

WYCHAVON

News, stories and services for residents

Autumn 2023

Take our
survey and
you could
**WIN
£100**

**Housing
support and
advice**

**Free energy
efficiency grants**

Marking
50 years
of Wychavon

**Christmas bin
collection dates**
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 **WYCHAVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
good services, good value

Welcome to the latest edition of your WYCHAVON magazine. It's a little earlier than usual as we have moved the publication dates to autumn and spring, instead of summer and winter, so we can keep you better informed.



We know rising living costs are still a challenge and that's why in this edition you will find useful contacts you can go to for help, free support to improve the energy efficiency of your home and advice on how to deal with rising rent and mortgage payments.

I also encourage you to take part in this year's residents' survey. Your feedback is more important than ever as we decide on a new four-year plan and priorities for the council. You can find details within this magazine about how to take part. Please don't miss the opportunity to make your voice heard.

You will also be able to read the views of some of our new councillors who were elected in May. On behalf of all councillors here at Wychavon, I want you to know it's a privilege to be able to serve you as your elected representatives. All of us will continue to work hard on your behalf to make our district an even better place to live, work and visit.

Cllr Bradley Thomas Leader of Wychavon District Council

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Villagers get 'smart' to deter criminals



Villagers in Peopleton have become the latest Wychavon residents to join a crime fighting scheme aimed at deterring thieves and burglars.

We have been working with the local parish council and West Mercia Police since March, to turn Peopleton into a SmartWater Village to deter criminals from targeting the area.

So far 157 households have signed up - more than the 70% of households needed to achieve the status.

SmartWater is a colourless liquid solution that can be applied to the surfaces of belongings and valuables. It leaves a unique code which is almost impossible to remove and can only be viewed under ultraviolet light.

Each household has been given a kit containing enough liquid to mark up to 75 items.

Marked items are then registered with a national database so if they are stolen, the rightful owner can easily be identified and the property returned. SmartWater deters criminals as they know stealing SmartWater marked property makes it more likely they will be caught and convicted.

Signs have been installed around Peopleton to warn criminals it is a SmartWater village and households have been given window stickers as well.

The packs were funded by local charity Peopleton Parish Lands and West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion. Our community safety team has been supporting the parish council to knock on doors and promote the scheme to residents.

It is part of West Mercia Police's 'We don't buy crime' initiative which is aimed at deterring acquisitive crime, which includes burglary, theft, robbery and shoplifting.

Crothorne was the first area in Wychavon to become a SmartWater village, achieving the status in 2015. Since then 27 other villages have also signed up to the scheme.

Other parishes or villages interested in becoming SmartWater villages should email communitysafety@wychavon.gov.uk for advice on the process.

Free energy efficiency support

Residents living in low-income households not on the main gas network can now get help upgrading the energy efficiency of their home.



Wychavon and Worcestershire County Council have successfully bid for more than £2.8 million from the second round of the Government's Home Upgrade Grant. The money can be used to fund work such as improving home insulation or installing air source heat pumps.

People on low incomes who own their own home and meet the qualifying criteria can get work carried out for free. Those who rent can ask their landlord to apply. Landlords must pay 50% of the cost if they are a social landlord and a third of the cost if they are a private landlord.

To qualify for the funding, you must meet the following criteria:

- **live on a joint household income of less than £31,000**
- **live in a property off the gas grid (such as a home heated by oil, LPG, electric etc)**
- **live in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate rating between D and G**

It is estimated 196 homes in Wychavon could be upgraded as part of the project.

We have already invested almost £3.8 million in improving the energy efficiency of homes across the district.

As part of the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, £3 million was spent upgrading more than 170 homes with energy efficient solar and solar thermal panels,

external wall insulation and loft insulation.

The project was a joint bid with Rooftop Housing Group, Trent and Dove Housing Group, Citizen Housing Group and Trident Group. Work was targeted at low-income households in fuel poverty and is estimated to have saved households up to £450 a year on their fuel bills.

Another £791,986 was spent installing solar panels, solar thermals and draught proofing 148 homes as part of the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. Social housing providers supported the project with another £368,547 of funding.

To apply for the new Home Upgrade Grant funding, or for more information on available energy efficiency schemes, visit www.wychavon.gov.uk/energy-efficiency.

Get help with your energy bills



If you need help with your energy bills or would like advice on improving the energy efficiency of your home, including help with funding work, then please call our energy advice partner Act on Energy for free on

0800 988 2881 or visit www.actonenergy.org.uk



A chance to
WIN £100
with our
residents' survey



Have you had your say yet?

Take our residents' survey and tell us what you think about:

- ✓ **Local services**
- ✓ **Your local area**
- ✓ **How we're performing**
- ✓ **What our priorities should be**

But hurry, the survey closes on **Sunday, 15 October 2023.**

► *Don't miss the chance to influence our work.*

Take the survey now at
www.wychavon.gov.uk/residents-survey
or scan the QR code.



Why we're backing *our town centres*

Last year we launched Town Centre Investment Prospectuses – ambitious visions for the future of Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore. Place Boards have been created in each area to support making these visions a reality.

Place Boards are made up of a mix of people with passion for our town centres. They include representatives from businesses, the community and local councillors. We are backing them with almost £1 million of funding from our share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Here we talk to the chair of each Place Board to find out more about their hopes and plans for the future.



Matt Nicol
Chair of Droitwich Spa
Place Board



Listening to the needs of residents and businesses is a key priority for recently appointed Droitwich Spa Place Board Chair Matt Nicol.

Matt has been part of the town's community for more than 25 years and as owner of Nicol & Co estate agents, he spends a lot of time listening to people moving in or around the area.

And that Matt believes, has given him a good understanding of where the challenges and opportunities lie for the future of Droitwich Spa.

"I spend a lot of time listening to people who are moving here so I know what people are looking for. Similarly as a resident of many years, I understand what their needs and aspirations for the town are too," he said.

"One of the reasons I was keen to join the Place Board is because I was impressed by the positive conversations going on and the passion and desire for the town from those already involved. I believe I can add some value to that."

One of the major projects on the board's list is exploring the opportunities to further develop and enhance Droitwich Lido. A feasibility



study is looking at the options including using the currently disused Art Deco building.

Physical improvements to the town centre are also in the pipeline including improved lighting and a shop front enhancement scheme has been launched. There is also an ambition to create a new 'health corridor' linking Churchfields Farm, a visitor attraction in its own right, to the town.

"Droitwich already has a great reputation and there are lots of reasons for people to want to come here. It's easy to get to off the motorway, we have the Lido, some great events, beautiful parks, the canal and some unique businesses you don't get elsewhere," Matt said.



"There are lots of opportunities ahead and things we can do to bring about positive change, so I'm optimistic for the future."



Tom Tarver
Chair of Evesham
Place Board



Property consultant Tom Tarver has lived in Worcestershire all his life and has worked in the town for over 20 years. He got involved with the Place Board as he is passionate about Evesham and believes it has a bright future.

"We have this exciting vision for the town now, partnered with the enthusiasm, experience and dedication of people here to deliver it, and matched by investment as well," he said.

"There are so many positives we have here in Evesham we can build on and make more of. We have a beautiful riverside setting that we've been guilty in the past of turning our back on to some extent. Our history is a real asset, and the success of the Battle of Evesham Festival has shown what is possible when we embrace our heritage.

"We can't turn back the tide, we have to accept things have changed and focus on what we have here in Evesham and how we tell our story and challenge perceptions about the place."

The board has already had some early successes. A decorative mural

featuring two traditional shopfronts from Evesham's past has brightened up disused units on the high street (see picture above). A What's on 2023 events flyer with more than 50 events in Evesham and the Vale has been distributed to more than 22,000 homes in the area and a shop improvement scheme has just been launched.

The group has also funded an accessibility audit, which will look to make improvements to the town centre's appearance to benefit people of all abilities.

Work is also underway on creating a new visual identity for Evesham, which will support changes to the way it is promoted. An ambassador programme is planned to involve the community in championing the town.



"The prospectus isn't a plan of what will happen over the next 20 to 30 years but a vision to inspire people. Part of our role is to keep some momentum going and share our enthusiasm with people who can influence it and invest in the area."



Darren Eden Chair of Pershore Place Board



Evolution and not revolution is the focus for Pershore Place Board Chair Darren Eden who has lived in and around the town all his life.

With 20 years of business in the town under his belt, the former paramedic turned entrepreneur is clear about what the board's number one priority is.

"Our purpose is to support and develop the local economy," he said.

"Everything we do needs to be focused on making the town centre more appealing for residents and visitors, to attract more footfall and support those businesses within it."

A key project is the creation of a marina on the River Avon at Pershore to tap into some of the river traffic that is currently being snapped up by other towns. An economic feasibility study is currently being carried out to explore the idea.

"It's basically a stopping off point on the river. Worcester, Evesham, Upton, Tewkesbury, and Stratford all have them and it's something we're really missing out on in Pershore," Darren added.

Boosting tourism is another priority and working with Pershore Town Council, the board has already provided funding to open the Tourist Information Centre on Saturdays. The creation of a regularly updated Visit

Pershore events calendar and guide, and a Visit Pershore social media presence are also in the pipeline.

A Georgian Fayre is planned in the run up to Christmas while the board is paying to enhance the existing Christmas lights display so it covers the full length of the high street.

Conservation approved wall brackets have also been installed throughout the town centre, which will provide an opportunity to decorate the town with various flags at appropriate times of the year.

A longer-term ambition is to work with the different levels of local government to improve the physical appearance of the town centre.

"We're starting from a good place to begin with in Pershore," Darren said.



"Through the Place Board we can make some small changes that are going to have an immediate impact towards encouraging townspeople and visitors to use the businesses and services, while also looking at key projects that can complement what Pershore already has."

"It's definitely a case of evolution and not revolution."



Find out more about the work of the three Place Boards by visiting www.wychavon.gov.uk/town-centres.

Covers to help cut emissions

Making a splash in Wychavon's swimming pools is now more environmentally friendly thanks to the installation of new pool covers.

Covers have already been installed to the swimming pools at Evesham and Pershore Leisure Centres and Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre will have a pool cover installed soon.

The covers are placed over the pool each evening after the last swimming session, trapping in the heat and preventing water evaporation.

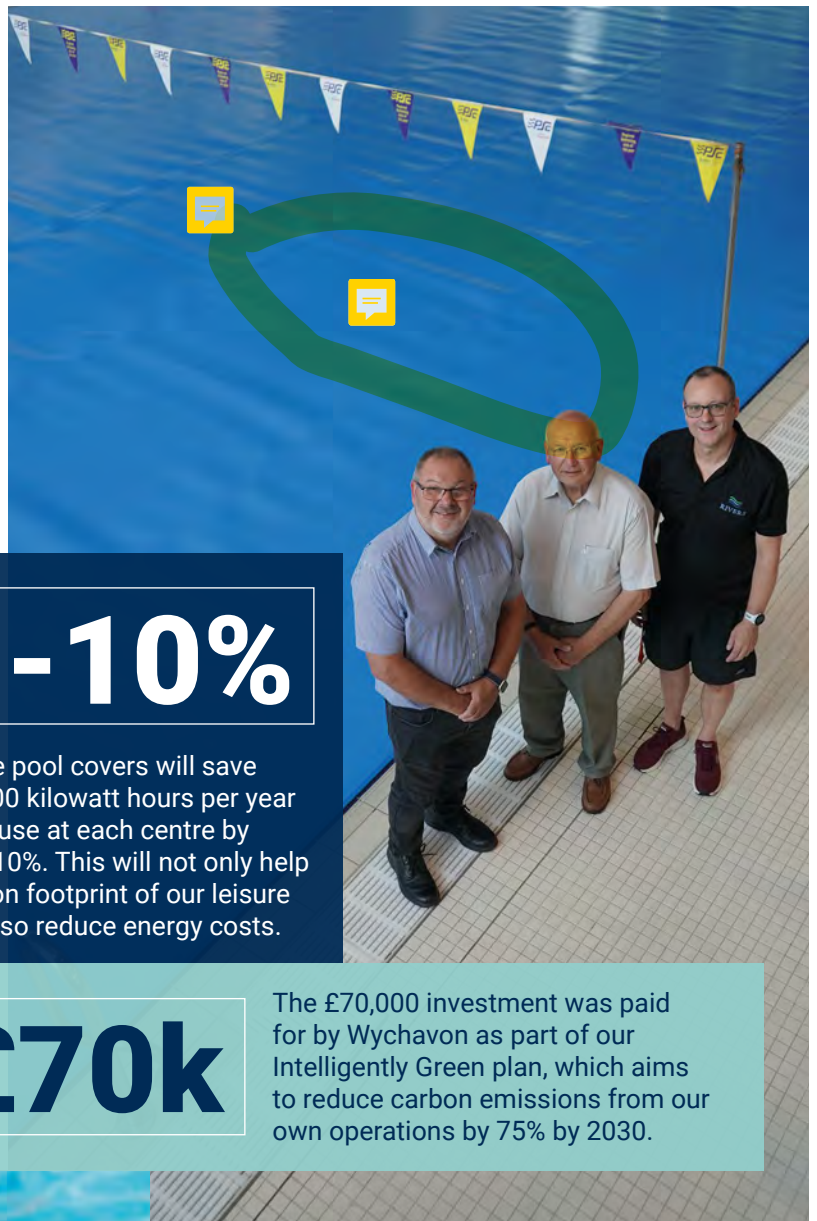
Fitting pool covers will result in less heat loss and will also protect the fabric, fixtures and fittings within the swimming pool hall.

 **5-10%**

It is estimated the pool covers will save 120,000 to 150,000 kilowatt hours per year and cut total gas use at each centre by between 5% and 10%. This will not only help to slash the carbon footprint of our leisure centres but will also reduce energy costs.

 **£70k**

The £70,000 investment was paid for by Wychavon as part of our Intelligently Green plan, which aims to reduce carbon emissions from our own operations by 75% by 2030.



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£1.3 million for new sports facilities

We are investing another £1.3 million into improving sporting facilities across Wychavon.

Work is underway on a £900,000 scheme to transform sporting facilities at Pershore High School.

The project will create a new floodlit sand dressed artificial pitch at the Station Road school, which will be used for hockey and football training. One of the benefits of the project is it will allow Pershore Hockey Club to play in their hometown for the first time in decades.

The old 3G football pitch, which was about 20 years old, has been resurfaced and the floodlights upgraded to energy efficient LEDs. Work was completed on the 3G pitch at the end of August, while the sand dressed pitch should be ready by the autumn.

As well as providing modern state-of-the-art facilities for pupils, they will be available to the community to hire outside of school hours.

In Evesham we are spending £300,000 on creating a new 3G artificial pitch at Prince Henry's High School. We are providing half of the funding towards the £600,000 project, with the other half coming from a grant from the Football Foundation.

A smaller 3G pitch is also planned at the home of Inkberrow Football Club, although it will be for the benefit of the whole community. The total cost of the work is £750,000 with Wychavon providing £100,000, £50,000 coming from Inkberrow Football Club and the remaining £600,000 from a Football Foundation grant.

Both projects are waiting for planning permission.

It takes our total investment in new sporting facilities over the last two years to almost £8 million following the opening of the new 3G pitch and pavilion upgrade at Droitwich Spa, new 3G pitch and pavilion in Evesham and Evesham VeloPark



The new facilities were identified as needed in Wychavon's Playing Pitch and Open Spaces Strategy because of a lack of outdoor sports pitches.

They form part of our commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of residents and access to sport and leisure opportunities.

New scheme *recognises food safety standards*

Businesses that consistently maintain high food standards are being recognised as part of a new scheme.

The Triple 5 scheme celebrates eateries that gain the top level five Food Hygiene Rating and maintain it for at least three inspections – a cycle which takes about six years to complete.

Restaurants, cafés, takeaways and catering vans that achieve Triple 5 status will be sent a letter from Worcestershire Regulatory Services, which carries out food hygiene inspections for Wychavon, which they can display to customers.

If a business fails to maintain a five star rating at future inspections, they will lose Triple 5 status.

More than 70 businesses across Wychavon have already been recognised by the scheme. More will be added as inspections take place.



5-star service - Lisa Bonsall and Lisa James from The Deli@Pershore, celebrate achieving Triple 5 status.

The National Food Hygiene Rating scheme allows customers to choose where they eat out or grab food on the go with confidence. It rates food businesses from zero to five, with level five businesses deemed to be going above and beyond the required legal food safety standards.

You can find out the rating of a food business by visiting the Food Standards Agency website at www.food.gov.uk/ratings.



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Help with housing costs

What to do and where to go for help if you are struggling to afford your mortgage or rental costs.



If your fixed rate deal is coming to an end

Start talking to your lender about six months before your fixed rate deal is due to end. You can also use an independent mortgage advisor who can search the market to help you get the best deal. There is a link to a mortgage calculator on our website which can help you work out what your new monthly repayment is likely to be when your deal ends to help you understand the impact on your finances and budget.



If you are struggling to afford your mortgage repayment

Talk to your lender as soon as possible. Lenders have agreed with the Government they will offer help and guidance to anyone worried about their mortgage repayments without it affecting their credit file.

Options available to you include extending the term of your mortgage to reduce your payments, switching to interest only payments and other options such as a temporary payment deferral or part-interest payment.

If you are up to date with your payments, you can take any of these options without a new affordability check or affecting your credit score.

If you have already missed a payment, then contact your lender as soon as possible to access the support they can offer.



If you are struggling to pay your rent

Talk to your landlord or housing association. Explain to them why you need extra time to pay your rent and what you are doing to address the problem.

Make a budget to identify where you can cut back on spending so you can prioritise paying your rent and other essential bills first. If you are struggling with debt or it's becoming a long-term problem, then get advice.



» If you need more help

The organisations below can offer free help dealing with debt and managing your money:

Citizens Advice South Worcestershire

☎ 0808 278 7891

🌐 www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Money Helper

(government supported service):

☎ 0800 138 1677

🌐 www.moneyhelper.org.uk

National debtline

☎ 0808 808 4000

🌐 www.nationaldebtline.org

Meet our new councillors ←

In May voters elected **43 councillors** to Wychavon, **16 for the first time**.

We caught up with some of our new councillors to find out what motivated them to become a councillor and how they were feeling a few months into the role.



Councillor
Ben Hurdman,
Inkberrow
Ward



Conservative

Why did you want to be a councillor?

I have grown up and lived in this community most of my life and care about the area. When I found out our two superb district councillors were retiring I thought now is the time to try and make a difference.

You're a few months into the role now, what are your first impressions of life as a councillor?

I had very little experience of council business before I was elected so it's been a real eye-opener and really interesting. Everyone is so welcoming and friendly. Meeting the parish councils has been a highlight.

What do you hope to achieve during your time on the council?

If I can help make people's lives a little better during my time on the council then it will be mission accomplished. I am keen to preserve and enhance our local area for the people that live here and for generations to come.



Councillor
Jodi Arnold,
Persore
Ward



Liberal Democrat

Why did you want to be a councillor?

I actually had no idea I wanted to be a councillor. There are basic standards I believe every community should have and I used to contact the council all the time to get things done. So, it was suggested to me that the work I was already doing made me perfect to run for the district council.

You're a few months into the role now, what are your first impressions of life as a councillor?

The sheer amount of work involved in being a district councillor has been a shock but I am finding it incredibly fulfilling, as well as frustrating at times because of the realisation we are limited in some areas with how much influence we have over decisions being made on behalf of our residents. Although, I hope the tide is turning on this and going forward Wychavon district councillors become more collaborative.

What do you hope to achieve during your time on the council?

My biggest aim is to represent my fellow residents, be their voice and be a force for positive change going forward when decisions and improvements are being made and discussed.

Also, as a working mum with a son at the local high school, I hope to show that even with time constraints, anyone who cares for their local community should put themselves forward to stand as a councillor.



Councillor
Judith Ciotti,
Honeybourne,
Pebworth and The
Littletons Ward



Green Party

Why did you want to be a councillor?

As a resident I have always taken an active interest in planning issues, the design code and public footpaths via the excellent Wychavon website, so when I was asked to stand I agreed and to my surprise I was elected.

You're a few months into the role now, what are your first impressions of life as a councillor?

It's busy and a bit overwhelming at first but the staff are very helpful and I am lucky to have the support of the other Green councillor in my ward. We have five rural parish councils to represent so it's interesting to learn about each one and how I might be useful as a bridge between the parish and the district.

What do you hope to achieve during your time on the council?

My hopes include tougher speed limits in towns and villages, greater emphasis on provision for cyclists and pedestrians, more community transport, better recycling, holding developers to account more strongly and retrofitting existing social housing to make warmer, energy efficient homes. These changes can only be made collectively but to achieve any of them requires us to continue to care about our communities and our places whether town or village, but also to be able to adapt to change.



Councillor
Mary Tasker,
Evesham
North Ward



Labour

Why did you want to be a councillor?

I want to make a change in my community for the better. Local communities were hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and we need to get that community spirit back and deal with local issues.

You're a few months into the role now, what are your first impressions of life as a councillor?

I have felt very supported by the team of councillors I work with, especially as I am the only Labour councillor in Wychavon. The council is not about party politics but an overall aim for all of us to work together to make a difference in our communities and I feel we have a strong district team.

What do you hope to achieve during your time on the council?

We need a greater majority of progressive parties to ensure we can challenge practice, to come up with new ideas to ensure local communities benefit from the vast knowledge the council possesses and can implement. I hope to achieve a good reputation as a councillor, so it opens doors for other Labour candidates to be elected as councillors in such a Conservative stronghold.

Celebrating

50 YEARS of WYCHAVON

Our Chairman has embarked on an ambitious challenge to visit every part of the district to celebrate a special milestone.

Cllr Robert Raphael aims to make at least one visit to more than 60 town and parish council areas between now and next April to celebrate Wychavon's 50th Anniversary.

During the Chairman's 50th Anniversary Tour, Cllr Raphael will be highlighting the work of local organisations, meeting with volunteers, catching up on projects we have funded over the years and checking out some of the district's natural and historic sites.

The tour will end with the Chairman's Civic Ceremony at Pershore Abbey on 21 April 2024, which will be a celebration of Wychavon's role in the district, following its formation in 1974.

Cllr Raphael started his tour in July with a visit to Wick Care Farm. The farm is a not-for-profit organisation offering therapeutic activities for adults and young people over 12 who are living with mental health issues, complex educational needs, dementia or learning disabilities.

He also supported the opening of a new play area in Pebworth, funded with our £70,000 Community Legacy Grant. Cllr Raphael's other visits to date have included spending

time chatting to businesses at the Jinney Ring Craft Centre in Hanbury, learning more about the iconic radio transmitters off the M5 near Wychbold and exploring Hartlebury Castle and Museum.

Cllr Raphael said:

“

“I am really enjoying getting out and about and exploring our district, discovering the difference Wychavon has made over the last half a century and meeting the wonderful people who make this such a great place to live, work and visit.”

You can follow the Chairman's tour on his Facebook page or visit www.wychavon.gov.uk/fifty.



Hartlebury Castle
and Museum

Droitwich Transmitter Station



**Jinney Ring Craft
Centre, Hanbury**



Wick Care Farm



Shorthorn Woods, Bishampton and Throckmorton



Pebworth play area

Parks news



Cllr Emma Stokes (second left) with our parks team

Revamp for St Richards Open Space

A series of improvements have recently been made to St Richards Open Space in Evesham. We have planted an avenue of 22 new trees including Hornbeam and Sweet Gum. There is a new Cotswold stone path to improve accessibility as well as new signage. Plans are in the pipeline to install a new natural style timber play area which will include a castle themed play unit inspired by the Battle of Evesham. There will also be a cable zip wire, boulders, slides, basket swing, sensory items and a wheelchair accessible trampoline.



Green Flags flying proudly

Green flags are once again flying proudly over our parks after they were recognised as amongst the country's best.

Five of our parks - Abbey Park and Workman/Waterside Gardens in Evesham, Vines Park and Lido Park/St Peters Fields in Droitwich Spa, and Abbey Park in Pershore – have retained their Green Flag Award status, which is an international sign of quality for parks and open spaces.

Droitwich Community Woods, which we manage along with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, has also received the award for the fourth year in a row. They join more than 2,200 winners across the UK.

Abbey Park in Evesham has now won the award 18 years running, since first being entered in 2005. All five parks have now had Green Flag status for more than 10 years.

New water play area for Pershore

Work is set to get underway this month on a new water play area in Pershore's Abbey Park.



The £330,000 scheme will replace the existing water play area, which is outdated having been installed more than 15 years ago. It is also increasingly expensive to run costing between £10,000 and £15,000 a year in maintenance costs alone.

Work should be finished in time for the play area to open by May next year. The final design will reflect the setting of the park.

Our Executive Board approved the funding as the second part of our water play replacement programme. It follows the opening earlier this year of the new water play area in Evesham's Abbey Park, which has proved popular.

It is expected work to replace Droitwich Spa's water play area in Lido Park will take place towards the end of 2024.

Wildflower planting

To support our pollinators and other wildlife we have been busy planting 31 new wildflower areas or improving existing habitats across our parks and open spaces.



Examples of wildflowers to look out for include Borage, Red Clover, Corn Cockle, Purple Loosestrife, Common Poppy, Teasel, Yarrow and Ox-eye daisy.

In Droitwich Woods, we have created wildflower areas from green hay strewing from Eades Meadow as well as seed sowing. We have created a new meadow on a roadside verge in Bowden Green in Droitwich Spa which has created a haven for wildlife as well as brightening up a once unused close cut grass verge.

Could you help **foster** a dog?

An urgent appeal is being made to dog lovers to volunteer as foster carers following a surge in people wanting to hand over their four-legged friends.



Dogs Trust in Evesham is facing a record number of enquiries from people who are no longer able to care for their pooch. Volunteer foster carers of all ages are needed to provide a temporary home for dogs of all ages, shapes and sizes with nowhere else to turn.

Since the Home from Home scheme was launched in 2013, almost 1,000 dogs have been placed with foster carers. The Trust currently has 35 foster carers but has a waiting list of dogs waiting to come in.

Sarah Galvin, Co-ordinator of the Home from Home fostering scheme at Dogs Trust Evesham, said:



"We are facing a crisis as our kennel space is really stretched. We need to act now to be there for as many dogs as possible."

"Fostering a dog is a great opportunity for dog lovers who are currently unable to have a dog of their own. We cover the essential costs and you'll

be playing the most important role, giving stability, love and care to a dog in need as you prepare them for life in their forever home.

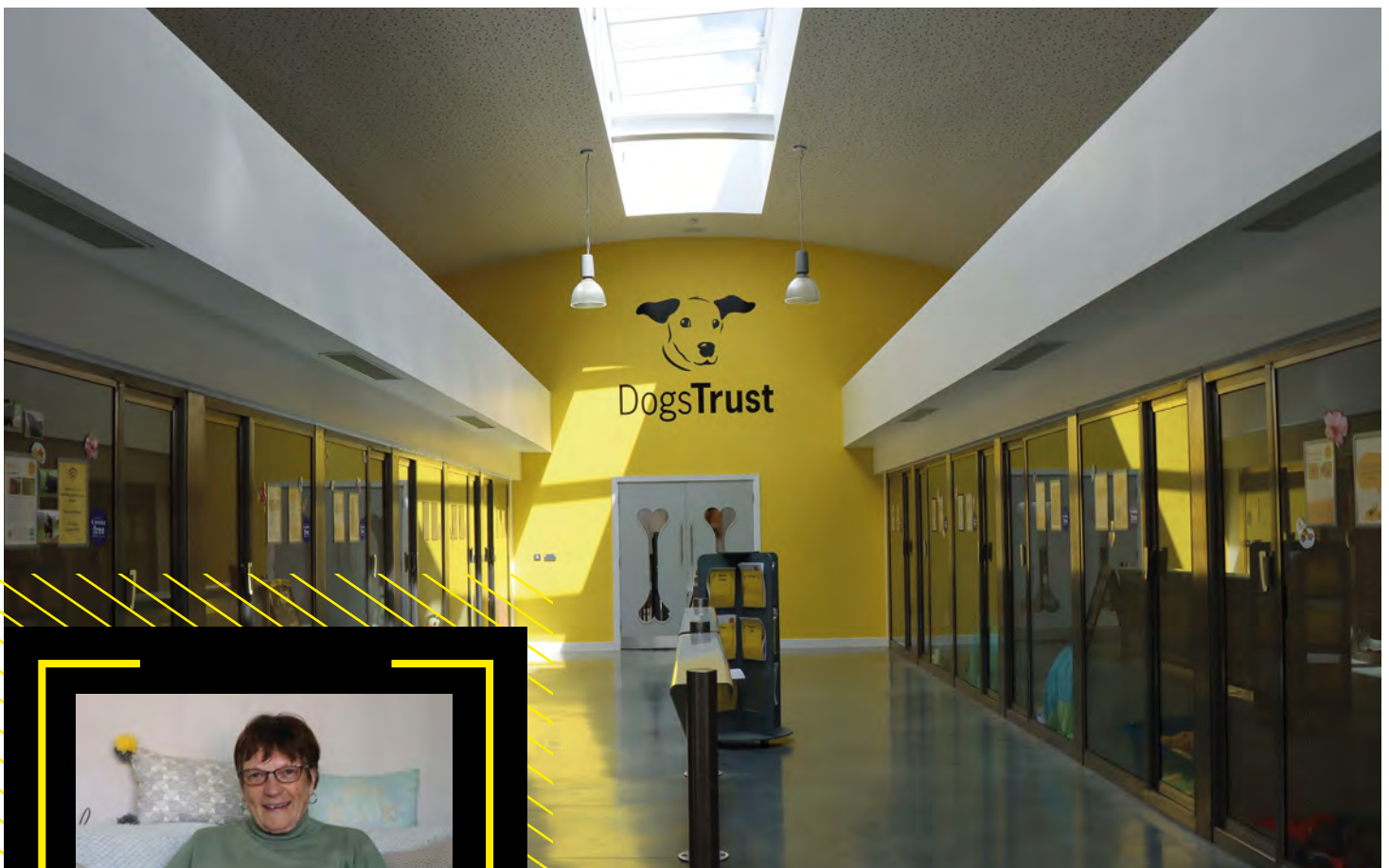
"We have dogs who are ready to be fostered anywhere from a few days to several months and we can be really flexible. We know life can be unpredictable, so we make sure foster carers can always take a break when they need one.

"Our foster carers give our dogs valuable experience of home life, and they get to know what makes them tick; they can tell us everything from what are their favourite toys and treats, to the kind of walks they enjoy, to where they like to sleep. All that information gives us the best chance of ensuring our gorgeous dogs find their ideal forever home when the time is right.



"So, if you think you can open your heart and your home to help a dog get back on their paws, please get in touch."





Annie Poolton became a foster carer for Dogs Trust Evesham two years ago and has never looked back.

The 76-year-old said: "I have had dogs all my life so when I finally came to the decision that I could no longer take on the commitment and cost of having a dog of my own, I wanted to do whatever I could to help others.

"Now I am retired I have the time to give them all the love they need and it's wonderful. I have had 16 dogs including Shih Tzus, German Shepherds, Staffordshire Bull Terriers and Dachshunds and I've had older dogs, puppies, dogs that are poorly and some that are at the end of their life.

"Whatever the circumstances, being able to care for dogs at a time when they really need it is incredibly rewarding. I love them all so much but also knowing that what I am doing is helping Dogs Trust take in more dogs and give them the special care they need, spurs me on."



We are supporting the appeal after a spate of reports of abandoned and dumped dogs in the district in the last 12 months.

They include Dilly the Dachshund who was found dumped in the district undernourished and with a skin disease called mange which was infected.

The bodies of a French Bulldog and terrier pup were also found dumped on some wasteland in Badsey.

Pip Griffin, Wychavon and Worcestershire Regulatory Services Animal Welfare Officer, said: "I understand with the rising cost of living that people are under financial pressure, but the treatment of some of the dogs we have found abandoned in recent months has been shocking and appalling.



"The Home from Home scheme is a great idea and will ensure dogs can be properly cared for while a permanent home is found for them. If you can't cope with looking after your dog, or any other pet, then please call us because we can help."

If you would like to apply to become a volunteer foster carer visit www.dogstrust.org.uk/foster or call 020 7837 0006. If you can donate, please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk/support-us/donation.



If you are struggling to cope with your pet and need help, please call the Worcestershire Regulatory Services animal welfare team on 01905 822799.



Developer contributions explained

You may have seen or heard the terms Section 106 (S106) money or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) linked to planning applications or how we fund key projects. But what are they? Here is our brief guide to both.

What is S106 money and CIL?

S106 money and CIL are types of funding, known as developer contributions, provided to us by developers as part of planning agreements.

Section 106 is used to help reduce the impact of a specific development, so it is acceptable in planning terms. For example, a road junction may need upgrading to allow safe access to the new development.

CIL is used to pay for infrastructure needed to support the wider impact of a development or several developments in the same area, such as a new school.

Who decides what developers have to pay?

Contributions are negotiated as part of each individual planning application depending on the size of the development and the number of properties being built.

Planning officers will only ask for a contribution if it meets legal guidelines. It must be fair and reasonable according to the size of the development. If a developer offers an unrelated contribution, it will not be considered when deciding whether to grant planning permission. For example, it would not be right to take money from the developer of a supermarket to fund a new swimming pool. But it would be acceptable to expect the supermarket to pay towards road improvements to minimise the impact of the development on the road network.





What can S106 and CIL be spent on?

We have several policy documents which guide what developer contributions can be spent on. Officers use these to decide how much to request and what the money will be used for.

S106 can be spent on things such as affordable housing provision, public open spaces, local road junction improvements to support a specific development and town centre improvements.

CIL is used to fund infrastructure projects such as major road building, schools, flood defences or health facilities.

S106 and CIL cannot be used to fix existing issues, like potholes, or pay for things like new or existing staffing costs for public services.

Some funding is ring-fenced to meet a specific need in a particular area. For example, if more playing pitches are needed in a parish, money can be requested to build a new one and then can only be spent for that purpose and in that area.

Where there is no identifiable local need, money may be requested from a developer to fund a general need across Wychavon. This money can then be pooled together to help fund priority projects.

Do residents get a say in how S106 and CIL is spent?

Parish and town councils are told each year how much they have available to spend on eligible projects. Unless it is a small application, we would always expect parish or town councils to show how they have consulted residents when applying for S106 money. Residents can also make suggestions to their town or parish council at any time.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan, part of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review, contains a list of projects that need funding to support proposed development and was available for public comment as part of recent consultations.

As CIL money is required for larger, strategic projects, how it is spent is mainly determined by policy and evidence documents.

Worcestershire County Council is responsible for deciding how money for roads and schools is spent.

How has the money been spent in my area?

Between April 2017 and March 2022, we spent more than £10.1 million of S106 money on projects to improve the district. These include:

 **£1.49 million**

towards the development of Evesham VeloPark

 **£1.86 million**

to fund a new 3G pitch and pavilion improvements in Droitwich Spa

 **£855,000**

towards a new 3G pitch in Evesham

 **£740,847**

to Worcestershire Council for improved cycling and road infrastructure (figures for 2021/22 only)

 **£95,794**

to help install changing rooms and a toilet at Drakes Broughton Village Hall

 **£30,799**

towards a new Community Hall at Worcester Norton Sports Club

 **£24,838**

in a cycle grant to Grafton Flyford and Flyford Flavell

 **496**

New affordable homes (figures for 2020/21 and 21/22 only)

During the same period £1.474 million was collected in CIL funding. We are currently exploring ways to use CIL money. This is not unusual as it can take many years to collect enough money to fund a suitable project.

Find out more about developer contributions on the planning section of our website.



Supporting our **pandemic recovery**

Over the last two years, our Covid-19 Recovery Fund has paid out £150,000 to a range of organisations across the district to help them deal with the impact of the pandemic.

Here are stories of three organisations we have supported through the fund.

Signpost, Broadway

For almost 25 years Signpost has been a source of free information and support for the community of Broadway and the surrounding villages. They offered help with anything from bus pass and blue badge applications to assisting with financial queries.

But all that changed because of the pandemic. Covid-19 restrictions closed the charity for more than nine months, which resulted in a drop in donations, loss of volunteers and rental income, putting its future at risk.

A £10,000 grant from the Business Interruption Grant and another £2,000 from the Mid-Counties Co-op helped Signpost survive. But as life slowly got back to normal it became obvious something had changed.

"The nature of the demand has changed. We used to typically offer information such as applying for a blue badge, attendance allowance

or how to access home help etc. Now we also have people coming through the door unable to pay their fuel bills or mortgage payments and we've even had our first cases of homelessness which is a reflection of the economic situation we currently find ourselves in," said Helen Rushmore, Chair of Broadway Signpost.



"We're upskilling our volunteers because those sorts of enquiries require a different level of response."

Another challenge was the amount of time taken to run the organisation was preventing the recruitment of desperately needed new volunteers and raising awareness of the service Signpost offers.

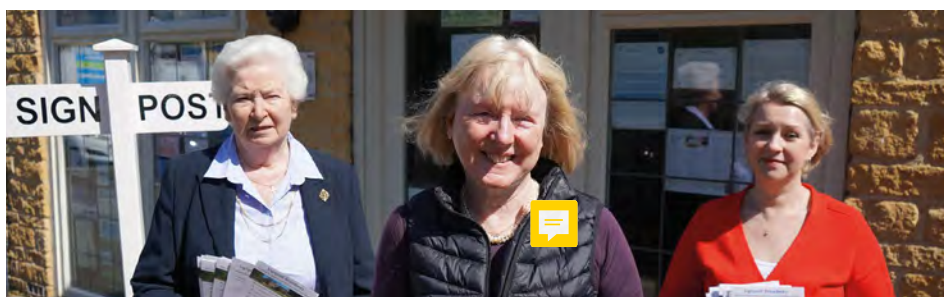
Wychavon stepped in with a £10,000 grant from the Covid-19 Recovery Fund to help pay for a part-time, self-employed, volunteer administration assistant to oversee the general

day-to-day running of Signpost's main functions. This has freed time up for Helen and others to go and publicise what Signpost do. The number of volunteers has steadily increased to 15, a new bereavement support group has been set-up and more organisations are now using the charity's offices as a base to provide services or social groups.

Signpost has recently launched a new website thanks to a £2,000 grant from the Mid-Counties Co-op and also a new volunteer hub, connecting people to local opportunities.

Successful defibrillator, CPR and First Aid Training courses continue to be provided and are being expanded. So far over 300 local people have attended these.

Sue Jones, treasurer and founder member of Signpost, added: "What we do here is very worthwhile. It feels as if we are giving back to the community and I know the community values us. We regularly have people come in to thank us. We know our volunteers are making a difference."



To find out more about Signpost, or to volunteer with them, visit <https://signpost.info>



Wick Care Farm, Wick

Founded in 2014, Wick Care Farm is a not-for-profit organisation designed to help people improve their mental and physical health.

The farm offers therapeutic activities for adults and young people over 12 who are living with mental health issues, complex educational needs, dementia or learning disabilities.

Clients carry out a range of activities on the farm including caring for animals, growing and harvesting vegetables, cooking, rural crafts, maintenance and repair projects and conservation work.

The pandemic affected the farm in many ways including the loss of clients, lost fund-raising opportunities and increased operating costs.

The pressure on the NHS, particularly mental health services, has also made it harder to promote the farm and secure referrals.

The £10,000 recovery grant from Wychavon has been used to increase the hours of staff to develop and nurture professional links with local mental health services and schools, to identify people who could benefit from the farm's services. An administration assistant has been recruited so the site's occupational therapist

can spend more time with clients, increase capacity, and enhanced training and support is being offered to volunteers.

Isobel Meikle, founder and director of Wick Care Farm, said:



"All these measures will support us to recover operation to full capacity offering and improving the services we have established over the last nine years."

People can contact Wick Care Farm directly for support or referrals can be made by schools, mental health or learning disability services.

For more information about Wick Care Farm email info@wickgrange.co.uk



Men in Sheds, Inkberrow

Loss and loneliness are two of the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, putting people at increased risk of developing several health conditions. In Inkberrow, a group of men have come together to help combat this by adopting an idea from Australia.

Men in Sheds is a way for men to get together to connect, share skills and create things. As Mick Trott, Chairman of the group explains.



"The idea is women talk face to face and men talk shoulder to shoulder, in other words while they are doing something," he said.

"We've had some interesting and important conversations while working on projects that we wouldn't have otherwise had."

An £8,000 grant from the Covid-19 Recovery Fund has helped the group to create the shed out of some former changing rooms in the village sports pavilion, as well as pay fuel bill costs, rent and for tools, benches and materials.

The group is growing quickly, with 20 members involved already, and they are becoming a key part of the village. Projects they have helped out with include refurbishing the village phone box, repainting the bus shelter, building bird and bat boxes for the Millennium Green, repairing footpath gateposts, installing a parish noticeboard at the village shop and making scenery for the local panto performance.

The shed meets every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm.

Visit www.inkberrowshed.co.uk/blog/ for more information.



NEW *underpass* art trail launched



Several underpasses in Droitwich Spa have been transformed into stunning pieces of public art as part of a Wychavon-led community project.

A new trail has now been launched to help residents and visitors enjoy the artwork which was created by professional artists working with the community.

The Droitwich Underpass Art trail takes people on a tour from the railway station to Westlands estate, taking in the seven underpasses decorated as part of the project as well as other local points of interest.

Each artwork was inspired by feedback from residents and workshops with young people from local schools and youth groups.

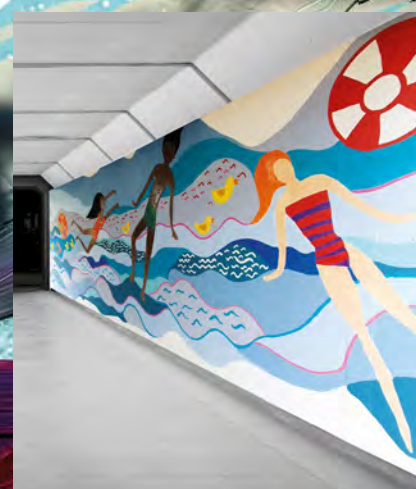
They include aspects of Droitwich Spa's history, a celebration of its community spirit and natural

environment, as well as some of the famous characters that have called the town home.

The underpasses can be found next to Droitwich Spa Railway Station, under the A38 Westlands to King George V Playing Fields, Briar Mill, Crofters Hill, Hunters Way, Ombersley Way and Paddock Hill.

A trail booklet is available from Droitwich Spa Tourist Information Centre which includes details of the artists and the story behind each artwork, as well as fun facts and activities. It is also available to download, along with a suggested route map from www.valeandspa.co.uk.





The underpass art project was funded by Wychavon along with Droitwich Spa Town Council and money from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

It was supported by organisations including:

Droitwich Arts Network, Westlands Residents Group, Droitwich Action for Future Youth, Droitwich Spa Youth Council, Droitwich Spa High School, Platform Housing Group, Droitwich Standard and West Mercia Police.

Our guide to **affordable housing**

Buying or renting a home is one of the biggest challenges facing people right now, especially our younger residents.



The average house price in Wychavon in 2022 was 9.75 times the average salary according to the Office for National Statistics. While that has improved from a peak of 10.72 the year before, it still means affording a home is out of reach for many. Rents are also increasing.

Since 2016, Wychavon has helped deliver more than 1,800 affordable homes. Our housing team is dedicated to working with developers and planners to increase affordable home provision.

There are many schemes available to help people either get on to the housing ladder or access the rental market.

This is a quick guide to help you in your hunt for affordable housing.



Social rent

These properties are provided in Wychavon by registered housing providers (commonly called social housing providers). Rents are set nationally and are usually about 55% of private market rates. Homes are allocated according to our allocations policy, with those in the highest need for housing given priority. You need to be on our housing register to be able to bid for properties.



Affordable rent

These properties are provided by us through our registered housing providers. The rent level can be no more than 80% of the local market rent. They are allocated in the same way as social rented properties.



Build to Rent and Rent to Buy

These properties are usually built as blocks of flats. The property is rented for a set period, during which time the tenant saves enough money for a deposit so they can buy the property at the end of the rental term.



Discount market homes

These are properties that are sold at lower than market value, usually 70% of the open market price. The price is agreed between us and the developer. They are aimed at people who cannot afford to buy on the open housing market but could afford the discounted price. You usually have to have a local connection to the area where the property is and meet other qualifying criteria which is available on our website. When buying a discounted market home, you need to remember you will need to sell the property with the same discount percentage as you received when buying it.



First homes

This is a type of discount market home where the property is again sold at 70% of the open market price. However, to be able to buy the property the purchaser must be a first time buyer, have an annual combined household income of no more than £80,000 and have a mortgage worth at least 50% of the discounted purchase price. We also ask for a local connection to Wychavon. If you buy this type of property, be aware this criteria will apply to all future sales, so you will only be able to sell to other first time buyers.



Shared ownership

This is where you buy part of the property and you rent the remaining part. Over time you can buy more of the property. You may also be able to buy the property outright if you can afford to do so, this will depend on the restrictions placed on the property. In some cases, they must remain in shared ownership forever to allow other people a chance to get on the property ladder.



Shared equity

This is similar to shared ownership except you buy a share in the property and do not pay rent on the other part. You then get the opportunity to buy further shares in the property at different times until you own it outright.

How to find affordable homes

If you would like to know when discount market homes become available in our district, then you can join our mailing list by emailing housingstrategyandenabling@wychavon.gov.uk.

We also advertise them on our social media pages so give us a like or follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You can also find more information on our website.

Alternatively, search for affordable homes and your location on a property website or online to see what is available in your area.

For more information



Visit www.wychavon.gov.uk/housing



Protecting **our wildlife**

Protecting and enhancing our plant and animal life has always been important to us.

But since The Environment Act was introduced in 2021, it has placed new legal duties on us to improve biodiversity.

We've been preparing for these changes by identifying species of importance to Wychavon, the wider region and those where the district's populations are nationally or internationally significant.

As well as a list of species, we've also drawn up actions we can take to support nature's recovery and support others to deliver for wildlife.

You can have your say on our list of priority species and the actions we can take to help them by taking part in our consultation, which will launch in the new year.

One of the ways the new law seeks to reverse the decline in nature is through the planning system.

From November, most planning applications will have to show how a development will increase biodiversity by at least 10% and maintain those benefits for at least 30 years. This is called biodiversity net gain.

While the average household application won't need to show biodiversity net gain, we encourage residents to look at things they can do to support our wildlife when making alterations to their home. These include incorporating bee and bird bricks in extensions, or using bat-friendly lighting, green roofs, native plants, and surfacing which allows water to pass through it.

What to look out for

As the vibrant hues of summer fade into the sepia embrace of autumn, nature in Wychavon unveils its hidden treasures creating a visual feast for the casual observer and keen wildlife enthusiast alike.

Wander through the district's woodlands and you'll encounter a kaleidoscope of mushrooms emerging from the forest floor and sprawling over fallen trees, recycling nutrients through their enormous network of root-like filaments.

What we see is only the fruit of the fungi, the equivalent of an apple or plum designed to spread its seeds or in this case spores, far and wide. So where is the fungi tree that these fruits come from? Everywhere beneath our feet. It's now being thought that far more than being simply waste and nutrient recyclers fungi play a vital role in creating and sustaining much of our natural environment.

We have a fear of fungi, unless they come packaged from a supermarket and in some cases, rightly so but you don't have to eat or touch them to enjoy them. Why not grab a camera and head to your local woodland for a foray into the fabulous world of fungi.

The Fly Agaric grows in sunny woodland glades and edges, an easy toadstool to identify with its scarlet cap and white freckles, like something straight out of a fairy tale.

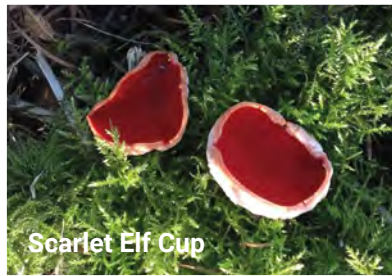
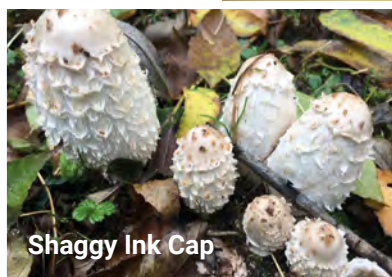
Another mushroom with an impish connection is the **Scarlet Elf Cup**, sometimes known as Fairies' Baths. When you see the tiny bright red cups bursting from a mossy green branch, it's easy to see how they got their name.

King Alfred's Cakes are a wood decay specialist. For anyone who knows the story of a disguised King Alfred being scolded for letting his attention wander and burning the cakes he was watching, this tells you all you need to know about their appearance.

Dead Man's Fingers are another fungi that specialise in wood recycling. Growing in clusters, their elongated and blackened fruiting bodies look like a hand emerging from the underworld, ready to grasp an unwary ankle, like these seen in Droitwich Community Woods.

Jelly fungi can often provide an unexpected autumnal colour hit in the strangest of places. **Yellow Brain Fungus** can be spotted at Millennium Wood near Drake's Broughton.

Shaggy Ink Caps abound in woodland, hedgerows and old, undisturbed grassland. When young they look like a typical white toadstool but as they age, the scales on their cap begin to lift and curl giving rise to their other name, the Lawyer's Wig. Eventually as the fungi themselves decay, they display why they are called ink caps as their deliquescent flesh oozes a sticky, black liquid.



Jewels on the wing

Wychavon's ponds and wetlands become a playground for vibrant dragonflies as summer draws to a close. The bright blue and green of a patrolling Southern Hawker can often be glimpsed near water and along woodland edges. Hunting for flies and midges, they are inquisitive and may come and inspect you when you stray into their territory.

Common darters are also active well into autumn. Reddish brown and one of our smaller dragonflies, they will often bask on paths to absorb warmth which should make them easy to photograph. Living up to their darter name as soon as you approach they will take off, moving a few metres away before settling again, just out of shot.

Harvest mice abandon their perfectly woven summer nests in preparation for winter. Unlike dormice they don't hibernate and must seek shelter from the chill in dense undergrowth, venturing out to search for seeds or berries even moss, roots and insects are on the menu for a hungry harvest mouse.

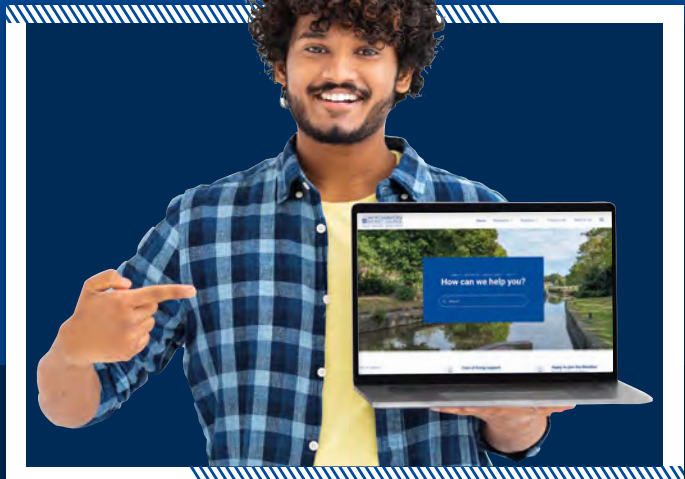
WYCHAVON

Key contacts

If you need support, then you will find lots of help and advice on our website.



www.wychavon.gov.uk



If you need to speak to someone, then you can contact our services directly using the details below.



- For help with Council Tax bills call 03004 560560 or email wychavontax@southworcestershirevenues.gov.uk
- For help with benefits call 03004 560560 or email wychavonbens@southworcestershirevenues.gov.uk
- For help with housing issues contact our housing and customer services team on 01386 565000 and choose option 5 or email housing.needs@wychavon.gov.uk

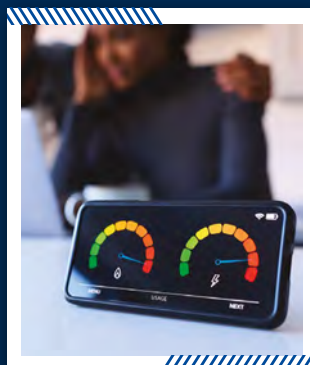
Other key contacts

Debt advice

For help with debt advice and other issues call Citizens Advice South Worcestershire on 0808 278 7891.

Help with energy bills

Our partner Act on Energy offers help with everything from dealing with energy bill debt to advice on reducing energy use and installing renewable technology. Call them free on 0800 988 2881.



Household Support Fund

We are distributing the Government's Household Support Fund to help provide essential goods, food, fuel vouchers and direct support to households. Contact your local volunteer centre for more information:

- Citizens Advice South Worcestershire call 0808 278 7891.
- Droitwich Spa CVS call 01905 779115 or email admin@droitwichcvs.org.uk
- Evesham Volunteer Centre call 01386 570530 or email co@eveshamvolunteers.org.uk
- Pershore Plus call 01386 554299 or email admin@pershorevolunteers.org.uk

2023-2027 WYCHAVON Councillors

Updated 22/8/23

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Liberal Democrats 7

Labour 1

Green Party 6

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WYCHAVON

Christmas collection dates 2023

Revised collection dates for
household waste, recycling and garden waste

Between Monday 18 and Friday 22 December 2023 collections take place as normal.

The following changes will be made to bin collections
over the Christmas and New Year period:

Usual collection day	Festive collection day
Monday 25 December	Wednesday 27 December
Tuesday 26 December	Thursday 28 December
Wednesday 27 December	Friday 29 December
Thursday 28 December	Saturday 30 December
Friday 29 December	Tuesday 2 January
Monday 1 January	Wednesday 3 January
Tuesday 2 January	Thursday 4 January
Wednesday 3 January	Friday 5 January
Thursday 4 January	Saturday 6 January
Friday 5 January	Monday 8 January
Monday 8 January	Tuesday 9 January
Tuesday 9 January	Wednesday 10 January
Wednesday 10 January	Thursday 11 January
Thursday 11 January	Friday 12 January
Friday 12 January	Saturday 13 January

Extra waste and recycling:

From **Wednesday 27 December 2023 to Monday 8 January 2024 only**, you can put out up to two extra sacks of general waste next to your black bin. Extra recycling can be put out next to your green bin in clear sacks. You can get these from libraries in Broadway, Droitwich Spa, Evesham and from the Civic Centre in Pershore.

Please make sure bins are out
by 7am as collection times
may be different to normal.

Collections as normal from
Monday 15 January 2024

Garden waste customers:

If you have a real Christmas tree, you can put it in your garden waste bin. You can also cut it into manageable sections, no more than 4 ft in height, and leave it beside your garden waste bin.

If you are not one of our garden waste customers, then you can sign up for £52 a year at www.wychavon.gov.uk/waste

Download your collection calendar for 2024 at www.wychavon.gov.uk/calendar