

Library overdue books amnesty

Libraries Week runs from the 9 to 14 October, a celebration of Britain's much-loved libraries. Herefordshire Libraries will be hosting events, activities and exhibitions to celebrate.

During this week there will be a library amnesty, so if you have a book that is long overdue, just bring it in and all the charges will be waived no questions asked. There will be an anonymous drop off point in Hereford Library if you are in a rush. While you are there if your membership has lapsed, pop in and renew your library card.

From 9 October there will be no overdue book charges for under 18s to encourage children to read more.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/384/book_amnesty_for_libraries_week_-_9-14_october_2017

Government Challenge Fund – Attention to Strategic 'A' Roads

Herefordshire Council has secured £5 million from the Department for Transport towards an £8 million project to improve road conditions on strategic 'A' roads in the county. The funding has meant we can resurface 37 miles of road on key transport routes, which includes the A4103 Hereford to Worcester road. This is the most significant investment into Herefordshire's A roads for over twenty years.

We recognise that significant road improvement work can cause inconvenience to businesses and residents, including those on the A4103 and we have tried to minimise disruption by progressing works quickly and safely. Balfour Beatty Living Places has been working on our behalf to keep the local community informed, however the delivery of works on this scale does lead to some unavoidable inconvenience, for which we can only apologise.

We do not take the decision to close any A road lightly and have investigated different working practices including night and weekend working and lane closures for the work on the A4103. The method of working we are using has been chosen to maximise safety and productivity when working on this particular highway. The decision was made to work on the A4103 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, allowing it to remain open at other times. 'Businesses open as usual signage' has also been deployed.

We hope that all will recognise the benefits that these works will bring to Herefordshire.

Social Care Funding – Letter to Government

Herefordshire Council, alongside ten other local councils in the West Midlands, is urging the government to release social care funding to ensure vulnerable residents continue to be supported.

The government announced in July that local councils would be required to meet a new national target by September to reduce the proportion of NHS beds unnecessarily occupied due to delayed discharges from hospital to 3.5%. If councils fail to meet this target, NHS England has indicated that it will not release their Better Care funding, which is used to deliver critical services for older, vulnerable residents.

In the West Midlands, the funding totals approximately £150million, of which Herefordshire receives £4.5million. This is used by local councils to fund a range of essential services to support vulnerable residents to safely leave hospital, including home care, residential / nursing care and re-ablement, all of which directly support NHS services. Since the start of 2017, a sustained effort by councils has already led to a significant reduction in the number of people delayed in hospital, because they are waiting for social care.

***“Councillor Paul Rone, Cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: “Our adult social care service works hard to ensure older, vulnerable residents can be safely discharged from hospital, at the right time, with the correct level of support in place.*”**

***“If this essential government funding is not released, the services provided to support residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives will be severely affected and as winter approaches, it could have a drastic impact on local people. It will also significantly increase the pressure on our local NHS service, meaning the delayed hospital discharges target will never be achieved.*”**

***“We are therefore urging the government to provide immediate assurance that local councils will receive their funding in full, so as to ensure our county’s most vulnerable residents continue to be supported and protected. It’s simply unacceptable to change the rules partway through the year and threaten to withhold money that had previously been promised.”*”**

To find out more, please read the letter sent to the [Secretary of State for Health](#).

Get Online Week - 2nd to 8th October

As part of this year's Get Online Week, we are offering FREE workshops and drop-in events for beginners to learn more about using computers, making the most of the internet, staying safe online, sending emails, understanding social media and more.

Please help by sharing details of these with any groups, organisations or individuals you know who may be interested. The attached flyer includes full information, plus details of training being offered by some other organisations during that week.

They are also on the Events section of the Council website.

[Get Online Week - 2nd to 8th October](#)  PDF 239 KB

The Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy

The Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy is available to view at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/smots

[The Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy](#)  PDF 84 KB

Challenge Fund resurfacing works begun across Herefordshire

Herefordshire Council secured £5m government funding for road maintenance to the A4103, A465 and A438, following the successful bid to the Department for Transport's Challenge Fund, Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places, begun commencement of this major resurfacing works on three main routes across Herefordshire from 18 September.

This work supports Herefordshire's economic growth by investing in the condition of key transport routes leading to Herefordshire's Enterprise Zone.

The resurfacing works will take place on the A4103 Hereford to Worcester road, the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road, and the A438 Hereford to Brecon road.

The works have been coordinated to minimise disruption to road users wherever possible. Daytime closures will be in place between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 hours on the rural sites that are less congested and have good alternative routes. The majority of resurfacing within the city limits will be carried out as evening works between the hours of 18.00 and 01.00 hours.

All of the resurfacing works are being coordinated with other roadworks around the county to minimise delays as far as possible. However, inevitably, given this scale of investment in Herefordshire's roads the works will result in delays for some motorists and the public are urged to allow extra time for their journeys.

Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places would like to thank the public in anticipation of their understanding of what will be an unprecedented programme of resurfacing work that will deliver a real improvement in the condition of these key routes across Herefordshire.

The major resurfacing works must be carried out within the timescales set by the Department of Transport (18 September 2017 to 31 March 2018), and wherever possible, works have been planned to minimise disruption.

A4103 STORRIDGE / STIFFORDS BRIDGE – SECTIONS 1 TO 4

Work will start on Monday 18 September and finish on Friday 29 September, with day time closures between the hours of 8am-6pm daily. There will be no work taking place over the weekend and roads will be fully open to minimise disruption to the public.

The diversion route will be signed, and takes users on the A44, A465 and A417.

A4103 NEWTON CROSS TO FROMES HILL – SECTIONS 1 TO 5

Work will start on Monday 18 September and finish on Monday 2 October, with day time closures between the hours of 8am-6pm daily. There will be no work taking place over the weekend and roads will be fully open to minimise disruption to the public.

The diversion route will be signed, and takes users on the A44, A465 and A417.

Plus two other roads in Hereford.

Link Road on-track for opening in 2017

The City Link Road is on-track to open at the end of the year. The last few months of the construction project will include upgrading the A49 to widen the Newtown Road approaching

the roundabout and reduce the size of Newtown Roundabout to improve traffic movement and flow.

A diversion route will be in place throughout the works and access maintained to businesses and residents via the diversion and using local routes.

Councils work together to bring important bridge back into use

Herefordshire Council is working with Gloucestershire County Council to ensure the long term sustainability of Lydbrook Bridge.

The bridge, which is an important connection across the River Wye between the two counties, is used by over 20,000 walkers every year as part of the 136 mile Wye Valley Walk.

The councils have commissioned a feasibility report, which details the proposed options for ensuring the bridge remains safe and securing the necessary funding to bring it back into use for people to enjoy now and in years to come. The project is due to commence in spring 2018 and will run in three phases over the coming years:

Phase 1: Ensure the bridge remains safe for those using the river beneath it

Phase 2: Select the best option and secure the necessary funding

Phase 3: Re-establish the crossing over the River Wye

Councillor Barry Durkin, Herefordshire Council's Cabinet member for transport and roads, said: "The feasibility report is an important first step to ensuring we can preserve this important river crossing for future generations to enjoy.

"The councils acknowledge that whichever option is agreed, significant internal and external funding will be required to successfully repair the bridge. We will continue working closely with community groups, which can access alternative funding sources such as the Big Lottery Fund. We will also work with our MPs to see if they're able to access further public funding."

Councillor Vernon Smith, Cabinet member for highways and flood at Gloucestershire County Council, said: ***"The former railway bridge at Lydbrook had to be closed due to it being unsafe. Safety has to be our number one priority, so the area remains fenced off to protect the public."***

"We've commissioned a report which details the proposed options for ensuring the bridge remains safe and bringing it back into use for people to enjoy now and in years to come. We will continue to work with interested community groups and welcome their ideas on the best option going forward and how this can be funded."

Walkers are kindly reminded not to cross the bridge or remove the fencing, which is there to protect both them and the bridge from harm.

To find out more about the proposed options, please take a look at the feasibility report on the Gloucester County Council Lydbrook Bridge webpage.

Exciting volunteering opportunities

Do you have a passion for history, art, Herefordshire and people? Then we need you!

Discover more about the history of Herefordshire by interacting with visitors in the Museum and Art Gallery. You will be able to share your knowledge with the public through hands-on interactions and being able to answer their questions.

Become part of the wonderful museum team help to make sure all our visitors to the Museum and Art Gallery have the best possible time with us. We need volunteers for the following roles:

Museum and Gallery Interpreters - to provide a welcoming atmosphere for visitors, answer queries as they arise, provide tours to bring to life the history of the building
Activities Assistants to promote our onsite activities and encourage visitors to step back in time or discover more about Hereford and facilitate hands on experiences such as handling trays and interactive activities, and help visitors understand the importance of preserving local and national heritage

To be a volunteer you will need to be aged 18 or over and have a desire to share your passion for history and art. You will be supported by our current staff who are open to hear any new ideas and approaches for the service. Volunteer opportunities are designed to inspire and benefit those taking part as much as they support the Museum. All opportunities have flexible commitment requirements and aim to provide a rewarding and enriching experience for all.

If you are interested please email culturalvolunteering@herefordshire.gov.uk and we will send you an application form and a more detailed description of these volunteering opportunities

The Museum and Art Gallery opening hours from October will be Tuesday to Friday 10am – 4pm and Saturday 10.15am – 1pm

Blueschool House internal audit results to be published

A review by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) was requested by Herefordshire Council's incoming Chief Finance Officer to investigate the Blueschool House project management and overspend. The findings will be considered by the council's audit and governance committee on Wednesday 20 September 2017.

The audit scope included the background to the key decision, the procurement of the contract, changes to the original scope of refurbishment work, an understanding of the escalation of costs and how changes to the contract and refurbishment were authorised.

SWAP has presented the following key findings:-

The council's normal governance processes were not followed a failure to report to Cabinet that the project could not be delivered to budget.

The council's procurement procedure rules were not followed. There was no project board to oversee the Blueschool House refurbishment, as there should be for all major projects.

Time constraint pressure contributed to the progression and poor governance of the project

Based on recommendations by SWAP, Herefordshire Council fully accepts the findings. Council management will now consider and determine whether any further action should be taken in regard to individual officers as there was "...a clear disregard for processes and procedures which has resulted in a significant overspend on the project".

Herefordshire Council has now begun a review of its internal procedures following the findings of the audit.

Stop Smoking month - Stoptober

Herefordshire Council's public health team is encouraging those who'd like to stop smoking to take the Stoptober challenge. There's never been a better time to quit with more advice, support and quitting aids available, especially e-cigarettes which is now the most popular option; more restrictions on smoking and the ban on tobacco packaging imagery.
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/388/stoptober_is_back

Reporting defects

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>

Making a claim

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/footpaths-byways-and-bridleways/cg-report-prow-problem>

If you wish to make a claim as a result of damage to your vehicle please use

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/206/highway_claims



Barry Durkin
Cabinet Member – Transport and Roads
Old Gore Ward
September 2017