

Ward Report – March 2023
From your Local Community Champion – Ward 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.



Dear resident,

Happy St David`s day! Hopefully most of the winter is behind us and the explosion of snowdrops this year have been a real bonus as we prepare for spring.

As usual this ward report provides information relating to Herefordshire and primarily for Old Gore Ward and its parish councils. Hopefully, the messages provided will still give you information and details on where to find further details and/or how to report issues.

To enable this report I have consulted with many sources including information provided by other councillors. This month on 6th March Herefordshire Council has been declared the start for Purdah before the elections on 4th May 2023. This pre-election period, previously known as ‘purdah’, describes the period of time immediately before elections or referendums when specific restrictions on communications activity are in place. Please forward this update to any residents in the ward who you think may be interested and copy me in. As ever if you think I can be of help please do not hesitate to contact me. Stay safe and keep well everybody.

Call for volunteers – my re-election

At this point I would like to remind you of my intention to stand again for Ward Councillor for Old Gore Ward on Herefordshire Council– our ward!

To assist me I would like to ask for support and assistance from parishioners **in all seven parishes** to help me with running at the local election on **Thursday 4th May 2023**. I would be obliged if any resident, not necessarily living in the ward, would like to help me to be re-elected. My request includes parish councillors and clerks but not acting in their parish council role, again I would be obliged for their assistance. If anybody wishes to help me please contact by my mobile or using the email address Barry4oldgore@btinternet.com. I would ask that all those, without a parish council communications facility, advertise this personal request for assistance widely. It is not appropriate for parish council facilities to be used to assist with my election. To comply with regulations the next two updates will be sent from my private email address, but the confidentiality of your email contacts remains with myself alone, in accordance with GDPR regulations.

Barry

Protecting Herefordshire`s most vulnerable Children

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Local Authorities run many services, some you experience almost daily like highways, others perhaps not at all. The Council has a statutory duty to look after vulnerable children. These young people may need support or care as there is a concern for their health and wellbeing. Sometimes this means very difficult decisions to be made, including should a child be removed from its parent or family, with huge implications involved and life changing events for individuals. Many children will be placed on risk registers- sometimes before they are born.

This a very sensitive and pressured area requiring skilled staff and nationally there are real challenges in running Children`s services. In Herefordshire we have circa 400 children in care, which is a high figure compared to other similar councils and there have been real concerns about the way the service has been locally run. Last year the Secretary of State following Ofsted concerns intervened and appointed Eleanor Brazil as her Commissioner to oversee the service. Despite some recent small improvement the council`s children`s care department was still judged not to have the capacity or capability to run the services on their own.

The Secretary of State has retained her Commissioner Eleanor Brazil to continue to oversee Children`s care services in Herefordshire. In the Statutory Declaration published on the 1st March, the Minister instructs Herefordshire Council to work and cooperate with Ms Brazil and an appointed improvement adviser until further notice.

This is the right decision given the long history of poor performance and particular poor response to Ofsted reports since 2019. Having external leadership, directly responsible to the Secretary of State, is the best way that the council`s children`s service can stabilise and sustain improvement. Giving vulnerable children, families and carers the proper standards of process and support.

Going forward Worcestershire and Telford and the Wrekin councils will support the local services together with other national assistance. Longer term a lead local authority partner will be required. Maintaining and sustaining improvement will be a challenge and at a financial cost. The current budget for these services for 2022/23 which was 54.5 million pounds but is projected by the end of this month to have overspent and be 63.5 million.

Every child matters and most importantly we have to secure better outcomes for the most vulnerable. This must remain the Council`s most important priority.

The full report can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/herefordshire-childrens-services-commissioner-report>

Herefordshire Council Response at [Herefordshire Council responds to Ministerial decision – Herefordshire Council](#)

Social Work programme opens for recruitment in Herefordshire

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The 'Step Up' To Social Work programme in Herefordshire Council has opened for recruitment for aspiring social workers to apply for a place on the intensive but highly rewarding training programme.

Step Up To Social Work is 14-month, full-time training programme for talented graduates and career changers to become the next generation of child and family social workers supporting vulnerable children, young people and families. It is designed for people who want to become a social worker but do not have a degree in social work. Successful applicants train through a combination of academic study and hands on social work experience in a local authority.

[Start a new career in child and family social work – Herefordshire Council](#)

Local government elections on 4 May 2023

The last local government elections in Herefordshire were held in 2019. Herefordshire's next scheduled elections will take place on **Thursday 4 May 2023**, where all 53 district wards and 133 parish/town councils will hold elections for new members.

[Elections 4 May 2023 – Herefordshire Council](#)

Postal and proxy voting

Many voters today prefer to vote by post. If you will be away on polling day, at work or on holiday, are physically unable or just don't have the time to get to a polling station to vote in person, you can still exercise your democratic right to vote. You may have moved house since the electoral register was drawn up and have not yet joined the register at your new address. For your convenience, you now have the right to vote by post.

New arrangements allow anyone who is on the Register of Electors to apply for a postal vote at any election. However, you must be registered under Individual Electoral Registration to apply to vote by post or proxy. Remember if you can't get to your polling station for whatever reason, you can apply for a postal vote but you must be registered under Individual Electoral Registration first.

Download a [postal vote application form](#) and return it to electoral services by post or by hand.

The deadline for the receipt of new postal vote applications or to change or cancel an existing postal applications for all elections is 11 working days prior to polling day. Postal vote ballot papers are normally sent out about a week before the election.

Voter ID required – for first time at election

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For the first time residents in Herefordshire will need to show photographic ID to vote at this year's local elections. Residents are being urged to make sure they are ready to vote in May by checking they have an accepted form of ID.

The requirement to show photo ID at the polling station is introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act which was passed last year and comes into effect for the first time this May. This will affect all electors who vote in person or by proxy, at the next local Council elections on Thursday 4 May 2023. Electors or their proxy must bring a suitable form of photographic ID to their polling station before they are given a ballot paper. If someone doesn't have accepted photo ID, they can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

The electoral commission are running a campaign which we will be supporting to remind people they need to have accepted Photo ID in place in order to vote or they will need to apply for a VAC

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id>

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/elections-1/forthcoming-elections-referendums/8>

[Herefordshire residents need photo ID to vote at elections in May – Herefordshire Council](#)

[Check you're election ready – Herefordshire Council](#)

Council adopts the total Council Tax precepts for 2023/24

It is a matter of record that I, along with my Conservative colleagues, voted against this year's 4.99% overall charge proposal; however, we and our other opposition members were narrowly defeated by 2 votes. Similarly last year we proposed to the administration an alternative to not to impose the tax levy. We proposed that, as we then had some financial reserves, that those council tax payers in Herefordshire could have a 0% levy imposed. Thus a standstill, to offset, to some extent, the then impending cost of living crisis, again this was defeated in the vote.

The Council Tax bills will be sent out this month and at its meeting on 10th February the council approved a budget requiring the amount to be raised from Council Tax was £127 million resulting in a 4.99% increase. A band D council tax for 2023/24 will increase to £1,786.61 – an increase of £86. Added to this is the Police precept (£18.8 million is raised in Herefordshire towards West Mercia Constabulary) a band D charge of £264.50, an increase of £14.84 or 5.94%. Also the Hereford & Worcester Fire service (£6.7 million raised from

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Herefordshire) a band D charge £94.40 an increase of £5 or 5.59%. Finally the Parish precept is also to be added.

Herefordshire Council on 3rd March adopted the total Council Tax precepts for all Herefordshire residents. As the billing authority, the council has a statutory duty to collect charges set by each parish council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. However, Herefordshire Council has no control over the level of increase or how these organisations choose to spend their budget.

Herefordshire residents will be provided with individual bills based on their parish location. The raised precepts are needed to support the delivery of vital services across the county, with the average Council Tax bill for a Band D dwelling set at £1,862.50.

[Council confirms overall Council Tax for 2023/24 – Herefordshire Council](#)

Cabinet Commission presents options for restoring the Wye

A progress report has been published setting out some preliminary findings and recommendations from The Cabinet Commission for Restoring the Wye.

The Commission was set up by Herefordshire Council last year to investigate options for restoring the River Wye to good health. Its membership also includes the other three councils with responsibility for parts of the River Wye catchment area - Powys, Monmouthshire and Forest of Dean.

Presently river protection is provided through the delivery of a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) overseen by the River Wye Nutrient Management Plan Delivery Board). Following a review of these measures the conclusion reached is that the present voluntary activities do not provide the protection and actions needed to prevent further deterioration of the river's Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and will not deliver river restoration. More needs to be done, and the Commission makes a number of recommendations.

One of these recommendations is that other forms of regulatory and monitoring schemes for farming practices are explored, as a matter of urgency, to rule them in or out as viable solutions to deliver certainty for the river. Agriculture is assessed as contributing more than 70% of the phosphate pollution in the river catchment.

[Cabinet Commission presents options for restoring the Wye – Herefordshire Council](#)

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Herefordshire Council has now published its proposed Masterplan and Transport Strategy for Hereford City which include several interesting features. The funding for all of this was City masterplan £1 million, Eastern bridge crossing 400k and 62K to local transport development. However the decision to reverse the decision on the Hereford western bypass and cancel the work the southern link road (from the A49 to the A465 Abergavenny highway) cost 22.4 million pounds! So why build an eastern crossing when you threw out the Southern link road to A465.

A push towards more greener Hereford, walking, cycling and electric buses has some merit but what if you live outside Hereford City? If Hereford is to remain our County service centre how do we get there and through there? Greening over car parks, reducing highway capacity with more green space and anti-car measures ignore the reality of our lives in rural areas.

Some of the aspects have been aspirational for over 20 years like Transport Hub at Railway station, but others do challenge the wider thinking on the movement of people and business in and outside the City. There will be a fuller public consultation in the summer before submitting to Government.

Above: the reality of Hereford for so many of us.

[Comprehensive vision set out for the future of Hereford – Herefordshire Council](#)

Rough Sleepers

Project Brave began as a new way of dealing with homelessness and rough sleeping during the recent covid pandemic, when government notified councils to bring ‘everyone-in’ from the streets. In addition, this multi-agency partnership set out to create solutions for very vulnerable people at risk from substance use, mental health, criminal experience and exploitation. It zeroes in on those who aren’t eligible for, or fall between the cracks of, various statutory services.

[Cabinet makes Brave decision – Herefordshire Council](#)

Families facing financial hardship.

If you need help paying for food or energy bills visit our [emergency welfare support webpage](#) to see if you are eligible for a payment.

A proportion of our household support funding has been set aside for residents who need help the most during the cost of living crisis. This includes those who have not been eligible for other types of government support. You can apply if you are:

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- A Herefordshire resident over 16 years old, or a member of the armed forces who can demonstrate a strong connection to the county and
- A person or household experiencing financial hardship who can demonstrate the need for emergency support with essential living costs that cannot be met by other sources

[Emergency welfare support available – Herefordshire Council](#)

Supporting Ukraine

Last week marked the anniversary of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, and local voluntary work continues to get aid to their communities. I know that within our county many families have welcome Ukrainian people into their home and continue to support them at this most difficult of time. We can continue to support this work by contacting the details below.

Local teams continues to organise supplies - details can be found on

<https://www.facebook.com/drivingsupplioustoukraine/>

<https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/ukraine>

Our Community Can (we like this)



Have you heard about Our Community Can? They're keen to support people across Herefordshire, particularly those living in rural communities, to be active and creative. They want to help communities provide more opportunities that bring people together to help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

As each community is so individual, it's not one size fits all. To give you an idea of what "Our Community Can" do – they can offer opportunities to network with other people and organisations, deliver taster events, train volunteers and leaders, access funding opportunities or develop new and sustainable local active and creative opportunities.

So if you've got an idea to bring your community together, would like to try something new, and would like a little support to get going, get in touch with Our Community Can by e-mailing OurCommunityCan@worc.ac.uk, call 07747 204451 or visit the [Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire website](#).

Therapeutic support for young people



The Cart Shed are running some great fully funded courses, in their beautiful and empowering woodland environment, with places still available on their expanded Young Cart Shed programs.

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Young Cart Shed offers support for anyone between 14 and 25 who are experiencing anxiety, low mood, and difficulties at school, trauma, grief, social isolation, and low self-esteem, lack of confidence, relationship problems or neurodivergence.

Meet your safer neighbourhood team

We are a dedicated group of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) who work with local communities and partner organisations to keep our residents, businesses and visitors safe and to prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour in your locality.

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.



Whilst the information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the information (February 2022).



www.westmercia.police.uk
westmerciapolice @WMerciaPolice @westmerciapolice

Into the Woods (for 14 to 18 year-olds) and **Through the Woods** (for 18 to 25 year-olds) courses can help young people to develop new skills, make friends, learn how to manage emotions, build resilience and find direction.

There's support and understanding from mental health professionals throughout the weekly courses, and the opportunity to learn new skills from experienced tutors such as woodcraft, willow work and coppicing as well as drawing, photography and land art.

It's handy to know that free transport is available on request (where possible) from pick-up points in Hereford, Kington and Leominster. Participants can

attend either a six-week or twelve-week course.

To find out more about the courses, or to make a referral, visit The Cart Shed website.

Neighbourhood Matters from West Mercia Police

Do you want to know what's going on in your area?

Our COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS



When you sign up to our 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/>

The Neighbourhood Matters messaging service 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!**

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

To find out more and sign up, visit the [Neighbourhood Matters website](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/bb21d405/UARq0VNajkqv1vLf0zKSJQ?u=http://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/).

Report a crime to Police 101

When you sign up to our 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. Sign up below:

<https://link.edgepilot.com/s/bb21d405/UARq0VNajkqv1vLf0zKSJQ?u=http://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/>

Old Gore Parish Councils

Nil to report

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

Barry Durkin

Old Gore Ward

Mob. 07792 882054

Email. bdurkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

General Data Protection Act

The General Data Protection Act places obligations and responsibilities on any company, organisation and individual who holds and process personnel information. The new General data protection regulations (GDPR) that supersedes the Data Protection act came into force on the 25th May 2018. 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. **In seeking to maintain legal compliance I am requesting that if anyone is unhappy with I holding your email please contact me to advise and I will remove you from the list.** Otherwise I will retain your email contact and continue to send you monthly updates and occasional key information in my capacity as an elected Herefordshire Councillor.

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Useful Information – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Flooding: emergency contact details – please share with your networks

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

Flood alerts: Floodline 0345 988 1188. Sign up online at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings to get Flood Warnings from the Environment Agency by phone, email or text message. If you live by a river or stream, keep a watch on current and expected water levels.

Power cut: Call 105 or visit www.powercut105.com

BT phone line issues: www.downdetector.co.uk/status/bt-british-telecom

Gas leak: 0800 111 999 or visit www.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas

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

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

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

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

By letting us know where and what happened, especially if it hasn't been reported, we and our partners can use the information which may help reduce the future impacts of flooding. Please [report it here](#) or contact TalkCommunityEnquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Covid19

The Latest local Covid data and information www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-3

National Covid guidance is available on the Government website www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Talk Community

Email: Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01432 260027

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.

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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: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.

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](#)

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](#).

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

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Parishes Councils have their own inbox 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](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](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](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](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](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](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1859/speed-indicator-device-toolkit.pdf)

Another useful site:

For information on current and future planned roadworks by utility companies

www.roadworks.org

Please do follow BBLP on Twitter for up to date information about road closures, ongoing work etc., and [@HfdsStreets](#) 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_claims](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/206/highway-claims) please 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

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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