

Dear Levy Payer,

Herefordshire County Business Improvement District (HCBID) has continued to deliver strong, strategically-aligned activity across the Visitor Economy over the past 12 months. We have seen accelerated growth in brand recognition regionally, nationally and internationally through Hamnet, the launch of new digital tools, and a strengthened programme of business support.

The total economic impact of the tourism sector rose to £773m in 2024, an increase of 5.03% compared to 2023. Given the very challenging climate for tourism in 2024, this represents an excellent result. This underlines the strength of Herefordshire's performance. A strong destination brand directly influences visitor spend and business performance. Campaigns delivered under Visit Herefordshire have been proven to inspire overnight stays, longer itineraries and repeat visits; driving visitors into Market Towns and rural communities; increase spend with independent businesses, accommodation, food & drink operators, and activity providers. Every themed campaign, itinerary, press feature, and influencer visit is designed to convert inspiration into bookings and footfall.

Visit Herefordshire is managed and funded by HCBID, and the brand continues to play a central role in raising the profile of the County, driving visitor demand, and supporting the success of Levy Payer businesses. The Visit Herefordshire brand is a shared economic engine which, amplifies the County's story on a national stage, drives visitor behaviour, attracts new audiences, strengthens local business performance, and positions Herefordshire as one of England's most authentic, experience-rich rural destinations.

With the **launch of the Visit Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan** in April 2025, we have been able to focus projects and investments on long-term growth outcomes, improving the visitor experience and creating tangible value for our Levy Payers. The year has brought new initiatives, major product launches, and significant milestones that reflect our ongoing commitment to raising the profile of Herefordshire as an outstanding rural destination.

A few noteworthy developments from the past 12 months have been:

The Hamnet Effect: We were thrilled to secure the Filming in 2024, a major step in attracting production companies, supporting local creatives, and showcasing the County as a stunning and versatile filming location. This initiative is already opening doors for economic growth and destination visibility via the award-winning Hamnet. This cultural moment is helping elevate the County's profile and inspire new visitor interest.

Launch of the Visit Herefordshire Outdooractive app: The rollout of our Outdooractive partnership will transform how visitors engage with our rural County. This powerful digital tool is expanding our reach to adventure-seeking audiences worldwide, providing rich mapping and route information, and encouraging deeper discovery of Herefordshire's rural assets.

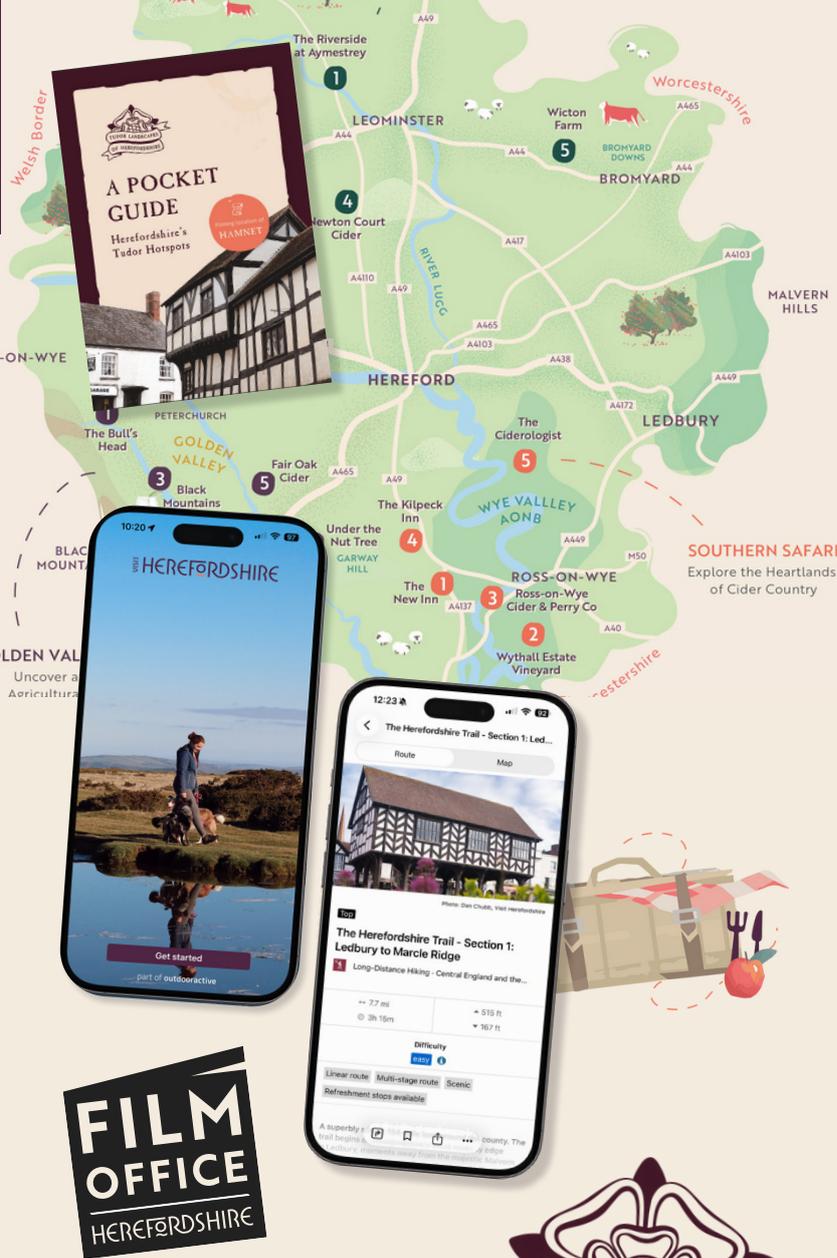
We look forward to building on this successful year and continuing our collaborative work with businesses, partners, and stakeholders across the County. It is now more important than ever for Levy Payers to actively participate in this year's BID Ballot. Your vote will directly influence the future of the County's Visitor Economy. Without a positive outcome, the vital investment currently driving destination marketing, development, and business support across Herefordshire would come to an end. Your engagement is essential to ensure we can continue delivering the growth, visibility, and opportunities that benefit every Levy Payer.



Joanna Hilditch & Glenn Jones
Co-Chairs of Herefordshire County BID

Achievements from the last 12 months

- 1. Place Informatics Data and STEAM Report:** The total economic impact rose to £773m in 2024, an increase of 5.03% compared to 2023 with increases to 8.05m total visitor days and 3.05m overnight stays. Given the very challenging climate for tourism in 2024, including continued cost of living impacts and a wet summer, this represents an excellent result. By comparison, the national GB Tourism Survey results for West Midlands recorded a 14% fall in staying visits and a 10% fall in day visits, while rural destinations across England saw a 6% drop in staying visits and 18% decline in day visits.
- 2. Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP):** A major strategic benefit delivering improved countywide coordination, destination data use, and strategic focus across marketing, product development, and business engagement. LVEP Status has unlocked access to VisitEngland toolkits, training and development; brought expert regional development support directly into the County and; increased Herefordshire's standing within England's Visitor Economy.
- 3. Launched Herefordshire's Destination Management Plan (April 2025):** Delivered a clear, LVEP-aligned strategic roadmap for the development of Herefordshire's Visitor Economy over the next 10 years. Providing long-term direction across marketing, product development, infrastructure and business engagement, targeting our primary markets of "Active Explorers", "Cultural Explorers", and "Curious Families".
- 4. Visit Herefordshire is a Strong, Credible and Recognised Destination Brand:** The Visit Herefordshire brand provides a unified voice for the County's tourism offer. Through consistent imagery, messaging and storytelling, the brand has positioned Herefordshire as an authentic, rural, high-quality destination. By showcasing the County's food, drink, culture, landscapes, and experiences, it helps visitors understand what makes Herefordshire distinctive. Consistent brand use across campaigns, PR, digital content, and national partnerships like VisitEngland builds trust and recognition, which is vital in a competitive visitor market.
- 5. Herefordshire Film Office:** is a joint initiative between the HCBID and Herefordshire Council to attract film productions, support location scouting, and showcase the County as a high-quality filming destination. Working closely with industry partners inc. VisitEngland and Creative England to provide stunning locations, logistical support, and coordination for visiting productions. A major early success of the Film Office was securing filming for *Hamnet*. The launch has generated national and international attention, sparking what's been described as the "**Hamnet Effect.**" This momentum has elevated Herefordshire's profile as a film-friendly destination, opened new economic and tourism opportunities, and inspired dedicated promotional activity to attract "set-jettlers" and cultural tourists
- 6. Launch of the Visit Herefordshire Outdooractive Partnership (2026):** Launched this year giving visitors and residents access to: A comprehensive digital mapping and route planning platform; walking; cycling, riding, and long-distance trail routes across Herefordshire; seamless GPS enabled exploration through the Visit Herefordshire app; enhanced visibility for businesses connected to outdoor and nature-based tourism. This launch significantly strengthens Herefordshire's appeal for active, adventure, and nature focused visitors and is one of the fastest growing tourism segments in the UK.
- 7. Major National Media Coverage:** Herefordshire appeared in leading outlets, journalist / influencer visits and curated media opportunities, strengthening awareness of the County's attractions and experiences through coordinated PR and digital activity. This collective promotion has ensured Levy Payers benefitted from high-value visibility that would be prohibitively costly to achieve independently.
- 8. Themed Campaigns:** Campaigns that have been rolled out and extended this year to support year-round visitor interest and overnight stays including: *Hamnet - Through Tudor Landscapes*; *Herefordshire Food Safaris*; and *Stargazing - The Stargazers' Guide to Herefordshire*.
- 9. Engagement:** The Visit Herefordshire website and social media channels act as a powerful marketing engine for the County. Continued expansion following the strong performance of 2024, with improved engagement and richer storytelling. During 2025, the 'Visit Herefordshire' website saw in excess of 1,180,000 million pages viewed by over 385,000 users, and almost 8,000 itineraries were downloaded. The Visit Herefordshire website showed up in 17 million Google searches and had around 135,000 listing interactions. High-performing pages include the Business Directory, What's On, See & Do, and Itineraries. Social media results and user engagement continue to grow year on year. These channels put Levy Payer businesses in front of motivated audiences looking for places to eat, stay, shop, and explore.
- 10. Visit Herefordshire Website Developments:** Significant improvements in content and digital mapping integrations, including: outdoor trails; POIs; multilingual content; immersive features; What's On pages; directory listings; Itineraries; newly developed themed content; structure, user engagement and website functionality, all leading to increased digital traffic and engagement.



11. Market Towns and Rural Grant Funds Awarded: Over the past 12 months, funding has supported a range of projects, including Late Night Shopping events in Ledbury, website developments for Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury and Leominster; Ledbury town map designed and distributed; finger post development and Christmas light installations in Ross-on-Wye; Destination Bromyard quarterly magazines; advertising campaigns in Kington and Leominster; promotion of the Leominster Antiques Trail; supported Masefield Matters community events program; improvements to Herefordshire Pilgrim Way signage; and development of the Herefordshire Trail map and signage scheme.

12. Herefordshire Cultural Partnership: HCBID has partially funded the creation of a refreshed Herefordshire Cultural Strategy that is in line with Herefordshire's 10-year Destination Management Plan, ensuring the County's economic strategies align.

13. Visit Herefordshire Tourism Conference 2025: brought together tourism businesses for a full day of industry insights, skills training, and networking. It featured presentations from VisitEngland, the launch of the new Destination Management Plan, and practical breakout sessions. The event highlighted strategic opportunities for growth, collaboration, and improved visitor experiences to 150 Visitor Economy Professionals in Herefordshire.

14. Visit Herefordshire Tourism Awards: Celebrating excellence, with 84 outstanding tourism businesses shortlisted for their innovation and quality. One of Herefordshire's largest industry events, the awards recognised top performers across 16 categories. 3 winners progressed to the VisitEngland Awards For Excellence. In 2025 Herefordshire secured 1 Silver and 2 Bronze awards. The ceremony strengthens pride in the sector and showcases Herefordshire nationally.

15. Learning Hub: Ongoing access to SEEDL's FREE Training Hub, with strong participation across customer service, digital skills, leadership and compliance. In 2025 1,437 Live Courses and 762 On-Demand Courses were completed.

16. Get Fully Booked: HCBID Developed and launched 11 new marketing training courses on the SEEDL platform in partnership with Get Fully Booked to support Herefordshire tourism businesses.

17. Place Support Partnership: provides FREE cost-saving advice and guidance and has now identified over £352,000 worth of cost savings for the businesses who have taken part.

18. Increased Business Engagement: regular Market Town Drop-Ins; workshops and specialist support sessions have been delivered leading to stronger, more frequent two-way communication with our Levy Payers.

19. Showcasing the County at Key Events: Raising Herefordshire's profile at high-footfall consumer shows, aligning with target audiences.



New for 2026

- > Continued LVEP programme delivery, partnerships, and improvements in destination coordination
- > Further development of the Film Office
- > Expansion of the Outdooractive platform with additional routes, mapping content, and business integration
- > Development of a dedicated wedding campaign on Visit Herefordshire to market the sector and attract new audiences
- > Develop a focus on outdoor activities such as fishing, golf and outdoor sports
- > Support agricultural businesses in the County to engage with Agri-Tourism diversification
- > Preparation for the 2026 HCBID Ballot, including: comprehensive business engagement, consultation on priorities for the next five-year BID Term and development of the new Business Plan

Local Visitor Economy Partnership

Recognised by



VisitEngland



What is the Herefordshire County BID?

The Herefordshire County BID is a designated area where businesses collaborate for a five-year Term to invest in Herefordshire's future. Through a set of agreed projects and services, we aim to enhance the County's Visitor Economy.

Our Core Objectives Are:

- > Achieve Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status from VisitEngland
- > Increase footfall to local businesses
- > Enhance workforce skills in Herefordshire
- > Provide 1-2-1 business support and cost-reduction services
- > Strengthen Herefordshire's tourism offerings
- > Drive inward investment and encourage people to live, work, and spend leisure time in the County

More information about existing and future projects, together with how you can get involved, can be found by visiting

www.herefordshirecountybid.co.uk

How is the HCBID Funded?

All businesses within the HCBID area with a rateable value of £12,000 and over, in sectors outlined in the HCBID Business Plan, are required to pay an annual HCBID Levy under the national BID regulations of 2004. The Levy is set at 2% of the rateable value for eligible non-domestic properties.

For more details on the geographical area, business sectors, and rules governing the HCBID, please visit our website:

www.herefordshirecountybid.co.uk/the-bid-area

| Finance Breakdown | | 2025/2026 | 2026/2027 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income | BID Levy | £449,079 | £377,212 > |
| | Supporting Income | £43,094 | £12,000 |
| | Total | £492,173 | £389,212 |
| Expenditure | Communicate | £213,148 | £198,683 |
| | Connect | £167,882 | £214,550 |
| | Collaborate | £123,542 | £89,163 |
| | Overheads | £110,395 * | £157,425 * |
| | Total | £614,967 | £659,821 |

* Overheads are high, but not unexpected, due to the repayment of the BID Loan which finishes December 2026.

> 2026/2027 BID Levy income is only 9 months' worth of collection due to the current BID Term finishing on 31 Dec 2026.

For more information and enquiries, contact tara@herefordshirecountybid.co.uk

The Herefordshire County BID covers the whole of the County, with the exception of the city centre of Hereford (which is covered by the Hereford City BID).