

Buckden Parish Council News

Council Website

For more information, please visit the Buckden Parish Council (BPC) web site at www.buckdenpc.org.uk. To automatically find out what is going on subscribe to our Newsletter service using your email address.

Coronation of King Charles and 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings

Following the very successful village Jubilee Celebrations there are two further events coming up, the Coronation in May this year and the D-Day Anniversary in June 2024. We would be very keen to understand any plans to celebrate these events and will be establishing a small team to help coordinate activities. Please let us know of any plans as soon as possible.

National Highways

We met with National Highways on 12th December. It appears that little progress has been made in finalising the plans for the roundabout. Conversations are continuing between the developers and their consultants and NH. On a more positive note, a detailed review of the North and South underpasses is being undertaken to identify and hopefully fix all the outstanding issues

Bus Service in the Village

We have received several complaints from residents about the bus services in the village. We are keen to understand your views and experience. If you have experience of the service, both positive and negative, can you please let us know so that we can contact the service providers. The more feedback we get the better. PLEASE LET US KNOW via the clerk on the e mail address below.

Flooding

We have established a Council Flood Advisory Group and are keen to set up a network of Flood Wardens to join the group. These individuals would help us to identify issues and solutions and provide a point of communication to residents. It would be particularly helpful if you have had experience of flooding or live in a location prone to flooding, but this is not essential. If you are interested, please contact the Clerk.

Drain Clearance

There have been several instances of flooding recently caused by drains blocked by leaves and debris which have not been cleared. If you see an example of this please report it to Cambridgeshire County Council as they usually deal with blocked highway drains and road gullies causing surface water flooding. Report to <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>. If possible, provide a photo. We have found this helps to accelerate action being taken.

All of the papers and reports for Council Meetings are available on the Thursday before meetings on Council website www.buckdenpc.org.uk. This provides the opportunity to see the agenda, reports of work carried out by the Council as well as reports from out County and District Councillors. Any questions or comments on this report should be addressed to the Parish Clerk at: Buckden Parish Council, Buckden Village Hall, Burberry Rd, Buckden, PE19 5UY. Telephone 01480 819407 Email: clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk.

HDC admit that establishing who is responsible for drains and sewers can be complicated. Their Environmental Health team can:

- help you find out who is responsible for a problem on or near your property
 - offer advice on drainage problems
 - investigate recurring drainage problems if they have an effect on public health
 - take action to resolve drainage problems that are not the responsibility of Anglian Water.
- <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/environmental-issues/contact-us-environmental-health/>

Christmas Lights

Unfortunately, despite new lights and a new supplier some issues were experienced again this year. Not all the lights were installed, and problems were experienced with electricity. We are meeting the supplier this month to ensure there is no repeat of this.

Swift Boxes

Overwintering in E. Africa, swifts are summer visitors to the UK; their arrival, usually in early May, heralding or coinciding with warmer weather. They are very good flyers, fast and acrobatic and need to be since they sleep, eat, bathe and even mate on the wing. From leaving the nest as a fledgling, it is likely that the next time they land will be to raise a family of their own, some two or three years later. By this time, they will have flown around 20,000 miles all without landing! In fact, swifts don't perch or land because they have tiny feet and legs which makes it very difficult for them to walk.

Swifts pair for life and will return to the same nest site each year. No doubt you have seen them and heard them shrieking as they zoom around tall buildings such as St. Mary's. They prefer nest sites high up in roofs or walls, squeezing through small holes to gain access. Like us, they will renovate their nest before laying their eggs and therein lies a problem. Our renovations in our desire to have energy efficient homes has meant that we have filled gaps in soffits, repaired gaps between tiles and generally sealed any gaps that a swift would utilize as a nesting site. This, along with a reduction in insect numbers, their food source, has led to a 50% decline in numbers over the past few years and they are now on the UK Conservation Status red list.

However, all is not lost as we can help to stem this decline if we can provide suitable nesting sites. Specially designed swift nest boxes are available and for new-builds, swift bricks can be incorporated. The Parish Council would like your help to provide some nesting places in the village and will arrange for boxes for

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residents to erect. There are some important things to consider if you would like to put up a swift box:

- Swift nests need to have at least **5m clearance from the ground and in front of the box** to give a clear flight path to and from the nest.
- If the nest box is secured tight beneath the eaves, aspect is not particularly critical and they can face any direction from NE through S to NW.
- Swifts are colonial birds and would benefit from multiple boxes. It is generally recommended to install 2-4 or more boxes.
- It can take several years for swifts to find new nest boxes. In the meantime, other birds such as house sparrows might colonise the box(es). This can help house sparrows which are in decline too and their presence will indicate suitable sites to swifts.

For more information, visit the RSPB information page at https://shopping.rspb.org.uk/INTERSHOP/static/WFS/RSPB-rspbUK-Site/-/RSPB/en_GB/Product%20PDFs/Swift%20Nestbox%202019%20instructions.pdf

If you think you can provide a suitable site for swift boxes and would be interested in putting one up please contact the clerk at clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk Providing a nest box is one way to help swifts but not all of our houses are suitable sites. There are other things you can do too such as submitting sightings to the RSPB Swift Survey (www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts). The information we collect can help planners and ecologists to identify where swifts already have colonies and how best to protect these.

Councillors

We would like to welcome Aidan Joy who has joined us as a Parish Councillor.

Council Meetings

The next Council meeting will be at 7.00 pm on Monday 13th February. The meeting will include a 15-minute open forum. If you want to speak at the meeting, please let us know what you want to say, by contacting the Parish Clerk. You will get a three-minute slot.

The Council Planning Committee will also meet if required. Agendas for these meetings are posted on the Parish notice boards no later than the Saturday preceding the meeting.

Office opening hours

The Clerk is operating flexibly between the office and home. If you wish to meet with the Clerk, please call on. 07483 033357.

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