

Much Birch Parish council

Ward member report, November 2016

Herefordshire Council votes to maintain libraries

The Cabinet recently voted to maintain libraries across the county; within a tough financial climate Herefordshire Council has bucked the national trend and has agreed to continue with its library network across the county. The opening hours will be maintained and investment is planned to bring them up to date. This decision is in addition to the investment being made by Herefordshire Council in Hereford Library and the establishment of a new library in Ledbury part of the award winning Masters House development. I know that several residents of the parish were concerned about the future of the libraries and hope that their worst fears have been allayed.

Farmer banned for life from keeping sheep

William Edward Hyde 62 of The Furlongs Farm Little Hereford was banned from keeping sheep for life, ordered to pay £1000 in costs, and £5000 in a compensation order, after pleading guilty to several animal welfare offences at Hereford Magistrates court last week.

This case came about after Trading Standards Animal Welfare Officers from Herefordshire Council accompanied by vets from the Animal Plant Health Agency (DEFRA) visited The Furlongs in February this year. During this visit a number of ewes and lambs were found without water, along with a ewe with a prolapse that had not received treatment. The officers also found a dead calf along with a large amount of dead sheep. Some of the dead sheep were left where they had fallen while others had been put into piles.

Subsequent visits revealed no improvements and further welfare issues were found including a sheep that was so ill and thin that the vet was shocked that it was still alive, three sheep were found suffering and 2 pigs without water. Therefore officers made the decision to seize 218 sheep due to the likelihood of further suffering. Fourteen of the sheep had to be put down because they were unable to travel.

Of the 12 offences, 4 related to unnecessary suffering, 4 related to failing to provide a suitable environment, 2 were in relation to the disposal and storage of the dead animals, 1 was for failing to keep veterinary medicine records and 1 for failing to record cattle movements.

Mr Hyde has to stop keeping sheep by 15th December 2016. This case reflects a tougher line against animal cruelty by Herefordshire Council.

Car parks in Hereford & Ross

Integral UK Ltd, on behalf of Herefordshire Council will be undertaking a programme of maintenance work in some of the county's car parks from 7-11 November.

The maintenance programme will require some short term and partial closures of car parks across the county so that white lining renewal and improvements can be undertaken. Full details can be found on herefordshire.gov.uk

Fastershire

We want to bring faster broadband to more homes and businesses in Herefordshire.

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire have been allocated funding from Central Government, matched by both authorities, with the aim of everyone in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to be able to access the broadband services they need by the end of 2018.

Phase one of the rollout aims to deliver around 90% fibre coverage across Gloucestershire and Herefordshire by the end of 2016. Additionally, every home and business in the eligible area will have access to the government's Universal Service Commitment of a minimum of 2Mbps.

How are we doing - phase 1

96,516 faster homes and businesses enabled

702 Kilometres of fibre 'laid'

99 exchange areas made 'live'

447 cabinets made 'live'

As we gain a clearer picture of what has been achieved under the current contract and with new funding opportunities becoming available, we can continue to plan for the future. With new providers entering the market as potential suppliers and with funding opportunities we can plan further how we will reach those homes and businesses which have not yet experienced an uplift in speed. The next stages of the Fastershire project will focus on areas that have not been reached and will enable us to reflect changes in technology and procure new solutions that are more suited to deploying fibre in rural and hard to reach areas. Wormelow exchange covering most of Much Birch has been enabled as has most of area 11 with 101 cabinets enabled in this area. I would like to hear from residents of Much Birch parish who can't access faster broadband.

Learn more, register for fastershire and keep up to date visit <http://www.fastershire.com/>