

# Buckingham Town Councillors

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# Buckingham TownMatters

Autumn 2011

## BUCKINGHAM NORTH

Cllr. Tony Chan	01280 816517
Cllr. Paddy Collins	01280 823006
Cllr. Jon Harvey	01280 812711
Cllr. Derrick Isham	01280 813770
Cllr. Rob Lehmann	01280 817331
Cllr. Andy Mahi	01280 816562
Cllr. Howard Mordue	0845 347 9320
Cllr. Ruth Newell	01280 815229
Cllr. Martin Try	01280 816202

## BUCKINGHAM SOUTH

Cllr. Terry Bloomfield	01280 815336
Cllr. Hedley Cadd	01280 814112
Cllr. Geraldine Collins	01280 823006
Cllr. Paul Hiron	01280 812072
Cllr. Lisa O'Donoghue	01280 824624
<b>Cllr. Mike Smith Mayor</b>	<b>01280 822215</b>
Cllr. Robin Stuchbury	01280 824285
Cllr. Warren Whyte	01280 820531

## Contact the Town Council at:



### Buckingham Town Council

Town Council Office, Buckingham Centre, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP

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Office open: Monday – Thursday 10am – 5pm Friday 9am – 3pm



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Buckingham Charter Fair  
(courtesy of Mr. Brian Simonds)



in this  
issue

town  
development

how we spend  
your money

buckingham  
fringe

best kept  
village

localism bill

music in  
the market

Thoroughly MODERN  
Traditional  
BUCKINGHAM



Mike Smith and Marjorie Howard

## A message from Mayor Mike

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The forthcoming Localism Bill will produce a lot more work, but we welcome this as it should give us a greater say on how Buckingham develops in the future. Housing growth in Moreton Road and Bridge Street, the massive development south of the by-pass, and outline proposals in Tingewick Road all have implications for our town infrastructure. The impact of 1,000-plus households will have big implications for all services, including local day care (about

which there are still uncertainties), our Fire Service (which is being “reviewed”), and our already congested roads. There are areas of Buckingham that have no play provision for our youngsters (a sad reflection on our planners); we shall need more burial space as Brackley Road Cemetery reaches full capacity; and demand for allotments is also increasing. Local discontent about the car parking is still rife, as our District Council seeks to further milk this cash cow despite fears that the introduction of charges has affected local trade.

There is, however, plenty of good news. During the past year, we have received slightly improved economic development funding from our District Council. Mainly centred on our town branding exercise, the roll-out of the Thoroughly Modern Traditional Buckingham brand will help attract more visitors to our historic town – and buoyant trading conditions and new business opportunities can only be good for us all. Hopefully, this trickle of funds will become a steady stream, and we shall receive a more balanced share of resources rather than see it all go to Aylesbury. The past year has seen a closer working relationship between town and district officers, which can only pay long-term dividends for Buckingham. The fact that two long-standing Town Councillors, Robin Stuchbury and Howard Mordue, are now also District Councillors will, I am sure, improve the political decision-making balance in Buckingham’s favour.

Our Tourist Information Centre, now funded by Buckingham Town Council and managed by Tourism South East, continues to offer local advice to visitors, newcomers and residents alike. It also provides a useful National Express coach and theatre ticket booking service, and holds tickets to all major local events. Fans of the “beautiful game” will be delighted to hear that they will also shortly have tickets for a whole host of events leading up to the second MK Dons Buckingham Big Day in February.

If I were a cynic, I might suggest that The Big Society is about getting volunteers to do the work previously undertaken by paid professionals. In Buckingham, we are already blessed with a small army of volunteers who run many of the things we both need and enjoy. My three charities – Project Street Life, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau and Buckingham Old Gaol Trust are all run by volunteers, as are around a hundred other local bodies. Where would we be without such people?

Although the general economic climate remains unfavourable, your Town Council continues to provide a wide range of entertainments for the enjoyment of us all – including the splendid new Buckingham Fringe in June, which was a resounding success. We have managed this and increased our staff to better meet our statutory responsibilities, while still keeping your Council Tax at the 2009 rate. Our office move to the Buckingham Centre now also means that you can call on all three councils under one roof.

Finally, do have a look at the invitation to let us know what you think, which appears on the back page of this edition of Buckingham Town Matters. Do tell us what YOU think, or let us know what you would like us to do. Your Town Councillors really do welcome your letters and emails.

Mike Smith  
Buckingham Town Mayor

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## New staff



Samuel Dix

In order to deal with the greatly increased workload, including changes that the forthcoming Localism Bill will bring, The Town Council has taken on some additional staff.



Amanda Brubaker

**Samuel Dix** is our new Town Plan Officer – a post we have created so that we can lead the way on planning for housing and employment



Liz Campbell

development in the town; **Amanda Brubaker** will run the many events we organise each year; **Liz Campbell** will support our committee structure; and **Louise Bird** will carry forward many of our administrative functions.



Louise Bird

We have also added **Matthew Shoemith** to our grounds maintenance and open spaces team.



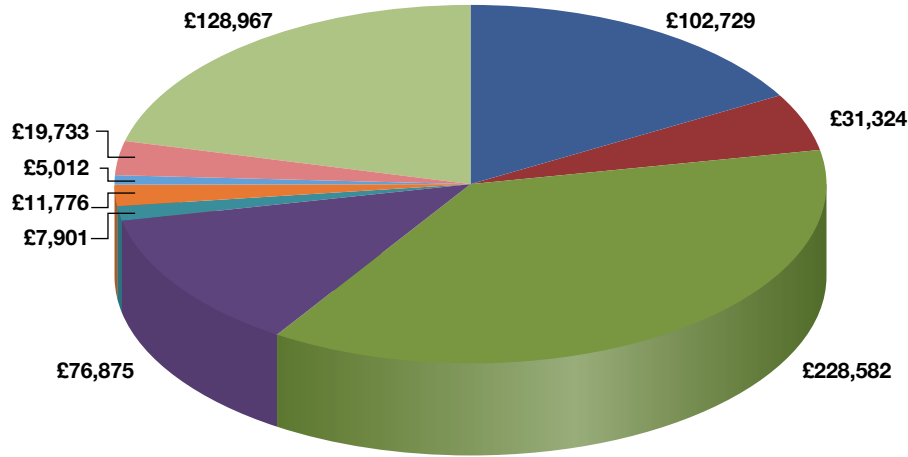
Matthew Shoemith

Not all of these are full-time posts, but they will enable our Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to concentrate on the many legal issues we have to undertake.



# How we spend your money

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- Chandos Park Refurbishment
- Legal and Administration
- Community Grants
- Park and Cemetery Maintenance
- Events and Entertainments
- Street Market Expenses
- Planning
- Long Term Projects
- Aylesbury Vale Shortfall

INCOME	2009/2010	2010/2011	EXPENDITURE <small>Adjustment after allocation of staff time</small>	2010/11
Precept	£529,944	£523,000	Legal & Administration	£102,729
Markets	£29,533	£26,948	Community Grants	£31,324
Interest	£438	£63	Parks and Cemetery Maintenance	£228,582
Rental and Burial Income	£13,355	£26,620	Events and Entertainments	£76,875
Sponsorship	£11,253	£6,339	Street Market Expenses	£7,901
Devolved Services	£550	£1,726	Planning	£11,776
Other	£302	£2,185	Long term projects	£5,012
Chandos Park	£0	£125,209	Aylesbury Vale Shortfall	£19,733
			Chandos Park refurbishment	£128,967
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£585,375</b>	<b>£712,090</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£612,899</b>
			<b>Transfer to reserves</b>	<b>£99,191</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£712,090</b>

## NOTES

The Precept is the amount that the Town Council asks Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC), our Council Tax Billing Authority, to collect on our behalf from the tax payers of Buckingham to fund the services and activities of the Town Council.

The Aylesbury Vale Shortfall is money for the Tourist Information Centre and the Buckingham Festival (formerly the Festival Fortnight) which AVDC decided to no longer fund.

# A new home for town council staff



The Town Council has moved to new office premises situated in the Buckingham Centre, adjacent to the library in Verney Close. This means that Buckingham residents can now go into the reception area and talk to any of three Councils covering the town. The move provides more appropriate office accommodation, and also allows Council and Committee meetings to be held again in the Council Chamber in Cornwalls

Meadow. The Council Chamber is now also available to local groups to hold meetings etc – please contact us at the address on the back page for hire details.

# Tourist Information Centre

Our Tourist Information Centre in the Old Gaol is under new management. Having been saved from closure by the Town Council in 2010, when District Council funding was withdrawn, the day-to-day management is now undertaken by Tourism South East, with funding from the Town Council and accommodation provided by Buckingham Old Gaol Trust.

Tourism South East has a wealth of experience in the tourism industry. You will still be able to get your tickets for local events, including the Film Place; book your National Express coach tickets, theatre tickets and obtain information about local bus services, attractions and events. Visitors will be able to book local accommodation as well as access detailed information about our town and the surrounding area. Opening hours remain as before – from 10.00am to 4.00 pm, Monday to Saturday.

**TOURISM  
SOUTH EAST**



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Through our Planning Committee, the Town Council reviews all planning applications in the town and passes our responses to the District Council to help inform their decision-making. It is always helpful when residents pass on their comments about planning applications to us, as we can take those into account when we formulate our response.

Following various reports we have received from you, we have recently been taking a more pro-active role in reviewing possible breaches of planning law or local policies, including alterations to buildings in the conservation area, the proliferation of satellite dishes, and inappropriate roadside advertising on the by-pass. The Town Council has no enforcement powers, but it can be the local eyes and ears that keep Aylesbury Vale District Council informed. We can then monitor their response to ensure that any breaches are dealt with appropriately.

As we report elsewhere in this edition of Buckingham Town Matters, we now have our own Town Plan Officer so that we can play a central role in the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Plan, and to allow us to react to the evolving Localism Bill (see next article). National planning policy is changing at a considerable pace, so having planning expertise “in house” will help to keep us up to speed with new and forthcoming changes. Buckingham is at a critical point in its history, and any further development has to be carefully considered in its relation and connectivity to the existing town, its impact on existing physical and social infrastructure, and in the potential contribution to our economic development.

Since the early 1970's, with the end of the old Borough of Buckingham, what happens in and around our town has been almost exclusively in the hands of Buckinghamshire County Council (in respect of roads and education) and, more especially, Aylesbury Vale District Council. It is perhaps inevitable that Buckingham has become something of a poor relation, given that we are located in an essentially rural, less densely populated part of the county and district, with relatively few major problems compared to the larger conurbations.

In recent months, the coalition government has made one of the major items of its “Big Society” initiative the need for decisions that affect local communities to be made as close to those communities as possible. The legislation driving this has not yet been placed before parliament, so it is not yet possible to completely define what areas are to be delegated down to town and parish level. What is fairly certain, however, is that it will cover some of the planning issues. These seem likely to be divided into two plans for Buckingham - a Neighbourhood Plan, which is legally adopted and covers land-use issues such as housing, infrastructure and employment developments; and a Town Master Plan, which concerns issues that make Buckingham a good community to live and work in. The Neighbourhood Plan will also feed into the Vale of Aylesbury Plan at District level.

Despite uncertainties about what the Localism Bill will eventually contain, your Town Council has, as reported elsewhere, “bitten the bullet” by recruiting a (part time) planner. He is currently unravelling the first component of this new regime by establishing our current position, including reviewing the 2008 Buckingham Plan and post-2008 developments. We would need to do this anyway, but only by establishing “where we are now” can we then move on to “where do we want to go”.

Given that a key element of the Localism Bill will almost certainly be the importance of community involvement, the council is drafting a questionnaire which aims to capture your views on the future of the town. This is just the first stage of a consultation process that will include many more workshops and forums and ultimately inform legal planning documents like the Vale of Aylesbury Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan for Buckingham itself. It is hoped the majority of responses will be obtained online via a service called ‘SurveyMonkey’ – see [www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk) to give us your views. Even if you don't have internet access, just pop into the library to obtain a hard copy or use the computers there free of charge.



# Music in the Market

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The weather was kind to us again at the end of May when so many townsfolk enjoyed a variety of bands co-ordinated by Buckingham Acoustic Club on the Town Council's behalf. Many brought their own chairs and settled down to an afternoon and evening of great music. Town Councillors and Town Council staff were in attendance throughout, and the crowd was beginning to build when the Town Mayor opened the event. By the time that Town Centre & Events Chairman Robin Stuchbury closed this regular event, the town was full of people. Many had come some distance to enjoy the music. Such events give our community a vibrancy that would be hard to find in many other places.



From top left, clockwise: Ian Murray and Susanne Winterbottom; Henry; Trash Can Rocket; The Havana Boys



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The first **Buckingham Fringe** between 18 and 25 June kicked-off (literally) with the **Haddenham Hoofers** attracting a good crowd between showers outside the Old Gaol. The ever-popular Comedy Night was a sell-out and featured comedienne



Haddenham Hoofers



Shappi Khorsandi

**Shappi Khorsandi** in the Community Centre, after which she signed copies of her bestselling book *A Beginner's Guide to Acting English*. Then Buckingham Athletic Sports & Social Club sponsored **Young Variety**, during which The Buckingham School and the Royal Latin School students provided various musical entertainments which again went well.

Members of Buckingham Art for All held demonstrations of their artistic skills in The Old

Gaol, and the Villiers Hotel provided cream teas to the accompaniment of the **Keith Templeman String Quartet**. The balmy evening of the Summer Solstice was celebrated with a free event in the Cattle Pens, where music was provided by **Scarecrow**, the **Brackley Morris Dancers** entertained, and Buckingham Twinning Association provided a BBQ. The Town Council teamed-up with Aylesbury Vale District Council to provide a free Youth Event in the skate park, where Sumo wrestling suits and a Bungee jumping popular, and sports equipment provided by AVDC was put to good use.



Young Variety



## But we're not done yet...



By popular demand, the **Oxford Fiddle Group** made their third successive appearance in Buckingham playing a wide range of foot-tapping jigs, reels and catchy hornpipes.

This was followed by the world's only parliamentary rock band, **MP4**, who performed live and raised money for the Help for Heroes charity (£850 to date). Speaker of the House of Commons and our MP, **John Bercow**, drew the raffle. Another hugely successful event; many asked for MP4 to return in the future.



For the younger children, two performances of **Pinocchio** on the final Saturday also proved popular, with their social messages such as the difference between right and wrong and the importance of telling the truth.

The week ended with the return of **Tomas Jimenez and Maria-Jose Garcia** and their stunning Fieri Flamenco show, which featured superb guitar work, guitar and castanet duos and flamenco dance.



### Now, we bet you can't wait until next year's Buckingham Fringe..!

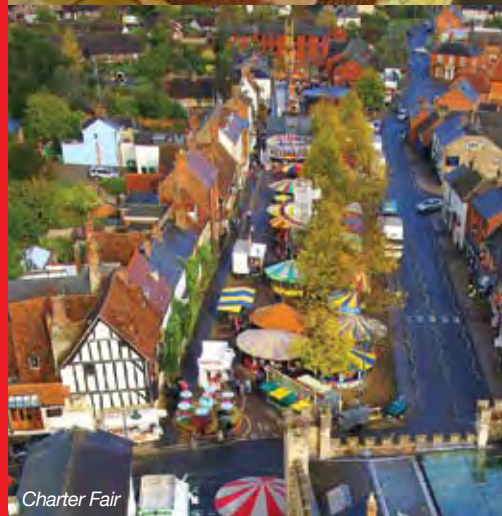
By the time you receive this edition of Buckingham Town Matters, our annual **Band-Jam** at the end of August will have been and gone. But there is still plenty for you to look forward to. Our annual **River Rinses** will take place on **18 September** and **9 October**, and the **Charter Fair** will be back in town on **15 and 22 October**. On **5 November**, we shall have our usual **Best Dressed Guy Competition** outside the Old Gaol and **Bonfire and Fireworks** in Bourton Park. The **Christmas Lights** switch-on will be on **26 November**, and the **Christmas Parade** will be on **10 December**.



Continental Market



River Rinse



Charter Fair



Christmas Parade

You can find out more about these and other Town Council events by visiting our website [www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk)





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# Parks and Open Spaces

You cannot help but notice how much our parks, cemetery and footpaths have improved over the past year. This is due to the hard work of our **Green Spaces Manager, Lee Phillips**, and his team.



Lee organises work in the parks and manages our horticultural contracts, including recent changes to the cutting regime in

Bourton Park paddock to encourage wild flowers. He also works with the Probation Service, which has assisted with some excellent work including clearing footpaths, tidying the rear of Castle Hill, improving the cemetery and the woodland between Verney Close and Cornwalls Meadow.

His work is augmented by the sterling work of various “Friends” groups, who do much to maintain the Railway Walk and undertake valuable conservation work in Maids Moreton Avenue. The Town Council also continues to work in partnership with Buckingham Community Wildlife Project, the Buckingham Society and the British Trust for Conservation

Volunteers to preserve and enhance our natural environment.

The Town Council’s Parks Policy Group has been unable to pursue matters as speedily as it would like due to staffing constraints, but now that we are at full strength we look forward to rolling-out the remainder of our plans to further improve and enhance our delightful open spaces.

Unfortunately, despite the huge amount of money spent last year in improving the play areas and public facilities in Chandos Park, some take delight in abusing them. The lighter evenings saw the unwelcome return of anti-social behaviour. For those affected, please be assured that the Town Council is taking all necessary steps to remove this blight from our midst. Police patrols have been increased, and offenders are being dealt with severely. We regret having to burden Buckingham’s council tax payers further, but are now forced to consider providing closed-circuit television in order to identify those responsible for spoiling the enjoyment of the majority.

## Buckingham in Bloom

This year, we did our annual selection of the best gardens a bit differently. Rather than invite nominations, Town Councillors traipsed the streets and photographed or otherwise noted the front gardens of what they thought were worthy contenders. This short list was then handed to the judging panel whose members re-visited where appropriate and then came up with the winners.

This year’s outright winner was **Sandra Henshaw** of Burleigh Piece. In second place were **Gerald and Christine Foote** (Westfields), while **Brian and Anne Wilkins** (Meadow Gardens) were placed third. Our judges also commended three further gardens – **Henry Adams** (Woodlands Crescent), **Catherine and Edwin Parkinson** (Chandos Road) and **Peter Musgrave** (Gifford Place). Prize winners received National Garden vouchers and rosettes; rosettes were also awarded to those commended.

Please do let us know if you like the new approach of “secret judging” (which gives everyone a chance) or would rather return to a system of nominations.



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Railway Walk



Buckingham Cemetery



# Youth Centre

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In February, the Town Council agreed to step in with financial aid for Buckingham Youth Centre, which saw its County Council funding cut. The £15,000 allocated by the Town Council will be used to pay Youth Workers to continue their valuable work until the longer-term funding can be found by the Youth Centre Management Committee.

Currently, they are in talks with The Buckingham School and the charity Clearly Speaking to make sure that the Youth Centre building can be retained into the future.

# Youth Council

The new **Buckingham Youth Council** held its inaugural meeting on 1 July. This has been a longstanding aim of the Town Council, who have provided an operating budget and some funding towards administrative costs.

The Youth Council was formed to give the youth of Buckingham a voice. Youth Councillors are already looking into projects which would benefit the young people that live or attend school in Buckingham. By working as a council they can bring pressure to bear on organisations to improve facilities and conditions in the area.

Article 12 of the UN Human Rights Convention states that young people under the age of 18 have the legal right to formally express their opinions, and for those opinions to be taken seriously. It places a legal responsibility on decision-makers to consult young people about the things that will affect them, and recommends that this be done

through establishing youth-based groups such as youth councils.

Our Youth Council will enable our young people to voice their concerns, participate in local government, and be empowered to take decisions and action to improve their local community.

Youth Councils enable local councils to represent the whole of their community, and thereby become more vibrant, modern and dynamic. They encourage young people to vote and become councillors when they are old enough, and help to improve services to young people. Similarly, they enable communities become safer, more sustainable, more vibrant and progressive, and truly representative.

The Town Council is looking forward to working with our Youth Council, and to understand more about what young people want and how they think



## Best Kept Village Competition

Buckingham also again won the coveted Michaelis Cup for small towns in this annual competition run by Bucks Association of Local Councils. Open to villages and small towns throughout Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, the competition is sponsored by the four District Councils and Motts Travel. The judges were looking for good standards of care, maintenance and community effort – the county's "best kept" villages, not the beautiful ones.

## Green Buckingham Group

The Town Council has members on this group, which was established to help make Buckingham more sustainable. Their third Green Fair, which will showcase a wide range of environmentally friendly and sustainable changes that everyone can make to their lifestyle, will be held next March.



You can find out more about their activities at [www.greenbuckingham.org.uk](http://www.greenbuckingham.org.uk)

## Your views count

Buckingham Town Matters is produced by Buckingham Town Council in order to provide you with a taste of what keeps Councillors and staff busy. But this edition, as the Mayor says, is also an invitation for you to tell us what you think of what we do, and what you think we should be doing. We are all working together to make Buckingham an even better place, so please let us know:

- **what you think we should carry on doing**
- **what you think we should stop doing, or do less of**
- **what you think we should start doing, or do a lot more of**

**You can email us or just drop us a line at the address below. We look forward to hearing from you.**

**Town Council Office, Buckingham Centre, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP**  
Email: [office@buckingham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:office@buckingham-tc.gov.uk)

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