

Ward Report – for June 2021
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.



Herefordshire Council Annual Meeting

The meeting had to be held at the Three Counties Hotel as the Shirehall continues to be closed for ceiling repairs. As you can see by the picture below screens separated all the councillors and the whole thing resembled some high class call-in centre.



It was good to meet up and see some colleagues who I hadn't seen for over 14 months.

One councillor dressed as a large hedgehog to acknowledge the decline in hedgehogs; I believed although some opinions varied. I believe we should now meet up physically as often as possible partly to send the right signals to those who are nervous of returning back to normal patterns of behaviour. However, I do believe that there is a place for the Zoom meetings, which have proved to be effective in the last year of so.

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As this was the annual meeting the main purpose is to decide on how Herefordshire Council will be governed in the 2021/22 municipal year. The roles of Leader, Chairman of Council and chairs of committees and scrutiny committees, these were voted upon and appointments were decided. Those elected are illustrated below:

Councillor Hitchiner has been elected Leader of Herefordshire Council.

Councillor Bowen has been elected as Chairperson of the Council and Councillor Guthrie is Vice-Chairperson of the Council.

Full Council appointed Herefordshire Council's committee chairs, confirmed as:

Adults and wellbeing scrutiny committee

Chairperson: Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Trish Marsh

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Audit and governance committee

Chairperson: Councillor Nigel Shaw / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Christy Bolderson

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Chairperson: Councillor Phillip Howells* / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Jennie Hewitt

Employment panel committee

Chairperson: Councillor David Hitchiner / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Ellie Chowns

General scrutiny committee

Chairperson: Councillor Jonathan Lester / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Tracy Bowes

Planning and regulatory committee

Chairperson: Councillor Terry James* / Vice-Chairperson: Councillor Alan Seldon

Licensing sub-committee

Chairperson: Councillor Alan Seldon

* Denotes a change of Councillor from last year

Following Full Council, Councillor David Hitchiner as Leader announced changes to Cabinet Member portfolios:

Councillor Liz Harvey's portfolio has been broadened to include planning. Councillor Harvey is now Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Planning. She is also the Deputy Leader of the Council.

Councillor Diana Toynbee* is Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting and the lead member in accordance with the Children's Act 2004. The recent court judgment has identified a greater need for focus and oversight of the council's children's social care. This more focused Cabinet portfolio will provide additional capacity and allow for greater accountability across Children's Services.

Councillor Felicity Norman is Cabinet Member for Young People's Education and Attainment and for post-16 education, training and skills development. This role is crucial following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our young people and to ensure that the county's education and skills are aligned and delivered effectively.

The new Cabinet will come into effect from Tuesday 1 June 2021:

Councillor David Hitchiner - Leader of Herefordshire Council / Corporate strategy and budget

Councillor Liz Harvey – Deputy Leader of Herefordshire Council / Finance, Corporate Services and Planning

Councillor Diana Toynbee* - Children's Services, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

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Councillor Felicity Norman* - Young People's Education and Attainment

Councillor Gemma Davies - Commissioning, Procurement and Assets

Councillor Ellie Chowns - Environment, Economy and Skills

Councillor Pauline Crockett - Health and Adult Wellbeing

Councillor John Harrington - Infrastructure and Transport

Councillor Ange Tyler - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community Safety

* Denotes a change of Councillor from last year

Political changes to the make-up of the council

- On Friday 7 May, Conservative candidate Councillor Ann-Marie Probert was duly elected as the Newton Farm Ward member. <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory/20/council-car-parks>
- On Monday 10 May, confirmation was given by Councillor Bob Matthews that Councillor Sebastian Bowen has changed political group, moving from the Herefordshire Independents to become a member of the True Independents group.
- On Tuesday 22 May a new group formed - The Independents for Herefordshire. This group comprises all members of the former 'Herefordshire Independents' group and all members of the former 'It's Our County' group. Councillor John Harrington will be the new leader for the Independents for Herefordshire group, he will be supported by Councillor Tracey Bowes, Councillor William Wilding and Councillor Peter Jinman who will provide the role of deputy group leaders.

The Executive is now made up of the new Independent for Herefordshire Group and the Green group.

All other political groupings remain unchanged.

The political make-up of the council following these changes is as follows:

- The Green Group – 7 members. No change.
- The Liberal Democrats – 7 members. No change.
- The Conservatives – 14 members. An increased by 1.
- The Independents for Herefordshire – 19 members.
- The True Independents – 5 members. An increase by 1.
- Un-aligned member – 1. No change.

Herefordshire Independent Remuneration Panel Report

The Report of the Herefordshire Independent Remuneration Panel which makes recommendations on councillor's allowances was considered at the annual Council meeting, 28 May 2021. The report analysed allowances paid by similar local councils across the

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country for comparison and found that Herefordshire Council pays the 9th (out of 10) lowest basic allowance within the cohort of comparator local authorities.

The recommendations made by independent panel are based on the principles of the [Dame Jane Roberts Councillor's Commission](#), which encourages people from a wide range of backgrounds to serve as local councillors, to compensate councillors for their work and have regard to the full range of commitment and complexity of their roles, while providing transparency and observing benchmarks.

Full Council has approved the [Report of the Herefordshire Independent Remuneration Panel](#). However, there were a number of implementation options suggested. The Conservative Group proposed option 2 - an amendment that the new rate of allowance not be implemented until FY 2023/4 as the appropriate option to approve; this being the year when the next local election year and thus potential new set of councillors and indeed existing, would be elected. The vote for other amendments proposed. Option 2 was carried and the revised scheme will come into effect after the next elections in FY 2023/4.

First annual meeting for our new Chief Executive – a message

Today we saw our first in person Full Council – thank you to all Members for your support in following COVID-secure measures during the meeting, it was great to see our fellow councillors.



Next week will see a visit from the Rt. Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). He will be in Hereford next Friday to officially open the Shell Store following a £7.3m refurbishment. The

flagship business incubation and innovation hub is forecast to generate around 128 new jobs by 2023, rising to more than 450 by 2031.

Following the recent High Court judgement on Children's Services, we have received the non-statutory improvement notice by the Department for Education and have been allocated an adviser for at least the next year. Gladys Rhodes White OBE has been appointed as an Improvement Adviser for a minimum of 12 months. Mrs Rhodes White will provide advice to Children's Social Care Services and Herefordshire Council, and she will chair the Improvement Board which is being established from the beginning of June 2021. I will work closely with Gladys and Cath Knowles, our Interim Director of Children's Services, to address the serious issues identified by the High Court judgement and Department for

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Education Improvement Notice and to deliver a sustainable and improved children's services department. While we seek to understand the full extent of past decisions made within Children's Services, we regret that we may find further instances that do not meet the required standards. If you are made aware of any concerns about the way someone has been treated by Herefordshire Children's Social Care services, you can contact at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/careconcerns or email careconcerns@herefordshire.gov.uk

COVID 19 - Update

The Herefordshire Council website provides local COVID-19 information including [vaccinations](#), [testing](#), [financial support](#), [mental wellbeing](#), [help talking to children](#), [myth-busting](#), and the [Love Local](#) map.

- The seven day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 22 May 2021 the COVID-19 case rate in Herefordshire is 13 cases per 100k people. This is a decrease of -45.7% on the previous week. Cases in England are 23.6 per 100k population.
- Fluctuations in the COVID-19 case rates are expected as society reopens and asymptomatic cases are identified through regular rapid testing.
- The NHS has invited people aged 30 and over to book their COVID-19 jab.
- More than 113,000 Herefordshire residents have received their first dose vaccine (73% of eligible adults).
- 72% of UK adults (more than 38m adults) UK have received their first dose vaccine, and more than 20 million adults in the UK have received two doses.
- Regular rapid testing now available to everyone - read more about [testing for COVID-19](#).
- Communication plans reflect the cautious easing of national lockdown restrictions with reminders to follow national guidance even when vaccinated. Messaging focus to 'Play your part' and make regular testing part of your new routine.
- Outbreak response continues and localised outbreaks have been quickly brought under control, responding to clusters and cases in high risk settings to prevent spread.

Car Parking Charges

It is reported that a new car parking charge structure that has been introduced across the county commenced on 17 May. It is said that it will make it easier than ever for you to make an informed decision about where best to park your car. Please see the details and cost of parking across the County.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1153/new-parking-charge-structure-introduced-today>

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<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory/20/council-car-parks>

Safe, Warm and Affordable Home

The need for a safe, warm and affordable home is central to all of our lives, which is why we are asking people to share their views and help to shape the future of housing in Herefordshire.

The council has launched a consultation on the Local Housing Strategy, a key document that the council is developing that will allow us to plan strategically for meeting current and future need and demand, and the effective delivery of housing-related services.

Announcement: [We want your views on housing in Herefordshire](#)

Broadband

The Gigaclear and Airband roll out continues. I remain committed to getting as many as possible of my residences and businesses connected. There is a still a current plan by BT to remove broadband from copper wires this decade and until there is some super technological access, this infrastructure will be the only access locally we can depend on for significant broadband signal. There is a degree of pace being applied by Gigaclear and Airband to encourage residents and businesses to sign up. Airband are the local installer for broadband and to ensure take up please register with Airband. The latest information I had implied we have achieved good coverage and the installation is progressing, especially now that the B4224 is open again; as this closure provided a blockage to roll out. To get more local information about Airband and register your interest go to:

<https://www.airband.co.uk/>

Gigabit broadband set to transform Ross-on-Wye

Homes and businesses in Ross-on-Wye will soon benefit from gigabit capable broadband.

The rollout is thanks to a small grant project to connect businesses in the Alton Road area that still require a superfast connection. Fastershire's Marches & Gloucestershire business broadband grant is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and has enabled Full Fibre Limited to establish a foothold in Ross-on-Wye from which they will expand their network into the rest of the town using their own investment.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1160/gigabit-broadband-set-to-transform-ross-on-wye>

Highways

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The work at the crossroads in How Caple will now be commenced in late June and is expected to last for six weeks. There will **not** be a road closure of B4224, rather traffic controlled by traffic lights, so access to Fownhope businesses and Hereford will continue to be available.

Potholes

The current highways annual plan has the removal of water from highways as a priority at c. 60% of the budget. This may well increase the numbers of potholes on the highways. Please can I encourage you to report potholes? I know we have issues about the length of time and the inconsistent filling in of some and not others but please do not assume someone else will do it. There is a pothole reporting app available. Go onto Herefordshire Council website and download the pothole App to help report potholes

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

Rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution

What you must do to manage manure, fertiliser and soil to prevent runoff, erosion and leaching.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution#prevent-erosion-manage-livestock-and-soil>

Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant

Herefordshire military veteran housing officially opened by celebrity Ross Kemp.



A military veteran housing scheme has been officially opened on Friday 21st May by the well-known actor, author, presenter and investigative journalist, Ross Kemp, on behalf of The Buchanan Trust.

During the opening ceremony, Ross, a long-term supporter of the Armed Forces community, assisted in cutting the ribbon for the four new Alms-houses cottages that have been built specifically to help ex-service personnel make a successful return to civilian life.

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Announcement: [Herefordshire military veteran housing officially opened by celebrity Ross Kemp](#)

Knife Angel visit to Hereford Cathedral

The Knife Angel will be situated outside the West End of Hereford Cathedral from 14 June to 12 July. The sculpture is 27ft tall, it weighs 3.5 ton and is made out of 100,000 confiscated knives received from 43 Police Forces across the UK. It originated from The British Ironwork Centre in Oswestry and took sculptor Alfie Bradley over two years to construct. It has been on tour round the UK and has become a national monument against violence and aggression in all its forms. Not only does the Angel act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, but it is also acts as a beautiful memorial designed to celebrate those lives who have been lost through these violent and thoughtless actions.



The team responsible for bringing the Knife Angel to Hereford is headed by Alison Davies and Meryl Cain. Alison lost her son Mark to knife crime in 2018. The team want to raise awareness of the catastrophic impact violent crime has on individuals, families and communities.

For more information please visit the Knife Angel Hereford website:
www.knifeangelhereford.co.uk

Official Launch of The Queen’s Green Canopy: “Plant a Tree for the Jubilee”

His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, Patron, has planted a tree to launch The Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) - a unique, UK-wide tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022, by inviting people to “Plant a Tree for the Jubilee.”

Her Majesty, The Queen joined The Prince of Wales for the first Jubilee tree planting in the grounds of Windsor Castle earlier this year, during the tree planting season. As well as being a national project, The Lieutenancy of Herefordshire is supporting The Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) initiative locally. This will be rolled out across Herefordshire and beyond, during the next planting season from October 2021 until March 2022, or later depending on tree supplies.

The Lieutenancy and Herefordshire Council are keen to help ensure that as many trees as possible are planted for the Canopy in Herefordshire. This well-conceived campaign will encourage the choice of healthy native trees that will thrive in their environments.

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It is hoped that as many people as possible will be able to support this inclusive and far-reaching initiative. This could include parish councils to make their area greener.

Full information pack from The Queen's Green Canopy is attachment to this report, alongside press releases and tree fact sheet.



The Queen's Green
Canopy Official Launc



List of general facts
about trees.pdf



QGC Official
Information Pack.pdf



Media Release - QGC
Ambassadors.pdf

Or to find out more about what we are doing in Herefordshire there is a page on www.herefordshirelieutenancy.org.uk

Apply for a Postal Vote - Local by-elections

After the recent council elections in Herefordshire I would take this opportunity to advise that you may apply for a postal vote for the local election in **May 2023**. **So** if you can't get to your polling station for whatever reason, or you do not want to vote in person at a polling station, you can apply for a postal vote; but you must be registered under Individual Electoral Registration first. You may register for a postal vote for this upcoming election please select:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>

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.

PLEASE CONTINUE SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL BUSINESS

Many of our local business are supporting our community with supplying delivery of groceries, take away food and other items.

They are too many to list here in case I miss someone but they will be on your local websites.

Please support them. If this crisis teaches us anything it is the importance of local community and a local economy.

Information from Parishes

How Caple: The works proposed at How Caple crossroads draws closer with implementation and start date being end of June with a sic week expected work period. There is not going to be a road closure, so Fownhope businesses will be accessible and the route to Hereford will remain unaffected, other than delay under traffic lights at the site.

Upton Bishop: The proposal to install traffic lights at Old Gore crossroads has been proceeded to discussions relating to implementation with the land owner. These tentative

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plans are currently be reviewed by the land owner and when we have a consensus I will be providing the parish council with an overview.

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

Barry

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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., [@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.