

# Buckinghamshire Councillor's Annual report 2021/2022

May 2022

Dear Parish Council

Another year has flown by and it has been a pleasure working with you.

As before it has not been a year without significant challenges locally.

Not least the ongoing impact of East West Rail and HS2, the continuing pandemic and now the tragic situation in Ukraine.

As you are aware your three local councillors, myself, Frank Mahon and Michael Rand have been working together collaboratively across our large ward of Grendon Underwood.

After the elections last May we took a decision to divide our ward into three parts so we could each focus on a group of parishes each. As always we are keen to hear how this is working for you and will always ensure we are flexible so that we can provide parish councils the best possible service.

I have listed below some of the highlights for Buckinghamshire Council from the past year which reflect the Council's corporate aims. Do let me know if you would like more detail on any of the many initiatives and projects listed below.

Your Councillor

Angela Macpherson

## STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

- Community Boards have delivered 412 projects across the county
- Achieved match funding - £0.71 in match funding for every £1 of Community Board funding
- Of these 112 were environment projects, including -
  - Tree planting, woodland activities, forest schools and 'Go Green' initiatives not only tackling environmental issues, also addressing mental health and providing new skills
  - Improvements to parks, green spaces creating new communal areas and community gardens
- 29 economic recovery projects were delivered including -
  - Supporting people to access training or employment, support for setting up a new business, and providing financial advice and support
  - Supporting shops and businesses in our town and villages with shop local campaigns
- We launched the Bucks Online Directory which is a helpful and searchable directory with 3,000 community groups and organisations listing local activities and support.
- We rolled out of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme
- We ran the Active Communities Pilot Project, a community-based approach that engages with local people and various assets within a community
- We launched our first ever Buckinghamshire Adult Safeguarding campaign with our partners – See Something, Say Something, Do Something.
- The wellbeing for Education Return programme was successfully cascaded across all schools in the county. This provided additional mental health and emotional well-being support.
- Over 600 days of patrols were carried out by Street Wardens, dealing with 1637 incidents

## PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board was launched in line with new statutory duties contained with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The Financial Insecurities Partnership was established in April 2021 with partners from the Voluntary & Community Sector
- The Council's Helping Hand team successfully utilised just under £3.5 million of grant funding, provided through the Local Support Grant and Household Support Fund, to support financially vulnerable families. This has provided just over £2.4m worth of holiday food voucher support via schools and early

years settings to families with children eligible for pupil premium, early years' pupil premium or 2-year-old funded free education places.

- The Family and Carer Support Service in One Recovery Bucks, which tackles substance misuse situations, has provided 228 family group support interventions and 1,650 family one to one interventions.
- We launched 'community cafes' which provide 60 face-to-face appointments each week for residents to speak with adult social care workers and with other agencies. 343 residents have been helped to date.
- Children's Services in Buckinghamshire are no longer judged to be inadequate by Ofsted.
- 15 new foster carers (25 placements) and 14 new adopters approved between 1 January and 31 December 2021
- 89.3% of schools were rated good or above by Ofsted as of 31 December 2021
- 76% of care leavers aged 19-21 are in Employment, Education or Training.

## **IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

- The Council has adopted the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy
- Pilots have been held at three locations to test to implementation of Moving Traffic Offences and a public consultation held with a view to being one of the first Council's to introduce these restrictions outside of London.
- Carriageway, footway, drainage and structures capital programme of £34M this year was delivered.
- We invested £4m in drain and gullies work programme to clean each of the 85,000 gullies in Buckinghamshire at least once and repair those that needed it.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan was completed, introducing 60 Real Time Bus Displays to provide passengers with live information on how full the buses are.
- Personal Transport Budgets were launched as an alternative option for SEND students, giving over 360 families the freedom and flexibility to make their own transport arrangements and supporting children's independence.
- The Big Bucks Tidy Up was part of the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean. We provided additional litter and cleansing campaigns which accounted for nearly 3000 miles of additional mechanical sweeping and over 2000 hours of additional litter picking.
- We won 6 Green Flag Awards for our Parks
- Buckinghamshire Council are one of the leading non-London authorities when it comes to issuing enforcement notices. The Council issued 54 notices resulting in us being the 5<sup>th</sup> highest outside London
- 900 planning enforcement cases were closed which was a significant increase on the previous year, plus Enforcement Notices were being upheld on appeal.
- We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to fly tipping. As of March 2022, 98 cases have been fully investigated, 50 suspects reported for prosecution, 48 Fixed Penalty Notices issued, and we have seized and disposed of two commercial fly tippers vehicles.
- We continue to lobby HS2 and EWR to agree a process for road repairs as a result of their project work in Bucks

## **INCREASING PROSPERITY**

- £15m Future High Streets Funding is being programmed for delivery, unlocking a 3-year regeneration and public realm scheme for economic and social recovery for the town centres in both Aylesbury and High Wycombe
- Just under £1 million of Reopening High Streets Safely and Welcome Back Funding was invested in towns and villages across Bucks to support high streets during lockdowns
- The Additional Restrictions Grant has seen over £22 million re invested to support the recovery of vital businesses impacted by Covid across Buckinghamshire.