



April 2025 Ward Report – Old Gore Ward

Parishes of: Brampton Abbots with Sollers Hope and Yatton, Brockhampton with Much Fawley, Foy (East), Foy (West), How Caple, Kings Caple, Much Marcle, Upton Bishop and Woolhope

From your local County Councillor: Barry Durkin

Dear Residents

Spring sees the arrival of the lambs in the fields, birds singing, warm sunshine but also the thud of the annual council tax bill on your floor. As with nearly all councils ours has gone up by 4.99% reflecting the rising costs of the services that communities need. However, its sobering to think that about two thirds of our budget will be spent on children and young persons' and adult care alone, leaving the remaining third for everything else e.g. collection and disposal of rubbish and recycling, museums, schools and libraries, as well as other services, with repair and maintenance of our highway another requirement. Part of a national problem that can only really be resolved by Government.

As you will be aware nearly five years ago our children's care services were identified as failing and since then considerable work and funding has been put into that area. The recent external reports have noted good improvement but this a journey complicated by highly sensitive issues, full time recruitment challenges and care of some of our most vulnerable young people, some of whom are identified as at risk before they are born. However, the progress and the positive direction of travel is very welcome.

The 2025/26 budget has an extra 13 million into highways and that begins on 1st April with resurfacing across the county, within our ward and in particular on areas of B4224 toward the M50. Last year we received several highway investments in the ward but with full resurfacing costings of £32.99 per square metre and a layer of bitumen and chippings costing 4.99 per square metre the money will only cover so far.

At a recent Council meeting I supported a motion for the re-introduction of Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in our market towns. These units deal with minor injuries only but take some of the pressure of the County Hospital's A & E department which had real problems over the winter. Strangely the body that runs the NHS over Hereford and Worcester allows the MIUs to continue in Worcestershire. During the debate examples were given of residents seeking the services of MIUs in Ludlow and Abergavenny rather than travelling to Hereford. However, the negative is that they are not open 24/7 and can only deal with minor issues which needs understanding, but if it saves delay and blockage in A & E it should be a consideration. I look forward to the sub regional NHS body's response.

In this month's update I report on the recent announcement on research for the river Wye, update on future local house building, continued bird flu restrictions, plus latest on Highways and usual contacts.

As ever if I can be of any help please don't hesitate to contact

Barry

River Wye

The Welsh and UK Government announced a new £1 million joint research initiative



to tackle water quality issues in the River Wye. The Welsh Deputy First Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies, and UK Government's Water Minister, Emma Hardy, made the announcement during a roundtable meeting in Monmouth with key stakeholders from both sides of the border.

The programme will work closely with established organisations, local farmers, environmental groups, and citizen scientists.

The comprehensive cross-border research programme will:

- Investigate the sources of the pollution and pressures affecting the river
- Study the impacts of changing farming practices and land management
- Develop and test new ways to improve water quality
- Examine what's driving wildlife decline and water flow - the movement and quantity of water which is crucial for habitats and species

This funding is significantly less than the previous governments £35 million to tackle the Wye issues, and follows on the back of the sudden cancellation last month of the Sensitive Farming Initiative (SFI) grants which encouraged the very practices required to improve the water quality and ecology of our rivers.

Future Housing development

The Government's announcement to increase house building and issue new



development targets has a significant impact on our parishes. The emerging local Plan (the legal plan which is used to help determine where development can take place) was moving towards adoption; but has been 'smashed' by the government's decision to increase the number of houses to be built in Herefordshire over the next 20 years, from the original 16,100, in the original plan, by 70% to 27,260.

Councils have to identify a five year land supply otherwise they are less able to refuse planning applications; the government's announcement of the new target figures at a stroke undermined

Herefordshire previous 5 year plan supply figure. It has reduced our available land supply to circa 3 years - well below the requirement. Thus developers are able to make applications for development will be difficult to control. In the meantime this doesn't mean that it is a developer free for all. New planning applications will be determined by the National Planning Policy Framework and much higher standards of environment and sustainability which will particularly restrict development in open countryside. This means the council will have to go back to the start on identifying how these houses are to be distributed and what village settlements can be identified for future development.

It also means where Parish Neighbourhood plans are over 5 years old they also lose their status. This problem is reflected in many other council authorities in England.

Highways and PROWs

Herefordshire Council continues to offer funding to parish councils to help improve the large network of footpaths in our county. Over recent years many kissing gates have been installed particular near our villages to improve access for residents for walking and ensure secure fencing to keep livestock in their fields.

Final scoping is taking place regarding the resurfacing of parts of the B4362 in Shobdon one section on the western side of the village past the Bateman estate and another from the Bateman extending to the cemetery. Works scheduled later in summer.

Highways

Throughout 2025/26, Herefordshire Council is investing an additional £13.5million into the county's highway network. This will consist of £10million for A & B roads and £3.5million for C & U roads, and follows on from the additional £8 million the council invested in resurfacing in 2024/25.

Works will begin in April and continue throughout the summer, with initial investment focussing on the A417, A438, A466, A4103, A4112, B4203, B4214, B4216, B4224, B4225, B4348, B4355, B4360 and B4361.

Further investment and on our C and Unclassified road will also take place from April, with Highway Engineers working hard to deliver additional sites.

Herefordshire Avian Flu Restrictions

On Sunday 16 February 2025 measures were enhanced in the county when



mandatory housing, which was already in place in other parts of the country, was extended to cover Herefordshire.

All bird keepers in Herefordshire must keep their birds housed to protect them from bird flu. This applies to pet birds, commercial flocks and just a few birds in a backyard flock.

Avian influenza circulates naturally in wild birds and when they migrate to the UK from mainland Europe over the winter they can spread the disease to poultry and other captive birds.

The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) with mandatory biosecurity measures is in force across all of England meaning it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures.

Ofsted published their latest findings

Ofsted has published their latest findings for Herefordshire Children's Services in a report today.

The Ofsted letter details the results of Herefordshire's sixth monitoring visit that took place on 18 and 19 February 2025. The focus of the inspection centred around the quality and timeliness of social work assessments.

The inspection is part of a series of visits put in place following the service being judged inadequate in July 2022.

Headlines from the report noted that **'Timely completion of assessment and support provided by social workers and family support workers in the assessment and support teams has a positive impact which enables the majority of children and their families to progress in having their needs met'** and **'Leaders are now making some tangible progress to improve the quality and consistency of practice within the assessment teams.'**

[Ofsted publishes findings of monitoring visit - Herefordshire Council](#)

Corporate Parenting Strategy

At its meeting today, Friday 7 March 2025, Herefordshire Council endorsed the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025- 2027

[Council unanimously endorses Corporate Parenting Strategy - Herefordshire Council](#)

Flooding resilience

Council investing in flooding resilience, response and recovery Herefordshire Council is investing an additional £2 million over the next two years, as well as growing the in-house team, to improve the county's flood resilience

[Council investing in flooding resilience, response and recovery - Herefordshire Council](#)

New Warm Homes funding to help county residents

Herefordshire Council has welcomed the announcement of new government funding which will help households stay warm and lower their energy bills.

[New Warm Homes funding to help county residents - Herefordshire Council](#)

WOW For All Ages



Have you checked out the latest WOW events taking place across Herefordshire?

WOW sessions offer a warm, welcoming space for all members of the community to enjoy spending time together.

The WOW sessions are open to people of all ages. Each event will include a choice of activity, as well as hot food and a drink. The good news is all WOW events are completely free of charge. Attendees will also be able to access information and signposting to support with the cost of living.

From football training, to afternoon tea and fun at the farm - there should be something for everyone to enjoy! Visit the [Talk Community Directory](#) to find out what's on, when.

The Baton of Hope is coming to Herefordshire - and you can get involved!

This autumn the Baton of Hope will tour the UK and on 2nd October the baton will travel through Hereford city. The campaign aims to raise awareness about suicide and mental health, provide support to those affected, and inform communities across the UK.



As part of the event, we are seeking Baton-bearers - individuals who have been personally affected by suicide, whether through their own experiences or the loss of a loved one. Baton-bearers play a vital role in this initiative, and we invite you or anyone you know who might be interested to participate in this special day dedicated to changing the narrative surrounding suicide. **The application deadline is 31st March 2025.**

To find out more about the Baton of Hope Herefordshire, how to apply, or other ways you can get involved please visit the [Talk Community Directory](#).

If you or your organisation would like to be involved, or if you'd like more information, please contact BatonOfHopeHereford@herefordshire.gov.uk

Cervical Screening in Herefordshire

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers and the NHS Cervical screening programme helps save an estimated 4,500 lives each year by detecting HPV and referring women and people for effective treatment. Cervical screening (smear test) is available to all women and people with a cervix aged 25 - 64, if you're registered with a GP, you'll automatically receive an invitation to attend.

Unfortunately, uptake for cervical screening is reducing. Data from 2023 showed that approximately 30% of people have never been screened for cervical cancer or not taken up their latest invitation for an appointment. To improve uptake within Herefordshire, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) need to understand what stops people from taking up the offer of a free cervical screening appointment.

If you're a Herefordshire resident and eligible for a cervical screening appointment please take 5 minutes from your day to complete this anonymous questionnaire, all feedback will be used to help shape future services.

To complete the questionnaire please use this Microsoft forms survey. The survey closes on **28 April 2025**.

[Cervical Screening | Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust](#)

Easter school meals

Thousands of Herefordshire children and young people in nurseries, schools and colleges will continue to receive free school meals support during the Easter school holidays

[Council continues free school meals support for Herefordshire children this Easter](#)

As part of our £2 million investment over the next two years in improving local flood resilience, a FloodPod visited a selection of our market towns last Friday and Saturday, providing information to residents about how to protect their property from flooding. Well-known flooding advisor Mary Long-Dhonau OBE, 'Flood Mary', was also there providing information. The FloodPod proved very popular, with dozens of people visiting over the two days.



We contacted all Parish Councils this week with details of a community flood equipment pilot scheme and how to submit expressions of interest. The scheme is designed to supplement the Community Flood Signage Scheme by providing further flood resilience equipment to help minimise the disruption from flooding, as part of a proactive approach to supporting communities. Expressions of interest need to be returned by Wednesday 23 April please.

Herefordshire Spring Clean

The Great Herefordshire Spring Clean is an excellent example of what can be done if we all do our bit as part of a collective effort. Over the past two weeks hundreds of residents have got involved in clearing litter in their local area - and they are all to be thanked and congratulated for their efforts.



I was privileged to be the lead councillor with regard to the organisation of the clean-up and attended Great Western Way litter pick on Friday 28th March to do my bit' Officers from FOCSA (waste collection), BBLP, Herefordshire Council and Emma Jones and her volunteers to work together. We achieved a lot in a short time we're fortunate to have local communities who care about the county they live in, and who give their time to ensure it remains an attractive place to be.

Battery and small electric Items Household collections

From Monday 7 April 2025, batteries and small items of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) will be collected by bin collection crews as they do their usual rounds.



Electrical items and batteries should never be put into household rubbish or recycling bins as they can cause contamination or a fire.

It will soon be easier than ever to safely dispose of batteries and small electrical items such as irons, hairdryers and alarm clocks.

[New battery and small electric item household collections coming to Herefordshire - Herefordshire Council](#)

Contractor announced for Transport Hub

The Hereford Transport Hub project has taken a significant step forward as the council are pleased to announce McPhillips (Wellington) Ltd as the official construction partner.

[Contractor announced for Transport Hub - Herefordshire Council](#)

Parish Council Summit

I look forward to welcoming representatives from our ward Parish Councils to Plough Lane on Tuesday evening for the Parish Council Summit.

Our Local Community Support Officers

Sign up to police alerts, you can choose which areas you want to hear about and what activity is taking place in that area. You'll also hear about positive police action, good news stories and be able to play an active part in helping us with our public appeals.

<https://link.edgepilot.com/s/bb21d405/UARq0VNajkqv1vLf0zKSJQ?u=http://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/>

Our Local Community Support Officers

Kirsten Kysow 07773 034152 and Simon Hall 0796302401

Report a crime Police 101 Ext 61216



If I can be of any assistance please contact me

Barry

Mobile – [07792 882054](tel:07792882054) (not text delivery)

Email – barry.durkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

Local Emergency Numbers

PLEASE report potholes and concerns

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[Report problems on the road -](#)

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road

[Check on progress of a defect](#)

herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map

Report a serious pothole, flooded road or highway obstruction- Balfour Beatty Living Places: 01432 261800

Footpaths issues -

□ PROW - PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk

□ PROW No - **01432 383 550**

Report fly tipping it will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame. by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via

the council website on the links below as your

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/f452e836/Hy5YWk_SgEGkleekL2ROFQ?u=https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/98/fly_tipping

Flooding: emergency contact details – please share with your networks

Report a flooded road or highway obstruction- Balfour Beatty Living Places: 01432 2618000

By letting us know where and what happened, especially if it hasn't been reported, we and our partners can use the information which may help reduce the future impacts of flooding.

Environment Agency: 0800 80 70 60 (24-hours) or visit www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident

Flood alerts: Flood line 0345 988 1188. Sign up online at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings to get Flood Warnings from the Environment Agency by phone, email or text message. If you live by a river or stream, keep a watch on current and expected water levels.

Has your property been affected by flooding? – Please share with your networks

Welsh Water: 0800 052 0130 (Water emergencies) or 0800 085 3968 (Sewer emergencies) or visit www.contact.dwrcymru.com/

Severn Trent water: 0800 783 4444 www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/check-my-area/

Household incidents contact details – please share with your networks

Power cut: Call 105 or visit www.powercut105.com

BT phone line issues: www.downdetector.co.uk/status/bt-british-telecom

Gas leak: 0800 111 999 or visit www.wwutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas

Welsh Water: 0800 052 0130 (Water emergencies) or 0800 085 3968 (Sewer emergencies) or visit www.contact.dwrcymru.com/

The Citizens Advice Bureau Online at advice@citizensadviceherefordshire.org.uk for initial contact by email. Please also give a contact phone number in case we need to contact you for more information.

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

Ukraine relief - Local teams continues to organise supplies - details can be found on

<https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/ukraine>

<https://www.facebook.com/drivingsupplioustoukraine/>

Community needs contact details – please share with your networks

Talk Community

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: [01432 260027](tel:01432 260027)

Potholes, Defects, and dog poo reporting, blocked gullies, etc. online

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, 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. As always please continue to make use and encourage the use of established reporting methods for any highways defect; online, or using the telephone app – for potholes, dog poo - Telephone customer services on [01432 261 800](tel:01432 261 800).

Please note that Herefordshire Council strongly encourages Balfour Beatty to promote all service requests and queries should be logged via the HC website at Herefordshire Council website - also download the pothole App to help report potholes as you see them.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>

[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e3b2b34e/ttjzBlvIfEewR-](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e3b2b34e/ttjzBlvIfEewR-39NN73dA?u=https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole)

[39NN73dA?u=https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole](https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole)

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole> - or

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

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.

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 fly tipping form](#).

Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

For any PROW (Public Rights of Way) maps or problems, you can report these via the following link on the Herefordshire Council's website: [Report a public right of way problem | Herefordshire](#)

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

Litter picking

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

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., and [@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)

Did you know...?

Parishes Councils have their own inbox for emails which 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

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

Toolkits:

Community commissioning

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

Traffic Regulation Orders

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

Speed Indicator Devices - SIDs

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