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HEREFORDSHIRE NOW

The residents' magazine from Herefordshire Council

December 2023

FREE AND ONLINE



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 Herefordshire
Council

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Navigating winter in Herefordshire



As we head into winter it's time to gear up for colder temperatures and prepare for the conditions that accompany the season.

Winter vehicle check-up

- Ensure your brakes are in good condition, as well as the battery and heating system.
- Check your tyres. They are your first line of defence against slippery roads. Check the tread depth and keep your tyres properly inflated.
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. Include a blanket, snacks, torch, first-aid kit and make sure your mobile phone is fully charged.
- Adjust your driving. Increase your distance from the car in front, reduce your speed and be extra cautious.
- Keep an eye on local news and traffic updates for information on road conditions. The Herefordshire Council website provides regular updates on gritting schedules and road maintenance, giving the latest information so you can plan your journey.

True grit

Our winter maintenance team helps keep the county's roads safe and moving. Priority routes are pre-treated when local inspections and weather forecasts indicate gritting is needed. We have crews on-call 24 hours a day who can react quickly to changing weather conditions.



Follow us:

 [hfdscouncil](https://www.hfdscouncil.gov.uk)

From November through to March we provide winter maintenance services on nearly 600 miles of the county's roads. Our gritting routes map shows the priority and secondary routes for gritting. For the latest updates on road gritting in Herefordshire follow @HfdsStreets and for road gritting in the West Midlands follow @wmgrit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/gritting

Roadside grit bins

Parish councils can request roadside grit bins for minor roads that might not otherwise be gritted. The cost of purchase, installation and servicing is met by the parish council.

We also consider requests for a grit bin to be moved if there's a better position for it. So if you have any thoughts on the grit bins in your area, get in touch with your parish council. www.herefordshire.gov.uk/gritbins

Be flood aware

Flooding can occur anywhere and can happen quickly and unexpectedly. There are things you can do to prepare and to limit the impact of flooding on your property. www.herefordshire.gov.uk/prepare-flooding

- Develop a personal flood plan. The Environment Agency has created one which you can download, print and fill in www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan
- If you think your property may be at risk of flooding the National Flood Forum has some helpful advice www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk
- Check the flood risk in your area. Monitor flood warnings and alerts, and use the government's flood warning service.

Sign up to get flood warnings from www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings by phone, email or text message.

For advice during a flood, see the government's get help during a flood information which can be found at: www.gov.uk/help-during-flood.

The most important thing is that you and your family remain safe. If you are or somebody else is in immediate danger and need rescuing, dial 999 immediately.

We're keen to hear from you about the services you would like us to feature in Herefordshire Now. You can get in touch via herefordshirenow@herefordshire.gov.uk to tell us what services you'd like to find out more about. To view this magazine online or sign up to receive future editions in your inbox, visit:

herefordshire.gov.uk/council/herefordshire-now

All details correct at time of print.

Cover pic: Peter and Margaret enjoying a walk in Herefordshire, picture by Lucy Brown

The road ahead



An additional £2.55million is being spent on repairing roads in the county.

Residents consistently tell us that improving the quality of our roads is a priority for them. This new investment is entirely additional to the council's usual annual spend on maintaining the road network and is possible thanks to funding from the Department for Transport.

Repair work has already started on some smaller roads that link rural communities in preparation for extensive surface dressing in 2024. This process of repair and

surface dressing will prevent the selected roads from deteriorating to the point where they require expensive resurfacing.

A well-designed surface dressing has been proven to extend the life of a road surface for over ten years, is cost-effective, and keeps disruption to a minimum.

You can find more information, including a full list of schemes, at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roadinvestment

Marches forward

Major infrastructure such as roads and rail, housing, energy supplies and digital connections don't stop at county borders. And just because you live in Herefordshire doesn't mean you don't go into other counties to work, learn, for health care or to visit.

So, it's important that councils work together on common issues that affect their residents and businesses.

A new partnership called Marches Forward will see Herefordshire Council work with neighbouring Shropshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council and Powys County Council.

The councils are joining forces to apply for funding from government

on major projects that will benefit the Marches region, which covers 80 percent of the English / Welsh borderland. It's anticipated that the councils' planned collaboration and willingness to work together will increase overall government investment.

Each council will continue to deliver services as they do now but will work together, as partners, where there is mutual benefit and added value. Areas of cross-border shared interests are likely to include transport, skills and housing alongside energy, climate change and digital connectivity – common issues for the area's population of almost 750,000 people.

Welcome



When working in council services you don't have to look far to find inspirational stories - they are all around us. None more so than that of Abbey's adoption journey featured on pages 4-5; and of Gary on page 12 who has turned his life around after a year living on the street. I'd like to thank those who share their experiences with us, and I hope you enjoy reading about them.

Winter can be a difficult time financially. As we pay more on heating and electricity from spending more time indoors, we all need to make the pennies stretch that little bit further. On pages 15-18 you'll find information about where to get help, advice and support with the cost of living, and on activities in the community, from the council's Talk Community team.

It's never too late to prepare for winter weather. You'll find some helpful information about staying healthy during the winter months on page 20. And for preparing your home and car for inclement weather on page 2.

Finally, I would like to give an update on the improvements we're making to our children's services. You can read more about these on page 7.

Paul Walker, chief executive, Herefordshire Council

Abbey's adoption journey



“We’re a team” is how Abbey describes the relationship with her three-year-old son. She’s two and a half years into their adoption journey and is happy to share her story with others who may be thinking of adopting a child.

Abbey’s adoption journey began following three rounds of failed fertility treatment. She started to think about adoption as an option because she wanted to be a mum and felt she could provide a child with a loving home for life.

“When I first made the call to the agency they asked me to wait six months from my last course of failed fertility treatment to make sure I was ready to seriously consider adoption.

“Six months later I called them back. I was really nervous and didn’t know what to expect. I was a single, gay woman thinking about taking on a child on my own - it was a huge step for me to take.

“I went along to an information day about adoption and I immediately knew it was right for me. I started my training to be an adoptive parent in September 2020, and in April 2021, I was approved by an adoption panel and put in touch with the family finding team.

“I took part in a series of assessments where I was able to talk about the sort of child I could provide and care for and how they would realistically fit in with my future. I was pleasantly surprised and really excited to find out soon afterwards that a suitable match had already been found. I was told that it was a little boy and he was eight months old.

“The adoption agency provided me with a copy of a report that told me everything about him. I felt it was important that I knew his background so I had a good understanding of his life so far. I was then given a picture of him and I could not have imagined seeing a child who looks more like me. It was insane! He was the most beautiful, smiley little person I had ever seen and I couldn’t wait to meet him but I understood that a lot of preparation work needed to take place before this could happen.

“I finally got to meet my son in August 2021 and it’s hard to explain how amazing that moment was. I was so nervous in case he

cried and I wasn't sure how he would react. But I needn't have worried because when he met me for the first time he put his arms out towards me straight away. I spent two precious hours with him and then he fell asleep on me after having his bottle.

“I'm lucky because when things get tough we have a really good support network around us”.

“The next two weeks involved spending lots of time with him, alternating between his foster carer's house and my house and then I finally got to bring him home. I think I underestimated how hard that period would be for him because he was very unsettled due to the change in his living environment. It was probably the hardest few weeks of our lives so far. I remember calling the foster carers because I was really upset because he wouldn't settle and they were really supportive and encouraged me to keep going and that we would be fine.

“When I look back those first few months were not easy, especially at night. He used to wake up 15 – 20 times a night, so I would lay by his cot just to be close to him

and provide reassurance. It was an extremely tough time but we got through together.

“After 12 weeks of living together I applied to the court to legally adopt him. This was nerve wracking time when there could have been an appeal against his adoption but I was reassured by the agency that the court hearings went really well.

“When I received the adoption certificate that stated he was officially mine it was a huge relief to know that no-one could take him away from me. For me it was confirmation of what we had already become. I was his Mum in every way I could be and we had created a family that was forever. It was such a great feeling.

“I still chat to his social workers as they were so supportive and played such a huge part in getting us together and helping us to become a family. His foster carers were also amazing. We're still in touch and they're like another set of grandparents to us. I send them updates so they can see that he's growing up into a funny and kind little boy.

“I'm lucky because when things get tough we have a really good support network around us. My Mum has been involved with his adoption from the start and has been really supportive and I have some amazing friends who are always there for us.

“I finally got to meet my son in August 2021 and it's hard to explain how amazing that moment was”.

“I think about our future all the time. I'm open and honest with him and I regularly talk to him about the fact that he's adopted. I think it's important for him to know where he's come from as he grows up.

“Our bond is incredible. He's the cheekiest, funniest little boy I've ever met - he's so affectionate. I love him so much and I know he loves me. Before I met him I never knew it was possible to feel love like this. Cuddles at night time, baths and brushing his teeth are all part of being his Mum and I wouldn't change it for the world.”

Anyone can adopt. It doesn't matter whether you are married or single, in or out of work, or whatever your race, religion or sexuality, as long as you can provide a child with a safe, loving home.

If you're interested in finding out more about adoption, visit the ACE website www.aceadoption.com or call 0300 369 0556.

Free childcare

Good news for some working parents in Herefordshire. Depending on your income, circumstances and immigration status, you may be able to claim up to 30 hours of free childcare for your three to four-year-olds.

If you think you're eligible and want to apply, visit the government webpage: gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare or www.herefordshire.gov.uk/frechildcare





NOT SURE IF HALO IS FOR YOU?

Give us a try with an exclusive **FREE 7 day leisure membership day pass**!

haloleisure.org.uk/7daypass/

*7 day free pass does not include access to swimming lessons



LEARN TO SWIM AT HALO LEISURE

Get your little ones swimming and learning a valuable life skill by signing them up to our Halo Learn to Swim Programme.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

-  **BUILDING CONFIDENCE** - Your child will work to build confidence in the water and gain new life saving skills.
-  **DEVELOPING SKILLS** - Your child will use equipment to help with confidence and strength, using gross and fine motor skill coordination.
-  **FUN & ENGAGING** - Our classes are fun and promotes interaction, social skills and basic swimming fundamentals.
-  **GUIDANCE** - Halo Swim Coaches will guide and support your little one at every step of the way with the aid of fun, games, floats and toys.
-  **REWARDING** - Enjoy those proud moments when you witness your little one progress on their learn to swim journey with Halo and collect colourful badges and certificates along the way.
-  **LESSONS** - All of our lessons are 30 minute sessions and run weekly all year around (apart from two week break at Christmas).



Find out more at www.haloleisure.org.uk or speak to Reception at your local Halo Pool



Building a children's service we can all be proud of

Important progress has been made over the past few months in Herefordshire Council's ongoing priority of making sure children in the county are kept safe and thriving.

The council has worked with Ofsted inspectors over the course of three monitoring visits to review progress in the way services care for children in need of support and protection.

The inspectors concluded that progress continues to be made with real improvements being seen in some areas of work although more needs to be done to make sure this is more consistent.

And the summer saw the launch of a new improvement partnership with one of the country's leading children's services – Leeds City Council – to help the council continue its work in driving forward these improvements.

Front-line children's services social care staff from the county met with colleagues from Leeds – where Children's Services are rated as 'Outstanding' - to launch the long-term partnership in July and heard directly from them

about their experience, their ways of working and how this will benefit Herefordshire.

Corporate director for children and young people, Darryl Freeman said: "The assessment of the Ofsted inspectors that practice is starting to improve and positive progress is being made with some families, but needs to be improved more consistently across the board, is fair and reflects our own analysis of our performance.

"We know we are on the right path but that the pace of change needs to quicken and improvements more consistently embedded. We were encouraged that the inspectors reported some real improvements in areas such as management oversight, supervision and our audit process and it is pleasing they recognised social workers liked working in the county and felt well supported.

"However, we also fully recognise that we need to do more to make sure the quality of our work is more consistent and further step up the pace of change.

"I have confidence in our workforce and we can build on



the areas where progress has been made or is well underway.

"We remain committed to working more closely with families in Herefordshire. Being more open to listening has helped us to make positive developments in areas of our service and we're determined to re-build trust in the local community.

"Our ongoing improvement plan aims to do just that and that will be supported by the important partnership with Leeds which will help us as we look to accelerate our improvements and sustain them in the future."

New family space

There are now new family and child-friendly meeting spaces in the council offices at Plough Lane.

The rooms have been transformed for families who are meeting children's services care and support staff. They provide a private area for child protection conferences and for meetings with our social care teams and other professionals.

A dedicated entrance to the building has also been created so families can access the new area directly without having to go through the main reception area.



The new welcoming and comfortable facilities are part of the council's ongoing

improvements to transform children's services.

Have yourself a green Christmas



to make a meaningful gift that a family member or friend could cherish - or make something nice to eat!

Christmas cards

- Use your cards to create decorations ready for next year
- Cut out the picture on the front and turn it into a gift card
- Recycle – put old cards in your green recycling bin or sacks

Online shopping

There's no denying that buying your gifts online can be convenient, but what about the packaging? If you've been doing some shopping online, you might have ended up with a lot of cardboard to get rid of.

The good news is that recycling cardboard is easy, but don't forget to remove any polystyrene or plastic bags!

Christmas jumpers

Everybody loves a Christmas jumper, so if you're shopping for a new jumper for yourself or a loved one, there are ways you can keep it environmentally friendly:

- Don't buy brand new. You could buy a second hand Christmas jumper instead; there are plenty in charity shops or on second hand sites like Vinted or eBay
- Get crafty and upcycle an old jumper to make it unique!

Tree disposal

To dispose of a real tree, remember to book a slot and take it to one of our household recycling centres where it will be composted with garden waste. You can also recycle your real tree through the St Michael's Hospice Tree Collection Service.

Bathroom items

Those toiletries gifted by our favourite aunty can be a godsend, just remember to keep your empties out of the rubbish bin. Whether it's bubble bath, shower gel, shampoo or deodorant, once they're empty, recycle them.

We all know we need to reduce waste. Not only does it help protect the environment, it can also reduce the burden on our wallets!

Christmas can be a particularly wasteful time of year, but thankfully help is on hand. The best way Herefordshire residents can help to cut their waste this year is by making the most of the advice and support available on the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' section of the Council website: herefordshire.gov.uk/reduce-reuse-recycle

Don't feed the bin

Studies show that we each gain on average 0.8–2lbs in bodyweight over Christmas, but do you know what can also be left feeling bloated? Your bin. That's because we throw too much food away.

By throwing away less, we not only create less waste, we also save ourselves money.

The Love Food, Hate Waste website is a great resource for advice and support. www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/

What can I recycle, and where does it go?

Knowing what to recycle and what to bin can be confusing.

Things like carrier bags, plastic film, polystyrene and even tissue paper look like they should be recyclable but can cause big problems, so please don't put them in your recycling.

Green bins are also unsuitable for pet food pouches, crisp packets, textiles, batteries and nappies.

We're always grateful to everybody for recycling. You are helping to improve your local environment and save the planet. Here's what your recycled items are turned into:

- Plastic drinks bottles → carpet, backpacks, sleeping bags and fleeces
- Metal cans → bike and car parts, construction beams and new cans
- Glass → new bottles, new jars and fibre glass
- Paper → tissues and new paper products

Batteries

Toothbrushes, headphones and anything else with a plug, battery or cable should be recycled. Some companies even offer to take your old appliance when they deliver your new one.

Reduce waste this Christmas by finding out where you can recycle or donate your batteries: recycleyourelectricals.org.

Get creative

Why not make your Christmas gifting creative this year? Instead of buying something, if you have a special skill, you could use this

Sustainable wrapping

We're all aware of the scenes of devastation that can precede Christmas lunch, with wrapping paper strewn everywhere. Just remember:

- When buying your wrapping paper, look for the recycle symbol
- Brown parcel paper is the safest, recyclable wrapping out there (and cheapest!)
- Foil or glitter wrapping paper cannot be recycled
- Make sure you remove ribbons and bows from paper before recycling. Don't worry about removing the sticky tape

Advent calendars

Once you've opened your last advent calendar door, don't throw the box in the bin. Follow these steps to recycle your advent calendar:

- Separate the mixed materials - cardboard and hard plastics can be recycled, foil cannot.
- Check the materials are clean, remove food, dirt, or anything else
- Pop the recyclable materials in your green bin

visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling/christmas-rubbish-recycling for more

Recycling landmark reached



A huge recycling landmark has been reached in Herefordshire.

EnviroSort, the specialist sorting facility based in Worcestershire, has processed over 1 million tonnes of recycling since the plant opened over a decade ago.

If all the recycling was made up of plastic bottles laid end to end, that would be enough to go around the world 20 times.

The EnviroSort plant was opened to sort kerbside recycling, as part of the Integrated Waste

Management Contract held between the county councils in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the plant operator Severn Waste Services.

Today, the building receives up to 40 delivery vehicles a day, produces around 260 bales of recyclable materials daily and processes over 75,000 tonnes per annum, that's 3351 double-deckers full of material each year.

More information about EnviroSort is available at www.severnwaste.com/envirosort

Herefordshire Council

A Seasonal Shift

The bin collections due on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day have been moved. All other collections remain the same. Please put your bin out before 6:30am

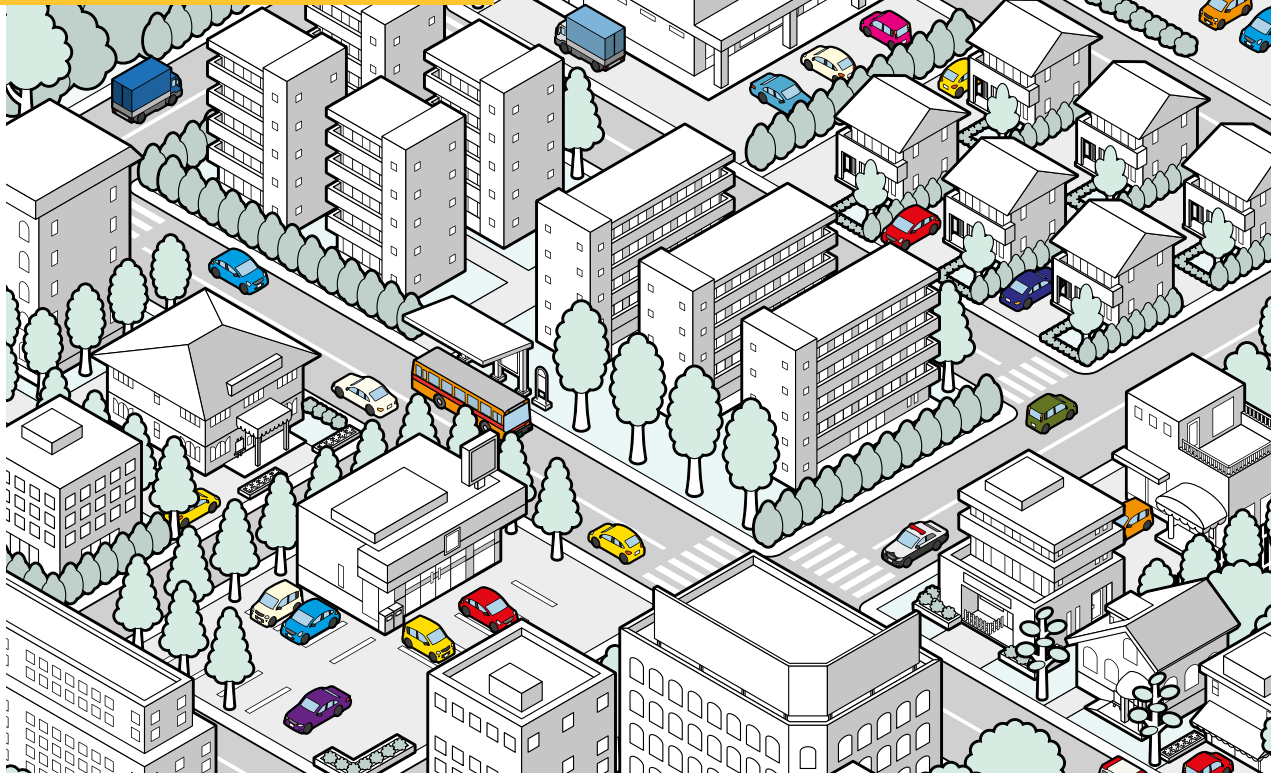
Our crew members are also driving home for Christmas, so the bin collections over the holiday season have been slightly shifted to allow for some festive rest. The replacement dates are as follows:

No collections	Revised collection day
Monday 25 December 2023	Saturday 30 December 2023
Tuesday 26 December 2023	Sunday 31 December 2023
Monday 1 January 2024	Saturday 6 January 2024

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

herefordshire.gov.uk/christmas

New £1million grant scheme to tackle crime



The Safer Communities Grant will support projects that focus on early prevention, tackling the causes of crime, vulnerability, exploitation and anti-social behaviour

A new grant scheme has been launched to support new and existing projects that focus on the early prevention of crime and tackling its root causes, and on vulnerability and exploitation of children and young people.

The Safer Communities Grant is open to not-for-profit organisations and schools across Herefordshire, with grants of between £25,000 and £300,000 available over the next two years.

Projects will work to prevent crime at the earliest stage through recognising vulnerability and risks of exploitation, and addressing anti-social behaviour. In line with the county's joint early help and prevention strategy, the projects will ensure early support services are in place for children, young people and families and help to promote positive emotional health and wellbeing.

The Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion (PCC), West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council have collaborated to provide the £1million for the grant scheme.

Local Policing Commander for Herefordshire, Superintendent Helen Wain, said: "We welcome the Safer Communities Grant and are pleased the additional funding has been secured. We know tackling the root causes of crime and focussing on early prevention will make a significant difference to our local communities across the county."

PCC John Campion said: "The only way we can tackle some of the deep-rooted issues in the county is by working together. This project is a big step forward as I remain committed to driving down crime and the harm it causes. I am pleased to be making additional funding available to deliver the landmark Safer Communities project, in close partnership with Herefordshire Council and West Mercia Police."

To find out more about the grant scheme, please see the council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/scf

Interested in applying?

If you are a not-for-profit organisation and are interested in applying, please contact our Talk Community Team to discuss your project.

Email us at: talkcommunityenquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk

Projects for a Stronger Hereford

Following a successful bid to the Government's Towns Fund for £22.4million, fifteen trailblazing projects are set to transform Hereford's culture, sport and the riverside as well as offering greener travel.

We caught up with Abigail Appleton, Principal of Hereford College of Arts who's heading Stronger Hereford to find out more.

What is Stronger Hereford?

When government announced funding would be available for 'levelling-up' towns across the country, Stronger Hereford was formed to firstly find out what people would want the money to be spent on, and then putting a bid together. We were successful in securing £22.4million and now

Stronger Hereford is all about ensuring the projects are seen through to completion over the next two years.

How were the projects chosen?

Before we submitted our bid to government we asked hundreds of people about what Hereford is and what we want it to be. We gathered ideas, opinions and proposals from residents, communities and businesses through public surveys, open forums and discussion. This gave us a really good idea of the priorities and aspirations.

How will they transform Hereford?

All the projects are located in Hereford as the government funding terms required, but making Hereford more attractive



Abigail Appleton
Principal of Hereford College of Arts

to live, work, study, visit and invest in benefits the whole county. With fantastic new facilities for sport, culture, skills development and travel we truly believe everyone will find something to enjoy.

For more information about Stronger Hereford and each of the fifteen projects see strongerhereford.co.uk

On track for success



© Cameron M-Hill Photography

A brand new cycling facility for the whole community has opened in Hereford.

The 1km circuit, which is managed by Halo Leisure, is next to the leisure centre in Holmer Rd and is an impressive addition to the facilities already offered there. The new cycle track is one of fifteen projects funded by Stronger Hereford.



© Cameron M-Hill Photography

The track has facilities for all ages and abilities. It provides a safe cycling environment for those learning to ride, families looking for a low cost activity, riders with disabilities who can experience cycling in a controlled

space and competitive cyclists coming together to enjoy their sport. There is no need to pre-book just turn-up-and-ride! Cycle hire/group bookings also available: www.haloleisure.org.uk/herfordcycletrack/



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STRONGER
HEREFORD

Living the dream



He lives in a one-bedroom rented flat. Currently, he has no holidays planned and he doesn't have a car (or a driving licence for that matter).

We'll forgive you if you can't see the connection between our headline and opening paragraph – however living the dream is a relative concept.

Gary Meridith lived for a year outside in a sleeping bag. So his small rented flat gives him the security he craved while rough sleeping, shelter from the weather, and gives him somewhere to invite his three young daughters, aged 8, 10 and 12.

Seeking help

It was Gary's mother who persuaded him to seek help. He went along to Homepoint, Herefordshire Council's social housing register (or 'housing waiting list', as it's often called). A history of eviction and alcohol abuse meant he was not placed on top of that register.

However, Gary was offered space at a shelter on the edge of Hereford. While the shared accommodation offered no

support and he had to take his belongings with him every time he left - it was a start.

Intensive support

From there, Gary moved into temporary accommodation that sits under Herefordshire's multi-agency Project Brave. He was provided with intensive support, initially by Homepoint and then by the council.

That support helped alleviate the mental health issues Gary had struggled with. He began doing voluntary work in community gardens. He was introduced to – and still does – yoga three times a week. He cycles most days. And, most importantly of all, he has invaluable time with his daughters who enjoy cooking, eating and staying with their dad.

Project Brave began in 2020, when government notified councils to 'bring everyone in' from the streets at the start of the covid pandemic. It finds ways to help

very vulnerable people at risk from substance use, mental health issues, criminal experience and exploitation.

Project Brave is a big part of the reason Gary now has goals of his own. He wants to start taking driving lessons and eventually get a car. He looks forward to being able to take his daughters on holiday. He also hopes to secure a bigger place that would be more suitable for when they come to stay with him. None of those things seemed possible when Gary was looking up at the stars from a dank sleeping bag. Which is why he says he now feels like he's "living the dream".

Visit the council's webpage to find out more about Project Brave:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1502/cabinet-makes-brave-decision

Homepoint:
www.home-point.info

Support from the street



There are a wide range of services available to support homeless people and rough sleepers.

As the cold weather arrives, we all become more aware of those who are sleeping rough and may need help.

The council's Rough Sleeper Outreach Team works with people who are currently sleeping rough or are at risk of sleeping rough. Every effort is made to ensure they are safe, warm and supported.

Over the past year, the team has seen the number of people sleeping rough across the county reduce. This is thanks to the passion and hard work of the team and collaborative working with partner agencies and from the community, voluntary and faith organisations.

Homelessness support

While rough sleeping is the type of homelessness many of us think of first, most of the homeless approaches to the council are less visible. These include circumstances such as where households are affected by family or friends being unable to accommodate them, the end of a private rented tenancy or domestic abuse. Unemployment and illness may also be contributory factors.

The council's Housing Solutions Team is responsible for coordinating the county's response to homelessness. Our priorities are to prevent households from becoming homeless in the first place and to relieve it for those who are already homeless or sleeping rough.

There's more information on the council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/homeless

Winter warmth

There's a range of support available all year round for those who are homeless or about to become homeless, and a specific plan to address rough sleeping during extreme weather, called the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).

The council will also launch its night-time shelter accommodation for men and women across the county in early December. A warm, safe space will be provided nightly and volunteer partners will provide washing and laundry facilities, food and warm daytime space.



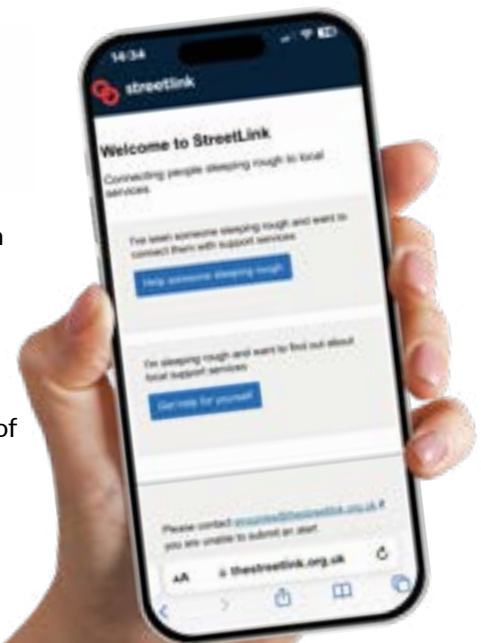
Streetlink is a website that anybody can use to report someone who is sleeping rough to support services.

In Herefordshire, reports that come through Streetlink are sent directly to the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team who can then take steps to ensure that suitable

support is offered to that person within a matter of days.

When making a Streetlink referral, please include as much information as possible – as this gives the team the best chance of locating the person and offering support.

<https://thestreetlink.org.uk>



Pioneering wetlands deliver more homes and less river pollution



A pioneering wetland, planted with 85,000 specially-selected plants, is now removing phosphates from treated wastewater.

The Luston Wetland is filtering treated wastewater being piped from the Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water treatment plant nearby. It removes the final traces of phosphates from the water before being released into the naturally-running watercourse bordering the site.

Luston is a pioneering wetland because of how it's been engineered, and what it is designed to do over the next 80-100 years. Located on a 3.46-hectare site there are three connected water-filled pools (cells) lined with naturally occurring clay. The cells contain up to 14 aquatic plant species selected because of their effectiveness at filtering and removing phosphates from the water as it passes through.

How do wetlands help the rivers?

The soil type in Herefordshire is unable to retain the phosphates that pass into it from a number of sources – notably from livestock farming and households, through the wastewater and sewage produced. As phosphates find their way into watercourses and soil they eventually drain into our rivers. It's these high levels of phosphates that unbalance the natural state of the rivers, and

their polluting effect reduces the health of the river water and the inhabiting plants and wildlife.

Why is the building of new homes affected?

Trying to stop the growing levels of phosphates has posed a problem for Herefordshire and many regions across the UK and Europe. The UK Government through Natural England (the agency responsible for overseeing the wellbeing and protecting the natural world) introduced a ruling in 2019 that no further houses could be built in areas designated with a high level of phosphate pollution. Construction could only go ahead if the developer could demonstrate the right measures would be taken to not add any further phosphates into the environment once the new households had been built and were being lived in.

Herefordshire Council faced this challenge by collaborating with leading ecological experts and specialist agencies to find a solution. The answer being that although phosphates were generated when creating new homes, these could be 'neutralised' either by installing treatment

measures on the site of the new homes, or contribute towards removing the phosphates from elsewhere using plants and nature – namely the wetlands.

Helping Herefordshire and other counties

Herefordshire was proud to create one of the world's first wetland that removes phosphates created in one area to compensate for those generated in another using a verified credits exchange scheme where developers can pay for credits to offset. Achieving this balance between the two is described as 'nutrient-neutrality'. Of course, the long term goal is to ultimately remove and reduce the level of phosphates circulating throughout Herefordshire, and restore the rivers and environment to their natural equilibrium.

Part funded by Marches LEP, the Luston Wetland and other nature-based measures will have a far-reaching impact on Herefordshire as the momentum builds in the development of 1000 new homes, many of them affordable. It helps revitalise the economy by creating jobs (especially within the construction sector), alongside new housing. View the video here: <https://bit.ly/luston>

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/nutrient-management

Talk Community are bringing Herefordshire together, by connecting people to services, groups, community hubs, events, and information to help them stay well.



HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Household Support Fund is funded by the Department of Work and Pensions to help those hardest hit by the cost of living crisis.

Herefordshire Council's Talk Community is delivering the Household Support Fund to residents in need in Herefordshire.

In the face of an ongoing cost of living crisis, many people in Herefordshire are finding it difficult to make ends meet. By working in partnership with a number of local organisations they are able to offer vital assistance with food, heating and essential household items.

If you are over 16 and struggling, to pay for food and energy bills, applying for support is simple. Phone 01432 383838 or complete the online application form www.herefordshire.gov.uk/hsfapply.

For parents with a child under the age of 5 who are struggling to afford essential items, help is available to help ease the burden with a one-off emergency payment. For more information contact your health visitor, midwife, local children's centre, nursery, pre-school or childminder.

Pensioners who are facing difficulties with food costs can find relief with a grocery voucher from Age UK Hereford and Localities by contacting them on 0333 0066 299. Age UK can also provide 'warm home' packs, information and advice.



Vulnerable individuals with long-term respiratory health conditions, identified as being at risk due to their home conditions could be eligible for financial support and energy saving packs. Referrals can be made through Keep Herefordshire Warm. www.yesenergysolutions.co.uk/schemes/keep-herefordshire-warm.

If you are a household with a disabled person that uses specialist medical equipment and have high energy costs due to this, financial support may be available. Keep an eye on updates to the Household Support Fund page for when this programme of support goes live and details of how to apply. www.herefordshire.gov.uk/household-support-grant.

If you need help or can't find what you're looking for email householdsupportfund@herefordshire.gov.uk

You can get more information and advice around the Cost of Living at talkcommunity.org/money-on-your-mind You can stay in touch with any updates to the Household Support Fund by keeping an eye on the Household Support Fund page.



Winter of Wellbeing (WoW) Activities

Spend quality time with your family in a warm space!



During the winter months, families can take part in a variety of wellbeing activities designed to bring warmth and support. Organisations across Herefordshire are offering a range of free, engaging activities to beat the winter blues. Alongside the activities, families can enjoy hot food and a drink and access valuable advice and support on managing the cost of living.

Visit the www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/winter-of-wellbeing-wow-activities Winter of Wellbeing Activities page to see what's happening near you!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



In June Ross open gardens hosted many different activities celebrating Learning Disabilities Week

South and West: Ross Community Gardens

5-4-3-2-1 -

Ross Community Gardens are go...
Over the past 6 months Ross Community Gardens have certainly been on the go.

Tim Shelley and the team have won an award, celebrated 10 successful years and were part of the Ross Open Gardens Weekend.

They have welcomed hundreds of school children and individuals who are visiting the garden, attending groups, services and support.

We can't share all the successes, but here are the 5 most recent:

5 - In June the Gardens hosted many different activities celebrating Learning Disabilities Week.

4 - July saw the first Ross Children's Book Festival and the gardens hosted story times, meet the authors and some fantastic children's trails.

3 - August saw the first HaF event where children enjoyed gardening, cooking and outside activities

2 - In September a new 'Start Cooking' class was launched for parents.

1 - November saw the relaunch of free warm soup over the winter period, a free WoW Christmas Family Fest and on Christmas Eve enjoy an evening of Christmas entertainment.

North and West: The Lion Café - Boarder Chess Club, Kington

The Boarder chess club at The Lion Café has proven a popular

event for all ages! The group was established by two gentlemen from Presteigne who approached the wonderful Kate from The Lion Café about starting a group in Kington. As an ambassador for the community Kate jumped at the opportunity, this is now one of the many groups that run from The Lion Café along with it being a Talk Community Hub and community food larder. The Boarder Chess Club has welcomed players as young as 7 and as old as 95!

This shared love of the game is bringing communities together whilst also offering children access to free drinks and snacks which have kindly been supplied by the local Co-op pioneer. The ongoing relationship between the Lion Café and the chess club has also led to donations of wood for the fire being made to the café! Community at its best!!

City: Putson Baptist Church

Putson Baptist Church is based in South Wye, in Web Tree Avenue, where since the arrival of Andy Goode from Cardiff, the sense of community is strong and supportive of each other. The Church became a Talk Community Hub during the pandemic to provide additionally to its existing activities which at that time were offered remotely and since then, Andy and his growing team of volunteers, have worked extremely hard to bring the community



The Boarder Chess Club has welcomed players as young as 7 and as old as 95!



Andy Goode, Putson

back together. They have twice-monthly, hilarious lunch clubs, coffee mornings and weekly stay and play groups to name a few. Putson Baptist Church provides a warm welcome, a friendly atmosphere and a listening ear to everyone who walks through its doors. More than that, they operate a money and debt advice service, emergency food boxes for residents living in the local community and information and signposting to other areas of help. Finally, they know how to have lots of fun with events like the recent Light Party for families offering free tea and coffee for adults and party games and chicken nuggets and chips for children.

East: Meet at the Gate (Burley Gate)

Burley Gate's 'Meet at the Gate' Talk Community Hub is providing information and signposting help, activities and support from a wide range of providers to the local community, and a warm welcome with a piece of cake.

The Hub works with key partners such as Severn Wye Energy (pictured here providing advice to a local resident), Age UK and the Crime Prevention Team to share information around topics such as staying safe and how to reduce energy costs, as well as offering games, craft activities, a mini lending library and just a nice place to meet with others and have a natter. The Hub will also be launching Table Tennis sessions in the New Year, a great way to keep active, learn a new skill and have a bit of healthy competition with the neighbours!

'Meet At The Gate' is open every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10am to 12.30pm at Burley Gate Village Hall. You don't have to live locally to come along, everyone is welcome.



Severn Wye Energy at Burley Gate's 'Meet at the Gate' Talk Community Hub (pictured here providing advice to a local resident),

Here for the Holidays



Did you know that if your child is eligible for benefits-related free school meals* then they could receive up to 16 hours fully-funded activities over the Christmas and Easter holidays and up to 64 hours over summer. There's a fantastic range of exciting indoor and outdoor activities to choose from and each session includes food, so no need to bring a packed lunch!

Want to find out more?

Visit talkcommunity.org/holidayactivities. Or pop into one of our free drop-in info sessions to get help making a booking (we will be happy to answer any questions).

We will be at Blue School House 12 December 9-11am, Ledbury Children's Centre 13 Dec 9-11am Ross Library 13 Dec 12.30-2.30pm. For the Easter sessions we will be holding drop-in information sessions on the following dates: Tue 5 March, Wed 6 March, Tue 12 March, Wed 13 March. Details of venues and timings will be made available on the Talk Community Directory.

Herefordshire families can enjoy an exciting day of activities all for free at Whitecross School in Hereford 9.30am-1.30pm on Sat 23 Dec.

All children will receive a free meal on the day! Limited places so please book eequ.org/experience/2205. The Here for Herefordshire Holidays programme is funded by the Department for Education.

MONEY ADVICE

Managing money can be stressful, but it's important to remember that anyone can have money worries or fall into debt for all kinds of reasons. There are a number of organisations across the county who can help with free, confidential money advice. Residents can check that they are receiving all of the support they're entitled to, using the Better Off calculator. It's free to use and anonymous: www.herefordshire.betteroff.org.uk.

Bromyard Food Bank and Money Advice Centre provide free debt advice and support for people who may be struggling with debt or other money concerns. To find out more, call 07434 669103 or email info@bfandmac.org.uk www.bromyardfoodbank.co.uk

Citizens Advice Herefordshire provide information on a wide range of areas, including debt solutions, borrowing money, budgeting, benefits and housing. www.herefordshirecab.org.uk

Ledbury Debt Centre offer free debt advice and support to help people who may be experiencing debt or other money problems. To find out more or book an appointment, call 0800 328 0006. This takes you to a national helpline to book a local appointment. www.herefordshiremethodists.org.uk/ledbury-debt-centre

Leominster Community Money Advice Connect Centre offer free and confidential advice, to help you consider the different options available if you're

experiencing money worries, you're in debt or need assistance with budgeting. The service is run by Leominster Food Bank and to book an appointment with a Money Mentor, simply call 07563 000862 or email cmamanager@leominsterfoodbank.org www.leominsterfoodbank.org/support

South Wye Community Money Advice Centre, based at Putson Baptist Church in Hereford, offer free, confidential advice and practical support for people experiencing money problems, including budgeting and money management skills. To make an appointment, call 01432 357700 or email swcmac@putsonbaptistchurch.co.uk www.putsonbaptistchurch.co.uk/

Find out more www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/money-and-legal-matters/money-debt-and-budgeting

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS



There are a number of local groups in Herefordshire coming together, to organise Christmas cheer in the community.

You can find out more on the **Talk Community Directory**: www.talkcommunitydirectory.org

Christmas and New Year activities
If you're looking for ideas to help you and your family stay active and entertained during the Christmas and New Year holidays, head over to the Talk Community Directory Christmas and New Year Activities - Talk Community Directory www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/keeping-well-staying-healthy/community-christmas to explore some of the different events and activities taking place across Herefordshire.

TALK COMMUNITY

Free financial help and information is available to Herefordshire residents and businesses through Talk Community

talkcommunity.org



Museum's 'Inside Out'



Herefordshire's museum service has launched an exciting new project that uses interactive digital technology to showcase items that would otherwise be unseen. The 'Inside Out' project takes unseen artefacts from the museum's collection and uses digital art to bring them to life - providing an opportunity to see some of the thousands of objects currently in storage while Hereford museum is closed for redevelopment.

The museum team have worked with local artists who've used digital technology to showcase the chosen artefacts, starting with

an early 19th century handmade Victorian wooden Noah's Ark that includes a selection of intricately-carved animals.

'Noah's Ark Interactive' has been created by artist Andy Round of Paradise Multimedia and takes the shape of a classic 1980's arcade game that takes the player on a journey to discover more about the features animal's, climate change, Victorian Britain, the flood story and much more.

The digital exhibit is at Leominster Library until the end of the year before continuing its tour around

some of the other libraries in the county.

The Inside Out project is part of the Hidden Gems programme originally funded by The Arts Council and National Lottery Heritage Fund to create projects that raise the profile of local heritage through arts, digital technology and community involvement.

Herefordshire's Museum Service will be announcing more interactive displays of museum items in the New Year.

Moving the Mosaics



Every visitor to Hereford's museum and art gallery during the past 100 years will have been impressed as they passed by the large wall-mounted Roman mosaics in the stairwell.

The Broad Street building is currently closed while preparations are made for the redevelopment of the museum.

The mosaics were originally laid on the floor in a wealthy home in Kenchester, and have been a wall-mounted display at Hereford museum for almost a century.

The mosaic removal was painstakingly planned over the last seven months. The operation was carried out by a team of specialists from one of the UK's leading building conservation, repair and restoration companies.

The museum redevelopment is funded by Stronger Hereford, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Herefordshire Council.

For further updates see the History lives here pages on the Herefordshire Council website: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/history-lives

Hoard continues to pull a crowd

The Herefordshire Hoard, widely recognised as one of the most important archaeological finds in the last half a century continues to attract thousands of visitors.

It remains on show at Hereford's Museum Resource and Learning Centre in Friars Street. The open mornings have been fully booked and the family fun days well attended.

We are looking forward to unlocking more of the hoard's secrets and sharing them with you. Find out more: <https://herefordshirehoard.co.uk>

Get winter strong

As the weather gets colder it's more likely that we'll pick up infections that are more easily spread as we spend more time indoors.

There's a few simple steps we can take to look after our health and the wellbeing of others, when the weather gets colder:

- Have your flu and Covid-19 vaccinations if you're eligible, especially if you receive a letter from your GP because you are in a high risk group. The vaccines give the best protection so it is important that you take up the offer as soon as possible
- Keep your home heated to at least 18°C (65°F), especially if you have a heart or lung condition
- Have at least one hot meal a day and plenty of hot drinks
- Don't forget to look in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives



The poster features the UK Health Security Agency and NHS logos at the top. The main text reads: "Flu and Covid-19 spread more easily in winter and can cause you serious illness." Below this is a blue banner with "GET WINTER STRONG" and a checkmark icon. The next line says "Come forward for your flu and Covid-19 vaccinations when invited." There are icons of two people, one wearing a face mask. A dark blue box contains the text: "Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself, those around you and the NHS." with a syringe icon. At the bottom, a yellow box says: "Find out more about how to stay well in winter: www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/"

Don't let food poisoning ruin your christmas



Avoid the unwanted gift of food poisoning this Christmas. With an estimated one million cases a year, food poisoning doesn't stop over the festive season.

No-one wants to get food poisoning this Christmas so make sure you follow the advice from <https://www.food.gov.uk/> to make sure you and your families stay well this winter

Follow our top tips to stay safe in the kitchen this Christmas.

Season's Eatings

- 1. Pack raw and ready-to-eat food in separate shopping bags.**
This avoids cross-contamination.
- 2. Give your turkey time to defrost fully, in the fridge.**
It could take up to 4 days, so check the on-pack guidance.
- 3. Don't wash raw turkey.**
It splashes germs onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops.
- 4. Make sure your turkey is cooked by checking that:**
 - The meat is steaming hot throughout-
 - There is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part
 - Meat juices run clear
- 5. You can use previously cooked turkey (even if it was frozen) to make a new meal.**
This new meal can be frozen too, but only reheat it once.

Choose well this winter

Thousands of people visit A&E every year who could be treated more quickly and effectively in other health outlets in the county.

Read our guide to choosing the best option for you and your family to make sure you get the treatment you need and help to cut down on needless trips to A&E during the busy winter months.

Symptoms: Hangover, minor cuts and grazes, sore throat, coughs
Which treatment? Take care of yourself



A lot of illnesses and injuries can be treated at home by using medicines from your local pharmacy, shop or supermarket. Keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet, stay at home, and get some rest. You can also ask your pharmacist for advice.

For further information, locations and opening times, visit the Find a Pharmacy NHS website: www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy

Symptoms: Cuts, sprains, minor sports injuries, minor burns.



Which treatment? Head to a Minor Injuries Unit
There is a Minor Injuries Unit in Ledbury (Market Street) that is open 7 days a week, 7:45am to 6:30pm.

You don't need an appointment and your waiting time may be shorter than at A&E. If you're unsure if the MIU is suitable for you, visit 111.nhs.uk for guidance before attending. Please note this is specifically an injuries unit and so cannot treat other illnesses. Ledbury Community Health and Care Centre - 01531 632488

Symptoms: Ear pain and acute backache, persistent symptoms, long-term conditions.
Which treatment?



Contact your GP surgery
A range of healthcare professionals are available via your GP surgery.

The surgery reception team will be able to advise who best to see for your condition. Appointments are available at your registered practice and can be booked by phone, online or in person.

If you can't get to surgery during the day, ask to make an evening or weekend appointment (available at 9 locations throughout Herefordshire). If your GP surgery is closed and you need an urgent appointment, call NHS 111 for advice.

Symptoms: Toothache, gum problems. Which treatment? Visit your dentist or Dental Access



Centre. The Dental Access Centres provide dental pain relief if required for urgent treatment for patients who do not have a dentist. Patients will be triaged in line with their clinical need and the most urgent cases will be given priority. If you need urgent advice you can contact the clinics below.

- Gaol Street Dental Access Centre 01432 378920
- Leominster Dental Centre, 01568 619380
- Asda Dental Access Centre, Hereford, 01432 382180
- Ross-on-Wye Community Hospital, 01989 561114
- Ledbury Dental Access Centre 01531637615

For urgent out-of-hours dental advice call 111. Use the NHS Find a Dentist website to search for a dentist near you www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist.

Symptoms: Very serious or life threatening, for example chest pains.
Which treatment? A&E unit, Hereford County Hospital



A&E doctors and nurses are trained to deal with serious and

life-threatening illnesses and accidents. If you think your injury or illness may worsen on the way to hospital, or if moving the patient could cause further injury, phone 999. Tell the operator that there is a medical emergency and a response vehicle will be sent to you.

Symptoms: Tummy bugs, painful coughs, emergency contraception, skin rashes, red eye.



Which treatment? Visit your local pharmacist

Pharmacists have long opening hours and are experts in medicines, so can give advice on correct medicines to treat these illnesses.

They can offer advice on sexual health and contraception. Many also offer guidance to help you give up smoking or tackle obesity.

If your symptoms continue for more than a few days, you may need to see your GP. You can ask your pharmacist for advice.

Symptoms: Colds and flu, runny noses. Which treatment? Take care of yourself or use the NHS Symptom Checker



Symptoms of cold and flu typically include: sore throat, fever and chills, tiredness, and aches and pains. People often make unnecessary trips to the GP when they should be resting at home, drinking plenty of fluids.

Occasionally flu can become a serious condition for some. The NHS has an online Symptom Checker which will help you decide whether you need to see your GP if your symptoms are more serious. Go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

Find us on Nextdoor!

We are now on Nextdoor. We can now provide updates on services, community events, and important updates for your neighbourhood, especially during emergency events that may affect you such as flooding and snow.

Join us on Nextdoor and get updates for your neighbourhood straight to your inbox.

nextdoor



Herefordshire Council's website provides a number of services you can access from the comfort of your own home, including:



Manage your council tax
Manage Housing Benefit
Information on road closures
Receive the latest news
Find local events
Order or renew a library book

View planning applications
Sign up for school closure and transport alerts
View our vacancies
Advice on social care
See the latest consultations

Report a problem including:
Missed bin collection
Potholes
Flytipping
Litter problems
Faulty street light

Visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk

Have you signed up for your My Herefordshire account yet?



If you would like to go to one place to find the council services that are local to you – then you need to sign up for your My Herefordshire account.

Why sign up?

Having a My Herefordshire account gives you easy access to check your bin collection dates, your local councillor, planning applications in your area and check your council tax account.

Also, your My Herefordshire account will log any contacts you have with us, such as calls to our customer service centre, or any problems you report online so you can check progress on your enquiry.

It also means that any forms you need to fill in on our website will be auto-filled with your information, making them quicker and easier to complete and for you to track.

How to sign up

1. If you are an existing user

If you currently have a 'My account' with your Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefits or Landlord accounts details registered with us – register for a new account using the email you previously used, and you will be able to access all your previous account information.

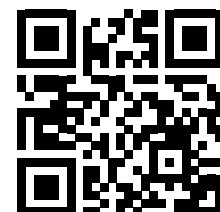
Once you have registered on the new system you will just need to login next time you visit us.

2. If you are a new user

Register to create an online account tailored to you. You will be able to access your Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefits or Landlord accounts, check balances and make payments. You can see when your bin collection times are and any planning applications in your area, plus much more.

Welcome to Herefordshire Council's online account

Visit my.herefordshire.gov.uk or Scan the QR code to sign up!



E-cigarettes to help you quit smoking

Research has found that e-cigarettes are a useful stop smoking aid, helping many adult smokers to quit smoking and to stay quit. Although neither are entirely risk-free, smoking is by far the greater risk.

Although the use of e-cigarettes are solely intended to help adult

smokers quit, the amount of young people vaping who have never smoked is continuing to grow. The short-term health effects of vaping can include coughing, headaches, dizziness and sore throats.

For more information, and support to stop smoking please contact

Herefordshire's Stop Smoking Service on 01432 383567.

Most vapes contain nicotine which is addictive. For more information on vaping visit Talk to Frank (www.talktofrank.com) and the NHS Better Health website (www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking).

VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES THE FACTS



MOST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T VAPE OR SMOKE.

Vapes containing nicotine are age-restricted products; it is illegal to sell them to under 18s and for adults to buy them on their behalf.

VAPES ARE NOT HARMLESS.

Short-term effects can include coughing, headaches, dizziness, and sore throats. Long-term effects are as yet unknown.

HARMFUL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Disposable vapes and the batteries inside them are bad for the environment, with many ending up in landfills.



Those who knowingly sell to under 18s are driven by profit and don't care who they sell to.

DON'T BE DUPED!

DON'T SMOKE? DON'T START TO VAPE.

YES, let's Keep Herefordshire Warm



Herefordshire householders are saving around £500 a year, on average, on energy bills, and we'd love you to join them.

Herefordshire Council is working with YES Energy Solutions to deliver the county's Keep Herefordshire Warm service.

YES's expert energy advisors deliver free, impartial advice to residents to help them reduce their

energy costs and access funding to improve the energy efficiency of their properties with improved insulation.

Residents may also be eligible to receive one-off support payments to contribute towards their

energy costs via fuel vouchers and payments to suppliers.

Call 0800 677 1432 or visit www.yesenergysolutions.co.uk/schemes/keep-herefordshire-warm to start your energy saving journey today.

Funding for off-gas properties in county

Herefordshire Council is working in partnership with Severn Wye Energy Agency to offer the £7m Home Upgrade Grant.

The grant helps to pay for much-needed energy-saving home improvements to a range of properties across the region that are not on the mains gas grid and hard to heat.

The Home Upgrade Grant will run until March 2025 and is funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. It offers home energy efficiency upgrades to Herefordshire households who:

- Don't have mains gas heating in their home
- Live in an energy-inefficient home (with an EPC rating of D, E, F or G)



- Have a combined household income below £31,000 per year or on means-tested benefits.

Eligible households will benefit from a wide range of energy-saving technologies and receive fully funded home improvements worth tens of thousands of pounds. These include insulation, solar panels, high heat retention storage heating, air source heat pumps and many households will be offered more than one upgrade.

Mr Greco, from Hereford, had his home upgraded with an air source heat pump, solar panels, cavity wall and loft insulation fully funded by the Home Upgrade Scheme. He said: "I'm £1,020* better off each year thanks to my Home Upgrade Grant. It's a fantastic scheme for any householder."

To find out if you qualify and apply for the Home Upgrade Grant, call the Severn Wye team on 0800 170 1432 or visit severnwye.org.uk/upgrade.

Jane and Martin's fostering journey

Fostering teenagers is a decision laden with purpose and passion for Jane and Martin, who embarked on this transformative journey after retiring. In this interview, they share insights about the realities of fostering, the profound impact it has had on their lives, and the invaluable lessons learned along the way.

Why did you decide to foster teenagers? We'd thought about it for 6 years. We were bored after taking early retirement and felt that we could offer young people the time and space to make a difference.

How long have you fostered teenagers for? Three and a half years, including therapeutic fostering of young people with complex emotional needs.

What does fostering teenagers entail? It's about slowly gaining their trust. It's important to set the right expectations, consequences and boundaries that allow them to grow and develop. You get really invested in helping to shape their futures.

What does a typical day fostering teenagers look like? Weekdays are generally taken up with school. We'll have dinner together and chat about his school day. On weekends we'll have Sunday lunch together and we go out for food once a week which he really enjoys. We involve our young people with our day to day, including seeing friends and celebrating special occasions. On weekends most teenagers don't get out of bed before midday, so you do get time to yourself!

What does fostering teens bring to your life? It certainly stops you from being bored! It comes with its challenges, but you can make a real difference. It gives you so much joy, especially when you have a real impact on their lives.



Silly things like taking them to restaurants and showing them new experiences just gives you so much. It's a great feeling inside.

Why should people consider fostering teenagers? It's not how people think it's going to be. You can have great conversations with them as they become more independent.

They are interesting and good company. It takes time, but once you build the relationship, it's really rewarding. You can do it at any age as well - Martin is nearly 80!

What has fostering teenagers taught you? Patience, tolerance, empathy. You become more patient as it goes on. You learn a lot through the training and placements. You are aware of how the young people will perceive what you're saying and you recognise their reactions to you aren't always personal.

What qualities do you need to foster teenagers? You've got to have humour, fun and patience. It's about doing things slowly and expanding their worlds to provide them with new experiences. You need to be able to set boundaries, which they may not have had before. Be open and honest and try to stay relaxed.

What keeps you motivated to foster teenagers? The relationships. Once you start to make a difference, it keeps you going. During some placements, we've had compliments about how our young people have developed. We don't do it for the money; the reward is when you change their path in life and make a difference. The camaraderie between foster carers also really helps.

How would you describe fostering teenagers in three words?
We love it.
*The names have been changed to protect the identities of those involved

Foster carer nominated for award



Charlotte, a Supported Lodgings Provider for Herefordshire Council, was nominated for the BBC's Make a Difference Carer's Award by the young people she assists.

The Awards took place on 14 September at West Midlands

Safari Park. The Carer Award was won by Vicky Tramontana for her work with people with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Supported Lodgings Providers guide young people over 16 as they transition from care settings

or homelessness to independent living. These placements focus on helping young people learn crucial life skills, such as cooking, cleaning, and budgeting.

Over nine years of fostering, Charlotte and her husband Matt have helped many young people to begin their adult lives. Their critical work helps care-experienced people create stable and rewarding futures.

Charlotte said: "It's really lovely to be nominated and completely unexpected. It's lovely to have extended family. I'm chuffed to bits."

For more information about how you can make a difference to the life of a young person, call 01432 383240 or visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fostering

Looking after someone's child?

Do you look after somebody else's child? Do you know someone who does?

You should let Herefordshire Council know about such arrangements, which may be considered as private fostering. This allows us to check if the child is safe and well and they, as well as their carer, is supported, if needed.

Let us know by contacting 01432 260 800, or email cypd@herefordshire.gov.uk

For more information about private fostering, or to find out how to notify us about this type of arrangement, visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/privatefostering

Film shows Any of Us



A film highlighting the attributes needed to be a foster carer has received a nationwide launch.

'Any Of Us' looks at three very different individuals who each in their own way show the caring instinct that is fundamental to being a foster carer.

The film was launched in September with a premiere at Birmingham's Everyman cinema.

It is the sixth film produced by a growing partnership of councils and children's trusts to promote local authority fostering.

To watch the video, visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fostering

Making a stand, #Change the story

Violence experienced by women and girls takes many forms. Some behaviours and words may seem harmless, but normalising them ignores the short and long-term effects on women.

Herefordshire Council is an accredited organisation for White Ribbon – a campaign to engage men and boys to end violence against women and girls.

The aim of the campaign is to #Change the story – to change harmful attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality and men’s violence against women. It encourages us to think about our own actions, promote equality and respect, and to be prepared to call out harassing, sexist and violent behaviour when we see it in others.



The White Ribbon promise is to never use, excuse or remain silent about men’s violence against women

Why does White Ribbon focus on men’s violence against women?

The sad reality is, that the majority of violence against women is perpetrated by men. Whether that is a partner, ex-partner, colleague, or stranger.

The White Ribbon campaign recognises that not all men are violent, however all men can help to end violence against women and girls by challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours.

How is Herefordshire Council supporting White Ribbon?

We’re proud to be a White Ribbon accredited organisation and to make a stand against any form of violence. We are actively working with local communities to raise awareness, and to ensure our workplace has zero tolerance of sexist, harassing and abusive behaviours.



How can I help?

Being a White Ribbon ambassador or champion is an effective and meaningful way to further your commitment to ending men’s violence against women and girls. Ambassadors and champions advocate and communicate the message of White Ribbon in social spaces, community settings and work places across the county.

Need help, support or advice?

If you’re a victim of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and/or sexual violence, including harassment, stalking, unwarranted attention and misogynistic comments you can get help.

• West Mercia Women’s Aid – helpline 0800 783 1359

• West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre – helpline 0808 500 2222

• If you are in immediate danger call the police on 999, or to report a crime that has taken place previously dial 101

If you or someone you know is affected by harm or abuse you can find advice on the council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/social-care-support/protect-someone

Find the White Ribbon UK website at www.whiteribbon.org.uk

Looking after your mental health



It is important to look after your mental health and wellbeing all year round in a post-pandemic world where the cost-of-living crisis is challenging for many of us.

One in four people in the UK suffers from a mental health condition. With everything going on in our daily lives, awareness of our mental health and how to care for ourselves or others is essential.

We know how to care for our physical health and what to do when we're unwell or injured. So, we should take the same approach to mental health when we're not feeling quite ourselves. We can do a lot for our mental health and overall wellbeing.

Knowing some of the symptoms of depression and anxiety is half the battle, and identifying them can help determine our next steps in deciding what care and support we need. It's important that we should seek professional support where and when self-care hasn't been effective.

Need more support?

Take a look at these websites for extra support:

- Samaritans Mental health – call us any time on 116 123
- NHS (www.nhs.uk)
15 Symptoms Of Depression And Anxiety
- BetterHelp (www.betterhelp.com)
- Self-care for mental health problems
- Mind – call Mind Infoline on 0300 123 3393 (www.mind.org.uk)

- Or visit initiatives like Qwell (www.qwell.io/). Qwell is a free, online safe and anonymous mental wellbeing support for adults; free training in mental health awareness and mental health first aid

to community organisations; funding for a community mental health coordinator

If you need more information and advice visit talkcommunity.org/moym.

Be scam-aware



Recent figures show that over 70% of UK residents have been targeted by scammers in the last year.

Common scams to be wary of include:

- Scam energy rebate text messages
- Energy tariff scams run by people turning up on your doorstep
- Loan sharks preying on vulnerable people affected by cost of living pressures

People need to be on their guard against suspicious emails and

texts. They also need to be wary of fraudsters turning up on their doorsteps offering too-good-to-be-true deals. And be very careful about anyone turning up at your door uninvited. They could be there to scam you. Visit <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/counter-fraud>

Report out-of-the-blue texts and emails to 7726 or report@phishing.gov.uk.

For more information on what we do, search for 'trading standards' on the council's website: herefordshire.gov.uk.

Delivering a better future - start your career search today!



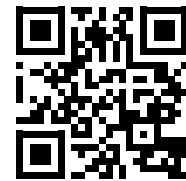
Spirit of Herefordshire isn't just a job portal showcasing all the latest jobs at Herefordshire Council. It's your doorway to a fulfilling career.

Herefordshire has the best of all worlds. It's a place where the whole family can grow and thrive. Children have access to excellent education, there are well-paid jobs for adults, and family life connects to the local community and to

nature. Herefordshire is a great place to work.

If you are looking for a new career, why not take a look at the range of jobs we have available.

Visit www.spiritofherefordshire.com today or scan the QR code now.



Start your job search today: www.spiritofherefordshire.com

Contacting a councillor

Is there an issue in your community? Do you have a view? Would you like to speak to your councillor or a cabinet member?

Feel free to get in touch:

Website: herefordshire.gov.uk/councillor-contacts
or call: 01432 260000

Cabinet members:

Leader, corporate strategy and budget: Councillor Jonathan Lester
Adults, health and wellbeing: Councillor Carole Gandy
Children and young people: Councillor Ivan Powell
Community services and assets: Councillor Harry Bramer
Economy and growth: Councillor Graham Biggs

Environment: Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst

Finance and corporate services: Councillor Pete Stoddart

Roads and regulatory services: Councillor Barry Durkin

Transport and infrastructure: Councillor Philip Price



Employers and training providers invited to support future young workforce

Herefordshire Skills Show aims to inspire the next generation.

Herefordshire Council is inviting local employers, education and training providers and entrepreneurs to take part in a skills and training expo aimed at young people on Thursday 8 February 2024 at Hereford Racecourse. Herefordshire Skills Show will take place during National Apprenticeship Week (5 – 11 February 2024) and offers local businesses and training organisations the opportunity to provide expert advice and guidance to the county's future young workforce.

It's a great way to showcase your business and raise your profile as a key employer in the local area.

Organisers will be welcoming over 1,200 young people, in years 10 and above, to the event.

If you are a local business or a training provider and would like to take part in the Skills Show and engage with young people, you can find more information at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/skillsshowemployers

To find out more about the event visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/skillsshow

The Herefordshire Skills Show 2024 has been organised by Herefordshire Council in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System, National Autistic Society's Herefordshire Branch, the Department for Work & Pensions, The Marches Careers Hub, The Careers & Enterprise Company and The Marches Skills Provider Network, NMITE, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and Herefordshire Means Business



Herefordshire employers

Showcase your career opportunities

Connect with your future workforce

8 FEBRUARY 2024 | HEREFORD RACECOURSE

BOOK NOW www.herefordshire.gov.uk/skillsshow

FREE Christmas parking is back!

Residents and visitors can make the most of fairs, events and late night shopping in the run-up to Christmas in Herefordshire, thanks to free parking that has been arranged and funded by Herefordshire Council.

Have you been enjoying the free parking at Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye? Why not make the most of the free parking at:

Kington Winter Food & Drink Festival: Saturday, 23 December 2023 (funded by Kington Chamber of Trade/Town Council)

Hereford late night shopping: after 4pm on Wednesdays, 13 and 20 December 2023

This includes all council public car parks and on-street pay and display bays. Please note this free parking offer does not apply to any private car parks, unless stated. If in doubt look for the 'free parking' information signs and check local restrictions.

As usual, it's free parking in our market towns after 6pm every day and all day on Sundays.

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/freechristmasparking



Free Christmas Parking



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please email: herefordshirenw@herefordshire.gov.uk

