



Autumn 2023 Update

Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor

Walford

Whitchurch and Ganarew Group
Parish Councils

From

Kerne Bridge Ward County Councillor

Simeon Cole

Dear Residents

Thank you for placing your trust in me in May to represent you for the four years until May 2027.

It has been an extremely busy time since the elections. As soon as the result was known an intense programme of mandatory training and refresher courses was put in place for all Councillors. This programme explained the workings of the Council and the legal obligations of being a councillor.

We were all allocated duties within the Council's activities and, in addition to my full council responsibilities (3), I have been asked to sit on the following committees

- Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (3)
- Planning Committee (7)
- Scrutiny Management Board (3)

The figures in brackets indicate the number of meetings attended. In addition, there have been two planning site visits.

Unfortunately, towards the end of this period I encountered a period of ill health which included a spell in hospital. I am pleased to report that, after what seemed like a very long recovery period, I am fighting fit again.

Ward Activity

In addition to attending to many emails and telephone calls relating to potholes, road closures and planning matters, I have managed to arrange the resurfacing of two sections of road and am dealing with many hedgerows which have become overgrown and are a danger to traffic and pedestrians.

I am pleased that we have been able to accelerate what seemed to be slow progress under the previous administration.

There are many drainage issues in the ward. We are quite unusual in Herefordshire terms in that we have borders with two other counties. I am coordinating with Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire councils where there are road closures which affect us in our ward.

On the subject of cross border cooperation, at the end of October, Herefordshire Council entered a new 'Marches Forward Partnership' which will see us work with Shropshire Council, Monmouthshire CC, and Powys CC, collectively joining forces to apply for funding from Government on major projects that will benefit the Marches region which has a population of 750,000 people covering 80% of the English/Welsh borderland. While each council will continue to separately deliver services to residents and business as now, they will work together where there is mutual benefit and added value. This will include transport, skills and housing alongside energy, climate change, green growth and digital connectivity and we will be better placed to bid for national funding against larger urban centres.

Based upon my experience as a parish councillor I am lobbying strongly for Council Officers to engage more with the parishes wherever it is appropriate.

I consider it a privilege to serve you all in this role and will do so with pride and devotion.

If you think I can help with any matters relating to Herefordshire Council please do not hesitate to contact me, my email address is simeon.cole@herefordshire.gov.uk

With best wishes

Simeon

Other Council matters

The River Wye

The Government has announced measures to allow house building which has been subject to a moratorium to restart, caused by phosphate pollution. However due to our cross-border situation our understanding is that there are additional measures required for the Wye catchment and its tributaries. I and my colleagues are maintaining pressure on water companies and encouraging improvement in farming practices which will still be required to deal with substantive water quality issues.

Hereford County Hospital

The Council is working with Hereford Hospital - Wye Valley NHS Trust - to develop an educational training centre for the benefit of improved local care and health skills in the county. The demands on recruitment and retention of staff are greater than ever and having such a facility locally can only strengthen our local workforce and services.

Energy Grants

The Council is working in partnership with Severn Wye Energy Agency to offer the Home Upgrade Grant, part of a £7 million government scheme, to pay for much needed energy-saving home improvements to a range of properties across the region that are not on the mains gas grid and hard to heat. At a time when energy prices are skyrocketing and many residents are struggling to keep up with their bills, the funding aims to bring down household energy bills over the long term, by improving the energy efficiency of properties, making them easier to heat and power, and lowering carbon emissions.

Please report potholes and concerns

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reportingapp/>

Report a serious pothole, flooded road or highway obstruction- Balfour Beatty Living Places : **01432 26180**

Footpaths issues –

- **PROW - PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk**
- **PROW No – 01432 383 550**

Report fly tipping it will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame. by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via the council website on the links below as your https://link.edgepilot.com/s/f452e836/Hy5YWk_SqEGkleekL2ROFQ?u=https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/98/fly_tipping

Local Emergency Numbers

Environment Agency: 0800 80 70 60 (24-hours) or visit www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident

Flood alerts: Floodline 0345 988 1188. Sign up online at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings to get Flood Warnings from the Environment Agency by phone, email or text message. If you live by a river or stream, keep a watch on current and expected water levels.

Power cut: Call 105 or visit www.powercut105.com

BT phone line issues: www.downdetector.co.uk/status/bt-british-telecom

Gas leak: 0800 111 999 or visit www.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas

Welsh Water: [0800 052 0130](tel:08000520130) (Water emergencies) or [0800 085 3968](tel:08000853968) (Sewer emergencies) or visit www.contact.dwrcymru.com/

The Citizens Advice Bureau Online

at advice@citizensadviceherefordshire.org.uk for initial contact by email. Please also give a contact phone number in case we need to contact you for more information.

Parish Council Contacts

Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor Parish Council - clerk@goodrichandwelshbicknor-pc.gov.uk

Walford Parish Council - clerk@walfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

Whitchurch and Ganarew Parish Council - clerk@wagpc.org.uk