November 2026 – Ward Report – Sutton Walls

Tourism Businesses across Herefordshire have voted decisively in favour of a further five-year Term for Visit Herefordshire, securing continued investment in the County's visitor economy from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2032.

Following a successful Ballot of Levy Paying tourism businesses in the County, Visit Herefordshire, has received a mandate to continue leading the growth and development of the County's visitor economy for the next five years. The result marks a major vote of confidence in the work delivered since 2022 and provides a platform to build on one of Herefordshire's most significant economic success stories.

The successful Ballot secures the second five-year Term of Visit Herefordshire from 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2032, enabling delivery of the ambitious programme set out in the Visit Herefordshire Business Plan 2027-2032. Visit Herefordshire's new Business Plan is focused on four ambitious pillars:

1. Attracting Visitors and New Audiences,

2. Working Together for Business Growth,

3. Authentic Herefordshire as an Economic Engine for Tourism, and

4. Investment in Tourism. These priorities will help to continue to deliver an improving visitor economy.

Herefordshire Council, hit particularly hard by Government funding reductions, is preparing for next year's budget. One of the saving proposals is to reduce the Council Tax reduction scheme which currently offers residents on lower incomes 100% relief on their Council Tax Bill. The proposal is reducing the offer to 80% for 2027/28, and those residents will pay 20% of their council tax bill, as pre covid. The current cost of the 100% reduction is £16.4M per year and thus reducing this to 80% for working residents, OAPs will not be affected, will save the council approx. £3M. This is an example of the hard choices that need to be made to achieve a balanced budget for next April.



HEDGE OWNERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Herefordshire Council is asking residents to make sure their hedgerows are a cut and maintained for the sake of safety and visibility on our streets.

With bird nesting season over, the Council's Streetscene team

is asking landowners, farmers, agricultural tenants, housing associations, businesses and residents across the county to check their boundaries and cut back any hedges, trees or other vegetation that may be obstructing roads, footways and public routes.

Overgrown vegetation can extend across pavements, making it difficult for pedestrians to pass safely and, in some cases, forcing people closer to the road. It can also restrict visibility for drivers, particularly around junctions and bends, making it harder to see pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles.

Landowners have a responsibility to ensure vegetation on their property does not obstruct roads, footways or public rights of way. I have encouraged some residents with large hedges to annually use an agricultural contractor who can do the job in a hour or less that could take you using hand equipment days.

Enforcement officers are currently inspecting the highway network and contacting landowners where action is needed. Landowners are being asked to check their boundaries and carry out any necessary trimming before formal action becomes necessary. If the Council has to carry out the work the landowners will be billed.



HEREFORDSHIRE NATIONAL FARMING WINNER

Congratulations to Jo Hilditch from The Whittern Lyonshall who received an Outstanding Contribution to British Agriculture Award at the 2026 British Farming Awards, held at the NEC in Birmingham. She was also a finalist in the Agriculture's Woman of the Year category, and her farm manager James White was a finalist for Sustainable Farmer of the Year.

Jo took over the 700-acre mixed farm over 30 years ago, being the fourth generation of her family, and this year celebrated 150 years of farming in Lyonshall. In a very male dominated industry Jo has demonstrated that women can also succeed in the industry.

Jo has transformed the farm into a diversified rural enterprise focused on sustainability, innovation, and tourism. The enterprise employs 24 local people many of whom have worked on the farm for years which now includes blackcurrant fields, cider apple orchards, vineyards, arable land, poultry, sheep, woodland, renewable energy, and holiday accommodation.

The farm produces up to 400 tonnes of blackcurrants annually for Ribena, manages 65 acres of cider apples, and operates a substantial poultry business supplying Avara Foods. She launched her own drinks brand, White Heron Drinks, more than 20 years ago, producing British Cassis and Framboise, and more recently, sparkling wine.

Converting historic estate buildings into luxury accommodation and developing the farm as a destination for weddings, retreats, and farm-based e-bike and walking tours.

Alongside her agricultural work, she is co-chair of Visit Herefordshire, supporting the county's tourism sector with a focus on agritourism.



Hard to believe but in Herefordshire we have an issue with Hare coursing. Organised gangs trespassing on farms who film dogs chasing Hares and then sell the films for betting in the far east.

West Mercia Police are working with our farming community and recently arrests have been made.

Report immediately if you see: • Vehicles driving across farmland or unsuitably for the area. • Groups with sighthounds. • Trespass, damage to crops, criminal damage or intimidation. • Suspicious rural activity. • In an emergency call 999. • For non-emergencies call 101. • Report online: westmercia.police.uk/report • CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111 100% anonymous.

Our Local Community Police Team

Sign up to police alerts, you can choose which areas you want to hear about and what activity is taking place in that area. You'll also hear about positive police action, good news stories and be able to play an active part in helping us with our public appeals.

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/bb21d405/UARq0VNajkqv1vLf0zKSJQ?u=http://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/

PC Kimberley Jones 07929 721808 Report a crime Police 101 Ext 61216
Safer Neighbourhood Officer

As usual – if you feel that I can assist you in any way, do please make contact.

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Sutton Walls Ward

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