



June 2026 Ward Report – Old Gore Ward – Herefordshire Council

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 hope you've all had a good week and were able to enjoy the fabulous sunshine - it's certainly felt like summer outdoors. With it being a shorter week for many and it being half-term for families, I also hope there's been an opportunity to take a bit of time out to enjoy the weather.

The County flag has been flown at half-mast to mark the funeral of former Leader of the Council, Tony Johnson who passed away at the start of May. I am pleased that the council made this tribute to a truly respected man and a good friend to me.

I mention in this month the change of Public Realm Contractors, result of the recent Care Quality Commission's inspection of our adult services and amongst others celebrating the installation of a charter for the River Wye.

So I hope you have and continue to receive the benefits of our summer weather. Please do not forget to ensure that you, children and indeed animals in the hot weather - remember heat can be dangerous.

As I have said before I gather my information from many sources to enable a wide view of Council matters for your information. I am aware that some of my parish councils receive the neighbourhood watch regular updates from the police.

For those who are not currently on their distribution list I provide the address for Neighbourhood Watch www.alert@neighbouralert.co.uk

Should you need to contact me, please feel free.

Kind regards

Mob. 07792 882054

Barry.durkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

New Era for Herefordshire Highways and Public Realm Services



Monday, June 1st, sees the formal start of the council's new approach to Public Realm services with the contract with M Group commencing. This will see an overhaul of how we maintain and improve our roads, highways, parks and open spaces to better meet residents' needs and expectations. As you will know, we'll be taking more of a leading role – directing and

working with M Group and other providers to deliver a step-change in public realm maintenance. This is the council's biggest single contract. I know that officers have found his clarity of purpose helpful in this transition is the start of a new chapter for highways and public realm services, with a new model designed to give greater local control and improved outcomes for residents.

[New era for Herefordshire Highways and Public Realm Services.](#)

Care Quality Commission's Adult Social Care Assessment

At the end of last week, we have seen the publication of the **Care Quality Commission's assessment** of our adult social care services. These assessments are rigorous and play an important role in helping us understand where we're doing well and where we need to continue improving for the residents who rely on our services.

There is positive recognition within the report, including 'Good' ratings for safeguarding and for partnerships and communities, and no areas rated 'Inadequate', which reflect the commitment and professionalism of colleagues across our services. Overall, the report rates us as 'Requires Improvement', with a score of 56% - just seven percentage points below a 'Good' rating. It's important to note that around 30% of councils assessed under the new regime have received the same rating. This is the first time we have been assessed under the new CQC framework, and the findings broadly reflect our own self-assessment.

We already have a comprehensive Improvement Plan in place, and this work is ongoing. The report highlights real strengths, including the dedication of our staff, strong partnership working and effective prevention, alongside areas where we know we need to continue improving, particularly around waiting times and access to some services.

In particular the report noted that *"staff were passionate about supporting people in Herefordshire"*; in terms of the quality of care and interaction with people *"94% of service users said they thought staff were caring and compassionate"*, and that *"people experienced*

person-centred and strength-based assessment and care planning that was considerate of their needs". You can read our full response on our website.

[Council committed to further Adult Social Care improvement following CQC assessment - Herefordshire Council](#)

Corporate Peer Challenge

We also welcomed back colleagues from the Local Government Association for the **return visit of the Corporate Peer Challenge team**. Their original visit provided valuable external insight, during which they assessed us as a good council, striving to improve further. This follow-up, which forms part of the usual CPC process, is an important opportunity to reflect on the progress we've made and to continue strengthening how we work as an organisation. The CPC team's initial reflections on their return were positive. They highlighted the warm welcome they received, the openness and honesty of interviewees and clear evidence that the council has taken previous recommendations seriously.

They felt the current transformation approach is the right one and noted that it is increasingly owned by staff, although delivery will need to be carefully managed given the council's capacity and resources. Progress in areas such as data and insights was recognised, alongside some ongoing frustrations with systems. They acknowledged the financial challenges the council faces and the need to continue managing these carefully. Partnership working was seen as a key strength, and they recognised the council's ambition for major projects and growth.

Overall, they reaffirmed their view that Herefordshire is a good council, with the maturity to address challenges, including those highlighted through the CQC assessment. Next steps will be the production of a short CPC report. The year ahead was described as bringing both opportunities and challenges, including leadership change and the run up to the 2027 elections, making it particularly important that we maintain momentum and continue to deliver our priorities.

Council Finances

I am pleased to report that Herefordshire Council have delivered a balanced budget for year end of 2025/26, despite significant funding and demand pressures. The final outturn report, presented to Cabinet on 21 May, confirms that the council ended the year with income and expenditure aligned, reflecting strong financial management and the sustained efforts of services to control spending. That included delivery of £13.2 million in savings while actively managing cost pressures, most notably in adult social care, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), home-to-school transport and

temporary accommodation. This is great credit to our finance team at the council and the Cabinet Member Cllr Peter Stoddard particularly when you considered we have less population than some of our neighbours.

The council's draft accounts for 2025/26 have been published, one month ahead of the 30 June statutory deadline. This statutory document outlines governance arrangements in place and tells the story of our financial position and performance for the year ended 31 March 2026. Preparation of the accounts is a huge achievement and labour of love by all teams involved in their production. In only 38 working days since the financial year end, teams have worked tirelessly to reconcile the year end position, close down the ledger, report the outturn position to Directorate Teams and Cabinet, and prepare the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement comprising over 33,000 words of narrative explanation and accounting disclosures. The council has a proven track record of high-quality financial reporting, and I would like to thank Cllr Stoddard for his role, insight and rigour in helping us maintain our financial stewardship. I am sure you will also join me in recognising the hard work of Rachael Sanders and her team in achieving this impressive outcome.

The timely completion of the accounts provides valuable, external assurance over the council's financial reporting arrangements. The accounts will be presented to the council's Audit & Governance Committee on 9 June and will be audited by our external auditors, Grant Thornton, between June and September to confirm the accounts are 'true and fair' and free from errors. The draft accounts for 2025/26 can be viewed on the council's website [Draft Financial Statements 2025-26](#) alongside a summary set of statements [Summary Financial Statements 2025/26](#).

Shire Hall and the Museum & Library project

You may have seen some media coverage this week relating to Shire Hall and the Museum & Library. As Cllr Bramer said in our public response, these redevelopment projects are large and complex, involving listed, historic buildings which reflect their current (red) RAG rating. We are working with technical design teams and major contractors to finalise designs and costing, and as with any publicly funded major projects these are kept under continual review to monitor and forecast costs, timings and resources in the interests of taxpayers. We continue to work closely with all funding partners, such as the Stronger Towns Board, and we are due to discuss the status of both these projects with the board in early June.

Key Leadership and Governance Roles

Herefordshire Council confirms re-election of key leadership and governance roles at annual general meeting of the Council Chairman, Vice Chairperson and Leader of the Council re-elected, with most committee and panel chairs remaining.

[Herefordshire Council confirms re-election of key leadership and governance roles at annual general meeting of the Council - Herefordshire Council](#)

Multi-Million Pound Programme



Herefordshire Council is making ‘strong progress’ on multi-million-pound programme to bolster transport links, active travel and safer routes for schools. The Council confirms continuing progress across 10 schemes, with majority completing within 18 months. This comes as Council invests multi million on roads and highways improvements and a renewed commitment to improving travel choices for all.

Herefordshire Council is due to complete these key transport projects within the next 18 months to help improve connectivity, safety and accessibility for tens of thousands of residents, commuters, workers and visitors. Full details may be reviewed at:

[Herefordshire Council making ‘strong progress’ on multi-million-pound programme to bolster transport links, active travel and safer routes for schools - Herefordshire Council](#)

Expansion of Council Recycling Service - Crunch and squeeze!



Herefordshire Council has expanded its recycling service to include foil and tubes. These now join Herefordshire’s recycling list. So, “Scrunch and squeeze, recycle please!” That’s the big message to Herefordshire residents as we expand our kerbside recycling service to include foil and tubes, making it even easier to recycle at

home. Now, residents may dispose of aluminum foil, foil trays, metal, or foil-lined tubes (such as tomato purée tubes), and plastic tubes – including toothpaste and cosmetic tubes – included in household recycling please ensure:

- Make sure items are clean and dry
- Squeeze out any remaining product from tube
- Leave lids and caps on tubes

- Put recycling loose in the bin, not in plastic bags
- Scrunch smaller pieces of foil into a ball to help processing

The latest news release from Herefordshire Council: [Scrunch and squeeze! - Foil and tubes join Herefordshire's recycling list - Herefordshire Council](#)

Plain Old Telephone System (POTS) removal

As the Digital Champion for Herefordshire, Cllr. Stoddart wanted to make you aware of the planned closedown of the Plain Old Telephone System (POTS), which will see all analogue services close and all services becoming digital.

This is scheduled for January 2027. It's very important that all residents are aware of this and the potential impact on them. We will be providing further updates for the public, including on the Herefordshire Council website and via social media posts throughout the year.

If any residents, have any concerns or issues regarding the digital switchover please do not hesitate to contact him at: peter.stoddart@herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Trading Standards and Police act

Herefordshire Trading Standards and police target illegal vape sales in Leominster
Herefordshire Council Trading Standards and West Mercia Police have carried out enforcement action against two Leominster businesses linked to the sale of illegal tobacco and illicit vaping products.

[Herefordshire Trading Standards and police target illegal vape sales in Leominster - Herefordshire Council](#)

Major Multi-Agency Rural Crime Crackdown

Council supports major multi-agency rural crime crackdown in south Herefordshire
Herefordshire Council's Community Protection team has supported a major multi-agency day of action targeting rural crime and environmental offences in south Herefordshire. The operation, led by West Mercia Police and conducted in and around Ross-on-Wye, brought together a range of partner agencies to tackle offences affecting rural communities, motorists, businesses, and the environment.

Council officers worked alongside police, HMRC, Gloucestershire Police and other specialist agencies as part of coordinated enforcement activity focusing on vehicle-related offences, waste crime, animal welfare, and wider regulatory breaches.

[Council supports major multi-agency rural crime crackdown in south Herefordshire - Herefordshire Council](#)

Carbon Management Plan

In May the Cabinet approved the Carbon Management Action Plan for the Council, which sets out a clear and practical approach to reducing emissions while delivering tangible benefits for residents and communities. By focusing on improved energy efficiency, a more diverse energy mix, including renewables, and targeted carbon reduction measures, the plan supports greater energy resilience, helps manage costs, and contributes to better air quality and public health outcomes. Cabinet members praised the work of officers for these achievements.

[Herefordshire Council approves Carbon Management Plan to cut emissions and improve energy efficiency - Herefordshire Council](#)

Special Events premises

On Thursday I visited **Gardner Hall** in Hereford as we begin using it as a new venue for weddings, civil partnerships and other ceremonies. It was great to meet the team there and see first-hand what a lovely setting it is. I know a lot of effort has gone into preparing the venue, and it's a positive addition to the services we offer residents. Please do tell your friends and families about this new venue as a good option in Hereford to hold special events. The team has big plans for generating a lot more income for the council.

[Good event location option in Hereford](#)

River Wye Charter



Herefordshire has joined forces with neighbouring local authorities and conservation organisations across England and Wales to endorse a new Charter for the River Wye, setting out a shared commitment to the river's long-term recovery. It was great to see Herefordshire taking a leading role in the development of the River Wye Charter, which was formally signed at a special ceremony in Hay-on-Wye last Sunday, with Cllr Swinglehurst at the forefront of events alongside partners. Protecting and improving the health of the river is a priority for our communities, and it's encouraging to see partners coming together with a shared commitment to long-term action. This was an effort very much led by Herefordshire Council and in doing so they brought together neighbouring English as well as Welsh councils, public bodies and conservation groups. This has generated a lot of really positive publicity in local, national and even international media, and helps to



position Herefordshire strongly and authoritatively. My thanks also go to Richard Vaughan and his team for their dedication and hard work to this most important milestone. If you have Facebook, please do take a look at this nice video of the ceremony.

Left: Deputy Leader of Herefordshire Council Elissa Swindlehurst signs the Charter for the River Wye.

[Herefordshire Council takes leading role in major step forward in protecting the future of the River Wye - Herefordshire Council](#)

Police Service



Ross on Wye Safer Neighbourhood Team - Neighbourhood Matters

Significant progress being made in tackling rural crime



Six months ago, almost 30 members of the farming community across Herefordshire met with my deputy Marc Bayliss to talk about rural crime and the work West Mercia Police was doing to tackle it. Concerns were raised with regards poaching, hare coursing, vehicle and

equipment theft, and livestock worrying and theft. PCC raised these concerns with the Chief Constable and progress has been delivered at pace, including:

- ✓ Rural crime training for call handlers with support of the National Farmers Union 📞
- ✓ Provided £50k of funding to buy two 4x4s 🚗 🚗
- ✓ Increased targeted activity to tackle hare coursing and poaching 💪

The positivity at the follow-up meeting this week in Ledbury, was testament to the action taken and the continued positive results in catching criminals and regaining stolen property.

But rest assured, the work does not stop here. This is only the beginning of the activity taking place across the force's three counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.

Message Sent By - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia

Police Information - Neighbourhood

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

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

Severn Trent water: [0800 783 4444](tel: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.wwutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas

Welsh Water: [0800 052 0130](tel:0800 052 0130) (Water emergencies) or [0800 085 3968](tel: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_october_2016.pdf

Litter picking

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

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

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