

County Council Update from County Cllr Anne Wight December 2019

Annual Christmas Present appeal

The County Council has launched its annual Christmas present appeal to help Buckinghamshire's vulnerable children and young people.

The annual appeal, now in its fifth year, sees County Council employees and county councillors donate Christmas presents throughout November and December for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people across the county. The presents will be handed over to children and young people by members of the council's Children's Services teams in time for Christmas.

Tolis Vouyioukas, Executive Director for Children's Services, said: "Our employees are fantastic, caring people and for the last few years they've really committed to supporting our appeal by donating many hundreds, if not thousands, of presents.

"We are thrilled to be running the collection again this year as we know how much all our staff want to help make Christmas that little bit better for children who otherwise might not receive much. I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to every member of staff who brings in a present; it will make a real and tangible difference to the disadvantaged families we work with.

"Supporting us with the appeal again this year are a number of local residents, community organisations and businesses who together provide a lot of support, for which we are very grateful."

If any residents wish to donate gifts, these are always very much appreciated by the children, and can be dropped off at county hall reception in Aylesbury.

Donation guidelines:

We would welcome gifts for children aged from babies to 19 years old, male or female

There are more disadvantaged children in the 10 – 16 age range than any other – so we do need most gifts for that age range

We ask that you leave the gift unwrapped so that we know what gender and age the present is for

London Luton Airport Expansion Consultation and information

Luton Airport's Statutory consultation for the proposed expansion from 18 to 32 million passengers per year will continue to run until 16th December.

Residents might wish to review expansion proposals and reports on the Future Luton website below in order to fully understand the key issues under discussion during the consultation.

<https://futureluton.llal.org.uk>

<https://futureluton.llal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LLAL-consultation-dates.pdf>

Help test the new Website

In April 2020, the five councils in Buckinghamshire will be replaced by a new unitary authority called Buckinghamshire Council. As part of this transition, we are creating a new website.

We are looking for local people to give us feedback on the design and usability of the new site. If you live in Buckinghamshire and you're willing to help us, please sign up to help.

What does this involve?

Over the next year we will be moving all the information on the current five council websites to the new website for Buckinghamshire Council.

If you sign up, we will send you regular (no more than monthly) emails asking you to complete testing online or inviting you to take part in face-to-face sessions.

Online testing will involve short 5-10 min tasks.

Face-to-face sessions will be held in the current five council buildings. They will last approximately 30-40 mins and involve testing the website and a short interview. £25 of shopping vouchers will be offered for your time and travel for the face to face sessions.

You can sign up or opt out at any time by going to the Shadow Authority website and accessing the link below or by going to the homepage and clicking on the "News" heading in the top frame.

<https://shadow.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/help-us-test-our-new-website/>

Freight Strategy Officer Update

I am pleased to be able to provide a progress update from our Freight Strategy officer, Graham Hillary:

"I must thank all the residents and businesses in the Ivinghoe Division for their patience and consideration during the Brownlow Bridge restriction period. It has been clear that some places have seen reduced Heavy Goods Vehicle flows whilst others have seen increased numbers. I appreciate the inconvenience experienced along with concerns about listed buildings, roads and the schools in the area.

The restriction was introduced as a result of a Canals and Rivers Trust survey that raised concerns about the weight bearing capacity of the bridge. For safety reasons it was critical to restrict use of the bridge by large goods vehicles while we worked on how to proceed. In order to protect the structure from further deterioration and to support the local businesses that employ hundreds of residents, approval was given to repair the bridge and maintain its role as part of the highway infrastructure.

The role of the Brownlow Bridge moving forward will be as part of a wider area approach focused on delivering the adopted freight strategy. The strategy has clear objectives to:

- ensure HGV traffic stays off unsuitable roads, minimising the negative impact on residents and the environment;
- promote the use of preferred routes for HGVs; and
- Offer support for business to deliver the county's aspirations for growth.

The proposal is being finalised for internal Bucks County Council approval, after which it is expected to be subject to public consultation. It is important that the approach is presented in the right forum to help gather constructive comment to help shape the final proposal. I look forward to the consultation and the opportunity to position what I believe is a good proposal, I welcome the chance to meet with many residents and work together to improve things in the area."

New contact points for new Buckinghamshire Council

People in Buckinghamshire will be able to visit an expanded range of locations for face to face information and advice on services of the new Buckinghamshire Council from April next year.

The Shadow Executive for the new council looked at how residents will be able to get on the spot access to council services through a network of local bases called Council Access Points, supporting the new unitary council to be close to its communities and making it simpler for people to get the information and support they need.

When the new Buckinghamshire Council comes into being on 1 April 2020, Buckinghamshire residents will be able to access information, advice and support on a range of topics near where they live or work. The Council Access Points (CAPs) will be based at the heart of local community life in existing buildings throughout Buckinghamshire.

Residents will be able to get face to face help on the spot from staff in locations they currently use to access council services. Staff will be on hand to guide people, signpost them to help, support them with online services and in some locations discuss more complex issues.

Five 'Access Plus' centres, located in the current council offices in the county's main towns, will offer extra services from Monday to Friday for residents who have more complex enquiries.

Other Council Access Points will operate from existing buildings, such as libraries, spread across the county stretching from Buckingham in the north to Burnham in the south. The locations of these will be confirmed and promoted as part of the launch preparations for Buckinghamshire Council which will go live in April 2020.

Once the Council Access Points are up and running, Buckinghamshire Council will start work on the next phase. The ambition is to evolve the access points to create wider one-stop community hubs based in multi-purpose buildings at the heart of community life.

Residents will ideally be able to access information about a wide range of topics, enjoy a social space and get support from different services such as the police, town and parish councils, visitor services and community groups all in one place. We will ask residents and communities to help co-design these facilities to meet local needs.

Whilst services will easily be accessible online, sometimes residents need to speak to someone face to face. Having access points dotted across the county will mean that people will be able to speak to someone to get the help and advice they need, close to where they live. More information on the Council Access Points will be forthcoming over the next few months, so I will be keeping everyone informed as to further developments.