

Buckden Parish Council District

Councillor's Report – 12th July 2022

General

I am pleased to see the number of gardens that are leaving a patch of lawn to grow long and wild, which provides vital food and homes to our insect populations. I understand that the UK's flying insect population has declined by as much as 60% in the last 20 years. A big thank you to villagers who are being a little less tidy around the garden, a little more tolerant of weeds and providing places for insects to drink – in the words of Joni Mitchell, “You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone”.

NEW PLAY AREAS OPEN AT HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK

Four new nature-themed play areas are now open to the public at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

Installation of the new play areas is the first step in enhancing the facilities at the much-loved country park and the District Council is pleased to announce that the play areas are now open to users.

Each play area has a distinct theme to offer something different and represent the park's variety of habitats:

- Wetland – featuring a huge duck play sculpture
- Woodland – low-level, wooden equipment for younger children
- Sensory – a multi-sensory zone
- Grassland – a large Hinchingsbrooke hideaway wooden structure to encourage physical activity across all ages.

Specialist accessibility equipment will be installed later in the summer due to delays related to supply chains and the availability of materials, followed by new seating and new pathways. The next phases of the wider project will see £3 million invested in enhancing facilities within the park, with details of the proposed enhancements to parking, the visitor centre, café facilities, pathways and cycle routes to be shared via public exhibition later in the Summer. The play areas have been funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Keep up to date with the future improvements of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park by following the District Council's social media channels, or by visiting:
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/HCPimprovements

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: NEXT ROUND OF APPLICATIONS TO OPEN

The District Council is set to open the next round of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) applications on Monday 4th July 2022.

Applications are open to Huntingdonshire's Town and Parish Councils and infrastructure providers, with invites to apply to be sent out shortly. CIL is a planning charge placed on developers that allows local authorities to assist in the funding and delivery of infrastructure within the local area to support the needs arising from growth.

More information of CIL funding can be found by visiting: www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/CILfunding

A1 Safety Group

I attended the A1 Working Group alongside our Parish Council representatives and National Highways. At the meeting, representing Buckden, Diddington and Southoe I asked for the proposed A428 dual carriageway and the proposed Buckden Roundabout layout to be modelled because this wasn't considered at the planning stage despite Parish Council objections. National Highways have now agreed that such modelling will be considered should the A428 proposal be funded at a meeting in July.

My view is that any solution to the Buckden Roundabout to facilitate new housing must, first and foremost, be safe and sustainable – this means that substantive modelling must be performed prior to works taking place, rather than safety checks after modifications to the roundabout have taken place.

There is no connection at all between the current works on the Roundabout and the proposed, Church Commission, traffic light alterations to facilitate the Silver St development.

Wishing you all well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

District Councillor for Buckden, Diddington and Southoe
Executive Councillor for Corporate & Shared Services
Phone: 07480 798 342