

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – OCTOBER 2025

Dear Residents and Councillors,

As we move into autumn, I wanted to share a few important updates that may be of interest to our community. From new funding opportunities to major developments in local government and the release of a draft Local Plan for consultation, there are several initiatives underway that could have a direct impact on Buckden and the wider district.

Local Plan Consultation Expected to Begin – 5th November 2025

A draft Local Plan has now been produced and, subject to Cabinet approval, will be released for public consultation starting on 5th November 2025.

Parish Councillors, residents, and other interested parties will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the content of the plan. While public attention will understandably focus on the sites proposed for development, I would encourage equal—if not greater—scrutiny of the policies within the plan itself. These policies will ultimately shape future site allocations, and this consultation offers a vital opportunity for communities to challenge their wording, relevance, and fairness.

For Buckden, policies of particular interest include Draft Policy LP 8 – Local Services Villages, as well as those likely to impact Neighbourhood Plans. The outcomes of this consultation will be reviewed by the Planning Inspector, making this a significant moment for parishes to influence the final version of the Local Plan.

Community Watercourse Maintenance Grant Launched

Cambridgeshire County Council has introduced a new grant scheme offering up to £10,000 for community flood action groups and parish councils. The funding supports efforts to manage and maintain local watercourses where poor conditions may increase flood risk.

For full details, visit: [Community watercourse maintenance grants | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Enquiries: flood.andwater@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Analysis of Water Quality at Southoe and Diddington Brooks

I have obtained water quality data for Southoe and Diddington Brooks from the Quarry Operator at Paxton Pits, covering the past few years. Buckden Flood Group are analysing this information, and we hope to share the findings with you over the coming months.

Local Government Reorganisation – District Council Update (October 2025)

Overview

Local Government Reorganisation remains a rapidly evolving issue, with significant implications for Huntingdonshire. Following cross-party agreement among Group Leaders, the Council is now actively developing a business case for **Option E**: a standalone Huntingdonshire unitary authority.

Option E Proposal

- Creation of three new unitary councils:
 - Huntingdonshire as a single unitary authority
 - Peterborough, Fenland, and East Cambridgeshire combined
 - Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire combined
- All County Council services would be split and transferred to these new authorities.

Strategic Context

- **RAF Wyton** has been identified in the Government's latest *Defence Industrial Strategy* as a key site for defence and innovation, reinforcing Huntingdonshire's national relevance.
- The Government is also proposing **new towns** across the Ox–Cam Growth Corridor, further elevating the district's strategic importance.
- Significant housing and employment growth is underway in Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, and Ramsey.

Key Considerations

- The proposal aims to preserve existing district boundaries and align with NHS and public sector service areas.
- Viability and scale remain critical concerns, with Huntingdonshire's population below the government's preferred threshold for unitary authorities.
- The business case must demonstrate financial sustainability, service delivery capacity, and strategic influence.

Next Steps

- Local Partnerships have been commissioned to develop the Option E business case at pace.
- The Council continues to engage with other options (A, B, and C) to ensure all viable models are considered.
- Final decisions will be made by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution following a formal consultation process.

Join the Buckden Walking Group!



The Buckden Walking Group is off to a fantastic start and is open to Southoe members who wish to get out and about – now growing with **52 members and several group walks already enjoyed together**, it's quickly becoming a great way to connect, stay active, and explore our local area.



Whether you're looking for gentle strolls, good company, or simply a reason to get outdoors, we'd love to welcome you. Scan the QR code to visit the **Facebook page** and see what the group is up to!

Prefer WhatsApp?

To join the WhatsApp group, please email me your **name and mobile number** this helps us stay GDPR-compliant and keep the group safe and inclusive.

Let's keep walking, talking, and building something special together!

Wishing you well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

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