


# Buckden Parish Council
# Community Action Plan
## Final June 2020 - 2025

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# 1 Introduction

This Community Action Plan, (CAP), consists of non-planning issues that were raised by the community and Parish Council during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process and during the Council's Annual Strategy development meetings.

As the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is a statutory planning document it cannot include non-planning issues. However, to supplement that, this Community Action Plan reflects all the non-planning concerns raised. CAP issues will be addressed by the Parish Council outside of the Neighbourhood Planning process.

There will be further consultation with residents about the prioritisation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, including for the projects within the CAP. This will be part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process.

# 2 Community

## 2.1 Older residents

Research amongst older residents shows that they value, and in many cases are dependent upon, the range of services, community facilities and voluntary support provided locally. This helps people to be self-sufficient within the village. In turn, this reduces the need for car travel, encourages walking and creates an overall sense of independence.
Older individuals do not need to move elsewhere to be closer to services or, potentially become prematurely dependent upon care services. This is recognised as a key determinant of quality of life.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Review Rural Exception sites for older "downsizers" subject to decision on Silver Street | BPC |
| Seek to develop more Alms House provision | BPC |

## 2.2 Young people

A range of activities are provided for younger people. These include Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Beavers, football club etc. The children at Buckden School were consulted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation. Information gathered from this highlighted a strong desire for more extensive play facilities in the village, to include facilities suitable for young people over 12years. There is also a strong demand to increase the opportunities and facilities available for teenagers in the village. Increased evidence of relatively low-level vandalism, particularly around the village hall suggests that some facility for older children would be beneficial for users and the wider community. St Marys Church have established a Youth Club, Youth at the Towers catering for the 11-14 age group.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Carry out a detailed consultation with the young people of the village to establish their priorities and preferences | BPC |
| Once priorities are established support the development of further facilities for young people, promoting co-creation in which they can be involved | BPC/VHT |
| Consult with Scouts on their requirements and liaise with GP surgery to support a wider well-being agenda for this part of our community | BPC |
| Consider a coffee shop for younger people | BPC |
| Consider the development of a youth parish council promoted through Duke of Edinburgh scheme & Hinchingbrooke school. | BPC |

## 2.3 Integration of new residents into the Parish

There is likely to be a significant influx of new residents to the village with the current and various proposed housing developments come to fruition. Despite clear reservations about the scale of development it is important that new residents are welcomed to the village. Given the location of the developments, on the edge(s) of the village, it is particularly important that new residents do not feel isolated or lonely.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Actively welcome newcomers to our village and help them integrate. Publish and distribute a welcome pack. | BPC |
| Ensure that existing communication media are expanded to include new developments. | BPC |
| Promote provision of facilities to support young families e.g. community café with facilities for toddlers | |

# 3 Community support

There is an extremely active voluntary sector within the parish which provides many services to all residents, making up, to some extent, for increasingly stretched and under-resourced public services. They create a social network, help to minimise loneliness, may provide transport and generally act as a safety net for vulnerable residents.
In addition, Buckden is served by a number of excellent GP practices. The Buckden surgery, in particular, is an asset to the village, as it promotes information on health and well-being and runs weekly Health Walks. The Council is keen to support the surgery and other local business such as the Pharmacy to work with them to promote a "Healthier Buckden"

There is increasing evidence that services which in the past would have been provided by the District and/or County Council are being cut and action on these left to be funded and provided at Parish level. Cambridgeshire County Council are discussing the provision of "Transformation Hubs" to be located in villages to help support vulnerable groups.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Support and if necessary consider contributing to funding for local Transformation Hub | BPC |
| Actively support, publicise and encourage voluntary groups and clubs. Consider promoting new facilities e.g. a film club | BPC |

# 4 Allotments

The village benefits from two sites providing allotments for use by villagers. These are viewed as a key facility to be protected, enhanced and promoted. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies to try to protect the allotment land by designating it as green space. The allotments in Silver Street have recently been improved to include the ability to rent half plots, and the provision of a community space for socialising, and further opportunities for improvement will be encouraged.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Further opportunities to improve the allotments as a facility for the community will be sought and encouraged | BPC |

# 5 Village Hall and Recreation Ground

Buckden benefits from a substantial Village Hall and recreation grounds which are viewed by residents as key assets. They are well-used and act as focal points for residents.
The building and grounds are owned and managed by the Village Hall Trust (VHT) Charity.
The Millennium Hall hosts a wide range of facilities for all ages. These include several meeting rooms, a large hall with a stage, a library, a preschool, a playground. The recreation grounds include playing fields and a lake with access to local footpaths.
In many ways the village hall is very successful. The meeting rooms and main hall are very well utilised, frequently at capacity, with a wide range of business and social activities. The Library and preschool are well supported. Cricket, tennis, bowls and football clubs are also active users of the facilities. The VHT also leases part of the premises to the Village Club which is a private members club used by village residents.
The Village Hall Trust sponsors The Buckden Festival (village fete) and also provides facilities for the annual Buckfest music festival.

The VHT faces several challenges. The playground equipment currently funded by the Parish Council is small and caters only for younger children. The lake and the immediately surrounding area is under-utilised and requires considerable maintenance. The sports pavilion currently needs considerable refurbishment and facilities for storage of sports and ground maintenance equipment are not fit for purpose. There is an ongoing need to maintain the fabric of the building and the grounds, for example; the tarmac footpaths are in a poor state of repair, and eventually the main hall floor, its flat roof, and one of the gas boilers will need to be replaced. All of the these are expensive to resolve, and the VHT is actively seeking to raise funds to meet these challenges.

There are several potential opportunities for the VHT to improve and/or better utilise the facilities in both the hall and playing fields. Feedback was gathered from village residents in 2018 and further priorities were identified through the NP consultation, which included pupils at the Primary school and the Council's Annual Strategy meeting. There will be further consultation with the residents on the proposed priorities. See Appendix 1

| Actions | Owner |
|---|---|
| Further consultation with residents and particularly school age pupils on the priorities for Village Hall developments | BPC/VHT |
| The emerging VHT plans when finalised will be considered and supported where appropriate by the BPC | BPC |
| A joint working group will be established to help facilitate the implementation of the VHT plans. | BPC/VHT |
| Opportunities for grant and other funding will be sought by VHT trustees, in addition to the opportunities for S106 and CIL funding. The VHT may seek the assistance of BPC expertise in this area. | VHT/BPC |

# 6 Communication Liaison and Partnerships Parish Councils

## 6.1 Residents

It is important that residents are aware of the services, support, and facilities available in the village. Regular and effective communication is a key facilitator of a sense of community and belonging. The monthly Roundabout Magazine, which is delivered to all households by volunteers, is a significant asset in this regard. However, for some time other communication media, for example the BPC website, The Roundabout web edition and the use of social media, have not been fully utilised in reaching out to all residents. The Council wishes to optimise use of social media. In the current climate of significant anxiety about proposed housing development and traffic congestion, timely and accurate information provision is even more critical. Communication must also be two way and it is important that residents have easy access to contact with the Council and that if they communicate with us to raise issues then the communication is dealt with in a timely and professional manner.

| Actions | Owner |
|---|---|
| Review current communications and seek to make it more reader-friendly; utilise social media, where there is the capacity to do so appropriately | BPC |
| The BPC website will be promoted widely and updated to maintain appropriate and timely information for residents | BPC |
| As the village expands, the budget for the increased circulation of the Roundabout will be found from the BPC's share of Council Tax | BPC |
| Additional communication media, including digital, will be adopted by BPC to promote and facilitate effective communication to all age groups. | BPC |
| Seek to better meet expectations of our residents by ensuring they are informed about the scope of Parish Council duties and powers. | BPC |
| A survey mechanism will be developed to gauge resident satisfaction with local amenities and to share results with appropriate organisations e.g. HDC and CCC | BPC |
| Consider establishing Parish Council "surgeries" as opportunities for contact between Councillors and residents | BPC |
| BPC will identify those residents who are 'harder to reach' and act as far as they can to help appropriate communication gets to them, directly or through other means | BPC |

## 6.2 Local organisations

The village has a large number of local organisations which enable the village support and enhance the life of the village. The Parish Council has recently prioritised developing further the working relationship between the Council and local organisations to ensure clear communication and mutual support.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Where links have been established with key organisations in the village, such as the churches, the surgery and the school, nominated Councillors will maintain and develop those links | BCP |

## 6.3 Local Councils

A number of Parish councils face similar issues to those faced by Buckden. It has been agreed that the Council should seek to continue to develop the partnership with other local parish councils to increase the impact when engaging with other organisations and to share information and expertise. We will also continue to work with both Huntingdon District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council; engaging with their local representative, supporting and where appropriate challenging their strategy and services.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Maintain and develop liaison with adjacent Councils, working with them on key issues such as the A1, the Offord level crossing, and River Great Ouse. | BPC |

# 7 Pavements, roads, road safety and public transport

## 7.1 Pavements

There are many complaints about the quality of pavements in the village. Given the age of the infrastructure improvement is difficult. Better access for the disabled and prams is a frequent comment.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Regularly inform HDC and CCC of repair requirements | BPC |
| Undertake an analysis of both the accessibility and state of repair of pavements via the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, (LCWIP) | BPC |
| Use this analysis to plan for additional dropdown kerbs, improving surface of paths, requesting CCC to reinstate and extend double yellow lines on roads; seek grant funding to facilitate these improvements | BPC |

## 7.2 Roads

Potholes on both the main and minor roads are a constant source of annoyance in the village.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Regularly inform HDC and CCC of repair requirements | BPC |
| Keep the pressure on Highways England and CCC to repair potholes rapidly | BPC/HE/CCC |
| Arrangements to limit HGV access to the historic core of the village will be sought. | BPC |

## 7.3 Road Safety

The Parish Council has had some success recently with introducing safety and speed control mechanisms within the village. These include:

- Introduction of a 20-mph speed limit in Church Road
- A zebra crossing outside the school
- Funding has been approved for several speed control features in Perry Road and Mill Lane

It is vital that the cycle path used by many children to get to Hinchingbrooke school is improved and maintained; this is key priority for the Council

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Continue to seek opportunities to make our village a safer place for all e.g. promoting speed limits and by applications for grants/use of CIL funding | BPC |

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Support any actions taken by the primary school to encourage parents to walk their children to school and to park more considerately in in the vicinity of the school. | BPC |
| Actively seek to take part in CCC pilots to minimise parking and vehicles waiting with engines running in the vicinity of the school. | BPC |
| Actively seek to take part in CCC pilots to minimise parking and vehicles waiting with engines running in the vicinity of the school. | BPC |
| Implement funded speed reduction improvements in Mill Road | BPC |
| Continue to support Speedwatch volunteers to monitor speeding traffic within the village | BPC |

## 7.4 Public Transport

Public transport in the village is generally considered to be poor, there are insufficient links with the railway station, which results in more car journeys.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Seek opportunities to improve public transport links connecting Buckden to other transport networks and to nearby villages and large towns. | BPC |
| Seek opportunities to provide better transport to local surgeries | BPC |
| Actively seek to take part in CCC pilots to minimise parking and vehicles waiting with engines running in the vicinity of the school. | BPC |

# 8 Public rights of way and Cycling

## 8.1 Public Rights of way

Walking has been actively promoted in the village for many years and is a key part of village life. The Parish Council has for several years promoted the existence and use of parish footpaths through a leaflet outlining the Rights of Way Footpaths in the Parish. There is a Footpath Warden, who together with the members of the BPC Rights of Way and Tree Advisory Group, checks the accessibility of the paths and where it can takes action to resolve the issue or reports Cambridgeshire County Council . The Parish Council works with the Cambridgeshire County Council Rights of Way Officer to develop the walks in the village and to work with landowners to ensure paths are accessible. Part of the Ouse Valley Way footpath is within the Buckden parish boundary and the Council has recently joined the Great Ouse Valley Trust which promotes, for public benefit, the conservation, restoration and enjoyment of the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the Great Ouse Valley and its environs in Cambridgeshire.

The Council was successful in bidding for funds from the A14 Community Fund to put in place the 8km Round-about-Buckden circular walk using existing Rights of Way. The Council was also successful, following application in 2012, in establishing the Anglian Water Authority Road from Leadens Lane as a Public Right of Way for pedestrians. (i.e. a footpath)

The Parish Council has representatives on the Paxton Pits Quarry Liaison group and will be working with the developers and Paxton Pits to promote the new footpaths that the developers will be putting in place and working to develop information on accessing the network of paths both within the Parish and beyond.

The surgery promotes walks for health in the Village and there are Health Walk leaders who organise and lead those walks.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Promote use of paths through liaison with local community groups in particular youth groups and school | BPC |
| Support proposals to grow and develop the footpath infrastructure by incorporating new paths developed by Aggregate Industries at the Paxton Pits site. | BPC |
| Work in partnership with landowners and Little Paxton Pits nature reserve to promote use of paths between villages. | BPC |
| Liaise with landowners to put in place “permissive paths” to facilitate for circular routes and/or access to neighbouring villages. | BPC |
| Identify paths which are frequently walked but are not currently Rights of Way and put in processes for claiming a right of way through user-evidence | BPC |
| Establish a Friends of Buckden footpaths group that will take responsibility for reporting issues and carrying out minor maintenance work. | BPC |

## 8.2 Cycling

Despite the demand from residents, Buckden is not currently well served for cycle ways. Existing paths are poorly constructed and generally not 'fit for purpose'. In some cases, they are dangerous. They compare very unfavourably with the new style of path seen within the A14 development areas. Cycle paths are a critical part of Buckden's strategy to reduce vehicle traffic and manage congestion and pollution within the village.

A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was completed in August 2019. The key high priority proposals in the plan are included in **Appendix 1**

| Actions | Owner |
|---|---|
| Identify and work to fund proposals in the LCWIP process including improvements to existing streets to make them accessible to those with reduced mobility e.g. people using wheelchairs/mobility scooters and those who are visually impaired | BPC |
| Ensure that the cycle route to Hinchingbrooke school and the station is fit for purpose and that improvements are made by the Highways Authority (CCC) to ensure safe crossing points | BPC |
| Fund the 5 metre extension of the cycle route that goes under the A1 from the bridge to Mere Lane | BPC |
| Improve cycle parking in the village | BPC |

# 9 Climate Change, environment, wildlife and green spaces

## 9.1 Climate Change Mitigation

Cambridgeshire County Council have recently announced an environmental emergency. The Parish Council is very aware that it must play its part in mitigating the impact of Climate Change. Many of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are designed to support this position. However, it is recognised that the village needs to play a full role in and take ownership of this issue. An advisory group was established in 2019 to develop a plan. Initial thoughts are included below. These will be converted to specific actions during 2020.
A workshop was held on 11th January 2020 to kick-start village engagement in this subject. The information from the workshop will be used to create a comprehensive Climate Change Mitigation plan. This plan will form the first update to the CAP.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Develop Buckden Village Plan for Climate Mitigation | BPC |
| Consider purchasing a Heat Loss Energy Camera for use by residents | BPC |
| Install electric vehicle charging points in appropriate locations | BPC |
| BPC to work with local businesses to listen and advise on opportunities to benefit from addressing climate change issues | BPC |

## 9.2 Wildlife, environment, and green spaces

Much work has been undertaken to record and map the diverse wildlife habitats and species in the village. A great deal of interest has been shown in this area and a number of very successful presentations have been made, particularly at the school. This education and communication processes are critical to ensuring an appropriate focus on the protection and preservation of the local environment. Further studies are expected to reveal a great many more species in such an important ecological area and further surveying, mapping and recording of Buckden is a key desired outcome of the Community Action Plan.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Develop a landscape assessment strategy, to include wildlife and green spaces, biodiversity improvement to increase flora and fauna in village, bird boxes, bug hotels, bat boxes, hedgehog refuges | BPC |
| New wood for Buckden, increase tree canopy cover, encourage residents to plant trees, provide trees where it is within our powers to do so | BPC |
| Land acquisition proposals to be developed if considered a priority for wild life and green space development | BPC |
| Fund Churchyard biodiversity improvements | BPC |
| Produce wildlife story leaflet | BPC |
| Seek to undertake pollution measuring and use the information to support the case for road improvements | BPC |
| Dredge the lake, create nature reserve if affordable | VHT/BPC |

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Improvement to village green to include footpath, bench, biodiversity measures | BPC |
| Liaise with Tarmac re area they own on the edge of the village to promote and development as part housing and part park, including a County designated wildlife site. | BPC |
| Undertake further surveying, mapping and recording of local wildlife | BPC |
| Continue to support education and communication about the local environment | BPC |
| Review management policies for the open spaces BPC manages to enhance biodiversity and manage our operating costs, and work with others within the Village to do the same | BPC |

# 10 Promoting improvements in Parish Council effectiveness

It is important that the Parish Council has systems, policies and processes that facilitate good communication with residents, timely action on issues raised and supports the delivery of the ambitious plans of the Parish Council outlined in this document.

| Action | Owner |
|---|---|
| Work towards the nationally-recognised Local Council award scheme to demonstrate good practice and planned improvement in governance | BPC |
| Form relationships with other Councils and organisations to influence planning policies nationally and locally | BPC |
| Put in place:<br>• Map of landownership<br>• Map of maintenance accountabilities<br>• Digital mapping of cemetery and stability testing of memorials | BPC |
| Aim to continually develop and improve BPC service delivery arrangements to ensure value for money from BPC share of Council Tax | BPC |

# Appendix 1 - Detailed Priorities

## Priorities for Village Hall Development

Priorities were gathered from village residents in 2018 and further priorities were identified through the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

- Further development of the playground for the under 12s
- Development of outdoor facilities for older children.
- Expand, and perhaps move, the playground to create a facility more akin to those at Little Paxton or Grafham.
- Create a coffee shop/soft play area located in the room currently used for the Village Club. This facility could be provided by the Village Club or a third party.
- If renovated, the area around the lake could be used for a nature trail, fitness trail, and/or a wildlife area. For the lake itself to be a better used it would require dredging which would be extremely expensive. However, this could improve the environment for wildlife. Paths could be levelled to make them more accessible for mobility vehicles and wheelchairs
- There are two Pavilions on site, one is used by both the football and cricket teams and one is leased to the bowls club. These could be better utilised for village functions, but both need considerable updating.
- The playing fields abut two fields which if made available could be used for expansion. Work by the VHT will begin in the second half of 2019 to evaluate the options and develop a plan.
- Improved drainage of sports pitches
- Provide a tarmac path around the recreation ground

## The priorities identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) completed in August 2019.

- An improved walking and cycling route between Buckden and Huntingdon providing access to Hinchingbrooke and Station. (SN1 on map)
- A new walking and cycling route through Paxton Pits, towards Little Paxton and St Neots. This includes a link via Diddington and the planned Paxton Pits circular cycle route. (SN2a)
- An improved walking and cycling path from Buckden to the Offord's. (SN3)
- A new leisure route linking Buckden and Brampton with Grafham Village and the reservoir via Brampton Road or Church Commission land. (SN4a and SN4b)
- Accessibility and road-danger-reduction measures throughout Buckden. These are aimed principally at making the village more accessible for pedestrians and those with restricted mobility.