

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting

28 July 2023



The Local Government Association (LGA) is a representative body of nearly all the English and Welsh Councils and represents, campaigns, lobbies and speaks up for the many varied services and issues we have. I recommend to you all to visit and explore their website, as a way of extending your own knowledge and understanding of the workings of local government: <https://www.local.gov.uk/>

Recently several of us attended the LGA Annual conference in Bournemouth where I was pleased to support the campaign to raise awareness of the abuse that can happen towards some elected councillors. While mostly our experience is sensible with some strong questioning at most, sometimes in our communities and chambers behaviours and attitudes can take unfortunate turns. I understand that in the past being on the receiving end. Debating and disagreeing with one another is a healthy part of democracy, but abuse and intimidation crosses the line into dangerous territory. The right engagement matters. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-stamping-out-abuse-councillors>

Hopefully you are all signed up and receiving your weekly alerts from Rural Services Network. This is another lobbying organisation targeted at raising the issues of delivering services which is very supportive of our elected responsibilities. <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/>

Last month saw the celebration of Armed Forces week and there were several specially organised events. Over 200 cadets took part in a Coronation parade at the Castle Green with the Lord Lieutenant taking the salute. The Vice Chair and myself attended the raising of the flag in High Town and afterwards we witnessed Hereford City Council signing the Armed Forces Covenant.



It is estimated that there some 2,500 serving officers living in Herefordshire with over 1,100 children in our schools. According to the recently published 2021 Census information, 9,600 residents

in Herefordshire have previously served in the UK Armed Forces representing over 6% of the adult population. In our county 11% of all the households has at least one former veteran.

Herefordshire Council has long been a supporter of the Armed Forces Covenant and provides the secretariat for the County's Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership. The partnership is made up of representatives of the main military charities and 130 organisations, who have pledged their support to recognise the needs of our armed forces community and remove disadvantage where it exists, particularly in relation to the areas of Health, Housing and Education. Councillor Barry Durkin is the Council's nominated Armed Forces Champion and Chair of the Covenant Partnership. Further information is available on the council's website link below.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/armed-forces/herefordshire-armed-forces-covenant-partnership/2>

Chairman`s Charities

It is customary for the Chairman to adopt Charities, and I am working with the Cabinet member for Adult Care Cllr Gandy and the Director Hilary Hall on raising the awareness of the community`s understanding and support of dementia. There has been recent encouraging news on improved treatment of the illness but it still places huge pressures on partners, families, friends and our care network. We all need to learn what we can do to support those impacted and become a more dementia friendly community.

My other charity is "We are Farming minds."



WE ARE FARMING MINDS 

We are Farming Minds registered charity has been set up by farmers for farmers to tackle mental health in the farming community within Herefordshire.

How can we help?
24 Hour Support Line:
 We run a **FREE 24 hour Support Line** 7 days a week for farmers and their families within Herefordshire who are feeling distressed and need someone to talk to anonymously.

Counselling:
 We provide **fully funded counselling** to anyone in the Herefordshire farming community who may be in emotional distress.

Training:
 We offer **FREE mental health awareness training** to anyone living or working in or with the farming community in Herefordshire.

Social Events:
 We run a series of **FREE social events** throughout the year to break the isolation often felt by the farming community in Herefordshire.

Befriending:
 Befriending volunteers offer companionship and support to people who are isolated and lonely – they may visit you at home and/or phone for a regular chat. A befriender can offer conversation and a listening ear to those that need it.

Call our Support Line:
0808 802 0070
 Or text:
07786 203 130

General enquiries: wearefarmingminds@gmail.com
www.wearefarmingminds.co.uk

we Are Farming MINDS
 the Farming community  [WeAreFarmingMinds](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreFarmingMinds)

This year Herefordshire has seen five members of the Farming community take their lives, and I know that there are Councillors like myself who knew some of them personally. Farming can be a lonely occupation, hard work, tough financial conditions and lately come under strong public criticism.

But this is an issue not limited to Farming. We all welcome the changing attitudes and awareness to Mental health in our society today, and as community leaders we have a potentially important role in our wards to increase and influence peoples better understanding and support of this issue.

Since the last Council meeting I have attended many events, meetings and activities. Including duties with the Lord Lieutenant, participating in two citizenship ceremonies where twelve people swore allegiance to His Majesty and became UK subjects. Hosted a meeting with our County Mayors, their clerks and the High Sheriff. Briefings on operation London Bridge, Armed Forces covenant and Skylon park. I have visited NMITE and met with their Chairman and Chief Executive, attended the Hereford and Worcester Chamber awards and the launch of fundraising for Snodhill castle in the Golden Valley.