

## County Councillor's update for Warndon Parish Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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### 10 Year Management Plan for Worcester Woods Country Park

A draft management plan for Worcester Woods Country Park has been drawn together to:

- Bring together relevant information regarding Worcester Woods Country Park and document it in a single plan.
- Guide the recreation and conservation management of Worcester Woods Country Park for the period April 2024-March 2034.
- Ensure the ongoing effective site management for the next ten years by developing a comprehensive plan which will guide management.
- Provide a supporting document for grant applications and accreditations.

The draft plan is available to look at here:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/environment/countryside-and-leisure/country-parks-picnic-places-and-nature-reserves/worcester-woods-country-park>

Before the plan is finalised, comments are invited to be submitted to [countrysidecentre@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:countrysidecentre@worcestershire.gov.uk)

The closing date for comments is **25th March 2024**; all comments received by then will be considered. In view of the anticipated response, it will not be possible to give an individual reply to each comment received. However if you include your contact details it will help should we wish to contact you to clarify or discuss your comments.

Thank you in advance for taking time to consult with Worcestershire County Council about this Management Plan.

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### Local Nature Recovery Strategy - consultation deadline extended

**The deadline to have your say and help shape a brand-new pioneering strategy for nature recovery in the county has been extended until Sunday 10 March.**

The public consultation will inform the preparation of the new countywide strategy, which will help protect and improve Worcestershire's local environment.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Worcestershire will be one of 48 across England and key in the delivery of a national Nature Recovery Network of sites.

The LNRS is a new type of plan for nature and environmental improvement. They are a legal requirement of the Environment Act 2021 and Worcestershire County Council has been appointed as the Responsible Authority to lead the preparation of Worcestershire's LNRS, supported by the six District Councils and Natural England.

Each LNRS will contain a locally agreed Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map. Once adopted, the LNRS will be a way for anyone to view the agreed nature recovery priorities in a location and determine what practical action could be delivered to achieve those priorities.

This first stage of the consultation process is asking Worcestershire residents what the local threats and priorities should be for nature's recovery and where the opportunities are within the county to deliver more, bigger and better improvements for nature.

Once this consultation closes and responses analysed, there will then be a second stage of the consultation, later this year, on a full draft of the strategy.

Take part in the conversation about nature recovery at <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments/environmental-policy/worcestershire-local-nature-partnership/have-your-say-worcestershire-local-nature>

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## **County fostering service needs your support – Could you be a foster carer, or know someone who could?**

Did you know that if you refer a friend to Worcestershire Children First Fostering, you will receive £250 as a thank you when they start an assessment and a further £750 when they are approved as Foster Carers?

There are many fostering opportunities offered by Worcestershire Children First Fostering to find the perfect fit for you!

Whether you're interested in short-term or long-term fostering, respite fostering, parent and child placement, buddy fostering, or specialist fostering, we've got you covered!

Our Specialist Fostering scheme is specifically designed for experienced carers who can provide support to children who have faced challenges and have complex needs. Your skills can make a significant difference!

If you're unable to commit to full-time fostering, our Buddy Foster Carer scheme may be ideal for you. You can offer regular short breaks to a local fostering family and care for a child on a flexible part-time basis during weekends, weekday evenings, or even school holidays.

Please contact us to discuss further if you are interested in making a real difference to a child's future.

For more information visit <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/childrens-services/worcestershire-children-first-fostering> or call 0800 028 2158.

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## **Success at Regional Energy Efficiency Awards**

Worcestershire County Council were successful at last night's West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards, picking up the award for Council of the Year for the second year in a row.

The award highlights councils that have shown a true commitment to promoting energy efficiency within their region and thanks them for their service to their local communities.

The award recognised our work to promote energy efficiency schemes across the county, such as Solar Together, the Household Support Fund, Home Upgrade Grant Scheme and improvements to its estate.

We were recognised for the support offered to businesses, through Net Zero Worcestershire, Business Energy Efficiency Programme and the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme and the work the Council undertake in partnership with district councils.

The award also highlights the commitment to delivering Carbon Literacy training for staff and work to tackle Fuel Poverty with partners, as well as showcasing the expertise within the Council in supporting energy efficiency measures.

For more information about our energy efficiency work, visit the environment pages on <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/environment>

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## Extra Funding Boost To Help Businesses Go Green

Businesses in Worcestershire and the Marches will benefit from an additional £2.3 million in funding to help reduce their carbon footprint and move towards Net Zero.

This additional funding from the pilot Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS), awarded to Worcestershire County Council, will bolster other funding streams, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to deliver the Net Zero Worcestershire and the Marches Energy Grant programmes.

The programmes offer free energy assessments and grant funding to implement energy efficiency measures to small and medium businesses in the West Midlands. The pilot Business Energy Advice Service is funded by the Department for Energy Security and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

In Worcestershire, UKSPF is individually managed by the six District Councils: Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council, and Wyre Forest District Council. Worcestershire County Council is delivering the support programmes in partnership with the six District Councils.

### **Councillor Richard Morris, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for the Environment at Worcestershire County**

**Council, said:** “As a council, we are committed to developing a sustainable Economy and taking action to tackle climate change; this includes providing support which will help businesses to make the transition to Net Zero. This additional funding means we can deliver Net Zero Support to even more businesses, which is brilliant.

“It is programmes like this that help businesses to become more resilient and more sustainable for the future, whilst also helping to alleviate rising costs. I urge eligible businesses to take the first step to reduce their carbon emissions and make use of this fantastic programme.”

Delivered flexibly, the decarbonisation reviews enable businesses to gain a better understanding of their carbon emissions, how to use energy more efficiently and will receive an outline of where cost savings can be made.

After a business has received its decarbonisation review, it will then become eligible to apply for grant funding to implement energy-saving initiatives such as renewable technology, LED lighting and energy management. The amount of grant funding on offer will be dependent on location and project.

One of the many businesses supported through the council’s scheme was Kidderminster Manufacturer, Storm Environmental. The company benefited from huge energy and cost savings after receiving a free decarbonisation assessment and grant funding.

The business used grant funding to partially fund the cost of adaptations to be made on its rotary machinery, a key piece of equipment for its manufacturing.

Since making the adaptations, the business has benefited from, increased efficiency, a boost in production and reduced costs. It has generated an estimated saving of 1 million KWH/ per annum (enough to power around 750,000 homes for an hour) and is expected to save 180 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

For more information on the Net Zero Worcestershire programme, visit <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/business/business-support-and-grants/net-zero-worcestershire-support>

Visit <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/business/business-support-and-grants> for more information on business support grants.

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## Register for the Business Worcestershire Conference 2024!

Registration has opened for the next **Business Worcestershire Conference, taking place on Wednesday 13 March at Sixways Stadium Worcester.**

The focus of this spring event is **Innovation and Technology.**

The conference brings together, industry leaders and experts to inspire and inform local businesses with some of the latest thinking and insight around innovation.

Topics which will be explored at the free event include building an innovation culture, raising finance for innovation and scale-up, Artificial Intelligence in innovation and innovating at scale.

Confirmed speakers include Paul McGillivray who has over 23 years as a tech co-founder and Chief Technology Officer and has spearheaded digital transformation projects for brands like Sony and Tesco. Jim Shirley, founder of FundingHero, a tech platform that teaches strategic investment readiness, educates startups and scaleups on how to raise high-growth funding.

Simon Hill, CEO & Founder of Wazoku will be the Keynote speaker addressing how to approach Innovation at Scale. Wazoku have worked globally with organisations such as NASA, Nissan and GSK and are continuing to strengthen their own innovation offering and follow their mission to Change the World, One idea at a time.

They will also be joined by, and Natalie Wadley Co-Founder and CEO at 3D Changemaker.

Innovate UK will also be providing an update on accessible support for businesses to support their innovation journeys, in addition to networking opportunities and the chance to speak with other partners regarding funded support, such as H&W Chamber of Commerce, Worcestershire Growth Hub, Innovation Alliance West Midlands and Made Smarter.

Register, to attend for free, at <https://businesseventsworcestershire.com/events-search/details/?id=280>

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## Calling all Worcestershire Businesses - are you tired of the 'Rogue Trader' label?

Worcestershire County Council's Trading Standards service is pleased to announce a partnership with United Knowledge Ltd to provide a new 'Trading Standards Approved', trader's scheme.

This scheme aims to support both local businesses and consumers, providing honest traders with a way to be identified as such and stand out from the crowd.

From February 2024, consumers will be able to find a Trading Standards Approved trader, introducing an added sense of confidence with the reputable accreditation.

The scheme covers a diverse range of trades and businesses. Whether consumers are in search of a trustworthy plumber, pest controller, landscaper, electrician, or any other contractor, you will soon have the privilege to find a Worcestershire approved trader.

We extend a warm invitation to all business operators who believe they meet the criteria to be Trading Standards Approved, to visit the Trading Standards Approved website <https://uktsa.com/about-uktsa/> and proceed with their membership application.

Approved business operators are welcome to incorporate scheme logos on their vans, paperwork and advertisements, adding a distinguished touch to their brand image.

For more information on the scheme, please visit the UK Trading Standards Approved website <https://trustedtraders.uktsa.com/>

This scheme is for Worcestershire businesses or businesses operating predominantly within the county. For more information on the criteria for joining the scheme, please email Trading Standards at:

[TSEnquiries@Worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:TSEnquiries@Worcestershire.gov.uk)