



Cllr Jilly Jordan

Soulbury Parish Council Meeting Monday Sept 18th 2023

How can we make Buckinghamshire safer?

That is the question the Safer Buckinghamshire Board is asking residents and other interested parties as it launches its Safer Bucks consultation.

The Safer Buckinghamshire Board is the local multi-agency community safety partnership that brings together experts from the police, fire service, probation health and social care services.

Following last year's community safety survey, the new Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26 was developed. The strategy outlined the five key priorities for improving community safety and fear of crime in the area. To help deliver the next 12 months of the strategy, the Safer Buckinghamshire Board is keen to know:

- What impact crime and anti-social behaviour has in local areas
- More about people's experiences of reporting crime
- How safe or unsafe residents feel in Buckinghamshire

The consultation is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Buckinghamshire. It is open until 29 October. You can complete the survey online at: [Community safety survey 2023: How can we make Buckinghamshire safer?](#) . Residents can obtain a hard copy by contacting: sbp@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

On the whole Buckinghamshire is a very safe place to live and visit but like any area, there can be times and locations where issues occur. We are really keen to hear from local residents and others about their experiences and the effect these matters have had on them. We can and do look at the statistics and background data, but this first-hand detail from individuals responding to a survey like this is invaluable in helping us to effectively target our resources and attention to make the best impact and improvement. It doesn't take long to complete so please take a few minutes to let us know your thoughts.

You can read the full Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy [online](#).

Taking action against anti-social behaviour in your local community

Buckinghamshire Council is once again joining forces with partners to help tackle anti-social behaviour and promote community safety in the county.

Next week two further Community Action Days are planned:

- **Wednesday 20 September – Aylesbury North** - 11am – 3pm at Elmhurst Family Centre, Dunsham Lane, HP20 2DB
- **Thursday 21 September – Ryemead and Micklefield, High Wycombe** - 11am – 3pm at St Anne's and St Peter's Church, 245 Micklefield Road, HP13 7HU

As part of the initiative, local partners will be undertaking high visibility patrols, completing litter picks and responding to a range of community issues.

Residents are also invited to pop along to the events to discuss any local concerns with the teams and organisations attending. This includes:

- Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- Buckinghamshire Council staff:
 - Community Safety & Anti-Social Behaviour Team
 - Public Health
 - Helping Hand support
 - Waste Management
 - Active Travel (bike marking)
 - Community Engagement
 - Prevention in the community team
 - Community Boards
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Fire & Rescue Service
- Housing Teams
- NHS services
- CarersBucks
- Healthwatch Bucks

The events form part of the council's flagship [Opportunity Bucks](#) programme which aims to ensure that all residents in Buckinghamshire have the opportunity to thrive. Extra resources are being focused on 10 key areas around the county which includes parts of High Wycombe and Aylesbury.

These events offer a great opportunity for anyone who has concerns about anti-social behaviour or other aspects of community safety in their local area, to speak face to face with teams from across the council and other partner organisations. We want residents across all our communities to feel

safe and for people to speak to us about the issues that concern them. Working together we can look at what can be done to tackle problems and direct our resources in the best way.

Further multi-agency community action days are planned for October.

For more information on community safety and how to report an issue visit the council [website](#).

Do you still need to respond to the annual canvass?

During July and August, Buckinghamshire Council's Electoral Services team sent either a letter or an email to all households in Buckinghamshire as part of the annual canvass. This communication asked residents to check that their electoral registration details are correct to make sure they retain their right to vote and have their say in future elections.

Households that have been asked to confirm or update their details but haven't yet done this are urged to do so as soon as possible and online where possible. The letter or email will say if you need to respond or not according to your circumstance. Residents not on the electoral register won't be able to vote in elections and this may also impact their ability to obtain credit.

People who have moved recently are especially encouraged to take part in the canvass and check who is registered to vote at their new address; also if someone in the household has now turned 16 or 17 years old.

Households that haven't responded, and are required to do so, will be visited by one of Buckinghamshire Council's door-to-door canvassers who will begin doing their rounds on Friday 22 September.

Canvassers will be carrying clear identification with them and will check the details held on the electoral register are correct or record any changes, if necessary. Please follow the instructions on your canvass form or email to avoid a canvasser visiting your household.

For more information, please contact the council's Electoral Registration team by telephoning 01296 798 141 or by emailing elections@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

"If possible, please respond to the canvass online, as your information will then be processed instantly. It also means there's no chance of your form being lost in the post, plus it's more environmentally friendly. Last year, £18k worth of postage/printing costs were saved due to electors responding digitally.

"It's hugely important that residents are on the electoral register so that they can have their say and vote in future elections. The register is also used for credit referencing purposes to counteract fraud. If you're not registered you might be refused credit, have problems opening a bank account, getting a mortgage, or taking out a mobile phone contract."

Further information on the annual canvass can be found on the Election pages of the council's website at: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/confirm-voting-details

About the electoral register

The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on Electoral Registration Officers to maintain the electoral register for their area and to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties.

The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only

eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service or checking credit applications.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details. Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.

To be eligible to register to vote a person must be:

- Aged 16 or over (a person may register to vote at 16, but may not vote until they are 18)
- A British or qualifying Commonwealth citizen who has leave to enter and remain in the UK or does not require such leave.
- A citizen of the Republic of Ireland or other European Union (EU) member state.
- British citizens, Irish citizens and qualifying citizens of Commonwealth countries (including Cyprus and Malta) can vote in local government elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. To date, the UK Government has not made changes to the eligibility of EU citizens, meaning at present they too can vote in these elections.
- Full details of the Electoral Commission's research on the electoral registers can be found on its website.

Go back to school sustainably this September

With families preparing for the start of the new school year, Buckinghamshire Council is taking the opportunity to encourage more people to make their journey to and from school more sustainable.

Many people already use alternatives to the car to take their children to and from school, but we want to make sure that everyone is aware of the huge benefits using a more sustainable form of transport can have. Choosing to walk, cycle or scoot to school is good not only for your own health but also better for the environment.

The council's Sustainable Transport Team works with schools across the county to help them create their own School Travel Plans to promote and encourage active, safe and sustainable travel for school journeys. Schools are encouraged to sign up to the national Modeshift STARS accreditation programme which recognises and rewards schools and other organisations that have shown excellence in supporting sustainable and active travel. Currently 65 schools in Buckinghamshire have a Modeshift STARS accreditation, ranging from the starter level Green award up to a Platinum award for outstanding achievement.

Even for those who have no alternative to the car for school journeys, there are still things you can do to make a difference. We know that alternatives to the car are not always possible but simply by turning your engine off when waiting for your children to come out of school at the end of the day, you are helping reduce potentially harmful pollutants. Alternatively, you could try parking a bit further away from school and walking the last part of the journey. This can help with fitness and also avoid traffic congestion outside the school gates.”

Encouraging more people to switch to greener forms of travel is a key element of Buckinghamshire Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy which aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Rough calculations show that for an average sized car, travelling a distance of one mile to school each day and one mile home again, over the course of the school year, the level of CO₂ emissions created in one year would be around 100kg. Choosing to adopt an active form of travel such as walking, cycling or scooting instead, would save this amount, which equates to the same weight as a newborn baby elephant.

Parents can make a commitment to follow the [Parent's Parking Promise](#). Those who sign up to the pledge get a sticker to put in their car window. The promise encourages people to think more carefully about where they park for school drop offs, avoiding zig zag lines directly outside school and being mindful of not blocking pavements for other families, including those with buggies and wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

For more information on sustainable school travel, visit the council [website](#) where you can also find out more about the [Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#).

A safe haven in Buckinghamshire

After months of careful planning and discussions with the Home Office and local Housing Association, Fairhive, three Afghan families are moving into vacant Ministry of Defence properties in Buckinghamshire this week with a further six families joining them in the next two weeks. Due to their work with the British Military, each of these families are eligible to move into Ministry of Defence houses. The properties are being paid for by the families who are in receipt of housing allowance under Universal Credit.

Catastrophic events in Afghanistan back in 2021 left women, children and men in the country feeling vulnerable and fearing for their lives. During the evacuation of Kabul (Operation Pitting) Afghan nationals and UK citizens managed to leave the country, looking to rebuild their lives in the UK. The second anniversary of Operation Pitting is today (24 August).

All of the families who arrived in Buckinghamshire arrived as part of the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. They were either locally employed staff, meaning they worked with the British Military or at British Embassy, or had helped the UK efforts in Afghanistan standing up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law.

Buckinghamshire Council is helping all these families to integrate into their new communities and build a new life - ensuring they do not feel isolated and have the support they need - receiving help with medical needs, arranging English lessons, finding jobs, and getting children into education. Continued wrap-around support has meant the settled Afghan families are doing exceptionally well with most in employment, children thriving in school and families settled in their communities.

Fairhive acts as the landlord for these nine properties and they will be managed in much the same way as our existing housing stock. Household members will have the same access to all of the services we provide, such as welfare benefits support, help to get on-line, advice and guidance about tenancy conditions and opportunities to work with us as involved residents.”

Proud to mark Ukraine Independence Day

Buckinghamshire Council marked Ukraine Independence Day on the 24 August, having welcomed over 1,700 Ukrainian refugees to the county since March 2022 as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Both the Council and its local communities have been deeply moved by the plight of people in Ukraine. In March 2022, when the British Government launched two national schemes for Ukrainian refugees to come to the UK and outlined the responsibilities for local government, Buckinghamshire Council quickly acted to put in place plans that, with the support of partners, would welcome families to Buckinghamshire and help them to make new lives in the county over the coming months, and years.

We would like to thank the over 1,000 sponsors in Buckinghamshire who have opened their homes to Ukrainian guests. Together with the Council's swift response means we have welcomed, and will continue to welcome, individuals and families to the county in large numbers. Our thoughts are with all those who have lost loved ones because of the current conflict."

For details of how to get involved - <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/helping-hand-for-ukraine/become-a-rematching-sponsor/>