



Update on Culture, Sport and Leisure

Communities & Localism Select Committee – 21
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Leisure



Service Details – Culture, Sport & Leisure



Cllr Clive Harriss
Sports & Leisure

- Local & Country Parks
- Leisure Centres
- Sports Facilities
- Input into S106 Sports Provision



Cllr Gareth Williams
Communities & Public Health

- Libraries



Cllr Patrick Hogan
Culture

- Cultural Strategy
- Museums
- Archives

Four Country Parks, visited by over 1 million people every year.

Programme of capital projects to improve local parks and play areas.

10 leisure centres around the county – Swan Pool & Leisure Centre, Buckingham; Aqua Vale Swimming and Fitness Centre, Aylesbury; Risborough Springs Swim & Fitness Centre, Princes Risborough; Court Garden Leisure Complex, Marlow; Wycombe Leisure Centre, High Wycombe; Chesham Leisure Centre, Chesham; Chiltern Pools, Amersham; Chalfont Leisure Centre, Chalfont St Peter; Beacon Sports Centre & Theatre, Beaconsfield; Evreham Sports Centre, Iver – plus the South Buckinghamshire Golf Course in Stoke Poges, and smaller facilities.

The library service operates in 29 locations and delivers public, online, school, home and prison library services. 11 libraries are also Council Access Points, providing residents with access to Council services.

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As part of the county's Cultural Partnership ([Buckinghamshire Culture](#)), we support the delivery of the Cultural Strategy, maximizing investment and harnessing culture to support economic development, new housing and communities, health and wellbeing, education and skills.

The service also delivers key cultural events such as the WhizzFizz family arts and literary festival and manages relationships with the Wycombe Museum and the County Museum in Aylesbury, which are operated under trust arrangements, and with the main theatre operators.

Buckinghamshire Archives hold collections of local and international importance, including records related to Stoke Mandeville's role in the development of Paralympic Games.

Country Parks/Parks

- We continue to see record-breaking numbers of visitors to our parks as people benefit from these high quality green spaces for exercise during the pandemic.
- However, this increased demand has brought additional costs for waste collection and disposal, enhanced cleaning and other Covid-safety measures; and parking issues on surrounding roads.
- Filming activity has also continued (as permitted under Covid restrictions).

Other achievements during 2020/21 include:

- ✓ Completion of:
 - new skate park in Amersham
 - new play areas in Amersham, Dunsham Park and Rustics Close in Aylesbury
 - new outdoor gyms at Vale Park and Cottlesloe Green, Aylesbury
 - a new café on the Rye in Wycombe, opening in early 2021.
- ✓ Six Green Flag Awards for our parks – The Rye, Wycombe; Higginson Park, Marlow; Hughenden Park, Wycombe; Heartlands, Buckingham; Vale Park and Bedgrove Park, Aylesbury.
- ✓ Activities to support communities: online play events, treasure hunts in local parks, Country Parks activities.

Sport & Leisure

- Covid restrictions have had a significant impact on leisure, with leisure centres and swimming pools only able to open for very limited periods during the year to date, with reduced customer capacity due to social distancing.
- The South Buckinghamshire Golf Course has been able to open for longer periods, but is also closed under the current lockdown restrictions.
- All our leisure operators have robust Covid-secure measures in place and will reopen as soon as they are permitted to do so.

Other achievements during 2020/21 include:

- ✓ Continuing progress on the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre development in Amersham, opening later this year.
- ✓ Completion of refurbishments at Court Garden Leisure Centre, Marlow; Chesham Leisure Centre; and Chalfont Leisure Centre ('dry' facilities; we are also now replacing the pool). The centres at Chesham and Chalfont include exciting new immersive workout studios.
- ✓ Installation of new goals at Farnham Park Playing Fields, with a grant award from the Football Foundation.
- ✓ Strong partnership working with Leap, Active Travel etc.

Libraries

- Buckinghamshire Libraries have continually adapted their offer during the pandemic, providing Request and Collect services, virtual events, etc – winning the Proud of Bucks staff award for ‘Innovation and Creativity’.
- Libraries colleagues have also actively supported community hubs throughout, making over 2,500 phone calls, organising food parcels and delivering PPE around the county.
- During the current lockdown, libraries are closed and staff have been redeployed to support calls to vulnerable residents, the vaccinations programme, contact tracing, and help with business support grants.

Other achievements during 2020/21 include:

- ✓ Over 3,500 new library members and over 50% increase in people using our e-books and other online resources.
- ✓ Successful introduction of Council Access Points in 11 of our libraries.
- ✓ Refurbishment of Marlow Library, providing significantly improved facilities.
- ✓ Hosting Black History exhibitions in main libraries.

Culture

- Buckinghamshire Archives continued to deliver services remotely during lockdown and delivered new outreach online, including Buckinghamshire's first Virtual History Festival (15,538 views from 4,862 unique users).
- A key focus has been working with Buckinghamshire Culture to develop and launch a local Cultural Sector Recovery Programme, with support from the Rothschild Foundation.
- Various organisations in Buckinghamshire have received support through the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund, delivered through Arts Council England: Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, Queens Park Arts Centre, Wycombe Arts Centre, Elgiva Theatre, Swan Theatre, Chiltern Open Air Museum, Wycombe Museum and others.

Other achievements during 2020/21 include:

- ✓ Working with Buckinghamshire Culture to launch key projects supporting the Cultural Strategy, such as *Bucks in 100 Objects*.
- ✓ Cross-portfolio work to establish contribution of culture to the Council's strategic priorities, including with Community Boards.
- ✓ Buckinghamshire Archives renewed its National Archives accreditation to 2022.
- ✓ Artist in residence projects in Libraries.

Key Service Priorities 2021/22

- Continuing focus on Covid recovery.
- Agreement of a countywide Leisure Facilities Strategy.
- Completion of the Chilterns Lifestyle Centre in Amersham.
- Continuing progress on the wider capital programme for leisure, parks and play areas.
- Service Improvement Review and development of the future strategy for libraries and Buckinghamshire Archives.
- Continuing work with Buckinghamshire Culture to deliver the Cultural Strategy.