Malvern Hills District Council Report (April 2026)

Cllr Lesley Bruton (Tenbury Ward)

It is an honour to serve as the District Council Member to represent the Tenbury Ward. I care passionately about the community, the town and surrounding area because it's my community and my home for nearly 47 years.

Thank you to all the residents' who have supported me and given me encouragement, which is very much appreciated.

The annual town meeting is a great opportunity to recognise the work undertaken by councils at all levels and the important contributions they make to our communities. Thank you to the Town and Parish Councillors who serve our communities, giving many hours of their time for free and they are the grass roots of local government.

The District Council has provided grant funding in the town through several schemes including the Town Centre Support Scheme, Apprentice Bursary, Tourism Scheme, the Malvern Hills Rural Fund and the Community Facility Legacy Grant Scheme. The Town Council was awarded nearly £90k through the Community Facility Legacy Grant scheme towards new play area equipment.

This year, District Councillors were allocated a £1,000 ward budget to support their communities. I supported Tenbury Primary Academy with £350.00 towards new library books, £300.00 towards camping equipment for Tenbury Girl Guides, £200.00 towards a defibrillator for Stoke Bliss village hall and £150.00 towards the Christmas Lights. It is wonderful to be able support children providing life skills and new experiences.

Flood Risk Management Scheme

We will continue to work with the Environment Agency to support residents and businesses to facilitate the provision of property flood resilience measures. The Heritage team have been working closely with the Environment Agency regarding the protection and measures for the listed buildings in the town.

In addition, I am grateful to the Head of Emergency Planning for his support to the town during flooding events and the provision of sandbags provided by the District Council, which were kindly distributed by volunteers.

Together with the Town Council we will continue to lobby the government to provide the necessary funding for the flood risk management scheme.

Local Government Reorganisation

Malvern Hills District Council voted in favour of submitting a two-unitary council proposal to the Government on the 18th of November.

The proposal ‘Transforming Worcestershire’ sets out the vision for two unitary councils to be created – one covering North Worcestershire and one South Worcestershire – running all services in their area. They would replace the current six district councils and Worcestershire County Council.

The document has been put together in collaboration with Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wychavon and Worcester councils following the Shape Worcestershire public engagement exercise.

Residents were invited to share their views on the proposals and how councils across Worcestershire should be run in the future.

A final decision from the Government is expected in July 2026. Elections for a new ‘shadow’ authority – or authorities – would then take place in May 2027, ahead of the new arrangements coming into effect on 1 April 2028.

Council Tax & Budget 2026/27

Council at its meeting held on 27th February, approved a net budget of £6,287,208. The Band D equivalent for the District Council has been frozen at £182.60 (no increase). Following the announcement that the Government is moving towards unitary approach to councils, Malvern Hills District Council is budgeting to end its expected lifetime and believes this can be funded within existing budgets.

Malvern Hills District Council has also committed to investing £2 million into council priorities – Health and Wellbeing, Economy and Environment – as well as over £1.3 million to deliver a household food waste collection service across the district.

Household Food Waste Collection

Malvern Hills District Council will be the first council in Worcestershire to deliver a household food waste collection service.

From 5 October 2026, the council will be rolling out the new service gradually in homes across the district.

Residents will be contacted directly and will be provided with everything they will need. They will receive a kitchen caddy, roll of liners, food waste bin for outside and instructions.

Collections will be every week on the same day as the waste or recycling collection. In Malvern Hills, approximately 37% of waste in an average bin is food.

Community and Local Business Investment

The Executive Committee approved a £1 million allocation to support the implementation and delivery of economic development and business support activities during 2026/27 and 2027/28.

A further allocation of £1 million was approved to support the implementation and delivery of community wellbeing priorities and activities.

Community Recognition Scheme

The District Council has received an amazing 128 nominations for our Connected Communities Celebration.

The celebration is to shine a light on the valuable contributions made by individuals, teams, organisations and businesses across the district. Each one will receive a letter of thanks, a special bin badge or framed certificate.

They will also be entered into a prize draw to win a pair of tickets to a special Community Celebration event, taking place in June.

SWDP Review

The South Worcestershire Development Plan was officially adopted by Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils at meetings held at the end of March.

Crucially the councils can now show they have enough land for housing over the next five years, meaning the 'tilted balance' which favours the approval of planning applications unless the harms of a proposed development significantly outweigh the benefits – no longer applies. Instead, housing and economic growth must be delivered according to the policies in the SWDPR and planners are in a stronger position to turn down those that don't.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Residents are being asked for their views on an ambitious plan to end homelessness and rough sleeping across districts in Worcestershire.

The draft strategy sets out how Malvern Hills, Redditch and Bromsgrove, Wychavon and Wyre Forest District Councils will work together over the next five years to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. Where this cannot be prevented, the councils aim to ensure it is rare, brief and not repeated.