

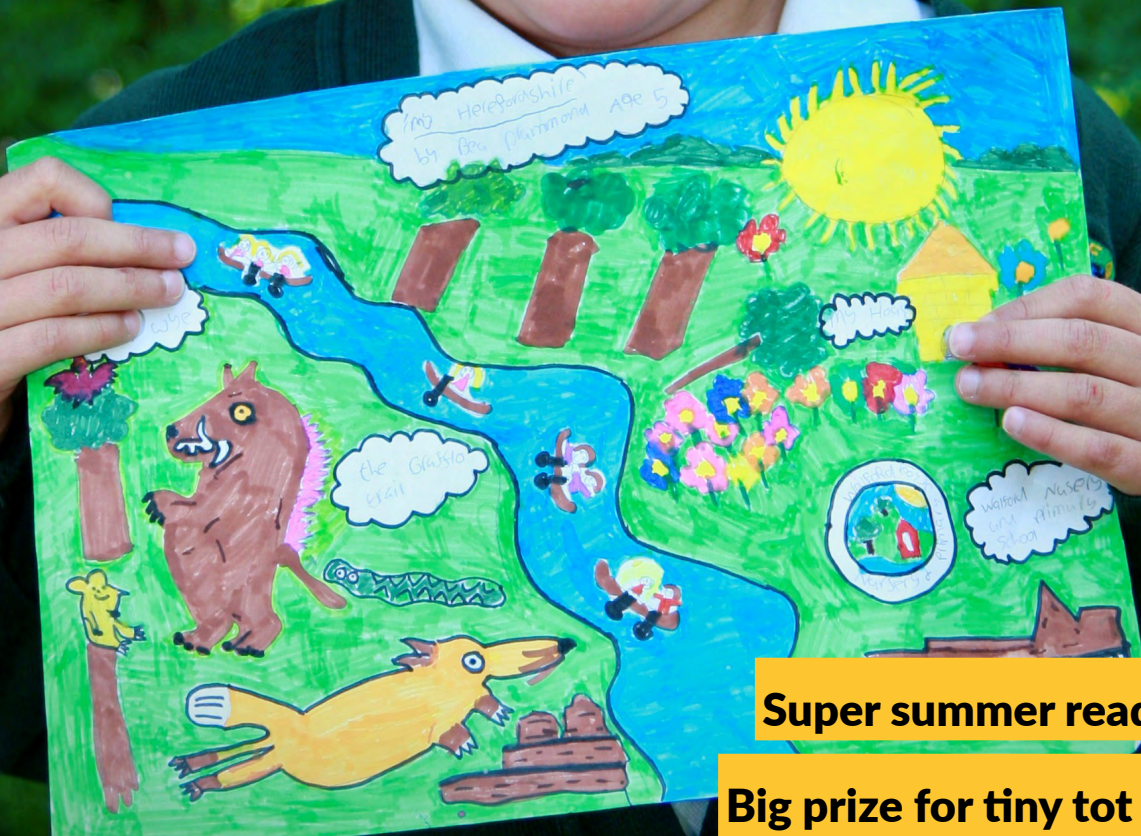
# HNN

HEREFORDSHIRE NOW

The residents' magazine from Herefordshire Council

June 2023

FREE AND ONLINE



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 Herefordshire Council



## Warm HUGs available

### Grants available for those in energy-inefficient homes

If you don't have a mains gas connection, you could be in line for fully-funded energy-saving improvements as part of a £7million scheme to upgrade the least energy-efficient homes in Herefordshire.

Home upgrade grants (HUGs) are for lower-income residents living in inefficient homes. The scheme provides you with a free survey that leads to better insulation,

heating and other energy-saving home improvements.

You can apply if you:

- Are not connected to the gas network
- Privately own or rent your home
- Live in an energy-inefficient home (with an EPC rating of D, E, F or G)
- Have a combined annual income below £31,000 or live with vulnerable occupants

We're working with energy charity Severn Wye on this scheme. Apply for a grant by calling them

on 0800 170 1432 or visiting: [severnwye.org.uk/upgrade](http://severnwye.org.uk/upgrade).

Bernadette Muldowney, senior project manager at the council, says: "This is a really great opportunity for hundreds of Herefordshire residents to get funding. We hope this two-year scheme makes a massive difference to homes across the county."

For more information about keeping warm and well, visit:

[herefordshire.gov.uk/winter-wellbeing](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/winter-wellbeing)

## Border control

### Maintaining verges is a balancing act

Many of us ignore them when we're focused on travelling. But, for birds, bees and butterflies, grass verges along roadsides are a feast. Insects feed on the flowers, birds feed on the insects.

Chopping down roadside flora is bad news for biodiversity. But overgrown verges can become



a hazard for road users if they restrict vision.

This is why we work with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) to maintain a balance.

As Ross Cook our director of economy and environment says: "We'll continue to work with Verging on Wild, as we have done

for many years, to improve how we manage our verges."

"We must keep our roads safe. But we've learned to do this in a way that also sustains biodiversity. Getting the balance right benefits us all."

Find out when, where and why we cut at: [herefordshire.gov.uk/grasscutting](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/grasscutting)



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 [herefordshirennow@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:herefordshirennow@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](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/council/herefordshire-now)

All details correct at time of print.

Cover pic: All smiles. Beatrice is delighted to win a prize in our art competition. See p8-9.

Follow us:





# Welcome

Staying with health, pages 6-7 provide insights into a recently published 10-year strategy. It links to the full document, which looks at our lifestyles and what's being planned to make improvements for everyone living in Herefordshire.

Nozstock, poetry in Ledbury and, of course, Hay Festival. I really enjoy getting out and about to events as well as within our beautiful countryside at this time of year. We do tend to be a bit more carefree in summer. Which makes it easy to forget to look after ourselves and others. Pages 12-13 provide some great health and wellbeing tips to stay safe this summer.

I feel honoured to be working for the council as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. I was also delighted that so many of our residents enjoyed events celebrating HM The King's coronation. See the back page for photos from both events.

Finally, some thanks. First, to residents who took part in

the local elections. This page provides more on the outcome and how the council works. I'd also like to thank all the schools and their pupils who entered our art competition. You'll find a selection of the many wonderful images we received on pages 8-9.

I was amazed by the standard of entries from our young people. I know this made the panel's job of selecting winners extremely difficult. Well done to everyone who took part.

Paul Walker, chief executive, Herefordshire Council

## Election explainer

Herefordshire residents went to the polls on Thursday 4 May to cast their votes in the local elections. While voters know who they want to represent their interests, not everyone knows the nuts and bolts of the process. We asked Colette Maund (electoral services manager) and John Coleman (democratic services manager) to explain.



Full council meeting, 19 May

**Why and when did the local elections take place in Herefordshire?** Legislation states that full term elections must take place every four years on the first Thursday in May.

**Did as many voters as expected turn out?** We had a 37.3 per cent turnout. So, 55,044 votes out of a possible 147,552.

**Did photo ID make any difference/ cause any problems?** No major problems.

**How many people (who didn't have photo ID) applied for a voter authority certificate to vote?** We had a total of 393 online applications as of 24 April 2023.

**How many councillors do we have in Herefordshire?** 53

**Which councillors make up the cabinet?** Once elected at the annual council meeting, the new leader assembles his or her cabinet.

**What do cabinet members do that other councillors don't?** Members have portfolio areas (eg, housing, transport or finance). Non-cabinet councillors do not have powers to take executive decisions, but can vote at full council meetings and sit on committees. For details see the back page.

**How can I contact my local councillor?** Visit the 'your councillors' section of the council's website: [herefordshire.gov.uk](http://herefordshire.gov.uk) or see the back page.

**Is being a councillor a full time job?** No. But the hours can be long. Most balance their council duties with other employment.

**Can you have a full time job and be a councillor?** Yes. But councillor duties are on top of this. However, most employers allow time off for employees if they become elected.

**Can anyone over 18 stand in local elections to become a councillor?** Most people over 18 who live in the county can stand as a candidate. Full guidance is provided on the 'become a Herefordshire councillor' page of the council's website: [herefordshire.gov.uk](http://herefordshire.gov.uk)

To find out more, visit: [herefordshire.gov.uk/elections](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/elections)

# Grants still available for repair cafes

Tea, coffee, cake and a friendly chat were all on offer at the opening of South Hereford Repair Cafe (SHRC) in April.



SHRC is the latest of its kind in the county. Held in Dinedor village hall, it follows in the fixing footsteps of similar ventures in Ledbury, Leominster, Malvern, Presteigne and one in Marden that opened just this month.

Five electrical items were among the 16 repairs SHRC's volunteers tackled on its opening day.

They also mended five items of clothes and honed the blades of five blunt instruments that had seen sharper days.

## Fixing toys is child's play

Repair cafes are popping up everywhere. They're run by local people who help with the admin side of things (repair items usually need to be booked in in advance) and those who make hot drinks and clear up afterwards. Then, there are the volunteers who have

the skills to put the pop back into toasted toasters, make holes disappear from well-worn clothes and toy with toys to give them a new lease of life. While the repairs are done free of charge, donations towards the running of the cafes are always welcomed.

Allan Simnett, coordinator at SHRC, says:

"The significant support we have received from Herefordshire Council, together with advice and assistance from Ledbury and Malvern repair cafes, have been vital elements in getting us to the point of successfully opening south Hereford. From the beginning it has been a team effort and greatly appreciated!"

If that's whet your appetite to set up a repair cafe in your area, you'll

be pleased to know that funding is still available.

Until Sunday 3 September, you can apply for a grant of up to £2,500 to cover the cost of establishing a new repair cafe or expanding an existing one. The funding is available to Herefordshire-based, non-profit groups, organisations as well as city, town and parish councils.

See our webpage for more information, including details of how to apply for a grant: [herefordshire.gov.uk/repaircafe](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/repaircafe)

For more on SHRC, visit: [repaircafesouthhereford.org.uk](http://repaircafesouthhereford.org.uk)

For more on the Marden hub, visit: [marden-links.org/marden-hub/](http://marden-links.org/marden-hub/)

# Super hubs are coming

They will be big. And they will be for the community!

Grants of up to £300,000 are available to create super hubs in Herefordshire.

The success of Talk Community's 73 hubs, spread out across the county, has prompted bigger and better thinking. Existing community-led hubs offer useful information and signposting. This helps local people connect with each other, stay well and feel safe.

Super hubs will offer these things and much more besides. The

one-stop-shops will give residents more reasons to visit, offer more space for activities and provide a selection of services that best serve the communities in which they're based.

Amy Pitt, service director, community wellbeing, says:

"Super hubs are the next logical step in our vision to build stronger in Herefordshire. We know people enjoy using the communities existing 73 hubs across the county. Many residents have asked about longer opening hours and more services to enhance what they already have. This is what super hubs will offer. They will be big. And they will be for the community."



Grants of between £5,000 and £300,000 are available to eligible groups likely to include: existing hubs, registered charities and community sports groups. The deadline for first expressions of interest is midnight, 25 July 2023.

For further info/to apply: [herefordshire.gov.uk/hubs-capital-grant](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/hubs-capital-grant), email: [hubscapitalgrantscheme@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hubscapitalgrantscheme@herefordshire.gov.uk) or call 01432 260753

# Getting in the good books



Well read – library assistant Jo Spicer looks forward to helping with our summer reading challenge

## Dive into the UK's biggest free reading for pleasure programme for children

Keeping children happy all summer can be a challenge for any parent or carer. After all, young people get bored easily, especially during school holidays when their routines are disrupted.

What they need is a bit of drama. Yes, drama! With a bit of fun thrown in. And maybe a bit of poetry...

The summer reading challenge gives children the chance to read, or listen to, anything they like to keep themselves entertained right through the longest school holiday.

The biggest programme of its kind in the UK takes place in every library in Herefordshire. Between the Saturdays 8 July and 9 September, the challenge invites children aged four to 11 years to bury their noses into pages, scroll across the screens of e-books or listen to the audio books of their liking. Facts as well as fiction are all part of the fun. Called Ready, Set, Read, this year's theme is sports and games. So, as well as occupying their brains, the

summer reading challenge could also inspire children to keep active during summer.

Jon Chedgzoy, manager of Herefordshire libraries, says:

"This challenge is a brilliant way of keeping children happy at a time when their friends may have gone on holiday or are doing other things with their own families. Parents and carers can bring their children to their local library before the challenge starts to join in. They'll each get a bag of goodies to inspire their reading. That contains a special collector card to record six books we recommend they read (or listen to) during summer. Children who let their local library staff know when they're finished the challenge will be presented with a special certificate and medal. There's also an online version of the challenge, which is especially useful for those who don't live close to one of Herefordshire's libraries. So, every primary aged child can join in the fun. Ready, set, read!"

For more info, visit: [herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries-1](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/libraries-1). For the online version of the challenge: [summerreadingchallenge.org.uk](http://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk)

Summer reading challenge is presented by The Reading Agency and funded by Arts Council England.

## Open as usual

It's stood the test of time since the 17th century. So, even though it will be wrapped in scaffolding for 16 weeks from July, the doors to the Black and White House will be open to visitors. The maintenance work to its exterior will not affect its usual opening hours.

In fact, if you've ever wondered how things were made so well four centuries ago, a series of demonstrations during summer will give you some clues.

Museum supervisor Julia Radburn says: "The necessary work being done will help protect one of Herefordshire's most important heritage sites for years to come. While that's going on, we're open as usual and we're really looking forward to welcoming visitors to the exciting events organised for summer."

To find out more, visit: [blackandwhitehouse.org](http://blackandwhitehouse.org)



# Live well, live long

## Details of a newly-published 10-year plan for a healthier Herefordshire

In general, people in Herefordshire have a good quality of life and tend to live longer than nationally. We live in a sparsely populated rural county, so getting out into the great outdoors is relatively straightforward.

However, like many areas in the country, the county faces a number of health challenges with an ageing population and health care needs such as an increase in obesity and rising levels of ill-mental health.

This is where the new Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy comes in.

Created by the council and partners in health, the police, the voluntary sector and other services, the strategy aims to improve the health and wellbeing of every resident in the county, but particularly those who experience poorer health.

To do that it considers a range of factors beyond the professional people and services many of us think of when it comes to living well and living long. Things like our education, our work environments and housing also have a significant effect on how we feel, how likely we are to be affected by serious problems and how long we can expect to live.

With so much to consider it's hard to know where anyone would even begin when it comes to making improvements. Fortunately, Herefordshire Council's director of public health, who contributed to the strategy, agreed to answer our questions.

We began by asking what will come first to make improvements over the next decade?

"The partners on Herefordshire's health and wellbeing board agreed to focus on a small number of priorities to avoid spreading ourselves too thinly," says Matt Pearce. "One focus is with our 0-5 year-olds. The building blocks of life are laid down in those early years and are the foundation for good physical and mental health when we're older.

"Having a happier start in life, living in a loving home, eating well and enjoying a good education are critical for living longer, healthier lives."

So, the aim is to help parents and carers make healthier choices for their children?

"In simple terms, yes," Matt says. "But, as with most things in life, it's much easier said than done. As with many areas in the UK, there are big differences between the health and wellbeing of people living in our poorest and wealthiest



*Horizon scanner. Matt Pearce takes the long view when it comes to the county's health and wellbeing*

areas of Herefordshire. Our focus really needs to be about providing more help where it's most needed and giving children the best start in life.

"There's already some fantastic things being done in Herefordshire," Matt adds. "That includes the work of midwives and health visitors through something called the healthy child programme. We're supporting parents with a children's health and advice team (CHAT) and working closely with the voluntary and community sector. We also want to build on our oral health programme where we have already trained over 40 nurseries to help over 1500 children with supervised teeth brushing.



**“There’s already some fantastic things being done in Herefordshire”**

**Matt Pearce**

### **Mental health**

So, giving people the best start in life is the strategy’s first priority. What’s the second?

“Our second priority is good mental wellbeing across all ages,” Matt says. “We can’t achieve much – or as much as we’re capable of achieving – if we’re not resilient. Improving mental wellbeing will be a really good way of helping everyone in the county achieve their full potential.”

Are mental health issues a major concern in Herefordshire?

“Yes and no,” Matt responds. “While data suggests mental wellbeing among adults in the county are better than average across England, a high proportion experience anxiety and depression, made worse by the pandemic. We’ve also heard that many children and young people report low levels of mental wellbeing and that these numbers increase as children get older. Everyone with a mental health issue can face disadvantages in their lives. Having good mental wellbeing is the key to help people live happy, prosperous, independent lives.

“There’s a lot of good work being done to tackle mental health issues in Herefordshire. We have

a range of charities, voluntary groups and training programmes all designed to help people improve their wellbeing. Herefordshire and Worcestershire’s ‘Now We’re Talking’ website is a fantastic one-stop-shop for mental health support. It includes help for people feeling stressed and anxious as well as information for parents and carers worried about their children. However, we also know that access to some mental health services is difficult and our partners are working hard to address this.”

In essence, the strategy sounds like it’s aimed at preventing rather than curing our health and wellbeing issues. Is that a fair summary?

“The adage that it’s better to prevent than cure still makes a lot of sense,” Matt agrees. “Also, there’s plenty of evidence suggesting the solutions to many challenges can be found in our communities. We want to help people and communities help each other and move away from reacting to problems towards prevention and early intervention.”

For full details of our health and wellbeing strategy, visit:

[herefordshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-strategy](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-strategy)

[www.healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk/](https://www.healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk/)

## **Surfing skills for seniors**



### **Four in 10 over-75s aren’t online**

Fortunately, Age UK is doing something about this sorry statistic.

The charity offers drop-in sessions in Ledbury, Yarpole and Ross-on-Wye to bring older people up to speed with all things digital. Being online makes it easier to keep in touch with friends and family. Surfing the net also means you can shop and learn from a screen in your own home.

For more details, call 0800 008 6077; email [referralhub@ageukhw.org.uk](mailto:referralhub@ageukhw.org.uk) or visit:

<https://bit.ly/3Owr75z>



# County prize draws

## Competition winners announced

Three talented young artists were chosen as the winners of a council competition open to local school pupils and nursery-age children. A total of 272 artworks were received by the closing date. Then, it was all down to the judges.

The 'My Herefordshire' competition gave children the chance to showcase their artistry by expressing what they like best about living in the county.

The colourful competition was divided into three age categories, with a first, second and third-place prize within each group.



Walford winners. From L-R: Harry, Beatrice, Charlotte and Florence, from Walford Primary School, show off their prize winning entries from the 'My Herefordshire' art competition



Judges could not separate two of the entries in the key stage 1 category so gave third-place prizes to two children. This meant 10 prize-winners were chosen from the 31 shortlisted artworks. The budding artists behind those entries will be awarded book tokens worth £30, £20 and £10, respectively.

Entries included an image of canoeists on the River Wye, with characters from the Gruffalo books alongside; a precisely felt-penned image of local countryside; another is a montage of key local features captured within the shape of an apple.

Many of the artworks were complemented with brief descriptions of the place, activity, club or person in Herefordshire they represented and why it means so much to the young artists. The description that came with the felt-penned rural scene was: "I drew the woodlands because I spent time there in lockdown and walked 50 miles, also it's calming and peaceful".

Darryl Freeman, our corporate director, children's services, the competition's head judge, says:

"Wow! We had so many brilliant entries from our local children. It really was difficult to pick out

those who should receive prizes. The competition has been a fantastic success and it gave us the chance to see how artistically talented our young people are in Herefordshire."



# Children's meeting place



As part of our improvement plan to transform our children's services, we're currently developing three family-friendly meeting rooms within the council's Plough Lane offices.

Construction of the new rooms is due to be completed at the end of June. From then, families will be able to agree suitable meeting times with their social work team.

A separate side entrance will allow families to enter the Plough Lane building without having to come through the main reception area. The new private meeting rooms are very close to that side entrance.

Darryl Freeman, our corporate director, children's services, says: "We agreed with Ofsted to improve our services. This is just one of the improvements we're making to better serve families in Herefordshire. It's really important that we provide suitable meeting rooms where we can listen to and support families in comfort and privacy. This new feature is one of nine key areas of improvement we're putting in place for families. We've published full details of our plan on the council's website. Our progress is being closely monitored by Ofsted so we can be sure we can improve our services to provide families with the best level of support possible."

For more information, visit: [herefordshire.gov.uk/improvement](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/improvement)

## Private fostering - let us know

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.

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

If you run an organisation in Herefordshire, you can request free leaflets and posters on private fostering by emailing: [admin.sbu@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admin.sbu@herefordshire.gov.uk).

## Childcare - free

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](https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare)



# Return on your investment

How looking after children brings untold rewards



*Sarah Wixey says empathy, patience and love are what's needed to be a successful foster carer*

Every 20 minutes, a child comes into care needing a foster family. Most of those children have been abused or neglected. This, according to the UK's leading fostering organisation, is why there are over 70,000 children living with around 56,000 families in the UK.

During May, the Fostering Network ran its annual campaign to celebrate the carers who transform the lives of the babies, children and young people who make up the above sobering statistics.

We caught up with one family in Herefordshire who have fostered around 18 children. Sarah and Alan have been married for 31 years and have three birth children: Miles (24), Ava (19) and Gus (17). The couple live in one of the county's villages and Sarah provided responses to our questions.

## **Why did you start fostering?**

Fostering became my career after I saw an advert in the local paper saying 'Could You Be A Foster Carer?'

We wanted to make a difference to children who couldn't live at home with their parents. We

wanted to provide a loving home and give children opportunities that might not happen if they were at home.

## **Can you tell me about your experience of fostering?**

We love being a foster family. Being able to provide a loving home and seeing children flourish and making memories with them is incredibly rewarding.

## **What are the main challenges and the main rewards of fostering?**

You can offer so much to these babies and children. Seeing their face light up when you walk into a room. Seeing them achieve their goals. Making new friends, being part of your family. Taking them on holidays and days out. It's all very rewarding.

There are many challenges. But nothing you can't overcome. Being a good foster carer means you'll work through challenging situations and support children through difficult times.

## **How is the foster child/ren in your care doing? Does he or she understand why they are being fostered?**

We have three very happy children living with us. A sibling group of two boys and a little girl with

special needs. The siblings have a very good understanding as to why they are in care. The little girl has less understanding but is incredibly happy with us.

**How does the child/ren you are fostering get on with your other children/ family members?** They all get on incredibly well. Other placements haven't worked as well.

## **In your view, what makes a good foster carer?**

You need to be patient, non-judgmental, have empathy, be loving, caring, objective, rational and fair.

## **Is there anything other families should know about fostering that you've not mentioned?**

It took us about six months to be approved when we started fostering in 2010. The process can be quite intrusive and will involve family, friends, employers, birth children's school and previous partners, etc.

Visit [thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk) to find out more.

# Healthy Herefordshire

*Hello sunshine! Shades are out, short sleeves and sandals are everywhere and our towns and villages are a-buzz with visitors*

Some of us forget to take care of ourselves during the hazy days of summer. So, we've put together some health hints and tips for you to consider during the year's longest days.

To stay safe this summer:

- Avoid direct sun between 11am and 3pm
- Walk in the shade and apply sunscreen
- Avoid extreme exercise
- Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes
- Drink plenty of water and avoid excessive alcohol
- Eat cold foods, especially salads and fruit
- Take a cool shower, bath or body wash

Closing your curtains during the day is also a good idea to help keep your indoor spaces cool during the hottest times of the year.

"Most of us enjoy being outside during the summer," says Herefordshire's director of public health, Matt Pearce. "We can all make the most of warmer temperatures by taking a few simple precautions and looking out for people in the community who may be at risk from the effects of hot weather."



For more info, visit the following sites:

- <https://bit.ly/3BRgpz1>
- <https://bit.ly/426f8iu>
- <https://bit.ly/3BSJDxz>



## Eating out, staying safe

When we're not loafing on our lawns during summer, many of us are scampering towards the shed to dust off the barbecue that's not been used since last year.

As tempting as it is to invite friends and family round to our sunny back gardens, it's worth reminding ourselves how to play it safe when it comes to chucking our favourite foods on the barbie. The following guide will help ensure you, your friends and family make the most of fine-weather food.

**Scrub up.** Wash your hands with soap and water before handling food. Remember, if you touch raw meat or fish, you should scrub again before touching other foods. Don't forget to do the same with any utensils you use to avoid cross-contamination.

**Thaw before you gnaw.** Barbecues have a nasty habit of making food look tasty before it's actually safe to eat because it's not cooked in the middle.

Make sure all your frozen meat is completely defrosted before you introduce it to the flames. Take extra care to cook chicken, pork, sausages, burgers and fish right through. Alternatively, cook it in the oven before finishing it off outdoors.

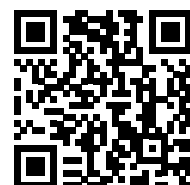
**Keep salads in the shade.** Keep your food out of direct sunlight as much as possible. Put it in the shade or indoors until you really need it. It's worth keeping food that can perish (including dips, cheese and meats) in the fridge and taking them outside in batches.

There's a glut of food safety guidance on the Food Standards Agency's webpage, including allergy advice, fire safety and managing your leftovers: <https://bit.ly/45wuC1Z>.

## File on food

A new publication offers some bite-size hints and tips on eating well, written by our director of public health. Matt Pearce's report also tells us the stories behind our food. He says: "Having a diet that improves the health of people and the environment is often deemed a 'win-win' situation. Supermarkets may make shopping easy. But it's well worth thinking about the whole journey of our food, from farm to fork."

For full details, visit: [herefordshire.gov.uk/DPHreport](https://herefordshire.gov.uk/DPHreport)



# Banking on help



Bank of crave – food and volunteers are needed now at Herefordshire's food banks

## Herefordshire's food banks need more donations and volunteers to keep helping the county's vulnerable residents

Food banks in the Trussell Trust network gave out almost three million emergency parcels in the past 12 months.

That record number indicates the size of the challenge facing charities set up to help people in need.

Many people are still struggling because food inflation recently hit 16 per cent, according to the Independent Food Aid Network's survey from February.

Herefordshire's independent food banks and community larders survived the winter. But a continuous supply of food is still needed and some would welcome new volunteers. We spoke to Kathy Bland in Leominster to find out more.

### Where does Leominster food bank get its supplies from?

The general public donate items at collection points at Leominster Co-op and Morrisons. We use the bankthefood.org app and our own digital channels to share what donations we need. We also buy food to give to people from donations we receive from the public.

### Can anyone come to get food?

Food banks operate on a referral basis. Referring agencies include schools, health visitors, probation, housing associations, money advice centres, Citizens Advice and other agencies.

Food shares [surplus food from supermarkets] are open to anyone but offer a much more limited range. Whatever is available is shared out: sometimes there's a lot available, sometimes very little.

### Are the food banks open every day?

Leominster food bank is open Tuesday and Friday 11-12. Leominster food share is open Wednesday and Saturday 2-2.30pm.

Other food banks, food shares and pantries in the county operate on different days of the week for people in their locality. They are listed on Talk Community's website: [talkcommunitydirectory.org](http://talkcommunitydirectory.org)

Do the food banks have enough food donations to share with everyone who comes in? We currently have enough food because we do a large amount

of food shopping every week. However, the rate of increase in need means this is not sustainable in the longer term. There will come a point where we have insufficient funds to meet demand.

### Who works in the food banks?

There's a variety of roles in Herefordshire's food banks for volunteers: supermarket food collector, distribution team member, food bagger, food share volunteer, money mentor, trustee, coordinator, cleaner, clear-up crew, team leader and grant funding officer. Practical roles involve some heavy lifting. People-facing volunteers are friendly, non-judgmental and have great listening skills.

We need some strategic thinkers and management level volunteers to join us and help us become more resilient.

### How should people get in touch if they want to help?

Email: [leominsterfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:leominsterfoodbank@gmail.com).

For other food banks in Herefordshire, visit: <https://bit.ly/3IOAY3g>



## Letters to the editor

Transport in Herefordshire needs a complete rethink.

I work in the County Hospital in Hereford.

Several staff have left due to the lengthy commutes they endured on a daily basis. The time taken to get to the outskirts of Hereford is equal to half the journey time from many outlying areas. The other half of that type of commute has people stuck in traffic getting into Hereford.

The people who left worked in specialist posts. They went to find employment not necessarily closer to where they live but at sites that meant spending less time stuck in traffic.

The new transport hub allows city dwellers to change how they move around Hereford. But, it does not provide an alternative means of transport for the majority of rural commuters. They still need to use their cars to reach reliable and alternative methods of transport.

We need four park-and-ride sites, north, south, east and west of Hereford. The transfer from car to bus could take place on the outskirts of the city. The service would have to provide reliable and regular transit to the city centre hub, which means buses that run between 6am and 8pm. The park-and-rides would also need to be secure, so people would be confident about leaving their cars

there. A fee of, say, £5 a week would encourage people to use them. Cycle paths from the park-and-ride sites to the city would also offer a useful alternative.

We need to encourage people to come to work, and be able to shop and enjoy leisure facilities, in Hereford. These measures would vastly reduce the queues of traffic we see every day, getting into or away from the city.

The price of parking within Hereford is also too high. We are discouraging people to drive into the city from the county, without currently providing them with a reliable and cost-effective alternative.

The transport hub is a step in the right direction. But, as a rural county, we must provide more for the commuters from out of town.

Huw Roberts, Hereford

### HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL RESPONSE

Dear Huw

A new local transport plan is being developed. This will be published in 2024. Our aim is to ensure that transport links across the county – in the city, market towns and rural areas – support residents and visitors to travel easily, sustainably and safely. We will share your views with the recently-elected council members.

**Got a view? Want to have your say? Write to the editor of Herefordshire Now by emailing [herefordshirenow@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:herefordshirenow@herefordshire.gov.uk). We reserve the right to edit your messages.**

## From queues to QRs

How Herefordshire's buses opened their doors to 21st century tech

QR codes are now being used at over 500 bus stops in Herefordshire.

All you need to do is scan the codes with your smartphone to get the real-time arrival of the next bus (and the next and the next and the next...).

Bus QRs have been helping passengers avoid rain and cold weather since they were launched in May this year. This is because, once you've bookmarked a QR code, you can get bus info from wherever you are.

Which means you can put your feet up at home, stay in a warm cafe or keep watching a movie until it's time to move for your bus.

Herefordshire's bus QR codes are funded by the Department for Transport.

Visit [herefordshire.gov.uk/public-transport-1/bus-travel/6](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/public-transport-1/bus-travel/6) to find out more info.



# Telecare scams warning

## Residents advised to be vigilant

Residents who use telecare services should beware of cold callers who may attempt to defraud them.

Telecare offers remote care for older people and those who are less mobile. The system links equipment at home with a 24/7 monitoring service. If the telecare user's alarm is sounded, staff from the monitoring service will contact the customer's relatives or neighbours to let them know there is a potential issue at the property.

We have written to our customers to let them know that their telecare service may be interrupted or cut off due to a digital switchover happening gradually all over the UK.

The letter advises our customers what they should do to stay safe. But some users of other telecare systems may not yet be aware of the digital switchover or a potential interruption to their service.

We advise all telecare users to get in touch with their provider, which should be able to help.



News reports from other counties suggest scammers are using the uncertainty over the digital switchover to attempt to defraud telecare customers. They tell users that their provider is no longer in business or that they need to pay to keep their service running.

"If you receive one of these calls it's likely to be a scam." That's the stark warning from Lee Davis, Herefordshire Council's head of prevention and support. "We would never cold-call our telecare customers and ask for their bank details. Nor would any other legitimate telecare provider"

Lee's top tips for Herefordshire's telecare users are:

- If your provider calls, hang up and call them back to make sure the call is genuine
- Never rush into a decision

- Ask your provider for their advice about the digital switchover if you need it
- Don't share your bank details over the phone
- Hang up

Lee adds:

"We received a call from one of our customers who had just spoken to a cold caller. The cold caller said our customer needed to replace her existing telecare system. It was a scam.

"Another customer was charged an excessive amount for telecare style services, believing the services were from Herefordshire Council."

If you're unsure, call our telecare team for advice on 01432 261 650 or visit our webpage for more information: [herefordshire.gov.uk/counter-fraud/counter-fraud-services/6](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/counter-fraud/counter-fraud-services/6)



Do you know a family member with a personal telecare product?

Check if the **#DigitalSwitchover** will affect their service.

# Spring celebrations



Our anniversary. Herefordshire Council is 25 years old. 114 staff members have worked here the whole time. That adds up to 2,850 years of service. Here's to the next quarter century.

## 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](http://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



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please email: [herefordshirenow@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:herefordshirenow@herefordshire.gov.uk)

