



Cllr Jilly Jordan

Soulbury Parish Council Report July 16th 2023

Explore the great outdoors with Love Exploring

Families in Buckinghamshire are being invited to explore the great outdoors right here on their doorstep, using a new fun and simple interactive mobile app. The Love Exploring app is completely free and gives users access to a range of games to play and activities to do throughout the year, when visiting parks and open spaces around the county.

Love Exploring encourages communities to explore their local area, parks and green spaces more through walking. The app creates bespoke activities to bring audio mindfulness guides and augmented reality games such as Dinosaur Safari, to local areas. The app is free and invites users to play games and take part in guided trails which include quizzes to get them hunting for clues as they explore the place they are visiting.

The app has multiple benefits and specifically aims to:

- Motivate residents to become more active
- Increase usage of our wonderful local parks and green spaces
- Deter crime and anti-social behaviour and increase the confidence of park users.

With the summer holidays on the horizon, now is the perfect time for families to download our Love Exploring app and discover the fun that can be had in our parks and open spaces, all for free. It's not just families who can benefit, anyone can download the app and get exploring. There are activities for all ages and by taking part you can increase your activity levels without even realising it. So, what are you waiting for? Download the app today and get exploring!"

To see the locations and download the Love Exploring app visit the website:

www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/loveexploringbucks

Celebrating Buckinghamshire's Adult Learners

Over 120 people gathered at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury on Wednesday evening (5 July) for the annual Buckinghamshire Adult Learning Awards.

The awards are designed to celebrate the achievements of students taking part in adult learning courses in Buckinghamshire. They also recognise the work of trainees, assessors, tutors, learning support assistants, volunteers and staff.

Learners are nominated for an award by tutors and learning support assistants. In turn, learners are invited to nominate tutors, learning support assistants or volunteers who have inspired and supported them in class. The nominations are reviewed by a team of judges and awarded points across a number of areas. Those receiving the highest score in each category are named the winner.

The winners announced at the ceremony included:

- Skills Learner of the Year: Kenneth Peach
- Supported Intern of the Year: Eloise Labross
- Trainee of the Year: Sava Rubskyi
- Vocational Learner of the Year: Roxy Mitchell-Gears
- Learning for Personal Development Learner of the Year: Sheila Wright
- Community Learner of the Year: Pat Andrews
- Apprentice of the Year: Saska Banjac D'Arc
- Tutor of the Year: Fiona Redwood
- Learning Support Assistant of the Year: Mei Lin-Chapman

Each learner winner was presented with a trophy and certificate by Anita Cranmer, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

Congratulations to our winners and to all those nominated. This event shines a spotlight on the hard work and dedication of learners and staff alike. Buckinghamshire Adult Learning courses provide the chance for people, whatever their age or background, to develop a range of skills and experience, opening up doors to exciting new opportunities and career paths.

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning runs over 1,500 part-time courses and workshops, delivered from 140 locations across the county. For more information visit the [website](#).

We need adopters for children from Black African and Caribbean Communities

Buckinghamshire Council is calling for people who may be considering adoption to get in touch. Adopters are needed for all children in Bucks, but those who are looking to adopt a child or young person from Black African and Black Caribbean heritage are particularly sought after.

National evidence shows that children from black communities typically wait longer to find the right family and so spend more time in care than some other children. Data from 2021-22 shows that on average, black children and children from other ethnic minority groups wait 100 days longer to be adopted*. In a bid to encourage more people to consider adoption, the council is launching a new campaign to raise awareness.

When it comes to adoption, it is not essential to be of the same ethnicity as the child you are adopting, as long as you are willing to regularly and openly promote their culture and ethnicity.”

However, we would really like to see more adopters from our Black African and Black Caribbean communities. We know that there are people out there who may be considering coming forward, but they could be worried about the process involved or think that their circumstances make them unsuitable. We would urge these people to get in touch as we have lots of information and support to help everyone through their adoption journey, you just need to reach out and take that first step.

One of the ways the council is helping to inform prospective adopters is via a new series of podcasts created in partnership with Home for Good, a faith-based charity that promotes adoption and fostering and professional broadcasters Carrie and David Grant who have an adopted son. The podcasts cover a range of topics including the adoption process and inter-racial adoption.

Another way to find out more is to join one of our online information evenings. These events are a great way to gain insight and learn more about the adoption process and how Buckinghamshire can support you. You will get to hear first-hand from adopters about their experiences and have the chance to ask them, and our team any questions you may have.

Join us at the next event which takes place on Tuesday 1 August 6pm to 7.30pm
<https://adoption.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/pages/informationevent>

In addition to the podcasts and information events, there are lots of other ways people can find out more about adoption directly from home:

Read stories from those who have fostered before and hear from our adoption team on our [Adoption Blog](#).

- The [WeCanAdopt website](#) has a handy list of commonly asked questions and answers to help dispel myths about adoption.
- Our [AdoptionReady](#) tool allows you to develop your own personalised plan to find out more and begin your adoption journey.

To find out more visit the [website](#).

Buckingham temporary Banking Hub opens

Cash Access UK, the organisation set up to protect nationwide access to cash, has opened a temporary Banking Hub in Buckingham allowing people to access banking services and cash in the town centre. Established in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council through its Buckingham and Villages Community Board, and with the support of Buckingham Town Council and community representatives, the temporary Banking Hub provides local people with access to banking services, while plans for a permanent Hub have also been confirmed. The temporary Banking Hub is located at Buckingham Library and opened this week.

The temporary Hub is open Tuesday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm, and will remain available until the new permanent Banking Hub opens. The temporary Banking Hub offers a counter service operated by the Post Office, where customers of all major banks and building societies can carry out regular cash transactions. It also offers a Community Banker service where customers can talk to their own banking provider about more complicated issues.

Community Bankers will work on rotation, with a different bank or building society available on each day of the week:

Tuesday – NatWest

Wednesday Nationwide

Thursday – Lloyds Banking Group

Friday – Barclays (coming soon)

Cash Access UK is committed to delivering a permanent Banking Hub in Buckingham and, in a significant step forward, the location for the new permanent Hub has now been confirmed. This will be located at 19 Market Square, Buckingham (former Lloyds Bank branch). The team at Cash Access UK are now working hard to get the new premises ready.

The Banking Hub team looks forward to welcoming residents to the temporary Banking Hub at Buckingham Library and supporting them with their everyday banking needs. They will also be able to keep residents up to date with progress on the permanent Banking Hub.

The Buckingham & Villages Community Board, Buckinghamshire Council, Buckingham Town Council, and Cash Access UK have worked together throughout the process to ensure that Buckingham residents and business voices were heard and to support the provision of access to banking in a suitable location as quickly as possible.

New electric bike hire scheme launches in Aylesbury and High Wycombe

Two electric bike (e-bike) hire schemes have launched in Aylesbury and High Wycombe, alongside the existing e-scooter hire schemes operated by Zipp Mobility. Twenty-five e-bikes will be available for public hire across the towns through the Zipp Mobility app, the same app used for the e-scooters.

Customers can register and hire the e-bikes through the app and will be charged per minute of usage. The e-bikes can be picked up and dropped off at the same bays currently used for the local e-scooter trial. The app includes a map showing bay locations and the 'geo-fenced' areas that the bikes can operate in.

The e-bikes provide power assistance to help riders on hills but still require pedalling. They are classified as normal pedal bikes and riders are advised to wear helmets for safety.

This Zipp e-bike trial provides an exciting new sustainable travel option for residents and visitors in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. The pedal-assist bikes will make cycling more accessible, helping people get around town in an affordable and eco-friendly way.

“The addition of e-bikes to our existing e-scooter offering, means that people now have a choice of which wheels they want to use for commuting or leisure trips.

“We’ll be evaluating the trial scheme in a few months to assess the viability of making e-bike hire a permanent feature in the towns.

“E-bikes are a vital step towards achieving Aylesbury and High Wycombe’s environmental goals and promoting a cleaner, greener future. By prioritising safety, fostering collaboration with the local council, and providing sustainable transport solutions, Zipp is reshaping urban mobility and setting a precedent for other cities worldwide. Together, we can create a cleaner, more connected future for all.”

Anyone wanting to hire an e-scooter or e-bike must:

- Be more than 16 years old
- Hold at least a provisional driving licence
- Download the Zipp Mobility app on their smart phone:

[Download the app for iPhone](#)

[Download the app for Android](#)

Before their first ride, a customer needs to take a photo of their driving licence and upload it to the Zipp app along with a selfie to verify their identity. Once verified (takes less than 1 minute) they can ride one of the e-bikes or e-scooters for 20p a minute plus a £1 unlock fee.

Find out more about the Buckinghamshire e-scooter and e-bike trials at:

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

Buckinghamshire Council offers free holiday activities, food and support for eligible children and their families this summer

Buckinghamshire Council is providing residents with a comprehensive range of support to help families during this year's school summer holidays. Eligible children and their families will receive Helping Hand digital food vouchers and some children will also have access to holiday clubs and hot meals provided by the [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\)](#) programme.

Funded by the Department for Education and coordinated by the council, thousands of free HAF holiday club places are available countywide in over 50 locations, catering for eligible children and young people in Reception to Year 11 and including specialist SEND HAF clubs. The HAF programme offers an exciting range of high-quality activities, including dance and football camps, movie making, martial arts, cookery and crafts, as well as a hot and nutritious meal at each session. The Roald Dahl Museum is also running fun outreach sessions at HAF clubs on three dates over the holidays.

Each eligible child or young person can attend up to 16 HAF sessions over the summer holidays.

A proportion of HAF programme places can also be accessed by other groups of children and young people who are identified as able to benefit from attending the HAF clubs. These groups include looked after and previously looked after children, young carers, children living in low-income households who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, and children with an education, health and care plan. The council is working with schools and HAF club providers to identify and invite children from these additional groups to attend.

Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Anita Cranmer, said:

"We are once again proud to support our local children and families during the summer holidays, as part of our excellent HAF programme. These free and fun activities across Buckinghamshire have been a great success, enabling eligible children to enjoy fun holiday clubs and experiences with a healthy meal included. This year, the HAF programme is running in more locations, so it should be even easier for families to access HAF sessions near them.

"We know that the summer holidays can be a worrying time for families, as time off school can increase food bills and energy costs, as well as make it more difficult to arrange childcare for work, and other commitments. So, I'd urge eligible parents and carers to book their children on to HAF sessions as early as possible so that they can benefit from the support that the HAF clubs offer families."

Buckinghamshire Council's Helping Hand service is also providing eligible families with a digital food voucher code to use during the summer holidays. Children and young people who receive free school meals, as well as those receiving early years' pupil premium or 2-year-old funded free education places will receive a digital food voucher that can be used in

most major supermarkets in Buckinghamshire. This scheme is funded from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund.

As part of our Helping Hand service, we are also offering a range of support and practical advice for residents who might be struggling during the summer months with the general cost of living. The news continues to be challenging around high prices and mortgage rates and many local families are still feeling uncertain about their finances.

"I hope all families who are eligible use the digital food vouchers. Anyone who's worried about covering costs can reach out to our Helping Hand team for help if they are struggling to afford necessities such as food and other household costs.

Anyone worried about finances can visit our Money Problems webpage at buckinghamshire.gov.uk/money-management or our cost of living pages at buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living to see what support is available.

Families that aren't eligible for free school meals, but are looking for free or low-cost activities to do as a family, visit the school summer holiday support web page at buckinghamshire.gov.uk/summer-holiday-support for information on cost of living support, exciting local activities, offers and attractions.

All residents worried about paying their bills/covering general living costs can contact Buckinghamshire Council's Helping Hand team on 01296 531151 or complete the [online contact us form](#) and someone will contact you.