

Ward Report – for February 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.



Covid-19 update

There is still local and national Covid-19 information and support available.

Local data: [Understanding Herefordshire Covid-19 summary website](#)

Local information: [Herefordshire Council website](#)

Local vaccinations: [Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group website](#)

National guidance: [Government website](#)

Urgent medication supplies: [NHS website](#) / call NHS 111

Council urges residents to continue helping reduce spread of virus

In Herefordshire, our local Covid case rate remains high so we encourage everyone to wear masks as a matter of personal choice, to help limit the spread. As people across Herefordshire return to their normal routines this week, Herefordshire Council is reminding them to play their part to help keep everyone across the county safe.

The government's Plan B remains in place to help prevent the spread of the highly contagious omicron variant of COVID-19.

[Play your part to help keep Herefordshire safe – Herefordshire Council](#)

Face Coverings

The government lifted face covering guidance from Thursday 27 January, but advises that you continue to wear one in crowded and indoor spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet. In Herefordshire, our local Covid case rate remains high so we encourage everyone to wear masks as a matter of personal choice, to help limit the spread. All Herefordshire council meetings, being held in-person, are using Covid-secure measures and will be live-streamed to make them as accessible as possible.

Councillors may choose to join meetings in person or virtually; however, if not in person they may take part in the meeting but may not vote. For the time being, the Council is asking

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staff to continue working from home, unless their role requires them to work from a fixed location.

Bird keepers reminded to follow rules

Avian influenza has been confirmed by Defra at a farm near Ross-on-Wye. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have confirmed there is avian influenza (H5N1) in a small flock of chickens, ducks and geese at a farm near Ross-on-Wye.

Herefordshire Council has been liaising with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and there appears to be no wider risk, but bird keepers are being reminded that they must follow government requirements. The council acted quickly as soon as receiving information from Defra. The result is a loss of livestock to the farmer, whose premises will undergo a total disinfection under Defra and APHA supervision.

Herefordshire Council is currently in the process of writing to or visiting every household within a three-kilometre protection zone of the affected premises, to ensure that poultry keepers are taking the necessary precautions in line with Defra guidance.

[Bird keepers reminded to follow rules](#)

Talk Community

The Council are delighted to announce that our latest Talk Community Hub launched today, which means we now have a fabulous 38 hubs across Herefordshire. Belmont Community Centre, with friendly volunteers and a cup of tea at hand in their Community Café, welcome you to their hub.

To find out more about your nearest hub, visit www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/hubs.

Talk Community helpline: The helpline is still available to help residents, who don't have support from family, friends or their local community, with food supplies, medication delivery or befriending (this includes those who are self-isolating).

Neighbourhood Matters from West Mercia Police

Do you want to know what's going on in your area? Well now you can by signing up to the messaging service called [Neighbourhood Matters](#).

Neighbourhood Matters enables residents, businesses and community groups to keep in touch with our local West Mercia Police teams and learn more about what they are doing in your community. It's free to sign up and is a great way to know what's happening in your area and what is being done about it.

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You can choose to receive updates on crimes and latest information on on-going incidents. You can also hear about positive police action, good news stories and be able to play an active part in helping with public appeals.

To find out more and sign up, visit the [Neighbourhood Matters website](#).

Your county, your views – Herefordshire Local Plan

It has been said that where we live plays a big part in helping us feel happy and secure. Being involved in and having a say about our local neighbourhood can play a valuable part in being a part of our local community. This is your opportunity to contribute

The Local Plan 2021-2041 will be a new document that will help shape growth and development across the county over the next 20 years. This is your chance to get involved at an early stage in the local plan update, to have an influence. Herefordshire Council want to hear your views.

Take a look at the draft vision and objectives, and explore the options on how residential development can be distributed across the county. You can take the survey in handy bite sized chunks, or all at once.

Consultation on the location and scale of new development throughout Herefordshire will run until **Monday 28 February**. Have your say by visiting the [Herefordshire Local Plan website](#).

Household Support Grant to help low income households this winter

I repeat this this essential message again this month. If you are living in a low income household that receives Universal Credit (at a level below the threshold for free school meals and/or free prescriptions), you can now apply for a one-off payment of £60 to help with food, energy and other essential costs. One-off payment now available to help support vulnerable people and families. The payment is available through [Herefordshire Council](#), which has been allocated over £1million by the government as part of a new Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people and families this winter.

To receive this support you will need to complete a short online application form to verify your identity and provide your bank details for payment. **The deadline for applications is 28 February 2022.**

Community involvement with planning

A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will engage with the community in respect of planning matters.

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A statement of community involvement is prepared which sets out the council’s policy in respect of consultation on planning matters adopted in January 2017 [Statement of community involvement January 2017 \(herefordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/consultation-and-community-involvement). The proposed revised statement of community involvement would replace this current document.

Extensive review of the planning process leading to the publication of the Localism Act in 2011 and National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, as well as the emerging White Paper for Planning, means there is now far greater emphasis on early engagement with all potentially affected parties. The revised statement of community involvement (URL below) details the various ways in which people are able to be involved in the planning process and the commitment the council has to ensure there is ample opportunity to do so. This document was produced to Full Council on 28th January 2022 for approval by councillors. However, numerous comments were made and the document is to be “tweaked” before printing; therefore, be advised although the document is broadly agreeable there will be changes made e.g. role of ward councillor.

<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50096947/Appendix%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20revised%20version.pdf>

Have your say on the new Herefordshire Local Plan.

Have your say on the new Herefordshire Local Plan throughout the county is now live and will run until 28 February 2022.

[Consultation on the options for the location and scale of new development](#)

The new document, which will replace the current Core Strategy, will determine growth and development across the county over the next 20 years. It will ensure that we deliver the required housing, alongside the jobs, and supporting community infrastructure and services in a way that is appropriate for the rural nature and historic character of the County.

Changes to the Fastershire programme and Gigaclear

Statement from the Leader of the Council c. 28/1/2022

Whilst the county now has over 93% premises that can access superfast broadband which is significant for such a rural area, there were two blows to the broadband deployment plans. These both relate to Gigaclear as the main supplier commissioned by the council through Fastershire to provide a full fibre network across the county. In November one of their subcontractors for build works, Complete Utilities, ceased trading with immediate effect leaving Gigaclear to make sites safe and work with their other subcontractors to pick up the delivery. Whilst this was effectively addressed, a wider issue related to Gigaclear has been

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emerging relating to their ability to deliver broadband to parts of our county due to the cost. The main impact is on 2,324 premises in the south of the county still on broadband speeds of less than 30Mbps. The council made the decision to break with Gigaclear for their contracted works in the south of the county and for the areas to be part of the new national Government Project Gigabit programme. Whilst this will take longer to reach some premises it means that, subject to the Government delivering on the programme, a wider area can benefit from gigabit capability. In the meantime the council will support communities affected with a household grant, support for business and continue with the community broadband scheme. I appreciate that residents who had been expecting to receive better broadband will be very disappointed and we will continue to do what we can to press Central Government to provide help.

Repayment to the LEP

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) comprises a group of Councils viz. Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin known as Marches LEP. This LEP is the method by which the government pays for approved government work to be completed by the respective council. In this instance the repayment relates to a dispute between Herefordshire Council relating and LEP relating to costs to be repaid to the LEP by Herefordshire Council for their cancelling the recent proposal for a 'Bypass' for Hereford.

This matter was brought to light by a recent freedom of information request of Shropshire Council (lead authority) giving information not previously declared by Herefordshire Council.

Statement from the Leader of the Council c. 28/1/2022

“As a result of an FOI request made to Shropshire Council, Cllr Lester stated at the last Cabinet meeting that the Council had reached a settlement to pay £2.3m to Shropshire Council, acting in its capacity as the Accountable Body for the LEP.

This settlement figure arose as a result of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council and Marches LEP agreeing to settle all outstanding disputes in relation to the LEP funding of the South Wye Transport Package. The agreement contains confidentiality obligations which mean that I cannot say anything about the settlement without the agreement of the three parties. Such an agreement has not been reached but my understanding is that officers are working on this. Clearly I cannot predict what communication is to be provided but I am pressing officers to provide a full explanation, to which Councillors and the public are

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entitled. I am not happy with this situation especially as my ability to answer Councillor questions at this meeting will be very limited.

I have asked the Chief Executive to review all the circumstances which gave rise to this settlement being agreed. Given that the parties ended up in mediation, there was clearly an issue which was disputed strongly by both parties. This investigation will be carried out by our internal auditors SWAP, and will be provided to the audit and governance committee”

What have you got planned for The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations?

If you have a creative and cultural activity idea that your local communities would like to take part in for the Jubilee celebrations, have a look at [Let’s Create Jubilee Fund](#) which is now open for applications.

The fund is to help voluntary and community groups develop creative and cultural activities, as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022. Grants available will be of £750 to £10,000.

Applications for the fund close on Monday 28 February. For details about how to apply, visit the [Herefordshire Community Foundation website](#).

A beautiful tree with so much to give

Would you like to plant a beautiful tree to last a lifetime, whilst supporting our local Hospice?

St Michael’s Hospice has teamed up with Wyevale Nurseries to establish a tree planting initiative. At a time when we are considering our carbon footprint, what better way to do this than by getting out in the garden with the family and planting your own tree? It’s also a fitting way to remember a loved one, a living legacy to that person.

There are four fabulous trees to choose from including the Silver Birch and Rowan tree. The tree pack costs £20 and includes everything you need to plant your chosen tree, with a handy “How to” planting guide. All you need is an appropriate space in your garden.

For more information and to get involved, visit the [St Michael’s Hospice website](#).

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

Barry

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Email. bdurkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

Local Parishes News

Upton Bishop: It is expected that all works will be completed by early February. However, the entire junction has been closed to traffic unfortunately, the proposed and approved diversions which included travelling along the A449, A49 and A438 have been circumvented by drivers running parallel to the A449; which has included driving up and along Perrystone Hill – with all classes of vehicles. This has caused extreme problems and danger to the residents. I have spoken with the cabinet member for Highways and Infrastructure and asked him to review the methodology of considering diversion routes, to prevent this type of incident. I have spoken with BBLP and the Police and they have set in train some measures to try to deal with this unwanted incursion of ‘A’ road traffic onto an unclassified road. The police have introduced marked vehicle patrols, with my urging to be active in enforcing, speeding and driving with undue care or dangerous driving. I have also requested of BBLP senior management that the highways verges be attended to post Old Gore crossroads opening. Also, that the damage to the highway of Perrystone Hill – throughout its length be repaired post Old Gore crossroads opening.

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Useful Information

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>

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.

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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.

To identify road numbers, or to see if publicly maintained or to view Public Rights of Way: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/716/highways_and_public_rights_of_way_map

The highways maintenance plan – which sets out the council's system of road inspection, maintenance and repairs, including timescales:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5210/highway_maintenance_plan_october_2016.pdf

Toolkits:

Community commissioning

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/18820/community_commissioning_model_toolkit.pdf

Litter picking

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/14134/community_litter_pick_toolkit.pdf

Traffic Regulation Orders

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2891/application_toolkit_for_traffic_regulation_orders.pdf

SIDs

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1859/speed_indicator_device_toolkit.pdf

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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](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/206/highway_claimsplease_use)

Council tax reduction or exemption

You can get money off your Council Tax bill, or even pay nothing, in certain circumstances. A discount or exemption depends on your current situation and circumstances, but does not take account of income or savings. If you are on a low income, you may also be able to get help to pay your bill through Council Tax Reduction. We will need to assess your financial and other circumstances to see what help you qualify for.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200146/council_tax/39/council_tax_reduction

General Data Protection Regulations Statement

The General Data Protection Act places obligations and responsibilities on any company, organisation and individual who hold and process 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.