

Stay at home

Please read the rules and the advice from the Government [here](#) and I want to thank everyone for taking this seriously to keep people in Buckinghamshire safe.

Changes to council services ****IMPORTANT****

We are having to make changes to how our services run but please be assured **we are doing everything we can to carry on providing the services our residents rely on**, under these most difficult circumstances.

Like many other organisations, we are having to prioritise what is needed the most. **All of our country parks are now closed. Play parks and sports areas in parks are also closed but parks remain open for exercise. Our libraries are all closed to the public too.** Some libraries will be opening as special local support hubs for the vulnerable but will not be open for general use or for library services - more on this below. **You can still access the library service online**, borrowing ebooks, emagazines and more – check it out at www.buckscc.gov.uk/elibrary.

We have also **closed all of our Household Recycling Centres (tips)** and we are having to **make some changes to our bin collection services too**.

I understand that you will have many questions about what to do with your waste and recycling as a result of some of these changes and we will keep you updated on this over the next few days.

You will also have heard that **weddings and other ceremonies have been cancelled** and we will be in touch with those of you who have bookings with us to make other arrangements or to offer a refund where necessary.

Other changes are being made in regard to registering births and deaths.

Please go to www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk for all the very latest information on our services and keep checking as the information is regularly being updated.

How to get help and support if you need it

As I let you know last week, we have set up a [virtual Community Hub](#) – an online service where you can find out **how to get support and help if you need it**, especially if you are elderly or vulnerable.

We have also been inundated with offers of help and people wanting to volunteer which is just fantastic – and it's through this Community Hub that you can [offer your help](#).

While we are all being asked to stay at home - and it's vital that we all do so - people who are helping the vulnerable are classed as essential and can carry on with the fantastic work they are doing to support people in the community.

Go to www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus to find out more.

We want to hear from local volunteer and community groups too so we can grow our list of contacts

on the hub and help match people to support groups in their local area.

So please email communities@buckscc.gov.uk if you represent such a group.

Launch of local support hubs

I'm really pleased to tell you that the council is establishing eight local support hubs around the county in the following locations:

- Buckingham Library
- Chesham Library
- Princes Risborough Library
- Marlow Library
- Beaconsfield Library
- Wycombe District Council offices
- Chiltern District Council offices
- The Gateway in Aylesbury.

The support is intended for those who have severe medical conditions, and who do not have access to family, friends or local support networks.

The following government guidance helps to define who that may include <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

These hubs will be coordination and distribution points for our volunteer networks – **they are not 'drop in' centres for the public and will not be open to the general public.**

I'll keep you informed about these hubs as more information becomes available.

Business support

These are challenging times for our local businesses, large and small.

We are working closely with the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Buckinghamshire Business First to identify need, pull together available support and put in place the measures to help stabilise our business community.

Any business that is being affected by COVID-19 (coronavirus) or has concerns about its future impact on business, can visit the website bbf.uk.com/covid-19 where the most up-to-date advice and support is being collated. To speak to a member of the Business Support Team call 01494 927130, email BusinessSupport@bbf.uk.com or feedback any business concerns via a survey online at bbf.uk.com/covid-19-survey

Video updates

We know everyone is full of questions so we have been trying to answer them in regular video updates – see our [latest update here](#).

Please ask us your questions using our twitter feed [@bucksCouncil](#) and the hashtag #AskBucksCouncil.

As this situation develops we might use different ways to keep in touch with you and answer your questions but rest assured we will keep our residents updated with what is happening and what the council is doing through this crisis.

Local foodbanks need donations too

Many local people rely on foodbanks to feed themselves and their families and this is a service that is needed now more than ever.

If you can, please **consider donating to your foodbank** while you do your own essential grocery shopping – just one or two extra items in your trolley would be much appreciated.

We are also working really closely with food banks and local food suppliers to look at how we can help the food supply in the area and we will be able to update you on that in the next few days.

Stay healthy while you stay at home

As we all deal with these massive changes to our lives and staying at home, it's really important that we still remember to look after our physical and mental well-being.

At the moment we can still all leave our homes to take outdoor **exercise once a day while keeping a safe distance from others** – or you can exercise at home or in your garden. There are loads of tips online about how to exercise at home, from YouTube workouts to the videos from the [NHS fitness studio](#).

It's also so important to look after our **mental well-being** too. Being physically distanced from others doesn't mean you can't stay in touch and find other ways to have contact with friends and loved ones.

Find out more about how to look after your mental health while staying at home by checking out the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

Citizens advice and information

Every one of us will be finding this situation difficult in many different ways and the **Council will do everything it can to keep you updated on how to get support, information and advice.**

[Citizens Advice](#) also has some helpful information for anyone experiencing difficulties because of coronavirus and their information is also being updated all the time.

We will email you as often as is needed to get any new information out to you.

In the meantime please **stay home, stay well and look after each other.**

Martin Tett
Leader of the Shadow Executive

