



## Bucks Older Peoples Action Group Meeting 10am Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Meeting Minutes

Christ The Servant King Church, Sycamore Road, High Wycombe.

### Attendees:

1. Alan Barnard – BOPAG Chairman & Marlow Bottom Valley Plus (AB)
2. David Whittaker – BOPAG Vice Chairman (DW)
3. Paula Watts – BOPAG Administrator/Editor (PW)
4. Cllr. Steve Broadbent – Cabinet Member for Transport, Buckinghamshire Council (SB)
5. Jane Osborn - Lane End OPAG (JO)
6. John Betts – STOPAG Stokenchurch (JB)
7. Janet Kenny – EX-OASIS (JK)
8. Marta Fischer – NHS (Digital Rep) (MF)
9. Ros Horrocks – Age UK Bucks (RH)
10. Martin Donlon – Wye Valley Volunteers (MD)
11. Pippa Harrison – Local resident – Marlow(PH)
12. Elizabeth Aylward – PROBUS (EA)
13. Michelle Bewley – Social Prescriber ARC Bucks(MB)
14. Louise Joslin – Ashridge Homecare(LJ)
15. Ian Gronbach – Memory Partners (IG)
16. Makyla Devlin – BCC (MD)
17. Talisha Patel – BCC (TP)
18. Sheila Gronbach - Memory Partners (SG)
19. Steve Hewitt – AVSE (SH)
20. Megan Best – Porthaven Care (MB)
21. Richard Stevenson - Princes Centre (RS)
22. Marrison Green – Hub Care Support (MG)
23. Lesley Ball – Imperial Health (LB)
24. Elizabeth Connell – LEOPAG (EC)
25. Karoline Lamb – 60+ Fitness (KL)
26. Linden Porter – Lane End member (LP)
27. Sheila Keatinge – Lane End (SK)

### Apologies:

Heather Wilde– BOPAG Assistant Admin

Wendy Healy – Avery Care

Linda Richards – LEOPAG

Stephanie Moffat – BCC

Barbara Richardson - COPAG

Marian Mullady – Local resident

Joe Boake - Extra Care Hughenden Gardens Village

Vanessa Pilgerstorfer- Tracy Trust

Robert Standon – RNU Oxford Health

Phil Folly – COPAG

**Please Note: A number of questions from BOPAG members were collated in advance of the meeting and sent to Cllr. Broadbent so he could base the body of his presentation around the questions.**

**AB:** Introduction to the format of the meeting and welcome to our speaker, Cllr. Steve Broadbent Cabinet Member for Transport. Questions afterwards please.

**SB:** Thank you for the invitation. "In my view Transport is the best job in Cabinet as it touches everyone's lives in Buckinghamshire." Transport is both a **Facilitator** and an **Enabler**

He continued by giving us a brief insight into his background: he lived in Africa for 8 years and ran a hotel business there, having originally gone as a VSO as a Small business Advisor but had to commission his own road repairs to access the hotel which, unbeknown at the time, was to give him good standing for the future.

**SB** had distributed printed sheets, giving the audience a look at Bucks Highways "assets", emphasising street lighting (29000 street lights).

To demystify TRANSPORT; as well as roads it also covers public rights of way, 100 miles cycleways, school transport, EV rollout, HS2, and policy work, sustainable and active travel routes, parking and enforcement, major regeneration plans and development funding in towns (Aylesbury was given as an example)

**Local Travel Plan 5** is now under development and sets the theme for next 5 years. It sets the transport agenda for the future.

**SB** directed members to: <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>: where you can report any roads issues – street lights, dead animals, branches on the road etc.

**Transport for Bucks** no longer exists. They have gone from a model where there was a single operator to a model where he now chairs an alliance with **BCC** and **The Highway Alliance** with Balfour Beatty who fix the potholes and maintenance, to AtkinsRéalis who are specialists in design.

**SB** can track their performance and whereabouts digitally. This means he gets much more structure and data and can hold these 2 organisations to account.

Winter services operate from October 31st and the first salt runs have been conducted. **SB** described the life of a pothole and why there were so many last year – no consistent snow layer and consequently a lot of freeze thaw because of freezing temperatures. Now they have up to 16 gangs throughout Bucks concentrating on pothole repairs.

They are currently investing over £100 million on improvements to roads. They trial new methods for repairing roads, one new one is called In situ recycling. Cannot be done on every road but it gives more value for money and reduces carbon as it recycles the existing road surface. **SB** reported that he often gets questions on why the roads are better elsewhere e.g. N. Yorkshire. He described the funding formula based on length of carriageways and no consideration for volume or type of traffic. BC may have similar miles of roads but very heavy traffic and yet receive the same amount of money as other areas.

We currently have 233 big capital schemes and have completed 142 of those, fixing 2616 street lights, of which 91% now have replacement LED bulbs, saving a 1/3 of total money spent on electricity. 25,000 potholes and emptied 60,000/85000 gullies. (Important to leave circa 25% silt for filtering purposes). BC does not own all the roads, National Highways own others e.g. Handy Cross junction

**SB** continued by addressing Q1 and Q2 questions on **Roadworks**:

3 years ago, average no of permits: 24-25000. In 2023: there were 75000. He does not have the right to perennially deny a permit, but applications are refused and rescheduled so that all works do not occur at the same time.

Utilities now include fibre companies and they do not need a permit if they deem an emergency exists. They only have to give 2 hours' notice. He gave the recent example of Marlow traffic havoc where they only gave a permit to one company but other roadworks started the same week because of utilities emergencies. The Council can fine for permit breach and they can revoke licences. There

are 2 levels of fine but they not been reviewed for 19 years so it is cheaper to take the fine rather than remove the works. He is currently lobbying the Government to increase the fines.

### **Bus Services**

Bucks Council want to improve and increase public transport and buses will play a huge part. Government have put in a fare cap of £2. Bus travel took a hit because of the pandemic. BC work with the operators and those who have ticket concessions can now travel at peak times for £1. The council subsidise the bus companies but they do not own them and cannot dictate which routes they run. BC received no local funding last year to provide bus routes in rural areas.

**SB** has highest car dependency in his ward of Ridgeway East. Regular bus services are still sadly lacking. **SB** Described a pilot “on demand” scheme for rural areas (Pick me Up) which enables flexible travel, with no fixed timetable, with routes that are determined by passenger bookings. Operated by **Carousel**. Can book up to 2 weeks in advance. Virtual bus stops – aim to be around 200 metres (400m max) from your residence for those with mobility issues. Via app or phone. He used the example of Flackwell Heath.

His department aims to be an **Enabler** – make it possible for everyone to use public transport. As a **Facilitator** they are promoting the adoption of new technology such as electric charge facilities – pilot scheme in Wendover with chargers in the High Street.

**SB** reiterated that transport affects everyone, but one can’t necessarily please everyone at the same time. He hoped he gave an insight into Transport, what it entails and its boundaries?

**SB** gave a plug for Simply Walks and the volunteers. Encourages everyone to get out and walk and to use **Fix my Street**

### **Questions:**

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**AB:** Observed that the **Pick Me Up** bus services goes from Marlow to Little Marlow and U turns in Little Marlow rather than going on to Bourne End. **SB** replied that some of the buses are on demand which is why you see this phenomenon on the same journey. The operational zone for the Pick Me Up service is limited by DfT (and funding). May seems like duplication of a route for residents but they are supplementing an existing bus service. They have agreed upon a 3-year plan with a view to looking at which routes are needed, hence there is no money available to have a requested on-demand bus service from Marlow to Bourne End as part of the scheme. He suggested that **AB** uses the local Community Board to raise the issue of additional routes. He reiterated that BC are an **Influencer** not a Provider as bus services are deregulated.

**One.Network** was mentioned by **SB** in response to complaints by **AB** and **PH** that they need contact details to report Traffic Works misdemeanours. One.Network warns one in advance of permits granted for work and the duration. It cannot account for emergency work. **AB** asked if there was a way of reporting permit breaches directly to inspectors. **SB** replied that it is possible via the BC. **AB** asked if the Handy Cross Park and Ride was functioning properly.

**IG** asked about how long the on-demand bus scheme would last? **SB** replied that it lasts for a total of three years and may possibly expand into other areas (as happened recently into Flackwell Heath), or expand by operational days and times. All based upon passenger and financial impacts. **SB** reiterated that the Pick Me Up scheme supplements the existing routes and does serve additional areas when requested but there are Operator limits.

**JO** brought up the promise of “well planned transport” relating to a planning application in Lane End. She reported that Lane End residents wish to know when the travel plan is going to happen? **SB** replied that the transport part of a planning application sits in Planning (under “Development Management”) and **SB** is not party to it. It does not form part of his remit so he is unable to give a definitive answer. **LP** recounted that a Lane End cancer patient conducted a survey on the

requirement for a regular bus service, as he was unable to reach his doctor's appointment in time as there were no buses. 500 people responded to his survey and the result is that residents are desperate for a regular service. **SB** asked for the results of the survey to be sent so that he can forward them to the bus operators.

**MD** interjected saying that local Community Boards do have their own priorities and are very active. She is the **Community Board Manager** for South West Chilterns. She will leave her card and people are very welcome to email her and to come along to the meetings. They can be **Influencers**. **SB** said that this issue should perhaps be put onto their meeting agenda.

**AB**: Heathrow Bus service – little known and underused. **SB** replied that they were pleased to get this service and are in talks with Carousel to get it more widely publicised.

**DW**: There is no bus service to the Little Marlow Sports Complex which hinders usage from younger section of the community. **SB**: £260K of work has been carried out to improve the track and sports complex. It is under the jurisdiction of the Bucks Leisure team. There is no current plan for a bus service to the track. **DW** pointed out that we were lucky to have a champion of transport in Cllr Steve Broadbent and Greg Smith MP. **SB** pledged to lobby further on our behalf to get more funding for rural transport. He said that the government are beginning to take notice and thanked **DW** for his kind words.

**LJ** gave **SB** the example of her adult disabled son who lives independently and who volunteers with his other 5 housemates. They all need transport but 5 taxis turn up to take them to the same place each week which seems incredibly wasteful. **SB** explained that increasingly there is a need for individuals with Special Needs to travel alone, hence how this might happen. **LJ** replied there was no need as they all live together. **SB** agreed and will raise this with the Adult Care Social Team to see if the 5 taxis could be reduced if details were provided.

**AB**: Many verges and roundabouts are being left uncut to encourage "pollinators." As a result of this, at some road junctions, sight of oncoming traffic can be obscured and therefore hazardous. Is a full risk assessment taken at these points? Are further areas planned? **SB**: There has been 2 "rural cuts" and an "urban cut" this year across the county. Our Inspectors and Local Area Technicians report back on where there are potential risks to road safety and carry out an additional cut if necessary. Road safety, particularly at junctions, will take precedence when considering additional cuts. **KL** commented that we need pollinators and that we need uncut grass verges. **SB** confirmed that Transport was working hard to keep certain areas uncut for pollinators where it was safe to do so.

Notices: **Marta Fischer** from Bucks West Integrated Care Board. BWICB

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**MF** explained the role of the ICB is to allocate the NHS budget and commission services for the population, taking over the functions previously held by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) of NHS England. from 1 July 2022. **MF**'s team provide digital services and deliver new IT systems. She wanted to stress how important it is to be able to use the online services available in the NHS app and to make appointments, see test results etc and to be able to use on line services generally. The NHS saved 27 million pounds last year by people using the on-line prescription services. It additionally saves admin costs, reduces traffic on the roads etc.

Current ICB Projects are:

- **Hospital at Home** – keeping people at home instead of going to hospital but to do this you have to be able to use digital services (mobile or using NHS monitoring equipment)
- **Share Care Records** – ability to access your health records quickly and easily from anywhere
- **NHS App & Digital Cafes** – to help people use the NHS app and other services. They have 5 digital cafes a month in: Flackwell Heath, Bourne End, Hazlemere, Marlow, High Wycombe. They can help with any digital needs and she works closely with social prescribers, specifically **MB**. 67% of the population use the NHS app. It holds all your personal health data and is secure.

**AB** thanked Martha and apologised for the lack of time available. He thanked **SB** for coming and for his patience. The meeting closed at 12.00 pm.