



BUCKINGHAM'S ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2021

Buckingham Town Council

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1. Background

This report provides a summary of Buckingham's Annual Town Meeting which was held online on Wednesday 26th May 2021.

The purpose of the Annual Town Meeting was to provide an opportunity for the Town Council and other local organisations to gain a wide view of residents' views on issues facing the town and to facilitate work to respond effectively.

In recent years Buckingham's Annual Town Meeting has been designed to enable as many residents take part as possible. Over the past couple of year's, Town Meetings have been held in the Community Centre and structured with an informal, facilitated style that has enabled residents to talk to partners, as well as giving the opportunity to publicly ask questions.

The usual approach has been to host a week long public consultation on The Town Council's Facebook page in the week running up to the official ATM meeting in the Community Centre. In that respect this year was no different and our consultation ran from the 10th-14th May and residents were invited to post questions or comment under (pre-agreed) discussion topics. Resident's questions and comments were then circulated to representatives in advance of the 26th May, and questions amalgamated from the online consultation were to partner organisations by the Mayor.

2. Online Consultation Feedback

The four themes discussed during the online consultations and comments received were:

Monday 10th May we posed the question:

"How can the town support businesses and residents following the Covid restrictions and what else should Buckingham Town Council and our partners be doing to support our town and local businesses post-Covid?"

This question wasn't widely responded to; 35 people engaged (liked, commented or shared) the post and two statements were received from residents.

The town centre is a real gem and potential destination yet it is unappreciated and neglected by AVDC and now BCC whose main intervention is to make parking more complicated and expensive.

BTC needs to be bold and seize the initiative with a town centre plan we can rally behind - even if it goes beyond remit, it can act as leverage.

It should aim to make Buckingham a vibrant and viable premium destination by building on its pleasant, heritage, riverside environment, interesting independent retailers, cafes, pubs and restaurants.

Key points:

1: Free parking (if charging is a good idea, why don't Bicester Village do it?)

2: Pedestrianise the centre - from White Hart to Gaol. Yorkstone or cobble the streets and allow outdoor cafe seating and entertainment.

3: Incentivise independents over charity shops - with an active campaign to attract more and promote start-ups.

4: Redevelop the Tesco building with something much more attractive and in keeping.

5: Do more to connect the riverside with the town centre and encourage visitors to enjoy both.

Maybe enlist the support of the university and local business in creating and promoting the Buckingham Strategy.

Free parking this month has proved to be very popular. What we need now is short term free parking and parent and child spaces. I think these are more important than the electric charging points now being installed. Who decided we needed them?

New and independent shops should definitely be encouraged. Traders associations have not always been successful but we need to work together to make changes that suit all our needs.

Tuesday 11th we posed the following question:

“Around once every ten years Buckingham might have a serious flooding event, this is when flooding impacts not just on the parks and low lying roads, but on people’s homes.

It is really important that residents know if their home or business is at risk of flooding and prepare in advance (here we inserted a link to the Residents information page of our website which details flood advice and appeals for volunteers for our Flood Volunteer Group).

What else can Buckingham Town Council and its partners do to help support residents and businesses?”

This particular post was well received, it was viewed by over 2,300 people and had over 230 likes/dislikes or other forms of engagements. The following comments were received on the subject:

Stop building on flood plains - future planning applications must take this into account. Also flood planes can be created. Only if there is a will can the flooding problem be solved

Flood barrier or wall either side of the river in Ford St to protect the Woolpack pub etc.

Clear fallen debris from the river and increase the flow.

Wednesday 12th May we asked:

“Buckingham Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. Since then the Council has been busy investigating actions the Town Council can take, as well as looking for ways to work with partners to make a difference. You can view and download the latest version of our [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) from our website, updated at Full Council in March 2021.

What else should Buckingham Town Council and our partners be doing to address the challenges of climate change?”

This was another popular subject, having been viewed by over 2,400 people and receiving over 150 interactions.

The main comments that arose from this thread were:

I note the backing of Buckinghamshire Council for EV charging points in Cornwall Meadow car park. This is positive but far better to have 4 Ultra Rapid Chargers than 8 ‘standard’? The latter are generally a white elephant in fast turn around parking locations where customers want/need faster charging. Ultra Rapid Chargers will also draw in passing ‘trade’ from people stopping journeys en-route to charge up. This has a positive benefit on local shops/coffee shops etc as drivers need something to do in the 20 mins or so their car is charging. It might also encourage local taxi firms to switch to EVs.

The council could also seek to lead by example and set out a plan for decarbonising the Community Centre. Switching to LED lighting, improving insulation, installing roof mounted solar and ASHP. Requires investment but sensible to have a plan in place. Sounds like Buckinghamshire Council have agreed to pay for the EV charging already.

Clear the obstructions in the river to increase the flow and prevent rubbish that gets trapped, and prevent rodent’s invasion, plant wild flowers all along the river banks to attract insects and wildlife.

On Thursday 13th March we asked the following:

“We have a new suite of Town and Unitary Councillors in Buckingham, some new faces and some more familiar. What do you think should be their top 3 priorities for Buckingham in 2021/22?”

This post had a low level of engagement, reaching only a few hundred views and forty odd likes/dislikes or shares. In summary this question received the following comments as priorities for new Unitary and Town Councilors to focus on during 2021/22:

- Stop building new housing on the slopes surrounding the town. Fields soak up water, housing developments do not, resulting in more water run-off, higher river levels, and more flooding.
- Better planning for new housing developments and protecting open green space for communities to use. More engagement with residents and responding to queries positively.
- Flood Defenses.

So in summary it was a worthwhile consultation exercise, each year we've done this it's highlighted areas of concern that are key to the residents of Buckingham and this year, it is clear the main issues are around flooding and climate change. With our stretch of the River Great Ouse being central in both of those themes. The feedback received from the online consultation was amalgamated into 4 key questions that was presented, in advance, to our invited guest from Buckinghamshire's Responsible Authorities to respond on the 26th May 2021.

3. Annual Town Meeting 26th May 2021

The meeting was held online via Zoom and attended by the following representative from Buckingham's Responsible Authorities:

Cllr. Robina Ahmed – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Mark Cole JP – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr Margret Gateley – Buckingham Town Mayor
Cllr Jon Harvey – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Sue Hetherington – Buckingham Town Council
Mr. Dean Jones – University of Buckingham
Sergeant Kuttner – Thames Valley Police
Cllr. Andy Mahi – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Anthony Ralph – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Lisa O'Donoghue – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Adekunle Osibogun – Buckinghamshire Council & Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Howard Mordue – Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Anja Schaefer – Buckingham Town Council
Greg Smith MP – Member of Parliament for Buckinghamshire
Cllr. Robin Stuchbury - - Buckinghamshire Council & Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Martin Try – Buckingham Town Council

Cllr. Warren Whyte – Buckinghamshire Council & Buckingham Town Council
Cllr. Ryan Willett – Buckingham Town Council

What follows is a copy of the questions and responses received at the Annual Town Meeting on the 26th May 2021.

4. Questions Amalgamated from the Online Consultation

1. What more can be done to incentivise independent traders to our High Street shops?
2. How can we stop building on the flood plain and further support residents and businesses at risk of flooding?
3. What more can be done to assist the community in the reduction of household's carbon footprints?
4. How do we work together to reinvigorate our beautiful town into a destination for residents, tourists and shoppers?

4.1. What more can be done to incentivise independent traders to our High Street shops?

Cllr. Osibogun – Consult with the Town's traders and residents.

Dean Jones – Celebrate everything that is already happening in the town and focus on Buckingham's culture, arts and entertainment to drive more footfall into the town.

Cllr. Mordue – In order to thrive, Buckingham's shopping areas have to be better supported by the town's shoppers. Rent reduction may act as an incentive to drive more traders but ultimately the shops need more shoppers.

Cllr. Stuchbury – Events in the town Centre are key to unlocking the town centre post-covid. Buckinghamshire Council are looking at programme of events throughout the Summer of 2021. Buckingham's Street Market income has risen despite the challenges of lockdown. The Traders Associate needs to be reinstated and shop owners need to be full engaged to help bring activity into the town centre.

Greg Smith MP – Lets celebrate what we've got in town. Buckingham has a thriving town centre and I have been impressed with the traders that I've met in various meetings and visits of their ambition and Entrepreneurial spirit for a vibrant town centre and we need to all support that. Indeed, we have been very fortunate that there have been very few businesses closures in the town centre and there are few vacant premises compared to other comparable small market towns around the country. Buckinghamshire Council and the Government have distributed significant grants to help with businesses that had significant challenges during lockdown, and many new and existing businesses have benefitted from significant Business Rate relief or small business relief.

4.2. How can we stop building on the flood plain and further support residents and businesses at risk of flooding?

Cllr. Stuchbury spoke on recent planning applications in the Flood Zone that were opposed by the Town Council and later granted permission. The new Buckinghamshire Plan should be more inclusive of the catchment area and hope the councilors are recognizing the impact of development. Balancing lake need to be developed, monitored and maintained. Potential Floodgates at the Woolpack, Ford Street were investigated over ten years ago and refused as it was obscuring/interfering with a public right of way and would detract from the beauty of the area. We should be looking for measures to ensure water is retained as much as possible. The Environment Agency needs to take responsibility to ensure riparian owners to remove trees from blocking the river and the private landowners in the river basin catchment need to realise their responsibilities. Cllr Stuchbury spoke about concerns on how HS2 may effect future flooding events in the town.

Cllr Harvey raised concern over the capacity of Buckingham's storm drain systems and called for measure to be put in place to ensure town and its residents are not effect by flooding because of over development of housing.

Cllr. Donoghue said County's Planning Officers needed to visit Buckingham before making decisions. The Environment Agency's flood data is often quoted and is not factual correct. It is based on old inaccurate data.

Cllr Whyte said the Environment Agenda had overall responsibility for flooding with Buckinghamshire Council as the lead food authority, various other community groups and local authorities also had responsibilities coordinating a response was complicated. The flood zones in town are designated by the Environment Agency and the flood level data is old and questionable in its accuracy. The statutory investigation (Section 19) is being carried out by Buckinghamshire Council and hopes were that the boundaries of flood zones will be reassessed. Candleford Court is the only development in the flood Zone, the new care home at Cornwalls Meadow is on the edge of the flood zone. Authorities need to look upstream at water retention programmes and natural flood alleviation on the river's tributaries.

Cllr Whyte reported:

- In future the river water level gauge on Castle Bridge would be taken in to account along with the one at Brackley.
- Link to the latest flood update and the Section 19 survey for those impacted by it: <https://www.facebook.com/WarrenWhyteUK/posts/2989856331251012>
- Anglian Water are investigating March Edge already regarding the sewerage problems.

Greg Smith MP said the way the planning system works it simply doesn't recognize flood risk in the way it should.

Dean Jones reported on flood damage at the University and said a robust community action plan was needed with a coordinated Flood Action Group led by the Town Council. The community fundraising of £20k was distributed to those residents impacted in the floods but only touches the surface of recovering from the physical damage and in another 5-10 years' time will residents be more reluctant to donate. We need to think about and address these concerns for the future of the community in Buckingham. Some areas are always going to be affected by flooding and could be improved to limit the damage and impact of future flooding events.

Cllr. Cole said that Buckinghamshire Council had to listen when Buckingham Town Council draws its attention to not only local but national planning policies - the Crown Care Home is being built on a site in Flood Zones 2 & 3, the use of which for housing, especially for vulnerable people, is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. AVDC Planning studiously ignored this and even the Secretary of State overruled the NPPF.

4.3. What more can be done to assist the community in the reduction of household's carbon footprints?

Cllr. Stuchbury raised concern over the affordability of retrofitting homes with renewable energies. Houses should be constructed as sustainably as possible and all new developments should be constructed as carbon neutral with assistance from the government.

Cllr. Whyte said Buckinghamshire benefited from a comprehensive doorstep recycling scheme and more work should be done to promote the benefits of replacing LED light bulbs and [home composting](#).

Cllr. Harvey said there were many domestic energy providers that sourced from 100% renewables but in the future all households should have their own form of renewable energy generation. New housing developments should have EV charging point on the kerb side and older properties should be well insulated with incentives to help replace old gas boilers.

Cllr Mordue said there was legislation to stop gas boilers being installed in new developments. Cllr. Hetherington reminded members of the historical AVDC Green Fair.

The Mayor listed some of the things the Town Council have done including Electric vehicles and planned installation of solar panels on the Lace Hill community centre.

Greg Smith MP - The Government remains dedicated to increasing the efficiency of low income homes across England to tackle our contribution to climate change. The funding previously allocated for the Green Homes Grant will now support a scheme that targets low income households which will be distributed by local authorities. Through reallocating these funds, Ministers hope to achieve a better-targeted approach that will reach more households. This additional £300 million of funding will

increase the Government's total spending on energy efficiency measures to £1.3 billion for this year.

The Government is working with industry to examine the potential role of hydrogen in heating homes and workplaces. It would work in a similar way to gas boilers today but without any carbon emissions. The UK is already a world leader in hydrogen and the Government is investing £500 million in new hydrogen technologies. Prior to consulting on the role of 'hydrogen ready' appliances, the Government will assess the case for encouraging, or requiring, new gas boilers to be readily convertible to hydrogen, so-called 'hydrogen-ready' boilers, in preparation for any future conversion of the gas network. By the mid-2030s I am pleased that the Government expects all newly installed heating systems to be low-carbon or to be appliances that can be converted to a clean fuel supply.

4.4. How do we work together to reinvigorate our beautiful town into a destination for residents, tourists and shoppers?

Dean Jones said the yearly influx of almost 600 new students would benefit from a comprehensive digital welcome a package to outline what is available in the town.

Cllr Harvey said working together was key as was respect between key organisations.

Cllr Stuchbury reported on the work of the Town Centre Manager and said work needed to be undertaken to stimulate the independent market and put more culture into the town Centre with entertainment and buskers.

Cllr Whyte said Buckingham was a vibrant small market town with retail and cultural talent but how do we nurture it to make sure it is not lost for future generations. We need to be more vocal about our asset, Gilbert Scott, Stowe, Silverstone and Buckingham's beautiful architecture. The Community Board started looking at focused intervention in the town Centre and hopefully we can look at improving some of the tired areas of the Town Centre, Old Town Hall, Chancery Chapel, riverside boardwalk.

Cllr Ahmed said there have been many good building blocks that have come from Buckingham Town Council including #shoplocal, Buxplore and the Tonw Council's social media pages.

5. Written Questions submitted in Advance of the Meeting

*To what extent can we hope to stick to the **Neighbourhood Development Plan** that representatives of this town have produced. With Conservative Governmental plans to allow developers to build homes as and where they like, will we get assurance from the Conservative MP for Buckingham, and Councillors concerned with development, that our neighbourhood development plan will be stuck to and nothing more?*

Greg Smith MP - Buckingham Town Council is currently undertaking a review of the Neighbourhood Plan and I support local residents being able to control the shape of new development.

I also support Buckinghamshire's Council ambitions for the new Local Plan to focus on brownfield and town centre sites. I do not support the further loss of any more countryside.

Cllr .Whyte referred to Buckinghamshire Council's response to the government proposals last autumn here: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/planning-reform-response/>

We also responded to the more recent consultation here: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/buckinghamshire-council-raises-concerns-about-the-governments-proposed-changes-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-the-national-model-design-code/>

Cllr. Stuchbury said Buckingham was unfairly facing Unwarranted development that is unsustainable and un-environmentally friendly.

Cllr. Osibogun - As BC Councillors, we continue to support local voices being heard on planning matters and support our neighbourhood development plans. While the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan is dated and currently being reviewed by the Town Council's Planning Committee to ensure it aligns with the VALP and NPPF, we are keen to support and will work with the Town Council to evolve a plan that protects Buckingham's interests and promotes our local distinctiveness. We have also facilitated amendments to the Buckinghamshire constitution to enable Parish and Town Councils call in planning applications, which will ensure local voices continue to be heard on planning matters.

Please explain what is a "Community Board"; their purpose; their composition and how their work relates to the formal work of the Parish and District Councils?

Community Boards are a new way of bringing the council, groups, organisations and local people together to look at local issues and find ways of improving them together.

- As a community-led partnership, Community Boards will:
- influence how decisions are made and how services are delivered
- represent the voice of local people
- capture thoughts, ideas and suggestions
- bring together key community partners and residents
- identify local needs and work to produce creative solutions

There will be many ways the boards will work with the community to identify what is important in each area and take action together.

The boards will use local data, intelligence and the views of people and partners in the community to identify key areas of focus and priorities for the board. These priorities will help determine where the boards take action and allocate funding to improve the local area.

The boards are all about taking action. Action groups will explore the local priorities, set up local projects and find creative ways to make local changes.

Each board has an allocated budget to fund local projects and initiatives.

There will be five public meetings held each year. At these meetings, funding is allocated and feedback will be shared on the plan of action. Action notes from these meetings will be published online. Cllr Whyte was appointed Chair of the Community Boards for 2021/22 and looking to relaunch. Description of the Community Board.

Litter/Dog waste bins for Tingewick Road, this I raised some three years ago and at one of the meetings it was decided that a bin could be placed and that it would be down to the estates team to undertake this, do you have a timescale on when this will be?

Buckingham Town Council's Greenspaces Team have agreement to install the new litter bin (fixed to an existing pole outside the launderette) on the Tingewick Road and this job should be programmed in over the next couple of weeks. We are hoping to hear back from the Street scene department over the next few days with agreement on the installation of the new dog waste bin – to be located on the exit from Railway Walk. We will let the resident know once I receive any confirmation as to timescales for installation.

Disabled access to Clarence Park play area and riverine corridor, the last communication from the council meetings was that the consultant that was appointed by Taylor Wimpey to report back on the issue was reluctant to attend due to COVID concerns, this was I believe back in December but I feel it was longer, the excuse is frankly absurd and the consultant could have easily visited a large open space socially distanced to complete his/her report, disable residents from Clarence Park, Hamilton estate and Fishers Field all have access from the river walk but cannot access or leave the play area/river walk due to no dropped kerb. Has there been any further involvement from the TC to put pressure on TW to allow disabled access to the site.

Buckingham Town Council's Communications Clerk has been chasing Taylor Wimpey on a regular basis and on the 25th May we received the following reply:

The specialist consultant has finally been to the development (we struggled to get them to do a site visit due to Covid) and they are now drafting their proposal to resolve the access issues. Due to the nature of the issue and the area to be worked on they have not been able to confirm a timescale for their proposal but as soon as we have it we will let you know.

St Rumbolds Well, the whole issue of the developers and the TC regarding taking ownership or responsibility has gone quiet, there seems to be no update as to what's happening after the developer put a screen around the site, but that has now been breached and its back to fires being lit, glass smashed, empty cans and toilet waste back there again, really is this any way to treat a local historic monument, Buckingham should be proud of this but we all let it get to this state, if it was in the Cattle Pens or elsewhere in the centre of town it would be looked after and there would be further outcry, out of site out of mind. I'm more than happy to be part of a working party to clear this up as I've done in the past but it needs more permanent involvement/works to protect and highlight such a monument for the benefit of Buckingham.

The Town Council is currently in discussions with Barratts (Developers of the Tingewick Rd estate) about the option for the Town Council to take on the green spaces and play areas within the new development, this would include maintenance of the site of St Rumbold's Well. Full Council have agreed that the Town Council take on the green spaces and play areas following completion of the development, provided that Barratts agree a suitable initial payment, and that the development of the green spaces are completed satisfactorily, in line with the agreed plans. Whilst negotiations are ongoing we are unable to comment any further.

Cllr Osibogun - As BC Councillors, it is our understanding that the park is being transferred to the Town Council and believe the Town Council will presumably want to respond on timescale. We keep in contact with the archaeology team to ensure the situation of the Well is being monitored, and hope that perhaps the Buckingham Society might once gain help with raising awareness and understanding of the Well

Flooding Nelson Street - Along with many others we were flooded on the night of 23 Dec 2020. 3 feet of dirty water inside our house on Nelson Street for 48 hours. There are many national and local organisations responsible for different aspects of maintenance and flood prevention. This means nobody can be held accountable when flooding happens. Can you please create a chart showing who is responsible for what and post it on the council website? If not, why not?

Cllr. Osibogun - This information can be made available on the Buckingham Town Council website.

Transport for Buckinghamshire are responsible for maintaining street drains and culverts. We have repeatedly reported 3 drains and culvert outside my house that cannot cope with 30 minutes of persistent rain. The water doesn't drain away and means a pool stretches across Nelson Street at the corner of Tingewick Road. It last happened on 24 May. That in turn means cars splash up to 6 feet on doors and windows. Once water is over pavement level it comes into houses. Despite logging as an emergency, TfB don't attend or address. Reference 46075993. Can the council please pressure on TfB to take seriously?

Cllr. Osibogun - This complaint has been raised with TfB, the site was visited by TfB and the complaint addressed. We encourage residents to take part in the Council's section 19 investigation so that any problem that did occur with any agency's response can be considered.

What level does the river need to reach at Tingewick bridge before the EA send out a flood alert or a flood warning? On 23 Dec 2020 we received a warning at 23.10. Our house already had 3 feet of water inside at 19.00. What steps are any local or national organisation taking to ensure the river Great Ouse can handle the volume of water at any time? What sluice gates operate upstream from Buckingham? Who decides whether they are open or closed? What consultation with Buckingham takes place?

This falls within the remit of the Environment Agency and not Buckinghamshire Council.

What input can residents have into any flood management plan for the area?

Cllr. Osibogun - We would urge all Residents that were directly or indirectly affected by the floods to respond to the ongoing section 19 flood investigation and support the Town Council's Flood Group by volunteering as flood wardens.

Greg Smith MP - Since the flooding of Buckingham and some surrounding villages on the 23 and 24 December I have been impressed with the community response to the flood, but concerned that the Environment Agency did not respond as well or as promptly as they could on the night.

The Environment Agency has acknowledged that the Flood Warning system let Buckingham down that night, and they have reassured me that they now take into account local river levels.

I welcome the news that Buckinghamshire Council is currently undertaking a formal "Section 19" flood investigation, and once that is concluded in the next few months, I will be urging all statutory bodies and undertakers to come together to discuss and review long term options for the town and reduce future flood risk, and will be urging government for appropriate funding to support the recommendations

What evidence can you provide that Buckingham Town Council, Buckinghamshire Council, AVDC, the Environment Agency, Transport for Buckinghamshire, Anglian Water and other local and national organisations have taken steps to stop - or at the very least, reduce - flooding in Buckingham in the future? How are they currently and actively involved in flood prevention and what exactly are they doing, and what have they achieved so far?

Cllr. Osibogun - There is an ongoing section 19 flood investigation which will help identify the failings in the system and influence changes that need to be considered. Also, the Town Council is setting up a Flood Group to provide additional support and coordination.

What are your views on river dredging and raising the river banks? I believe this was brought up after previous floods in Buckingham but it was never acted upon.

This falls within the remit of the Environment Agency and not Buckinghamshire Council.

I would also like to mention that households in Nelson Street whose properties were flooded (including ours) received no assistance in person from Buckingham Town Council, AVDC, the EA, the police or volunteers on the night of the flood on 23rd December. No one knocked on our doors to let us know that flooding was imminent, no one asked if we needed any help, no one checked on us. No sandbags were delivered either. A member of the Fire Brigade did give us one 'acqua bag' (an alternative to a sandbag). The police didn't even close the Tingewick Road and Nelson Street to motor vehicles. Why did no one take action?

Cllr. Osibogun - The essence of the ongoing section 19 flood investigation is to help identify the failings in the system and influence changes that need to be considered. The Town Council's Flood Group will be able to assist and coordinate in the event of a flood. Your BC Councillors are encouraging the Flood Mobile to visit Buckingham this summer to share the latest developments in property level protection that home owners may want to consider in improving their flood resilience.

In comparison, in the hours leading up to the flood on 21st July 2007, representatives of various agencies were present to monitor the situation, and we were kept informed at regular intervals. We were then evacuated to the Radcliffe Centre. This time however, Nelson Street felt deserted and forgotten ...

Furthermore, not a single representative from Buckingham Town Council, AVDC, Buckinghamshire Council, the Environment Agency or local flood volunteer groups has even taken the trouble to check on us or our wellbeing since the night of the flood on 23rd December 2020 ...

Given that our house and our belongings were destroyed by a major flood, that we had to find alternative accommodation in the middle of a pandemic, not to mention the upheaval in our lives this flood has caused, a little thoughtfulness and a helping hand from our local authorities would have gone a long way.

Cllr. Osibogun - BC Councillors dropped off support leaflets after the flooding, but covid restrictions curtailed the scope of personal contact. The Community Board also provided emergency funding for residents, and numerous updates were shared on social media. The establishment of the Flood Group in Buckingham will provide additional support and help coordinate residents' welfare

Thames Valley Police - I appreciate your concerns about the flooding, it was such a horrible time for certain residents of Buckingham. Unfortunately, it would not be possible for the Police to knock on everyone's doors as we simply do not have enough officers (generally there are two response officers who work in Buckingham - however they also cover all of the towns and villages North of Aylesbury – as well as the local neighbourhood team who work shifts). Without wanting to sound like I'm trying to 'pass the buck', it is also not our responsibility to close roads during flooding, this would likely come down to the Highways Agency. The Police will always look to assist with road closures in the first instance as there may be a delay in the Highways Agency attending; however, this is not always possible due to our own resourcing issues.

Market Hill – West Street - *What measures might be taken and by whom, to enforce highways regulations along the brick-paved section of Market Hill between Barclays Bank to the east and the junction with West Street to the West. This section of Market Hill is an unclassified road which is subject to a 30mph speed limit having double yellow lines on both sides along its entire length. Persistent contraventions include:*

Placing (on a permanent basis) waste bins on the highway

Placing sign boards on the highway

Parking on the highway by the post office (but not necessarily so as to prevent other vehicles from passing)

Parking in the middle of the highway (such that the road is completely blocked) for various purposes including:

Making deliveries that may take as long as 30 minutes

Visiting the ATM at the post office

Setting down / picking up a taxi passenger

Parking on the junction of Market Hill and West Street

Passing the wrong way up Market Hill (from west to east – the road is one way from east to west) on pedal cycles and mobility scooters

Should this road be formalised as a shared space and /or be pedestrianised?

Cllr. Osibogun - The responsibility for dealing with parking issues, lie with Civil Enforcement Officers, (formerly called Traffic Wardens) who are employed by Buckinghamshire Council. Other matters can be reported on Fixmystreet . With serious obstruction to traffic flow to the Police.

Nelson Street and Rumbolds lane, Buckingham.

We are given to understand that the owner has a licence for a HMO for 5 people on Nelson street and has applied for planning permission retrospectively for the alterations. I note that he has actually mentioned in his application that the property will be occupied by students from the Buckingham University and given that there has been previous issues with waste disposal (rubbish in wrong bags and bins _ excessive rubbish strewn all over the road and inner courtyard) there will be careful management of this situation and the bins going forward.

Also, please note that the owners of no. xx Nelson street, thought it appropriate to add a dark Blue paint on the bricks, in a conservation area of the town. Apparently a council official has been out to view this as, a result of complaints from neighbours... and apparently, has Ok'd it.

Are we to expect the other two properties in the owner's empire to be painted the same! Lastly, the occupants have already had visits from police, in answer to Drugs issues in the inner courtyard of all three properties.

Does the council really think that the residents of surrounding listed buildings, in a conservation area of our lovely town, want these kind of properties on our doorstep?

What guarantee can the owner give, to the surrounding area that his tenants will give priority to good waste management?

What will be done to prevent drugs issues?

How can The planning application make reference to students of the Buckingham University when the University would only ever promote their own "on campus" accommodation?

Why has the owner been granted licences for HMO properties in the same location (and I am very aware that there is no license on xx yet, but there is every indication that he will apply) ... Is anyone actually representing the neighbours in this issue or is the owner your only concern .

We would ask that the town strongly oppose this development and that residents are taken into account. There are lots of elderly people around this area and they do not want this kind of interference in their lives. Nor does anyone want this kind of establishment having an affect on the house prices or the degradation of the wonderful community we have in this area.

Thames Valley Police - From a police point of view, we will look to act in relation to drug issues if we receive information/ intelligence that it is an issue. This can be done by contacting us on the phone via 101 or through 'online reporting' on the Thames Valley Police website. As you have mentioned, with the previous residents we did take action.

Cllr. Osibogun - The HMO License requests are to ensure that the property is in a proper and safe manner to house tenants and is administered by the Licensing Department of Buckinghamshire Council. Details of which are on the web site. Problems concerning noise, un-social activity would be dealt with by the Aylesbury Vale Area Environmental Health Department of Buckinghamshire Council. Drugs are a criminal matter to be dealt with by the Police.

We would like to raise the issue of Blue Bricks latest HMO application for xx Nelson Street. As part of this judgement have you investigated the financial stability of the company? If the company fails then it will not be able to complete any approved works, leaving the residence with an incomplete building and disputed ownership. This development will become part of three owned by this company, all of which are HMO's. It is not unreasonable to assume that each resident will have a car with neither the new nor current properties have no facilities parking attached and no on/off street parking in the vicinity.

Cllr. Osibogun - The HMO License requests are to ensure that the property is in a proper and safe manner to house tenants and is administered by the Licensing Department of Buckinghamshire Council. Details of which are on the web site. Problems concerning noise, un-social activity would be dealt with by the Aylesbury Vale Area Environmental Health Department of Buckinghamshire Council. Drugs are a criminal matter to be dealt with by the Police.

*Many residents are appreciating how **No Mow May** allows wildflowers and pollinating insects to thrive. The Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan of March 2020 includes actions to "protect and enhance native species and habitats" and a "review of grass verges and hedges to identify areas to be trimmed less and later in the year to support more wildflowers and insects." Yet every year there has come a point when places such as Berties' Walk are cut when in full flower. What assurances can you give that this won't happen again this year? Also, in many new housing developments, the landscaping of verges and gardens seem almost sterile in terms of biodiversity - with no flowering plants, just badly-planted evergreen shrubs. Does planning consent incorporate any requirements for biodiversity to protect and enhance native species and habitats, and if not can it be reviewed and amended?*

Bertie's Walk is a beautiful part of town that is currently under the management of Buckinghamshire Council. We understand that last year Bertie's Walk and other open spaces in the town (Coronation Meadow) were mown in contrary to Buckinghamshire Council's grounds maintenance schedule. Buckingham Town Council have been told the unscheduled mowing of those areas was a mistake and would not be repeated.

Buckingham Town Council's Estates Manager reviews our mowing schedule on an annual basis to ensure large sections of our greenspaces are left to grow. You may have noticed this in Bourton Park's paddocks and along the sides of the bypass. Buckingham Town Council's Planning Committee is consulted on all planning applications in the parish and our Planning Clerk has noted that a development of any size, the planting list for the soft landscaping has to be supplied and agreed. The vast majority of trees proposed are native species, and quite a lot of the shrubs which tend to the boring side because they are chosen for being low-maintenance e.g. no flowers needing deadheading, just a quick zoom over with a hedge trimmer

at the end of the season. If the planting is in an open space for adoption, it has to be thriving after two years, or replaced, before adoption takes place.