

## May 2026 – Ward Report – Sutton Walls

As we enter the final month of the Balfour Beatty contract the issue of potholes continues to be one of the chief concerns of many residents. I am pleased to report extensive work on the roads is carrying on with the new higher level of investment in the recent budget. We have a long way to go yet, but the improvements are beginning to show. Thank you to those residents who have been appreciative of this; positive feedback is most welcome.

The Council were intending to begin a Food waste collection from 1<sup>st</sup> April, but this is delayed as we were expecting, along with other local authorities, financial support from the government. The revenue cost to us would be 2.3 million pounds per annum and we should have received this funding as a new burden agreement. We are therefore having to confirm funding, review governance as the Cabinet decision was to implement the change subject to 'new burdens' funding being made available and review our implementation plans and timescales to align with these changes.

However, good news, our recycling rate (green bins) has remained at 39% despite a national trend of falling rates and you can now recycle aluminium foil, foil trays, metal and foiled lined tubes and plastic tubes.

I am pleased to support the Council in investigating the creation of a digital officer post to take on the responsibility for broadband provision across the county, management of our terrestrial mobile phone coverage and supporting the take up of new and improved digital services across the county. Despite the massive Fastershire investment to improve access to high-speed broadband, it is still an issue for so many as is poor mobile coverage, having an officer to specialise in this is important particularly for rural communities and businesses.

*The national media is very focused on the upcoming local elections a reminder there are NO local elections in Herefordshire this year. Herefordshire Council and Parish elections are held every four years – next elections May 6<sup>th</sup> 2027 ; with the Boundary Commission recently confirming no changes to our ward or parishes.*

### **Protecting the River Wye and its tributaries**



Herefordshire Council has agreed a Charter for the Wye and will integrate it into policies and decision-making where possible including the new Local Plan.

The Council will continue to prioritise freshwater recovery, including tackling pollution, restoring wetlands, reconnecting habitats and improving river systems at a catchment scale, in line with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Council Plan.

The Council will support neighbouring authorities in championing the Charter, promoting a

cross-border, catchment wide approach to protecting the River Wye and its tributaries and publicising this shared commitment.

Wye Valley National Landscape Projects includes £1.6–£1.8 million of funding supporting an annual programme delivery, combining DEFRA, Welsh Government, National Grid and other grants, which allow multiple landscape-scale projects to run alongside community and farming initiatives including:

- **Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) – 2025/26 delivery**  
The FiPL programme supported 43 projects with 40 farmers, delivering 27.5 hectares of wildflower meadow, 1,863 trees, 772 metres of hedgerow, 8 ponds, and 5 leaky dams, alongside livestock management improvements, fencing and farmer advice days
- **National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI)**  
Three major LEI projects (2025–2028, total £792k) are improving landscape and biodiversity following electric cable undergrounding with new and restored hedgerows, species-rich



grassland, orchard and parkland trees, and wetland and natural flood management features including ponds and leaky dams delivered during 2025.

- Lower Wye Nature recovery and climate adaptation projects

Practical measures are being delivered across the Lower Wye, including habitat creation, woodland and orchard planting, and natural flood management, linking biodiversity recovery with climate resilience and water management.

**FCC Biodiversity Community Grant Scheme**

- The grant aims to protect and enhance biodiversity through allocating funding to projects which will deliver environmental improvements and initiatives that create green spaces, improve biodiversity or help ecosystems in Herefordshire.
- Example projects include tree and hedge planting or management, creation of wildlife corridors, bird, bat or bug boxes and hedgehog homes, planting wildflower areas, wetland / pond creation. Projects should include community / public benefit and engagement.
- During 2025 a total of almost £62,000 funding was awarded to 12 successful applicants in the county including citizen science bat survey, Southside Farm community nature areas, biological heritage at Snodhill Castle and Oatleys Meadow destination park.
- The grant scheme will re-open to applications from 1 June 2026 and I hope will be of interest locally.

**Visit HEREFORDSHIRE – Annual Tourism Conference**

The annual conference of the organisation that promotes tourism for Herefordshire was attended by 220 local people. It is estimated that tourism is worth 830 million pounds to our local economy with 9% of the county employees.

Visit Herefordshire is a voluntary organisation run by local tourism leads who raise an extra precept on larger tourism business to fund their activity. They offer support to local businesses on reducing costs, including Business Rate Support service; organise over 2,00 training courses, both in person and online, and develop marketing strategies to promote the county.



Working with the Council they helped secure film locations for Hamnet in Weobley and Brilley which is estimated over two months was worth over £800,000 to the local economy.

Visit Herefordshire use AI and technologies to gather evidence of visitor movements and spend which helps direct county wide and individual business future planning. Among recent

campaigns are Local producer branding, Dog friendly status, Inn to Inn and Herefordshire wine tourism.

Going forward priorities include extending visitor stays in our county from weekend breaks to longer periods, targeting promotion to certain areas of the country, focusing on “empty nesters” and mature families as the prime market, and more active holidays in July and August for families.

A very impressive conference supporting the thousands of small tourism and hospitality businesses in our county.

## **PLEASE report potholes and concerns**



[Report problems on the road](#)

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road)

[Check on progress of a defect](#)

[herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map](http://herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map)

**Report a serious pothole, flooded road or highway obstruction- Balfour Beatty Living Places: 01432 261800**

Making a claim for vehicle damage : [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/highway-claims](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/highway-claims)

### **Footpaths issues –**

- PROW - [PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk)
- PROW No – 01432 383 550

**Report fly tipping.** It will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via the council website on the links below as your [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/fly\\_tipping](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/fly_tipping)