

Cllr Jilly Jordan update April 2023

New parking charges to come in across Buckinghamshire

New charges for on and off-street parking across Buckinghamshire will come into force from Monday 3 April. The changes are being introduced following a review by the council's budget scrutiny committee.

The changes will see an increase of 20p per tariff for on street parking and 10p per tariff for off street parking. Where applicable, free parking periods are expected to remain unchanged.

Commenting on the new charges, Steven Broadbent, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, said:

"The increased fees will go into maintaining the upkeep and enhancement of these valuable assets, which benefit the whole community, along with our environmental and transport objectives.

"The changes form part of a wider programme of work to improve our car parks, which includes installing new ticketless payment machines to make it easier for people to pay for parking – with customers able to choose cashless payment in addition to the options to pay via the RingGo app or phonenumber.

"This reflects changes in how people have chosen to pay for their parking in recent years. We've seen a decrease in cash payments and significantly more people choosing to pay using contactless cards or the RingGo app or phonenumber."

All funds raised from the council's on and off-street parking facilities are used to support the upkeep of facilities and wider transport initiatives.

More information on Buckinghamshire Council car parks can be found here:

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/parking

The Buckinghamshire School Awards – Who gets your vote?

Join us in celebrating our wonderful school communities across the county as we run our first ever Buckinghamshire School Awards.

The awards have been introduced by Buckinghamshire Council, in recognition of the dedication and hard work of all school staff across the county. Nominations are now open to all staff in schools in Buckinghamshire. The 12 award categories include; Teacher of the Year, Teaching Assistant of the Year, Unsung Heroes Award and Pupil Voice Award.

One award is open for the public to vote on – The Community Engagement School of the Year Award. Anyone with a connection to a local school can nominate the school they feel deserves this award which recognises schools that are actively involved in their local community, making a difference to local people beyond the school gates and in the wider area. The award will recognise schools that actively bring together families, staff, pupils and local residents to create a safe and inclusive community.

The awards have been generously sponsored by Wycombe Wanderers, Pinewood Studios, Buckinghamshire Skills Hub in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First, Thakeham, The Entertainer, Supply Desk, Bosch and LEAP. Nominations will close at 5pm on Friday 28 April.: “Buckinghamshire schools work hard to provide a first-class education for our children, nurturing and caring about their growth, wellbeing and development. We want these awards to recognise the amazing dedication, commitment and passion that the whole school community is showing day in and day out.

“To all those working in schools, whether you want to celebrate a fantastic teaching colleague, an inspirational senior leadership team or an unsung hero in your school, please nominate and tell us about the difference they are making to our children and young people across Buckinghamshire.”

To nominate a school for the Community Engagement School of the Year award [visit the Buckinghamshire School Awards 2023 webpage](#).

Once nominations close, nominations will be reviewed by a panel of judges and the winners chosen. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony 21 June 2023.

98% of Bucks families get one of their primary school preferences

Figures published today, Monday 17 April, show that overall, 98% of children in both Reception and Junior schools were offered one of their preference schools this year.

90% of children starting Reception received their top choice allocation, with 96% of families getting their first choice of Junior school. All children who expressed preferences in the Reception and Junior allocation rounds have been offered a school place in Buckinghamshire.

Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Children's Services said:

"I am pleased to see so many children being offered a place at their first choice of school this year. Starting or changing schools can be intimidating for many families, and we believe that every parent and carer knows what is best for their child. I am proud to say that we have been able to offer most children their preferred schools, where they can continue their education and reach their full potential."

In total 6912 children were allocated places in Reception classes and 1750 children have been allocated places in Junior schools.

5.88% of children got their second-choice Reception preference and 1.33% received their third preference. In Junior school allocations, 1.68% got their second-choice placement and 0.06% were give their third choice. Further allocations will be made in the summer term when late applications will be processed.

Council has a new tool in the fight against potholes

As part of its new contract, which started on 1 April, Buckinghamshire Highways has taken delivery of a different type of vehicle to help in the fight against potholes.

Used by many councils across the country, the Pothole Pro is a time-saving, three-in-one vehicle designed to make pothole repairs faster. First it cuts into the road surface where a pothole has appeared, it crops the perimeter of the hole neatly to allow a watertight repair, and then it brushes away and collects the debris afterwards. Highways teams just need to lay and compact asphalt into the prepared hole to complete the repair.

The benefits of using such a vehicle are speed but also that operators are safely in their cab, with no risk of the use of vibrating hand tools affecting their hands or fingers.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steven Broadbent said: "I joined the crew training on the Pothole Pro last week and was impressed with the potential of the machine and the speed the crew picked up the skills to operate the machine safely. This is just one of a number of tools we will be using to invest in and improve our roads. Whilst the machine won't be able to access everywhere or fix all types of defects it has great potential as another option we can use on our road network."

Although potholes can occur at any time of the year, it is late winter and early spring where the weather can have a massive impact on the number of potholes forming and there is an increase in the number of potholes on the county's roads after heavy rain followed by freezing temperatures.

Buckinghamshire Highways carries out regular inspections of the highway network by dedicated staff to ensure potholes and other defects are identified and repaired in a timely manner, keeping the highway safe. Problems on the roads and footways of Buckinghamshire should also continue to be reported using [Fix My Street](#).

Buckinghamshire Council awarded £576k to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to low-income households in the county

Buckinghamshire Council has been awarded £576,000 from the government's Home Upgrade Grant to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to owner occupied and private rented properties in the county. The upgrades are aimed at tackling fuel poverty and reducing carbon emissions.

The scheme enables eligible households to benefit from a range of energy and cost saving upgrades, depending on the specific circumstances such as the fuel source, energy efficiency and EPC rating of the home. The majority of the funding will be made available for the least efficient homes heated by the most polluting fuel sources

"This new funding from the Home Upgrade Grant will help us continue to improve Buckinghamshire's most energy inefficient homes. The funding is aimed at low-income households, helping them save money and reduce fuel poverty. The home improvements will also cut carbon emissions and support our progress towards making Buckinghamshire net zero by 2050.

"With fuel costs at an all-time high, the second phase of this scheme is an important chance for local residents to improve their homes, save money on their energy bills and reduce their carbon emissions."

Buckinghamshire Council will shortly be contacting residents who they believe are likely to be eligible for the scheme. Further information will also be made available soon on the council's website.

Any Buckinghamshire residents who are struggling to afford basic necessities such as food, fuel and other household costs should call the council's Helping Hand team on 01296 531151 or complete the [online contact form](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-upgrade-grant-phase-2>

Be part of the Community Food Chain and help people in need

Buckinghamshire Council is encouraging residents to be part of the [Community Food Chain](#) and lend a helping hand to ensure food gets to those in need of support. If you enjoy helping others, or have excess food, green fingers or free time you could donate, there are a wide range of ways you can help your community.

As the cost of living pressures continue, 33% more food parcels have been provided to residents by foodbanks in January and February this year compared to the same time last year. In addition to support available through foodbanks, the council's Helping Hand service

provides support for residents who are struggling to pay for food, utility bills and other household essentials.

The Community Food Chain represents how residents and support services work together giving and collecting donations that are then distributed to those in the community who are in need. Part of this is the council's [Food Champion](#) scheme, which works in partnership with Street Associations and local communities to increase much needed donations to local foodbanks. Food Champions are encouraged to coordinate regular food donations in their street, area or place of work to collect dry and tinned food items and to deliver them to the foodbanks.

Anyone wishing to be part of the Community Food Chain and lend a helping hand can now join the 46 amazing volunteers that have already signed up as Food Champions around the county by contacting their nearest foodbank to set up a collection point.

If you have green fingers, you can also participate in our [Grow to Give scheme](#), where we encourage people to grow food in their garden or allotment and donate the excess to community fridges. Each Grow to Give allotment site has a donation point, making it effortless for residents to join the food chain and donate their fresh produce.

Alternatively, anyone can offer their time and volunteer at [a foodbank](#) or a community fridge - or even set up their own community fridge. Community fridges are a great way of supporting your community and reducing food waste. They enable local people and businesses to donate fresh food and produce that might otherwise be wasted. All food donated to the fridges will be available for residents to collect and enjoy. [You can find your local community fridge here or find out more about setting one up.](#)

"If you are able, please consider getting involved and give a helping hand. We know that so many of our residents and local businesses are incredibly generous and welcoming when called on to help others.

To find out more or to set up a scheme in your street please visit our [Food Champions](#) page.

- Residents struggling to buy food can find out about the food support available from [Helping Hand](#) or use the [Buckinghamshire Online Directory](#) to find local organisations who can provide emergency food support.
- Anyone interested in further opportunities such as volunteering during the King's Coronation, can register with [Community Impact Bucks](#), who provide a free and confidential service to help match your skills and interests to local opportunities.
- A total of 15,427 adults and children in Buckinghamshire were supported by food banks during January and February this year.
- This is an increase of 37% compared to the same time last year, with council referrals increasing by 23%.
- Alongside food bank support, the council's Helping Hand service issued 808 Supermarket Vouchers in January and February to assist residents with food crisis support, clothing and essential household items.

