

I hope everyone had a very happy Christmas and I wish all my residents all the best for the coming year.

Local Government Reorganisation

As you may have heard, Buckinghamshire County Council and all four district councils are going to be reorganized into a single unitary authority. While there are quite a few details to be finalized, the new council will be simpler, better value and more local to Buckinghamshire communities than the current two-tier system, ultimately moving to a more sustainable future for the county. It is envisaged that services which complement one another but are currently divided between the district and county councils such as bin collections, waste disposal, planning and roads, will be brought together under the single unitary council, resulting in more efficient, joined-up services for residents.

The new council will take effect in April 2020, with elections of councillors to follow in May 2020. The district council elections, which were due to take place in May 2019, will be delayed by a year, while county councillors will serve a 3 year term instead of the usual 4 year term to allow for May 2020 elections. I hope to be able to provide further information for my residents on these developments as more details emerge over the coming months.

Remembrance Sunday

I hope everyone was able to participate in some of the many local events to commemorate the Centenary of the Armistice. I was deeply honoured to have been asked to lay the wreaths in Ivinghoe and Pitstone this year to remember the Fallen of Buckinghamshire. It was a moving tribute to all those who laid down their lives in wars and conflicts, and especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War. The photo below includes (from left to right) the Ivinghoe Parish Councillors Claire Bamber and Karen Groom, me next to Major Owen Wynne of the Welsh Guards, Ivinghoe Parish Councillor Anna Stone and Ivinghoe Parish Clerk Bridget Knight.



Brexit Preparedness

On 10 December, 2018 the Cabinet at Buckinghamshire County Council agreed the following three recommendations from the cabinet report on Brexit Preparedness, which were:

1. BCC to work with social care providers to promote EU Settlement Scheme take-up by EU nationals working in the sector.

2. BCC to undertake all EU Settlement Scheme suggested actions (assuming positive follow up).

3. BCC to develop and deliver, in partnership with BBF, a second Brexit Summit as part of the Buckinghamshire Business Festival.

If you wish to read the full report on how Buckinghamshire is preparing for Brexit, that can be read online on the BCC website, by clicking "View Councillors Meetings and Decisions" on the homepage, followed by "Agendas and Minutes for Cabinet", and then selecting 10 December, 2018 which will allow you to access the Reports pack.

Transport for Bucks Update

Horton Wharf Road has now been resurfaced this year as part of my Capital Maintenance Programs. Due to Anglian Water works in Pitstone with their diversions in place, it has been agreed to hold off on resurfacing Cheddington High Street until early spring to avoid inconveniencing residents.

We are now well into the winter gritting season and I often get asked by residents about how gritting decisions are taken. Well, they are based on local forecasts and on road temperatures rather than air temperatures. Salting is likely to take place whenever road temperatures are forecast to fall below +1°C and ice is expected to form.

This decision is not taken lightly as each run uses approximately 65 tonnes of salt if we use a pre-wet mix, or 85 tonnes of rock salt if we lay the salt dry. Costs include the salt, labour and fuel.

No guarantee can be given that roads will always be completely clear of ice or snow. If we are responding to a late change in forecast, or if we have to wait for rain to clear before we salt, wet roads may freeze before they are salted. We can't salt during wet weather as the salt would simply be washed away.

In severe cold weather below -8°C , even salt will not prevent ice from forming.

We usually send the gritters out at 7pm and 4am to ensure the roads are treated before the road temperature drops below 0 and before peak travel time in the morning. This also means the gritters should have a clear run of the roads as they can struggle to effectively salt a route if there is a lot of traffic.

If it is raining in the early evening, a decision may be taken to salt later so the salt doesn't get washed away. If snow is forecast before 7pm the gritters may be sent out earlier, before the afternoon rush hour.

Two decisions are made over gritting in Buckinghamshire – one for the north of the county and one for the south, as weather conditions and road temperatures may vary.

Once a decision has been made, a Twitter alert is sent out. You can follow us on Twitter [@tfbalerts](https://twitter.com/tfbalerts) for daily updates.

We decide which roads to grit based on a scoring system:

- Gradients 0 / 4 /10 / 20 points
- Bends (roads over 40mph) 0 / 4 /10 points
- Community link (200+houses). 5 points
- Traffic Flows 0 / 10 / 20 points
- Historically salted route 5 points
- Public and School Bus Routes 0 or 15 points
- Adjacent key facilities 10 points
- Route practicality and efficiency add/deduct points

A road will need to score on more than one issue to gain enough points to qualify for attention. A minimum of 28 points are required.

Trained and experienced inspectors carry out these assessments and the routes are decided before the winter season.

Why we prioritise

- **Cost:** Rock salt is supplied to the local authority at a cost and there is a limited budget available for winter maintenance.

- **Suitability:** Salt works most effectively on well used roads as the tyre motion plays a key role in the process. It is a better management of a limited resource to target such roads.
- **Availability:** Rock salt production is not sufficient in this country to salt every road. This was only too apparent in the winter of 2009–10 when a prolonged period of cold weather put pressure on the national salt supplies.
- **Environment:** Salting at the current level of 40% of the road network is not deemed to have a significant impact on the local environment. However damage to roadside plant life is evident at the end of the season. Though seepage into water courses is deemed to be at safe levels if we were to salt 100% of the network on a precautionary policy, we would see saline seepage into water courses at more harmful levels.

The Brownlow Bridge

After having been damaged last spring, the Brownlow Bridge in Ivinghoe was repaired by the Canal and River Trust, who subsequently recommended an 18 tonne weight limit for the bridge. This was considered by Transport for Bucks and, after technical analysis, it was agreed to put a temporary weight limit of 18 tonnes on the bridge in the short term. This will have the effect of preventing HGVs from using the bridge.

In the longer term, TfB are doing some traffic modelling as to what alternate routes the HGV traffic might take instead. Depending on the findings from these models, TfB will take a decision as to whether the bridge should retain an 18 tonne weight limit or whether there are other possible solutions for the longer term. As I know that HGV use of our rural roads and canal bridges is a key issue for many residents in our division, I will be monitoring the situation and will keep parish councils updated as to developments.

Time to Change Champion

I was pleased to have been able to attend the Time to Change employer pledge signing ceremony at Bucks County Council. For those of you who might be unfamiliar with Time to Change, the County Council has pledged its support to reducing stigma towards mental health in the workplace by signing the Time to Change employer pledge. Chief Executive Rachael Shimmin and Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Public Health Noel Brown signed the pledge on behalf of the Council at a special employee event on 10 October, World Mental Health Day.

The Time to Change employer pledge is a way for organisations and businesses to demonstrate their commitment to changing how mental health problems in the workplace are treated and making sure that employees who are facing these problems feel supported at work. To support their employer pledge signing, the Council has submitted an action plan detailing what work will take place to address mental health stigma including recruiting employee champions; asking employees to share their personal experiences of mental health problems; equipping line managers to have conversations about mental health; and providing clearer information and signposting to wellbeing services.

As I have had post-natal depression myself, and as my daughter has recently had a very difficult time with self-harm while at university, I have agreed to become a Time to Change Champion in order to speak and write about my own experiences in the hopes of changing people's attitudes to mental health. I will initially be doing this through articles written in conjunction with the Time to Change officers in public health at Bucks County Council to help people learn how they can get help if they are struggling with a mental health issue, and to promote tolerance and acceptance in our society so as to reduce stigma.

Time to Change Buckinghamshire is a growing social movement working alongside the established national campaign aiming to change attitudes towards mental health through working with local communities, workplaces and schools.

Find out more about it and how you can get involved at www.timetochangebucks.org

NPHT Update and Heritage Center

I am very excited that the Paralympic Heritage Centre will be opening in Stoke Mandeville Stadium on Saturday 30th March, 2019. It has been a fantastic and insightful experience being a trustee on the board of the NPHT. For those who might not be aware of the history behind the NPHT, from modest beginnings in the late 1940s at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann encouraged wounded veterans to play sport as an aid to rehabilitation from spinal injury. This led to local competitions, to the Stoke Mandeville Games and to the Paralympic Games which today attracts national and international public support and interest.

Widely acknowledged as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement, Stoke Mandeville Stadium will become the home of the very first Paralympic Heritage Centre. Opening on Saturday 30th March 2019, the Heritage Centre will celebrate and explore this unique status.

The displays will feature:

- The life and work of Professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann.
- The history and work of the Spinal Injuries Centre.
- Key milestones in the journey from the 1948 Stoke Mandeville Games to the present day Paralympic Games.
- The development of wheelchair sports.
- Paralympic ceremonies.

There are plenty of ways in which residents can get involved in this inspirational project. We are now collecting local memorabilia and stories surrounding the Paralympics and Stoke Mandeville. So, if you or a family member have been involved in any way in the Stoke Mandeville Games from the 1940s onwards, we would love to hear your story so that we can share this great history with others.

We are also interested in any memorabilia you might have (tickets, medals, clothing, photos, programmes).

You can read the local stories we've already received on the NPHT website. Sally Haynes has shared with us her memories of being involved in the Finmere Horse show, which was established by friends and family from the local riding community to raise funds for the Paraplegic Sports Fund at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This fund provided transport for the athletes to attend the 1960 Paralympic Games in Rome. Colin Evered describes what it was like for his family to live at Elm Farm and farm the area from the 1940s until 1971. Stoke Mandeville Stadium and track are now built on this farmland. Colin shares his memories of attending the opening of Stoke Mandeville stadium by the Queen in 1969. Perhaps you attended an event as a child, and recall the impact it had on you?

In the early years of the Paralympic Movement the local community came together to support the Stoke Mandeville Games. If you are able to support us at the Paralympic Heritage Centre by volunteering we would love to hear from you. We will be holding a number of volunteer open days at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in 2019 to tell you more about how you can get involved as Heritage Centre Volunteers, Pop-up Museum Helpers and Paralympic Heritage Ambassadors. Visit our website for information about the first dates scheduled.

If you would like to discuss volunteering or any items or stories you might have please contact Katy-Jayne Lintott, NPHT Learning and Engagement Manager by email katyjayne.lintott@paralympicheritage.org.uk .

You can also follow the NPHT on Twitter @ParaHeritage, Facebook and Instagram @ParalympicHeritage #Paraheritagestories

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Many thanks for all your support in helping us to guard the legacy of our Paralympic athletes!

