

**Oral stories of Wye recorded** – oral historian, Marsha O’Mahony has completed the collection of stories from people who have lived, worked or interacted closely with the River Wye. Stories have been recorded and will be preserved for the future through the ‘Voices of the River Wye’ project.

**Great Herefordshire Spring Clean:** The Great Herefordshire Spring Clean is running from Friday 21 March – Sunday 6 April 2025. Notable events this year include a Hereford Community Clean Up Group litter pick along the Great Western Way in Hereford. The group will be picking litter and removing or reporting fly tipped items 10am-12midday on Friday 28 March. People can find their local litter picking group on [our website](#) and groups can get involved by registering their interest with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) at [communities@balfourbeatty.com](mailto:communities@balfourbeatty.com). Once registered, groups can collect and sign for the loan of litter picking kits and purple waste sacks from the BBLP depot on Thorn Business Park, Hereford.

**Hereford Museum and Art Gallery Discussions:** These ‘Public Assemblies’ offer you an opportunity to shape key decisions in the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, ensuring they reflect the values and perspectives of our community. The first event in the series, Displaying Human Remains, will explore the ethical, cultural and historical considerations around the exhibition of human remains in museums. It will be held on **Tuesday 8 April at 5.30-6.45pm in Ross Library**. No booking is required, and it is free to attend by anyone aged 16+.

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#### **Ofsted Monitoring Visit Findings:**

Details of Herefordshire’s sixth Ofsted monitoring visit that took place on 18 and 19 February 2025 have been published. The focus of the inspection centred around the quality and timeliness of social work assessments.

The inspection is part of a series of visits put in place following the service being judged inadequate in July 2022. Headlines from the report noted that **‘Timely completion of assessment and support provided by social workers and family support workers in the assessment and support teams has a positive impact which enables the majority of children and their families to progress in having their needs met’** and **‘Leaders are now making some tangible progress to improve the quality and consistency of practice within the assessment teams.’**

Inspectors found that there was a stronger understanding and commitment across the council to children who need the support of children's social care and that this was reflected in its corporate plans, priorities and the commitment to developing ‘Child Friendly Herefordshire.’

**Free Nordic Walking Courses:** free five-week Nordic walking courses are set to begin in Hereford this April. These courses coincide with National Walking Month in May and aim to promote physical activity and well-being among residents. The courses are a great way to learn a new skill in a fun and friendly social atmosphere and are led by Nordic Walking UK qualified instructor Alison Gaster. This spring there are two courses taking place on

Wednesdays at Aylestone Park, starting on 30 April. The first course will start at 1pm and the second course starts at 2.30pm, with each course session lasting an hour.

There is also another free five-week course taking place on Mondays from Belmont Country Park starting from 9 June at 1pm, perfect if you live or work nearby and can have an extended lunch break.

**Museum and Art Gallery Redevelopment:** the council has appointed an award-winning construction company to support the redevelopment of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. Herefordshire Council has announced the appointment of [VINCI Building](#) to provide construction advice and support for the remaining design stage of Hereford's new Museum and Art Gallery. The company was chosen because of its extensive relevant experience, including award winning projects at heritage sites such as York Guildhall, Stonehenge Visitor Centre and the National Portrait Gallery.

**Additional Investment in Highways:** Throughout 2025/26, Herefordshire Council is investing an additional £13.5 million into the county's highway network. This investment includes £10 million for A and B roads and £3.5 million for C and unclassified roads,

**Baton of Hope Initiative:** Scheduled for October 2, Herefordshire is seeking baton bearers for the national suicide prevention initiative, Baton of Hope. This initiative aims to raise awareness about suicide prevention and encourage open conversations to support mental health.

**River Wye Research Funding:** A £1 million joint research initiative has been announced by the Welsh and UK governments to tackle water quality issues in the River Wye. The funding will support research and actions to address pollution and enhance the ecological health of the river.

**High Court Ruling on Chicken Manure:** A High Court ruling has endorsed the Council's Mineral and Waste plan, and declared that chicken manure from industrial poultry farms can be classified as industrial waste.

**Local Plan Update:** The new mandatory housing target requires planning for 27,260 new homes over a 20-year period, a significant increase from the previous target of 16,100. This necessitates a comprehensive review and restart of the local plan-making process to accommodate the substantial growth and associated infrastructure needs.

**Council Tax and Budget for 2025/26:** Herefordshire Council has approved the 2025/26 budget, totaling £231.5 million. The budget includes a council tax increase of 4.99%, raising the band D equivalent charge to £1,969.36, an increase of £7.80 per month. The budget aims to address reduced funding from central government while meeting increasing demands for statutory services, including child and adult care.