

Ward Report – for April 2021
From your local County Councillor - Barry Durkin

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

Dear Parish Councillors and Residents, welcome to this edition of my ward report I hope you find it interesting and there is a ‘useful information’ section at the end.

Hope you had a good Easter

Covid update

As we see our current lockdown ease and the pandemic move into a more passive phase and hopefully decline along with the local public agencies.

I intend to discuss with all my parish councils their views and contributions to local recovery of the community as we all face the reality of what returning to some form of normality means.

I have attached the latest summary and enclose below the headlines and recent information on testing and for employers.

Herefordshire local Covid data and information www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-3

National Covid guidance is available on the Government website www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Seasonal workers to receive free Covid-19 tests on farms – release dated 1st April 2021

The government has called on employers of seasonal agricultural workers to help keep the nation safe and restrict the spread of Covid-19 by registering for free workplace testing.

This follows [the introduction of a new bespoke testing regime for international arrivals](#) this weekend, which extended the supply of free Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests to employers of seasonal agricultural workers in the edible horticulture sector. These workers play a vital role across many of our farms, picking fruit and vegetables and helping to feed the nation.

Seasonal agricultural workers will be able to access these tests through several routes, including home testing and community testing. They should remain on the farm for the 10 days after they arrive.

Announcement: [Seasonal workers to receive free Covid-19 tests on farms](#)

COVID-19 in Herefordshire, Weekly intelligence summary
Public Health & Intelligence Unit - 24th March 2021

Information on the latest information concerning COVID for Herefordshire.



Mar 24 COVID
Intelligence Summary

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Healthwatch –Herefordshire – Live Webinar



Join Healthwatch Herefordshire's Richard Kelly as he and our panel discuss the progress in community spirit and community action in Herefordshire.

What impact on wellbeing and resilience can this have?
How can this be harnessed and sustained?



Stephen Vickers
Director of Adults and Communities, Herefordshire Council



Bridie Sullivan
Herefordshire Community Foundation
(funding community initiatives)



Will Lindesay
hvoss - volunteering support and community response



Chrissie Pepler
Diocese link worker

You do not need to pre-register for this event. Just visit our Facebook page to watch live.

 @HWHerefordshire

Community Spirit and Action
Tuesday April 13th
7pm - 8pm

www.facebook.com/HWHerefordshire

County firms urged to sign up for staff home testing kits

Herefordshire businesses, unable to offer their employees workplace COVID-19 rapid testing, are being encouraged to sign up to a new system enabling them to obtain home test kits for staff.

The government initiative is open to any business with more than 10 employees and, to take part, they will have [to register](#) by 11.59pm on Monday April 12. The workplace testing programme will, from Tuesday April 6, begin supplying home test kits to eligible companies where it is not possible to set up testing on-site due, for example, to a lack of space or because companies operate across multiple locations.

Once registered, they can order the kits online to distribute to their employees. These self-test kits will enable staff to complete the home test and report their results to the NHS. Clear instruction are provided with the kits.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1133/more-options-for-workers-to-access-covid-19-rapid-tests>

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Shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable people lifted

Thousands of Herefordshire residents, considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), will no longer have to follow the current guidance on shielding from April 1.

Around 11,000 people in the county have been taking extra measures to protect themselves from COVID-19 but, with the virus case numbers currently low and the rollout of the vaccination programme, the government is lifting its restrictions and the guidance for CEV is changing.

Those in the CEV category will receive a letter in the next two weeks notifying them they can start following national restrictions alongside the rest of the population from April 1. It will include advice to help reduce their risk of catching COVID-19.

Steps to minimise risk include maintaining strict social distancing, keeping their overall social contacts at low levels and working from home where possible.

Announcement: [Shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable people to be lifted](#)

Every Mind Matters

Good mental health makes such a difference – it helps us to relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. But we all go through ups and downs in life, and experience life changes that can affect our mental health.

The impact and experience of coronavirus has been different for everyone, as has how we have reacted, but there's no doubt it's been a really difficult time for us all. That's why it's so important to do what we can to look after our mental health and wellbeing, and to reach out if you need support.

Every Mind Matters has been created by Public Health England, with tips and advice developed with experts and approved by the NHS. The [Every Mind Matters website](#) has simple and practical advice to get a healthier mind and get more out of life – from how to deal with stress and anxiety, to boosting our mood or sleeping better. It will help you spot the signs of common mental health conditions, get personalised practical self-care tips and information on further support. You'll also learn about what you can do to help others.

A statement on the Annual Plan 2021/2022

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport is currently reviewing the Annual Plan for 2021/22, which sets out the Highways & Public Realm priorities for the coming year.

Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places work closely with Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders to identify and prioritise future road and public space improvements across the

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county. All A, B and major C roads in the county are inspected monthly to ensure safety and information from these and other inspections informs the development of the Annual Plan.

The priorities for the coming year have been developed to align with the council's County Plan, and will focus on drainage following a difficult period which has seen the county affected by several flooding events. There will also be work on structures, including significant bridge works. General maintenance activities will continue, but this focus is possible because of the additional investment that has been made into carriageway surfacing over the past year and the overall condition of the road network.

Given the context of reduced capital funding from Government and financial pressures facing all council services, we are confident that the Annual Plan sets out the best possible programme of maintenance and improvement across Herefordshire's 2000+ miles of highway

Mairead Lane - Head of Infrastructure Delivery

Herefordshire Council Senior Appointments

Paul Walker will be joining Herefordshire Council has been appointed as Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) with effect from 3 May 2021. In the interim, our Acting Deputy Chief Executives are Claire Ward (also currently Head of Paid Service) and Andrew Lovegrove.

Leominster and Hereford Mayfair 2021 postponed until the summer

Following a meeting of Herefordshire's Safety Advisory Group, it has been determined and agreed with the event organisers that due to the pandemic, it would not be prudent to hold the Leominster and Hereford Mayfair events in their usual slots at the end of April/beginning of May.

New High Sheriff for Herefordshire



Jo Hilditch from the Whittern in Lyonshall is the fourth generation of her family to become High Sheriff of Herefordshire.

She runs the family farming business which includes the production of blackcurrants and the liqueur Cassis which she has developed, and chairing the Herefordshire Farmers Club. She also has holiday letting business and chairs the Visit Hereford group who help promote tourism in the county. She has made many TV appearances including Dragons Den and recently on Salvage Hunters.

The office of High Sheriff is one of the oldest in land created over a thousand years ago, just after the Norman Conquest by monarchs to help keep the peace in the Kingdom, and

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support the Judges in the administration of law and order. The earliest Lyonshall resident I can find holding the office was John Melbury in 1404 who also seems to have served a further seven times which is most unusual.

The High Sherriff is the second most senior resident of the County after the Lord Lieutenant. The office is held for one year, is non-political and unpaid, with the appointment made by the Sovereign herself in an ancient ceremony where the name of the appointed person is pricked by a silver bodkin on a parchment.

These days the office is still used to support the local judicial and magisterial functions but also the blue light services and voluntary organisations. In particular Jo has indicated she wants to support the overall local recovery from the recent pandemic particularly supporting mental health in agriculture and young people.

Jo is pictured in the adapted traditional uniform of a lady High Sheriff.

Culture Boost for North Herefordshire

North Herefordshire will receive £203,859 to support iconic cultural and heritage organisations as they reopen and recover from coronavirus.

Across the country, more than 2,700 culture and heritage organisations and independent cinemas are being supported to survive and thrive with nearly £400 million.

This is part of the unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund, worth almost £2 billion, the largest one-off investment in the arts in our history.

County leisure centres receive funding boost

The National Leisure Recovery Fund from Sport England supports publicly owned leisure facilities through the coronavirus crisis. Herefordshire Council has received £460k to allocate to Halo Leisure to help secure the future of these important community venues located across the county in Hereford City, Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington, Ross. This is the maximum amount that could have been allocated and seeks to allow leisure facilities to reopen to the public.

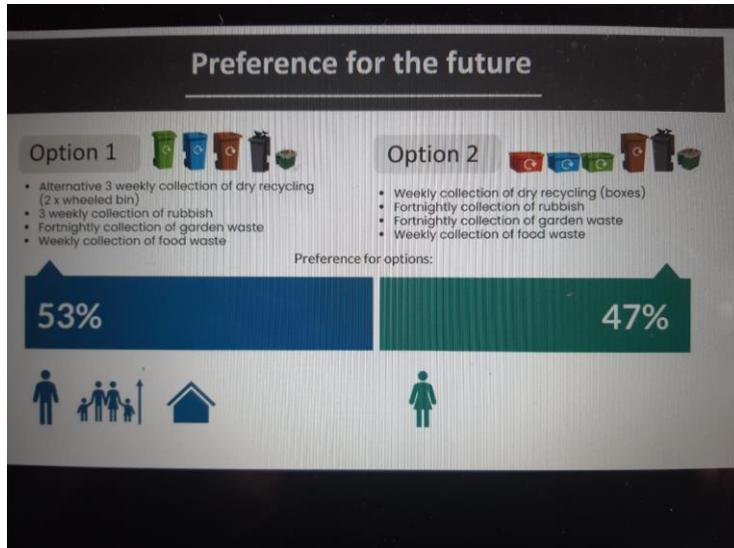
Halo is a social enterprise and like many registered charities has struggled financially during the ongoing pandemic.

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Domestic Waste consultation



The weekly collection contract is up for renewal in 2023 and the disposal contract in 2024 and residents will recall that I alerted you to a consultation earlier this year on the future of your collection. The council received over 3,500 responses and using weighted data (reflecting the demographic profile of the population) the preference for options where as indicated in the picture alongside.

The weekly bin service is one of the most popular services the council has with 99% take up and I modestly will take credit for its introduction when I was Leader of the council.

Currently the most recycled materials are plastic, thin card, paper, food tins, and glass bottles. The most frequent items that should not be placed in the bins include plastic film, textiles and batteries. There was strong support for including food waste in the new contract; and also for green garden waste but not for paying for it.

Residents indicated they preferred a leaflet / calendar as the best form of communication and advice. Discussion will continue on the new specifications of the contract which I will feed back

Council Tax precepts for all Herefordshire residents.

As the billing authority, the council has a statutory duty to collect charges set by each parish council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. However, Herefordshire Council has no control over the level of increase or how these organisations choose to spend their budget.

Herefordshire residents will be provided with individual bills based on their parish location. The raised precepts are needed to support the delivery of vital services across the county, with the average Council Tax bill for a band D dwelling set at £2,051.61.

This includes the council's own tax charge of £1,652.30 (for a Band D dwelling) which was approved by Full Council on 12 February 2021 - the equivalent of £31.78 per week. The precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia rose by £14.94 to £240.19, an increase of 6.66%. The precept for Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority rose by £1.69 to £87.68, an increase of 1.97%.

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The average Band D Council Tax bill is broken down as follows:

Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown	
Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown: Herefordshire Council	£1652.30
Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown: Average parish council precept	£71.44
Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown: Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia	£240.19
Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown: Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	£87.68
Average Band D Council Tax bill breakdown: Total	£2051.61

Residents on a low income may be eligible for help to pay their bill through the Council Tax Reduction scheme. Some residents will continue to pay no Council Tax at all, such as young adults who have left care and also all the council approved Foster Carer families.

[Manage your Council Tax online](#)

[Council Tax Reduction schemes and allowances](#)

Fly Tippers prosecuted

Herefordshire Council has won an Enforcement case against two friends who were found guilty of fly tipping two loads of waste which were found dumped on Bromyard downs and in a layby near to Acton Green crossroads.

John Hodgkins (40) of Redstone Lane, Stourport-On-Severn and Isaac Janes (48) of 78 Layman Walk, Stourport-On-Severn both pleaded guilty to two counts of fly tipping at Hereford Magistrates' Court on 9 March 2021. The pair received fines and costs totalling £1072.00 each.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1118/duo-fined-for-multiple-fly-tips-in-herefordshire>

Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, - Planning Referendums on 6 May

In light of the continuing uncertainty caused by the pandemic, there has never been a better

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time to apply for a Postal Vote. To apply in time for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections please select:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on 20 April 2021.

Apply for a Postal Vote - Local by-elections and Neighbourhood

Just to remind you, in the future there will be the normal council elections in Herefordshire in early **May 2023** and if you can't get to your polling station for whatever reason, or do not want to vote in person at a polling station, you can apply for a postal vote but you must be registered under Individual Electoral Registration first. You may register for a postal vote for this upcoming election please select:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>

The deadline for the receipt of new postal vote applications or to change or cancel an existing postal applications for all elections is 11 working days prior to polling day. Postal vote ballot papers are normally sent out about a week before the election.

Flooding Initiative – Parishes Old Gore Ward

You will be aware that I have sent an email asking parish councils to sign up to establish a ward wide emergency plan working group. Please respond with either a 'yes' or 'no', as soon as possible

[PLEASE CONTINUE SUPPORTING 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.

Information from Parishes

How Caple: The works proposed at How Caple crossroads draws closer with an anticipated start date of early May 2021. There is a meeting with the Project Manager for the job early April, once BBLP have consulted with the selected contractor. At this meeting we will know whether there will be a proposed full road closure. I am keen that we keep the B4224 fully available, as possible to prevent the inconvenience and potential damage to our local

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environment. Nothing decided yet and the PC chairman and clerk will attend this meeting with the Fownhope councillor and me to view their proposals.

Upton Bishop: The proposal to install traffic lights at Old Gore crossroads has been selected for financing and proposals will soon be forthcoming to illustrate what is proposed. These tentative plans will be discussed with the parish council.

Woolhope: The roads around Woolhope have been inspected by BBLP to determine how and when to repair the damaged infrastructure. I have not seen the report and have asked for a copy to be sent to me.

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

Barry

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Old Gore Ward

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Useful Information

Covid19

The Latest local Covid data and information www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-3

National Covid guidance is available on the Government website www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Talk Community

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01432 260027

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.

Report fly tippers

If you spot someone fly-tipping

- Make a note of any vehicle used, including model, colour and registration number. If it is safe to do so without being seen, take a photograph or video of the activity
- Note the fly tippers' clothes, and distinguishing features. If you can hear the fly tippers, take note of anything which was said along with the speakers' accents
- Make a note of what they dumped, the location, weather conditions and how far away you were at the time

Please send us this information by using the [report flytipping form](#).

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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

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 personnel 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.