

## **Buckinghamshire Councillors Report Edlesborough PC Mtg and Newsletter copy for Dec 22**

### **New home energy schemes for Bucks residents**

#### **Beacon Road Ringshall - Upcoming Drainage Improvement Works Road Closure**

Work will take place on Beacon Road, Ringshall from the National Trust Dockey Wood Car Park to the Steps Hill Car Park. The works are programmed to take place from (nominally) Monday 31st October, and it is anticipated that they will be completed by Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November. The work will be carried out using a road closure in operation between 7am and 7pm and temporary traffic lights when necessary.

This type of work is extremely weather dependent, and therefore these dates are subject to change at short notice.

#### **Become a Food Champion and help your local community**

Buckinghamshire Council is reaching out to residents to offer a Helping Hand to support those struggling the most with the cost of living crisis. The council is relaunching their Food Champion scheme in partnership with Street Associations and local foodbanks, where residents are invited to set up a food collection service for tinned and dry food in their own road or street.

To help increase collections, Food Champions are encouraged to coordinate monthly food drops within their street or even their place of work and deliver these directly to the foodbanks. Once delivered, the vital provisions will help make up food parcels for vulnerable local individuals and families which will be distributed by the foodbanks direct.

To find out more about the Food Champions scheme – or to set up a scheme in your street – please visit: [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/food-champions](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/food-champions)

Residents struggling to afford food can locate and contact their local foodbank by going to: [buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

### **Have your say on the Home to School Transport Consultation**

Buckinghamshire Council has today launched its Home to School Transport Consultation inviting residents to share their views on proposed changes to council-run school bus charges (Spare Seats Scheme), the Home to School Transport Policy (0- to 25-Year-Olds) and the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2023 to 2024.

Until midnight on Sunday 4 December, people in Buckinghamshire will be able to provide their views on proposals for:

- Spare Seats Scheme charging options
- Updates to our home to school transport policies

Any changes will apply for the 2023 to 2024 academic year onwards and will apply to both new and existing customers.

The Spare Seats Scheme offers paid-for seats on timetabled Council-run school buses, after all young people who are eligible for free school transport have been allocated a seat.

The changes will even out the cost of travel over a child's whole school career by reducing the cost of post-16 travel for some Spare Seats passengers, making it easier for parents and carers to know upfront how much they will have to pay before applying for a seat.

The consultation addresses concerns that the Spare Seats fee structure is complex and difficult to understand and proposes three options for simplified school bus ticket charges.

## **Buckinghamshire Council receives £2.7m funding to support rough sleepers in the county**

The Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has awarded Buckinghamshire Council £2.7 million of funding to help rough sleepers.

The funding – which covers five schemes running up until March 2025 – was granted following a successful bid by the council and will help support rough sleeper initiatives such as emergency beds, housing first support, and drug and alcohol outreach.

## **Last chance to help reshape constituencies**

### **Final chance for public to help reshape constituency map as Boundary Commission for England launches consultation on new revised proposals for constituencies**

The Boundary Commission for England today (8 November) publishes new revised proposals for constituencies across the country and opens a final month-long consultation, giving the public a last opportunity to send in their views.

The Commission has taken into consideration over 45,000 comments sent in by the public during the previous two stages of public consultation, and has changed nearly half of its initial proposals based on this feedback. A third and final consultation on the new map of revised constituency proposals is open now until 5 December. The

public are invited to view  
and comment on the new map at [bcereviews.org.uk](http://bcereviews.org.uk).

The Commission is undertaking an independent review of all constituencies in England as requested by Parliament. The number of electors within each constituency currently varies widely due to population changes since the last boundary review. The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors each MP represents, resulting in significant change to the existing constituency map. As part of the review, the number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543.

After this final consultation has closed on 5 December, the Commission will analyse the responses and form its final recommendations. These will be submitted to Parliament by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

## **Final deadline to cash council tax rebate vouchers approaches**

### **PLEASE NOTE CORRECTION TO PHONE NUMBER BELOW**

Buckinghamshire residents who haven't yet cashed their council tax energy rebate vouchers are being reminded that the deadline is fast approaching, at the end of this month.

Earlier this year the Government announced that all households in council tax bands A to D would receive a £150 payment as part of a range of measures to support people with the rising cost of energy pressures. Residents who were eligible for an energy rebate who had not received a BACS transfer were sent a voucher in the post in August this year. The vouchers need to be taken with a form of photo ID, to a post office, where they can be exchanged for £150.

Latest figures show that around 3,600 vouchers are still waiting to be cashed in Buckinghamshire.

The original vouchers sent out are only valid for 90 days so some will no longer be redeemable, but the council can still make a payment by BACS transfer for residents to receive the payment. Anyone who needs to do this must telephone the council before 24 November to arrange this. Call 0300 131 6000, choose Option 3 and then Option 6. The last payment run will be made on 25 November.

If your voucher is still valid but you are unable to get to the Post Office yourself, you can nominate someone else to collect the money on your behalf. The nominee will need to take the original letter and relevant photo identification to the Post Office. The process is fully explained in the voucher letter and on the council website: [www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax)

Anyone who has been sent a voucher but is in a position not to need it, please consider cashing it in and donating the funds to the Heart of Bucks Crisis Appeal

which is helping local people who are struggling to make ends meet as a result of the rising cost of living.

Your donation could help someone in need buy food and household essentials, contribute towards moving costs for someone fleeing domestic abuse or help with energy costs.

## **Buckinghamshire Council examines concerns about pollution of rare chalk streams**

Buckinghamshire Council is vowing to do what it can to lobby water companies and the Environment Agency on polluted watercourses in the county. The Council's Cabinet has heard a special report on concerns over pollution in the county's rivers and rare chalk streams. The council's Transport, Environment and Climate Change (TECC) Select Committee carried out the rapid review into potential pollution of the water courses after fears that more discharges by water companies and the impact of HS2 works were potentially polluting the chalk aquifer beneath the Misbourne Valley.

The council does not have responsibility for water quality; this lies with the Environment Agency and the water companies. The cross-party review group gathered evidence from a variety of different sources and stakeholders over a four-month period earlier this year to get a better understanding of the current health of Buckinghamshire's waterways and to see how potential problems and concerns can be addressed.

## **Council calls for action to strengthen primary care services in Buckinghamshire**

Buckinghamshire Council's Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Select Committee has today (Tuesday 15 November) reported the findings of an independent review into the progress of the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across the county and has made a series of key recommendations

Primary Care Networks bring together groups of GP practices in a geographical area, to work collaboratively with each other in managing patient and community needs. Buckinghamshire currently has 13 PCNs. Their aim is to provide communities with better access to a broad range of tailored healthcare services and to encourage enhanced partnership working

Councillor Derek Town