

Buckden Parish Council Chair's Report October 2020

1) Information on underpasses

Following a complaint from a resident, I reported flooding in the northern underpass and the fact that the access door to the electrics in the underpass had had the padlock removed. On 28th September I received a call from Jake Rainey from HE to update me on actions taken and to report on the review of the underpasses undertaken with Hamish Masson.

ACTIONS

- The issue of flooding in northern underpass has been referred to drainage team.
- The padlock has been replaced

He reported that:

- HE is responsible for the structure of both underpasses
- HE is responsible for the maintenance of the southern underpass
- CCC is responsible for the maintenance of the northern underpass
- HE will undertake the annual maintenance review of the southern underpass

2) Community Action Plan

The Community Action plan was approved by the Parish Council earlier this year. Now that the NP is with the examiner we need to plan for the implementation of the Community Action Plan. The delivery of the plan offers an opportunity to revise the focus of the Advisory Groups and formally link their work to the delivery of the plan. Ideally, if we were not subject to COVID restrictions, we would join together for an informal evening and draw up our plans jointly. As this is not currently possible, it is suggested that Anne and I do some preliminary work and circulate to the Chairs of Committees and Advisory groups for further input and then bring back to the PC for approval.

3) Budget

We are into the budget round again and AG are being asked to put forward suggestions for budget expenditure in the next financial year. Is it worth considering the possibility of jointly purchasing with the VHT a new printer ? Our current one is old and rather unreliable.

Your views on items 2 and 3 would be appreciated.

4) Video call doorbell this has been purchased enable residents to contact the Clerk and to provide a good security system for when the Clerk returns to the office

5) Overhanging trees and hedges The article on this in the Roundabout provoked some response. It is obviously an issue of concern for a number of residents. The suggestion is that we circulate the attached leaflet to householders in roads where hedges and trees are adjacent to the public highway. Volunteers to help with distribution would be welcomed.

6) Thanks

As reported in the NP report, the group had to respond to a number of questions from the examiner and review 90+ responses to the HDC consultation. This all had to be turned round in under 14 days. Many thanks on behalf of the Council for their amazing work in providing very detailed and professional responses within the tight timescales set.

PROPOSED LEAFLET FOR RESIDENTS

Dear Resident,

You may have noticed the article in October's Roundabout about Hedges and Trees overhanging the Public Highway. You live in an area where there is a possibility that your hedge is overhanging the pavement/footpath. This makes it difficult for everyone but particularly those with mobility problems and people with pushchairs and buggies. **Please check your hedge to ensure it is not causing any obstruction. If it is please ensure it is cut back as soon as possible.**

The following is simplified guidance to the legal issues in relation to hedges. The full information is in the October edition of the Roundabout or available from the Clerk clerk@buckdenpc.org

As owner or occupier of a property you have a legal responsibility (Highway Act 1980 s154) to ensure that the 'public highway' next to your property is not obstructed by vegetation from the property.

The public highway, is defined as any verge, footway, carriageway, bridleway or footpath that is maintained at public expense and over which the public has a right of way.

When the Local Authority becomes aware of such obstructions, they will usually contact you as property owner about the problem. If you do not take corrective action within a reasonable time, the Local Authority can issue a formal notice for the work to be undertaken, and if that is ignored, they can do the work and charge you.

Although the Highways Act 1980 doesn't specify any actual measurements for overhanging vegetation, the requirement should be met by:

- For pedestrian areas, minimum headroom of 2.3m (7ft 6 inches).
- For carriageway and an area immediately adjacent to it (for a distance of 0.45m (1ft 6 inches)) minimum headroom of 5.2m (17ft).
- In both cases, all vegetation should be cut back vertically. See the diagram below.

