

Buckinghamshire Councillors Marsworth March 2022

Over 2,000 nominations received for Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List

More than 2,000 sites and assets have been nominated by local people for inclusion on Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List.

Using funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Buckinghamshire Council is working to improve the quality and extent of its Local Heritage List.

The Local Heritage List seeks to identify locally significant assets and celebrate their contribution to local identity and character. These assets can include historic buildings, archaeological sites, landscape features, historic parks and gardens and more. To date, over 2,000 assets have been nominated for Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List, including clock towers, road signs, post boxes, bridges and lamp posts, as well as the usual historic buildings, heritage assets and archaeological sites.

The Local Heritage List Project Team is now seeking volunteers to help identify and assess assets important and local to them. If you have an interest in heritage, particularly that of Buckinghamshire, and some spare time on your hands, this could be something for you!

For more information on the Local Heritage List or to register your interest in volunteering visit: [Home - Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List \(local-heritage-list.org.uk\)](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/local-heritage-list) or email localheritagelist@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Ofsted Inspection Outcome – Buckinghamshire Council Children’s Social Care

Between 29 November and 17 December 2021, Ofsted conducted their re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers. The report published 11 February 2022, says that Children’s Services in Buckinghamshire are no longer inadequate, but still require further improvements to be good.

As part of the inspection, inspectors evaluated:

- overall effectiveness of the service
- the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection
- the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families

Inspectors looked at approximately 350 children’s cases and reviewed over 300 documents and supporting evidence.

They met with staff, partners, children and young people, care leavers, parents and carers, adopters and foster carers.

Cabinet Member for Buckinghamshire Children’s Services, Councillor Anita Cranmer said: “We are pleased to hear that the majority of our children in care feel settled and safe where they live.

We have made considerable progress in our approach to children at immediate risk of serious harm and prompt action is taken to protect them. Our most vulnerable children/new-born babies are safely protected from future harm, either through care proceedings or through rigorous child protection plans.”

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet makes budget recommendations

Next year’s spending plans and council tax proposals have been considered by Buckinghamshire Council’s Cabinet today as part of the overall process to set the 2022/23 budget.

The Buckinghamshire Council budget for 2022/23 has been set amidst a turbulent time for public sector finances, with many competing pressures such as higher inflation rates and the significant costs of providing social care. However, Buckinghamshire Council is in a better position than many local authorities; we are able to balance our books and commit spending to key priorities that our residents have told us matter most to them.

Social care costs are projected to rise by around 5% next year, meaning that overall the Council is budgeting for nearly £300 million in total social care spending during 2022/23. This huge sum means we can go on providing critical services for the residents that need them most but we need to raise council tax to help cover this cost. Last year councils were advised they could raise the adult social care precept by a full 3 % to cover the costs of adult

social care. However, we chose to defer some of that rise until this year, to spread the burden for our residents over a longer time. It means that this year we're proposing a 2% rise in Council Tax to cover the increase in adult social care costs. In addition, we are proposing an inflation increase in our general service costs of 1.99%. This compares to inflation of over 5%. This general inflation increase, combined with the special increase to cover the increased costs of social care gives an overall proposed rise of 3.99%, or £1.23 per week for the average Band D property.

This proposal is part of the overall budget plans that have been scrutinised in recent weeks and which have now been recommended by Cabinet, ahead of final consideration by Full Council on Wednesday 23 February. The budget was set following consultation with residents who told the Council which areas they wanted to see prioritised. It means the balanced budget proposal includes plans to spend money on key projects such as:

- Continuing to spend over £100 million on improvements to roads and pavements
- Tackling the climate crisis including planting more than half a million new trees in Buckinghamshire, one for every resident
- Investing nearly £25 million in waste services, including vehicle upgrades and a new household recycling centre in the north of the county
- Cleaning every one of the 85,000 gullies in the county again this year
- Continued additional funding for litter clearance
- Adding to the funds available for rolling out high-speed broadband into additional areas
- Maintaining the Street Warden scheme in High Wycombe

Council Tax now makes up 82% of how we fund these services and given costs such as Adult Social Care are going up by as much as 5%, we simply don't have a choice. We are doing what we can to keep this to a minimum and are implementing the additional 1% Adult Social Care precept that was deferred from last year. We also know that residents in Bands A-D will also get a Council Tax rebate of £150 as announced by Government recently, so this will reduce the cost for many households in Buckinghamshire.

Our budget is formed on behalf of our residents so we must include spend on projects they tell us they want. So overall, I am proud we are in a position to produce a balanced budget that still includes significant spending on improving our roads and infrastructure, improving our environment, and carrying on making Buckinghamshire the best place to live, raise a family, work and do business.

Part 2

Now is the time to start planning your Jubilee celebrations

Buckinghamshire communities are being encouraged to get planning their celebrations to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee later this year.

The official public holiday to mark the historic occasion of The Queen's 70 years on the throne, falls from 2 to 5 June 2022. The four-day bank holiday weekend is the perfect time for local communities to plan their own celebrations. From street parties to special lunches and beacon lighting to bespoke events there are many ways for communities to get involved.

To support those who may want to hold a street party the Council is waiving the fee for temporary road closures, but it is important that people apply in plenty of time before the deadline of 6 May. See this [webpage](#) to find out more.

On 2 June hundreds of beacons will be lit up and down the county to mark the Jubilee. Local communities can register to light a beacon. For more information, visit the official [website](#). In Buckinghamshire, the council is supporting [The Queen's Green Canopy \(QGC\)](#), a nationwide planting initiative which invites people to Plant a Tree for the Jubilee. The tree planting season comes to an end in March but starts again in November so people can plan ahead. Leading on from this, the council's 70 Trees for 70 Years project is asking residents to nominate their favourite tree or woodland to compile into a list of the 70 best-loved trees. For more information on all the projects relating to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, please visit [Buckinghamshire Council's website](#).

News release from the Boundary Commission for England

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) invites comments during its secondary public consultation on constituency boundaries, which is open now until 4 April 2022. [Note: This public consultation relates to MPs constituencies and is separate from the councillors ward consultation.]

The Commission is undertaking an independent and impartial review of all constituencies in England, to make the number of electors in each constituency roughly the same. The number of constituencies in England will also increase to 543. The 2023 Boundary Review requires substantial changes to the map of constituencies across England, and the Commission wants members of the public to help shape the boundaries in their area by taking part in a consultation, running 22 February - 4 April.

View the initially proposed constituency boundaries for your area and provide views on them by visiting the consultation website bcereviews.org.uk. Responses can also be sent in by letter, email or provided in person at a public hearing. The Commission will hold 32 public hearings across the country throughout the consultation period, allowing members of the public to have their say in person about the proposed changes in their area. Book a 10 minute slot to speak at a hearing in your region on the Boundary Commission website: bit.ly/bcepublichearings. A video of each hearing will be available to watch on the Boundary Commission for England's YouTube channel shortly after it has taken place.

The Commission received over 34,000 responses from the public during its first consultation last year. These comments are now available to view by area, along with the initial proposals for constituencies, on the consultation website.

Secretary to the Boundary Commission for England, Tim Bowden, said:

“The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors represented by each MP. It's important that the constituencies we shape reflect your local community as best as possible. We received over 34,000 responses during our first consultation last year which are available online for the public to read and comment on. We're inviting more people to have their say in our current secondary consultation, which is open now until 4 April.

Help us to get our proposals right for your area by telling us your views via bcereviews.org.uk, or at a public hearing in your region. We're looking forward to hearing your feedback, and we take every response into account during our review of constituency boundaries."

More Bucks children offered first choice secondary schools places this year

Nearly four out of every five pupils in Buckinghamshire have been offered their first choice of secondary school in this year's allocations.

Figures for Buckinghamshire show that 78% of the 6917 children who applied for a school place were given their first-choice preference. This compares to 74% in 2020. A total of 99% of children in Buckinghamshire who applied in this year's process received an offer of a school place on Tuesday 1 March.

The school system we operated in Buckinghamshire can sometimes cause complications but I'm so pleased that we have been able to support the majority of our families in finding the right school for their child, to help them continue their education in the school of their choice.

Just over 10% of applicants received their second-choice placement and 4% were offered their third choice. Only a handful of children, (0.0187%) have not yet been allocated a place. The reasons for this include late applications and preferences for schools far outside catchment or not meeting individual schools' entry requirements.

Offers must be accepted by 11.59pm on Monday 14 March. Families who wish to appeal their allocation can do so by following the guidance given on the Council [website](#).

Free grants for energy improvements to homes

We are reminding residents of the free Government funding available to help them improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Not only does better energy efficiency have a positive impact on the environment and our collective bid to tackle climate change, it also helps reduce energy bills and at a time when costs are rising rapidly this can only be welcomed.

The scheme is run by our partner Warmworks and is available to households on low incomes in both private and rented properties. Please help us promote the scheme in your local communities so residents can benefit. The deadline for applications is fast approaching at the end of this month.

warmworks.co.uk/greenhomesgrant

Town and Parish Council customer service VIP line

You can make contact with us via the following email addresses:

- parishsupport@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- memberandparishsupport@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

And access Transport for Bucks (TfB) updates and information via the Parish portal:

<http://parishes.transportforbucks.net>

There is also a dedicated Town and Parish Council customer service VIP phonenumber where you can reach a member of our customer team on 0300 303 5640, 9am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 5pm on Friday.

New licensing policy adopted for Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council has adopted a new policy that sets out how it will consider applications and issues relating to licensing. Under the Licensing Act 2003, the new Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire replaces those that were previously being used by the former district councils.

The policy sets out how the Council will consider applications for licences for alcohol sales, entertainment provided at large scale or late night events and late night food take-aways. It also explains the Council's approach to dealing with problems at existing licensed premises. The law requires that the Council produces and publishes this policy at least every five years.

Before the policy was approved, the Council consulted with a wide range of people and organisations who might be affected by it, including the police, licence holders, members of the public and residents' associations. All of the comments received were considered and some changes were made to the final policy as a result.

The policy includes elements that reflect how licensing can support the Council's core aims of strengthening our communities, improving our environment, protecting the vulnerable and increasing prosperity. Applications for permanent licences, and any significant changes to current licences must be advertised at the premises and on the Council's website. Anyone who might be affected by the proposed activities, or changes, can object if they think that any of the licensing objectives are likely to be undermined. These objectives are: the prevention of public nuisance, public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder and the protection of children from harm. Existing licences can also be reviewed and action taken where activities are causing a problem.

Are you caring for someone else's child?

Buckinghamshire Council is urging residents to get in touch if they are aware of children living apart from close family, as this informal arrangement could be what is known as Private Fostering and if so, by law, the council needs to be informed.

Children under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) who are living away from their parents or close relatives (such as aunts and uncles, grandparents, siblings or step-parents) for more than 28 days are classed as being in a Private Fostering arrangement. By law, the council must be told of this.

Private Fostering arrangements are completely legal and can often be the best solution for the child. There can be lots of reasons why a child doesn't live at home and their parent has arranged for someone else to care for them. It might be due to illness or instability at home, being sent from overseas for education or healthcare, teenagers living with the family of their boyfriend or girlfriend, or something else.

As a council, we simply need to know about the arrangement so we can support everyone involved and ensure the child is safe and well looked after. So, if you think you might be involved in a Private Fostering arrangement, or if you are a professional and know someone who is in such an arrangement, please let us know, it's the law.

Last year, Buckinghamshire Council supported a number of children in a Private Fostering arrangement, but it is believed there are other cases it has not been made aware of.

Find out more at: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/private-fostering or call the Connected Persons team 01296 383 962 or email: cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Buckinghamshire Council to convert first refuse vehicle to electric thanks to government grant

Buckinghamshire Council has been awarded more than half a million pounds to upcycle its first refuse collection vehicle to electric. It marks the start of the Council's programme to convert its fleet to electric, resulting in zero exhaust emissions.

The £578,000 funding, which was announced this week, is from the Government's Air Quality Grant, which helps councils to develop and implement measures to reduce the impact of dirty air on people's health.

The grant will cover the cost of upcycling the first vehicle as well as providing a blueprint for the future conversion programme. The funds will also be used to pay for performance trials, spare parts and specialist equipment for maintaining the vehicle. It all paves the way for more vehicle conversions to follow in the future.

The upcycled 10-year-old Dennis Eagle 26 tonne refuse collection vehicle will travel 412 miles a week in the north of Aylesbury, including through three air quality management areas. These are areas which have exceeded the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide so the use of an electric refuse vehicle in these areas will also promote and contribute towards improving air quality. As a result of using the electric refuse vehicle, over 10 tonnes of greenhouse gas, 69 kg of oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and half a kilo of particulate matter emissions will be saved per year.

Air pollution is the single biggest environmental risk to public health. As part of the same government funding scheme Buckinghamshire Council has also been awarded a grant to purchase and trial low-cost monitoring sensors which will be part of clean air campaigns throughout the year.

Derek Town