

# End of Year Report 2025/26

## Grendon Underwood & The Claydons Ward

### Introduction

The 2025/26 municipal year marked the first full year operating under the new Buckinghamshire Council electoral boundaries introduced at the May 2025 local elections. The boundary review, undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, reduced the number of Buckinghamshire councillors from 147 to 97 while creating revised ward structures intended to improve electoral equality and better reflect local community identities.

The newly configured Grendon Underwood & The Claydons ward brought together a wider rural catchment area, incorporating communities with shared transport, rural infrastructure, and planning concerns. The first year has therefore focused heavily on integration, representation, and establishing consistent service delivery across the enlarged ward area.

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### Key Impacts of the 2025 Boundary Changes

#### 1. Improved Electoral Representation

The revised boundaries were designed to provide fairer representation across Buckinghamshire by balancing elector numbers between wards. The new ward configuration has enabled:

- More proportionate representation for rural communities.
- Greater alignment between parish identities and council representation.
- Improved coordination between parish councils and Buckinghamshire Council members.

The new arrangements formed part of Buckinghamshire-wide reforms approved ahead of the May 2025 elections.

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#### 2. Community Integration Across Rural Villages

A major focus throughout 2025/26 has been ensuring the newly grouped communities within the ward feel equally represented. Key actions included:

- Establishing regular parish liaison meetings.
- Coordinating ward-wide communication updates.
- Creating shared priorities around transport, road safety, and rural services.
- Community Board

The inclusion of villages across the Grendon Underwood and The Claydons area has strengthened opportunities for collaborative approaches to:

- Rural bus provision
  - Flood resilience
  - Road maintenance
  - Planning consultations
  - Speculative planning applications
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### **3. Highways and Infrastructure**

Residents consistently identified highways as the most significant issue during the first year of the new ward arrangements.

#### **Priorities addressed included:**

- Pothole repairs and surface deterioration on rural roads.
- Speeding concerns through villages.
- Drainage and flooding hotspots.
- Coordination with HS2-related traffic impacts in surrounding areas.
- National infrastructure projects. Rosefield, EWR, New Sub station
- Solar farms and Battery storage.

Particular emphasis was placed on ensuring smaller rural settlements were not overlooked following the larger-scale ward restructuring.

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### **4. Planning and Development**

The ward has continued to experience planning pressures linked to:

- Rural housing delivery
- Infrastructure strain
- Protection of village character
- Environmental and landscape concerns
- Speculative planning applications
- Lack of a 5 year land supply
- New Prison programme

The boundary changes have encouraged a more joined-up approach to planning responses between neighbouring parishes as we build the new Buckinghamshire Plan.

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## **5. Parish Council Collaboration**

The first year demonstrated stronger engagement between Buckinghamshire Council and parish councils within the ward area.

Key developments included:

- More coordinated responses to planning applications.
- Shared discussion forums on transport and public services.
- Increased attendance at parish meetings by ward councillors.

This collaborative approach has helped build stronger local accountability following the transition to the new ward structure.

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## **Financial and Service Delivery Considerations**

The new council arrangements were intended to support more efficient governance across Buckinghamshire by reducing councillor numbers while maintaining community representation.

During 2025/26, the ward saw:

- Continued delivery of waste and environmental services.
- Improved coordination of rural maintenance programmes.
- Greater use of digital consultation and resident engagement tools.

However, residents also raised concerns regarding:

- Reduced visibility of councillors across larger ward areas.
  - Pressure on rural services.
  - Response times for highways and enforcement issues.
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## **Resident Engagement**

Throughout the year, councillors and parish representatives undertook:

- Village meetings
- Community drop-ins
- Online consultations
- Planning briefings

The expanded ward geography created challenges around maintaining visibility across all communities, but attendance and participation levels remained positive.

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## **Looking Ahead to 2026/27**

Priorities for the coming year include:

1. Continued highways investment and drainage improvements.
  2. Strengthening rural transport connectivity.
  3. Supporting parish-level community projects.
  4. Managing planning growth sustainably.
  5. Ensuring all villages receive equitable representation under the new ward structure.
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## **Conclusion**

The first year under the May 2025 boundary arrangements has been a significant transition period for Grendon Underwood & The Claydons ward. While the enlarged rural geography has created new challenges, it has also strengthened collaboration between communities with shared priorities and concerns.

The ward enters 2026/27 with stronger parish coordination, clearer strategic priorities, and an increasing focus on protecting rural character while improving local infrastructure and services.