

## June 2024 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

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**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. This report is prepared from information from Herefordshire Council and other councillor sources so that I may provide a comprehensive review of the County activities.**

Unfortunately the initial spring sunshine has turned back to rain and although the forecast for the week ahead looks to be improving nothing is guaranteed so please do be careful when travelling as heavy showers often lead to slippery road surfaces. Excess rain also leads to muddy fields and with farmers needing to enter and exit fields at the moment it is not uncommon to see mud on the roads. The vast majority of farmers are very diligent and clear up any mud very quickly but where you do spot a problem please let me or the locality steward know so the matter may be appropriately dealt with. The recent warm and wet weather has led to a surge in growth on the verges. This can cause visibility / safety issues at junctions and on narrow roads. The delay in cutting potentially dangerous junctions has been raised with Herefordshire Council / Balfour Beatty and if you are aware of any that haven't yet been cut then please do let me know.

Equally Balfour Beatty have started the normal verge cutting programme. The areas requiring extended areas left to are due to community wildflower planting, ([Verging on Wild | Herefordshire Wildlife Trust \(herefordshirewt.org\)](#)). The Annual Plan in place indicates:

“Amenity Grass Cutting” - The amenity grass cutting (not highway verges, visibility splays of accident sites) have been reduced from 6 cuts per year to 5”

“Verges Grass cutting” – Verges are cut either 1 or 2 times per year times per year under the current plan, depending on the relevant PC's wishes. A small number of verge locations, where it is safe to do so, are not being cut this year as part of a biodiversity trial. Verge cutting is carried out to both enhance the appearance of an area and assist with forward visibility for road users. However, there is a standing item that if parish councils want to increase their wild flower areas on verges they are asked to inform BBLP what they require, then one cut – safety first though. Unfortunately, this year the message went out very late to BBLP. However, although a little late for this year PCs must ensure that they inform BBLP if they want to increase or decrease of the, verging on the wild scheme to the agreed extent they desire.

If you are aware of any which should be on that list and would like to check then please contact the parish council so they may consider, so avoid any inadvertent cuts may be avoided.

## **Public Rights of Way**

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) network across the county is set to be improved thanks to £250,000 investment. The funding is being made available to Town and Parish Councils for replacement of PROW assets such as stiles, finger posts and gates. I am pleased to confirm that details of this have been made available to all Parish councils via their Clerks – if you have been inadvertently missed off this list then please let me know and I will arrange for details to be sent to you. The scheme offers Parish councils the opportunity to apply for a fixed amount of funding to replace assets on PROW in their areas. The funding available for each asset is set at the rate Herefordshire Council would pay if they were to purchase the asset themselves. I would urge you to take up this funding opportunity as there is no guarantee it will be repeated but please do consult with the relevant landowner before applying so permission can be obtained for installation. [Investing in our Public Rights of Way – Herefordshire Council](#)

## **Highways Maintenance**

I have noticed that there has been an increase in pothole repairs over the last few weeks and although many areas require significantly more investment, it is a welcome step in the right direction. As always where you spot a repair completed by Balfour Beatty or a utility company that does not look to be of a sufficient standard please raise it with me and I will highlight it with the relevant team. Herefordshire Council does use its powers to force utility companies and Balfour Beatty to return and redo work where it does not meet the standards required however, if these issues are not flagged to them then they are unable to take action.

## **Lengthsman Grant**

The third instalment of our additional funding to Parish councils (Aside from the increased Lengthsman Grant - £250k and the Prow Scheme - £250k) is the Local Drainage Fund - £445k. Expressions of interest were due in last month and I am told approximately 90 Parish councils registered their interest. Details of how to apply and the projects that can be funded will be published soon but please do not be concerned if your expression of interest has not been acknowledged. If you emailed the email address given in the initial invitation to express an interest ([lengthsman@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lengthsman@herefordshire.gov.uk)) then you will have been included.

## **Council Accounts – Appointment of Municipal Officers**

On a County level, you may be pleased to know that Herefordshire Council held its Annual Meeting and the current minority Conservative Administration retained control under our leader Cllr Jonathan Lester. The Chairman of Herefordshire Council remains Cllr Roger Phillips and the Vice-Chairperson is Cllr Steph Simmons.

## **Council Accounts - End of Year Financials**

Equally noteworthy was the publication of the Council's year end financials.

The council's draft accounts for 2023/24 were published on 31 May in line with the deadline. The timely completion of the accounts provides valuable assurance over the council's financial management. Only a small proportion of councils will meet this deadline and this is a huge achievement by the teams involved in their production. The accounts report our performance for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 against approved budget.

When our administration took control of the council in May last year the predicted deficit was nearly £13.8m for this year and over £19 million for 24/25. I am pleased to say that through targeted action the deficit for 23/24 was reduced to £8.7m and a balanced budget set for the 24/25 financial year. The over-spend is due to national pressures from rising costs and demand for placements for children and young people. We are delivering against this budget now and although exact figures at this stage are not available all the signs point to our targets being met.

The accounts have been decluttered to make them easier to read and understand and a two-page summary document is also available to provide a snapshot of the council's financial position and performance for the year.

"Looking ahead to 2024/25, we've set a balanced budget to improve our services and support the Council Plan vision and we will continue to strengthen the council's financial position.

"We've supported our residents, businesses and communities to respond to economic challenges. We've successfully delivered our services to provide value for money and we've strengthened our governance to safeguard public money."

The draft accounts for 2023/24 can be viewed on the [Council publishes draft accounts for 2023/24 – Herefordshire Council](#)

On a final note I would like to reassure residents and Councillors that although Government may grind to a halt throughout the election, Herefordshire Council is not subject to the same restrictions and will continue with business as usual. This includes the delivery of vital services, road investment and associated projects. I will provide a written update prior to the General Election but no matter who you chose to vote for, please do make sure you are registered and able to exercise your vote on 4<sup>th</sup> July. As always if you have any concerns locally please contact me.

**Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28**

Full Council has (24 May 2024) approved the Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28, which sets out how the council will make its contribution to the ongoing success of Herefordshire. The Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28 sets out council priorities for the next four years and a commitment to delivering the best for Herefordshire

[Herefordshire Council approves four-year Council Plan – Herefordshire Council](#)

### **Herefordshire Museum Service**

Herefordshire Museum Service has been selected as a pilot museum for The Sensational Museum project which uses innovative multi-sensory ways to engage with visitors

The Sensational Museum, supported by a £1 million grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, is dedicated to revolutionising the accessibility of museums by reshaping the role of senses in museum experiences. [Herefordshire Museum Service joins The Sensational Museum – Herefordshire Council](#)

### **Funding received from Arts Council**

Herefordshire Council will receive £750,000 from Arts Council England, thanks to its Government-funded Capital Investment Programme.

The funding is going towards supporting the major refurbishment and extension of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, located on Broad Street, to create a state-of-the-art museum and art gallery for Herefordshire.

[£750,000 awarded to Hereford Museum & Art Gallery redevelopment project from Arts Council England – Herefordshire Council](#)

### **New special school for Herefordshire**

The Department for Education (DfE) has today announced that Herefordshire will get a new special school for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The DfE revealed the locations of 16 new special schools and the council is delighted that Herefordshire's bid has been successful and the county is included in the list. [Herefordshire to get a new special free school – Herefordshire Council](#) the announcement follows the government's spring budget pledge to provide £105 million to build new special free schools across England.

The new Herefordshire special school will build up to catering for 80 children and young people, aged 2-16 years with complex autism and severe learning difficulties.

### **General Election**

Herefordshire Council's electoral services has published the 'Statement of Persons Nominated', which details the constituency candidates standing for the UK Parliamentary General Election on Thursday 4 July 2024.

**North Herefordshire County Constituency:**

- Jon Browning – Labour Party
- Ellie Chowns – The Green Party
- Andy Dye – Reform UK
- Michael Guest – Social Democratic Party
- Cat Hornsey – Liberal Democrats
- Bill Wiggin - The Conservative Party

**Hereford and South Herefordshire County Constituency:**

- Nigel Ely – Reform UK
- Joe Emmett – Labour Party
- Jesse Norman – The Conservative Party
- Dan Powell – Liberal Democrats
- Diana Toynbee – The Green Party
- Mark Weadon

**Register to Vote.**

Our election team are working at full steam in preparation for the upcoming general election on 4 July. They're currently reminding people they need to be on the electoral register to vote, and that photographic ID will be needed to vote in-person. If you see the posts on our social media channels please share them and help to spread the word.

Old Gore Ward is currently situated in North Herefordshire County Constituency. Remember, your vote on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 is important. How you may vote is contained on [Types of election, referendums, and who can vote: General election - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/types-of-election-referendums-and-who-can-vote-general-election) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

**Public Health**

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 was published this week for the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Board. '[Ageing well in Herefordshire](#)' is easy to read and insightful, and is well worth a read. The report can be found on the [council website](#).

## Carers Week



Carers Week, which runs from Monday 10 to Sunday 16 June, aims to raise awareness of the vital role carers' play, highlight the challenges they face and to recognise the contribution they make to families and communities. Events are being held to thank unpaid carers for their dedication and hard work, and to encourage them to access the support available. [Herefordshire marks Carer's Week 2024 – Herefordshire Council](#)

## Become a Halo Hero



Halo Leisure is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help promote healthier, more active lifestyles in the community. Whether it's supporting swimming lessons, helping on the cycle track, or being a gym buddy to those who find exercising challenging, volunteers are guaranteed to make a difference with Halo, and gain invaluable experience.

Other benefits include flexible hours, ongoing training, rewards, cashback, and paid expenses! To learn more and to register, [visit the Halo Leisure website.](#)

As ever if you think I can help please do not hesitate to contact me? Stay safe and keep well everybody

Kind Regards

*Barry*

## Police and Community Safety



**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**

The new General data protection regulations (GDPR) that supersede the Data Protection act, came into force on the 25th May 2018 and places obligations and responsibilities on any company, organisation and individual who holds and process personnel information. I make this statement that I hold a list of emails of local people that I have built up over the years which I retain and use. In seeking legal compliance I am requesting that if anyone is unhappy with me holding your email contact please advise me 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

## **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](http://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](http://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](http://www.powercut105.com)

BT phone line issues: [www.downdetector.co.uk/status/bt-british-telecom](http://www.downdetector.co.uk/status/bt-british-telecom)

Gas leak: 0800 111 999 or visit [www.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas](http://www.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas)

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

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

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

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.

### **Talk Community**

**Email:** [Talkcommunitycovidresponse@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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. As always please continue to make use and encourage the use of established reporting methods for any highways defect; online, or using the telephone app – for potholes, dog poo - Telephone customer services on [01432 261 800](tel:01432261800).

Please note that Herefordshire Council strongly encourages Balfour Beatty to promote all service requests and queries should be logged via the HC website at Herefordshire Council website - also download the pothole App to help report potholes as you see them.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>

[https://link.edgепilot.com/s/e3b2b34e/ttjzBlvIfEewR-](https://link.edgепilot.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](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.

### **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 fly tipping form](#).

### **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](#)

### **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

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 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](http://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\\_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](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200146/council_tax/39/council_tax_reduction)