

Note from the Editor

They say that there is no such thing as a free lunch and that is mostly true, so when I was contacted recently by Thames Water and offered a free visit to check out my house for leaks and fit free water saving devices, I was skeptical. In fact I was convinced it was a scam. But I was wrong. Thames Water are on a mission to help everyone use water more efficiently and this service is all about the easy things we can change in our homes. This is open to everyone served by Thames Water so please spread the word. More info below.

Hot off the press—the five councils in Buckinghamshire are set to be replaced by a single unitary council covering the whole county, housing and communities secretary James Brokenshire announced on the 1st November. It's anticipated that the new council should be established on 1 April 2020 with the first elections taking place on 7 May 2020. We await further updates

On page 8, there is an offer of free surplus food for community groups & charities so please contact Eleanor if this is something your group could use.

All sorts included this month and thank you to all the people that have sent in information. Next month I will cover the events for the Christmas period so if you have any that you wish to publicise including any requests for volunteers, please let me know by the 29th November .



Andy

Smarter Home Visits



Water is a precious resource and it is important that we all do our bit. It's one of the reasons why Thames Water have developed the largest water efficiency programme in the UK. They have set their targets high. Each day, they plan to save 34 million litres of water between 2015 and 2020. In a year that's enough water to fill Loch Ness almost 2 times.

They have won awards for their Smarter Home Visits. They visit our customers, fit free water-saving gadgets and give tailored advice on how people can save water and in turn save money on their water and energy bills.

In 2017/2018, they visited 60,000 homes. During these visits, they fitted more than 200,000 water saving devices in customers' homes.

Andy has just had one of these visits and was really impressed. When you book, you are given an hour slot when the engineer will visit and told the name of the engineer and the ID

that they will be carrying.

Scott (the named engineer) arrived bang on time and went about checking every tap, toilet, baths, showers and water connected appliances. No leaks were found but if they had, they would have been fixed, Scott did fit aerators to a couple of mixer taps and a water saving device to a cistern. All explained and no charge. He then went off to check the water meter in the lane.

If you'd like to see an example of a Home Visit you can watch a video at www.thameswater.co.uk/My-Account/Water-meters/More-information/Savings-made-simple which also gives handy hints and tips to help you save.

If you would like a Smarter Home Visit, please call Thames Water on 0800 6226623. Monday—Friday 9-5



Council Budget Consultation 2019/20



The major services provided by Bucks County Council play a part in most people's lives, whether that's through education and learning, roads and transport, health and social care, household waste recycling or just using country parks.

Their Strategic Plan sets out their aims; these are:

- safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
- creating opportunities for everyone and building self-reliance
- ensuring Buckinghamshire is a thriving & attractive place to live and work into the future

However, they are facing some very big challenges. The population is growing rapidly including, for example, more young children needing school places, more elderly people as people live longer, and the type of services that people need is changing and demand is also growing. The increase in people they need to support means overall higher costs. Bucks is also growing in terms of housing developments with thousands more homes set to be built across the county. This brings additional pressure to provide new roads, schools and other infrastructure to serve these new and growing communities.

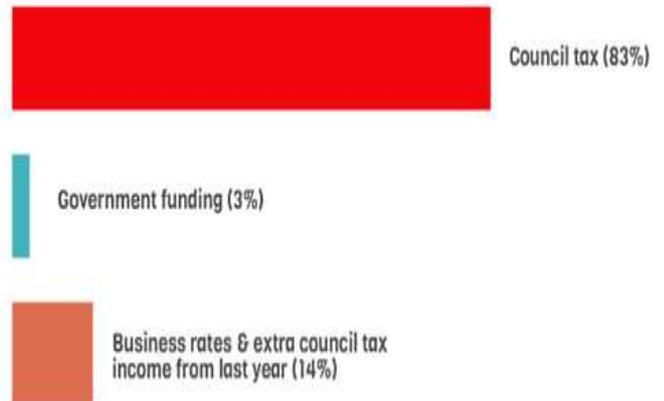
Bucks County Council are amongst the increasing number of councils who now no longer receive any central government funding for day to day services, which means that despite having made savings in the budget of £102 million over the last five years, they will need to make further cost savings in order to balance the books next year.

They have statutory responsibilities - things that they must legally do but there is also a long list of other work that they still want to do to ensure communities are safe, prosperous and healthy. The funding for the running of schools is not set or controlled by the Council; this goes directly to schools from government.

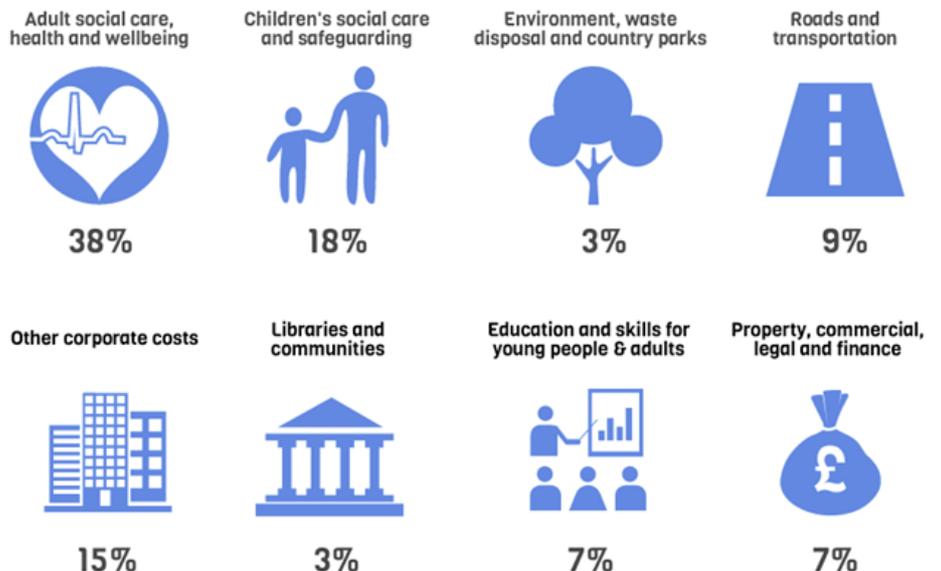
They are now working to set the budget for the next financial year, 2019/20 and beyond. They will be making difficult decisions about the level of spending across the board. The next few weeks is your opportunity to help shape what they spend across all of the services they provide. Your input is important and will help decide spending on the services you receive next year.

The survey is open until **14 November** and you can complete the short online survey at <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/finance/budget/budget-consultation-201920/> which will take less than 10 minutes. If you need it, you can get support to complete the online survey at one of our main libraries – these are Amersham, Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Buckingham, Chesham, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough.

Where their money comes from



Where the 2018/19 £330m budget goes





Budget 2018



This week Chancellor, Philip Hammond, delivered the 2018 Autumn Budget. These changes take effect in April 2019, and Age UK have picked out the measures which are most likely to affect people over pension age now and in the near future.

How will my State Pension be affected?

The old State Pension and new State Pension increase by 2.6% from 6 April 2019, a cash increase of £3.25 a week and £4.25 a week respectively.

State Pension age

From November 2018 the state pension age will be 65 for both men and women. From 2019, the State Pension age will gradually increase for both men and women to reach 66 by October 2020. State Pension age will be increasing from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028. There will also be reviews every 5 years after that to look at State Pension age.

How will benefits be affected?

Working-age benefits : The majority of working-age benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance, are unchanged. They are frozen at their 2016–17 levels for 4 years following the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

Universal credit : Over £1 billion has been set aside over five years to fund top-up payments from those who have been moved onto Universal Credit from other benefits.

How will my private pension be affected?

Lifetime allowance for pensions will increase in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rising to £1,055,000 for 2019-20. This is a limit on the value of payouts from your pension schemes that can be made without triggering an extra tax charge. These payouts could be lump sums or retirement income.

What are the changes to tax allowances and thresholds?

The amount of income you can earn before you pay tax - the personal allowance - increases from £11,850 to £12,500 on 6 April 2019.

Basic rate tax will be still payable on taxable income up to £34,500 and the higher rate threshold will be increased from £46,350 to £50,000.

How will my savings be affected?

The ISA annual subscription limit for 2019-20 will remain unchanged at £20,000.

Pensions cold-calling will be made illegal this autumn. The Government first mooted a ban back in 2017 and consulted on it earlier this year. The response to the consultation has now been published, and it says that draft regulations will be published in the autumn.

Debt People struggling with debt will be given more 'breathing space'. This was pre-announced ahead of the budget. Those with serious debts will be given a longer grace period of 60 days before being hit with further interest, charges and enforcement action.

And ..

Road Repairs Local authorities in England to be given £420 million for road repairs. This will be made available immediately to local highways authorities to fix potholes and carry out other repairs. The boost comes after a harsh winter followed by a scorching summer has damaged many local roads.



Whats On

Hearing Technology Day

Help in Hearing are hosting an exhibition and talks by the UK's leading suppliers on two days at two venues this month where you will be able to learn about the future of hearing technology presented by the UK's leading companies

Advances in technology mean that hearing aids will one day become multi-dimensional medical and lifestyle devices. Join us for product demonstrations and to learn all about these exciting developments including:

- Automatic foreign language translation facility
- Health and fitness tracking on mobile apps
- Remote contact with your audiologist
- Aids that recharge for seconds & last for hours

Wednesday 28th November at Harleyford Golf Club Harleyford, Henley Rd, Marlow SL7 2SP
Exhibition: The Pavilion Talks: The Clayton Room

Thursday 29th November at South Buckinghamshire Golf Club Park Road Stoke Poges SL2 4PJ
Exhibition: The Oak Room Talks: The Cedar Room Refreshments served

Exclusive offers & complimentary hearing assessment voucher for all visitors worth £120

Don't miss out on enhancing your life with the most advanced hearing technology There is no charge to attend but places are limited. For the full agenda and to book your place

0345 222 0579 or mail@helpinhearing.co.uk

Will Aid Month



Will Aid runs throughout November, when nine charities and 900 solicitors team up to provide basic wills for a charitable donation. It's always popular, so book now.

There's no set fee but Will Aid hopes you'll make a donation of around £95 for a single will or £150 for a pair of basic 'mirror' wills, which it will distribute to its partner charities. This is a good price for a solicitor-drafted will but if you can't afford it, you can give less.

To find out your local participating solicitor enter your postcode on the Will Aid website or phone 0300 0309 558. Contact the solicitor to arrange a meeting, stating you're calling as part of the Will Aid scheme. You can donate via the Will Aid website before you go and take a print-out of the receipt with you, or donate once you're there. You also get free will registration to make it easy for your family to find your will



ROSSINI

rejoices with



BRITTEN

Great Missenden Choral Society
Saturday 15th December

7:30pm

at

St Peter & St Paul Church, Gt Missenden,
HP16 0AZ

Britten - A Ceremony of Carols
Mike Sheppard - When a Baby is Born
Rossini - Petite Messe Solennelle

Tickets £15

Available from www.gmcsonline.co.uk or Wye County, 36B High St, Gt Miss, 01494 864 225



Whats On

WWI film They Shall Not Grow Old

Peter Jackson's ground-breaking First World War film *They Shall Not Grow Old* will have its television premiere on BBC2. The archive feature film will broadcast on the 11th November at 9:30pm, as part of BBC2's commemorative coverage marking the 100th anniversary of the armistice.

Jackson, best known for the *Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit* film trilogies, is set to bring WWI to life using wartime footage — colourised and converted to 3D — from the Imperial War Museums' film archive.

It will be accompanied by original audio from the BBC archives, using the voices of veterans to narrate the events of 'the war to end all wars'.



THANK YOU to the World War I generation

100 years ago the guns fell silent on the world's first truly global war. To remember those who lived through this time and say thank you for all that they did for us, on the 11th November from 1 – 4 pm there is a free afternoon tea event at AVDC, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury.

This family-friendly event will include afternoon tea, World War 1 ration lunches, exhibitions and stalls. There will also be live performances from The Rockabellas, The Halton Military Wives Choir, J's Joyful Divas, The Royal British Legion Buckinghamshire Band, WW1 Poetry Reading by The Chiltern Poets.

This is a free event but you must have a ticket and these can be collected from AVDC's Main Reception (The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF) and The British Legion Pop-in (19-21 High Street, Aylesbury HP20 1SH). You can also book on line via www.buckscc.gov.uk/wwi-event



TRY IT, LOVE IT, LEARN IT week will run from Monday 19 – Friday 23 November.

You can try an existing course ranging from arts and crafts, languages, floristry, health and fitness, cookery and digital photography.

You must book your free class by Thursday 8 November at 12 noon.

You can find list of participating courses at : www.adultlearningbcc.ac.uk or you can call them on 01296 383582



Workaid have a variety of craft classes taking place between now and Christmas. To find out full details, either call them or visit their website (details below)

Wed 7th Nov Knit & Natter £2.50
 Sat 17th Nov Art Journalling £10
 Wed 21st Nov Knit projects using less than a ball of wool
 Fri 23rd Nov Sewing Bees £15
 Sat 24th Nov Textile Treasures £65
 Wed 5th Dec Knit & Natter £2.50
 Sat 8th Dec 10-2 Craft Open Day Be inspired by crafts in action
 Weds (term time) Drawing & Painting £10
 Workaid, The Old Boot Factory, 71 Townsend Road, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 2AA
 01494 775220 crafts@workaid.org



Money Matters

Millions could lose free TV licences – the 6 options being considered

The scheme was first introduced by the government in 2000 who paid for and ran it. But in 2015, George Osborne announced the government would no longer provide the funding and the BBC would have to take it on. The BBC are now looking at what to do about the free TV licenses offered to homes with older people

The options being considered are :

1. Allowing the concession to lapse without replacement
2. Increasing the age threshold from 75 to 77, in line with increases in life expectancy since 2000
3. Increasing the age threshold from 75 to 80, in line with other parts of the benefits system for older people
4. Retaining a universal concession for over-75s at 50% of the licence fee value, in line with the current concession for those with severe visual impairments
5. Means-testing the concession by linking eligibility to receipt of Pension Credit for over-75s
6. Means-testing the concession but extending eligibility to all those over State Pension Age in receipt of Pension Credit

A public consultation on the future of the concession, setting out a range of options will be launched in the future, the BBC said.

Some good news on the Triple Lock Pension—at least for now

The state pension triple lock will remain in place at least "for the rest of this Parliament", the government has confirmed. The triple lock guarantees that the state pension grows every year by the highest of inflation, growth in earnings or 2.5%. While the committee says this makes it unsustainable, the government says it stands by the triple lock as a key lever for lifting many pensioners out of poverty.

Help for the Winter

Over 64 or on benefits? Are you eligible for winter cash from the Government? Winter can be tough but there's help available...

a) Winter Fuel Payments. If you were born on or before 5 Nov 1953, regardless of income, you're eligible for the up-to-£300 one-off payment. If you get certain benefits, eg, state pension, pension credit or jobseeker's allowance, you'll usually get it automatically, otherwise you may have to claim. Winter Fuel Payment Centre 0800 731 0160

b) Warm Home Discount. If you were on pension credit on 8 Jul 2018, most get an automatic one-off £140 rebate on their electricity bill between Oct and Mar, unless you're with some smaller suppliers. If you've a prepay or pay-as-you-go meter you won't get it automatically, but you can apply for it. Other low-income families may also be eligible. Contact your fuel provider for further information

c) Cold Weather Payments. This is a separate grant paid by the Government to older people and those on certain benefits to help cover costs when temperatures hit zero in your area. You'll get £25 for every seven consecutive days it's zero degrees or below



Simple Energy Advice
GOVERNMENT ENDORSED ADVICE

Are you forced to choose between heating and eating this winter? It's a disgraceful choice, but sadly it's a dilemma too many face. It is worth checking if you're eligible for special help, via special free advice service
www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk or call 0800 444 202.



Health News

healthwatch
Bucks

Flu Jab Shortages

GPs and pharmacies have been urged to share stocks of the over-65s vaccine to combat delays. Elderly people seeking flu jabs are being turned away due to a shortage of vaccines.

Deliveries of the adjuvanted trivalent vaccine, designed for over-65s, are being staggered as there is only one supplier. NHS England claimed all orders would be available by mid-November in time for the traditional flu season. But Boots confirmed there is "temporary shortage of stock at a small number of stores" and Lloyds Pharmacy recently suspended its vaccination service.

Manufacturer Seqirus say that they are on track with the phased delivery plan agreed with NHS England earlier this year. They expect to deliver more than 9.7 million doses of FLUAD this season, which is well above the uptake seen in the 65+ age group in previous seasons. 6 million doses have already been delivered with more stock going out daily and final deliveries to be completed in mid-November as planned.

Hearing aids and cataract surgery may prevent dementia:

Wearing a hearing aid or undergoing cataract surgery could prevent dementia, two major studies suggest. Research shows the treatments halt the rate of cognitive decline by up to 75%.

Cognitive decline, which affects both memory and thinking skills, is slowed after a patient's hearing and sight improve. The rate of decline is halved following cataract surgery and is reduced by 75 per cent following the adoption of hearing aids, scientists found.

Manchester University researchers, who led the trials, branded the results 'exciting' as the battle for a dementia cure continues. The research on cataract surgery assessed 5704 participants between 2002 and 2014 - The trial on hearing aids followed 2040 participants between 1996 and 2014 in the US.

Making health and social care information easier to understand

A report by Healthwatch Bucks (HWB) found that many health leaflets and documents are difficult for people to understand. In fact, 43% of adults find it hard to understand health information. HWB wanted to find out why.

HWB looked at 15 different health and social care leaflets and documents. These documents were tested using the Flesch-Kincaid test, which tests how difficult a document is to read. They found that most of the documents were difficult to read. Only one was written in plain English. The main writing issues were complex sentences, long sentences, and impersonal wording. Also, lots of organisations assumed people knew things that aren't common knowledge.

Thalia Jervis, Chief Executive at HWB, said *"We are really pleased that everyone has responded so positively to the report. Patients can only get involved if they can understand the information they get. This report will help make that happen."* HWB recommends that leaflets aimed at patients should be written in plain English. Also, formal documents that are available to the public should contain a plain English easy-read summary.

In response to the HWB recommendations, Nicola Lester, Director of Transformation at Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said *"The report is a timely and useful reminder which will help us to make sure that whenever we provide written information we consider the readability of what we produce. Across the CCG, we have asked that staff adopt the recommendations made within the Healthwatch report for all our publications. To improve readability, we will ensure that all future key documents include an easy-read summary at the beginning."*

Gillian Quinton, Executive Director of Communities of Health and Adult Social Care at BCC, has also responded positively saying that they will be creating a number of tools and information to help officers develop these techniques



2018

Contact Details for the Bucks Older People's Action Group

Andy can be contacted on
Tel : 01296 622122

E-mail : info@bopag.org.uk

BOPAG, c/o The Hale Farmhouse, Hale Lane,
Wendover HP22 6QR

Bucks Older People's Action Group Meetings

2018 Dates

21st November

2019 Dates

Jan 23rd, March 20th, May 15th, July 17th

All are welcome. Meetings run 10-12.30 and are currently held at Christ the Servant King, Sycamore Road, High Wycombe, HP12 4TJ

Please contact Andy Trueman on 01296 622122 for further information



FareShare - Free Surplus Food

Tesco work with Fareshare to distribute free surplus food from their stores to local projects. They currently have availability all around Buckinghamshire.

All it requires is one person, once a week, to go their nearest participating food store and collect the donations. This is a completely free project. Once matched with a suitable store, a text will go out to let your group know what food is available on that day and all you have to do is pick the food up. All of the food is in date, very much usable and could benefit your groups and any volunteers you might have.

The video demonstrates the Process <https://vimeo.com/266846117>

If you'd like to find out more please contact me. We are always looking to get more food out to people in need in the area, so please do not hesitate to let me know.

Also if you are aware of any other local groups who could benefit from our surplus food scheme, let me know!

Kindest Regards, Eleanor Cox Community Coordinator South West 07377702324

Dates for your diary

19th November 7pm At the Waterside Theatre, Aylesbury. NHS Buckinghamshire CCG has a limited number of FREE tickets available for a performance of the acclaimed show Finding Joy, from Vamos Theatre. To claim your free ticket, go to www.buckinghamshireccg.nhs.uk/finding-joy or call 01296 382 752

Thursday 22nd November She Got The Vote 11 – 11:45 at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UU. Refreshments available. Admission is free but booking is strongly recommended for all events due to popularity and limited space. To reserve your place call 01296 382 587 or email archives@buckscc.gov.uk

2018 Dates of Partnership Boards

Assistive Technology 12/12

Dementia 13/12

Older People further dates to be advised

Physical & Sensory Disability 29/11

Carers—further dates to be advised

Please email or phone Debbie if you are interested in attending. Mobile: 07507 399 180 Email:

debra.robinson@suco.org.uk

Bucks Health Trust Board Meetings

Wed 28 November 9am Hampden Lecture Theatre, Wycombe Hospital

Buckinghamshire CCG Board Meetings

The final 2018 Governing Body meeting will take place on **Thursday 13 December** at the Misbourne Practice, Church Lane, Chalfont St Peter, SL9 9RR

The Buckinghamshire Primary Care Commissioning Committee next meeting will take place on the **6th December** 3pm – 5pm, Bevan Room, 2nd Floor The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF

Fake Poppy Merchandise



The Royal British Legion are urging consumers to beware of scammers ahead of Remembrance Day 2018.

A spokesman said: "We advise people to buy responsibly through official channels, and to report fake poppy merchandise. Your donations are intended to support Armed Forces community men, women, veterans and their families. But instead they could end up benefitting fraudsters if their poppy merchandise turns out to be fake."