

Buckinghamshire Councillors Report for Marsworth PC 12th February 2024 & Newsletter

Secretary of State decision, land adjacent to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill

In response to being notified of a decision to uphold an appeal against Buckinghamshire Council's refusal of planning permission for a new Category C prison at land adjacent to HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill at Grendon Underwood, Councillor Peter Strachan, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration said:

"This decision is desperately disappointing and is another kick in the teeth for local people already blighted by HS2 and East West Rail construction works in this area. While we understand the need for more prison places nationally, we remain adamant that this is the wrong location for this facility. This is a rural location, which takes in an historic landscape and it will not be easy for families to access the facility to visit inmates.

The council's Strategic Sites Committee unanimously refused planning permission for the prison back in March 2022 and we stand by the reasons for that decision; the committee felt that the combined effects on the local area in terms of sustainability, heritage and the environment would have an overriding negative impact. There was also a feeling that not enough consideration has been given to alternative sites which could be more suitable for such a facility.

It is therefore disappointing to receive news that the appeal against our decision has been upheld. We are in the process of digesting the decision letter in full before determining any next steps"

Fly-tipper's Christmas Day 'gift' to Bucks residents lands him in court.

A man who brazenly dumped waste in the middle of a road in Beaconsfield on Christmas Day 2022 has been prosecuted in court following an investigation by Buckinghamshire Council's fly-tipping enforcement team and the assistance of local residents who were outraged by the incident.

Jordan Louis Acton, aged 32, of Ernest Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, admitted to fly-tipping a load of waste at the roadside at Windsor End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, on Christmas Day 25 December 2022. He entered a guilty plea when his case was heard at High Wycombe Magistrates Court on 25 January 2024. The case had been delayed in coming to court due to a change of address which saw Acton fail to attend an earlier hearing and his subsequent arrest in Surrey.

On 25 December 2022, a commercial truck load of waste was dumped at the roadside near houses and offices on Windsor End in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Vigilant

local residents examined the dumped waste and found traceable details which were later investigated by an enforcement officer from Buckinghamshire Council's fly-tipping enforcement team.

Local residents and businesses checked their domestic and commercial CCTV systems and helped confirm the description of the offending vehicle. The description was referred to Thames Valley Police who subsequently identified the vehicle. The details found in the dumped waste were traced to waste which the producer confirmed was removed by Acton and he was identified as the registered keeper of the vehicle seen carrying and depositing the waste.

Acton was interviewed by enforcement officers from the council but gave 'no comment' responses to questions.

High Wycombe magistrates fined Acton £693 and awarded full clean-up and investigation costs to Buckinghamshire Council who brought the prosecution, to a total of £1,838.70. A victim surcharge of £277 was also imposed meaning that Acton has to pay a total of **£2,808.70**.

Communities should prepare for groundwater flooding

Communities across the Berkshire Downs and Chiltern Hills should be prepared for groundwater flooding. Residents can [check their risk on the government website](#). If you are in an area that is not covered by the Environment Agency's groundwater flood alerts but have previously experienced groundwater flooding, you should prepare for groundwater flooding over the coming weeks.

Groundwater flooding is currently occurring in areas across the Berkshire Downs and is starting to appear in Buckinghamshire. [Groundwater levels are high in the Wycombe area](#) and are being monitored. Buckinghamshire Council have produced [groundwater flood maps](#) of the likely locations for groundwater flooding, where it is most likely to emerge and what locations it will impact. These are available for Chesham, Marlow, Hambleton, Wycombe and West Wycombe.

If you are experiencing flooding, you can call Floodline for advice at 03459881188. You should [report flooding to Buckinghamshire Council](#).

If it is an emergency and flooding is causing a risk to life, you must call 999.

Groundwater can infiltrate the sewage system. If you have problems flushing your toilet or sewage is emerging, contact [Thames Water](#) on 0800 316 9800.

Groundwater flooding occurs when water gathers beneath the ground's surface, causing the water table to rise and eventually reach the surface. Groundwater flooding has some key characteristics that differ from other sources of flooding:

- Flooding will usually occur days or even weeks after heavy rainfall.

- Flooding may persist for a long time, often lasting for weeks.
- Water may emerge on hillsides.
- Water may rise up through the floors, rather than entering through doors.

Due to these characteristics, and the fact that groundwater flooding is a less common source of flooding, people are often caught unprepared.

Furthermore, while local agencies are prepared to support you, no measures are available to lower the water table during a groundwater flood. Therefore, residents and businesses must be prepared that groundwater levels will remain high and should undertake measures to protect their property until the water table naturally falls. The most important thing to do to prepare for groundwater flooding is to have a personal flood plan. [Flood Mary's website has many resources for creating a plan, including a template to fill in.](#) If residents and businesses already have flood plans, this is the time to review them and action what they can. We advise planning for the worst-case scenario of groundwater flooding lasting for weeks.

This can be incredibly difficult, as homes, roads, and community spaces can all be affected for long periods of time. If you are struggling and would like someone to talk to, the [National Flood Forum](#) is a charity to help, support and represent people at risk of flooding. You can call them on 01299 403 055.

“Groundwater flooding can have devastating impacts on those affected. One of the best ways to reduce that impact is to be prepared. Ensure you have your flood plan ready and speak to your community to ensure everyone knows of the risk. Groundwater has long been the forgotten form of flooding, and communities at risk do not get the same level of advice and support as they do with other forms of flooding. We are working to change that with Project Groundwater, and we will continue to share our learning to benefit all who experience groundwater flooding.”

Project Groundwater supports communities to be more resilient to groundwater flooding. The project aims to increase engagement with communities in order to help build understanding and awareness of groundwater flooding. We are working to:

- improve monitoring of when and where groundwater emerges
- develop a better groundwater flood warning service that will support residents to take action
- investigate what nature-based solutions could be used to reduce groundwater flood risk.

This project is funded by Defra as part of the [£200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes](#) which is managed by the Environment Agency. The programmes will drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.

For more information, please visit: www.projectgroundwater.co.uk

You can follow the project on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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Buckinghamshire Council announces Aylesbury town centre improvements

Work is due to start on a number of upgrades and improvements in Aylesbury town centre, to enhance the existing space with attractive lighting and other new features.

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to the positive regeneration of our county and in particular our market towns, as outlined in the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework, which has recently been adopted. This includes specific town centre plans to create great, sustainable places to live and visit, where our businesses and communities can thrive and prosper.

As part of a package of investment, these initial measures will bring forward immediate improvements to the heart of Aylesbury, kickstarting the wider regeneration of the town.

These improvement works are due to start in March and will include:

- **upgrading the power supply to Market Square** - increasing power availability to many more market stalls, allowing for more traders and more variety with a new layout. Greater power capacity will also provide scope for more varied and bespoke public events, attracting more residents and visitors to the area
- **improving the lighting in Market Square** including a newly designed lighting scheme to celebrate and illuminate the historic features of the square, also restoring power to historic lanterns and lighting the clock face on Market Tower
- **cleaning and repair works** to the statues and monuments in Market Square
- **public realm improvements to Cambridge Street** to introduce a permanent pedestrianised section with brand new street surface and lighting
- **making permanent the traffic orders in Kingsbury Square** prohibiting general traffic from the route outside the Rockwood pub and thus enhancing the space for pedestrians/shoppers and visitors

Library theatre show promotes the benefits of gardening for mental health

A theatre show promoting the benefits of gardening for mental health is being hosted in nine libraries across the county between Monday 19 February and Saturday 2 March.

The *Head Gardener* show features the story of brothers Jake and Warren Oldershaw and brings audiences a performance that digs deep into the reasons why we could all do with a bit more horticulture in our lives.

During the show the pair tell personal tales of why gardening is so important for mental health; design, draught and bring to life a unique and beautiful garden; share fascinating stories of different projects, plants and species; and even throw a few songs into the mix.

The show has been given the thumbs up by celebrity gardener Alan Titchmarsh who described the performance as: 'Living proof that gardening is good for you'.

The theatre tour is being jointly funded by Buckinghamshire Council's Healthy Libraries programme and the national Rekindle programme. Rekindle is led by Creative Arts England and funded by Arts Council England and is designed to empower libraries to strengthen ties with local arts and make it more accessible to local communities. The Healthy Libraries programme brings public health initiatives direct to residents, providing a range of events, activities and information to help people live healthy and happier lives.

Councillor Derek Town