



News, stories and services for residents

Spring 2025

*Who's your
community
star?*

**Tackling youth
homelessness**

**Go Wild with
WychRewards**

**Council
Changes**
- have your say

www.wychavon.gov.uk



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News *in brief*

Plan progress

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDPR) has moved a step closer to officially being adopted.

We are waiting for the initial findings from Planning Inspectors, who scrutinised the document during public hearings in March and April. We aim to consult on any changes to the Plan during the summer and present it to councillors, to be officially approved, before the end of this year.

Visit the [SWDPR YouTube channel](#) to watch recordings of the hearings.

Loo upgrade

Our toilets in St Andrews Square, Droitwich Spa will re-open in June following a £175,000 revamp. The block has been refreshed inside with new tiling, sinks and mirrors.

St Andrews Square is the last of our loos to be upgraded as part of our public toilet improvement scheme.

Raven repairs

Emergency repairs to safeguard the former Raven Hotel in Droitwich Spa are almost complete. Scaffolding and netting have been installed to stop debris falling from the roof, and propping has been placed inside to support the structure.

Roof repairs are being commissioned following a slight delay, after a survey found asbestos in the building. We stepped in to do the repairs after the owner failed to comply with a court order and will reclaim the costs from them.

Visit our [Raven Hotel information page](#) to stay up-to-date with the latest developments with the building's future, or scan the QR code on the posters on the scaffolding.

Latest news *direct to your inbox*

- ✓ Weekly planning lists
- ✓ Waste and recycling information

- ✓ Events and activity updates and much more.

Sign up at [Wychavon's e-newsletters](#)



Community Stars 2025

Celebrating local heroes

Who's your star?

Do you know someone who goes the extra mile to make a difference to improve the area where you live? Then nominate them for a Wychavon Community Star.

Wychavon Community Stars celebrates those who live or work in our communities and use their own time to make a significant, lasting and positive difference to the people, places, and environment of Wychavon.

Winners will get a special Wychavon Community Star to wear with pride. They will also receive a certificate from our Chairman or another Wychavon representative at a small, personalised celebration.

Who can I nominate?

You can put forward an individual, a group, a team or an entire organisation.

Examples of the kind of things people may receive a Wychavon Community Star for include:

- ★ **Helping to make their town or village a better place to live**
- ★ **Improving life for people less able than themselves**
- ★ **Making a difference to the local environment**
- ★ **Improving a struggling voluntary organisation**

More information is available on our website.



Nominate
now
or find out more.

How can I make a nomination?

You can nominate a Wychavon Community Star by filling in our **simple online nomination form** at or scan the QR code on this page.



Get rewarded

Almost 300 people are in with a chance to win prizes for helping the environment – and you could join them!

We launched WychRewards in January to help motivate and reward people for taking simple, sustainable actions to support our environment.

Once registered, you choose which actions you pledge to take each month, like recycling correctly, leaving the car at home for short journeys, or switching off appliances to save energy.

You log your activity through the website or WychRewards app to earn Green Points and then watch as you compete with others on the leaderboard.

The top six Green Points earners win a £50 voucher each month from a choice of National Garden Gift Voucher, Morrisons, Aldi, Waitrose, Argos, and Ecoswap. The winners are based on points earned that month, so you'll have a chance to win no matter when you join.

There is a fun team competition, where the part of the district with the most points wins money to donate to a local charity or project.

So far, more than 2,900 sustainable actions have been logged. We're currently running our Go Wild campaign, offering extra points for residents who let their lawn grow for a month, grow a wildflower patch in their garden to support pollinators, or take part in our nature-themed photo competition.



What people are saying about WychRewards

"It's a good reminder of what more I can do, as well as taking notice of the things that I already do to look after our environment. I also like the prospect of winning!"

"It's easy to do and has great ideas for how to be more sustainable."

"Love how it makes me take ownership for the little things I can do every day to help the environment."

"We are loving this initiative! We all want to live long and happy lives so, with simple changes and choices, we can make the world a healthier place too! If you're not taking part, then I feel you're missing out on a better future for our children. We must act!"



Sign up:

Register today on the [WYCHRewards website](#) and start your journey to a more sustainable lifestyle.





**Earn vouchers for
your sustainable
actions**

Log your
positive action

Climb the
leaderboard

✦ WIN ✦
monthly vouchers

SIGN UP NOW



wychrewards.co.uk



Riverside backing

A major funder has indicated they would be prepared to back a bid to bring Evesham's Riverside Shopping Centre into public ownership.

We have an 'agreement in principle' from the funder, which is not being named at this point due to commercial confidentiality. A formal decision is expected this summer.

If the deal is given the green light, then councillors could be asked to make a decision on buying the centre by the end of this year, with a view to completing the sale by the end of March 2026 at the latest.

The deal would also see us take on the ownership of properties in Market Square and any other units the owner has an interest in. Existing businesses would continue to trade.

Detailed discussions about how to regenerate the site won't begin until a sale is completed. But the centre will likely be demolished and replaced with a mixed-use development, including housing and leisure businesses.

Cllr Chris Day, Leader of Wychavon District Council, said: "We promised in our We Are Wychavon Plan we would bring the Riverside back into public ownership, and we're excited to be one step closer to achieving that ambition.

"As always, nothing is agreed until it's agreed, and plenty of things could still go wrong before we get this deal over the line.

"But we want to be as open as we can with residents to show, as promised, real progress is being made behind the scenes.

"Regenerating this site will be key to our strategic aim of building on Evesham's strengths so the town centre can thrive into the future."

Learn more:
[Visit our town centres information page to find out more about our vision for the future of our town centres.](#)

From homelessness to hope



Wychavon councillors with Merstow Place staff and residents.

“

Before I came here, I was very low, feeling suicidal and very anxious. If it wasn't for this place, I probably wouldn't be here now.”

Those are the words of 22-year-old Kiera, who is talking from the garden of our supported youth homelessness scheme in Evesham.

After finding herself with nowhere to live and facing having to sleep on the streets, she reached out to our housing team for help. Kiera was offered a place at the scheme, which is run in partnership with youth homelessness charity St Basils.



Cllr George Duffy, Wychavon's Chairman, washes up with a resident of the scheme.



Cllr George Duffy, Wychavon's Chairman, talks to a resident of the scheme.

“

Now I've got my life skills and I'm ready to go. I actually want to go somewhere with my life now. I don't even feel sad anymore.”

The aim is to support young people with challenges that put them at risk of rough sleeping or sofa surfing, so they can move on to their own accommodation and live independently.

Young people with a local connection to the district who have approached our housing team for help are referred to the scheme. They are given a range of support including training on budgeting, independent living skills, education and employment qualifications.

Since it opened in August 2021, 30 young people have been supported by the scheme, with 17 of these having worked through their challenges to complete an accredited life skills course and move on to their own long-term accommodation.

They include Kiera, who at the time of this interview had just been given the good news she had been allocated her first home and was getting ready to move in.

“I'm really excited because it's got a garden and I'm just really looking forward to having my own little place,” she said.

“Being here has just helped me so much. Before I would rot away in my room, I don't think I spoke to anyone for years. But I've made friends here and I've even gone out to my first club!

“It's such a lovely community, everyone helps each other and there's always someone to talk to.”

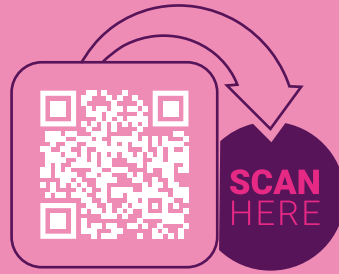
Kiera's story is a familiar one for our housing team, who have seen requests for help from 16 to 24-year-olds increase by 323% since 2018. Requests from single adults at risk of homelessness have almost doubled.

It's prompted a step change in the way we support people.

“We found our ability to help was limited. We could provide temporary shelter for a night or two or potentially social or private sector rented housing, but we knew many people would struggle to sustain their tenancy and the cycle of crisis would begin again,” said Jennifer Taylor, Wychavon's Director of Communities and Housing.

“After analysing our housing register, we realised the issues facing young people extended beyond housing availability. They included chaotic lifestyles, complex mental health needs, and barriers to accessing essential support like healthcare and job services.”

As well as creating the youth homelessness support scheme in Evesham, we realigned our service to focus on preventing homelessness and taking a holistic approach to support needs rather than just housing people. All staff now undergo regular Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) training to better understand and address the underlying motivations behind people's actions. This allows us to find solutions tailored for their needs, making them more likely to be successful long-term..



Learn more

If you're at risk of becoming homeless, please reach out and ask for help. The earlier you contact us, the more options we have to help.

Visit our [housing support page](#)

We work closely with partners to tackle rough sleeping earlier so when it does happen, we ensure it is rare, brief and non-recurring.

We have also converted five empty properties in the north of Wychavon into temporary accommodation, aimed at single people over 25. These properties also come with outreach support to ensure people have the skills they need to move on and secure their own long-term home.

And, the scheme in Evesham has been so successful, we are investing more than £1 million into creating a second one in Droitwich Spa so we can help even more young people. We'll identify a suitable partner to run that scheme in the near future.

Our new approach has not gone unrecognised, and we've been shortlisted for The Municipal Journal Award for Innovation in Housing. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in London in June.

“Through our new approach and collaborative working with our partners like social housing providers, our outreach team, social services, the NHS and St Basils, we're changing lives,” said Cllr Rick Deller, Wychavon's Executive Board Member for Housing.

“

We no longer just provide a roof over people's heads. We provide opportunities for bright futures, which will positively impact the people we help, their loved ones and our communities for generations to come.”



Council changes

The Government has announced the biggest shake-up of local government for more than fifty years.

Currently, services are split between Worcestershire County Council, us and parish/town councils in this area.

Under the Government's plans, all county and district councils will be scrapped by April 2028 with services delivered by a single council, known as a unitary council.

These councils will join with others across a wide geographic area to form a combined strategic authority, with a directly elected mayor like in the West Midlands. The combined authority would attract money and powers from the Government to invest in things like transport, skills and housing to drive economic growth.

Parish and town councils will be unchanged but may have a greater role in delivering local services and representing communities.

There are currently two proposed options for the future of local government in this area:



Option 1:

One unitary council providing all services for Worcestershire.



Option 2:

Splitting the county north and south, with a unitary council in each area providing all services.

Discussions are continuing about how a strategic combined authority could work for Worcestershire.

What does this mean for me?

Until April 2028, nothing will change — you'll continue to receive the same great services from us you always have. After that, a new council will take over, which may change how some services are delivered. Any changes will be decided by the new council.

What happens next?

As we went to print, we were awaiting initial Government feedback on the two options. A detailed proposal will be submitted by 28 November 2025. If approved, shadow council elections will be held in May 2027, with the new council starting in April 2028.

How can I get involved?

We are consulting with residents on the two options from 1 to 29 June 2025. You can find out more about the changes and have your say by scanning the QR code on this page or visit the [Shape Worcestershire website](#).

Work starts

First stage of leisure centre revamp underway



Work is underway on the first stage of a major upgrade to Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre.



The car park is being extended to create an extra 292 spaces and 24 spaces for bicycles. Construction should be completed by the end of July.

Detailed costs for the next phase were discussed by councillors earlier in May, so work can start as soon as the car park is completed. The proposal includes an extension for a new learner pool, café, and new reception area. Parts of the existing centre will be refurbished and modernised. Air source heat pumps will provide the new extension's heating requirements. LED lighting, water-saving measures, and solar panels will also be installed.

Work on stage two should start by the end of August and be completed by September 2026.

Plans for a new skatepark near the leisure centre are also being finalised. We hope to appoint a contractor for the £300,000 scheme early next year, with work starting by May 2026. A pump track is also planned for the site, with work starting once the skate park is built.

The schemes are part of our We Are Wychavon Plan for a multi-million-pound investment in health and wellbeing in Droitwich Spa.

Visit the [Droitwich Leisure projects information page](#)

★ A new era for ★

Droitwich Spa



Lido feedback

Hundreds of you responded to our consultation on plans for a multi-million-pound upgrade to Droitwich Spa Lido last year.

An overwhelming 86%, of the 685 of you who took part, backed the plan.

Some issues were raised repeatedly in the feedback.
We've provided answers to those comments on the opposite page.





What you asked for

Improvements to the changing rooms

Although improving the changing rooms is not part of our investment, Wychavon Leisure – which runs the Lido – know they need upgrading to match the standard of the proposed development. They are working up proposals.

Accessibility

This was a recurring theme throughout the consultation. As part of the project's next phase, we're including accessible elements in the design, including improved access to the pool and a Changing Places toilet. Additional training will be provided to staff, such as requiring lifeguards to learn British Sign Language.

Importance of the café

Many of you expressed your love for the café and current operator. We can confirm there are no plans to change the current operator, and we're working with them to see how we can keep the café open during any construction work.

Car parking

Although we will improve the car park layout, we can't add more spaces without damaging Lido Park. A multi-storey car park would also be out of character with the area and unlikely to get planning permission. We will be improving the signage from other car parks around Droitwich Spa town centre to create clearer routes from them to the Lido, so we're using all available capacity.

Heat the pool or cover the pool

Many of you asked if the pool could be heated. It already is, and there are no plans to increase the temperature as it would be costly and increase our carbon emissions, which goes against our efforts to tackle climate change.

Some people also wanted the pool covered. Again, we're not going to take up this idea as we feel it wouldn't be a Lido then, and it would take away what makes it special.

What happens next?

Feedback will be used to help draw up a detailed design for the project to then secure approval for the funding from councillors in early 2026, with a planning application submitted in the spring. If the plans are approved, work should start in autumn 2026 and be open for summer 2027.



Droitwich Spa Lido upgrade

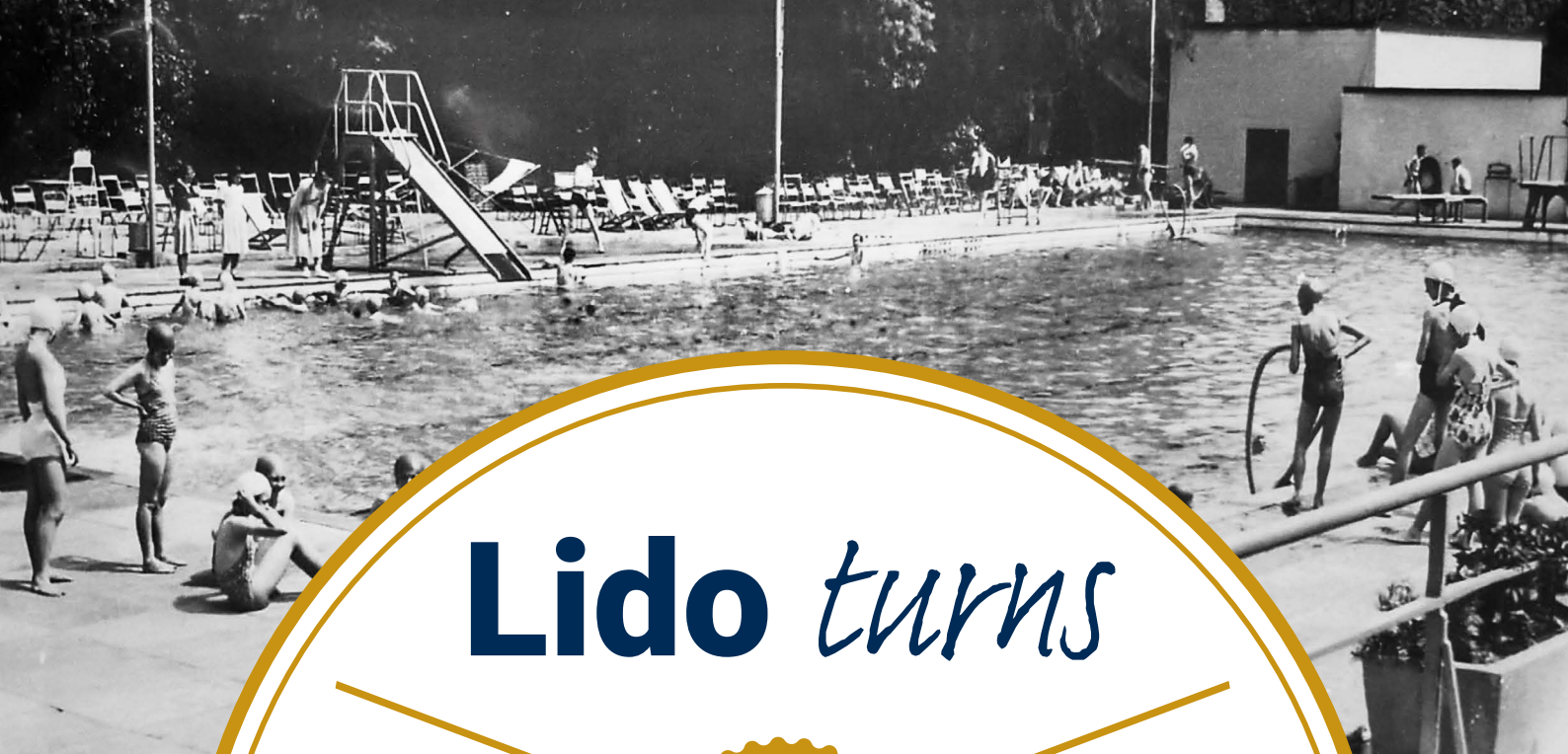
- ★ An enhanced and safer entrance from Worcester Road.
- ★ Wing extensions to join the existing café building with the Art Deco building.
- ★ Create a brine pool experience and spa and leisure facilities.
- ★ A new café at the south end of the site for users of the Lido and Lido Park.
- ★ Upgrades to the appearance of the area surrounding the Lido pool.
- ★ Extending the Lido grounds to include a new family-friendly swimming area.

Keep up to date with the project

Visit [Droitwich Spa Lido project page](#) for the latest updates, or [sign up for our e-newsletter](#)

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Lido *turns*



90

Special events are being held this summer to celebrate Droitwich Spa Lido's 90th birthday.



Friends of Droitwich Spa Lido (FODSL) and Wychavon Leisure are working with us to mark the occasion.

Celebrations start on 19 July with a synchronised swimming display at 6pm followed by an open swim session. This event will also launch a special memory book telling the Lido's story through photos and the personal recollections of local residents.

There will be a Swim 90 challenge throughout the summer, with swimmers of all ages and abilities able to sign up for personal or group challenges in the pool. Entry cards will be available from the kiosk.



Then, on Saturday 16 August, prepare for open-air cinema at the Lido. Visitors can enjoy a swim from 6pm before settling in to watch a showing of *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* from 7.30pm in the Lido Car Park. Refreshments will be available from Little Al's café.

Suzi Wood, Chair of FODSL, said:

"We're looking forward to a spectacular summer and hope for a good turnout of revellers to join in with our celebrations!"



Did you know?

Droitwich Spa Sea Bathing Lido opened on 10 June 1935. A jubilant crowd, including local dignitaries, watched Ralph Lynn, a film star of the time, cut the ribbon, bringing saltwater open-air bathing to the people of the town and the wider region.

Budget *boost*

We've made some new commitments in our budget for 2025/26, so we can continue making a difference to our district. They include:

- ▶ A recommitment to **support investment** in the Riverside Shopping Centre in Evesham, Droitwich Spa Lido and Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre.
- ▶ **More than £1 million** for our parks and open spaces, including security improvements, various other improvement projects and a new water play in Droitwich's Lido Park.
- ▶ **Another £1 million** from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support community groups with projects and businesses, to provide skills and development opportunities.
- ▶ Close to **£1 million on preventing homelessness**, exploring options to increase affordable housing, providing rough sleeper accommodation, domestic abuse accommodation and continuing to identify and bring empty homes back into use.
- ▶ **£30,000** to identify new wildlife and woodland locations to boost biodiversity.
- ▶ **£90,000** for path improvement works at Pulley Lane, Droitwich Spa.
- ▶ Exploring options to **improve parking** at railway stations.

We increased our share of the Council Tax bill in April by 2.5% – or £3.13 – to £128.21 a year for an average Band D property.

This was below inflation and, despite the rise, our share of the bill remains the lowest in Worcestershire and one of the lowest in the country.

Need support?

If you need help paying your Council Tax bill, email wychavontax@southworcestershirevenues.gov.uk or call 03004 560 560 (9am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday). Appointments can be booked between 2pm and 5pm through our website or use our live chat service.

Visit our Council Tax information page to find out more.



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Go paperless

Scan the QR code to get your Council Tax bill emailed to your inbox in future, or visit [our e-billing sign up page](#).



Improvement *grants*

Town centre businesses across Evesham and Droitwich Spa have been transformed with support from our Business Front Improvement Grant.



Charlotte Hampson (centre) from Evesham Place Board with Sandra Capaldi and Sian Purton from Wallace House.



**Funded by
UK Government**

Overall, 15 grants totalling £130,000 have helped 23 businesses upgrade the look of their premises. The scheme was launched with support from Evesham and Droitwich Spa Place Boards and funded by our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The aim was to help increase footfall, encourage landlords to bring empty units back into use and enhance the character of both town centres.

Grants between £500 and £10,000 were available to fund 50% of the project cost, with the business expected to fund the rest with their own money.

In Evesham, the scheme has helped upgrade units in one of the most historic buildings in the town centre.

Samuel Wallace Smedley Trust owns numbers 40 to 44 High Street and the upstairs unit. They received £20,000 to restore the ten upper-floor sash windows and replace the front of the vacant number 40 with a traditional timber shop front, restoring the character of the building. The rent

from the shop contributes towards the trust's ability to carry out its charitable aims. The refurbishment will strengthen their ability to attract a high-quality tenant to this prominent area of the town. Some of the other businesses awarded grants include Magpie Antiques, Library Arcade, Felton's Bistro and The School Shop.

Sian Purton, Wallace House Community Centre Manager, said:



We couldn't have done this without Wychavon's support. The shop has got a new life to it now and is a credit to the charity, rather than something we need to work on. I'm really excited for the future and to see how this will benefit the community and the trust."

Parks Café was among the businesses in Droitwich Spa that benefitted from the scheme.

A grant of £9,000 was used to improve the outdoor area of the Victoria Square eatery so customers could sit outside. Enhancements include new tables and seating, landscaping, tarmacking to improve accessibility, outside decoration and updated signage.

Owner Kathleen Westwood said:

"I am extremely thankful for the grant. It has improved the appearance of my business, the high street, and the number of patrons I can seat – it is great to be accessible for all."

Some of the other properties that have benefitted from the scheme in Droitwich include Droitwich CVS, Brown and Fincher, Nelly's Yard, Ban Laeng Massage Therapy, Evolve Clothing and Queens Fish and Chip Bar.

Continuing to invest

More than £1 million is set to be invested into skills, business support and improving communities.

The money comes from the latest round of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). We have been given more than £1.2 million as our slice for the next year. Although significantly less than the close to £4 million we received last time, we still have ambitious plans for using the money.



- ▶ **£ 270,000** in business support funding.
- ▶ **£ 250,000** converting the former police station in Pershore into new commercial office accommodation.
- ▶ **£ 185,000** to help businesses identify skills gaps, fund training and boost apprenticeships.
- ▶ **£ 150,000** to support projects that develop strong communities.
- ▶ **£ 150,000** to tackle barriers stopping young people accessing work and education.
- ▶ **£ 120,000** split evenly between the district's three Place Boards to fund schemes supporting our town centres. This is on top of existing funding.
- ▶ **£ 140,000** to back festivals, events and tourism marketing to attract visitors.

We've also re-opened our successful Wychavon Rural Fund, backed by more than £245,000 from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Grants between £2,500 and £25,000 are available to support businesses in rural areas to invest in new equipment, machinery, or buildings. Farmers can also bid for money to help diversify their businesses. Community projects tackling issues and barriers to growth in rural areas may also qualify.

Expressions of interest have already been submitted for round one, with round two opening in July. Projects need to be delivered by January 2026. Full details are available on our website.

UKSPF and the Wychavon Rural Fund previously supported projects including almost £18,800 to help All Things Wild in Honeybourne install a Changing Places toilet and accessible paths.

Church Lench Village Hall committee received more than £7,600 to install a solar panel and battery storage system, to cut the building's carbon footprint and reduce costs.

A grant of £11,900 helped Sporting Club Inkberrow install a second cricket square on the site, to support the expansion of the junior section and boost income.

Learn more: [Visit the Wychavon Rural Fund page](#) for more information and to apply for funding.



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Action cuts carbon

Our Intelligently Green Plan, published in 2020, set us challenging targets to reduce carbon emissions to help tackle climate change. Our latest annual update shows we're on track to meet those pledges.

Here are some highlights:



Target 1

Cut emissions from our own council services by 75% by 2030

These fell 39% in 2023/24 – 1,181 tonnes less than our 2018/19 starting point.

We've done this by using carbon-cutting fuel in our waste collection and park maintenance vehicles, upgrades to the energy efficiency of the Civic Centre and leisure centres, and buying renewable electricity.

The installation of low carbon heating systems and solar panels at our leisure centres, which make up 66% of our carbon emissions, are planned over the coming years to help us meet this target.



Target 2

Lead the district to halve its carbon emissions by 2030

Emissions for 2022 – the latest available – show a 31% reduction since 2005, thanks to progress decarbonising the national electricity grid and renewable energy in homes and businesses.



Target 3

Double the district's low-carbon economy by 2030

Up 51% from 2018/19 and is now worth £381.1 million, employing more than 2,100 people. It is set to grow £447 million over the next five years.



Target 4

Treble the district's renewable electricity generation by 2030

Renewable electricity generation has more than doubled since the 2014 starting point to 200,664 Megawatt-hours.



Target 5

Capture 500 tonnes of carbon emissions by 2025

We have carried out several schemes, including further development of Avon Meadows in Pershore, improvements to Coney Meadow in Droitwich Spa, and planting 13,472 trees through the Trees Call to Action Project with Heart of England Forest. Studies are underway to measure their impact.

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Learn more:
[Visit our Intelligently Green Plan information page.](#)



Path to wellbeing



Work will begin this summer on creating a new wellbeing corridor in Droitwich Spa.

We are working with Droitwich Spa Place Board to upgrade the towpath along the canal from Vines Park to Salwarpe so it is more accessible.

The route will become a wellbeing corridor, providing easier access to various 'green pockets' of nature, with sights and sounds to enjoy. It will also create a walking route between the town centre and one of the area's main tourist attractions, Churchfields Farm.

Work is expected to be completed in the autumn and is part of a multi-million-pound investment we are making in leisure and wellbeing in Droitwich Spa.

It is the second part of a project to improve people's access to nature, following work to the neighbouring Coney Meadow wetland and reed bed.

Working with The Canal & River Trust, the 5.5-hectare site has been transformed so it continues to be a rich haven for wildlife and contributes to carbon capture.



A lack of open water on the site and the threat of shrubs and bushes overgrowing other habitats, threatened to transform the reed beds into wet woodlands, rendering them unsuitable for specialist species.

Ponds have been restored and the site's water-holding capacity improved through diversion and retention of surface water from the nearby canal. Areas of the main reed bed have been cut to enhance open water habitat and water edge environments, as well as promote healthy new reed growth.



The project was funded using Wychavon's share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Funded by
UK Government



Sian Purton
from Wallace
House and
Ashleigh Jayes
from Evesham
Almonry.

Talking benches

Special benches have been installed in Evesham town centre, encouraging people to get talking.

The 'time to chat' benches are part of a national scheme to reduce loneliness and social isolation. They are easy to recognise as they are painted moss green and have a special plaque on them.

Anyone who sits on one of the benches is indicating they are happy to be joined by others for a friendly chat.

Evesham Place Board recommended funding the benches through Wychavon's share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. A grant was given to Evesham Town Council to replace twenty benches across the town centre with longer-lasting, lower-maintenance metal ones. All benches also now have arm rests which are painted in a contrasting colour. This was one of the recommendations from an accessibility audit of the town centre.



Fighting crime

Businesses in Evesham have access to a new crime-fighting tool.

The Disc app provides an easy way for police and businesses to share crime-related information, submit reports of incidents, manage banning schemes and much more.

More than 550 towns and city centres are already successfully using it across the UK.

Evesham Place Board has been working with the Evesham town centre policing team to promote the app to members. We are funding it on a 12 month trial through our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Waitrose's Nathan Wilmott-Miller, Wychavon's Caroline Tredwell, Jack Healey from Boots and Sgt Duncan Eades.

Paying tribute

A memorial bench has been installed in Pershore town centre in tribute to a dedicated community servant who passed away last year.

The Michael Amies BEM Memorial Friendship Bench marks the life of a man who was devoted to raising awareness about the benefits of organ donation across Worcestershire. He was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work in 2017 and given the honour of carrying The Queen's Baton through Pershore in the build-up to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

During his life, Mr Amies was also involved in several other causes in the community, including Number 8, Pershore Market Town Partnership, Friends of Pershore Hospital and the environmental development charity Welcome To Our Future.

Local blacksmith, Steve Cooper, created the bench, which includes nods to Mr Amies' love for

painting plums and blossom trees. A small cat can also be found within the detail of the bench, which was Mr Amies' favourite animal.

The circular bench can be found on the corner of Broad Street and High Street. It is one of seven installed by Pershore Place Board, in partnership with Pershore Town Council, as part of their ongoing town centre enhancement programme. The project is funded by us through our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Darren Eden, from Pershore Place Board and Georgie Bailey, Wychavon's Pershore Place Projects Officer.

Light up

A new lighting scheme will brighten up Pershore High Street, as part of efforts to improve the look and feel of the town centre.

As we went to print, the overhead chain of LED festoon lights were being installed. They start at The Angel and zig zag across various buildings before ending at The New Inn – double the length of the previous scheme.

As an added bonus, the lights also change colour with various options available meaning they can be switched to support the town's festivals, such as purple for the Plum Festival in August.

They will go on at dusk during the summer and from 3pm in the winter. They will switch off at 10pm.

The project forms part of efforts to enhance the town centre and support the nighttime economy. It has been delivered by Pershore Place Board in partnership with Pershore Town Council and funded by us, through our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Market success

Broad Street Market in Pershore is going from strength to strength as it prepares to celebrate its first anniversary next month.

Pershore Place Board launched the market last June, using funding from our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and it has proved a hit with visitors and residents alike.

Featuring 30 stalls, it champions the best of local produce, with all traders required to produce their goods within ten miles of the town.

The market is not-for-profit, with all surplus funds going to Pershore Events and Festivals Association to support new and existing events on Pershore's social calendar.

The market takes place on the first Saturday of every month between March and November.

Residents' survey

The results

More than 1,400 of you took part in our 2024 residents' survey. Thank you to everyone who took the time to have your say.

Your views have been used to inform our work with partners, such as health services and the police, as well as the running of our day-to-day services.

Here are some highlights from the survey. Comparisons to 2023 are shown in brackets:

- ▶ **82%** of you were satisfied or fairly satisfied with your local area (up from 79%)
- ▶ **79%** of you felt you belonged to your local area (up from 72%)
- ▶ **71%** of you felt your area was a place people from different backgrounds got along (no change)
- ▶ **48%** of you felt people in your area pulled together to get things done (down from 50%)
- ▶ **55%** of you felt we provide value for money (up from 51%)
- ▶ **72%** of you were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with how we run things (up from 64%)
- ▶ **75%** of you thought we keep you well informed about our work (up from 69%)
- ▶ **64%** of you thought we acted on your concerns (up from 61%)
- ▶ **43%** of you felt you could influence our decisions (up from 36%)



The services you were most satisfied with:



93% Waste and recycling



91% Parks and open spaces



88% Wychavon run sports and leisure facilities



75% Community safety and Street cleaning

Get the full results:
[Visit our consultation information page.](#)

**Your
opinion
matters**

Register for this year's residents' survey

Look out for this year's residents' survey in September. If you would like to take part, [sign up for our consultation list](#). We will email the link directly to your inbox when the survey opens.



Who's taking your waste out?



Do you know who's got your waste?

That's the question we're asking as part of a new campaign urging residents to help us tackle fly-tipping.

The majority of fly-tips across our district are household clearances or garden waste. Our information suggests the culprits are mainly unlicensed rogue traders who go door-knocking, offering cheap cash-in-hand deals. The customer assumes they will dispose of their waste responsibly. In reality, they are dumping it in a country lane near you.

Our Environmental Crime team works all year round to tackle fly-tipping using various methods to try and catch criminals in action and clamp down on unlicensed waste carriers. Last year we investigated 1,275 fly-tips and took 56 enforcement actions, including five Fixed Penalty Notices.

But we need your help to protect our beautiful district. That's why our new campaign, set to launch this summer, will focus on the simple things residents can do to make sure their waste is disposed of properly.

We're also creating a database of local waste carriers, which we will have verified as having all the necessary paperwork. This will make it easier for you to choose a responsible person to dispose of your waste.

How you can help us tackle fly-tipping

The best way you can help is to follow the S.C.R.A.P code:

S

Suspect: Be wary of uninvited offers to take away your rubbish.

C

Check: They have a waste carrier's licence, then verify them by searching the Environment Agency website or by calling 03708 506 506. Note down the registration number of the vehicle used to take your waste away.

R

Refuse: Don't accept unexpected offers to remove your waste or from unverified waste carriers.

A

Ask: Questions about what will happen to your waste and seek evidence of proper disposal.

P

Paperwork: Always obtain a receipt and a waste transfer note when someone disposes of waste for you. You could be prosecuted if you don't, and they illegally dump it. A reputable trader should have no problem providing these.

Learn more:
[Visit our fly-tipping information page.](#)

Street art



We're turning streets, buildings, and underpasses in Droitwich Spa into art.

Community feedback has helped develop the designs, which are then created by professional street artists. They build on our popular Droitwich Spa Underpass Art Project.

Some have already been completed with another at Emms Haberdashery due to be installed this summer. We're working with Droitwich Spa Place Board on the project, with funding coming from our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Droitwich Loves Books

Chawson Pleck Underpass

Artist: Andrew 'Title' Mills

This piece includes interpretations of well-loved characters from children's fiction enjoying landmarks in and around Droitwich Spa. Look out for The Cat in the Hat, Horrid Henry, The Mr Men and Harry Potter taking a dip at the Lido and bell boating on the canal. Children from Chawson First School helped inspire the design.



Positive-Safe-Future

Camp Furlong Underpass

Artist: Melanie JS aka 7th Pencil

This piece was developed with Witton Middle School students who wanted to make people feel safer using the underpass with bright images, positive messages and a sense of pride in their town. The end panels showcase a selection of the students' own designs.



For the Love of Droitwich Spa

The Talbot

Artist: WeTheSeeds

Created with the community, embodying their collective love for the place they call home, the work showcases the town's iconic landmarks. It recognises the importance of Droitwich Spa's heritage. Look closely to spot the salt and Roman artefacts.



Rik Mayall's Comedy Emporium

High Street

Artist: Milan Topovic

This artwork is a tribute to one of Droitwich Spa's most famous sons, comedian Rik Mayall. It includes nods to the iconic characters Mayall played during his career. The design also includes his face on a King of Hearts playing card, representing his fans' view of him as the King of Comedy. It was installed to celebrate the first Rik Mayall Comedy Festival, taking place from 31 May to 7 June.



Vivid Memories: Reflections from Our Community

Union Lane

Artist: WeTheSeeds

This beautiful installation captures the stories of the people of Droitwich Spa. It is an eye-catching welcome for visitors arriving by train. Cherished memories include dancing at the winter gardens, a trip on the Pamela May and prom photos in Lido Park.



Garden is *blooming*

Under-used allotments in Rous Lench are now blooming as a vibrant community garden with help from us.

Villagers have reimagined the site as a connection, play and community events space.

A natural play area and a slide have been installed, while mounds provide adventure. A pond has also been added to boost biodiversity.

An existing cider orchard has been enhanced, with local pear and plum tree varieties planted. The allotments have been split into smaller plots and are now fully let, while new communal accessible raised growing beds have been installed. A clubhouse shed, seating, compost toilet, blue water pump and car park complete the site.

Rous Lench and Radford Parish Council put the project forward in 2022, after identifying a lack of space for young people to play safely and to socialise outdoors.

We backed the proposal with £50,000 from our Community Legacy Grant scheme, with the garden officially opening in May last year.

Another £25,000 from our share of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, £7,000 from Worcestershire County Council's Public Health team and generous support from the parish council and local businesses, has recently been invested to support the next stage of the project.

Villagers have formed the Rous Lench and Radford Community Garden charity to manage and maintain the site in the future.



Laura Bradley,
Trustee of Rous
Lench Community
Garden, Wychavon's
Ben Price and Cllr
Rob Adams.

Villagers get *smart*

Residents in Defford and Besford have joined Wychavon's SmartWater army.

More than 200 households signed up for the scheme. Each was given a kit to mark items with SmartWater – a colourless liquid that leaves a unique code almost impossible to remove. It can only be viewed under ultraviolet light.



Wychavon's Faye Allen-Carter, Nick Hall, We Don't Buy Crime Co-ordinator, Cllr Sue Rees and Cllr Peter Hale from Defford and Besford Parish Council.



Marked items are registered with a national database. If stolen, the rightful owner can easily be identified. SmartWater-marking deters criminals as it makes it more likely they will be caught and convicted.

Packs were funded by Defford and Besford Parish Council and West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, John Campion. Our Community Safety team supported promotion of the scheme.

Other areas interested in becoming a SmartWater village should email communitysafety@wychavon.gov.uk for advice on the process.

Garden transformation

St Andrews Gardens in Pershore has been transformed into a biodiversity, wellbeing and community engagement space.

What was once an informal green space and a closed churchyard is now a high-quality, ornamental and sensory-rich environment.

The new-look gardens are set to be officially opened in June and include a bespoke sensory garden, accessible pathways, raised planters and plenty of seating for people to relax in.

Plants have been specially chosen to provide an interactive experience through colour, scent, texture and even taste. The garden has also been designed to have a different theme each season while boosting biodiversity.

Healthcare professionals at Abbottswood Medical Centre will use the gardens for outdoor social prescribing to boost mental and physical wellbeing. Pershore College will also run gardening courses in the gardens.

Interpretation boards also be installed to celebrate the site's history as a closed graveyard. Existing memorials and headstones will still be maintained.

The space will remain open to the public throughout the year. It can also be used for community events and educational opportunities.

The project is led by Pershore Place Board in partnership with Pershore Town Council, us, Pershore College, the Diocese of Worcester, Abbottswood Medical Centre and other local partners.

It is part of the board's vision to make Pershore 'a destination for all'

Wychavon's Georgie Bailey, Charlie MacIntyre from Pershore Town Council and Darren Eden from Pershore Place Board.



SCAN
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Learn more:
Visit our town centre information page to find out more about the work of place boards in Droitwich Spa, Evesham, and Pershore.

Park *news*



Water play *design*

This is what the
new water play in
Droitwich Spa's Lido
Park will look like!

Work started during May
and will be completed by
the start of August.

Titled 'Saltwich Splash'

The design has plenty of
 nods to the town's heritage
and wildlife. New and
exciting features include
water sprays and arches,
a tipper bucket, an area of
boulders and a water run
with different levels to fire
children's imagination.

We've also added plenty of
seating and ensured the
design is mostly accessible
so everyone can enjoy the
fun!

The £550,000 project will
see the water play moved

from its current location
by the Lido, to the space
next to the tennis courts.
This will allow the Lido
to be extended as part of
our multi-million-pound
investment in leisure and
wellbeing in Droitwich Spa.

It is the final one of
Wychavon's water plays to
be upgraded, following the
opening of new water plays
in Pershore last year and
Evesham in 2023. The old
water plays were outdated
and increasingly expensive
to maintain.



Security *upgrade*

Extra security measures are being installed across our parks and open spaces to help deter unauthorised encampments.

Several locations have been identified as highly vulnerable, including areas already targeted in recent years.

We're looking at various options, such as installing bollards, rails (like the one pictured above in Pershore's Abbey Park), lock shrouding, and overhead barriers. Solutions will be designed to protect the look and feel of the spaces. Councillors have agreed a £250,000 fund to carry out any work necessary.

We've decided to act because of the increase in unauthorised encampments each year. As well as causing disruption and alarm to local communities, the cost of securing court orders and bailiffs to deal with unauthorised encampments is expensive.

Clearing up after an unauthorised encampment and the nature of the waste left behind, which often includes human excrement, is costly and challenging to deal with.

Where necessary, consultation will take place with local residents on the proposed security measures. Work will be phased over the next two years, with sites considered most vulnerable being prioritised.

Herbicide *controls*

We're limiting the use of herbicides in our parks and open spaces to support pollinators and other wildlife.

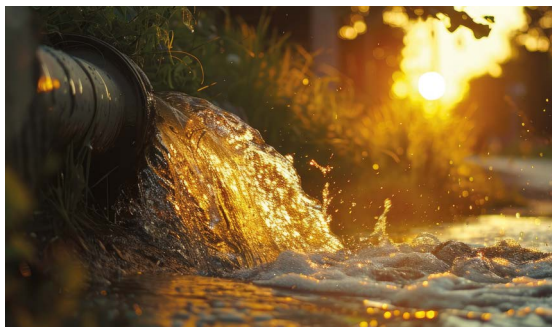
For the last 12 months, we have been trialling removing weeds by hand or with tools, but this has caused damage to tarmac and hard surfaces. Stubborn weeds and weeds in hard-to-reach areas also proved challenging to deal with. This meant the appearance of parts of some of our parks and open spaces was not up to our usual high standard.

As the trial was partly successful, we've agreed to continue restricting herbicide use. Herbicides will only be allowed on hard surfaces and on persistent weeds in planted areas, but only with sign-off from a senior member of our parks team.

The move is still expected to cut the amount of herbicide previously used in our parks. Money saved from not continuing with the trial will be reinvested back into biodiversity projects. We'll continue to explore opportunities to cut our herbicide use further.

Herbicides and pesticides are still used to control weeds on hard surfaces in urban areas, like town centres and residential roads.





Improving **rivers**

Many of you are concerned about untreated sewage discharges into our rivers via storm overflows. While these are allowed during heavy rainfall to prevent overloading the system, concerns exist about their use during dry periods. This has prompted regulator Ofwat to investigate all 11 water companies in England and Wales. Awareness of the harmful environmental impact on river quality and wildlife, even during necessary spills, is also growing.

Our Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which investigates specific areas of concern, recently questioned Severn Trent about their efforts to enhance local river quality.

What is Severn Trent doing to improve river quality?

The company plans to invest £1.1 billion by 2030 to cut storm overflow spills by increasing sewage treatment and storage. By autumn this year, more than 2,100 network enhancements will be complete, aiming to reduce average spills to 18 a year by the end of 2025, with a target of 10 by 2030.

Severn Trent isn't just responsible for deteriorating water quality, housing developments, industry and farms are also contributing. That's why the company has also pledged to help others reduce their impact on water quality through their Get Rivers Positive scheme.

We also require sustainable drainage solutions in new developments through the planning process.

What investment have they made in Wychavon?

Investment is planned at 20 sites in Wychavon over the next three years.

Last year, Lower Moor Treatment Works received a £3 million upgrade to increase capacity. This included installing four Submerged Aerated Filter (SAF) units that filter and increase the oxygen content of the water, improving its quality before it is returned to local waterways and allowing for better management during heavy rainfall.

How can I check where and when storm overflows happen near me?

Severn Trent's Storm Overflow Map provides spill location, frequency and duration data. Visit [View the Severn Trent Water storm overflow map](#).

Get involved

[Visit the Get River Positive page](#) for more information.

Avonvale River Action Group regularly monitors water quality on the River Avon.

[Visit the Avonvale River Action Group website](#) to learn more about their work. We're also funding water sampling kits for volunteers through parish and town councils.

The Environment Agency is responsible for setting, monitoring and enforcing water quality standards. Pollution incidents can be reported on 0800 80 70 60.

How can I help?

Simple actions support work to prevent storm overflow spills and protect our homes from costly blockages and flooding.

- ✓ Flush only the 3Ps: pee, poo, toilet paper. Bin other items like wet wipes and sanitary towels
- ✓ Scrape leftover food into the bin before washing up
- ✓ Use a sink strainer for food scraps
- ✓ Use kitchen roll to wipe grease and cooking oil from pans before washing

Reducing wastewater use during dry spells also helps create capacity at treatment plants to prepare them for wet weather.

These tips could also save you money on your water bill:

- ✓ Fill your dishwasher and use the eco-setting if possible
- ✓ Use a separate washing-up bowl for rinsing rather than washing suds off under a flowing tap
- ✓ Use a fully loaded washing machine (but don't overload it!) and use the eco-setting if available
- ✓ Have a shower instead of a bath
- ✓ Switch the tap off when cleaning your teeth
- ✓ Use the small flush button on a dual flush toilet or, for older toilets, a water displacement device like hippo bags
- ✓ Use a water butt for your garden
- ✓ Swap the hose for a watering can
- ✓ Cover the paddling pool to keep insects off so it will last for a few days. Use the leftover water on your plants
- ✓ Don't water your lawn if it goes brown during warmer months. It will soon spring back after a bit of rain

Watch the meeting

Scan the QR code to watch our councillors question Severn Trent.



SCAN
HERE

Tree-mendous success

We're celebrating the end of a unique collaboration that saw more than 13,000 trees planted across our district.

In 2022, we joined with Heart of England Forest, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, and Warwick District Council to run the Trees Call to Action Project, backed by a £499,446 grant from the Government and Forestry Commission.

Woodland packs, including hazel, oak, silver birch and rowan trees, and hedgerow packs including crab apple, hazel and wayfaring trees, have been planted in community parks, shared spaces and greens across the three areas.

In Wychavon, the focus was on working with landowners and community groups to restore, expand and improve the health of the district's orchards.

Some 344 fruit trees made up of 37 different varieties of apples, pears, and soft fruit were handed out, along

with 13,742 other trees and hedgerow packs. A particular success was reintroducing the Martin Nonpareil apple back to the village of Martin Hussingtree, where it was first discovered in 1795.

Volunteers were also trained to help manage and protect our orchards for future generations.

The project finished at the end of March, but tree planting and biodiversity-boosting habitat creation will continue in our district as part of our We Are Wychavon Plan. Another £30,000 has been committed to such projects in our budget for 2025/26.

Communities, landowners and farmers can still get help with tree planting at [the Trees Call to Action Project page on the Heart of England website.](#)



Wychavon's Liz Etheridge and Emma Pestridge, from the Trees Call to Action Project.

So why fruit trees?

Our orchards are powerful tools in the fight against climate change. Not only do they capture and store carbon like other trees, but they are also great for biodiversity. Their fruit provides a food source for wildlife. At the same time, they flower more often and richly than other trees, attracting bees, birds and other pollinators, which are essential for our ecosystem.

Fruit trees are less likely to be cut down for wood, meaning the carbon within them stays locked away for longer. Their leaves, fallen fruit and roots also contribute to nutrient-rich soil, which benefits surrounding plants and microorganisms.

All trees are great,
but fruit trees are just awesome!

Learn more:
[Find different local fruit tree varieties and where you can buy them](#)



VAPING CONCERNS

We've launched a campaign in schools to help raise awareness of the dangers of vaping among young people.

It follows an appeal for us to do something by students from The De Montfort High School in Evesham as part of one of our Local Democracy Days.

Although vaping can be a useful tool to help adults quit smoking, its use amongst young people who have never smoked is growing. We have even had feedback from our schools about pupils younger than ten vaping!

This is a concern as, while we know vaping is less harmful than smoking, we still don't know what the long-term effects of vaping are. However, we do understand the impact of nicotine, particularly on developing young minds and bodies. It's for that reason alone we should be doing all we can to raise awareness of the potential risks of vaping among our young people.

Our eye-catching campaign was developed with feedback from pupils at Droitwich Spa High School and focuses on three themes:

- **Challenging the idea most young people vape**
Although youth vaping is growing, only 9% of 11 to 15-year-olds vape regularly according to an NHS England study.
- **The risk of the unknown**
We don't know the long-term health impact of vaping yet, so why gamble with your health? If you don't smoke, then don't vape.
- **The known harms**
We know nicotine addiction can increase stress and anxiety while reducing concentration. A UK standard disposable vape delivers a similar amount of nicotine as 20 cigarettes.

The campaign includes posters for schools with links to more information and support. Advertising has also taken place on social media, buses and digital radio.

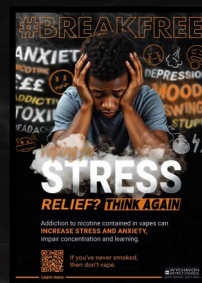
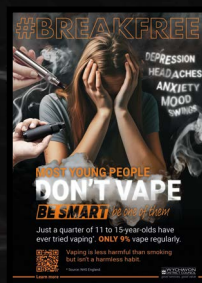
Trading Standards officers are also carrying out investigations on businesses linked to the sale of vapes to young people underage. Formal action was recently taken against two stores in Droitwich Spa for selling vapes to 17-year-olds without checking for ID. From 1 June, it will become illegal to sell disposable vapes to anyone in the UK.



You can download the posters and find other useful links at [Wychavon's vaping information page.](#)



Learn more

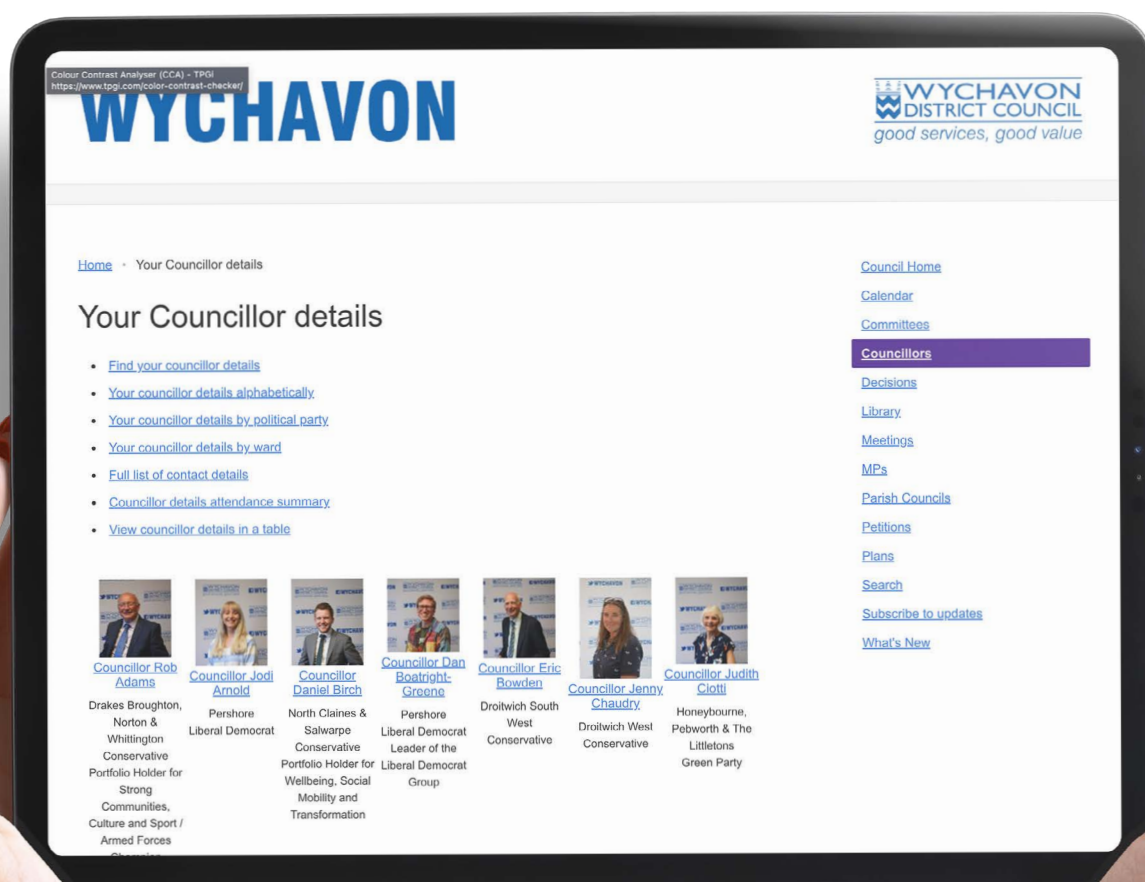


WYCHAVON

Councillors

2023-2027

For more information on your local councillors visit our [councillor details page \(opens in new window\)](#)



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