



South West Chilterns Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the South West Chilterns Community Board held on Wednesday 13 July 2022 in Via MS Teams, commencing at 6.30 pm and concluding at 8.15 pm.

BC Councillors present

D Barnes (Chairman), A Collingwood, P Drayton, C Heap, N Marshall (Vice-Chairman), Z Mohammed, D Watson and S Wilson

Town/Parish Councils and other organisations present

A Bristow - Great Marlow Parish Council

Others in attendance

S Crawford (BC); M Devlin (Buckinghamshire Council (BC)); N Dicker (BC); O Elliot; A Foister; C Hawkes (BC); C Horn (Marlow Ukraine Collective (MUC); L Jeffries (BC); C Killington; A Leibowitz (MUC); J Loader (BC); D Munday (BC); A Onischen; T Orlova (Community Impact Bucks (CIB); J Sambrook; C Scott (CIB); A Taylor; J Wilson (Adult Learning) and S Xmazur

Agenda Item

1 The Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Councillor Dominic Barnes, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the topic of the meeting would be around Ukraine.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman announced that Councillor Neil Marshall would continue as Vice-Chairman of the South West Chilterns Community Board for the ensuing year.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Lorente, Transition Town Marlow; Geoff Pegg, Wycombe District Neighbourhood Watch Association; Councillor Richard Scott, Marlow Town Council; Councillor Mark Turner, Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and Councillor David Johncock, (BC).

Note 1: Cllr Zahir Mohammed left the meeting at 7.40 pm.

4 Declarations of interest

The Chairman declared a personal interest and stated he was the Chairman of Marlow Round Table under item 8, Marlow Ukraine Collective Update.

5 **Notes of the last meeting**

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

6 **Helping Hand for Ukraine Programme Update**

Claire Hawkes, Service Director, BC, provided a presentation, appended to the minutes, and explained that she was part of the Ukraine Response Team which involved volunteers and staff secondees who supported the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The following was a summary and more detail was available on the slides.

Claire highlighted that BC was also supporting Afghanistan refugees and was mindful that there were some Ukrainian families on the Family Scheme Visas. The South West Chilterns area had the highest number of sponsors (60) and a map showed the areas with the highest number of Ukrainian children (High Wycombe). A Local Strategic Partnership Board had been formed early in the response to collaborate with a number of organisations such as the NHS, Thames Valley Police, Business and the voluntary sector. Several teams across the Council e.g., housing, education and Adult Learning were involved in the 'whole Council' approach. Approximately 150 staff had volunteered to be a Sponsor Liaison Officer and had been paired with a sponsor for one to one contact.

It was now month four and Bucks communities had shown fantastic support and community spirit. Particular thanks went to community groups such as Marlow Ukraine Collective and others offering support networks or drop ins for guests to socialise. Overall feedback had been positive, but BC was aware that some guests were experiencing challenges, which it recognised many Bucks residents faced e.g., transport, the benefit system and available housing. These were all being fed back to government task and finish groups weekly. A Temporary Sponsorship Scheme was in place for swift emergency 're-matching' and could appeal to people – anyone interested should contact ukrainesupport@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Claire stressed the need to put plans in place for the 'post 6 months' period and the importance of continuity being available where possible as children had settled in schools or communities. This would mean all tiers of government and the community working together to look at sustainable solutions. The project team had been extended to one year and two housing officers were being recruited as rental housing prices were high and creative solutions were required.

Nigel Dicker, Service Director for Housing, emphasised that there were 5,000 + on the housing list; it was about homelessness prevention and BC would support and respond as best they could but more help was needed from the Government.

Jacqueline Wilson, Principal, Adult Learning, provided information on the amount of English tuition which had been provided to the Ukrainian people. New venues had been set up in Lacey Green, Amersham and Beaconsfield and extra teaching staff would be recruited; classes would be offered in Marlow.

Debbie Munday, Admissions and Transport Manager, explained that the British and Ukrainian education schemes did not match and children were being put in slightly different year groups but children were grouped together where possible. The Fair Access Protocol enabled schools to go above their planned admission number; the Buckinghamshire School system had stepped up but had to treat the Ukrainian children the same as all other children, bearing in mind their circumstances.

Claire thanked everyone for their support. The following key points were raised in discussion.

- In response to being asked what advice should be given to new arrivals regarding schooling; Debbie advised it was not possible to guarantee a place for the start of term in September but stressed that the team would do the best they could. It was emphasised that this would also be an issue for any parent moving into the area. Head teachers could be contacted in an emergency but Debbie would need to ascertain if they were prepared to be contacted during the summer holidays.

Action: D Munday

- Any Ukrainian families who moved area would need to follow the same process as all other children to obtain a school place.
- Further work would be undertaken in collaboration with community groups to understand key needs going forwards, housing concerns and progress escalations.

Action: C Hawkes

The Chairman thanked Claire, Nigel, Jackie and Debbie for attending.

7 Representing a Hosting Family

Councillor Stuart Wilson introduced himself as a host and provided a presentation, appended to the minutes. Cllr Wilson stated he lived in Bourne End with access to public transport and had been hosting a family since 5th May 2022. The family consisted of the grandmother, mother and two daughters; the father was serving in the military in Ukraine. Only one family member spoke good English. Cllr Wilson advised that the Marlow Ukraine Collective had been really helpful; he had also had a small amount of interaction with BC and government departments. His observation from a host's point of view, was that the experience was humbling and gratifying, and one that he would repeat. His guests' desire to contribute to his household, society and work was phenomenal and they would be a new extended family for life. The Language apps had been a life saver, along with bus passes. Cllr Wilson felt he had provided support as a taxi service, financial consultant, employment consultant etc. What happened next was the big question. Marlow Ukraine Collective had been a pioneer and Cllr Wilson thanked them for their invaluable assistance.

The following key points were raised in discussion.

- Cllr Wilson was asked what he was expecting to happen next. Cllr Wilson advised that the Government FAQs stated that sponsors should give two

months' notice to BC if they intended to cease being part of the scheme. For those coming up to the cut off time, there were many issues associated with housing, moving schools, etc. which needed resolving and further information would be useful.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Wilson for being a sponsor and his presentation.

8 Marlow Ukraine Collective Update

Chris Horn and Ali Leibowitz, Marlow Ukraine Collective (MUC), provided a presentation, appended to the minutes. The MUC had been a success due to knowing what people needed and because other people had wanted to deliver. The [website](#) had been a great source of information. A number of Ukrainians had secured jobs; however, Ukrainians being hosted in Frieth were required to attend Reading Job Centre which was not an easy journey and hosts were constantly spinning plates to try to relieve the stress for the Ukrainians.

An event was held to welcome Ukrainian families to Marlow on 18 June 2022; positive feedback was received and Chris thanked Amanda Foister for donating Longridge for the day. The Rotary Club and Marlow Round Table also wanted to continue to help.

Ali highlighted the three big needs: clarity on school places/school transport, English lessons and what happened after six months. Ali emphasised that if the structures were improved, the hosts would be more likely to endure the situation. Unfortunately, there were no summer camps in place for children aged 14+. The South West Chilterns area had the biggest number of refugees but there was a lack of language provision and Ali had not heard about the four week summer school until this meeting. Transparency was required on how the funding process worked.

Chris thanked the SWC CB for listening and stated he would appreciate deeper conversations with other organisations. Chris recommended visiting the [website](#) for further information.

The Chairman advised that he was the local councillor for Frieth and was surprised that he not been informed that there were 50 guests in Frieth. The Chairman emphasised that there were three local councillors for the area and they were willing to help but stressed that they could not leap frog the system. The Chairman also confirmed that the councillors did receive briefings on the Scheme and it was explained that they were not provided specific information due to General Data Protection Regulations. Cllr Wilson confirmed that he had raised issues to Claire from a councillor and host perspective.

The Chairman thanked Chris and Ali for their presentation.

9 Buckinghamshire Ukraine Community Support Project

Tania Orlova and Cheryl Scott provided a presentation, appended to the minutes. Tania described herself as a 'bridge between two worlds', she was a refugee with an

eight year old son and was participating in many events and knew about what was being carried out in the communities. Tania had had to move eight times and was now looking for a new place to live as she needed to be independent. Sponsors were using their free time to help the Ukrainians and communities were helping each other. Community Impact Bucks (CIB) understood the top three problems – language, employment and housing and the [website](#) included information on how to find a volunteer and how the service worked.

Cheryl explained that there was also a Volunteer Interpreter Service with interpreters available for a community service (not to visit the Department for Work and Pensions). A form was available on the website to request an interpreter.

The Chairman thanked Tania and Cheryl for their presentation.

10 The Good Sides and Bad Sides of the Ukrainian Scheme

Sofia Xmazur presented the item and provided a presentation on behalf of Oksana Oganezov. Oksana had asked for feedback on the Ukrainian Scheme and the three main issues were education for teenagers aged 15+, Job Centre check-ins and free in-person English classes.

The Ukraine school system finished at age 17 but there was no information available on the difference between the UK and Ukrainian school systems and what was available.

Job Centre check-ins – Ukrainians received a £200 monthly payment but spent approximately £100 on a taxi for their weekly check-in at the job centre. There were communication difficulties at the job centre and it would be better for the Ukrainians to learn basic English before attending the job centre.

English classes with Ukrainian born tutors would be beneficial. Some Ukrainians did not possess the technical skills or equipment to use online resources. However, there was positive feedback on the sponsors, social support and kindergarten schools.

Sofia thanked everyone for the work being carried out. The Chairman thanked Sofia for her presentation.

11 Community Matters Buckinghamshire Council Update

Lloyd Jeffries ran through the BC update, appended to the minutes, and highlighted the following:

- The Helping Hand Scheme - support was available for those on a low income.
- Waste and recycling missed bins – apologies had been issued from the Council due to the recent bin collection problems. A ‘lessons learned’ document had been produced and would be circulated to the board members.

Action: L Jeffries/M Devlin

- Garden Waste Charges – The new waste subscription arrangements had been moved back and would commence on Monday 26 September 2022; there would be an ‘opt-in’ garden waste service charge of £50 per bin per year.
- The Community Boards would have a stall at the County Show on 1 September 2022 at Weedon Park, near Aylesbury.
- Council Tax Energy Rebate – over 80% of the £150 rebates had been paid. There was also an additional discretionary £25 Helping Hand top-up for those on specific benefits.

South West Chilterns Community Board Funding for 2022/23

The Chairman advised that the budget for 2022/23 was £122,528 and explained that there were the following action groups which were open to anyone and new participants would be very welcome (contact Makyla Devlin, Senior Community Board Manager - swccb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk):

- Transport and Highways
- Economic Recovery and Development
- Environment and Climate Change
- Community Engagement

Small grants funding had now been released for funding up to £1,000 and information was available on the [South West Chilterns Community Board](#) page of the BC website.

Makyla added that information was expected imminently regarding the process for transport related projects and would be forwarded to the Transport and Highways Action Group.

12 Date of the next meetings

Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 1830 and 8 February 2023 at 1830.



South West Chilterns Community Board Meeting

Chairman Cllr Dominic Barnes

13 July 2022

Via MS Teams



Agenda

Chairman's Welcome

Appointment of Vice Chairman

Apologies for absence

Declarations of Interest

Minutes of Last Meeting

Presentation – Helping Hand for Ukraine Update – Claire Hawkes and team

Presentation – A Home4Ukraine Matters – A Hosts Perspective – Stuart Wilson

Presentation – Marlow Ukraine Collective Update – Chris Horn and Ali Leibowitz

Presentation – Buckinghamshire Ukraine Community Support Project – Tania Orlova and Cheryl Scott, Community Impact Bucks

Presentation – Feedback from Ukrainian Refugees – Sofia Xmazur

Community Matters:

Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Update – Lloyd Jeffries

Funding update – Makyla Devlin

Public questions received in advance – to be presented by the Chairman

Date of the next meetings – Wednesday 16 November 2022 @ 1830h

Wednesday 8 February 2023 @ 1830h



helpinghand
for Ukraine

South West Chilterns Community Board

13th July 2022

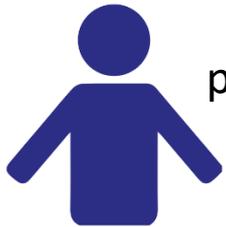


The two schemes

- Family Visa Scheme and The Homes for Ukraine scheme
- The family scheme is a private arrangement - 3-year visa to join immediate or extended family members in the UK
- Homes for Ukraine scheme - this is the scheme our volunteers and secondees are supporting

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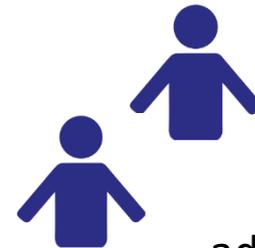
Roles and terms



Sponsors
people offering a
place in their
house

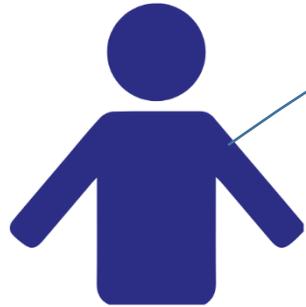


Guests
Ukrainians arriving –
sometimes called
beneficiaries

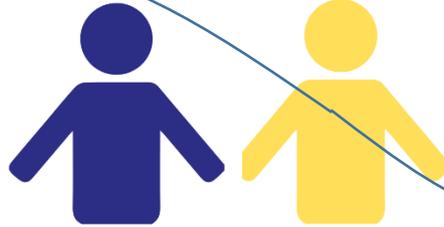


**Sponsor Liaison
Officers**
Staff volunteers
helping in
addition to their role

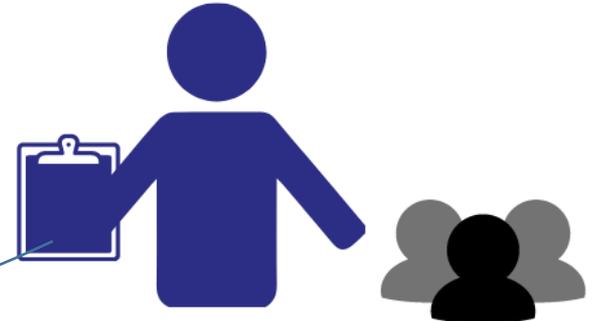
Homes for Ukraine scheme



Public 'sign up' to host an individual or family for minimum six months



Guests and hosts are matched (but not by the council)



The council provides coordinated support including education, housing checks and safeguarding

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Sponsors receive £350 per month if approved

Guests receive One-off £200 when they arrive Fully eligible for benefits and access to UK public services

The council receives £10,500 per person
This funding is for essential housing and safeguarding checks, initial payments to arrivals; assistance for the guests so they can access healthcare, benefits, employment and English language tuition and ongoing support

Demand in Bucks

As of 11th July 2022

Homes for Ukraine - Sponsor Location (LSOA)
Update Date: 12/07/2022

624

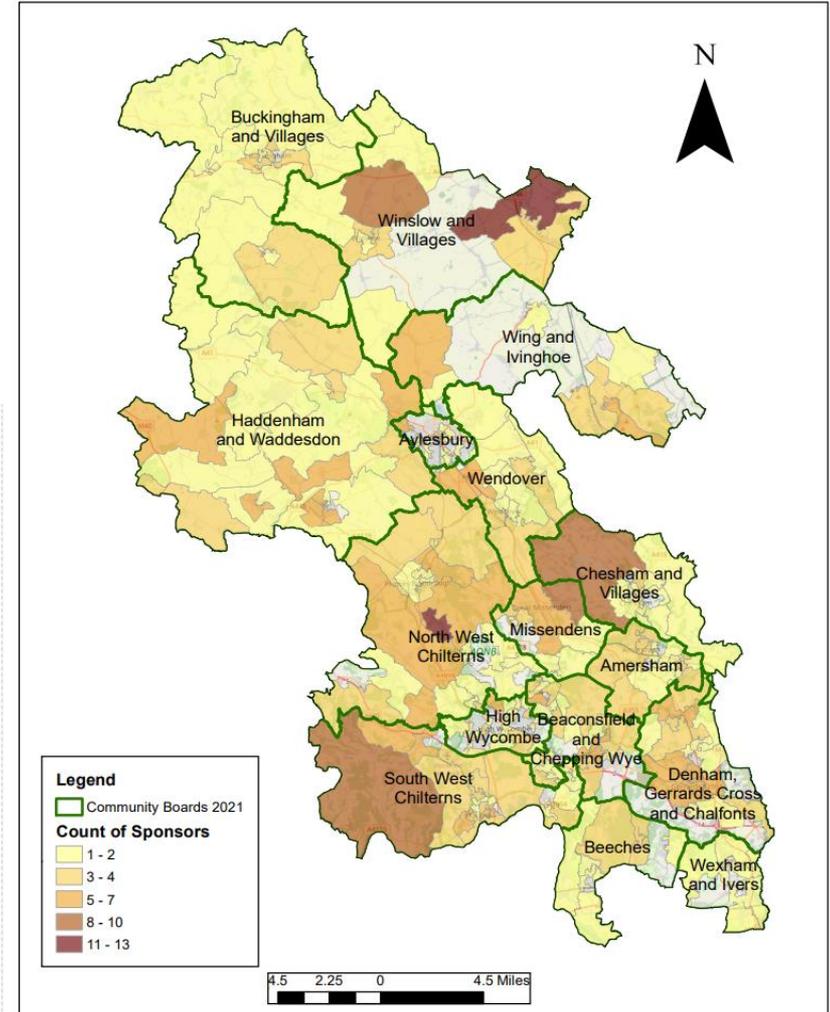
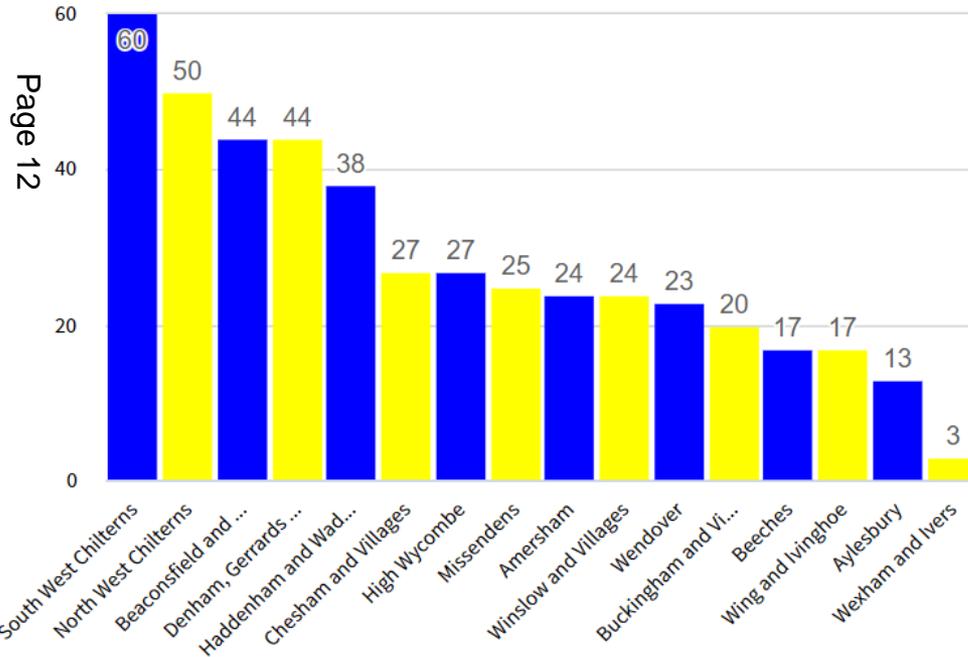
Sponsors

1576

Guests

1158

Arrivals

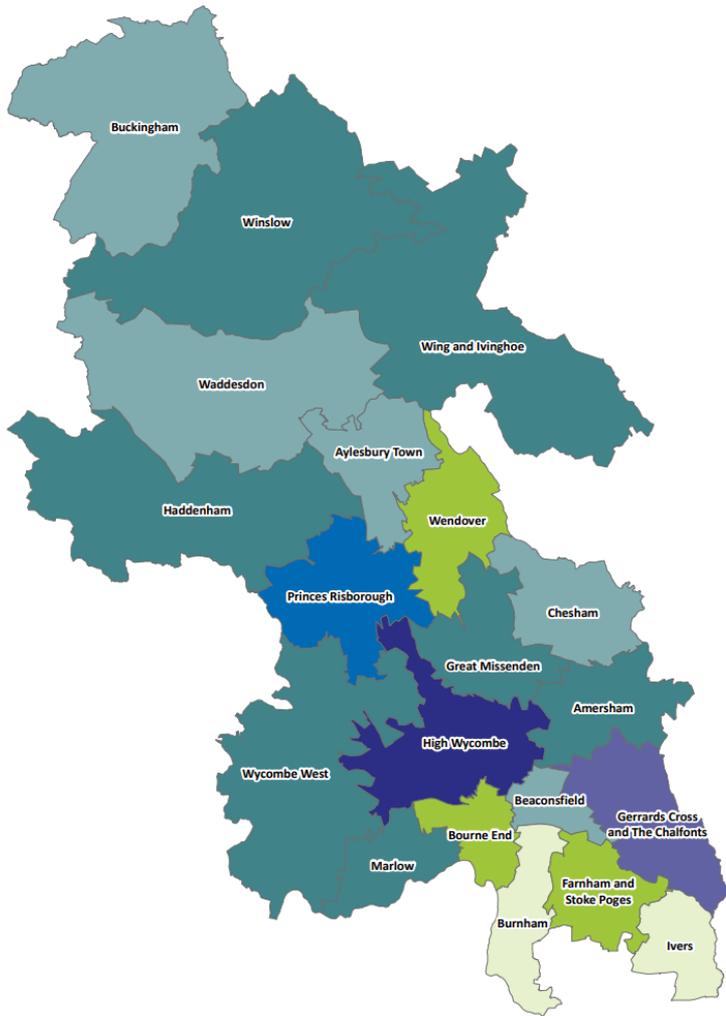


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Sponsors by Community Board



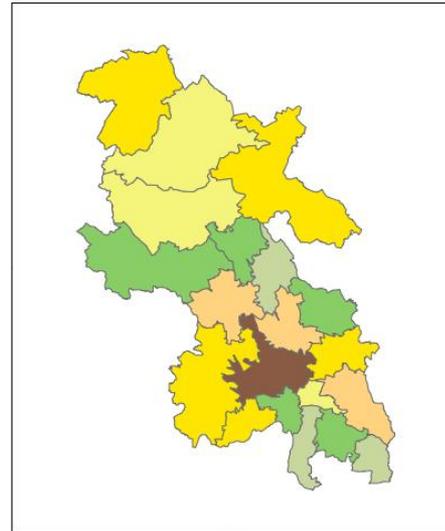
Ukrainian Refugee Pupils in Buckinghamshire July 2022



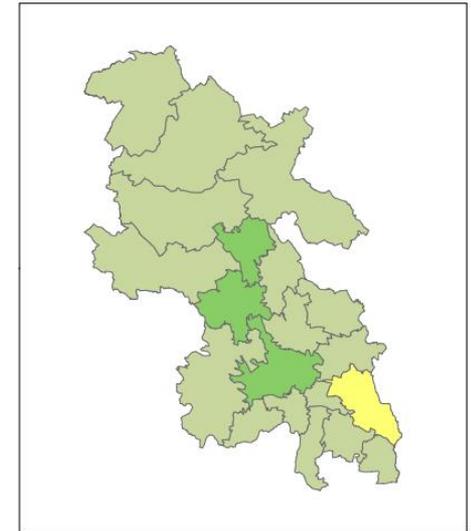
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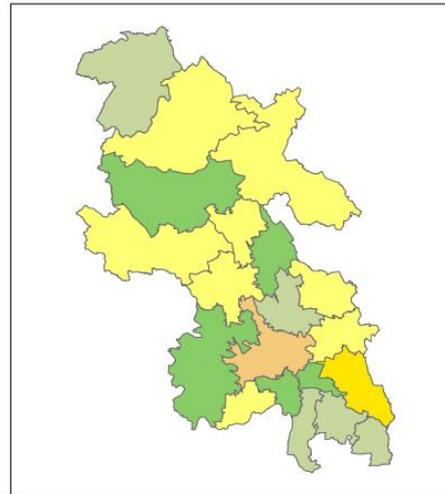
Produced by School Management Support Team
Business Intelligence and Insight, July 2022



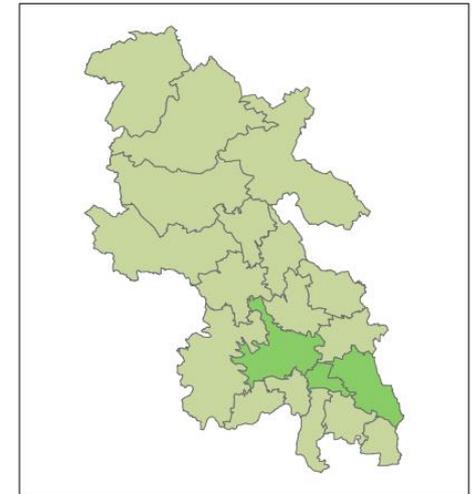
Primary Pupils



Early Years Pupils

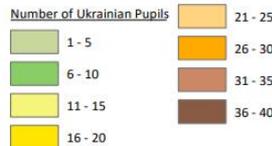


Secondary Pupils



Post 16 Pupils

Number of Ukrainian Refugee Pupils in Buckinghamshire July 2022



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0 1 2 4 6 8 10
Miles



Produced by School Management Support Team
Business Intelligence and Insight, July 22

Operating model

- Local strategic Partnership Board with sub groups
- A project team with 'area leads' – these are now in place for 1 year
- Work being undertaken by a variety of teams across the council including education, Children's safeguarding, Adults, Housing, customer services, finance.
- 120 staff volunteered to be Sponsor Liaison Officers (SLO's) – this is on top of their day job
- SLO links with sponsors and guests through calls and visits, arrange £200 cash on arrival, act as a link for questions and help unblock issues, check guests and sponsors progress
- Completed over 567 housing checks and 623 safeguarding checks
- 1,383 DBS checks requested by business support team on adults within sponsor households
- Webpages [A Helping Hand for Ukraine | Buckinghamshire Council](#)
- ukrainesupport@buckinghamshire.gov.uk mailbox set up to answer queries on a daily basis
- [Heart of Bucks Crisis Fund](#) established – £38,000 has been donated
- Commissioned Community Impact Bucks to support with community capacity and volunteer interpreters

Demand

- Month 4
- We are attending DLUHC / LGA weekly meetings to help feed our experiences and solutions. We are keen for Bucks voice to be heard
- Operating in the unknown – spotlight on some challenges faced by Bucks residents
- As we understand experiences we have adapted e.g. partnership board sub groups have been extended for university representatives, more voluntary sector specialists
- Mindful of the additional pressures on children services with the announcement 22nd June that eligible unaccompanied minors can now apply if they have parental consent
- Some safeguarding issues being raised as part of our checks and these need to be managed
- SLO's advising sponsors of scams
- Emergency cases requiring swift local rematching - created a local temporary sponsor scheme to allow swift rematching in emergencies
- Pressure on school places in some schools, school transport and adult language classes where there is a shortage of ESOL teachers
- Short window, some placements are only for 6 months yet guests have a right to remain for 3 years

Activity

- Checks and SLO teams
- Pop metric pop ups
- Employment webinars and information fairs
- CIB sponsor session
- Pilots for example mediation support, phone / online appointments at the Job Centre
- Sponsors and guests newsletter
- Exploring hearing voices and understanding needs including 'Speak Out Projects' with VCSE
- Planning fortnightly webinars with education and housing teams
- Summer Holiday Schemes
- Leap - Boredom buster bags and signposting to summer activities
- Oasis Project – hygiene packs, Lego, Disney

Post 6 months, some of our thoughts so far

- Collaborative approach – all tiers of government and community working together
- Critical to keeping talking with sponsors and community groups to understand issues and plan together
- Recognise the importance of staying local and having choice. Need a mix of options and consider parity
- Recruiting 2 housing officers to support guests and sponsors with advice including discussions with community groups
- Work with private sector landlords to build contacts and relationships to help secure private rented accommodation
- Understand the granular detail – could we do some collaborative deep dives?
- Support sponsors to go beyond the minimum 6 month offer – important to understand what help and support might people need
- Private Rental option will need creative solutions as rents are high and LHA gap is over £100 pm
- Match the offer of rent deposits and rent in advance currently made to local residents
- Growing demand on Housing Register for social housing
- We want to avoid the use of temporary accommodation as far as possible

Buckinghamshire Adult Learning

April – July

- Taught 154 Ukrainian citizens, 1602 hours of English
- Extended the existing hours of all of our 12 regular ESOL tutors
- Recruited 5 new ESOL tutors
- Expanded current class max capacity in 25 regulated courses
- Set up 27 new conversation classes across the county
- Delivered ESOL provision at Buckingham, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham
- New venues now include: Lacey Green, Amersham and via sub-contracting arrangement Beaconsfield

Future offer

- Sub-contracting arrangement in Marlow, with Marlow Language School
- 4 week Summer School offer in Amersham, Aylesbury, Lacey Green, Chesham, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Marlow.
- Provision for 2022/23 timetabled to support increased numbers

angela.cato@buckinghamshire.gov.uk or call 01296 674463.

Schools admissions

Principles:

- If possible children should be admitted to their closest age appropriate school
- Siblings should stay together
- All admissions are either via or notified to the Admissions Team
- Where schools need to go over PAN this is permitted by the Admissions Code and normally will be managed through the Fair Access Protocol
- The LA will support schools to admit children and to sustain their school places
- Where families have a strong preference for a particular school, we will make every effort to accommodate them

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Update:

- We are expecting 616 age 1-17 arrivals to Bucks
- Of these 548 are school age (4-17) and 483 are statutory school age (5-16)
- We have logged and processed 304 in year applications to schools and 20 nursery applications
- We have allocated school places to 293 pupils
- There are 11 applications outstanding at 8/7/22

[Schools and education | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

[Apply to change school during the academic year \(in-year transfer\) | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

[Contact school admissions | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

**Thank you
sponsors, community groups, businesses and charities**



A Home4Ukraine Matters – a Hosts Perspective

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Stuart Wilson



Homes for Ukraine Matters

A Host's View

Southwest Chilterns Community Board
July 13th 2022

Introduction – Cllr Stuart Wilson (Host)

THE VIEWS ARE MY OWN AND NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANYONE ELSE

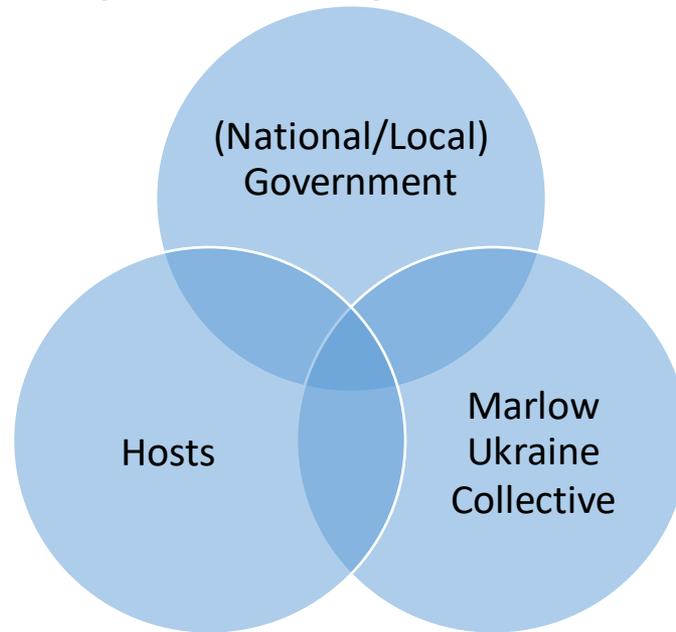
- Buckinghamshire Councillor for The Wooburns, Bourne End and Hedsor since May 2021
- Parish Councillor for Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council since March 2022
- Working full time as Councillor and Management Consultant
- Married, wife working Monday to Wednesday 12 hours per day, plus other hours as required
- One daughter at home (21) and two adult children (26, 24) in London and Leicester
- Live in Bourne End with straightforward access to public transport (bus, train)

- Host to a Ukrainian family of 4 since May 5
- Rapid process –opportunity on Friday, spoke to MUC on Saturday, Facetime on Sunday, visa application on Monday, visas approved by following Saturday, arrived 10 days later from Poland
- Grandmother (63), Mother (38), Daughters (17, 12)
- Father serving in the military in Ukraine
- Only 17-year-old arrived with good English

The Community Volunteer Model



How does it feel for each participant?



As a host



As a host

Host

- Humbling, gratifying experience
- Would repeat in a heartbeat
- We have laughed and cried together
- Guests are amazing
 - Resilience in adversity
 - Desire to contribute and work
 - Generosity
- A new extended family for life

- Language - apps are a lifesaver!
- Personal space and privacy
- Surrogate parenting
- Taxi service
- Financial consultant
- Employment consultant
- Education consultant
- Holidays/ personal sacrifices
- Future plans



As a host

Marlow Ukraine Collective

- MUC has been a real pioneer
 - Bus passes
 - Bicycles, helmets, lessons
 - Language classes
 - Socials/events
 - Clothes Exchanges
 - FAQs
- MUC is a campaigner
 - Visas
 - School places
 - Language classes
 - Summer places
 - Nex steps
- Formal structures
- Leadership
- Volunteer fatigue
- Funding
- Social media angst



As a host

National/Local Government

- UK Government bureaucracy
 - DWP – Universal Credit/Child Benefit
 - National Insurance Numbers
 - NHS Numbers and Registration
 - Biometric Residence Permit
 - Schools
- Buckinghamshire Council prompt
 - Home check
 - DBS check
 - Sponsor Liaison Officer visit
 - £200 cash per guest
 - Thank You payment (£350)
- Then, quiet...
 - No news is good news
 - Nature abhors a vacuum

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AN UPDATE ON OUR CURRENT SITUATION AND
OF OUR NEEDS GOING FORWARD

13th July 2022

THE PURPOSE OF OUR SLIDES AND CONTRIBUTION TO TODAY'S MEETING IS TO UPDATE YOU ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR AND TO HIGHLIGHT OUR BIGGEST CONCERNS AND NEEDS GOING FORWARD

- We will give you an overview of the support the Marlow Ukraine Collective has and is providing to the appx. 70 host families and their appx. 180 Ukrainian guests
- We will also highlight the main areas of support we need to secure from Buckinghamshire County Council to allow us to adequately support the Ukrainian citizens now settled and living within our community

Some of the Support given by MUC So Far





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Event held to welcome Ukrainian families to Marlow



Marlow Round Table



Marlow

How you can help us – 3 immediate needs



School places

Urgent need for clarity on whether school places will be made available to those children yet to arrive and what transportation provision is being made available



English lessons

Critical to integrating these people and giving access to employment. These must be flexible and local given zero hours contracts. Currently provided only through charitable donation.



After 6 months??

After 6 months

MUC seeks reassurance from the council and its partner agencies that these traumatised families will be supported to remain in our local area where they have settled into jobs and schools



Thank you for giving us the opportunity to
present

www.ukrainecollective.co.uk



Buckinghamshire Ukraine Community Support Project

Tania Orlova and Cheryl Scott





Feedback from Ukrainian Refugees



Ukrainian Response

A white rectangular panel containing a search icon, a dove holding a Ukrainian flag, the main title "Feedback from Ukrainian Refugees", a UK flag, and a button labeled "Ukrainian Response".

Sofia Xmazur





We asked our Ukrainian Community incl. Ukrainian Refugees to share their feedback on Ukrainian Scheme

Some things to improve:

- Education for Teenagers 15+
- Check-ins at the Job Centre
- Free in-person English Classes



1. Education for Teenagers 15+

Problem: Ukrainian families are worried about the education of their kids aged 15+

- Why?
- 1) Difference between Ukraine and UK School Systems
 - 2) No Information about scholarships / no programs for Ukrainian students
 - 3) Lack of information on how Ukrainian graduates can find affordable study opportunities in the UK



2. Check-ins at the Job Centre

Problem: Weekly check-ins at the Job Centre require a lot of money and time and don't bring much value yet

- 1) £100 out of £300 of the monthly payment goes for the taxi for a weekly check-in at the job centre;
- 2) difficulties in communication because the English tutor doesn't speak Russian or Ukrainian;
- 3) No option for online English classes
- 4) Some people need to learn Basic English before attending the Job Centre



3. Free in-person English Classes

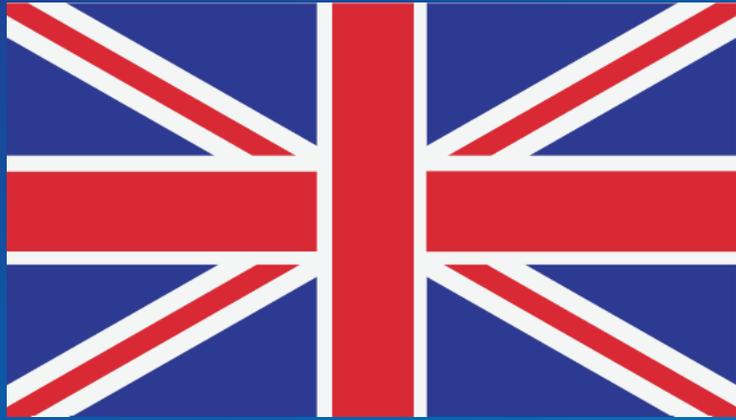
Problem: Not enough in-person English classes, lack of Ukrainian local community

- 1) They want to learn English with Tutors who speak their language
- 2) They need more in-person group classes where they can build a community
- 3) Reluctance to use only online resources (not enough technical skills or tech equipment)



Positive Feedback

Everything else they believe has been executed amazingly. Sponsors, social support, kindergarten, schools, visas - they are very happy to see so much help from UK citizens. They couldn't be any happier.



THANK YOU!





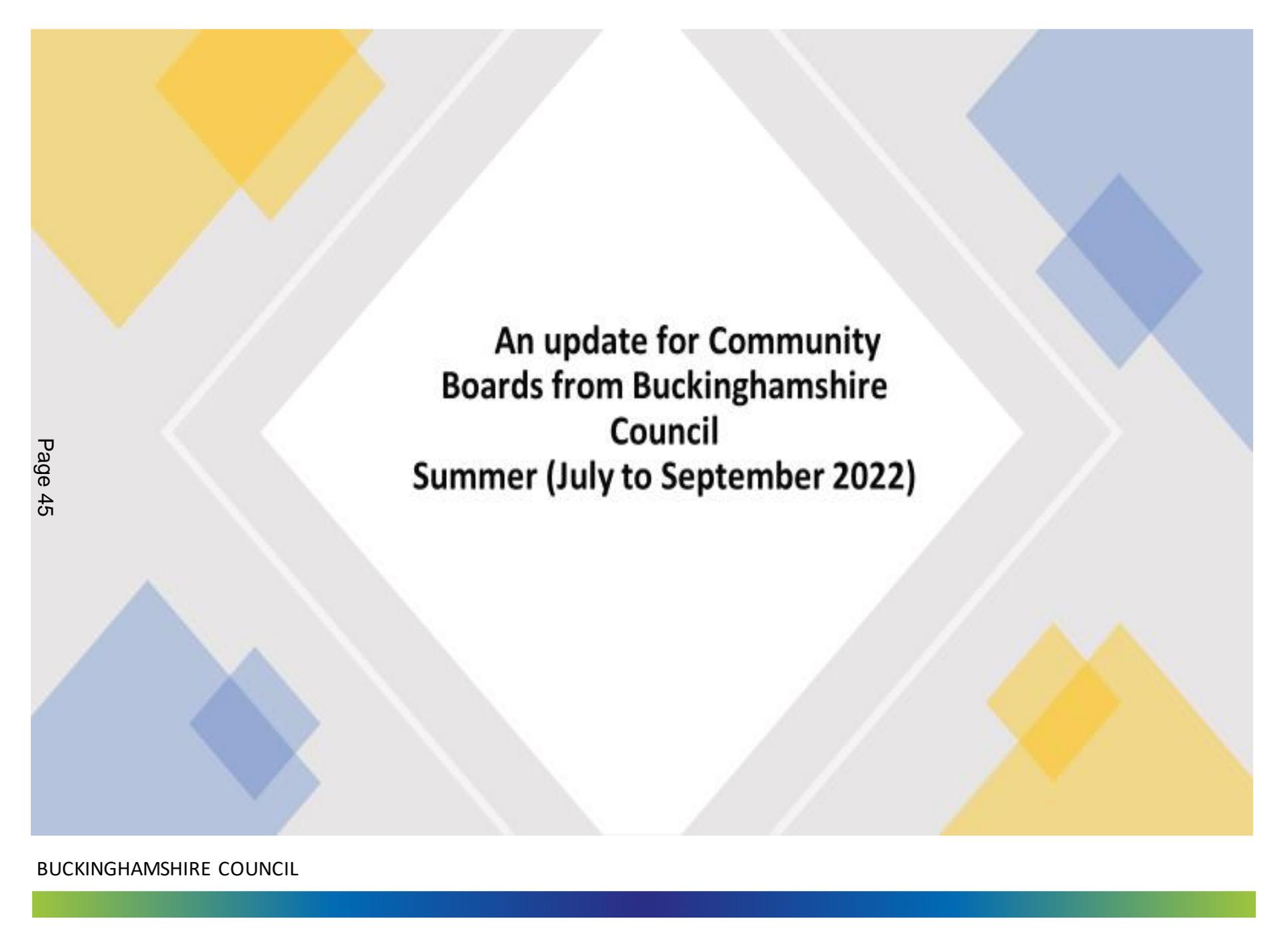
Community Matters

Buckinghamshire Council update – Service Director Lloyd Jeffries

Funding Update – Makyla Devlin

Public Questions – received in advance – Chairman Dominic Barnes.





**An update for Community
Boards from Buckinghamshire
Council
Summer (July to September 2022)**

Support for Ukrainian guests continues across the county

Over the last few months there has been an outpouring of support for our Ukrainian guests from our communities, alongside the work that we at the council are doing. We now have over 1,100 Ukrainian guests with more than 600 still expected to arrive across the County.

The community boards have been central to our efforts and have achieved so much across the county. Highlights include:

- Working with the community to put together welcome packs including food parcels, toiletries, vouchers from supermarkets and cafes, free eye test, donated gifts, clothing, toys, tech equipment, and SIM cards.
- Coffee mornings with talks covering a wide range of subjects including trauma, fraud, banking and life in the local area.
- Weekly lunch sessions where professionals help support both the host families and Ukrainian friends with various issues.
- Helping to secure funding for Ukrainian professionals – so far funding has been secured for a doctor and an accountant to take the relevant exams to practise here in Buckinghamshire.
- English classes.

There's a dedicated area on the Buckinghamshire Council website for anyone who would like to know more about how they can help/get involved – check out [‘Helping Hand for Ukraine’](#)

Support with food, bills and finances – Helping Hand and Holiday Activity Fund

As we approach the summer holidays, this is a timely reminder that we have support available for families and individuals in need, those on low incomes and those who are experiencing a financial emergency or crisis.

Our Helping Hand team can help if you – or someone you know:

- are struggling to afford food
- cannot keep on top of your bills
- are in debt
- are struggling to pay for essential goods in your home.

Find out more about our Helping Hand team and how they can [support with food, bills and finances](#).

Our #backontrack scheme offers practical advice and support for people experiencing money difficulties: [Money problems - advice and support if you are struggling to make ends meet | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

Using the Government Household Support Fund, the Helping Hand team will be providing £50 Digital Food Vouchers to eligible children and young people to support families over the summer holidays. These vouchers will be distributed through schools in July.

We also have our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. Further information can be found at [HAF information for families | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Waste and recycling missed bins and garden waste charges

Missed bins

Unfortunately in some pockets of the former Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe district areas of Buckinghamshire the recent change of bin collection days caused greater than anticipated disruption. This was due to both residents and crews getting used to the new bin collection days.

Following a difficult few weeks, an [open letter of apology was issued from Cllr Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council](#) and additional measures put in place.

By the end of day on Tuesday 5 July, Veolia were due to have picked up any remaining missed collections, and from this point on, the overwhelming majority of missed collections reported should be collected the following day (as per business as usual arrangements).

Garden waste charges

- In view of the disruption experienced by the round reorganisation, the start of the new garden waste subscription arrangements has been moved back to **Monday 26 September**.
- From that date we will offer a single chargeable 'opt-in' garden waste collection service, at a cost of £50 per bin per year (or reusable bags for properties not suitable for wheeled bins).
- This means anyone who has previously received free collections of garden waste will now have to subscribe, paying an annual fee to continue receiving fortnightly kerbside garden waste collections from the council.
- Our household recycling sites continue to provide free disposal of garden waste for anyone not wanting to pay for the subscription service.
- Find out more regarding the [garden waste changes](#).
- More information on how the service works can be found at [Buckinghamshire Council's Arrange a garden waste collection pages](#).

Community boards will be at the county show on 1 September

- The Bucks County Show is happening on Thursday 1 September at Weedon Park on the outskirts of Aylesbury for the first time since 2019, before the lockdown.
- This action-packed one-day event includes a whole range of summer activities for all the family, from the traditional livestock competitions, horse of the year show and show jumping, freestyle motorcycle display, to arts of home and garden skills.
- Buckinghamshire Council will be having one big combined stand highlighting that we are one unified organisation supporting residents in so many different aspects of their lives.
- Of course the community boards are central to that support. The managers are working together to plan the community board stall that will raise their profile, show some of the many successful projects carried out and encourage people to get involved with their communities through the boards.

Update on the £150 council tax energy rebate

- Over 80% of the £150 council tax rebates to help offset rising fuel costs have been paid to households.
- There is also an additional discretionary £25 Helping Hand top-up which Buckinghamshire Council is paying to householders who are on specific benefits.
- Anyone who pays their council tax by direct debit should have received their rebate automatically. Anyone who pays by another method is required to claim their rebate – details can be found at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/council-tax/150-council-tax-energy-rebate/how-to-claim-the-council-tax-energy-rebate/>
- Claimants have until August 2022 to supply their bank details enabling the council to pay directly into their bank account.
- From Monday 1st August householders will not be able to supply their details and all those households that have not claimed will receive a £150 voucher instead, which can be cashed at any post office.

South West Chilterns Community Board – Funding for 2022/2023

- Budget for 2022/2023 is £122,528 which is 6.1% of the overall budget of £2 million
- There is no cap on any budget spend between action groups/priorities
- Contributory funding is mandatory for projects over £1,000
- Maximum application amount is £15,000 (a Cabinet Member could agree to a higher amount in exceptional circumstances)
- Small grants has now been released for funding up to £1,000
- All information is available on the South West Chilterns Community Board page of the Council website.



Dates of Next Meeting

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The South West Chiltern Community Board next Meetings will be on:

Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 1830h

Wednesday 8 February 2023 at 1830h



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