



CLr Jilly Jordan

Soulbury Parish Council Report June 19th 2023

Celebrating Bucks communities

June is the 'Month of Community' and in Buckinghamshire we are taking the opportunity to celebrate all the great work our communities do.

From fundraisers to [food champions](#) and support networks to [street associations](#), our local communities are made up of people committed to helping others and improving life in their local area.

For the month of June, the focus is on celebrating everything that makes our communities great, including:

- Saying a big thank you to all those who volunteer, in whatever capacity, including those who have offered assistance as part of our Helping Hand for Afghanistan and Ukraine schemes, as well as our unpaid carers.
- Shining a spotlight on the work the council does with local communities to make them even stronger, including the work of our Community Boards and our work with partner organisations.
- Sharing information on how people can get more involved in their local community, including volunteering opportunities and other community initiatives.
- Raising awareness of the [Bucks Online Directory](#) which gives details of ongoing activities, schemes and community groups that people can get involved with.

Throughout June, the focus will be on different elements of community, tying into national campaigns and promoting local schemes and initiatives, including:

- Volunteering and [Refugee Week](#) (19 to 25 June) – a festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary.
- Spotlight on the Armed Forces – coinciding with [Armed Forces Day](#) (24 June) and including our [Armed Forces Conference](#) in Aylesbury (12 June).
- Combatting loneliness and isolation, with [Loneliness Awareness Week](#) (13 to 17 June).
- Getting involved in your community and increasing health and wellbeing.

There are lots of ways you can get involved in your local community. For volunteering opportunities, check out the [Volunteer Matching Service](#) run by Community Impact Bucks.

Call blocker programme shields vulnerable Buckinghamshire residents against scammers

In response to the growing menace of phone scams and nuisance calls, Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards is offering vulnerable residents a free device which blocks scam phone calls. The compact trueCall device screens incoming phone calls and blocks calls from unknown and unsolicited phone numbers.

Each year, a significant number of Buckinghamshire residents fall victim to fraudsters who employ deceptive tactics to steal sensitive data. Among the most prevalent methods used is cold calling, where fraudsters impersonate legitimate representatives of businesses or financial institutions.

Alarming statistics shared by the trueCall team reveal that the proportion of nuisance calls identified as scams has surged from 21% to 40% in the past two years. Furthermore, one-third of scam victims fall prey to a second scam within a year, with single older individuals being three times more susceptible than those living with partners. Vulnerable individuals are also targeted with approximately 40% more scam calls compared to the general population.

To apply for a free call blocker device, interested individuals should contact [Trading Standards](#) via email at ts.prevention@surreycc.gov.uk or call Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133. The devices are provided on loan for as long as they are needed – ensuring ongoing protection against fraudulent activities.

Any incidents of suspected fraud should be reported to Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133.

Pothole Pro gets to work fixing problem potholes

Buckinghamshire Council's latest tool in the fight against potholes has been hard at work tackling some of the most troublesome. Pro is a specialist three-in-one vehicle that speeds up the process of repairing potholes and large sections of the road surface road defects around the county.

The machine starts by cutting into the road surface where a pothole has appeared. It planes out the defective area then crops the perimeter of the hole neatly, minimising the amount of material that needs to be removed and allowing a watertight seal. It then brushes away and collects the debris afterwards. All that is then needed following this is for highways teams to seal, lay and compact the asphalt into the prepared area to complete the repair.

The harsh winter weather caused significant damage to many roads across the county, compounded by the extra HGVs working on projects including HS2 and East West Rail. The council's road crews were trained and ready to spring into action with the new machine once suitable dry weather conditions allowed them to get out and start making permanent repairs to the roads. During the previous wet and cold weather the crews could only make temporary emergency repairs.

The first sites the Pothole Pro visited earlier this month were Lower Road in Haddenham and Portway Road in Stone, where nine areas of defective road surface were repaired. The Pothole Pro will continue to travel around the county visiting sites that have been identified for repairs as part of a 28-day patching plan, including further works on Berryfields Road where 41 defects are due to be fixed over coming weeks.

Condition surveys of the county's road are carried out by the Highway Inspectors who, along with the Local Area Technicians, identify areas that require repairs. The number and size of the defects are recorded, measured and assessed to determine the best way of making the repairs. The Pothole Pro is being used to repair defects measuring 21.5sqf (2sqm) and above. For larger areas with multiple defects, use of the Pothole Pro for planing and sweeping is combined with the more practical methods of Plane and Patch or resurfacing is used, where the old road surface is removed in its entirety and a new surface laid. To date the largest patch of road repaired by the Pothole Pro has measured 2,637 sq ft (245sqm).

Keeping older drivers safe behind the wheel

Buckinghamshire Council recently welcomed a group of older drivers and family members to an event to help them find out how they can continue to stay safe and confident behind the wheel.

The event, hosted by a range of council teams and in partnership with other organisations including Thames Valley Police and Specsavers opticians, took place at Hartwell Nurseries in Aylesbury on Thursday 18 May. It supports the national Project EDWARD initiative which campaigns on road safety.

Older drivers are one of the most at-risk groups behind the wheel, along with young drivers, motorcyclists and people who drive for work. Research has shown that in our mid-70s, drivers start to have problems assessing complex or high-speed traffic situations. The number of older drivers is growing year on year and the number of collisions involving older drivers has also increased.

To help drivers aged 70 and over, stay safe and confident when driving, the council promotes a range of initiatives. In addition to having regular eyesight tests and checking any medication you are on does not affect your driving, one of the easiest ways to get some assistance is to book a Mature Driver Assessment. This offers the opportunity for drivers to discuss any concerns they may have with a qualified driving assessor who can offer advice and reassurance. It can help older drivers to gain a greater awareness of the types of roads and situations where they may be more likely have a collision. The aim is to ensure a driver is safe to be driving on the roads, and if not, identify what can be done to help.

Buckinghamshire Council has been running mature driving assessments since 2011. In addition, a free online module is available for older drivers and their families. The module covers many issues, including eyesight, medication, fatigue, distractions, journey planning, information about vehicle adaptations and licencing. There are also hazard perception videos to practice scanning techniques and additional modules on speed management and winter driving

The module takes about 15 minutes to complete and is free to access.

For more information on Mature Driving Assessments, our online modules and the other support available visit the [website](#).

New free workshops helping you get to grips with Excel, Budgets and Data

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is delivering FREE numeracy workshops across Buckinghamshire as part of its Multiply initiative. The latest series of workshops focus on helping local businesses improve employees' skills and confidence with Microsoft Excel.

The best way to learn Excel is to use Excel, which is why Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is offering a series of 90-minute online workshops targeted at adults (aged 19+) who do not already have a maths GCSE at grade C (or equivalent) or hold a Level 2 Maths qualification.

- Getting to grips with Excel (Wednesday 7 June: 9:30am – 11am)
- Getting to grips with Data (Wednesday 21 June: 9:30am – 11am)
- Getting to grips with Budgets (Wednesday 28 June: 9:30am – 11am)

The workshops aim to support local businesses improve their employees' confidence in using Microsoft Excel for business. This includes providing practical skills to manage spreadsheets, understand and create calculations using formulae and functions, create graphs and charts to analyse and present data and extrapolate trends and report on them.

The workshops are the latest to be delivered as part of Multiply - a new government-funded programme to help adults (19 years+) who do not already have a maths GCSE at grade C (or equivalent) improve their numeracy skills. The scheme is part of Buckinghamshire Council's 'Opportunity Bucks' programme which aims to improve outcomes for people in Buckinghamshire.

Find out more about the [online 'Getting to grips with...' workshops](#) and secure your free place for yourself or your employees today.

Senior political appointments confirmed at Buckinghamshire Council

Senior political appointments have been confirmed by Buckinghamshire Council following its Annual General Meeting yesterday (17 May) held at The Gateway offices in Aylesbury.

Martin Tett continues as Leader of the Council with his own set of portfolio responsibilities covering financial strategy, economic development, skills and employability, strategic infrastructure, policy and communications and the recovery plan for Buckinghamshire.

Two deputy leaders, Angela Macpherson and Gareth Williams, will continue to provide support in addition to their own cabinet responsibilities.

Taking up the important ceremonial position of Chairman of the Council for the forthcoming year is Patricia Birchley, with Mimi Harker supporting her as Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Martin also announced his new Cabinet appointments, together with deputy cabinet member positions. The full list is below:

Health and Wellbeing Portfolio

Angela Macpherson - Cabinet Member and Deputy Leader

Zahir Mohammed - Deputy Cabinet Member (Public Health)

Climate Change and Environment Portfolio

Gareth Williams - Cabinet Member and Deputy Leader

Jilly Jordan - Deputy Cabinet Member (Environment)

Planning and Regeneration Portfolio

Peter Strachan - Cabinet Member

Rachael Matthews - Deputy Cabinet Member (Town Centre Regeneration)

Gary Hall - Deputy Cabinet Member (Enforcement)

Homelessness and Regulatory Services Portfolio

Mark Winn - Cabinet Member

Carl Jackson - Deputy Cabinet Member (Regulatory Services)

Education and Children's Services Portfolio

Anita Cranmer - Cabinet Member

Joseph Baum - Deputy Cabinet Member (Skills)

Transport Portfolio

Steven Broadbent - Cabinet Member

Peter Martin - Deputy Cabinet Member (HS2/EWR)

Dominic Barnes – Deputy Cabinet Member (Transport Projects)

Accessible Housing and Resources Portfolio

John Chilver - Cabinet Member

Tim Butcher - Deputy Cabinet Member (Resources and HR)

Culture and Leisure Portfolio

Clive Harriss - Cabinet Member

Communities Portfolio

Arif Hussain - Cabinet Member

Thomas Broom - Deputy Cabinet Member (Community Safety)

Speaking after the meeting, Martin said: “The last year has been one of the most challenging we have all had to face, not least the invasion of Ukraine, rising inflation and energy costs, cost of living pressures impacting residents and businesses, national infrastructure projects impacting locally, major increases in demand and complexity for both adults’ and children’s social care, a strong focus on the environment and climate change and housing affordability remaining a key issue for many residents, including young people and key workers.

I continue to be extremely proud of the resilience of our residents, members, partners, and staff, who always rise to the challenge of delivering services and supporting residents.

Together, we want to ensure that all Buckinghamshire residents have the opportunity to succeed in life, to play their part in and share in the success of the county.

The year ahead promises to be another very challenging one...but we are up for it!”

The meeting was also webcast and can be viewed here: https://buckinghamshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/772184