

Buckinghamshire December Council Report

Provided by Cllr Anne Wight

Buckinghamshire Council Christmas Present Appeal

As some residents may recall, every year for the past few years Buckinghamshire County Council was proud to organise a Christmas present appeal for our looked after and vulnerable children. I am very pleased to say that this appeal is being continued by Buckinghamshire Council this year, and that it got some extra special support on Friday when Santa himself arrived with a special delivery of gifts to Buckinghamshire Council's Gateway offices.

The annual appeal – now in its sixth year – provides gifts to those children and young people in Buckinghamshire whose circumstances mean that they might not otherwise receive much at Christmas. This year, to ensure that everyone stays as safe as possible, the appeal has opened a [Just Giving: Buckinghamshire Council Christmas Appeal 2020 page](#) where people can make donations which will be used to purchase gifts.

For those supporters that prefer to select a gift themselves, purchases can be made online for direct delivery to The Gateway:

Christmas Present Appeal
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP19 8FF

Additionally, the Buckinghamshire Library Service is providing Covid-safe collection points for donated gifts at the following libraries:

- Aylesbury
- Buckingham
- Chesham
- High Wycombe

Paul Irwin, one of the Buckinghamshire Council councillors leading the appeal, said: "It was certainly an extra special moment when Santa himself arrived to support the campaign – but the success of the appeal depends on the ordinary people across the county who provide gifts or donate to the Just Giving page. It really does help our children and young people to have a happy Christmas – which is especially needed at this very difficult time.

"Please do whatever you can, and thank you for your support."

A Warning Regarding Green Homes Grant Scammers

The government's Green Homes Grant offers eligible homeowners in Buckinghamshire up to £10,000 of energy saving improvements, but doorstep fraudsters are already trying to cash in according to trading standards officers.

The [chancellor's scheme](#) helps homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their property while also giving the economy a much needed boost.

However, only approved and checked traders who officially register with the government can carry out the work.

Trading Standards Officers from Buckinghamshire are concerned the door may be left open for unscrupulous traders to exploit the trust of consumers who may not be aware and just want to access a voucher to get home improvements made cost-effectively.

Fred Wilson, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, says to be extra vigilant. "To get the grant you need to apply through the government's website. You may get people knocking on your door or offers through the post that they can get the deal on your behalf, but they can't.

"I am urging everyone, not just to be aware and ask questions, but to report it to our team so we can rid our county of these fraudsters."

You can apply for the scheme and see if you are eligible on the [GOV.UK: Green homes grant guidance webpage](#). Also, all tradespersons who deliver the work must be registered on the [TrustMark](#) or [Microgeneration Certification Scheme](#).

Trading Standards advises residents not to engage with cold callers either on the doorstep or on the phone. They say:

- Never engage with someone or allow them access to your home unless you are able to verify their authenticity and who they are.
- As with all scams: Be sceptical, stay calm, and don't be afraid to hang up, bin it, delete it or shut the door

To deter visits from cold callers, residents can display a no cold calling sticker by their front doors. To obtain a Stop Cold Calling Sticker Pack or to report an incident please contact Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on [03454 04 05 06](#).

Please be alert to these scams, and remind friends and neighbours that they can keep informed on the latest scams affecting your area by following Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading standards via social media.

A Guide to Buckinghamshire Waste Services

Residents across Buckinghamshire are reminded of the latest information and updates to Buckinghamshire Council's recycling and waste service, including: new collection calendars available to download for residents in the Chiltern and Wycombe areas, an update on the county's Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and the suspension of garden waste collection for residents in the Aylesbury Vale area.

Please be advised that currently the new national restrictions, in place between Thursday 5 November and Wednesday 2 December, have no impact on weekly household collections or Buckinghamshire's HRCs.

Household Recycling Centres remain open across Buckinghamshire

With the new national restrictions in place, it's likely residents will be spending more time at home and more waste may be produced. Buckinghamshire's HRCs will remain open as usual throughout this time, so it's still possible for those that need to, to make a trip to the tip. However, please note that the reuse shops will be closed in line with government guidance.

Residents who choose to visit later in the afternoon are reminded to please make sure plenty of time is left to make a trip. Last entrance to the site may be before 4pm, to allow those already onsite to unload their waste and exit by 4pm.

More information on the county's HRCs, including taking a virtual tour of the site and locating a HRC, can be found by visiting Buckinghamshire Council's [recycling and waste page](#).

Garden Waste suspension for Aylesbury Vale areas

Aylesbury Vale garden waste customers are reminded that the 2020 service will soon be coming to an end. For customers who normally have their brown garden waste bin collected on the same day as their green rubbish bin, the last collection for 2020 will take place the week commencing Monday 16 November. For customers who normally have their brown garden waste bin collected on the same day as their blue-lidded recycling bin, the last collection for 2020 will take place the week commencing Monday 23 November.

If you have additional garden waste, please remember that Buckinghamshire's HRCs remain open.

Additional information for Buckinghamshire residents

Buckinghamshire Council's street cleansing teams will be out and about collecting fallen leaves to keep our paths and roads safe this autumn.

Please avoid blowing leaves from gardens onto public highways as this can make pavements and paths extra slippery for users, especially in wet weather. The teams operate a schedule to clear leaves and having to return to clear sections that have previously been done has extra cost, and impacts on other roads that need clearing. Please use our garden waste collection service for your area to dispose of garden waste, or alternatively please take any additional garden waste to your local HRC.

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Bill Chapple OBE commented:

"We strive to provide timely information to our residents regarding their recycling and waste service and are pleased that, despite the new national restrictions, there is minimal disruption to the service.

"I'd like to thank residents for your continued cooperation and understanding, and share a friendly reminder to please keep up the good hygiene practice of wiping down bins and washing hands after handling bins."

Residents can view the latest service updates regarding recycling and waste at Buckinghamshire Council's [coronavirus updates page](#).

Business Grants Available to Help During the Pandemic

A summary of grants currently available to assist local businesses through the Covid pandemic are available via the Buckinghamshire Council website. The grants are for businesses who are facing challenges as a result of the latest COVID-19 restrictions.

There are two different types of grants available and they are being managed directly by Buckinghamshire Council.

- **Local Restriction Support Grant (LRSG)** – is available for businesses that have been required to close because of the national restrictions and is linked to rateable value.
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- **Additional Restriction Grant (ARG)** – is available for businesses which have been adversely impacted by the latest lockdown restrictions with a 30% or more reduction in income in November 2020 when compared to November 2019, but are not eligible for the Local Restriction Support Grant or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

If you are interested in one of these grants, please go directly to the Buckinghamshire Council website to check if you meet the criteria.

Buckinghamshire Council website link:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-business-support-hub/>

If you have any queries relating to these grants, please contact the Council directly as follows;

Local Restriction Support Grant - LRSG

- Aylesbury area: Phone [01296 585096](tel:01296585096)
- Chiltern area: cdcrevenue.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk Phone: [01494 732077](tel:01494732077)
- South Bucks area: SBDCbusinessrates.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk Phone: [01895 837540](tel:01895837540)
- Wycombe area: localtax.wyc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk Phone: [01494 412226](tel:01494412226)

Additional Restriction Grant – ARG

If you have been heavily impacted as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown from 5 November to 2 December, and have not been able to get support through the Local Restrictions Grant scheme, you can apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant.

The grant will be open to applicants from the 20 of November 2020 for a period of four weeks and will close at midnight on the 18 of December 2020.

To be eligible:

- your business must have experienced a reduction in income of 30% or more over the period of the second national “Lockdown” (you will need to be able to demonstrate this against the same period in the previous year)

You will not be eligible if:

- you are already eligible for the LRSG - i.e. you occupy a business rates paying premises in a sector which has been forced to close by the lockdown or
- you are a self-employed individual already receiving support through the government’s Self Employment Income Support Scheme

In addition your business must:

- be based in Buckinghamshire - Milton Keynes based businesses should apply to the Milton Keynes version of this fund
- have been trading immediately prior to November 5 2020
- not have been insolvent, in administration or under a striking off notice on November 4 2020

For more details please see the link and/or email address below:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-business-support-hub/coronavirus-business-grants/additional-restrictions-grant/>

discretionaryfund@buckinghamshire.gov.uk