



February 2026 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

Move over Warwickshire, because Herefordshire is the new Shakespeare County. The film Hamnet, which was filmed on location at Weobley, the Cwmmau Farmhouse in Brilley, and the river wye at Clifford is being used by Visit Herefordshire to promote local tourism of our county. Visit Herefordshire is a stand alone organisation financed by larger local tourism business to advertise our county and support the visitor economy. Herefordshire Council worked closely with the film company before and during the making of the film and gets a mention in the closing titles. The film has already won international awards and are nominated for Oscars and BAFTAs. The picture shows the old red Lion pub in Weobley, now a curry house, being transformed for the film. Hopefully our local villages and tourism business can benefit from extra visitors this year.

I also report on a recent visit by The Prince of Wales, some changes to policing, the appointment of the new highways contractor to succeed Balfour Beatty, plus the usual updates on Highway, local events and contact list.

Herefordshire funding has been hit very hard by the Government. The Government announced a " fair funding review " of English local authorities just before Christmas. The formula used for working out the funding was changed moving funding from rural councils to urban councils.

Should you need to contact me, please feel free.

Kind regards

Barry

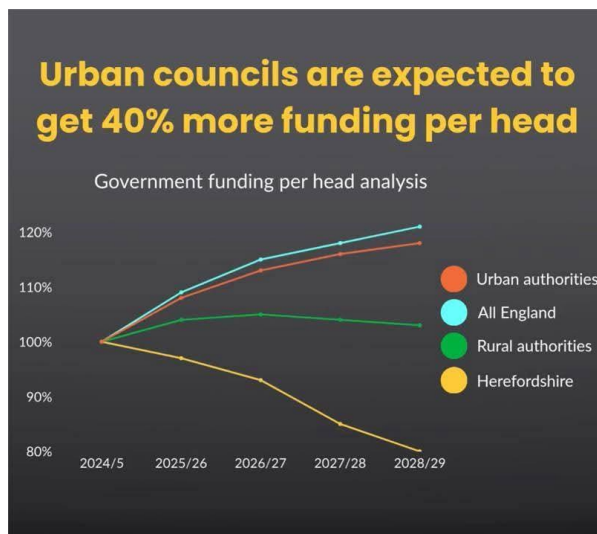
Mob. 07792882 054

Barry.durkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

Council Finances

The significant business for the Council now is confirm the budget for 2026/27 and set the Council Tax rate. In this update I go into detail of the very poor settlement Herefordshire has received for the next three years from the Government. As the graph shows urban councils will get nearly 40% more funding per head than Herefordshire by 2028/29.

It is deeply disappointing that the government is failing to sufficiently fund the



additional costs of delivering services to residents across a rural county. The government's Review, which covers the next three financial years, will cut £17.3 million (- 23%) from Herefordshire's central funding by 2028/29, adding to previous losses such as the £7.1 million Rural Services Delivery Grant leaving challenging savings to be found to meet inflation and service pressures. Our neighbouring English councils are similarly under pressure.

The government's new funding model assumes local authorities will raise council tax by the maximum permitted without a referendum - 4.99% per year for the next three years - placing further strain on rural households who already pay 20% more council tax than urban areas. That increase means a band D equivalent charge to £2,067.63, representing an increase of £8.19 per month for 2026/27.

The new formula fails to properly account for remoteness, increased and more complex needs for rural young people and the impact of an ageing population. In short, demand and costs for essential services are rising faster than funding increases. Herefordshire council's draft revenue budget, which will be debated at the Council meeting on 13th February, aims to overcome the £30.0 million gap identified, including redundancies, and measures to manage Directorate inflationary pressures via a centrally held Contract Inflation Fund. Details of the 2026/7 budget are in Cabinet papers on the council's website.

Other rural councils are facing tough decisions including Shropshire who are heading for a technical bankruptcy caused by not making savings in the past and freezing council tax for three years which resulted in a huge hole in their finances. Working with the Rural Services Network and our MPs we are trying to get a re visit to the calculations but despite the Labour Government having 100 rural seats I fear it will be a tough challenge.

Our council chairman had an opportunity to meet the local Government Minister Alison Mc Govern MP and requested her to revisit their “remoteness element of their criteria” and apply it to all rural services not just Social care which could improve our settlement by £10 million. The Finance team are briefing all the political groups on the council on measures to close the funding gap. I believe despite the above inflation figures we have to increase council tax by what the government expects otherwise the cuts will become even more severe to our services.

[Herefordshire Council considers options to close £30m budget gap created by UK government funding changes. Cllr Jonathan Lester, Leader of Herefordshire Council: “We remain deeply disappointed by... | Herefordshire Council](#)

New NHS Diagnosis Centre opened in Hereford

Government health Minister Stephen Kinnock MP officially opened the new NHS facility in Hereford last month. The 18 million pound Wye Valley Community Diagnostic and Treatment centre provides residents in Herefordshire and part of Powys with access to the latest cutting edge imaging services – X-ray, CT, MRI and Ultrasound. The centre will help take off pressure of the main Hospital, speed up waiting times and is open from 8am to 8 pm.

The centre has been open since September and is located just off Holmer road behind B&Q. I had a recent scan there myself and was most impressed with the service and facilities. It is oddly located between Painter Bros and B & Q via an Industrial access road.

Childrens Services

I am pleased to provide further information relating to my recent report that Herefordshire Council’s Children’s Services have now been rated ‘Good’ overall by Ofsted, with each specific service area receiving a ‘Good’ judgement and the ‘Impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families’ judged as ‘Outstanding’.

This is a significant achievement for the Council, reflecting the hard work and dedication of practitioners, managers, elected members and partners who committed to deliver the improvements. These very sensitive services which look after the care of some of the most vulnerable children in our county were placed in special measures in 2022 with a commissioner appointed by Government to oversee its running. While not as visible as some council services like potholes, the proper care and protection of these local children must always be a priority; and the achievement of this turnaround in the timescale and without further huge financial investment is a testament to excellent working practice by employees and partners. The very nature and complexities of children’s care mean you can never be overconfident in this area, but the service and political leaders deserve all credit for what has been achieved.

The full inspection can be read at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50293401>

Childrens' HAF Day

Herefordshire Council's Talk Community team is set to run the first ever February Half Term Big HAF Day, offering a free, fun-filled day of activities for eligible children, young people and their families.

[First ever February Half Term Big HAF Day announced for Herefordshire - Herefordshire Council](#)

Chief Executive's retirement

The Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council Paul Walker had indicated he would retire on 31st March and the council has been looking for his successor. Sadly initial applications received were considered by a cross party group of lead councillors as not being of the competency expected, so a further process is being undertaken with the current C.EX extending his term.

Prince of Wales in Herefordshire discussing mental health in Farming



Our council chairman (Roger Philips) had the honour to be presented to Prince William on his recent visit to Much Cowarne in Herefordshire as Patron of the Wearefarmingminds charity. The Charity raises mental health awareness in rural communities of Herefordshire offering 24 hour support, professional counselling and befriending services, combats isolation, provides resources and advice.

While speaking with farmers John and Luara Bowler he joined in with tree pruning and feeding the sheep. They discussed the financial, business and weather pressures that farmers face living in the countryside

but so often challenged by isolation.

The Duchy of Cornwall is the largest landowner in Herefordshire, primarily the original Guys Hospital estate of over 10,000 acres based mainly in the south of the county and the

Cradley estate in the east. Comprising of farms, woodlands, residential, and business tenancies, focusing on sustainable land management, environmental conservation, and community support, managed for the income of the Prince of Wales.

As a profile, provided by our chairman, he reports that the Prince is very tall and at 6ft 3 inches he will be the tallest monarch for over 500 years - since Edward the fourth 1442-1483.

Pictures include the Lord Lieutenant Edward Harley, The Prince, John and Laura Bowley, Sam and Emily Stables (founders of the Charity) and the council chairman.

Highways

Following a procurement process M Group Highways has been selected as the preferred provider to deliver the county's new Public Realm Services contract starting in June this year succeeding from Balfour Beatty – who did not tender.

The contract covers essential services that residents rely on, including the maintenance of roads and green spaces, highway drainage, street lighting, street cleansing, bereavement services, maintenance of bus shelters, rights of way and winter gritting.

Under the new contract, the Council will take back day-to-day control of public realm services, with the provider delivering work at pre-agreed rates. This approach will give the Council greater flexibility and ensure services are high-quality, efficient, and provide better value for money.

In last month's update I mentioned that I had asked many parish councils to submit to me highways with their consideration that have a particular issues. Those I have received have been submitted for consideration for the 2026/27 surfacing programme – if other parish councils who have not yet submitted their concerns, in addition to residents, please provide me with detail

The winter season is having its impact on our highways and I do urge you to report concerns

New “Pop and Shop” free parking

We will introduce 30 minutes' free parking in all council operated car parks from April 2026, delivering a key commitment to support local businesses and shoppers. The new “Pop and Shop” scheme is designed to make short, local trips easier and boost footfall for shops, cafés and services across the county.

[**30 minute free parking launched to boost local economy - Herefordshire Council**](#)

Green Waste

New garden waste collection services rolls out across Herefordshire

[Here come the bins - Herefordshire Council](#)

Herefordshire Council is introducing a new, improved fortnightly garden waste collection service starting in March 2026, offering residents a choice of a wheelie bin or reusable sacks for green waste, which will be turned into soil improver. Sign-ups are currently open for this new service. Existing subscribers can manage their service via the Club.

<https://www.greenwasteclub.co.uk/faqs>

School food vouchers

Over 4,700 primary and secondary school pupils who are entitled to benefits related free school meals will receive a free food voucher up to the value of £15 or equivalent directly through their schools.

[Food voucher scheme continues for February half term](#)

Winter NHS Pressures

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year online at 111.nhs.uk or by calling 111 for any urgent but not life-threatening medical needs. Trained advisers can direct people to the best possible care for their needs, including arranging an out-of-hours GP appointment or an appointment time to attend A&E
For real emergency situations Dial 999

Our Local Community Police Team

Last month West Mercia Police changed its structure from five areas Shropshire, Telford and the Wrekin, Herefordshire, Worcestershire North and South to a two units, bringing together all of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The change aims to improve how the force works and responds to demands, but the commitment to neighbourhood policing remains and we have our own local team of two police officers - Steve Thomas and Emma Turberfield, and our Community support officer Felix Rawlinson for our Arrow ward and surrounding parishes.

I am pleased to say they are attending many of our Parish council meetings, holding surgeries and carrying out speed enforcement in some of our villages. We have heard that there will be national changes to policing but retaining local neighbourhood police teams will be critical in ensuring safety in our communities.

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 Police 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/>

**Kirsten Kysow 07773 034152
Report a crime Police 101 Ext 61216**

Local Emergency Numbers

Reporting Highway Issues –

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:01432261800).

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.

For all Highway related defects report via:

24hr Phone – 01432 261 800

Website - Click Below

Report a problem



Dedicated Inboxes

Response within 10 working days

Members and Parish Inboxes:

for additional service information

Communities Inbox:

Social Value Support

Gullies

A basic map of known gullies for which Herefordshire Council at:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/flooding-2/flood-management/3#gulliesmap>.

Gullies are individually marked on the map with latitudes and longitudes being displayed along with a site code, which is used to identify the length of road where the asset is located.

Reporting gullies that need attention:

Report issues with the highway drainage network through the Council's online reporting system at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road>.

Issues reported are investigated by the relevant Locality Steward, who assesses the report against the Highway Maintenance Plan in order to determine the level of intervention required. Where necessary a job for a reactive cleanse is then raised and passed to a crew to attend.

Planned Roadworks

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 because of damage to your vehicle.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/206/highway_claimsplease use.

Report fly's 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](#).

Bins not collected

For info and for helping with constituent enquiries in the future, if any resident goes online and tries to log a missed bin collection the systems are set up to tell you whether there is a problem in your area. Or indeed, if the road hasn't yet been signed off by the collection crew.

This would give an immediate response to the enquiry, this is the correct and quickest route for anyone to find out about their collection or report it as a problem.

[Report a problem with household bins - Herefordshire Council](#)

Report Footpaths issues –

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](#).

- PROW - PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk
- PROW No – [01432 383 550](tel:01432383550)

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.edgепilot.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](tel:014322618000)
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](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/

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](tel:08000520130) (Water emergencies) or [0800 085 3968](tel:08000853968) (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/drivingsuppliestoukraine/>

Community needs contact details – please share with your networks.

Talk Community

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

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_o
ctober_2016.pdf](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_toolki
t.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14134/community_litter_pick_toolkit.pdf)

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](tel: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](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](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