

Firstly a belated happy new year.

Be aware of rogue traders

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Robert Christopher Hughes aged 25, was sentenced yesterday (2 February) at Worcester Crown Court on nine counts of rogue trading in the course of his roofing business, including fraud against five victims. Mr. Hughes, trading under a false address in Pershore as R Hughes Roofing, placed large advertisements in local publications offering fake 50% discounts for roofing work, whilst falsely claiming to have a 'TrustMark accreditation'.

The court heard that his advertisements attracted numerous requests for him to fix simple problems, such as leaking gutters. However, once at a property he would falsely claim there were other serious problems which needed urgent attention, such as deteriorated roofing felt which needed to be replaced when it rarely, if ever, needs replacing. He would then charge up to four times the going rate for this unnecessary work.

The court heard that Mr. Hughes would always start the proposed urgent repairs immediately, failing to give homeowners the legal 14 day cooling off period or time to obtain a second opinion and quote. The majority of his victims were vulnerable and elderly and the court held this as an aggravating factor in the offences. One 78 year old victim, for example, paid £36,000 for wholly unnecessary roof repairs, which left their roof in a far worse state than before.

The council's trading standards team advise never to deal with cold callers on the telephone, via e-mail or at the door. Rogue trading involves charging excessive prices for unnecessary and often poor quality work and, as this case demonstrates, is not always restricted to cold calling. A number of rogue traders will use flyers and conventional advertising, so members of the public need to be aware when looking for work to be completed. It is also often the case that a rogue trader will attempt to propose extra work, once a small job has been agreed or completed, particularly for roofing.

Herefordshire Council operates a trader register of local businesses, which can help identify reliable trade companies at www.traderregister.org.uk/herefordshire. Residents can also request a 'no cold caller' poster for windows and doors, by contacting the council's environmental health and trading standards service on 01432 261671 or ethelpline@herefordshire.gov.uk.

City Link Road continues on target

Alun Griffiths (Construction) Ltd continues to progress the construction of the City Link Road and the road remains on schedule to open later this year.

In order to perform drainage and re-surfacing works it is necessary for works to be undertaken on Station Approach on two consecutive Sundays: 19 and 26 February.

Station Approach will be subject to four way traffic signals from 7am to 7pm on Sunday 19 February. The traffic management will again be in place from 7am on Sunday 26 until 7am on Monday 27 February. These works may cause some delay.

We urge those travelling by train to leave extra time to travel to the railway station on these days.

<http://newsroom.herefordshire.gov.uk/2017/february/station-approach-works-to-go-ahead-in-february.aspx>

Herefordshire “First Shell” exhibition extended due to popular demand

A Herefordshire exhibition has extended its run until Friday 24 February 2017 due to popular demand.

‘The First Shell’ exhibition, presented in partnership with Rotherwas Ordnance Factory (ROF) – Front Line Duty Project and Herefordshire Council, marks the centenary of the first shell produced at Hereford’s munitions factory in Rotherwas.

The Rotherwas ROF project is part of a two-year Heritage Lottery Fund project marking the contribution of the munitions workers during the First and Second World Wars, most of whom were women. Visitors are also encouraged to bring names, stories, letters and photos of people they know of who worked at the munitions factory at Rotherwas.

‘The First Shell’ exhibition, held at Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre (HARC) in Rotherwas, is open Tuesday to Friday 9.15am – 4.45pm, and Saturday 11 February. Visitors will also have access to the family history search room during the exhibition.

Council proposes funding changes to carer support providers

Herefordshire Council is continuing to face significant reductions in its government funding and as a consequence is looking at every service it provides to consider if it’s being delivered in the most efficient way and providing a quality service for those who need it.

As part of this approach, by March 2018 the council will need to reduce its funding by £193,000, which it currently provides to Crossroads Care and Herefordshire Carers Support for delivering services to the county’s carers. This will be a phased reduction over the coming financial year and further reductions will need to be considered when commissioning future services for carers.

The council is already working in direct partnership with the county’s carers to produce a countywide carer’s strategy, which will recognise the significant contribution made by carers to the wellbeing of many thousands of Herefordshire residents. A robust strategy will help to

mitigate against any possible negative impact of the budget reductions.

The strategy will be based on carers' specific priorities to ensure there is a clear focus on the whole family, support for self-care and mutual support within communities and identified ways to support carers that don't require direct funding. Carers must have access to universal services through effective information and advice and be confident that the person they care for receives the right support.

Where there remains a need for a direct carers service, the strategy will set out future service commissioning plans for beyond 2018.

Councillor Patricia Morgan, Cabinet member for adults and wellbeing, said: "We are very conscious of the central role played by carers in ensuring a good quality of life for their loved ones across the county.

"The strategy offers the opportunity for us to work closely with carers of all ages to better understand their needs and identify ways in which they can be confident they're able to access the support they need from their local community."

Herefordshire's walking and cycling boost

Herefordshire Council has been awarded a £1.5 million share of the £60 million Sustainable Travel Access Fund awarded by central government.

The funding has been awarded to support the council's 'Destination Hereford' project, which aims to make the city a beacon for walking and cycling in the UK.

It will support a programme of local projects over three years from 2017 to 2020, with the aim to make walking and cycling a part of everyday life.

'Destination Hereford' will build on established links with local partners to deliver the 'Choose how you move' campaign. The aim of the initiative is to increase levels of walking and cycling across Herefordshire, contributing towards improved health and air quality for the county, reduced CO2 emissions and congestion and better access to jobs, education, training and local services.

The project forms a key part of the council's overall transport strategy by complementing investment in the infrastructure of the city. This includes the delivery of the Hereford City Centre Transport Package with the new city link road currently under construction, the South Wye Transport Package which will see the delivery of the Southern Link Road and the development of the Hereford Transport Package which includes the development of the Hereford Bypass.

Councillor Paul Rone, Cabinet minister for transport and roads, said: "Thousands more people will be encouraged to cycle and walk to work thanks to the government's award of £1.5 million to the county.

"With this fund, the council will be able to further invest in our 'Choose how you move' campaign, with safety and awareness training for cyclists, improved Park & Choose sites, additional secure cycle storage, bike repair and maintenance courses, improved road safety

measures and bike hire opportunities.”

For more information about ‘Destination Hereford’, visit the website:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/community-transport/destination-hereford>

Hereford library, museum and art gallery has reopened

Hereford library, museum and art gallery reopened on Tuesday 31 January, following the phase one completion of building work at Broad Street.

The building was closed due to asbestos found on the site, but has provided the opportunity to modernise the library for the many users. Spaces have been reconfigured to improve the customer experience, a suite of new PCs are available to use for free and the ceiling has been raised with new lighting. The county library will also welcome WISH (Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire) which will operate from the main library as a shared facility to make the most of the building.

Hereford museum and art gallery will launch an exhibition celebrating the life and work of Herefordshire artist Brian Hatton, with additional opening hours during the first two weeks.

Councillor Harry Bramer, Cabinet member for contracts and assets, said: “This is a great step in improving the customer experience at Hereford Library, with a modern look based on users’ feedback.

“Herefordshire Council is very grateful to those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to get Broad Street ready for opening, and to the frontline library and museum staff who have remained positive during the period of closure.

“The council has shown it is committed to the library service, with this additional investment in Hereford and previous investment in the award-winning Masters House that houses Ledbury library.”

Further work on the development of the Broad Street building will follow, with updates on the Herefordshire libraries Facebook page.

Herefordshire residents urged to take part in proposed waste charges survey

Herefordshire Council is urging all county residents, charities and care, residential and nursing homes to take part in a waste services charges consultation.

Significant changes have already been made to the council’s waste management services, such as the change to alternate weekly collection, which have resulted in savings in excess of £500,000. But with a further £17.5 million in savings to be made across Herefordshire Council by 2020/21, the council must review the charges for some of the waste management services it provides.

Councillor Harry Bramer, Cabinet member for contracts and assets, said: “I would urge all residents, as well as charities and care, residential and nursing homes based in the county, to complete the questionnaire.

“We want to ensure we have a wide range of views, from residents and organisations, to ensure that our waste management resources are used in the most efficient and cost effective way.”

The questionnaire is available online: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environmental-protection/waste-management/waste-costs-consultation> or can be completed at any of Herefordshire Council’s customer service centres.

The consultation will run until Friday 3 March 2017

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Wye Transport Package which will see the delivery of the Southern Link Road and the development of the Hereford Transport Package which includes the development of the Hereford Bypass.

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Barry Durkin

Ward Councillor - **Old Gore Ward**
Herefordshire Council

January 2017