

Bucks Councillors Report for Jan 2022

70 Trees for 70 Years

Do you have a favourite tree or woodland in Buckinghamshire? An ancient oak you always pass on your walks? An area of woodland where you love to sit and enjoy the sunshine? Or somewhere that evokes fond childhood memories?

Bucks Council are looking for the best-loved trees and woodlands in Buckinghamshire, as part of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

To mark her Jubilee year in 2022, HM The Queen has launched a unique tree planting initiative called The Queen's Green Canopy which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "**Plant a Tree for the Jubilee**".

As well as inviting the planting of new trees, *The Queen's Green Canopy* BC dedicate a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the United Kingdom and identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

Alongside this, we would like to celebrate more of Buckinghamshire's trees and woodlands, and are inviting residents to nominate their favourites. We are aiming to compile a list of the 70 most-loved trees and woodlands in Buckinghamshire.

To take part, take a photo of your chosen tree or woodland, tell us where it is and why it is meaningful to you, and send it to us via social media @BucksCouncil or 70trees@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

By submitting your photograph, you are consenting to its reproduction across Buckinghamshire Council social media channels and its use by the media. You can use a photograph you have taken at any time of the tree or woodland. The photograph must have been taken by you.

The trees or woodland must not be on private land that is not accessible to members of the public.

You can nominate more than one tree or woodland. If more than 70 trees are nominated, the top 70 with the most nominations will be chosen.

Nominations close at midnight on 1st May 2022.

Find out more about the Queen's Jubilee and how you can celebrate via our website <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/the-queens-platinum-jubilee/>

BC are encouraging residents and community groups to support tree planting as part of the Bucks Tree Mission - a shared mission to plant trees for a greener future.

The Bucks Tree Mission is an important part of our [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#). The strategy will reduce our carbon emissions by 75% by 2030 on the way to achieving net-zero no later than 2050.

For information about Bucks Tree Mission <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/trees-and-hedges/tree-planting-schemes/>

Buckinghamshire Council wins national award for ‘Best Promotion of Two-Year-Old Funding’

At the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) awards in November 2021, Buckinghamshire Council’s Family Information Service won a national award for the ‘Best Promotion of Two-Year-Old Funding’. Entries for the award were judged by a panel of parent champions.

Two-Year-Old Funding is available for parents who meet certain criteria. It entitles them to 15 hours per week (term-time) or 11 hours per week (all year) childcare at a nursery, pre-school or childminders.

The award was achieved due to the close collaboration with the council’s Early Years and Childcare Two-Year-Old Funding team to develop an effective campaign that uses a range of promotional materials across digital channels. This includes videos exploring what Two-Year-Old Funding is, the benefits of taking up a funded childcare place, and a targeted video which goes out alongside the distribution of leaflets across the county.

“Parents and carers who are interested in finding out more about the funding can do so by going to <https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/childcare-and-early-years/paying-childcare/2yo-funded-childcare.>”

Buckinghamshire residents receive awards in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours list

Awards for 32 Buckinghamshire residents were announced today in HM The Queen’s New Year Honours List. These men and women have been recognised for their outstanding work in supporting key services and communities, ranging from a commitment to voluntary services for young people to community support efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are two recipient’s within the Ivinghoe ward, these being -

Medallists of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

Mrs Carol Mary Lister: For services to the community in Cheddington, Buckinghamshire particularly during Covid-19

Mrs Pamela Susan Gail Steed: For services to the community in Cheddington, Buckinghamshire particularly during Covid-19

Buckinghamshire Council announces 2022/23 budget proposals

Buckinghamshire Council has published its proposed budget for 2022/23 showing how it plans to balance the books amidst an extremely challenging financial environment.

While many other councils are struggling to meet the financial pressures, Buckinghamshire Council can balance its budget whilst continuing to allocate funds to key projects residents have asked for. However, this is only possible by making some difficult funding choices.

All councils are operating in a highly uncertain financial landscape, coping with significantly increased demands on services, alongside the added pressures of the Covid pandemic, whilst seeing reduced funding streams from areas such as car parking and leisure centres. In Buckinghamshire we are managing many competing challenges, from higher costs, because of inflation, to the financial pressures many of our key providers are facing. It's also a big challenge recruiting and retaining staff in vital areas such as social work, where we need to be able to offer competitive wages to hire and keep staff in these critical roles.

Our prudent financial management through these challenging times means Buckinghamshire is in a positive position of being able to bring forward plans to balance the books while still delivering the service improvements in areas our residents have asked us to prioritise, such as committing over £100 million to roads and pavement improvements and our plans to open a new Household Recycling Centre in the north of the county.

As with all local authorities, the biggest budget pressures come from those services we are legally required to provide, particularly social care for both Adults and Children. Overall, **57% of our net budget** is spent on these services. In total we budget to spend **approximately £295 million on social care services in 2022/23**. Protecting the vulnerable and helping those that need the Council's services the most is arguably the most important work we do. We need to balance this alongside spending on the biggest priorities for our residents, like roads and pavements maintenance and improvements, tackling climate change and supporting our residents and businesses to build back from the pandemic.

It means difficult choices are being made and the budget proposals include the following ways of raising the necessary revenue for 2022/23:

- Increasing Council Tax in Buckinghamshire by 3.99% (a rise of £1.23 per week for the average Band D property). This includes a 2% precept to help pay for Adult Social Care
- Reducing some of the funding for our sixteen Community Boards
- Continuing the significant savings being made as a result of becoming a single unitary council
- Using a one-off sum of £1.36 million from the General Fund to balance the budget and mitigate risk in 2023/24

Making these decisions allows the Council both to balance the books (a legal requirement) and still continue many key projects such as:

- Fighting Climate Change by planting more than half a million new trees in Bucks, one for every resident
- Again next year, cleaning out every one of the 85,000 gullies in the county
- Spending more than £100 million on our roads and pavement improvement programme
- Enhanced street cleaning in local communities – part of our ‘Big Bucks Tidy Up’ programme

Our capital budget spans the next four years and proposes spend in the following key areas:

- £37.9m to support Economic Growth & Regeneration
- £136.4m on schools, and school improvement projects
- £117.9m on overall transport and Strategic Highways maintenance including i) £61.6m on major highway resurfacing schemes; ii) £17.7m on smaller planned surface repairs (known as ‘Plane and Patch’ repairs); iii) £8.5m on pavement repairs; iv) £8.4m on Street Lighting repairs, replacement and maintenance; v) £8m on drainage works to reduce flooding on our roads
- £120.5m on Strategic Infrastructure
- £24m investment in Waste, primarily on vehicle replacement and a household recycling centre in Buckingham
- £21.7m to support Housing and Homelessness including affordable housing action plans and disabled facilities grants

Buckinghamshire Council runs a robust and thorough budget scrutiny process, going further than many other councils to offer its residents the chance of hearing directly from councillors about the budget plans and giving residents the chance to question, challenge, and feedback direct through public budget scrutiny sessions which will begin on Monday 10 January. The details can be found on the Council’s website at the meetings calendar page. The Council’s Cabinet has approved the plans at a meeting earlier today (Thursday 6 January).

Buckinghamshire Council awards Household Recycling Centres contract to FCC Recycling

Buckinghamshire Council has awarded the new contract to manage and operate its nine Household Recycling Centres to FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd. The contract is due to start on 1 April 2022 and run for five years with the option to extend a further five years (ten in total).

Buckinghamshire's Household Recycling Centres attract over a million visits a year and handle more than 60,000 tonnes of waste. FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd, which manages the current contract for Buckinghamshire's Household Recycling Centres, was agreed as the successful bidder, subject to contract, at the council's Cabinet meeting in December.

The new contract is worth £15 million over five years rising to £28.5 million over ten years if the contract is extended. Some elements of the successful bid include:

- Partnership with South Bucks Hospice to ensure more waste is reused from all sites through the shops at Aston Clinton and High Wycombe
- A Waste Awareness and Education Manager to support residents and the wider community to recycle and reuse more
- A target of recycling at least 68% of the waste brought to the sites