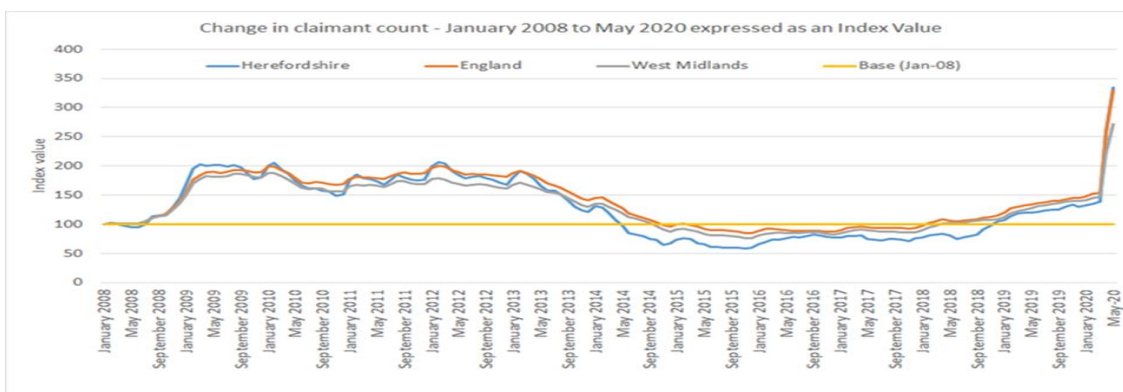
For more information:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1014/making_more_space_to_move_around_our_towns_and_city_safely

Local Economy

Data is beginning to emerge on the impact of the pandemic on Herefordshire's workforce:

- 5,100 people are currently claiming unemployment related benefits
 - Higher than at any point during and following the 2008-09 recession
 - 140% increase from March 2020
- 20,700 people in the County have been furloughed under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by 31st May
- 8,400 claims had been made by 31st May under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme: 66% of all potentially eligible people



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Discretionary Grant scheme extension

Herefordshire Council has announced an extension to the Discretionary Grant Scheme for businesses and charities, and invites any further eligible businesses to apply for funding

Throughout the pandemic Herefordshire Council has supported local businesses in different but also very direct ways. Paying out over £56M of central government grant funding to 4,825 businesses in Herefordshire. Alongside our Discretionary Grant Scheme, we have also provided online training on subjects such as planning your finances; secured funding to support the recovery of the visitor economy, and provided advice and guidance to hundreds of businesses.

As we continue to look for ways to support our local businesses, we have now extended the eligibility criteria for our Discretionary Grant Scheme.

Over 130 applications have been received for the Discretionary Grant Scheme with an average value of grant of £3K per business paid for by the Government. Although no funding decisions will be made until after the application round closes to ensure a fair opportunity to all. Should funds remain at the end of this round then a second round will be quickly launched which may broaden who is eligible to apply.

More details for local businesses on smallbusinessgrants@herefordshire.gov.uk

Tourism

I am pleased to see local tourism businesses represented on a steering group looking at the Marches Local Enterprise Partnerships gave £444,000 grant to support the Visitor Economy. It will commission a marketing and PR campaign over late summer and autumn to encourage day and staycation overnight visits to the county.

For more information:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1015/discretionary_grant_scheme_extension

Herefordshire Council purchases Maylord Orchards for over £4.5M

As I informed before, in June the council secured control of the Maylord Orchard shopping centre in Hereford. The site has over 145,000 sq. ft. of retail space, over 200 car parking spaces (in an underground car park) and circa 20 upper floor residential apartments. Built in the late 1980s the freehold was retained by the then City council but long leased. It has struggled in recent years due the lack of more, larger open space now favoured by modern retailers. The previous private owners have been anxious to sell the centre for some time. There is now some further information. However, I continue to have concerns as to why the council sees now as the sensible time to purchase. It clearly needs a revamp and according to the cabinet member:

“We are working with Montague Evans, leaders in future high streets, to identify ways in which the area can represent our ambitions within the County Plan. We will have short,

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medium and long term plans and I know Cabinet and the Leader would love to hear from those of you who have some ideas for how it could be utilised best “

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESS

Many of our local business are supporting our community with supplying delivery of groceries, take away food and other items.

They are too many to list here in case I miss someone but they will be on your local websites. Please support them. If this crisis teaches us anything it is the importance of local community and a local economy.

Please be scam aware by email, Facebook & on doorstep

I have been informing all of the various schemes that are in play for scammers to get your money. West Mercia Police have issued a warning to members of the public that criminals are using the COVID-19 pandemic to scam people out of money. The police are urging people not to click the online bait and become a victim. Also, the police, HMRC or banks will never ask anyone to transfer money or move it to a safe account, so please ignore these requests. There have been reports in Herefordshire of doorsteps salesmen claiming to be from the NHS!

You can read the latest news about the coronavirus scams in detail on the [West Mercia Police website](#).

Key public messages

Please make positive and sensible choices and be responsible citizens, by doing this you will save lives, protect the NHS and keep yourself and your family safe.

- Please make positive and sensible choices and be responsible, by doing this you will save lives, protect the NHS and keep yourself and your family safe.
- Please continue to limit who you have contact with as much as possible.
- Please take personal responsibility and take sensible steps to maintain social distancing if you do go out.
- Being outdoors reduces the risk of infection, but it doesn't eradicate it. Please maintain social distancing.
- We are fortunate to have some beautiful places within our county and many people will be glad they now have the option to make the most of them over the coming weeks. If you travel somewhere and it's busy, please be sensible and go elsewhere or return at a different time. Keep in mind the purpose of

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the regulations and the ongoing national effort to protect the NHS and save lives.

- There is different legislation and guidance in place in Wales, please respect it.
- Please continue to keep washing your hands. This is a vital part of reducing the risk of infection.
- If you are displaying symptoms of coronavirus, it is vital that you self-isolate for seven days and order a test immediately. If you test positive for coronavirus, you must share information promptly about your recent contacts through the NHS test and trace service to help alert other people who may need to self-isolate. If you have had close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus, you must self-isolate if the NHS test and trace service advises you to do so. If someone you live with is feeling unwell or displaying symptoms, please self-isolate for 14 days.
- Some people might not display symptoms so social distancing and hand washing remains vital. You can wear a face covering when out, to protect other people when you may be asymptomatic.
- Facilities such as waste & recycling centres, outdoor sports clubs, and outdoor retail outlets such as garden centres are now starting to reopen. Please follow the social distancing instructions and directions regarding entry and queuing, be aware that they might be busy, and try to avoid peak times.
- Hereford and Leominster waste and recycling centres are open. Please only visit if it is absolutely necessary and be prepared for queues.
- West Mercia Police will continue to engage with the public, explaining and encouraging people in relation to the guidance and social distancing, and will only take enforcement action where it is absolutely necessary - when there are clear breaches of the restrictions, predominantly people gathering in large groups.
- Please be responsible and continue to work with us. We all still find ourselves in very challenging circumstances and we appreciate that the public has responded so positively to the extraordinary restrictions placed upon them. Remember that if you need our help we are here for you.
- The NHS are still available and services continue. Please do not delay in seeking medical attention, should you need it.
- If you are self-isolating and don't have support, contact Talk Community on 01432 260027 or via the council website.

Thank you again for your continued commitment. Stay safe and well.

As ever if you think I can be of help please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Useful Information

Talk Community

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01432 260027

Information from Parishes

General Information

Defect Reporting

As always please continue to make use and encourage the use of established reporting methods for any highways defect;

- Telephone our customer services on [01432 261 800](tel:01432261800).
- Online using the telephone app – for potholes, dog poo and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

Please note that Herefordshire Council strongly encourages Balfour Beatty to promote all service requests and queries should be logged via the HC website at <https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole> or <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>

Please use the website or call the customer services call handling team. This will help ensure that everything is logged in to the operating system known as CONFIRM where it can be responded to in a timely way.

Did you know...?

You can follow our Twitter feed @HfdsStreets for [24/7](#) updates for all things highways; or.

Log on to <https://roadworks.org> to see any live traffic incidents as well as current and planned road closures, diversions, traffic restrictions and roadworks

For any PROW (Public Rights of Way) maps or problems, you can report these via the following link on the Herefordshire Council's website:

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-public-right-of-way-problem>

To report defects (potholes, fly tipping, blocked gullies, etc.) online:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/190/report_problems_on_the_road

If you have a general service request, i.e. if you want to report a pothole etc. , please use the link above, or call us on 01432 261800, rather than emailing your steward. Using the link or the phone number ensures that the enquiry is dealt with promptly and efficiently. Locality Stewards do not have the resource to be able to deal with service requests via email although of course they are happy to provide general guidance and support to you through email.

If you wish to email into the business, the best email address for Parishes have their own inbox herefordshireparishes@bblivingplaces.com and both of these email inboxes are monitored by teams in the office to ensure cover at all times. If you have an emergency to report please use 01432 261800 as this is answered 24/7.

To identify road numbers, or to see if publicly maintained or to view Public Rights of

Way: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/716/highways_and_public_rights_of_way_map

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The highways maintenance plan – which sets out the council's system of road inspection, maintenance and repairs, including timescales:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5210/highway_maintenance_plan_october_2016.pdf

Toolkits:

Community commissioning

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/18820/community_commissioning_model_toolkit.pdf

Litter picking https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14134/community_litter_pick_toolkit.pdf

Traffic Regulation Orders

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2891/application_toolkit_for_traffic_regulation_orders.pdf

SIDs https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1859/speed_indicator_device_toolkit.pdf

Another useful site:

For information on current and future planned roadworks by utility companies www.roadworks.org

Please do follow BBLP on Twitter for up to date information about road closures, ongoing work etc., [@HfdsStreets](https://twitter.com/HfdsStreets) and if you need help to set that up please let me know.

If you wish to make a claim as a result of damage to your vehicle

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/206/highway_claimsplease_use

Council tax reduction or exemption

You can get money off your Council Tax bill, or even pay nothing, in certain circumstances. A discount or exemption depends on your current situation and circumstances, but does not take account of income or savings. If you are on a low income, you may also be able to get help to pay your bill through Council Tax Reduction. We will need to assess your financial and other circumstances to see what help you qualify for.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200146/council_tax/39/council_tax_reduction

General Data Protection Regulations Statement

The General Data Protection Act places obligations and responsibilities on any company, organisation and individual who hold and process personal information, and it comes into force on the 25th May 2018; superseding the Data Protection Act 1998. As a County Councillor I hold a list of emails of local people that I have built up over the years which I retain and use on my council computer and email. I can give you all the reassurance that I do not and will not share those email addresses with any third party.

In seeking legal compliance as a data controller I am requesting that if anyone is unhappy with my holding their email contact that you please advise me so that I am able to remove you from the list.

Otherwise I will retain your email contact and continue to send you monthly updates, emails as required and occasional key information.