

Full Council approves 2018/19 budget and Council Tax rates

Full Council has approved the 2018/19 budget (26 January 2018), which includes the setting of Council Tax rates which will start in April 2018.

A total Council Tax increase of 4.9% has been approved by Full Council. This will increase the band D charge from £1,376.50 to £1,443.95 in 2018/19 (around £1.30 a week).

In order to keep Council Tax as low as possible, the adult social care precept will remain at 2% and will be spent on providing adult social care. Core Council Tax will be set at 2.9% (a 1% rise on last year). Increasing the core Council Tax gives Herefordshire Council the flexibility to spend the additional finance on all council services, such as roads and waste, in addition to adult social care.

Facts relating to adult social care.

Adult social care is funded by the council and the council tax. Here are some facts relating to how adult social care impacts upon the ability of other services to be provided e.g. potholes

- Around 75% of Council Tax is spent looking after around 3,200 of Herefordshire residents;
- Approximately 24% of Herefordshire residents are over the age of 65 and over, which is expected to rise to 60,500 by 2031;
- Approximately, 3% of Herefordshire residents are over the age of 85 and older, which is expected to rise to 10,800 by 2031;
- The adult social care precept, set by the government, will replace funding that has been removed by central government;
- By 2020, central government funding will be cut completely.

Looking after our community's elderly and in need is the proper way to be a community. So we need to look at ways to afford to pay for the services the council delivers and increasing Council Tax is one way to help fund these services."

Street Cleaning and Litter letter to Government

Following a motion agreed at full council on 13 October 2017 that resolved that the Executive is asked to write on behalf of Herefordshire Council to government making the following points:

The cuts in local authority funding have impacted our ability to deliver non statutory services. The rural sparsity of Herefordshire presents a particular challenge to our street cleaning programme and verge litter clearing which are non-statutory services.

The increasing volume of litter being dropped in the county on our streets and both major and minor roads is unsightly and dangerous. We recognise the tremendous efforts made by local people who go on litter picks or who just pick up litter when they see it. However, it is neither practical nor safe to rely on local volunteers to litter pick on busy highways.

Therefore we raise this issue with the suggestion that sufficient finances be made available to local authorities to attend to the problem. Such money should be raised from a tax on fast food (take away) outlets, confectionary and crisp manufacturers, alcohol and soft drink companies and tobacco companies since these are the main contributors to the problem. It will not be a pasty tax but a litter tax (although some benefit to health may accrue).

Defra should also be encouraged to run a campaign to stop the careless disposal of but encourage the recycling of silage wrappers, fertiliser bags, seed bags, feed sacks, baling twine and mineral buckets.

Furthermore, the Executive is asked to consider whether further steps can be taken to support Parish Councils, local community groups and individuals who wish to deal with this problem in their

area. The Executive is also asked to look into what can be done to encourage local business to engage with this challenge to reduce waste and litter in our lovely county

Hereford Transport Package consultation begins on 6 February

Plans for the Hereford Transport Package – the Hereford Bypass and associated walking, cycling, bus and public realm improvements will be exhibited on the 6, 7 and 8 of February 2018. The exhibition will be available for public view between 11am and 8pm in the pod next to The Coffee Corner at Old Market. There will also be an evening session on Tuesday 13 February 2018 from 6pm to 9pm at Whitecross High School.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/469/don_t_let_it_pass_you_by_have_your_say_on_the_hereford_bypass

Library archives to be boosted by inclusion of 150 years of local history

The award of £70,600 has been made by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to the Ross Gazette Archive Project in Ross-on-Wye to fund the digitisation of the entire newspaper archive and accompanying photographs, making it available for the public to access.

The digital archive will be available on Herefordshire library service's Herefordshire History project website (www.herefordshirehistory.org.uk), making it accessible to a much wider audience and preserving it for future generations. The Herefordshire History project will now provide an even greater range of unique source material on Herefordshire for students, researchers and the wider community that will be protected against the many destructive impacts of ageing that can affect physical archives. The project will include an intergenerational reminiscence initiative, primary school learning programme, film project, and work with local history groups, to involve the local community and incorporate their stories into the archive. Material gathered during the project will be used as the foundation for several exhibitions on the key themes of childhood, tourism and the river, the coming of the railway, and wartime Ross.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands said: "We're delighted to support The Ross Gazette to celebrate its heritage and preserve its significant archive of news stories and photographs digitally. Thanks to National Lottery players, local people will explore and play a part in preserving an important part of the town's history."

Keepmoat to deliver regeneration plans for the county

Herefordshire Council has formally appointed Keepmoat Ltd as their partner developer to deliver ambitious housing and growth plans for Hereford City and the wider county.

The agreement, which will span over a ten year period, will see Keepmoat developing sites along the City Link Road, and sites in the market towns over the next two years, with further development planned over further years. The Keepmoat Ltd bid was submitted in conjunction with a number of partner organisations including Keepmoat Regeneration Engine, WMs Housing, Herefordshire Housing Ltd and City Heart.

The council will also retain its ability to raise capital from the council's land holdings, whilst controlling the nature, speed and character of the county's development. Keepmoat will provide support for local businesses, third sector groups and the community as well as improving skills and educational attainment through training and apprenticeships. This, in turn will enable the development of new economic activity to address the problem of low wages in the county." The

partnership is to launch a programme of wider regeneration initiatives in March 2018 with the first new homes expected to be delivered early in summer 2019.

Conviction for Herefordshire criminal housing landlord

A criminal housing landlord has had her appeal dismissed following a two day trial at Hereford Crown Court which concluded on Friday 19 January 2018.

Recorder Judge Brand, Q.C. heard the defence contend that the property was a hotel and not an HMO. In her summing up, Recorder Judge Brand said “I can call my dog an elephant, but it is still a dog”.

“This was one of the worst cases of overcrowding our officers have seen in a licenced House in Multiple Occupation - one tenant was even found sleeping in a prohibited boiler cupboard with no windows. Both the company and the director Mayya Kostyuk of Herefordshire, put profit before the lives of their vulnerable tenants. Herefordshire Council is taking housing crime seriously, and this result sends a clear message to other criminal housing landlords that they cannot hide behind their company and such behaviour will not be tolerated. We will continue to protect tenants’ safety and the livelihood of our decent housing landlords, by ensuring criminal landlords are brought to justice”

If you have concerns about poor housing conditions, contact Herefordshire Council’s Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service.

Milestone for energy saving programme

Energy and resource efficiency is more important now than ever, and programmes like BEEP are a great way to enable businesses to lower their energy usage, save money and help the environment. I would encourage all businesses to look into BEEP, and it is very pleasing that so many local businesses have already benefitted from the programme. BEEP, which is one year into a three year programme, offers businesses the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £20,000 to help lower running costs and promote energy efficiency.

Grants can be used for LED lighting, heating improvements, compressors, fast acting warehouse doors and much more. BEEP offers technical support and grant funding to help manufacturing and engineering businesses, but it also works across other sectors, such as distribution, hotels and professional services. Herefordshire Council along with its partners Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, Worcestershire County Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and the Worcestershire districts were awarded £1.45 million funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government's European Regional Development Fund to help small and medium-sized businesses.

Beginners' Computer Training at Libraries

Herefordshire is offering free monthly computer and internet workshops for beginners at Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye Libraries. Covering topics from 'How to use your tablet' to 'Setting-up and using email', these workshops will help people feel confident using the internet safely.

Details of the February and March workshop are on the posters below - please share with individuals or groups who may be interested, or include in any parish updates. Hereford Library is offering weekly ICT drop-in sessions, Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm.

Ward Report

Old Gore Ward – Herefordshire Council

January 2018

For Ross-on-Wye

<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/extranet/documents/s50054850/Workshops%20Ross%20and%20Ledbury%20Libraries.pdf>

Avian bird flu

Herefordshire Council is advising poultry farmers and game keepers to follow the latest government advice, in light of the recent outbreak of avian flu across Europe. Keepers of poultry and other captive birds in Britain are now legally required to keep their birds indoors, or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds.

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/464/avian_flu_advice_for_herefordshire

News from the parishes.

To date of this monthly report I have not received any local parish information; therefore, with this monthly report there is no news from the parishes. However, I shall continue to be available for news from each parish and will publish it with my broader ranging monthly report.

Report it

Please note that Herefordshire Council strongly encourages Balfour Beatty to promote all service requests and queries should be logged via the HC website at

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole> or call through to the call handling team on 01432 261800.

Please use the website or call the customer services call handling team. This will help ensure that everything is logged in to the operating system known as CONFIRM where it can be responded to in a timely way.

For any PROW (Public Rights of Way) maps or problems, you can report these via the following link on the Herefordshire Council's website:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/248/public_rights_of_way_map

You can search for PROW information on the map using: - Footpath references, Postcodes, Addresses and Grid References e.g. 354000 254000

Barry Durkin

Cabinet Member – Transport and Roads

Old Gore Ward

January 2018