

### **Herefordshire Council smallholdings estate put on market**

Herefordshire Council has on Monday 24 April 2017 put its smallholdings estate on the market. The sale of the estate will generate capital and give the council the opportunity to reduce its historic borrowings.

There are 59 lots which have been marketed in total, and the council continues to follow the recommendations provided by Fisher German, its appointed agent. The smallholdings estate is subject to open market competition. All tenants who have expressed an interest will have the opportunity to bid for their own farm, and will continue to have the opportunity for the duration of the sale.

Farm Business Tenants have been granted a lease extension until September 2017, and end of tenancy compensation settlements for these tenants are being finalised. Councillor Harry Bramer, Cabinet Member for Contracts and Assets, said: “The council is committed to its duty of care to the local community and to tenants. As we find alternative ways to fund the statutory services we have to provide, we need to prioritise which activities the council can support. The smallholdings disposal plan will help us ensure best value for money for taxpayers.”

Herefordshire Council and Fisher German will continue to support and update existing tenants during the sales process, which is expected to last until September 2017. Further information about the marketed lots is available on the Fisher German website at

[www.fgherefordfarmsales.com](http://www.fgherefordfarmsales.com)

### **New Healthwatch provider for Herefordshire**

A new Healthwatch Herefordshire social enterprise has been established today on 20 April.

Healthwatch was established across the country as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The service is delivered by independent social enterprise organisations on behalf of local councils and aims to represent the views of residents on local health and social care issues.

From 2013, the contract to deliver Healthwatch Herefordshire was held by Herefordshire Voluntary

Organisations Support Service (HVOSS). HVOSS took the decision not to continue providing the service when the contract expired in March 2017. As a result, the council has considered alternative solutions and has set up a new independent social enterprise to ensure the

Healthwatch service continues to be delivered across Herefordshire.

Councillor Patricia Morgan, Cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: “The new social enterprise in Herefordshire will be supported by Healthwatch Worcestershire, which is one of the leading Healthwatch organisations in the country. The chief officer of Healthwatch Worcestershire, Simon Adams, has recently been appointed as the chair of the West Midlands Local Healthwatch Network, so our county will receive extensive support and experience to ensure residents’ voices are heard. “I’d like to thank the outgoing Healthwatch Herefordshire board members for their hard work and dedication over the past four years. The board has left a sound platform for the new provider to build upon now and in the future.”

### **All the fun of the fair? What do you think?**

The Hereford May Fair and Leominster Town fair contract is due for renewal in 2019. The fairs, which both run in May, have been a feature in the centre of Hereford and Leominster for hundreds of years.

It’s important that the views of people in Hereford and Leominster are taken on board before the contract, which lasts for seven years is considered for award once again.

Councillor David Harlow, cabinet member economy and corporate services said: “We know that the fair is popular with many residents and we are proud of the long history the county has with the fairs. But we do need to understand better the views of residents, shoppers, businesses and retailers before we consider awarding the contract for the next seven years.”

The council has produced a short survey in order to gain the views of residents which can be found at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/FairSurvey>

### **Herefordshire primary school places announced**

Parents in Herefordshire join those across England today (Sunday 16 April), with finding out which primary school their child will be attending in September 2017. This applies to the 88% of families who submitted an online application, as those who applied manually will receive a letter after the Easter bank holiday.

Herefordshire Council has made 1,899 offers of places in primary schools across the county with the following parental preference success rates:

First preference: 1,772 offers, which is 93.3% of the total offers

Second preference: 67 offers, which is 3.5% of the total offers with a cumulative success rate of 96.8%

Third preference: 12 offers, which is 0.7% of the total offers with a cumulative success rate of 97.5%

The balance of places offered, which is 48 or 2.5%, were to parents whose preferences could not be met and their offer was for the nearest school to their home address with available spaces. As in previous years, Herefordshire schools are a net importer of pupils, with more pupils from neighbouring counties requesting places in the county's schools than Herefordshire pupils requesting places in neighbouring counties.

There are currently 19 Herefordshire primary schools with waiting lists and 51 have available spaces. In comparison to last year, we offered 1,839 places of which 94.7% were first preferences and 98.4% were one of three preferences.

### **Snap General Election 8 June 2017**

On Tuesday 18 April, Prime Minister Theresa May announced her intention to hold an early general election. MPs have approved the motion and the election will be held on 8 June 2017.

In Herefordshire, there are two parliamentary seats: Hereford & South Herefordshire County Constituency, and North Herefordshire County Constituency.

From midnight Saturday 22 April, we will be entering the pre-election period known as purdah. All employees and elected members should read the pre-election guidance, as during this period we should not undertake any activity which could call into question the political impartiality of employees, or could give rise to the criticism that public resources are being used for party political purposes.

The guidance is designed to ensure that council resources and facilities are not perceived by the public to have been used for election campaigning or political purposes during the purdah period and that the political impartiality of employees has been maintained.

This guidance also contains advice for council employees about restrictions on political activities. Employees who may wish to engage in election activities in a personal capacity, where that is permitted, should ensure that they are not breaching any requirements of the rules. The guidance can be found at:

[https://apps.herefordshire.gov.uk/communicationstoolkit/Shared%20Documents/Preelection%20guidance%20\(Purdah\)%202017.pdf](https://apps.herefordshire.gov.uk/communicationstoolkit/Shared%20Documents/Preelection%20guidance%20(Purdah)%202017.pdf)

The logo for Barry Durkin, featuring the name 'Barry' in a stylized, blue, cursive font.

Barry Durkin  
**Old Gore Ward – Herefordshire Council**  
April 2017