



June 2026
Birch Ward and Parishes update
Cllr Toni Fagan

New era for Herefordshire highways and public realm services

The Council has begun a new chapter in the delivery of highways and public realm services, introducing a new operating model designed to improve local control, responsiveness and outcomes for residents.

Highways and public realm services cover road maintenance, drainage, street lighting, street cleansing, green spaces and winter gritting.

Under the new arrangements, services have returned to Council oversight for day-to-day management, with delivery supported by new partner M Group and a framework of approved local contractors. The transition has been carefully managed to ensure continuity of essential services following the end of the previous contract.

The new model aims to strengthen collaboration, improve efficiency and deliver better value for money, while also supporting local employment, skills development and wider community benefits through social value commitments.

The partnership with M Group is focused on delivering safe, reliable and high-quality services, alongside investment in new approaches to highways maintenance and service delivery.

Shout out for Shared Lives

This year's Shared Lives Week runs from 15–21 June, with the theme *Shout about Shared Lives – care worth talking about!*

Shared Lives is about supporting adults in an ordinary home, sharing family and community life – and this week is a chance for us all to help raise awareness of the service and the difference it makes. [Shared Lives Week 2026 - June 23rd to 27th - Shared Lives Plus](#)



Newsletter

[Home - Talk Community Directory](#)

[Council committed to further Adult Social Care improvement following CQC assessment - Herefordshire Council](#)

Help with the cost of living: Crisis and Resilience Fund

The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) is available to support residents in Herefordshire who are struggling with the cost of living or facing unexpected financial difficulties.

The CRF offers practical support at times of crisis, such as help with food, energy costs or other essential household needs. It's also designed to support people longer term, helping build financial confidence and stability through access to advice, guidance and local services.

In Herefordshire, support is available through a range of options, including:

- Crisis payments for urgent or unexpected situations
- Housing support, such as help with rent or deposits
- Support for heating oil and LPG costs
- Access to advice and services to improve financial resilience

We know many people who could benefit from this support may not be aware it exists. As trusted local partners, you play a key role in helping residents access the help they need. We'd encourage you to share this information through your networks, signpost individuals who may be struggling and use this support as part of your wider conversations with residents

To find out more about the Crisis and Resilience Fund and how to apply, visit the [Talk Community Directory](#).

Funding opportunity: Nature and Biodiversity Community Grant

A new funding opportunity is available for local groups looking to make a positive impact on Herefordshire's natural environment.

The Nature and Biodiversity Community Grant Scheme supports projects that protect and enhance local wildlife, habitats and green spaces. Grants are available from £500 up to £10,000, with applications of up to £35,000 considered where significant benefits can be demonstrated.

Funding can support a wide range of projects, from planting schemes and habitat creation to community nature spaces and environmental improvements that bring people together.

The programme is open to community groups, charities, schools and parish councils, and we'd encourage partners to share this opportunity with any organisations or groups who may benefit.

The deadline for applications is midnight on 31 August 2026.

Finally, I was delighted to attend the launch of the new Charter for the River Wye and sign the Charter on behalf of the Wye's tributaries in Birch Ward. Herefordshire has joined forces with neighbouring local authorities and conservation organisations across England and Wales to endorse the Charter setting out a shared commitment to the river's long-term recovery.

[Herefordshire Council takes leading role in major step forward in protecting the future of the River Wye - Herefordshire Council](#)



Kind regards
Toni
Cllr Toni Fagan
Birch Ward