

Ward Report – for July 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.



Mobile COVID test teams out and about

We also offer tests on site in some locations. Helping you to carry out regular testing whenever and wherever you need it.



The testing programme for Covid-19 is playing a vital role in helping to keep us all safe by identifying those who have the virus, but no symptoms, so that they can self-isolate and avoid passing the virus to others. Around one in three people who are infected with Covid-19 have no symptoms. Rapid testing using [lateral flow test devices](#) (LFT) is a fast and simple way to test people who are not showing symptoms, and

You can also follow where we are on social media, search [@HfdsCouncil](#) or follow [#HfdLft](#)

The council has a post Covid recovery plan and I am keen to get any support for my local community or business promoted - any suggestions get in contact and we will see what funding we can identify .

As of the 2nd July in Herefordshire 81.8% of the adult population have received their first vaccination and 63.8% have received their second. There is some concern about the local availability of getting your vaccination with many having to travel outside the county.

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Patients in Hereford Hospital

- While a single Covid-19 patient was admitted to Wye Valley Trust hospitals throughout the whole of May (admitted 6 May) since 8 June five patients have been admitted (over the course of the pandemic a total of 758 patients have been admitted, almost a third of whom were admitted during January).
- As of 22 Jun there were three patients in hospital, one of which was on mechanical ventilation – the first such patient since mid-March.

Please find enclosed the latest summary information as of 30th June below, with the full detailed breakdown available when you copy and paste the link

<https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/health/covid-19-summary/>

Local Testing centres in the county can be found on the websites

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-3/covid-19-testing

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

Key Messages

- We are now just over two weeks away from the expected lifting of all remaining restrictions under the UK Government's [roadmap out of lockdown](#) on 19 July, following the delay to 'flatten the curve' of the third wave amid the spread of the delta variant – nationally, numbers are expected to peak in July.
- Rates in nearby English authorities are still rising more quickly than in Herefordshire, and close attention is being paid to Birmingham, Cheltenham and Gloucester. The freedom to travel and mix under the current restrictions means that the virus is spreading between areas. [Birmingham](#) has been listed as an enhanced response area, and government advice is to minimise travel into and out of the area.
- Herefordshire remains behind the curve, although we are starting to see **signs that community transmission is increasing**, primarily within households. The latest published data indicate that the number of new cases this week was slightly lower than last (69 compared to 79), but we've seen local case numbers fluctuate throughout the last few months as a result of contained outbreaks. The difference in

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the last week is that cases are more evenly spread around the county rather than a few 'hotspots'.

- Nevertheless, the **absolute number of cases is still relatively low**, and local rates are all currently lower than nationally, regionally and in neighbouring English authorities. Cases are still concentrated in the young, with four in ten of last week's aged 18 to 29, and only six confirmed cases in people aged 65+. As elsewhere, the majority of cases are the Delta variant.
- There have been five Covid-19 **in-patients during June**, while total **deaths** remain below average for the time of year. Situations remain low. Reflecting this, Herefordshire's local system alert level remains at Level 2 (lowest level), however it is expected that cases will increase, following patterns elsewhere.
- Currently, the majority of situations in the county are in educational settings where small numbers of cases are being reported. In the majority of circumstances, transmission has taken place outside of the educational settings.
- On 28 June, just under 600 pupils were absent from Herefordshire schools – almost half were isolating after being a close contact of a case in school settings. The actual number of pupils isolating due to COVID-19 will be higher, but it is not possible to identify those isolating due to being a close contact of cases outside of school.
- 81% of all Herefordshire GP registered patients (aged 18+) have received a first dose **COVID-19 vaccine**, and 65% a second dose. Rates for most age groups are in line with regional and national averages.
- Vaccination has weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths, but not broken it – so **testing, isolating and contact tracing** remain vital
- PCR tests of symptomatic people remain relatively steady and positivity low.
- Average number of LFD tests have increased following a dip during school half term and the local rate remains one of the highest in the West Midlands. However, they are lower than initially seen when testing became widely available in March.

Council Matters

July Full Council Meeting – Cancelled

The next full Council meeting scheduled for 23 July has been cancelled. It has been reported that the business proposed for the meeting has not been put into a state where it may be able to be brought forward. There being no substantial business the Executive has decided to cancel the meeting. The next meeting is planned for October. This does not provide an appropriate message for the electorate of Herefordshire; giving an appearance that the council is not receiving appropriate scrutiny. However, it is the Executive's decision.

Promoting a safe return to the high street

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Two videos have been launched to help support the re-opening of businesses on high streets across the county, one for Hereford City and the other to promote the five market towns (Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross).

The videos, for use on websites and social media, aim to promote the individual character and unique shopping experiences of the city centre and high streets across the county as high-quality, welcoming, safe, visitor and shopper destinations to the county's residents and those in areas bordering Herefordshire. They are available via YouTube, where there is also a link to further information about the council's economic and wellbeing recovery plan. Please feel free to share through your networks.

[View the Hereford video](#) on YouTube.

[View the market towns video](#) on YouTube.

Free school meals during the summer holidays

The Council is providing funding, administered through schools, to ensure over 3,600 primary and secondary pupils will receive financial support during the summer holidays. This scheme aims to support vulnerable families who have been particularly affected financially by the coronavirus pandemic.

Under this scheme primary and secondary aged school pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals will receive replacement free school meals or food vouchers up to the value of £130 for the six week summer holidays. Parents and carers of primary and secondary aged school age children who already receive benefits related free school meals will be contacted by their school before the holidays.

Children who are eligible for the early year's pupil premium, and are not in a school setting, will receive a voucher posted direct from the council.

Read more about [free school meals for children during the holidays on the council website](#).

Ofsted inspection

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Some good news from our schools – Herefordshire has moved up to 7th place in England for KS2 performance, with 98.6% of our pupils in primary schools rated good or outstanding following recent Ofsted inspections. Well done everyone!

Holiday Activity Fund

Herefordshire’s holiday club programme runs throughout the summer holidays and is free for all children aged 4 to 16, who receive free school meals.

The programme offers over 7,000 places with 20 providers and has a fantastic range of exciting indoor and outdoor activities, such as rugby, football, dance, zorbing and den building (plus much more!), along with a healthy meal during each session. This is now live for eligible families during the summer holidays.

Talk Community

Successful Parish Summit was held on Wednesday 23rd June where 80 people attended to discuss future working opportunities and the development of a Parish Reference Group, if anyone is interested in becoming involved please email talkcommunityenquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk

Talk Community Hubs

22 Talk Community hubs are now live and are all available on the following webpage: <https://www.talkcommunity.org/>

Talk Community - People experiencing financial difficulties in Herefordshire

Any one of us can experience money worries at some point in our lives and for many the pandemic has heightened the strain on personal budgets, so it is good to know that Talk Community can direct you to where you can find free financial support. Whether you are an individual, a parent or carer, a young person or a business in Herefordshire, confidential support is available to help you tackle your financial troubles.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1172/money-on-your-mind-talk-community-can-help-you-find-support>

Neighbourhood Development Plans

Herefordshire Council has taken a positive approach to neighbourhood planning and provides support and advice to those communities interested in producing plans to complement the Core Strategy and provide detailed policies and site allocations for parishes.

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At June 2021, there were 113 Neighbourhood Areas designated within the County. This coverage indicates that 92% of those settlements highlighted within the Core Strategy for proportionate growth are within a parish producing additional planning policy. 88% of all Herefordshire parish councils have been engaged in producing local level policies with their communities.

The first Neighbourhood Development Plan in Herefordshire to be made/adopted was in May 2016. To date 81 Neighbourhood Development Plans have been made and a further 1 awaiting referendum (Dinedor). 2 have reached examination (Tarrington and Bridstow). Recently 13 referendums were held on the 6 May 2021 (following the delay due to Covid restrictions). 12 resulted in positive referendum results for Ross-on-Wye; Bredenbury and District; Ashperton; Allensmore; Brampton Abbots and Foy; Stretton Grandison Group; Garway; Madley; Clehonger; Bromsash, Gorsley and Linton; Colwall and Much Birch.

There are now an increasing number of adopted/made plans being reviewed with 14 either beginning that process or considering it with their local communities.

A map showing the current status of each neighbourhood development plan can be seen on the Council website.

Free LoyalFree App

Herefordshire residents and visitors can benefit from exclusive discounts, deals and loyalty schemes, across the county, simply by downloading the LoyalFree app.

The app is free for everyone to download and use and features a great range of deals and loyalty schemes, with independent retailers across the county. The app also includes some fantastic trails, to encourage more people to get out and about in Herefordshire, including walking and cycling, art galleries, gardens and castles and even dog friendly coffee shops. If that's not enough, there's also a local events section, to help everyone enjoy a summer staycation in Herefordshire.

Herefordshire Council has introduced the app, in partnership with award winning provider, LoyalFree, to help support economic recovery in the county, by encouraging people to stay, shop and spend locally across our historic market towns and villages.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1178/enjoy-discounts-trails-and-events-across-herefordshire>

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Be scam aware

Please make friends and relatives aware of a local scam. Callers purporting to be from the 'Medical Centre' are claiming Telecare equipment needs to be replaced and asking for bank details. The Telecare team would never ask for bank details over the phone.

If you, a friend or relative ever doubt a phone call you have received, don't share personal information and end the call.

Click to [share our scam alert post on social media](#)

Or - [Report a scam online](#)

Shell Store Rotherwas – opening

The official opening of the Shell Store unit on the Rotherwas Business Park was opened recently with Cabinet minister Robert Jenrick and Jesse Norman. The proposal to develop what was once the largest single span building in Britain and former armament factory into a centre to incubate and support new business began in my time in office so it was pleasing to see the project finally delivered with Government and former EU funding.

As we edge towards the easing of restrictions using government funding the council is proposing a package of support to help local business and community recover post Covid. The six million pound package includes some business support grants; promotion and support of Herefordshire tourism, hospitality and retail, encouraging people to return to more normal activity. There will be some support for reskilling and for young people particularly not in education, employment and training.

As ever the proposals are very City and market town focused and it would be appropriate to see some of this funding coming to support our local parish based businesses, so if anyone has a particular plan or proposal that they think could do with some support please contact me and I will do all I can to get some funding. Similarly supporting community wellbeing if anyone would like to access some funding to help a community or village project drop me an email.

Planning

One of my other concerns is the poor performance of council's planners and enforcement so we are lobbying for extra capacity in the department to support businesses requiring planning permission who are post Covid developing and creating jobs.

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Children Care Services

The Government has issued a notice on Herefordshire Council to improve its children care services and appointed Mrs Gladys Rhodes White as the officer to oversee the council's improvement and report to the Secretary of State. A meeting has already been undertaken to determine terms of reference etc.

Proposal for a new bridge - Hereford

Following the cancellation of the link road from A465 to A49 south of Hereford city and the western bypass the council are looking into building an eastern bridge crossing and connecting it to the existing network as part of a revised Hereford Transport package (HTP). This is designed to deal with traffic congestion and pollution in Hereford City. It is proposed to take drivers and traffic from A49 towards the East, over the new bridge and then continuing their route. If the driver is going north to navigate through to A49 North of Hereford, possibly using the Roman Road over the traffic lit single carriageway bridge. There is currently no work proposed, or costings done, to widen this bridge.

Transport

Application for government funding for electric buses for the city and improved cycling and walking in the city are also included within the HTP.

Grants available for community projects

If you know a community group in the Herefordshire postcode area which needs help with funding, then the Prime Foundation wants to hear from you.

The Prime Foundation has funded schemes including community sheds, sensory gardens, sports teams, cycle workshops and online wellbeing courses. If you know of a great Herefordshire cause that needs a financial boost of up to £2,200, [apply online by 5 August 2021](#).

The Prime Foundation is a registered charity founded by Prime plc. Prime recently developed the new Station Medical Centre in the centre of Hereford. When Prime builds a new facility it donates a proportion of its profit to the Prime Foundation which awards grant funding to initiatives that improve lives in the local community?

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New Hollie Guard personal safety app

Everyone should feel safe. The Hollie Guard App turns your smartphone into a personal safety device at the touch of a button and can help protect you in a number of situations discreetly.

For more information, or to download the app, [visit the Hollie Guard website](#).

Force for Change: Veteran to veteran volunteering

Herefordshire Veteran Support Centre, which provides support and a friendly listening ear for anyone in the armed forces community, is looking for help from local organisations.

The centre is aiming to expand its Force for Change project, but needs help to identify veterans in the county, who would potentially benefit from its low level 'buddy buddy' system and also those veterans who would like to volunteer.

It became evident during the first coronavirus lockdown, that veterans talking to veterans, immediately allowed common ground and trust to be built, enabling problems to be freely discussed and resolved.

To find out more or get in touch, visit www.herefordshire-vsc.org or e-mail sean.gane@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Apply for a Postal Vote - Local by-elections

After the recent elections in Herefordshire I would take this opportunity to advise that you may apply for a postal vote, at any time, for the local election in **May 2023**. **So** if you can't get to your polling station for whatever reason, or you 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 upcoming election please review:

<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.

[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.

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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 has begun on 26th June and will
continue for eight weeks. There is not a road closure, so Fownhope businesses will be
accessible and the route to Hereford will remain unaffected, other than delay under traffic
lights at the site.

Upton Bishop: The proposal to install traffic lights at Old Gore crossroads continues to be
discussed with the local land owner and when we have a consensus I will be providing the
parish council with an overview.

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

Barry

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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.

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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;
- You may report fly tipping on an app on the website and available for download.

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

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

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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](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.