



CLlr Jilly Jordan & Cllr Caroline Cornell

Drayton Parslow Parish Council Meeting, Monday 27th Oct 2025

Free Home Upgrades to Cut Energy Bills and Stay Warm This Winter

Buckinghamshire residents who live in privately owned homes, including private rental properties, that have low energy performance EPC ratings can apply for free energy-saving upgrades that will help them cut energy bills and stay warm this winter.

Eligible residents could receive up to £30,000 of fully funded energy saving measures, such as loft insulation, wall insulation, solar panels, smart heating controls, and heat pumps.

Having secured just over £3m of funding from the Government's Warm Homes Local Grant, Buckinghamshire Council has partnered with the National Energy Foundation's Better Housing, Better Health service to manage delivery of the scheme. This will include assessing applications and managing the pre and post-installation process.

The scheme is now open to Buckinghamshire residents who meet the following criteria:

- Your home has an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of D, E, F or G **AND** one or more of the following also applies -
- You live in a household with a combined gross annual income of less than £36,000
- A member of the household is in receipt of certain means-tested benefits such as Housing Benefit, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support, Pension Credit (savings and guarantee), or Universal Credit
- You live in a pre-qualified postcode area, as determined by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Residents in private rented accommodation must seek approval from the landlord before applying and landlords may need to contribute towards the improvements if they already have a home that has qualified for fully funded support under the scheme.

Rising energy costs coupled with the ever-increasing cost-of-living is creating real pressures on households in Buckinghamshire and there will be residents who will struggle to heat their homes this winter. We are always looking for ways to support those who need it and I would encourage anyone who is worried about cost of living pressures to take a look at the support available.

Residents who meet the eligibility criteria and would like to apply should either call the National Energy Foundation's free helpline on 0800 107 0044, submit a referral form on the Better Housing, Better Health website: www.bhbh.org.uk/make-a-referral, or email bhbh@nef.org.uk.

Residents are being urged to be aware of scammers and to ensure they communicate with the Better Housing, Better Health service via the official channels listed above.

The Warm Homes Local Grant builds on the success of the Home Upgrade Grant 2, through which Buckinghamshire Council secured £1.04 million to retrofit 48 homes, improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

To find out more about all the support available for those affected by cost of living pressures visit: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living/help-with-heating-and-household-bills/>

Celebrating the power of social connections as we get older

Buckinghamshire Council staged an event on Thursday 2 October to celebrate the role older people have in making their community a better place to live, work and age. It's in recognition of the United Nations International Day of Older People (IDOP) which has taken place on 1st October.

This year's theme is *Building Belonging: Celebrating the Power of our Social Connections*.

In partnership with Age UK Buckinghamshire, the event celebrated the work on the Age Friendly Bucks Programme and how it's working to create inclusive, supportive environments where residents can live healthy, active, and connected lives as they get older.

Attendees shared insights into what ageing well means to Buckinghamshire residents and explored ways to strengthen the Age Friendly Bucks programme through working collaboratively.

The event was attended by a range of partners including voluntary, community and faith organisations, NHS and council colleagues.

To find out more about the Age Friendly Bucks Programme and Buckinghamshire's Healthy Ageing Strategy 2024 - 2029, visit: <https://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/Resources/Councils/bucks-public-health/downloads/HealthyAgeingStrategy2024.pdf>

Age Friendly Bucks Programme

The Age Friendly Bucks Programme is a collaborative initiative aimed at creating an age friendly community in Buckinghamshire.

It involves local organisations and residents working together to explore ways to enable people to age well and live a good later life. The programme focuses on improving the well-being and participation of older people by addressing barriers to their participation in society.

It is part of the UK network of Age Friendly Communities and is supported by the Centre for Ageing Better and the Age Friendly Communities framework developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2007. The program aims to make Buckinghamshire a more Age friendly place to live, with a focus on outdoor spaces, buildings, and societal participation.

Green light given for 250-acre nature reserve in Aylesbury

Buckinghamshire Council has approved plans for a new, 250-acre nature reserve in Aylesbury, just east of the town's award-winning, nature-rich Kingsbrook development.

The new visitor destination, called Kingsbrook Meadows, will be equivalent in size to around 140 full-size football pitches. It will offer extensive natural greenspace where residents and visitors can help with the creation of woodlands and wetlands, allowing them to explore the wildlife as it develops, enjoying the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural world.

This planning approval crowns a groundbreaking partnership between Barratt David Wilson Homes, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and Buckinghamshire Council, who have worked together at Kingsbrook since 2010 to demonstrate that urban development and environmental protection can co-exist.

With work set to start in spring 2026, Kingsbrook Meadows will open in three phases, becoming home to wetlands, meadows, pools, woodlands, walking trails, gardens, and wild play area.

The final phase, due for completion in 2028, will culminate in the opening of a visitor centre, café and shop, with accessibility at the forefront of its design. There will also be a dedicated car park on-site. The RSPB will manage the site once complete, adding to the 220 existing sites it manages across the UK, creating local employment and volunteering opportunities.

Over half of the new site, 168-acres, is classed as a *Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace* (SANG), which is a designated area of open green space designed to reduce the impact of new housing developments on protected natural areas.

The first SANG in the north of Buckinghamshire, Kingsbrook Meadows aims to offer an attractive and more accessible alternative to ease recreational pressures from visitors and dog-walkers on Ashridge Commons and Woods within the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. The new site will be protected in perpetuity for at least 80-years.

Key features of a SANG:

- **Walks** - Each SANG must provide at least one circular walk of minimum of 2.3km which start and finish at a car park to 2.5km (30 to 40 minutes) and usually many other options for longer walks and onward connections into the countryside.
- **Accessibility** - Designed to be welcoming and easy to access, with footpaths or trails suitable for all abilities.
- **Biodiversity** - Created or enhanced to include diverse habitats and character of space - such as woodland, grassland, or wetlands - while protecting the local ecology.
- **Facilities** - Many SANGs include benches, bins (for rubbish and dog waste) and information boards and signage. They may also have parking available.

- **Dog-friendly** - Ideal places to walk your dog freely and safely.

To find out more visit - <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-or-improving-your-property/chiltern-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation-faqs/> About the RSPB

The RSPB is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, protecting habitats, saving species, and helping to end the nature and climate emergency. For over a century we've acted for nature through practical conservation and powerful partnerships, campaigning and influence, and inspiring and empowering millions of people, including almost 1.2 million members. Our network of over 200 nature reserves sits at the heart of our world-leading science and conservation delivery. Nature is in crisis, but together we can save it. www.rspb.org.uk

Buckinghamshire Council adopts new Health and Wellbeing Strategy

On the 23rd September, Buckinghamshire Council formally adopted the new Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which builds on the previous 2022–25 Happier, Healthier Lives Strategy.

The vision is to further improve the health and wellbeing of residents by working across health, social care, voluntary and community organisations and with our communities to help people live healthier and more independent lives.

The strategy focuses on improvements across all ages and all aspects of health and wellbeing including physical and mental health, social care and other factors that drive our health and wellbeing – such as housing, the economy, employment and the environment.

The Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy – 2035, ‘Helping People Live Healthier and More Independent Lives’, was developed in partnership with NHS organisations, Healthwatch, voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, and local residents. It sets out the following key priorities:

- **Empowering communities** – working with people and communities to empower them to live active and fulfilling lives, including a focus on the wider determinants of health such as housing, employment and education.
- **Prevention** – a greater emphasis on preventing illness, community support and encouraging independence so people can live healthier and more independent lives.
- **Proactive care** – working proactively with partners to identify and support people with needs to prevent escalation of their condition or decline of their overall health and wellbeing.

We want to thank all our residents for their feedback and engagement, which has helped shape this ambitious ten-year plan.”

To find out more, view the full strategy [here](#).

The Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board partners are:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Healthwatch Bucks
- Community Impact Bucks

Household Recycling Centres switch to winter opening hours from 1 October

From Wednesday 1 October, all 10 of Buckinghamshire's Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) will move to winter opening hours of 9am to 4pm daily. The change reflects shorter daylight hours and reduced visitor numbers later in the day. The winter hours will remain in place until 31 March 2026.

Residents can find details of which days their local site is open, what materials can be taken there, and even view live webcam feeds to avoid busy times by visiting www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling. I encourage residents to plan their visits and check the website before setting off.

Don't forget, if you have items in good condition such as furniture, bikes, or garden equipment, you can donate them at any Household Recycling Centre for charity reuse. Those items are sold through South Bucks Hospice reuse shops, helping reduce waste and support a great cause.

Have your say on how future development in Buckinghamshire should be determined

Buckinghamshire residents, businesses and interested groups are being asked for their views on the council's approach to future development in the county, in light of a significant increase in the number of new homes central government says must be built here.

The council has launched a consultation as from **Wednesday 17 September** on its draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. This is something that all councils are expected to have in place; the Local Plan sets out the strategy for meeting Buckinghamshire's future housing and employment requirement through to the year 2045. Following consultation feedback and the completion of a technical evidence base, the final Plan, due next year, will outline what infrastructure is needed to support growth, whilst also protecting the county's most valued environments. Not having a Local Plan leaves Buckinghamshire vulnerable to speculative and unplanned developments.

The draft of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire that residents are being asked to comment on will have to accommodate a huge increased level of housing to meet a new national target set by central government of 95,000 new homes and represents a 43% increase on what the council had previously been required to plan for. The council has therefore prepared a plan that reflects these higher growth numbers and is asking for views to help shape the final version in time for the submission deadline of December 2026 to central government.

The consultation runs until 23:59 on 29 October

- You can view the draft Local Plan and give your views here <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/draft-local-plan>

- The Local Plan consultation focuses on the approaches to the spatial strategy for meeting the housing and employment requirements along with development management policies on topics such as the natural environment, infrastructure, housing and employment.

Town and Parish Council customer service VIP line

You can make contact with us via the following email address:

parishsupport@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

There is a dedicated Town and Parish Council customer service VIP phonenumber where you can reach a member of our customer team on 0300 303 5640, 9am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 5pm on Friday.

Jessie Bath, Member Liaison Officer



Jessie Bath is a Planning Senior Business Support Officer, working within the Member Liaison Office for the Planning & Environment area.

She supports Members, Town & Parish Councils and the Planning & Environment teams to answer questions/enquiries they may have.

Planning & Environment covers the following areas:

- Planning – Development Management
- Planning – Major Developments
- Planning Enforcement
- Planning Policy (i.e. NPPF (National Planning Policy), 5 Year Land Supply, S106, Neighbourhood plans)
- Heritage and Archaeology
- Ecology
- SuDs – Strategic Flood Management
- Building Control
- Highways Development Management
- TPO's (Tree Protection)
- Landscape and Urban Design

One of the avenues to support communications between Town & Parish Councils and Officers are the Planning Surgeries, which we first set up in August 2023.

Schedules for these are circulated before each quarter, and the surgeries are well worth you attending if you need any Planning & Environment support, or if you just want to know more about the service.

Additionally, and you may already be aware of this, but we hold annual Town & Parish Councils forums, where our Planning & Environment teams give updates on each area and cover any policy or legislative changes you should be aware of.

To find out more about our Member Liaison Officers, email:

memberliaison@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Planning Liaison Surgeries, Q4 (Sept to Dec 2025)

- Members can request a 20-minute appointment by emailing memberliaison@buckinghamshire.gov.uk, they will receive a Request Booking Form by automatic reply. The Member should then complete the form and return to the email address above.
- The meetings are held via Teams. A link to the online meeting will be included when an invitation is sent to the Member.
- At least **two working days' notice** is required to request a Member Liaison Surgery appointment.

Monday 13th October, 10-11.15am – Planning Area 1 Member Surgery Appointments

Monday 27th October, 10-11.15am – Planning Area 1 Member Surgery Appointments

Monday 10th November, 10-11.15am – Planning Area 1 Member Surgery Appointments

Monday 24th November, 10-11.15am – Planning Area 1 Member Surgery Appointments

Monday 8th December, 10-11.15am – Planning Area 1 Member Surgery Appointments



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