



## HILLS FORD STAGES RALLY 2025

### OFFICIAL STATEMENT MONDAY 7TH JULY

Cheltenham Motor Club regrets to announce the cancellation of the Hills Ford Stages Rally 2025, originally scheduled for September.

Despite extensive preparations and the dedication of our volunteers, we have been unable to secure the necessary Motor Race Order and Road Closure Order from Herefordshire Council - critical permissions required to move forward with the event. In contrast, we successfully obtained the requisite orders from Gloucestershire Council as early as May 2025, and we are very appreciative of their quick response and support.

Our application for both counties was submitted in January 2025. Since then, our team has engaged in exhaustive resident liaison efforts, personally contacting over 700 properties affected by proposed road closures. At the time of this announcement, we are aware of just seven objectors residing within the affected areas.

Although Herefordshire Council initially committed to making a decision by 1st May—following unanimous support from its parish councils—that date was subsequently delayed to 26th May. Again, no objections were recorded at that level. Unfortunately, the council has yet to reach a definitive decision or provide the authorisations needed to proceed.

We are particularly concerned by the level of political interference that has emerged this year. Councillor Barry Durkin, Cabinet Member for Roads in Herefordshire, has engaged multiple external bodies, including Natural England and the Malvern Hills Trust, to solicit feedback on the event's environmental impact while simultaneously declaring his impartiality.

Despite repeated efforts to engage with Herefordshire Council on the positive economic contribution of the event - expected to attract thousands of spectators and deliver significant benefits to the local economy - our communications have been met with silence. Nearly 400 messages of public support were submitted by the community, yet none have been acknowledged, while all known objectors appear to have received direct responses. The council claims over 100 objections exist but has declined to provide these or share their context, therefore denying us the opportunity to find a resolution.

To those that have taken the time to write in with your support, thank you! We have taken note, even if Herefordshire Council have disregarded your email. If you wish to express your objection as to how Herefordshire Council have handled this matter, then please contact:

Bruce Evans – [bje@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:bje@herefordshire.gov.uk)  
Cllr Barry Durkin – [barry.durkin@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:barry.durkin@herefordshire.gov.uk)

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, local and national supporters, the rally championships, and everyone who committed their time and energy toward the 2025 event. Further appreciation goes to the parish councils set to host spectator areas - an important fundraising opportunity for the local community now lost due to this cancellation.

We must also extend a special thank you to Motorsport UK, who have also been in negotiations with Herefordshire Council over the past month, but have been unable to find an acceptable resolution to this matter.

This is not goodbye. Cheltenham Motor Club remains committed to motorsport, in particular this event, and we look forward to returning with some exciting news in the near future.

Dan Lister, Clerk of the Course  
Kevin C. Smith, Event Director

Cheltenham Motor Club



Hills Ford Stages  
Cheltenham Motor Club  
Upper Park Street,  
Cheltenham, GL52 6SA  
MSUK No. 120628