

FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS ...

FREE BUS TRAVEL – every weekend across Herefordshire until August 2022:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/bus-it>

Make your voice heard on policing issues

West Mercia Police want your help to support the community. They are looking for new volunteers to join one (or more) of their Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) as an independent adviser. IAG members act as ‘critical friends’ to the police, influencing, advising, and sharing their experience and expertise to help build trust with diverse communities.

At present, there are three main themed groups offering additional specialist advice and guidance for policing in relation to these aspects of diversity:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic IAG
- Disability IAG
- Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender + IAG

And there are different IAGs covering each of West Mercia’s Local Policing Areas:

- Shropshire
- Telford and Wrekin
- Herefordshire
- South Worcestershire
- North Worcestershire

If you would like to join, all that is needed is the ability to volunteer for a few hours every couple of months, and that you are happy to share your opinions on policing and community matters. You also need to be open to the views of others and be committed to fairness and respect for difference.

To find out more, contact adrian.symonds@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Applications now open for the Community Climate and Nature Grant Scheme Non-profit groups, or organisations based in Herefordshire (or a Herefordshire Parish Council) can apply for funding of up to £15,000 for new projects which will deliver carbon reduction and/or ecological enhancement in your community, based around four themes.

- Community Buildings – for example, energy conservation or efficiency measures
- Sustainable Transport – for example, community cycle parking or electric vehicle charging points
- Nature – this could include tree planting, community allotment projects, or the creation or enhancement of a community nature area
- Other Projects – such as waste reduction projects, or community initiatives that promote sustainable lifestyle choices

Early applications are welcome. The grant assessment panel will meet for the first time week commencing 15 November. The final deadline for submitting your application is **15 December 2021**. For more information and to apply online, please visit the [Herefordshire Council website](#).

The Sustainability and Climate Change team can advise applicants on completing their application. If you would like to discuss your idea for a project please contact the Delegated Grants Team on 01432 260753 or email delegatedgrants@herefordshire.gov.uk

Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Parish (G&WB)

- **Correspondence query:** i) speeding and ii) surface flooding
- **Outstanding:**
 - Surface flooding (BBLP)
 - S106 (still waiting for it to go on the website to see allocation)
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/local-plan-1/section-106-planning-obligations/3?documentId=928&categoryId=200185>) (HC)
 - TRO 77/85 (BBLP)
 - C1258 - 'when to be carried out in 2021/22' (BBLP)
 - awaiting legal response to a Private Rights of Way issue in Goodrich (BBLP)
 - Huntsham Bridge steps: safety issues/responsibility (Landowner)

Walford Parish (WPC)

- **Correspondence from residents:** i) request for speed restrictions near Green Meadows, ii) queries on intervention by member of the public (bin lorry) after Suitable for HGV signs (Howle Hill) were installed, iii) Daycroft Lane flooding
- **Outstanding:**
 - Highways:
 - Leys Hill Junction (BBLP/S106)
 - WA50 (BBLP)
 - WA25 bridge on work programme for 2020/21 (BBLP)
 - Pavement from Mill Race to Church (BBLP)
 - Awaiting WPC's response on:
 - Speeding in Walford – update on the community project to train local volunteers to detect/monitor speeding?
 - Kerne Bridge Launch site (recycling/ecological responsibilities in contract)
- Member of the **Flooding Sub-Group** (linked to the Parish Council's Safety & Environmental Working Group)

Whitchurch and Ganarew Parish

- **Correspondence with/from residents:** i) clearing verge to walk children to school from Sandyway Lane ii) light pollution from properties/recent developments, iii) poor state of Wye View Lane and white vans turning in front of property/into home on Wye View Lane, iv) parking, v) flooding in front of Woods of Whitchurch, vi) Afghan refugees
- **Outstanding:**
 - Poor state of PROWs & carriageways in Symonds Yat West esp. Byways/BOATs etc
 - Speed and traffic restrictions - parents worried about children walking/cycling to Memorial Hall from Ridgeway via Llangrove Road (WGPC/BBLP)
 - Highway England matters: awaiting action on flooding in heavy rain on slip road at Ganarew/ junction on A40 and another junction opposite Woods of Whitchurch (HE)

Across the Three Parishes. My full report is published on www.wagpc.org.uk - click on the link to 'Ward Councillor'

October 2021 - Cllr Yolande Watson: Herefordshire Councillor for Kerne Bridge

- Having continued conversations/correspondence with BBLP, Highways and Transport, and Highways England re: flooding, drains, potholes, road surfacing and footpaths/bridleways across the ward + continuing to walk and cycle across the three Parishes.
- Commenting on every planning application in the Parish and investigating those where the Parish Council and/or residents have expressed concerns
- Being a Facilitator/Advocate for parish residents/Clerks/Parish Councillors and raising/following through issues to the appropriate Officers in Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council (HC):

1. **Covid:** there is an automated **Herefordshire-focused dashboard** to give local residents a quick and easy way to access the latest picture of Herefordshire statistics on Covid:
<https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/health/covid-19-weekly-summary/>
 2. E-Committee, e-Council and e-Cabinet meetings are working well and will continue – hopefully as a hybrid - for the foreseeable future. In addition to my ward work - my **current portfolios include** Corporate Parenting/public health, food sustainability; Audit & Governance; Rethinking Governance (planning); Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee.
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Leaders Newsletter Oct 2021

A number of issues continue to dominate, each of which have local relevance.

Covid rates in our county continue at a very high level compared to our previous experience. Much of the increase is in the older school age group and has resulted in the closure of some schools which has a knock effect for parents. Judging by the busyness in Hereford this weekend, it seems that for many we are going back to “normal”. This approach brings with it risks and I would encourage everyone to continue to exercise caution.

The murder of Sarah Everard cannot fail but to have touched you all. For some time in the Council we have been looking at how we might provide more protection for those who have experienced peer on peer abuse. This case only goes to reinforce the need for action in this area.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has launched a draft **Safer West Mercia Plan** for consultation with communities and partners across West Mercia, and would be grateful if you could have your say.

The PCC comments that “Now is the time to build on the investment, tough decisions and progress we’ve made, for the benefit of the communities, and take it to the next level. Our communities rightly expect a police service they can access and trust, and they expect to feel safer where they live and work. There is always more that can be done and I will continue to be relentless in my drive to see that happen.

The plan carries forward the four main aims from my first term, putting victims and survivors first; building a more secure West Mercia; reforming West Mercia; and reassuring West Mercia’s communities.

There are a number of ways to take part in the consultation, although online submissions are preferable.

- You can email your comments to opcc@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Given the Sarah Everard case, you and other residents may wish to have your say in this consultation. **The consultation is open until Monday 1st November 2021.**

Herefordshire Citizens Climate Assembly

As part of setting a medium term financial strategy for the council, we will be holding a Herefordshire Citizens Climate Assembly which will take place early 2022. This approach is being taken because:

- the Administration wish to engage more residents in the democratic process and have open and honest dialogue
- there is a need to open out the discussion on the Climate Emergency and achieve buy-in and a degree of consensus for actions needed in the County and
- engagement of this type will further strengthen the aims of the County Plan and provide direction for actions needed.

The Citizens Assembly will be led by Impact Consultancy and supported by an organisation called Sortition. A Citizens Assembly brings together a minimum of 40 people together to deliberate 'tricky' policy issues and identify actions to implement locally. Crucially the 'assembly' is statistically representative of the wider local population which ensures robustness and that the outcome of the process withstands scrutiny. Once selected the assembly meets for approximately 30 hours to hear evidence from 'expert witnesses', deliberate the issue to be addressed and reach consensus on the necessary actions needed at the local level.

This process is designed to take a group of people with varying understanding of an issue through a process whereby there is degree of consensus reached. It is important to remember that people will be joining the process from different perspectives and levels of understanding.

It is worth noting that there are minimum standards set for a Citizens Assembly and the council will aim to meet these standards.

In many ways the key challenge of an effective Citizens Assembly is ensuring that you have a statistically representative Assembly. Sortition is an organisation that operates nationally and internationally who offer the service of identifying and recruiting participants. They use a tried and tested methodology using algorithms to identify participants, promote the process and recruit individuals. They will typically contact approximately 10,000 people for an assembly of 50-60 people.

For further information please contact Sarah Fishbourne at Impact Consultancy:
sarah@impactconsultancy.co.uk

Children and families – Cllr Diana Toynbee

CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The development workshops for the Children's improvement plan have continued this month with sessions for all members, internal leadership team and – very importantly - staff within the children services directorate. Thank you to all who participated. Engagement and feedback from these sessions have been invaluable and have contributed to the final draft of the plan that will go to the Improvement Board for approval on the 11th October. The plan will also go to Cabinet for endorsement at the end of October.

CORPORATE PARENTING

As part of our work to clarify expectations and make progress on this we propose creating special interest groups that report to the Corporate Parenting Panel. This would mean members can focus on their areas of interest and practical ways to support our young people.

Proposed headings are:

Housing and Accommodation
Education, Training and Employment
Health and Wellbeing
Communication and Participation

Please let Cllr Toynbee have your thoughts and suggestions.

Adults and Communities – Cllr Pauline Crockett

Afghan refugee resettlement scheme

The council has confirmed that Herefordshire will participate in Afghan refugee resettlement scheme as part of its commitment to resettle at least 125 refugees by 2025. It has offered to support arrival of 56 refugees in family groups during November and December 2021. People will be accommodated in Ledbury and Hereford and the council is grateful for the support of local housing providers. A support and orientation service for refugees is being arranged rapidly to support arrivals and a wide variety of local agencies has committed to help ensure a warm and comprehensive welcome for families arriving in Herefordshire.

COVID19 - care sector and care homes

The council has continued to support the care sector and care homes, in particular in managing the risk of covid19 to their residents and staff. Along with NHS colleagues, council teams have helped home providers experiencing a covid outbreak to continue operating safely, including ensuring adequate staff, support with infection control and clinical support for the most vulnerable people.

Recommissioning of domiciliary care services

Recommissioning of domiciliary care services for older and disabled people is now concluding successfully and will deliver comprehensive provision of support at home to people with eligible need across the county. New contracts will begin in November but there are arrangements in place to ensure that there is no disruption to the services people are currently receiving.

ASC operations news.

Prior to hearing that some Hillside residents and staff had very unfortunately caught Covid - 19, Hillside heard the very good news that the Hillside Kitchens had been awarded a five star food hygiene rating. This is completely down to the diligence of the Hillside manager and staff team.

With regards to the recent Covid outbreak at Hillside the same team is working to try and contain the spread. The last tests showed no further spread so we write this with a note of optimism. Hillside has the full support of the senior management team and council. We now wish all the staff and residents a speedy recovery. The home during the Covid outbreak cannot take new admissions and therefore commissioners are looking to identify alternative provision for Herefordshire citizens needing a short term residential stay either to prevent admission to hospital or for care at the point of discharge from hospital.

All other operational services including Home first are operating normally despite the pressures on fuel. ASC have mitigation plans in place if fuel cannot be accessed and so far there have been only a few difficulties reported by staff in trying to access fuel.

HAF

The Holiday activity and food programme was a great success with nearly 80% of available spaces booked and 28% of children who receive benefits related free school meals children attended. Providers and families alike have fed back how much they enjoyed the experience and are looking forward to reconnecting again at Christmas!

Falls

A new online falls prevention resource has launched to highlight the different measures older people can take, to try and prevent themselves from having a fall. The resource is full of useful information, top tips and short films, which will help more people in Herefordshire to see what they can do to look after themselves and reduce their risk of falling, especially as they get older. It aims to help more people stay healthy, active and independent for longer and provides families with information to help older loved ones.

To find out more about what you can do to help reduce the risk of falling, visit

www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/falls

Connecting business & charity

An inspiring event took place at a beautiful setting last week to launch the Connecting Business and Charity initiative. Over 200 people attended and a LinkedIn group supported by Talk Community promises to be a superb opportunity to further develop collaboration and mutual support between our county's businesses and charities / community groups.

Talk Community Hubs

There are now 28 live hubs.

Four went live at the beginning of September in Hereford City. They are:

St Martin's FoodShare

South Wye, Hereford

The first mobile hub, St Martin's FoodShare offers a public food share and Talk Community Hub at three locations across South Wye, in Hereford. They provide food given to them, to share with the community, along with providing free internet access and information and signposting support to local services, groups and activities. Another innovative approach to increasing the reach of Talk Community.

Herefordshire Veteran Support Centre Hub

West Street, Hereford

The Veteran Support Centre Hub offers a one stop shop for advice, guidance, support and signposting for veterans, serving personnel, their families and carers. Activities, 1-1s, consultations and group work organised to suit the needs. The hub adds to signposting opportunities and is open to anyone who needs support.

Challenge Church

Belmont Road, Hereford

Every Thursday morning they open The Hub, café area, where anyone who wishes can come in for free filter coffee, freshly brewed tea, homemade cake and a good natter.

They have people available who can provide initial debt advice and, most weeks, a qualified barrister able to offer free legal advice on a range of issues.

St Peter's Talk Community Hub

St Peter's Church, St Peter's Square, Hereford

The Talk Community Hub is held in St Peter's Church every Monday (except bank holidays) from 11am to 2pm. It's run by their friendly and knowledgeable volunteers for drop ins to access wellbeing information in a safe environment, at the heart of the city. The church also has a community lunch and craft groups on different days throughout the week.

Further information including location of all Talk Community Hubs can be found on the [Talk Community Directory](#)

Talk Community Development – community enquiries

Talk Community can help community organisations achieve more for their community by providing support for local activity and services across Herefordshire.

There's a range of support on offer, with a focus on what you can do to help yourself as well as initial support to help you develop your project or activity. This may take the form of self-help, one to one meetings, training, events and workshops.

If you or a local organisation in your area has a community development enquiry, such as funding support, needs more volunteers, please use the new online form to be found [here](#)

Covid Recovery Fund

Get Active

- Free swimming lessons for children and free family swimming sessions **launched July with 600 families** attending the swimming sessions and the lessons will continue through the holidays.
- Free adult swimming lessons launched **13th September** and free gym Memberships for academic year September 2021 – August 2022 for pupils sitting exams in years 11,12,13 (DOB 01/09/2003 – 31/08/2006) commenced 22nd September with **over 850 sign up's in 4 days.**

Digital and Poverty Exclusion:

Age UK will provide:

- 6 week courses providing covering basic IT skills, how to access and use social media, set up email, use Zoom/Facetime/Video calling, how to stay safe online and online shopping.
- 121/Outreach support - For those who are at the very early stages of entering the digital world, 121 outreach support by way of Co-ordinator meeting with the client to understand their individual needs.
- Tablet Loan - Purchasing 50 tablets, 20 of which will be dedicated to delivering our courses. The remaining tablets will be made available for loan to clients for a 3 month period to 'try before they buy'.

Finance and corporate services – Cllr Liz Harvey

New surveys will tell us what people think about life in Herefordshire

Early in 2021, a new Herefordshire Community Wellbeing Survey was undertaken by DJS Research on behalf of Herefordshire Council in support of its Talk Community programme. The survey explored how people feel about their local area and community, participation, satisfaction with the council, mental, physical and economic wellbeing and digital inclusion. The survey report and a short video summarising its main findings are available in the [Community section](#) of the [Understanding Herefordshire website](#).

A similar exercise involving children and young people in the county, the 'Growing up in Herefordshire Survey', was carried out by the School Health Education Unit (SHEU) this summer. The results will be released next month and will also be published on the Understanding Herefordshire website.

Both surveys will be a really important part of this year's Understanding Herefordshire joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) summary. The Intelligence Unit is also looking for any other evidence that you might have to inform this assessment of everything that affects the quality of people's lives in Herefordshire. Send your evidence to researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk.

LGA Review of Council's Intelligence Unit

The Herefordshire Council invited in the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a peer review of the Intelligence Unit (IU) and the use of data in decision making within the council. The peer review process is designed to be constructive and supportive with the intention of guiding improvement as a 'critical friend'. The review team consisted of officers and a councillor from other local authorities to give an objective view of the Intelligence Unit.

The team were on site Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 September 2021 and help a round of one to one and group interviews, along with review reports, policies and other documents.

The review explored a range of factors including:

- How could the organisation make better use of data in decision making
- The role of the IU in providing the evidence for priorities in the council
- Opportunities to strengthen the connection between the IU and the organisation
- Best practice delivery models operating in other areas and how to maximise the impact of existing data
- Any other key lines of enquiry that might be relevant to the overall objectives

The final findings are due in the next few weeks but initial feedback recognised the skills and abilities the team possess and well respected by teams that use the service most. The feedback also gave areas which we might be able to develop in order to make more of this resource. The feedback touch on how the council could use data more collectively across the council and with partners, promoting the information the council holds and the upcoming revision of the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) be key document for informing the services provided by the council.

For a range of information explore [Understanding Herefordshire website](#) where you can also subscribe to receive the latest information.

Digital Strategy Consultation

Herefordshire Council is updating its Digital Strategy, and though primarily about how the council uses IT to support its services we also want to hear from residents on what is important as being on-line is increasingly part of everyday life.

Face to face consultation has taken place in libraries and customer services offices at Blueschool House in Hereford, and now an on-line survey aims to catch the view of medium uses to see what more can be done to support their on-line access. This includes the type of services that could be provided digitally but also what are the barriers to increasing digital use – and this relates to the work of Fastershire regarding broadband coverage and digital inclusion.

October 2021 - Cllr Yolande Watson: Herefordshire Councillor for Kerne Bridge

Please see the link below to complete the survey, and please forward through your networks to get complete. The headline is 15 October 2021.

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HC_Digital_Strategy_2021

Reminder 2022/23 budget consultation – end Monday 4 October 2021 Herefordshire Council is consulting on its budget and Council Tax proposals for 2022/23 and is asking residents to participate and have their say.

This year, the budget consultation is focused on how the council can best support post-Covid recovery in Herefordshire and informing how the council can transform its services to ensure they are delivered in a way that is effective, affordable and environmentally friendly.

The council is also consulting on the proposed council tax reduction scheme for 2022/23 relevant to working age households on a low income.

[Complete the budget consultation online.](#)

In my area

Did you know residents can check the services local to their home address? Or any address in the county – invaluable if you are new to the area.

It shows their waste collections, who their councillor is, and nearby planning applications, school catchment areas and ward.

It also has a map of the local area where you can see your ward, parish, polling stations, GP surgery, schools and public footpaths and bridleways

A whole host of valuable local information in one place

Available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/inmyarea

Housing, regulatory services and community safety – Cllr Ange Tyler

Regeneration of Beattie Avenue

Built in 1944 Beattie Avenue, Hunderton was part of a new delivery plan to address the UK's post war housing shortage. The 41 bungalows were designed to last for approximately 10-15 years, after which time they were to be dismantled and replaced with permanent housing. Roll on 77 years and the properties have finally been demolished to make way for 71 new properties.

Connexus have developed a mixture of tenures and property types including 24 bungalows of which 6 are wheelchair accessible bungalows, designed and built specifically for families with physical disabilities. Accessible accommodation is the hardest to negotiate, some of the families have been on the waiting list for 5+ years.

There is also a good mix of tenures to suit as many tenants as possible. These include Social Rent, Affordable Rent, Shared Ownership and a fairly new product called Rent to Buy. This latest tenure has proved incredibly popular as it helps people to get onto the property ladder but without having to provide a large deposit, something that many people find impossible in the current financial climate.

Phase 1 of this scheme completed in July 2021 and residents have been slowly moving in, the second phase to complete by Summer 2022.

Environment, economy and skills – Cllr Ellie Chowns

Popular Fastershire courses return to the libraries

In September Fastershire restarted the 'Introduction to the Internet' digital inclusion workshops in main libraries during September, offering free beginners' sessions on using WhatsApp, smartphones and tablets. The workshops will be held monthly, with a promotional focus for Get Online Week (18th to 24th October). Details are [here](#). Any community venues or organisations who would like to host a free workshop to help people get more from technology – by learning how to make video calls, send emails, shop online, search the internet safely, etc – please contact jennie.morgan@herefordshire.gov.uk to find out more.

Climate & Nature Board

I just wanted to say a big thank you to everyone who has expressed interest in joining the new countywide Climate & Nature Board to help lead on our ambitious commitments to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030. We had a great response from across a wide range of residents, businesses, communities and organisations and we hope to confirm the board membership in the coming weeks

Community Climate and Nature Grant Scheme

Herefordshire Council's community climate and nature grant scheme aims to support communities in Herefordshire to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. We are inviting applications for funding for new projects which will deliver carbon reduction and/or ecological enhancement in your community. There are four main themes:

- Community buildings
- Sustainable transport
- Nature
- Other - for projects outside of the three main categories.

The maximum amount of grant that can be applied for is £15,000. Match funding is not required for grants of up to £5,000. Applications for over £5,000 will be expected to demonstrate match funding of 25%. In kind contributions will not be eligible as match funding. As funding is limited we recommend that you apply as early as possible and do not wait until the deadline. For more details visit: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/climate-2/climate-change/7>

Community Car Clubs

Funded by the Central Government Covid Recovery Grant, Herefordshire Council is looking to support up to six communities to establish community car clubs during an 18 month pilot. A community car club is a local, member-based initiative that provides access to pay-as-you-drive vehicles. Car clubs can improve accessibility to transport provision for residents particularly in rural areas. They can also help households reduce their carbon footprint by not owning a car and having more consideration about car use. We are inviting communities to submit an expression of interest by Thursday 7 October. For more details visit: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/public-transport-1/community-transport/5>

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC)

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC), a partnership service hosted by Herefordshire Council, has just launched its new website - <https://hbrc.org.uk/>. HBRC has recently been awarded £98,000 of Heritage Lottery funding for the project 'Hidden Herefordshire: Discovering its wildlife and wild places', which will promote biological recording within the county and help more people connect with nature. The project is being run in partnership with Cultivating Learning and Nature CIC (<https://www.clan-cic.org/>). The creation of the website is a key part of the project; it will both help to raise HBRC's profile, and get a wider range of people involved with biological recording. The website is currently

in an abridged form and more pages are being added regularly so keep checking back. At the moment you can see all the events HBRC currently has planned, which include free training workshops to develop identification and recording skills for various species groups such as fungi, woodlice, earthworms and bryophytes. Further workshops are planned for 2022, including centipedes, reptiles, birds and many more! Soon, users will also be able to submit their own biological records via the website and also see what species have been recorded in their area.

Marches Renewable Energy Project

The Marches Renewable Energy project, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, allocated all of the available funds for organisations to install renewable energy at their premises in Herefordshire a few months ago. The latest installation completed in Herefordshire in September is at Walford Timber, Ross-on-Wye who received a grant of £52,239 towards a large 155 kWp solar panel installation at their factory and warehousing premises. This will make an annual carbon saving of 26 tonnes.

Capability Fund

Herefordshire Council has been successful in securing grant funding from central government through the capability fund. This will enable us to continue to run successful schemes such as our Choose How you Move promotional campaign which includes cycle lessons, led walks and led rides. For more information visit: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/travel-transport/choose-move>

Economy

Visitor Economy Forum

I was delighted to be able to attend the visitor economy forum at Hereford Cathedral on the 8th September, attended by over 150 businesses from across the county. The event provided an opportunity to review the very significant impact of the visitor economy marketing and PR campaign funded by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to support Covid recovery, to hear from Lyn Hughes (founding editor of travel magazine Wanderlust) as well as Robin Tjolle from Visit England as to changing and future trends in the industry, and to consider how we can continue to work collaboratively together going forward through the proposed development of a Destination Business Improvement District. I was very pleased to be able to announce at the event that the council has committed a further £350,000 to support the continuation of the visitor economy marketing and PR campaign, to support the recovery of a key local industry by generating additional trade into the autumn and spring of 2022. The development of the Destination Business Improvement District is now also reaching a critical stage, with the ballot of potential levy paying businesses due to be held in November 2021.

Business Summit

We also held a very positive business summit event at the Shell Store the council's new fantastic business incubator facility on the 10th September. Over 80 businesses registered for the event, focussed on starting a new conversation between the council and private sector, considering how we can better work together to address some of our long term economic challenges and realise some of our great opportunities in our truly great county. The meeting agreed that we need new thinking in establishing a shared long term vision, and a 'big plan' to guide the development of a greener, fairer, and more prosperous society for all. During October and November we will be holding similar events in the market towns, as well as engaging with key groups such as women and youth in business to understand what kind of place they would like the county to be by 2050.

Covid Recovery Plan

In addition to the visitor economy marketing and PR campaign mentioned above, September also saw the launch of free weekend bus travel, encouraging people to get out and about spending time across our fantastic county. We have also launched the Revive and Thrive Grant scheme providing grants of up to £2,500 for people who want to trial a new business idea on the high street/ town centre (such as pop up shops or stalls) , or up to £10,000 to help existing businesses to develop and grow moving into new commercial accommodation. A number of new Covid Recovery initiatives are also due to launch in October, such as a grant scheme to enable businesses to purchase e-bikes, the roll out of a car sharing scheme, a grant scheme to support event businesses to relaunch, as well as support for the town councils in developing great places for residents and visitors to visit.