

Ward Report – for March 2022
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.



Good Spring month to you all. After a very torrid weekends and three storms causing havoc across the UK and their aftermath, it is great to see we are coming into a sunnier, calmer and much warmer one. Hope we have a great spring and upcoming summer.

COVID-19 News

For all the latest data and information for Herefordshire, as well as links to national government data, visit our [Herefordshire COVID-19 dashboard](#). You can also read the government's newly-issued guidance on [Living with COVID-19](#).

National announcements on [COVID-19 including updates on the Omicron variant and booster programme](#) are available on the government website, along with national data updates for [COVID-19 Surveillance, Reports and Dashboard](#).

The latest [national information, advice and guidance](#) is also available.

- The seven day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 20 February 2022: the COVID-19 case rate in Herefordshire is 400.4 cases per 100k people. This is a decrease of 36.5% on the previous week. Cases in England are 417.3 per 100k population.
- In Herefordshire, 88.2% of all eligible people have received their first dose vaccine, 83.8% have had their second dose and 70.4% have had their third or booster dose
- In the UK, 91.5% of all eligible people have received their first dose vaccine, and 85.1% have had their second dose and 66.3% have had their third or booster dose.
- [Government vaccination data](#) now includes those aged 12+. Statistics from other sources may vary.

Council reminds residents Covid has not gone away

As Covid restrictions are dropped, we're reminding residents that we have not seen the last of the virus. We therefore ask residents to continue with the good habits they formed during restrictive periods wherever and whenever possible. These include:

- Getting vaccinated
- Letting fresh air in if meeting indoors; or meet outside

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- Wearing a face mask in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet and when transmission rates are high
- Trying to stay at home if you feel unwell
- Taking a test if you have Covid symptoms and staying at home and avoiding contact with other people if you test positive
- Washing hands regularly with soap and water
- Following advice to catch it, bin it, kill it

More information is available on Council's [webpage](#).

Healthcare video explains how best to access urgent care

Accessing urgent care can be confusing with a number of different services being provided by a range of different organisations across Herefordshire. Taurus Healthcare has produced a video to help local people understand where to go to get the right urgent care treatment when they need it. Dr Mike Hearne, GP and Managing Director of Taurus Healthcare says: "A wide range of professionals is now accessible via patients' local GP surgeries. This means that patients can access the most appropriate care for their needs – which often isn't their GP. Many services can also be accessed when surgeries are closed via the Improved Access service, which is now available at six locations across Herefordshire."

The short video features local healthcare professionals, including a GP, Pharmacist, Optician and a Medical Consultant from Wye Valley NHS Trust and explains what services are available and how they can be accessed. The video emphasises the value of community pharmacies and helps people understand the services available from their local optometry practice – most eye-care problems can be dealt with at the practice without the need to be referred to a GP or the A&E department.

You can watch the new [Taurus Healthcare urgent care video here](#) and read about the [background here](#).

Wye Valley NHS Trust using the latest technology to help tackle waiting times

Wye Valley NHS Trust is using new ways of improving communications with patients who are waiting for hospital outpatient appointments as part of its efforts to tackle waiting lists which have grown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A pilot project in neighbouring Worcestershire has gone down well with patients and now, starting on Monday next week, February 28, patients awaiting a first or follow-up appointment will be contacted by an automated telephone calling system.

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During the call they will be guided through a series of questions to update the referral with current information and confirm whether the appointment is still required.

This will allow the Trust to establish whether patients' conditions have improved, whether they have sought treatment elsewhere or whether they still need to be seen.

Automated calling has already been adopted in other parts of the country to contact those who have waited throughout the pandemic to see if they wish to remain on appointment lists.

During the call, patients can still choose to speak to someone in person and plans are in place to use alternative means to contact anyone who misses a call.

The call will show up as coming from **01432 688000**. For further information, please refer to this set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Council direct care services will be transferring to Hoople Care

Services at Southbank Close, Ridgemoor Road, Hillside and the Home First re-ablement service will transfer to Hoople Care when it receives CQC registration. Hoople Care has been established to manage adult care services that have been in-sourced by the council.

Hoople Care already employs a number of re-ablement staff as part of Home First, and provides residential services for people with a learning disability at Ridgemoor Road and Southbank Close in Hereford. The CQC registration for these services is currently with the council, due to Hoople not yet being registered as a care provider.

A decision by Cabinet on Thursday 24 February, has given approval for directly delivered care services in Hereford to transfer to Hoople Care when it receives CQC registration. This is expected soon. Council staff working in those services will transfer to Hoople Care under TUPE arrangements.

Announcement: [Council direct care services will be transferring to Hoople Care](#)

BBLP

Please see attached the latest update for Feb 2022.

[Public Realm Round-Up - February 2022.pdf](#)

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Update on Fastershire delivery

Briefing Note – February 2022

This briefing note is for ward members whose areas have been affected by the [decision](#) of 18 November 2021 to alter the broadband delivery due to Gigaclear's withdrawal from the south of the county areas and the opportunity presented by the national government regarding the Project Gigabit programme. This includes Old Gore Ward and of course your parish area.

Following previous updates, this briefing adds information on the delivery of the Business Grant, Community Stage Five Grant and the new Digital Household Grant.

The total number of premises adversely affected in Herefordshire is 2,324 (though this number is reducing as we find that BT is reaching some new premises after investing in the replacement of end of life technology).

Digital Household Grant

As outlined in the report's recommendations, the council agreed to introduce the Digital Household Grant that will be made available to the 2,324 premises in the south of the county descoped by Gigaclear and have a broadband connection of less than 30Mbps.

The Fastershire [webpage](#) is now ready to receive expressions of interest to the Digital Household Grant scheme. The grant will cover the installation cost of a 4G LTE connection using external directional antennas with a theoretical speed of 150Mbps, although most properties will realistically benefit from speeds of 10–45Mbps. A low earth orbit satellite solution will be explored with the resident for properties that qualify for the Digital Household Grant where a 4G signal is not available.

Business Grant

The Fastershire Business Grant project has reached the final part of the development stage. The website based application portal is being built, and the grant process and eligibility criteria have been agreed. Businesses can register via the postcode checker at <http://www.fastershire.com>.

The new scheme increases the range of businesses that can apply for a grant to part-fund the installation of fibre or alternative faster broadband connections. The Business grant will allocate up to £20k per premise with a 20% contribution from the business.

Community Broadband

Since 2020 Fastershire has operated a community broadband scheme. The scheme aims to connect clusters of premises that the existing or planned delivery has not covered.

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The grant has contracted suppliers to deliver broadband to 11 communities, 538 grant funded premises that will all benefit from a gigabit-capable connection. We are engaging with a further 12 communities, which are at various stages in the grant process.

Project Gigabit

Fastershire will keep ward members updated about the upcoming public review as part of a new procurement process to be led by BDUK (Building Digital United Kingdom - part of the Department for Media, Digital, Culture and Sport).

The future of Fastershire

93.7% of premises across Herefordshire can currently access superfast broadband (independent figures from [Thinkbroadband](#)). The Fastershire team focuses on the end of the current contracts with suppliers and bespoke solutions for communities and businesses as outlined above, whilst the new Project Gigabit will run nationally. The Fastershire Digital Inclusion programme is continuing to help beginners to 'Get Online', and a communication and marketing initiative is raising awareness of faster broadband and encouraging people to take up a fibre service.

Email: info@fastershire.com

Web: www.fastershire.com

[Fastershire | Facebook](#)

Call for establishment of a Water Protection Zone across the River Wye and Lugg Catchment.

Cllr David Hitchiner, the Leader of the Council has sent a letter to Minister Pow, Under Secretary of State for DEFRA, renewing the call for all partners to come together to strengthen the approach to tackling the issue. Herefordshire Council would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for their continued interest and support through the work of the Nutrient Management Board.

[You can read the letter by clicking this link](#)

Full Council Meeting

In the matter of agreeing the Council Tax level the Administration put forward their proposal for 2.99% overall inc. social care of 1%. The Conservative Group proposed a motion whereby there would be, for this year, a nil increase in Council Tax because of the current and upcoming, dire straits people in Herefordshire would find themselves in with increases in heating, fuel 1.1% National Insurance contribution on those working, fire and police precepts – and parish council precepts. However, after a vigorous debate the vote was taken and the administration's proposal won with 27 to 22 votes.

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Climate Change

The administration has proposed and had passed that the New Homes Bonus coming to Herefordshire Council. The New Homes Bonus is a grant paid by central government to local councils to reflect and incentivise housing growth in their areas. It is based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised for new-build homes, conversions and long-term empty homes brought back into use. However, the administration won a vote for the funding of £1.33m is allocated to “managing climate change reserve”; to obviously deal with climate change solely.



Community News - www.talkcommunity.org

Practical digital help for older people



A lot of people have found social media a great way to keep in touch with friends and family during the Covid pandemic, and more organisations have an increased expectation for us to go online for information and services. Yet there are many older people who do not use a smartphone and don't feel confident using a computer.

Age UK are providing free, practical digital help for older people, as part of Herefordshire Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan. They have a number of 6-week courses across the county, along with one to one support and computer café groups – all designed to help people feel more confident getting online and using technology.

All participants will receive a loan of a new tablet or laptop during their course (that will do nicely). If you would more information about the courses, know someone who could benefit, or would like to volunteer your time to support older people to get online, you can contact Age UK on:

Tel: 0800 008 6077

E-mail: referralhub@ageukhw.org.uk.

You'll also find all the details on the [Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire website](https://www.ageukherefordshireandworcestershire.org.uk).

Flood Appeal Fund

Did you know there is emergency financial support available for individuals and families

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affected by Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin? The joint Flood Appeal Fund, through Herefordshire Community Foundation and the Hereford Times, can help with urgent needs, such as the cost of living in temporary accommodation or for items people need to stay in their homes such as dehumidifiers or re-stocking essential foods.

The priority of the fund, following Herefordshire flooding, is immediate straightforward financial support for people affected.

For more information and to either donate to the appeal or apply for emergency finance, visit the [Herefordshire Community Foundation website](#).

Giving back to communities – Co-op Community Dividend Fund

Do you feel passionate about people having access to healthy food? Or strive to reach and support our hard to reach groups in our community? Or perhaps you have an amazing energy saving project? If so, this funding opportunity could be for you.



The Community Dividend Fund has been relaunched, to offer vital support to good causes, groups and charities, for projects that aim to develop and improve communities. Groups can now apply for between £100 and £5,000 every two months, to help projects that aim to support food, health and wellbeing, inclusion and the environment.

Grants are available to full members of Central England Co-Op. The next round of applications closes on Thursday 31 March. Further information and how to apply can be found on the [Central England Co-Op website](#).

Welcome to Our Place – free online courses for parents

Also for grandparents, carers, foster parents, family members and friends!

Do you know anyone who would like a little help with understanding of how to support their child, from the early days of pregnancy, to the becoming an adult at 18?

Well the Solihull Approach courses are definitely worth being aware of. These fascinating, engaging courses help us be the best dad, mum or carer that we can be, whatever the age of our child. Whether for ourselves, a friend or someone we support through our work.

There are four courses available, including “Understanding your baby” and “Understanding your teenagers’ brain”, free to Herefordshire residents. Now how useful is that!

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To access the online courses, simply visit the [Our Place website](#), register your details and enter the access code: APPLEHERE

Understanding the support friends or family need when someone leaves hospital

When someone has just left hospital, it's often their friends, family members and neighbours that step in to help out. It can be an overwhelming time, with a mixture of emotions.



The NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) want to understand what support people would expect if they were helping someone close to them who had just left hospital.

There is a short [survey](#) which you can complete anonymously, which will help the understanding and will be used to support the carers discharge project. You don't have to have been in this situation, or be a carer to complete this survey. The anonymous findings will be posted on the CCG website.

The survey is running until the end of Sunday 20 March. [Take part in the survey.](#)

Local Parishes News

Upton Bishop: Work has started on installing electricity to the upcoming traffic lights and lamp standards. This started on 28th February and is due to end on 7th March 'ish. Following this the traffic lights and lamp standards will be installed.

How Caple: Work has started on the remediation of the verges, ditches and highways along Perrystone Hill. The public notice was issued on 28th February with a limit of three weeks but with an expectation of a couple of days. There has been good progress made along Perrystone Hill and including culvert jetting, ditches and highway pothole filling. However, the weather has now closed in, as I write, and work will have ceased for the time being.

Work is about to start on Falcon Ben How Caple with resurfacing of the road. The road will be closed from 09:30 to 15:30 with diversions notified. The houses and businesses with frontages will be accommodated to ensure that personal access and egress may be maintained.

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

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Barry

Barry Durkin

Old Gore Ward

Mob. 07792 882054

Email. bdurkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Useful Information

Flooding: emergency contact details – please share with your networks

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

Flood alerts: Floodline 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.

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.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas

Welsh Water: [0800 052 0130](tel:08000520130) (Water emergencies) or [0800 085 3968](tel:08000853968) (Sewer emergencies) or visit www.contact.dwrcymru.com/

Severn Trent water: [0800 783 4444](tel:08007834444) www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/check-my-area/

Report a flooded road or highway obstruction- Balfour Beatty Living Places: **01432 26180**

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

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. Please [report it here](#) or contact TalkCommunityEnquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk.

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>

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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;
- 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.

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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_picking_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., and [@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

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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.