

Birch Ward News July 2024

Cllr Toni Fagan

Dear Councillors,

Congratulations to Jesse Norman who has been re-elected as MP for South Herefordshire and of course I am delighted that Ellie Chowns has been elected as North Herefordshire's first Green Party MP. Having worked with Ellie over the past five years I know she will be an excellent and extremely hard working advocate for the county.

There are many unknowns about what will happen next as the new government grapples with the challenges facing the country and we are waiting to hear how changes to Planning will affect the emerging Local Plan in Herefordshire. I will keep you posted. We are currently also unsure what changes there are likely to be to funding for local government. The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a Local Government White Paper which proposes a comprehensive set of reforms aimed at empowering local governments, ensuring sustainable funding, enhancing public services, and fostering community engagement – do have a look at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/our-100-offers-new-government>

Broadband – I have had verbal confirmation that the Full Fibre upgrade we have been advocating for on the Wormelow exchange is likely to go ahead and various scoping works are taking place. I will confirm this when the official communication comes out.

PROW will be the topic of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 22 July - agendas can be found here:

<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1158&Year=0>

And questions can be asked prior to the meeting once the agenda is published

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/3>

We have two new members to the corporate leadership team Tina Russell will be with us as Director of Children's Services until March 2025 and Rachael Sanders, Head of Strategic Finance will be the Deputy Section 151 Officer following the retirement of Andrew Lovegrove.

Surface dressing continues as the £3.66 million investment programme across the county's C & unclassified road network- following on from the pre-surface dressing last year.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Herefordshire Council is responsible for bringing together local people, landowners, statutory agencies and organisations to develop and implement a strategy for restoring nature and biodiversity in the county.

Herefordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) draws together information on the current state of the natural environment in the county, and sets out priorities, activities and natural solutions to restore and improve biodiversity. Stalls in town markets are on:

- 18 July in Ross-on-Wye

To find out more about Herefordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), how it is being developed and how it will be implemented, please see the council website - [Ecology – Herefordshire Council](#)

Herefordshire Council is the designated 'Responsible Authority' for the Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

STUDENT FRAUD WARNING

- **Rental Fraud.**

Rental fraud happens when would-be tenants are tricked into paying an upfront fee to rent a property.

In reality, the property does not exist, has already been rented out, or has been rented to multiple victims at the same time. The victim loses the upfront fee they have paid and is not able to rent the property they thought they had secured with the payment. Rental fraudsters often target students looking for university accommodation.

- **HMRC Scams**

In previous years Students taking part time jobs have been at increasing risk from fake messages claiming to be from HMRC, often offering tax refunds.

- **Student Loans**

There have also been phishing scams claiming to come from the Student Loans Company. They often target first year students and dupes them into handing over personal information to steal their identity and defraud them.

- **Money**

mules.

Be very cautious of unsolicited job offers or opportunities to make easy money. These Fraudsters will pretend to offer legitimate jobs or get rich quick schemes

Take Five to Stop Fraud

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- Avoid disclosing security details
- Emails, Phone Calls and Texts may not be authentic
- Always make direct contact with any organisation by using a genuine phone number
- Stop and Challenge any unexpected requests
- Protect others by reporting Fraud and Scams

If you've fallen for a scam,
report it to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or via actionfraud.police.uk

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to **7726** to help phone providers take early action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks. You can also report Scam mobile calls by texting **7726** with the word "**Call**" followed by the scam caller's phone number.

Forward Fake Emails received to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you think your bank account or personal banking details have been used fraudulently, then use the short phone number - **159** - to contact the Fraud Prevention Department of most major UK banks.

Summer Holiday Activities in Herefordshire

If you're looking for ideas to help you and your family stay active and entertained during the summer holidays there are lots of different activities and events taking place across Herefordshire, from a family fete, an archaeology adventure, a graffiti workshop and lots more! We've been sure to include some free and low cost activities too (sounds good!).

Find activities for you and your family on the [Talk Community Directory](#) and don't forget to check out the [what's on calendar](#) for even more inspiration! Remember to keep checking the page, as we will continue to add to the list over the coming weeks

Over 4,700 children primary and secondary school pupils who are entitled to benefits related free school meals will receive a free food voucher up to the value of £90 or equivalent directly through their schools, to cover the cost of a lunchtime meal during the school holidays.

We have the perfect way to keeping your teenager active this summer and make the holiday spending stretch. With our Summer Teen Fit Hit pass for a one-off payment of £40, your teenager aged 12-17 can enjoy unlimited access to their local Halo centres facilities from 22nd July until the 1st September. That works out at less than £1 a day! Your teenager can enjoy:

- Access to all Halo facilities until 1st September 2024.

- Activities include gym, swimming, group exercise classes, indoor climbing at Bridgend Life Centre as well as golf, cycle track and athletics track at Hereford Leisure Centre.
- On sale between 1st July- 31st July 2024 - passes activate on 22nd July.

Wheeling with Wildlife

Date: Monday 22 July 2024 **Time:** 10:00am - 12:00pm **Venue:** Town Hall , Hereford , HR1 2PJ **Cost:** £0.00 per person **Organiser:** Herefordshire Wildlife Trust - City Branch

A guided wheelchair friendly walk taking in the wildlife of Hereford city that has been designed by the City Branch of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

The walk will start at 10am outside the Town Hall in Hereford on July 22nd 2024.

The wheeled walk is a free event that aims to help those less mobile connect with nature within the city.

<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/events/2024-07-22-wheeling-wildlife>

SEND Sessions at Halo

Halo have announced the launch of their SEND swimming sessions **at Hereford Leisure Pool**, specially designed to cater to individuals with special educational needs and disabilities.

These inclusive sessions will be held every **Wednesday from 1pm to 2pm** in the Leisure Pool. Open to both adults and children, members and non-members, these sessions aim to provide a calm and supportive environment for all. The sensory-friendly environment includes easy pool access, with reduced capacity and restrictions on noise to ensure a more relaxed experience.

For more information, or to book your spot, call **01432 272512**, or [visit the Halo website](#)

Wishing you all a good, restful, summer (including some sunshine!)

Kind regards

Cllr Toni Fagan