

Ward Report – for May 2020

From your local County Councillor - Barry Durkin

Old Gore Ward – Herefordshire Council

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. I am well aware that there is already a great development of support network of friends and neighbours looking after their immediate community, informally within streets, hamlets and pockets of houses including Whatsapp and telephone contacts.

This is valuable and the council has a covid-19 talk community (see previous ward reports) but it would be helpful to continue to feed these activities to our parish/community contacts so we can identify anyone or anywhere which may be falling through the net, and for people to know where to go if there are specific problems.

With this ongoing pandemic I have included in this ward report a lot of information from different areas. I appreciate that this ward report is considerably longer than previous but the information you are seeking may be included in this document.

I shall continue to keep you updated in my monthly report and also as and when information is available. As usual I remain available by email and telephone to assist you further when required.

A big thank you to everyone for looking out for your neighbours, our community lead contacts, 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

This month, will see the phased return of some of our school pupils and reopening of some shops although we will have to wait until next month probably for a haircut.

The safety of pupils and staff is at the forefront of planning for a phased return to education, following the Government's announcement that schools may re-open for primary school children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1 June - possibly followed by secondary school children in Years 10 and 12 later in the year.

With further Government announcements expected over the next few days, Herefordshire Council is working closely with schools, colleges and early years settings to plan for the potential re-opening of schools to enable more children and young people to continue their education in a safe classroom environment.

Since the lockdown in March, Herefordshire schools have collectively continued to support and educate children and young people across the county, including 800 children of the county's key workers and vulnerable children. This work has been carried out in an ever changing environment with schools, colleges and settings demonstrating their flexibility and commitment by adopting new ways of educating, keeping in touch and supporting their

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pupils virtually. Many of the schools have remained open during the school holidays for children of key workers and have supported families by distributing food or vouchers.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/992/safe_phased_returns_planned_for_schools_colleges_and_early_years_settings

Shops to reopen

I am sure we are welcoming the reopening of shops, regardless of what they sell. However, they will only be able to open with social distancing measures in place. Car showrooms and outdoor markets can reopen from 1 June. Non-essential shops can reopen in England from 15 June if they meet guidelines to protect staff and shoppers. Retailers will have to comply with new guidelines to protect shoppers and workers.

All of this is conditional on the government's five tests for easing lockdown being met by these dates. It is important and I am sure you will agree, that local businesses have been supporting their communities throughout lockdown with home deliveries; where they can. It is therefore important that now we support our local businesses.

£50 million boost to support the recovery of our high streets

Councils across England are to share £50m of additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. The money will allow local authorities in England to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets, through measures that extend to the end of March 2021. This funding comes on top of the Government's comprehensive package of support for business and workers during the economic emergency. The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund will help councils in England introduce a range of safety measures in a move to get people back to work and customers back to the shops. Councils will also be able to use this money to develop local marketing campaigns to explain the changes to the public and reassure them that their high streets and other commercial areas are safe.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887244/Reopening_High_Streets_Safely_Fund_-_Guidance.pdf

Life under lockdown - Mental Health

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.

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week ran from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 May and is more important than ever. 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.

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Herefordshire Council is encouraging residents to follow five simple steps to help combat anxiety and loneliness and improve people's mental health and wellbeing.

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

This advice remains relevant even after the pandemic has left us. Read more: -

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/990/free_mental_health_support_is_available_if_you_need_it

www.wisherefordshire.org/mentalhealth

Life Under Lockdown - Photographs project

Herefordshire Council has joined forces with the Hereford Times to collect images that best capture the spirit and consequences of 'Life Under Lockdown' - how the coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown has affected everyday life in the county, and how unfamiliar routines have replaced the familiar.

The images will be part of the county's historical records for years to come. To find out more go to www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk .

Life Under Lockdown - Talk Community telephone support

The Talk Community Covid-19 response has received over 3000 telephone calls since the commencement of the service 7 weeks ago. Herefordshire Council (HC) have deployed over 40 council staff to support the telephone service and vulnerable people of Herefordshire and at its peak were receiving 180 calls a day. The infrastructure has enabled over 1500 requests for support for the most vulnerable people with the main areas of support continuing to be for supplies and medication collection. The numbers of calls has significantly reduced to an average of 50 per day over the past few weeks, which indicates that the needs of the vulnerable are being met either in the communities, through the Talk Community response or within their own networks. Over the past few weeks HC have been planning for the next phase of the Talk Community Covid response and considering the future and sustainable model during this next stage. The telephone service has been available 7 days a week 8am-8pm during the weekdays and 10am-4pm on the weekend, however the numbers of call have significantly reduced over the weekend and out of hours therefore to provide a permanent offer for the vulnerable residents of Herefordshire we will be looking to reduce the hours over the next week. The weekend of the 16th/17th May will be the last weekend that the telephone support will be open and from the week commencing the 25th May, the bank holiday will be open 10am-4pm and from 26th May the telephone service will be available 9am-5pm Monday to Friday with the Blueschool House staff providing the telephone support. This enables a permanent infrastructure at a time when

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staff are being redeployed to substantive posts and to continue to meet the demand albeit at a reduced number. Out of hours support through Adult Social Care service remains available as well as the NHS 111 service, however the nature of the small amount of calls out of hours has not, in the majority of cases, required an urgent response."

The Talk Community Covid-19 response team can be contacted on 01432 260027 or talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Life under Lockdown – Domestic abuse, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence

The following information leaflets have been produced containing a lot of useful information and links:

[How can you help? Advice for friends, family, neighbours and community members.](#)

[Safety and Wellbeing Advice for Survivors](#)



Campaign launches safe space in Boots stores for victims of domestic abuse across the UK

From May 1, victims of domestic abuse will be able to access safe spaces at Boots pharmacies consultation rooms where they can contact specialist domestic abuse services for support and advice. More details can be downloaded here:

<https://www.hestia.org/news/press-release-campaign-launches-safe-space-in-boots-stores-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-across-the-uk>

Resources from SafeLives and Respect

[SafeLives](#) are a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse for everyone and for good. They work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. They have collated resources and useful information which will be updated regularly

<https://safelives.org.uk/news-views/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>

[Respect](#) is a pioneering UK domestic abuse organisation leading the development of safe, effective work with perpetrators, male victims and young people using violence in their close relationships. Twitter messaging targeted at perpetrators: [#Noexcuseforabuse](#)

<https://twitter.com/RespectUK>

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Quitting smoking

This is one of the best ways to protect yourself and others and reduce your need to use the NHS; with smokers being at greater risk of developing life-threatening respiratory complications from COVID-19, there's never been a more important time to stop smoking.

Smoking severely damages your lungs and weakens your immune system and puts you at greater risk of developing respiratory disease. If you smoke indoors or in a vehicle it exposes those around you, particularly children, to increased risks from second-hand smoke.

Fortunately there's a huge range of free advice, support and quitting aids available for those who want to stop smoking to improve their health and stay out of hospital.

Throughout May and June Herefordshire's Stop Smoking Service is offering free personal support to all residents registered with a GP practice in Herefordshire, to help them on their journey to quit smoking for good. People can self-refer by simply emailing hsts@herefordshire.gov.uk or calling 01432 383567. You can find out about the service by visiting www.wisherefordshire.org/smoking.

The NHS offers a wide range of support online. You can find out more by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/> and there's also a free Personal Quit Plan available at www.nhs.uk/smokefree

The public health charity, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), are encouraging people to give up together through their Quit for Covid campaign. They are hosting a twitter clinic every day from 7.30pm to 8.30pm, where people can ask questions and find support using the hashtag #QuitforCovid. You can find out more about the campaign by visiting www.todayistheday.co.uk.

Hereford Bridge renamed in honour of Rotherwas munition factory workers

Timed to coincide with VE Day 75 commemorations last week, the cycle and foot bridge over the River Wye, linking St James to Rotherwas, was named the Canary Bridge and lit yellow



for the occasion. This special tribute marked the efforts and sacrifices of the thousands of men and women who worked in the munitions factory at Rotherwas in WW1 and WW2. The workers were called the 'canaries' due to the chemicals that turned their hair and skin yellow.

Skills4Life

Youth Support Services (YSS) have announced the launch of a new two year service, Skills4Life, aimed at women aged 18 years and over to help them build their financial and employability skills. Skills4Life will support women to become more financially independent

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and resilient. Training around finances, along with resources to support learning and personal financial advice. For more details visit <https://www.yss.org.uk/News/new-skills4life-service>

Please contact Shibrana Miles - Shibrana.Miles@yss.org.uk . Open to all including the armed forces, subject to eligibility.

The Skills Toolkit

The Skills Toolkit is a free online resource of courses and tools to help you improve your digital and numeracy skills. The Department for Education has consulted some of the country's leading educational experts and employers to make up a collection of high quality resources to suit a range of interests and skill levels. More information at

<https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

Coronavirus Reopening High Streets Fund

MHCLG has announced the details of the details of the £50 million ERDF Coronavirus Reopening High Streets Fund. Herefordshire's allocation is £172,188, of which £6,888 (or 4%) will be for management cost. Please see attached documents.

This funding will be supporting activities directly undertaken by local authorities and does not include business grants. Funding delivery will commence on 1 June.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/50-million-boost-to-support-the-recovery-of-our-high-streets>

Offer for businesses impacted by COVID-19

The sheet is being updated as new information comes out but the key site for businesses to keep an eye on is:

<https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>

Funding opportunities for the voluntary and community sectors - COVID-19

This information has been provided by Dave Tristram, Funding and Enterprise Officer, Herefordshire Council.

“Information regarding funding opportunities for voluntary and community sectors can be accessed via the FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES link on our Funding Update page”.

The live link is here:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200139/community/393/community_funding_advice_and_business_grants

“If anyone has any additional information around grants and funding support specific to this, they can email myself and Elaine Edwards and we will add the info as soon as (our contact details are on the site)”

Access to dentistry

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Dental Practices in England can **reopen from Monday 8th June**, as long as strict measures are put in place to ensure patient safety.

Out of Hours services continue to operate with patients being assessed and seen as necessary. Access to these services is via NHS 111.

Remote meetings video/audio platforms – provided to Parish Council Clerks

You may find this information useful <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/remote-council-meetings/video-audio-platforms>

Plus a reminder of the Fastershire ‘Keep Connected’ grant worth up to £500, can support new software subscriptions and online platforms or technology. It is available to any not-for-profit groups or organisations, including charities, community groups and Parish/town councils. Please note that applications for laptops are likely to be refused.

<https://www.fastershire.com/assets/file/KeepConnectedApplicationForm.pdf>

Please Support Our Local Businesses

As we come out of the lockdown and are gradually permitted to go further afield I would ask that we **Please Support Our Local Businesses**. 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.

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 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.
- You are able to spend time outdoors with up to six people as long as those from different households maintain social distancing.
- 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 the regulations and the ongoing national effort to protect the NHS and save lives.

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- 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 for essential waste that can't be stored safely. 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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Information from Parishes

Nil

General Information

Nil

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

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

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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.