



May 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



I would like to start my update this month by expressing my deep sadness about the death of former Councillor and Leader of the Council, Tony Johnson, who passed away, aged 89, at the weekend. Former Cllr Johnson gave many years of committed service to this county, his ward and their people. He led the council during a pivotal period when significant regeneration and economic projects were being brought forward against a challenging financial backdrop. His time as Leader coincided with some major milestones for Herefordshire, including the opening of the Old Market development and the early progress of the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone. Tony was a colleague and a friend even after he left the council.

Herefordshire Council and Parish elections are held every four years - next elections May 6th, 2027, with the Boundary Commission recently confirming, in its draft for consultation, no changes to our wards or parishes.

Within my report this month I shall be informing of the change at the top of our Council, the reiteration of the parlous state of finances that has been caused by the underfunding of the government has made to our council and how we are getting on with addressing the infrastructure for Herefordshire. In addition to the public consultation regarding the future of the May Fairs in Hereford and Leominster. I also cover, the recent Tourism Conference, and also outline some of the work Herefordshire Council is doing to support the River Wye, its tributaries and catchment plus usual contacts. Additionally, a new scheme for this financial year is new ward grants scheme gives councillors funding to support local community projects

Should you need to contact me, please feel free.

Kind regards



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Herefordshire Council Business

Council appoint a new Chief Executive



Herefordshire Council has on (Friday 1 May) approved the appointment of Paul Satoor as its new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, subject to final routine pre-employment checks. Paul is expected to take up the role in the summer, following a comprehensive national recruitment process, and a competitive field of candidates.

[Herefordshire Council approves appointment of new Chief Executive](#)

Yeomans Travel – safety issues

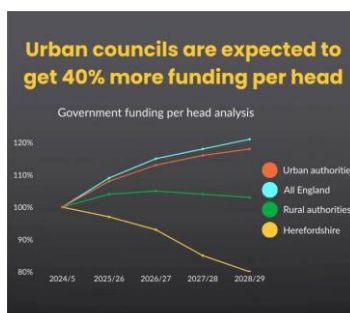
You may have seen reports in the media about Yeoman's travel and concerns raised about safety. Earlier this week, the council sought to reassure residents that we are closely monitoring the bus services we commission following a recent public inquiry into a local operator. While regulation sits with the Traffic Commissioner, the council attended the inquiry to understand the issues raised and has noted early improvements from the operator's action plan, including strengthened management and independent audits. Monitoring will continue to ensure services remain safe, reliable and effective, particularly for those who rely on school and essential transport. You can read our full message later in this bulletin.

[Council monitoring services following bus operator inquiry](#)

Council – Finance

The council has again provided a balanced medium finance strategy, without applying for the emergency funding available from the government. Notwithstanding, I wanted to reiterate the diagram below that gives an idea of the losses we have to deal with the reduction in funding from government and the differences in funding between urban and rural.

Hard Financial Reality



Herefordshire Council's revenue budget for 2026/27 totals £234.1M and includes a 4.99% increase in total council tax. Significantly better than either Worcestershire or Shropshire who are also borrowing funds from the Government and paying extra interest.

The Government's (un) Fair Funding review of local government budgets has ensured Urban councils are expected to receive around 32% more per head in Government-funded spending power for

2026/27. That rural residents will pay around 17% more in council tax compared to Urban residents in 2026/27. That by 2028/29, urban authorities' spending power is expected to allow them to spend around £100 more per resident on services than the most rural councils. Also, that by 2028/29, Government-funded spending power for the most urban authorities is estimated to rise by around 20%, compared with around 2% for the most rural councils. Worth noting that Birmingham City Council a Labour ran local authority which was bankrupt, now states that its financial situation for 2026-27 will be "balanced", with services set for £130m investment. I think this shows the true impact of the fair funding review which moves funding from rural to urban authorities.

We in Herefordshire will be required to make £20M of savings which will be met by controlling costs of service delivery, increasing income from fees and charges, managing demand for council services in high-cost, demand led budgets (an example is entering into long-term agreements with care home providers which can enable £2.5M of savings) and finally delivering efficiencies through review and transformation of services (use of AI in support of social workers reduces their time spent writing up minutes of interviews and thus makes them more efficient.) Of the £20M of savings, 35% or £6.9M are expected to be delivered on 1 April. The Council has to also start work on plans for the 27/28 budget and its required savings of another £20M!

Local Government Boundary Commission

The public consultation on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations for Herefordshire's [future electoral arrangements](#) remains open until 6 July 2026. Members and residents are encouraged to share their views on the proposed retention of 53 councillors across 53 single-member wards, including changes to 22 ward boundaries, before the Commission finalises its recommendations later this year.

With specific regard to Old Gore Ward, there will be minimal disruption other than to include a further parish council into the ward. At item 22 Old Gore, the changes you will see proposed:

- Change proposed: Gains Sellack parish from Llangarron.
- Reason: Improve equality without disrupting Ross ward structure.
- Rejected option: Inclusion of Brampton Abbots into Ross wards.

Personally, I am content with the proposed recommendations and would support those changes

Notwithstanding, a public consultation is now underway, until 6 July 2026, and Members and residents can make their views known to the Commission during this period. More [details including how to respond are on our website](#).

The [full recommendations](#) are on the Commission's website. The LGBCE will then consider all responses and aim to publish final recommendations in September 2026. It will then lay a draft order in both Houses of Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at the authority's elections in 2027.

Digital Officer

I am pleased to support the Council in investigating the creation of a digital officer post to take on the responsibility for broadband provision across the county, management of our terrestrial mobile phone coverage and supporting the take up of new and improved digital services across the county. Despite the massive Fastershire investment to improve access to high-speed broadband, it is still an issue for so many as is poor mobile coverage, having an officer to specialise in this is important particularly for rural communities and businesses.

Food Waste collection

The Council were intending to begin a Food waste collection from 1st April, but this is delayed as we were expecting along with other local authority's financial support from the government. The revenue cost to us would be £2.3 million per annum and we should have received this funding as a new burden agreement. We are therefore having to confirm funding, review governance as the Cabinet decision was to implement the change subject to 'new burdens' funding being made available and review our implementation plans and timescales to align with these changes.

However good news our recycling rate (green bins) has remained at 39%, despite a national trend of falling rates, and you can now recycle aluminium foil, foil trays, metal and foiled lined tubes, plastic tubes and batteries.

Renters Rights Act

People living in private rented accommodation in Herefordshire and property owners, managers and landlords are being encouraged to understand their rights and duties as the new Renters' Rights Act takes effect from Friday 1 May 2026.

[Council's enforcement powers highlighted as new legislation for private rented accommodation comes into force](#)

Parking

People visiting town centres across Herefordshire can now park for free for up to 30 minutes after Herefordshire Council launched its new "Pop and Shop" scheme. This is an initiative to enable more footfall for local businesses by enabling 'churn' of parking events. It is not a proposal for carrying out a full shopping trips but about specific short time errands that have to be made, e.g. prescriptions chemist, picking up children as it says Pop and shop. From the first figures gathered it may be seen as a success and is being used.

[Free "Pop and Shop" parking launched across Herefordshire](#)

New ward grants scheme gives councillors funding to support local community projects

Communities across Herefordshire will benefit from new grassroots projects and initiatives after approval of a new ward grants scheme. The new Herefordshire Councillor Ward Grant Scheme

will give every local ward councillor a £1,000 annual budget to invest directly in community projects within their ward area.

The initiative is designed to support small-scale projects that make a difference locally, giving councillors the ability to respond directly to ideas and requests from community groups, residents and volunteers.

[Decision - Introducing a Herefordshire Councillor ward fund grants scheme. - Herefordshire Council](#)

Parish Councillor – could you be?



Are you passionate about the community you live in?

Could you be a parish councillor?

Find out more A Herefordshire Council vacancy may arise for a number of reasons, such as a councillor's resignation or extended non-attendance at meetings.

When a vacancy occurs, and we are notified of the vacancy, we arrange to advertise the vacancy until an election is requested.

... see more about casual vacancies that are available on: <https://orlo.uk/BUFTb>

Highways and Infrastructure

Preferred Highways Contractor

M Group Highways has been selected as the new preferred provider for Herefordshire Council, replacing Balfour Beatty in June 2026. The contract covers highways maintenance, street lighting, cleaning, and winter gritting. The council is taking back day-to-day control of services, paying M Group for specific, agreed-upon work

[Herefordshire Council Names M Group as Preferred Service Provider of Public Realm Services - LCRIG](#)

Council confirms continuing progress across 10 schemes, with majority completing within 18 months

Multi-Million-pound projects



Council confirms continuing progress across 10 schemes, with majority completing within 18 months.

This comes as Council invests £37 million in roads and highways improvements with a renewed commitment to improving travel choices for all. The Transport Hub [pictured left] is due to open in October 2026. Full information may be found in the link below. In addition to bolstering transport links, active travel and safer routes for

schools

The latest news release from Herefordshire Council: [Herefordshire Council making 'strong progress' on multi-million-pound programme to bolster transport links, active travel and safer routes for schools - Herefordshire Council](#)

Consultation on the future of the May Fairs

Herefordshire Council is inviting residents, businesses and stakeholders to share their views on the future of the Hereford and Leominster May Fairs.

The public consultation is open until 23 May 2026 and will help shape how the fairs are organised from 2028 onwards. As long-standing events that attract thousands of visitors each year, the May Fairs play an important role in the county's heritage and local economy.

The Council is particularly keen to hear from those who live, work in or visit the town and city centres, as well as regular fairgoers. Feedback gathered will help inform future arrangements and ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered.

Community groups, businesses and organisations are encouraged to take part and share the consultation with their networks.

You can complete the consultation here on the [Herefordshire Council website](#).

Help to shape library services

Residents across Herefordshire are being asked to shape on how the county's library services can continue to evolve and serve local people's needs in many different ways.

[Making libraries even better - public consultation seeks views on Herefordshire's library services](#)

New Bingo Book Reading Challenge

Wondering what to read next? Looking for a fun and friendly reading challenge? Adults across the county are invited to take part in the new Book Bingo challenge, launching this month at Herefordshire Libraries.

[Eyes down for a full house with Book Bingo at local libraries](#)

Council – Talk Community

Newsletter Update

Our Talk Community newsletter will continue to focus on information for community organisations, hubs, leaders and services, including funding opportunities, training, national campaigns and sector updates. To better reflect this focus, Talk Community has moved from a weekly to a monthly newsletter.

Alongside this, we've launched a new public-facing newsletter called Spread the Word! Spread the Word will also be monthly and is designed for a wider audience. It will share local news,

community events, opportunities to get involved and positive stories from across our communities.

If you work with residents or community members who might enjoy hearing about local events and good news, please help us to spread the word - [sign up here](#).

Walk this May

May is a great time to get moving, enjoy the outdoors and look after your wellbeing, and Walk This May is all about encouraging people to do just that. Walking is one of the easiest ways to be active, and you don't need special equipment or lots of experience to take part. Whether you want to move a bit more, boost your mood or meet new people, walking can be a simple first step. If you'd like to walk with others, Herefordshire's Wellbeing Walks offer a friendly and supportive way to get involved. These free, regular group walks take place all across the county and are led by experienced Ramblers Wellbeing Walks leaders along tried and tested routes. Walks are taken at a steady pace and over easy ground, making them suitable for most people. Walking with others means you'll feel supported and safe along the way, and many walks finish with a cup of tea or coffee and time for a chat. There's no need to book, just turn up at the starting point 10 - 15 minutes before the walk begins and join in.

This May, why not step outside and give a local wellbeing walk a try? To find a local walk near you, visit the [Talk Community Directory 'What's On' calendar](#).

Events

Visit HEREFORDSHIRE – Annual Tourism Conference



The annual conference of the organisation that promotes tourism for Herefordshire attended by 220 local people. It is estimated that tourism is worth £830 million to our local economy with 9% of the county employees. Visit Herefordshire is a voluntary organisation run by local tourism leads who raise an extra precept on larger tourism business to fund their activity. They offer support to local businesses on reducing costs, including Business Rate Support service; organise over 2,00 training courses in person and on online and develop marketing strategies to promote the county.

[Visit Herefordshire Tourism Conference - Herefordshire County BID](#)

Protecting the River Wye and its tributaries



Herefordshire Council has agreed a Charter for the Wye and will integrate it into policies and decision-making where possible including the new Local Plan. The Council will continue to prioritise freshwater recovery, including tackling pollution, restoring wetlands, reconnecting habitats and improving river systems at a catchment scale, in line with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Council Plan.

The Council will support neighbouring authorities in championing the Charter, promoting a cross-border, catchment wide approach to protecting the River Wye and its tributaries and publicising this shared commitment.

[Wye Valley National Landscape Projects includes £1.6–£1.8 million of funding supporting an annual programme delivery, combining DEFRA, Welsh Government, National Grid and other grants, which allow multiple landscape-scale projects to run alongside community and farming initiatives including:](#)

FCC Biodiversity Community Grant Scheme



The grant aims to protect and enhance biodiversity through allocating funding to projects which will deliver environmental improvements and initiatives that create green spaces, improve biodiversity or help ecosystems in Herefordshire.

- Example projects include tree and hedge planting or management, creation of wildlife corridors, bird, bat or bug boxes and hedgehog homes, planting wildflower areas, wetland / pond creation. Projects should include community / public benefit and engagement.
- During 2025 a total of almost £62,000 funding was awarded to 12 successful applicants in the county including citizen science bat survey, Southside Farm community nature areas, biological heritage at Snodhill Castle and Oatley's Meadow destination park.
- The grant scheme will re-open to applications from 1 June 2026 and I hope will be of interest locally.

[Nature and Biodiversity Community Grant Scheme - Herefordshire Council](#)

Gypsum soil trials – positive results

Herefordshire Council has welcomed promising early results from a soil analysis trial exploring how gypsum, a naturally occurring calcium-based mineral, could help reduce the amount of phosphorus entering local rivers.

Positive early results from gypsum soil trial to help protect local rivers

Young Persons

Nine local organisations and groups have been awarded an additional £50k grant funding collectively by Herefordshire Council and Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion, to provide inclusive social activities for children and young people with SEND.

All the activity sessions have been designed to cater for the needs of children and young people with SEND and will enable children to have fun, make new friends and learn new skills outside of school or college.

Grant funding awarded to local organisations for SEND activities

Police - information



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/>

Report a crime Police 101 Ext 61216

Ross on Wye Safer Neighbourhood Team - Neighbourhood Matters



Meet your safer neighbourhood team

Officers can be contacted on the below numbers concerning community issues. To report a crime in progress call 999 and for non emergencies, report online at www.westmercia.police.uk/report. If you are unable to report online, you can contact us via the 101 non-emergency number.



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**.

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](#) 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

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_SgEGkleekL2ROFO?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.wvutilities.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/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](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