

Town & Country

Brought to you by Bracknell Forest Council

New administration for Bracknell Forest Council



The results of the local elections on Thursday, 4 May, saw Bracknell Forest Council move from a Conservative to Labour controlled local authority. The results mean that the council now comprises 22 Labour councillors; 10 Conservative councillors; seven Liberal Democrat councillors and two Green councillors.

The change in political leadership brings with it a new council leader, Cllr Mary Temperton, a new decision-making executive and a new Mayor of Bracknell Forest, Cllr Naheed Ejaz.

Since the elections, the new administration has carried out two executive committees where decisions have been made on:

- Investing £1.6m in Bracknell Leisure Centre to redevelop areas untouched during the 2018 upgrade (read more on page 17)
- Investing £350,000 in the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) team to increase staffing, provide additional training and improve

processes. They also agreed the new SEND strategy (read more on page 10)

- Accelerating and furthering the local hardship plan to help more families struggling with the cost-of-living (read more on page 16)
- Safeguarding car park users by agreeing to close the High Street car park later this year, following structural engineer advice that it is corroding. They agreed to add the site to the town centre masterplan for future regeneration (read more on page 18)

Additionally, a number of significant events and activities have been carried out, including:

- The borough's first Pride event, celebrating our LGBTQIA+ community
- A re-imagined Community Day to celebrate our diverse borough
- Armed Forces activities to give thanks to our local service personnel, their families and veterans
- Launching Craft Coop in Bracknell town centre to

provide a place for local artists and crafts people to sell their wares

- A climate change summit to work together with local businesses, schools and community groups and generate ideas for collective action against climate change
- Launching Solar Together so residents can afford to buy cleaner and greener energy

Work has also started to translate the Labour party's manifesto into an overarching Council Plan for the next four years. It will cover the themes of environment, community and the economy. Protecting our planet and reducing carbon emissions are hugely important, and action to address and monitor this will be one part of the Council Plan. Being out in the community, bringing the council to residents and making sure they are at the heart of every decision will also all be key parts of the new plan. The Council Plan is due to be adopted in the autumn and will be made available on the council's website.

What's inside



Meet your new councillors
See page 6-7



Bracknell Forest's beautiful parks and countryside
See page 11



Providing you with reasonable adjustments
See page 12



Reach out for cost-of-living support
See page 16

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Leader's welcome



Hello and welcome to the summer edition of Town & Country.

Following the local elections on 4 May, the council is now a Labour run authority. This is a change of council and a change of direction. We will build on the Labour party manifesto, building on what we already have, whilst tackling the difficult challenges now facing our residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

I have been a borough councillor since 2011, a councillor on Bracknell Town Council for 40 years and have recently been elected as the leader of Bracknell Forest Council. Being a councillor and the leader is a huge privilege, because it gives us some power to make things happen for our communities and the people we represent.

Our manifesto is ambitious and focuses on many key issues – climate change, the

cost-of-living, children's and youth services, education, adult services, housing, business and arts and leisure to name just a few.

Our priorities include making the council more open, transparent and inclusive. We will listen and learn, involving residents by taking the work of the council out to the community to make it a much greater service. We want to increase residents' knowledge of the hard work of the council, it's not only about potholes, bins and grass cutting.

I've lived in Bracknell Forest for more than 50 years and was a science teacher all my working life - teaching many young people at Easthampstead Park School. I am still passionate about education and ensuring every child matters. We will tackle the issues with SEND provision in the borough, driving this important work forward to improve delivery for our local children and young people.

We will prioritise provision for our youth throughout the borough, opening drop-in centres to give young people an environment in which they can feel safe to talk confidentially.

We also want to try and get more community police visible on our streets.

Likewise, enabling more people to get on the housing ladder, whether that be through affordable renting, social housing, or part ownership, is a priority.

I want to make climate change a priority for all in the borough, not just the council, and so I have taken on the climate change portfolio of work to give it a real focus. We will work with businesses, faith groups and residents, meeting challenges and resolving issues.

I'm delighted that Craft Coop, a social business enterprise set-up to benefit and involve the local community, has recently opened in Princess Square. The giftshop and community space gives local artisans and craftspeople the opportunity to showcase and sell their wares within the town centre. I'd encourage you to visit when you are in town.

As leader, I plan to carry on working with my community and fellow councillors to make Bracknell Forest an even better place to live, work and visit. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the weeks and months to follow.

Cllr Mary Temperton

Leader of Bracknell Forest Council

Bracknell town centre's new home for arts and crafts



Artists and crafts people have a new home in Bracknell town centre with the opening of Craft Coop.

The shop sells items that are beautifully made by local people and offers support and shop space to local arts and crafts people.

Craft Coop, which is based in Princess Square, not only offers artists a shelf to sell their products, it also offers marketing support to help artists develop their business.

Cllr Paul Bidwell, executive member for economic development and regeneration, said: "This shop is part of our work funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It is great to see so many local artists being given the opportunity to develop and expand their business into retail. The shop needs the community's support, so if you are looking for a gift, please stop by."

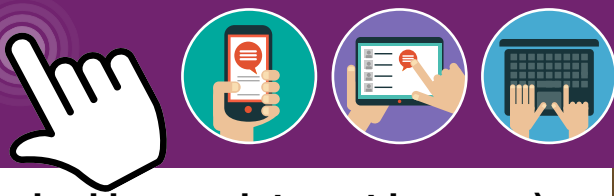
Heidi Berry, director of Craft Coop, said: "Craft Coop is your go to gift shop with a social mission. We have created a community who work together to support and develop each other. If you are a local artist or crafts person, please get in touch to discuss how you can become a Bracknell Forest Cooper!"

Rob Morris, general manager for The Lexicon, added: "We were keen to get Craft Coop into Princess Square. As part of their outreach, they will offer drop-in craft sessions, so do keep an eye on their website: www.craftcoop.co.uk."

For more information on Craft Coop, please scan the QR code.



Quick links



Keep these links handy (or bookmarked in your internet browser) to find everyday and useful information you might need from us.

Community groups, organisations and events in your area -
helpyourself.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Council tax enquiries - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council-tax

Refuse and recycling collections -
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling

Brown bins - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/garden-waste

Leisure facilities - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/leisure-services

Jobs - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/jobs

e+ account - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/e-plus-card



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If you need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with us, please call 01344 352000 or email: customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

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Get our news direct to your inbox!

Did you know that we produce a regular newsletter called Discover Bracknell Forest? It includes information about the events taking place across the borough. You can sign up for free at: bit.ly/BFCUpdates.

You can also find out information about the events across the borough by following Discover Bracknell Forest on Facebook and Instagram.



About Town & Country

Town & Country is published by Bracknell Forest Council.

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Town & Country is delivered to more than 50,000 households in the borough and is also available on our website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

A summary of **Town & Country** can be made available in large print, in Braille or on audio cassette. Copies in other languages may also be obtained.

Editorial: comms@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

General council enquiries: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Email: customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



New mural brings subway to life



One of the most used subways in Bracknell Forest has been transformed from a dull, graffiti hotspot to a vibrant mural that celebrates biodiversity and pollinators.

The underpass under the Sainsbury's roundabout on the A322 Bagshot Road, previously had plain white walls, providing a blank canvas for graffiti. However, the new artwork, hand painted by artist Lynne Hollingsworth and her team, has breathed new life into the area, making it a more welcoming space for pedestrians and cyclists.

The mural has been designed to appeal to all ages and is dementia friendly with simple colours and bold shapes. Oak leaves, daffodils, daisies and bees can all be spotted, giving a nod to the beautiful green spaces across the borough.

Cllr Helen Purnell, executive member for environment and community cohesion, said:

“We are delighted with the results of the artwork in the underpass on the A322.

“We know this is a popular pedestrian route that has often been vandalised, so to protect

this mural for years to come, it has been coated with anti-graffiti paint.

“Pedestrians can enjoy a glimpse of the Bracknell Forest countryside on their travels through the underpass, bringing a bit of green to a busy main road.”

The mural is part of a wider council initiative to make foot and cycle paths across the borough feel safer. As part of the project, overhanging vegetation on the approach to underpasses across the borough has been cut back to let in more natural light and help them feel less enclosed.

Community Learning at Bracknell Open Learning Centre



Adult learning courses in wellbeing, arts, computing and employability skills.

Visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/community-learning

Phone: 01344 354220

Email: community.learning@bracknell-forest.gov.uk










































By post: Bracknell Open Learning Centre, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, RG12 7GR

 Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/bracknelladultlearning





A guide to your borough councillors

Binfield North and Warfield West	Binfield South and Jennett's Park	Bullbrook	Crowthorne	Easthampstead and Wildridings
 Sheila Collings	 Kathryn Neil	 Caroline Egglestone	 Tina Eberle	 Paul Bidwell
 Adrian Haffeege	 Stephen O'Regan	 Kandy Jefferies	 Tina McKenzie-Boyle	 Guy Gillbe
 John Harrison	 Georgia Pickering		 Nicholas Robertson	 Helen Purnell
Great Hollands	Hanworth	Harms Water and Crown Wood	Owismoor and College Town	Priestwood and Garth
 Naheed Ejaz	 Janet Cochrane	 Peter Frewer	 Nick Allen	 Tricia Brown
 Mary Temperton	 Jenny Penfold	 Jodie Watts	 Ray Mossom	 Ryan Frost
 Gerry Webb	 Cath Thompson	 Cherise Welch	 Philip Thompson	 Michael Karim
Sandhurst	Swinley Forest	Town Centre and The Parks	Whitegrove	Winkfield and Warfield East
 Christoph Eberle	 Sophie Forster	 Roy Bailey	 Gareth Barnard	 Moira Gaw
 Mike Forster	 Patrick Smith	 Megan Wright	 Robert McLean	 Dorothy Hayes
 Nazar Zahuruddin				 Tony Virgo

Bracknell Forest Council's new leader and executive



A new leader and decision-making executive for Bracknell Forest Council are now in place.

Cllr Mary Temperton, leader of the council, announced the new executive at the council's annual general meeting on Wednesday, 24 May. The executive comprises:

- Cllr Roy Bailey, executive member for children, young people and learning
- Cllr Paul Bidwell, executive member for economic development and regeneration
- Cllr Guy Gillbe, executive member for planning and transport
- Cllr Kandy Jefferies, executive member for culture, delivery and public protection

- Cllr Kathryn Neil, executive member for finance and business change (deputy leader of the council and vice-chair of the executive)
- Cllr Helen Purnell, executive member for environment and community cohesion
- Cllr Megan Wright, executive member for adult services, health and housing

As well as holding the role of leader and chair of the executive, Cllr Temperton will also be the lead councillor for council strategy and climate change.

Additionally, Cllr Ryan Frost has been appointed as executive support member for children, young people and learning.

a sound Local Plan which respects our local communities. In particular, highlighting issues relating to the environment: climate change, sewage releases, together with protecting and enhancing our green spaces.

Bracknell Forest Council Conservative Group is committed to representing and championing the residents of our borough, to deliver positive outcomes from local services. We intend to hold the new Labour administration to account, whilst using our expertise and knowledge to support the delivery of the council's plans. We will, in part, achieve this by taking on 'spokesperson' roles to develop expertise in key service delivery areas. As part of this, we will look to meet with community organisations and residents' groups from across the borough to listen to local views and opinions. We will also work with councillors from other parties to debate and discuss issues of importance to our residents. We look forward to a challenging and productive four years, putting residents first.

Bracknell Forest Liberal Democrat party Leader: Cllr Mike Forster



Firstly, and most importantly, we would like to thank the residents of Bracknell Forest who voted for the Liberal Democrats, we will do our utmost to meet your

expectations.

Our aims and priorities focus on the following areas:

1. We want to improve residents' access to quality council services, particularly social care.
2. We are committed to tackling the environmental damage caused by pollution and sewage entering our rivers in the borough.
3. We are committed to ensuring council decision making is as transparent as possible and to challenge where appropriate.
4. We need to finish the Bracknell town centre development and will seek to regenerate further borough communities where appropriate.

As an opposition, we will work with fellow councillors of all parties who share our values and commitment to continuously improve Bracknell Forest. We will work with the Labour majority where our priorities are aligned and will challenge them to deliver the best outcomes for our residents. There are fundamental challenges which we all face, such as climate change and the cost-of-living crisis, and we are committed to putting aside party politics to address these for all.

You can find Cllr Temperton's thoughts on her new role and what the Labour party's priorities are on page 3.

On this page we hear from the leaders of Bracknell Forest's opposition parties

Bracknell Forest Green party

Joint Leaders: Cllr Adrian Haffegge and Cllr Sheila Collings



Green Party councillors bring different ideas and ways of working.

Greens do not vote on party lines and will cooperate with other parties and council staff. As opposition, we will challenge the council to reconsider its approach where we see better alternatives. We will engage with our residents, always acting in their best interests. Having a Green in the room provides a voice for nature, the climate and social justice.

The council has declared a climate emergency, but its current commitment to achieve net zero by 2050 is not soon enough. The new administration aims to improve the climate strategy and we look forward to working with them. We will push

for a significant and timely borough-wide reduction in carbon emissions, pollution and waste. Energy pricing is a significant factor in the cost-of-living crisis, affecting many. We will support moves to improve regulations and win funding to provide energy efficiency across homes and buildings throughout the borough.

Nature is known to provide us with significant health benefits and mental wellbeing, yet it is at risk, including during development. We want to deliver enhanced and connected green spaces, and improved air and water quality.

We understand that more homes are needed, particularly those that are more affordable. However, we will resist unsustainable development especially in the green belt. We seek to ensure developers deliver what they promise, and that new infrastructure and services are included to support both new and existing residents.

Bracknell Forest Conservative party Leader: Cllr Gareth Barnard



We will ensure the council's finances are managed prudently and sustainably, whilst maintaining high quality resident focused services. Helping to deliver

Successful community events at The Lexicon

The year has already seen several incredible events take place in the town centre, with teams from Bracknell Forest Council and The Lexicon working together to bring some notable firsts to the borough.

In May, residents gathered in Bond Square for a celebration fit for a king as the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III was screened. The ceremony was followed by live music on the stage, whilst visitors to The Lexicon indulged in free face painting, scones with jam and cream and even a Pimm's or two! The following day, dozens gathered in Princess Square for a charity tea dance.

The following week, hundreds of fitness enthusiasts made their way round the sights of the borough to pick up a participant's medal for The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon. They were cheered along the route by residents who had come out to support the runners. Congratulations to everyone who took part.

History was made on Saturday, 10 June, as Bracknell Forest saw its first ever Pride event at The Lexicon. The sun shone throughout, as local personality Brad Clapson hosted seven hours of entertainment from the stage in Bond Square. The night ended as Little Mix Tribute act, LM Live, sang the final bars of the evening. Planning for next year's Pride event is already underway.

Bracknell Forest also celebrated its rich culture and diversity on 8 July, as members of the borough's communities came together in Bond Square for an afternoon of food, music and entertainment.



After a season full of wonderful events, there's still lots to look forward to over the summer.

To celebrate South Hill Park's 50th anniversary as an arts centre, Bracknell Forest Council has teamed up with The Lexicon to bring the borough's first ever two-site promenade performance to Bracknell Forest. Based on the legendary Wizard of Oz novel and film, the audience will move through several locations. You can read more on: www.thelexiconbracknell.com.

The much-loved Summer of Fun events are back again for the school summer holidays. These free events are run by the parish and town councils and are aimed at families with children.

The Summer of Fun events run over the following days:

- Great Hollands recreation ground – Wednesday, 2 August
- Sandhurst Memorial Park – Friday, 4 August
- Locks Ride recreation ground, Winkfield – Thursday, 10 August
- Morgan recreation ground, Crowthorne – Tuesday, 15 August
- Farley Wood community centre, Binfield – Thursday, 24 August
- Braybrooke recreation ground – Wednesday, 30 August

All events run from 11am to 3pm and feature stalls, games and activities.

If you would like to find out more about events around the borough, sign up to receive the council's Town & Country Extra and Discover Bracknell Forest e-newsletters. You can sign up for free at: bit.ly/BFCUpdates.



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- LITTLE ACTORS AGES 4-7
- JUNIOR THEATRE COMPANY 8-14
- MEDUSA TEEN THEATRE COMPANY 14-24
- ARTEMIS COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS FULL TIME, 16+, FREE
- SUMMER SCHOOLS JUNIOR FROM £20 A DAY/FREE HAF
- SUMMER SENIOR SHOW INTENSIVE FREE FOR 16-18'S



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14TH, 15TH, 16TH DECEMBER 2023



WILDE THEATRE
SOUTH HILL PARK
24TH & 25TH FEBRUARY 2024



WILDE THEATRE
SOUTH HILL PARK
27TH, 28TH, 29TH, 30TH JUNE 2024



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- HAF is funded by Bracknell Forest Council

£350,000 investment in SEND team

The council's decision-making executive has agreed to invest £350,000 in the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) team - to increase staffing, provide additional training and improve processes.

This follows on from the successful £1m bid for government funding to improve services for children and young people with SEND and a successful bid for funding to build a new autism spectrum disorder (ASD) school.

It also follows on from the latest progress meeting on SEND improvements with the Department for Education (DfE). In that meeting, the DfE recognised that the council continues to give this work high priority and progress is being made. It also acknowledged the detailed Written Statement of Action (WSOA) plan is being well managed.

At its meeting in June, the executive also agreed the new SEND Strategy for 2023 to 2025. The strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of people including early years, school and college leaders, professionals from education, health, SEND, third sector and care, as well as parents, carers, young people and children.



PeopleImages/Stock/Getty Images Plus

It was developed following a series of community events, online surveys, group discussions and one-to-one interviews. Tool kits that were created to engage parents, carers, children and young people were co-produced with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF). These tool kits were identified as good practice by the DfE in a monitoring visit and have since been shared with other authorities as an example of good practice.

Cllr Roy Bailey, executive member for children, young people and learning, said: "Improving services and opportunities for children and young people with SEND is a

big priority. This additional funding will help secure extra staff in the council's SEND team as well as provide more training and improve processes.

"Progress is being made for children, young people and families with SEND, but we need this investment to make sure we have the additional staff capacity to keep making tangible improvements and that staff have access to training and development. We will continue to work towards providing excellent provision for SEND to ensure all children in the borough achieve the best possible outcomes."

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... **can** be used with

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Childcare
Choices



Get up to £2,000 towards your childcare cost!

Working parents can reduce the cost of childcare

With tax free childcare, working parents can get up to £2,000 towards childcare costs. Parents of three or four year olds can take advantage of the offer at the same time as 30 hours free childcare, maximising the support available, and could save up to £5,000 a year.

Parents must apply and have a valid eligibility code before the start of the term in which they want to use the 30 hours free childcare.

To find out more and apply

For more information about funded childcare: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/free-entitlements.

To apply for tax free childcare and 30 hours free childcare: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

For help and advice about applying for funding and finding funded childcare, please contact the Family Information Service: fis@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or call 01344 353133.



Green volunteering scheme to boost wellbeing

A Bracknell Forest green volunteering scheme is looking for new recruits to join the expanding group.

Green & Active is run by local charity, Involve Community Services, with Bracknell Forest Council. Since the scheme's launch in August 2022, volunteers have contributed over 1,400 hours to help conserve their local environment.

Anyone is welcome to join them for a volunteering session. So far, volunteers have included students, corporate groups, local environment groups, families and working or retired residents. Examples of tasks undertaken include:

- Orchard pruning at Lark's Hill in Warfield
- Footbridge construction at Big Wood in Binfield
- Composting wilted floral tributes at Easthampstead Park Crematorium

Volunteers have also included those referred by their GP or social prescribers. This is to take advantage of the health and wellbeing benefits associated with green volunteering. It makes people feel better, happier and more connected to other people and nature.

To find out more, visit the Green & Active webpage: involve.community/green-active

Call 01344 304404 or

email: green.active@involve.community

All activities are supervised. Tasks take place mid-week and at weekends.



Volunteers maintain a living willow structure, at Jealott's Hill Community Landshare.



New Splash, Bubbles and Balloons show

The Look Out Discovery Centre is running a new interactive science discovery show for children.

The Splash, Bubbles and Balloons show includes a variety of exciting experiments, such as water-bending, making bubble snakes and even encasing a volunteer inside a bubble! The show is aimed at four to 11-year-olds, but supervising adults can have fun taking part too!

There are five shows per day throughout the summer holidays and October half term week. They will also be run on most weekends from 15 July.

Each session lasts for 35-40 minutes. Tickets cost £2.10 each in addition to the science centre entrance fee.

See The Look Out's website for booking information.



Frost Folly doubles in size!



An extension to Frost Folly opened this spring after its management responsibility passed to our parks and countryside rangers.

The new public open space lies to the south of Frost Folly in Warfield. Its addition doubles the size of the site to 24 hectares (59.3 acres).

The natural space contains wildflower meadows, ponds and broadleaved woodland. The maintenance is provided through funding released from the development.

Cllr Kandy Jefferies, executive member for culture, delivery and public protection, said: "We are delighted we can officially open this extension to Frost Folly public open space. It means residents can now enjoy access to even more natural space."

Scan for further information about Frost Folly:



Big strides to improve local rights of way

In 2022, we conducted a mid-term review of our Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). This is our 10-year plan for improving footpaths, byways, bridleways, and restricted byways.

The purpose of the review was to assess progress made against actions over the past five years and to set priorities for the remainder of the plan.

Review findings revealed the physical accessibility of rights of way has been improved in at least 100 instances.

Examples include:

- removed 35 step-over or squeeze stiles, which are obstacles to access
- carried out 29 major surface improvements

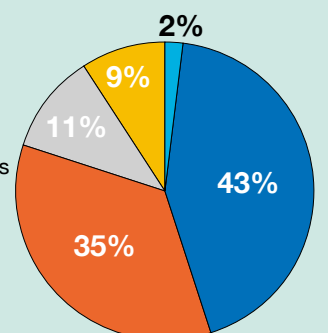
What was already a well-maintained rights of way network is even more accessible now, thanks to the work of key stakeholders and the support of local volunteers.

Visit our website to find out how you can help improve access to the countryside.

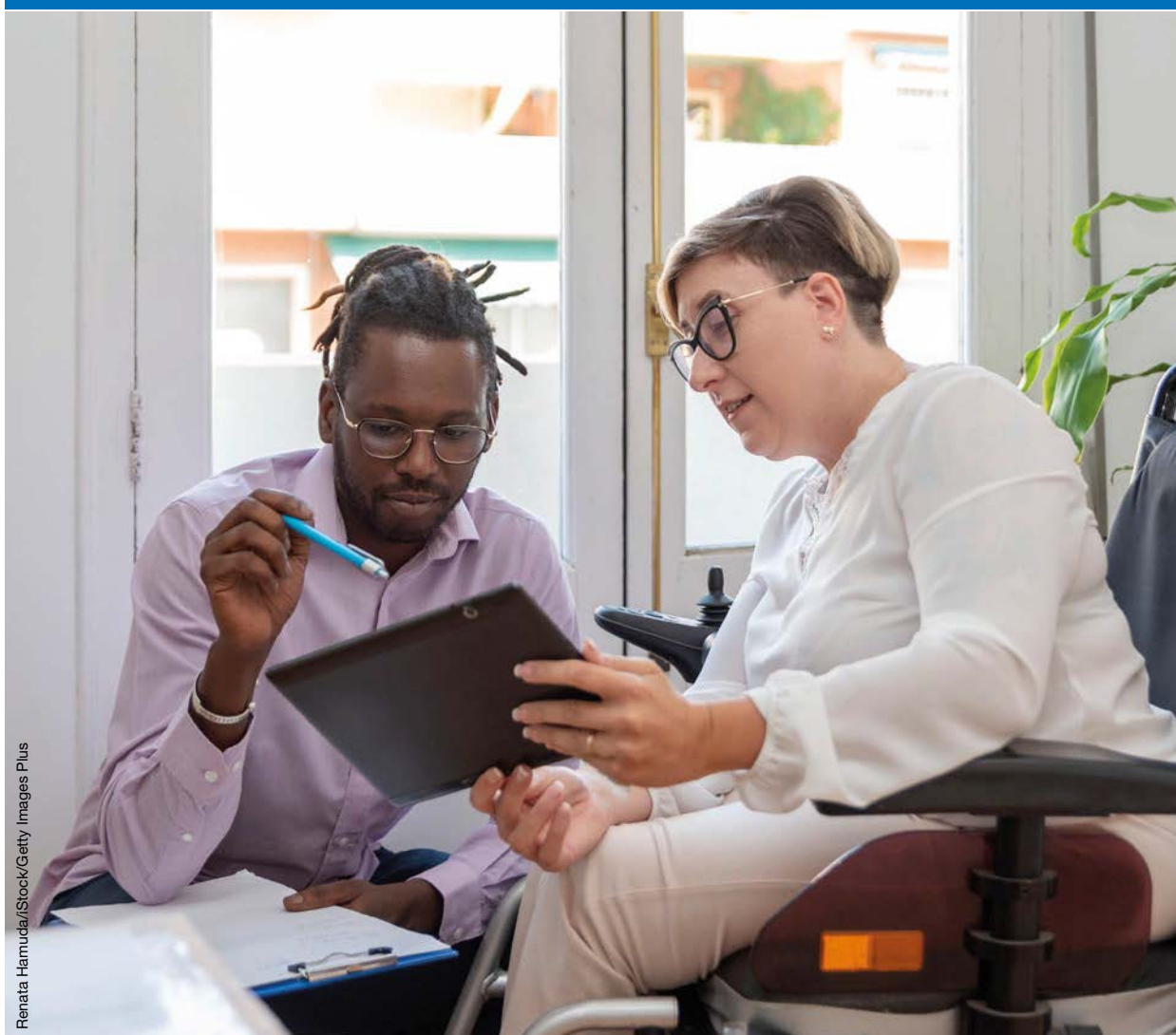


Right of way accessibility improvements 2017- 2022

- Furniture improvements
- Surface improvements
- Major vegetation work
- New signs
- New bollards



Providing you with reasonable adjustments



Bracknell Forest Council is committed to providing clear, reliable and accessible services.

We know that some people may find it difficult to access our services due to mental health, physical and/or hidden disabilities or literacy and language barriers.

Therefore, we are committed to making 'reasonable adjustments'. These ensure people with disabilities or long-term conditions can use our services as closely as possible to the standard offered to people without a disability or long-term condition.

What is a reasonable adjustment?

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty to prevent discrimination and remove barriers to our services.

Every person is different, and their needs and requirements will be unique. Therefore, reasonable adjustments must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For example, you may have a disability or condition that means you need information in large print or easy read.

Likewise, you may need us to communicate with you by phone instead of email/letter or you may need someone (a trusted friend or relative) to attend a meeting with you.

We encourage people with a disability or long-term condition to tell us the best way to remove barriers for them so we can provide the best possible service.

How do I go about arranging a reasonable adjustment?

Our staff will do everything they can to meet your needs. The best way to arrange a reasonable adjustment is to call, write to or email us.

You can call our customer services team on 01344 352000, email them at: customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or write to customer services, Bracknell Forest Council, Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell, RG12 1JD.

Alternatively, if you are already in contact with someone about a specific service (including council tax payments, parking tickets, benefits) you can call, email or write to them directly using the contact details supplied and request a reasonable adjustment.

What reasonable adjustments do you offer?

Reasonable adjustments are a vital way of ensuring people with a disability or long-term condition can access our services as equitably as possible – they do not need to be complicated, complex or costly.

It may be that you need more time to reply to us or that you need someone to help you fill out a form. Alternatively, it might be that you need a sign language interpreter or access to a hearing loop when meeting with us. You might need someone to explain something over the phone rather than in a letter or vice versa.

You are the expert in what adjustment would help you, so we will always ask you what would work best.

We will always consider effective changes to help people with disabilities and long-term conditions and will implement changes that can be achieved in line with the resources available.

Find out more at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/help/reasonable-adjustments-and-translations.

Be mental health aware

Our 'Let's Face It' free mental health awareness training course is back and people working in a customer facing role within the borough are encouraged to sign up.

The course aims to increase understanding of mental health and gives attendees the skills and confidence to support themselves and others who may be suffering.

The virtual course will run for four hours, including a break, and sessions are available on the following dates:

- Monday, 11 September
- Monday, 9 October
- Monday, 6 November
- Monday, 4 December

The training aims to:

- help participants spot the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues at the early stages
- give participants the skills and confidence to have conversations around mental health issues
- provide information around local services for signposting and support
- support participants to have a greater understanding of their own mental health
- help tackle wider stigmatisation associated with mental health

To book your place,

email: organisational.development@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
or call 01344 352293.



OUR DAY CENTRE:

At our Day Centre, you'll find a wide range of activities daily designed to stimulate your mind, nourish your soul, and keep you active.

From arts and crafts to games, exercise classes to group discussions, there's something for everyone. We serve a two-course meal every day.

Fully Dementia Friendly.

Open: Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.



COMMUNITY GROUPS:

Join our vibrant community groups and discover a world of connection, friendship, and fun.

Bringing people together, ending loneliness in the heart of your community. Embrace a welcoming and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and all are welcome.



OUTINGS & EVENTS:

Experience our amazing outings and embark on exciting adventures. From day trips to museums and theatre to fun-filled outings like mini-golf and bowling.

Discover new experiences and create lasting memories with Triple A.

www.ageconcernbracknell.org.uk
tel: 01344 422048

AGE Bracknell
Concern Forest

Charity Number: 1153607

Keep healthy this summer

Longer days, warmer temperatures, summer is finally here. Follow these simple steps to keep well this summer:

- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid the sun between 11am and 3pm
- Have cool baths or showers
- Keep your home cool using a fan or by shutting blinds during the day
- When out and about, walk in the shade, wear a hat and apply sunscreen
- Never leave children unattended in a paddling pool, even for the shortest time
- Look out for ticks when enjoying the outdoors
- Avoid swimming in open water that is not designated as a swimming area
- Keep pets cool with plenty of water and shade and avoid walking them in temperatures above 25 degrees
- Check in on those more vulnerable: the elderly, babies and children and those with long-term health conditions



Social prescribing summer programme

Unlock a summer of wellbeing and connection with our social prescribing summer activity programme.

From outdoor craft workshops, fitness classes and coffee drop-ins, there is something for everyone.

Activities are located across the borough.

For more advice, visit our public health portal (bit.ly/BFPHPortal) or scan the QR code.



Law Firm Blandy & Blandy to Open Wokingham Office



Leading Thames Valley law firm Blandy & Blandy has announced plans to open a new office in the centre of Wokingham.

The award-winning firm, which recently marked its 290th anniversary, currently has offices in Reading and Henley-on-Thames. Subject to relevant consents, the firm's new Wokingham office will be located at 5 Market Place, opposite the Town Hall.

Blandy & Blandy provides a full range of legal services to individuals, families and businesses, advising on areas including Wills, Probate, Tax & Trusts, Family Law, Residential Property

and Conveyancing, Employment Law, Dispute Resolution, Corporate & Commercial Law, Planning & Environmental Law, Commercial Property, Intellectual Property, Charity Law and Venue Licensing.

Chairman and partner Nick Burrows said: "We are excited to be able to welcome clients based in and around Wokingham to our new office later this year. Wokingham is an excellent place to do business and the recent regeneration has further improved an already wonderful town. Indeed, we have been pleased to advise several retailers and businesses who, like us, have been attracted as a result.

If any lawyers with connections to Wokingham are interested in joining our growing team, we are currently recruiting so please do get in touch." Blandy & Blandy is recognised as a top tier firm in the UK's leading guides to law firms, Chambers UK and The Legal 500, having

been described as "a standout firm of solicitors in the Thames Valley" and "an impressive outfit with a powerful client base." The firm is credited as being "led by very experienced partners and well respected throughout the industry" and for having "a thirst to achieve the very best outcome for their client."



Among other nominations and awards, the firm was recently shortlisted in the 'Property Law Firm of the Year Category' at the Insider South East Property Awards, taking place this summer, and highly commended in the 'Law Firm of the Year – South' category at the national Family Law Awards in London.

In June Blandy & Blandy was also named among the top 20 Planning Law firms in the UK by Planning magazine.

Cllr Clive Jones, Wokingham Borough Council's Executive Member for Business and Economic Development, said: "I am delighted that such a prestigious business as Blandy & Blandy are moving into Wokingham. Towns around the country are struggling to attract businesses but ours remain vibrant and thriving thanks to continued investment and support. I wish Blandy & Blandy every success here."

For further information or legal advice, please visit www.blandy.co.uk.



BLANDY & BLANDY
solicitors

A message from the Mayor of Bracknell Forest

Our family has lived in Bracknell Forest for over four decades. All my children were born and raised here. I was drawn to the natural beauty and lush forest which surrounds Bracknell. I have witnessed Bracknell Forest change tremendously, however, what hasn't changed is the great close-knit community spirit of this town. It's in the times of adversity that the true character of a nation comes to the fore. Having lived and supported each other through the COVID-19 pandemic, I can proudly say that we have set a very high bar for a community coming together to help each other.

As I volunteered with Healthwatch, delivering groceries and vital medicines to people who were sheltering and isolated, I came to realise what a uniquely special place Bracknell Forest is. It has a sense of community and togetherness, which makes it a wonderful place to live.

Our family business started over 20 years ago and all my children contributed to its longevity and success. They have all moved on with their lives, jobs and families.

When I moved into my current house over

27 years ago, one of the loveliest gestures I received was a neighbour knocking on my door with a beautiful bunch of flowers and a flask of tea. This is the Bracknell Forest I hope to see replicated in every neighbourhood, where we welcome newcomers.

I'm deeply touched by the trust people of Bracknell Forest have placed in me by electing me both as their town and borough councillor and now in my role as Mayor.

I promise to serve all of you in celebrating your diversity with you, regardless of any colour, religion or gender bias.

I will take every opportunity to listen and learn from my fellow residents, with compassion and understanding of your needs and concerns.

We are living through some challenging times. The cost-of-living crisis; climate change; achieving net zero; housing shortages; fuel poverty and food insecurity. Each one of these issues deserves attention and we will endeavour to listen and act. As your Mayor, I will make it a priority to aim for a thriving Bracknell Forest for everyone and

use my office to build this as truly a borough of opportunity.

I'll welcome any thoughts, suggestions and ideas to make Bracknell Forest better, please email: naheed.ejaz@bracknell-forest.gov.uk. Thank you all.

Cllr Naheed Ejaz
Mayor of the Borough of Bracknell Forest



Are you a resident in Bracknell Forest and able to host a Ukrainian Guest in 2023?

We still need host families for new arrivals and rematches in our borough.

You won't be alone, we have a whole team behind you ready to help at every opportunity.

If you're interested, you can register your interest by emailing: migration@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.



We'd love to hear from you.



Cost-of-living support

We have a range of support and advice to help you with the cost-of-living, full details can be found on our website at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support.

Help with internet bills

'Social tariffs' are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming universal credit, pension credit and some other benefits.

Most tariffs offer superfast broadband at speeds over 30 megabits per second for £10 to £20 a month – fast enough for you to keep in touch with friends and family, stream films or shop online. For more information, visit: ofcom.org.uk and search 'social tariffs'.

Local Welfare Scheme

Our Local Welfare Scheme can provide one-off payments in emergencies and help with the cost of essential items that are difficult to budget for.

It helps to ease the financial pressure for residents in the borough, who have low income and are most in need.

The scheme offers support for basic living costs and the cost of meeting essential items, such as:

- cost of food through a referral to a local



food bank or other form of immediate support

- cost of utilities including gas and electricity reconnection
- essential appliances and basic white goods
- essential furniture such as beds and mattresses
- cooking equipment, or other basic kitchen utensils

For more information or to apply for financial support, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/local-welfare-scheme.

Help for households event

Struggling with the cost-of-living? Come and join us for a chat at our next help for households event on Friday, 4 August* from

11.30am to 4pm in Princess Square. Many of our local community groups, organisations and partners will also be on hand to share the local support available. There will be a range of information available including the following areas:

- Debt and money management
- Food support and utility costs
- Benefits and jobs
- Affordable health and wellbeing

If you are in receipt of working age benefits, your travel to and from the event can be reimbursed, just make sure to speak to one of our Department for Work and Pensions colleagues on the day.

*If you are unable to attend this event, visit our website for more help and future events.

Join our fostering community

More safe and loving homes are needed to help prevent Bracknell Forest's most vulnerable children having to move out of the area.

Do you have the following?

- a spare bedroom
- some experience of caring for, parenting or working with children
- time to devote to a child
- a caring and empathetic nature

If the answer is "yes" why not consider helping change children's lives?

Following an assessment process and approval, we offer:

- up to £475 per week, per child fostered
- choice of placements from a few days to long-term
- support from an experienced Supervising Social Worker
- specialist training and 24 hour telephone support
- many benefits and discounts including free access to Coral Reef and local leisure centres



For more details, please complete our online enquiry form at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/fostering

 Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.co.uk/BFFostering

E: Fostering@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

Bracknell Leisure Centre to get £1.6m upgrade



The borough's main leisure centre will benefit from a £1.6m revamp to create an improved spa, new soft play area for children and additional fitness studio.

The final improvement plan for Bracknell Leisure Centre was agreed at a meeting of full council on Wednesday, 12 July, with work due to start later this summer.

The improvements will bring areas of the popular leisure centre up-to-date which were not redeveloped in 2018.

It will see the space behind the café and the current squash courts transformed in to a new soft play centre for children, facing on to the existing café. New squash courts will be created in the space vacated by the Whoosh play centre.

The spa will be fully upgraded to a high spec and will be redecorated. All improvement work is due to be finished by early 2024.

Thanking our armed forces in Bracknell Forest



Local armed forces personnel and veterans were thanked for their service by the new armed forces champion and the borough's Mayor during Armed Forces Week in June.

Cllr Georgia Pickering, armed forces champion for the borough, and Cllr Naheed Ejaz, Mayor, attended a flag raising event hosted by Sandhurst Town Council and supported by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

They paid tribute to our armed forces at the event, recognising the contribution of troops, service families, reservists, veterans and cadets.

Cllr Pickering and Cllr Ejaz spoke to military personnel and thanked them for all they do to keep Britain safe.

Bracknell Forest Council meetings summer 2023

August

Thur 17	6.30pm	Planning Committee
Thur 31	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission

September

Mon 11	5.30pm	Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee
Tue 12	5.00pm	Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel
Wed 13	7.30pm	Council
Thur 14	6.30pm	Planning Committee
Tue 19	5.30pm	Executive

October

Thur 5	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Thur 12	6.30pm	Planning Committee
Tue 17	5.30pm	Executive
Thur 19	7.30pm	Licensing and Safety Committee

November

Thur 2	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Mon 6	5.30pm	Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee
Thur 9	6.30pm	Planning Committee
Tue 14	5.30pm	Executive
Wed 29	7.30pm	Council

Details correct at time of going to press.



School Governors are people like you



Interested in influencing the future of young people?

Want to use your skills and develop new ones?



Email: governors.helpdesk@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

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Call us today to have your cooking appliances sparkling, using our own eco-friendly products.

Our oven cleaning experts will leave you free to enjoy your valuable leisure time.

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- Ovens & Hobs
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- Microwave Ovens
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oven.co.uk/oven_cleaning/bracknell



High Street car park to close this autumn



High Street car park will close from the end of October as the structure has come to the end of its life.

While the car park currently remains safe to use, independent surveyors advised the council that it should be closed this

year as the ageing structure is corroding. Structural engineers have stated the level of corrosion within the concrete reinforcement cannot be remedied.

The car park will remain open safely until the end of October. Work will then begin

to secure the site and decommission it – which is due to be completed before the end of the year.

High Street car park is mainly used by council staff working in the nearby Time Square office and a handful of monthly season ticket holders. It is not the car park of choice for shoppers or those visiting The Lexicon.

Bracknell town centre has lots of alternative car parks available - Braccan Walk, Princess Square, Albert Road and Weather Way are all within walking distance of the town centre. The closure of High Street car park should not impact on people's ability to park, as only The Avenue car park reaches capacity at Christmas peak times, while others have plenty of space all year round.

Structural engineers have advised that the businesses under High Street car park could remain in place safely until 2025, subject to regular inspections.

Get walking and cycling this summer

Summer is here and it's the perfect time to ditch the car journeys and opt for a more sustainable mode of transport, such as walking and cycling. Not only is this better for the environment, but it also has numerous health benefits and allows you to enjoy the beautiful green spaces that Bracknell Forest has to offer.



Our borough has a well-connected cycling network with over 100km of cycle routes, making it easy for residents to get around. Whether you're commuting to work or heading out for a leisurely ride, there are plenty of routes to choose from and you can do so by using our interactive map, bracknell.activemap.co.uk.

In addition to the cycling network, we are also home to some of the most beautiful green spaces in Berkshire. From the expansive Swinley Forest to the tranquil Lily Hill Park, there's no shortage of places to explore on foot or by bike. We have easy to follow walking routes available online:

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/countryside-walks

Our cycling team will be at some of the Summer of Fun events this August, so bring your bike for an MOT.

Try one of our free, guided walks for wellbeing. Visit: health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/get-active/walking.

Get moving with Walks for Wellbeing this summer

Get moving in the sunshine as the council continues the free Summer Walks for Wellbeing programme, in partnership with sustainable travel experts, Sustrans.

Walking is great for the mind and body and one of the easiest ways to become healthier. Anyone can join and enjoy the benefits of being outdoors with 10 guided walks, led by qualified walk leaders, being offered across Bracknell Forest's beautiful countryside.

Walks will take place in various locations across the borough, including:

- Binfield - Popes Meadow and Cabbage Hill
- Birch Hill - South Hill Park
- Bracknell town centre - The Elms and Lily Hill Park
- Crowthorne - Buckler's Forest
- Forest Park - Savernake Park
- Jennett's Park - Peacock Meadow
- Warfield - Westmorland Park
- Wildridings - Mill Pond

Walk leaders will offer coaching and mentoring to participants regarding their individual health and mobility needs, as well



as travel planning advice and route-finding assistance.

Walks are open to all residents and have been given a difficulty rating of either easy or moderate. The full programme of walks can be found on the public health portal: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wellbeing-walks.

Cllr Megan Wright, executive member for adult services, health and housing, said:

“Our wellbeing walks have been extremely popular in the past and we are so pleased to

have launched the summer programme.

“Walking is not only free, but it is one of the best ways to improve your activity levels. We are proud to say that anyone can take part, as all abilities are welcome and will be supported by our friendly walk leaders.

“Enjoy the outdoors and warmer weather, whilst learning more about active travel!”

There is no need to sign up for the walks, people can simply show up on the day in suitable clothing and footwear.

Join Eco Rewards and record your journeys



Eco Rewards

Rewarding Green & Active Travel

Sign up to Eco Rewards and get rewarded for walking, cycling or using public transport. Simply download the Eco Rewards app and scan the QR code signs around the borough on your journey. As a result, you will be entered into prize draws and can receive discounts and cashback from over 2,000 online retailers.



The app will even calculate your carbon savings and green miles. So far Eco Rewards members in Bracknell Forest have reached over 410,000 green miles, that represents over 16 and a half times around the Earth!

Scan the QR code or visit: ecorewards.co.uk for more information.

Take the bus for £2

Did you know that the ‘Get around for £2’ scheme has been extended until October 2023? Any single fare journey on the following buses will be just £2, helping you get around for less:

- Reading Buses
- Thames Valley Buses
- Stagecoach South

White Bus is not included in this scheme.

To plan your route and get live bus departures, visit: myjourney.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Co-ordinating roadworks

The council's highway team coordinates all work on the roads with a view to minimising traffic disruption as far as possible. This is achieved through the council's street works permit scheme, whereby any organisation wishing to work on the public highway must obtain a permit. During the year, there have been a number of ongoing roadworks across the borough which we understand can be frustrating for residents.

There are five main sectors with a statutory right to work on the roads, including: the highway authority, utilities and telecommunications. Following a directive from the Health and Safety Executive, the gas sector is currently nearing the end of a 30-year programme to replace all metallic gas mains within 30 metres of property.

There is also ongoing work by telecommunications companies placing fibre optic networks in the borough's roads. This is because the copper telephone and broadband network is reaching the end of its useful life and is being replaced with fibre optic cables capable of dealing with significantly more data. Telecommunications companies are given powers by government to install their equipment within the public highway and local authorities must not obstruct their work. However, companies must follow legislation regarding quality and safety.



Unfortunately, the council cannot force different companies to work together or inform us of their long-term plans. Currently we are dealing with an 82 per cent increase in workload compared with 2020/21.

We would like to thank the public for their patience as we continue to balance the competing demands from these companies.

£7.25 million being spent on the borough's highways

A number of roads, pavements and cycleways in the borough and set to be improved over the next year.

The council is set to spend around £7.25 million for ongoing maintenance that the local community has asked to see improved, including:

- filling in potholes
- resurfacing roads
- cycling improvements
- pedestrian routes improved
- highway maintenance

These improvements will ensure residents and visitors can travel safely and sustainably around the borough.

Work also includes several road safety schemes and improvements to tackle parking pressures and bottlenecks.

Planned traffic management and road safety work for 2023 to 2024 includes:

- a new pedestrian and cycle crossing on Temple Way (north of the junction with Boltons Lane), which will help parents and children get to King's Academy Binfield more safely
- a new zebra crossing on Cambridge Road in Sandhurst, near to Owlsmoor Primary School
- a new zebra crossing on Rectory Road, opposite Brakenhale School
- an extension to the upgrade of the footpath and cycleway on South Road to link in King's Academy Easthampstead Park
- increased parking areas in Claverdon, Swaledale, Kibble Green, Latimer, Fraser Road, Holland Pines and Prescott
- speed management schemes on Temple Way, Wood Lane, Park Lane and Sunninghill Road

More than £2.6 million will be spent on the planned resurfacing of a number of residential roads, as well as repairs to major roads such as the A322, A3095 and the A330.

There will also be £100,000 invested in technology to improve traffic flow and crossing points at key junctions. This will help improve journey times.

The £7.25 million is made up from £4.5 million capital budget (around 75 per cent from external funding, such as government grants and developer contributions) and £2.7 million revenue funding. The council has increased its capital funding for highways maintenance in 2023 to 2024 to rise to the ongoing maintenance challenges that all local authorities are experiencing.

FOLLOW THE

YELLOW BRICK ROAD

24 July - 2 September



**Fans of The Wizard of Oz
will love what is happening
at The Lexicon this summer!**

- A unique, family friendly theatrical experience, starting at South Hill Park and finishing at The Lexicon
- Yellow Brick Road Trail
- Floral Rainbow 'Snap, Tag & Share'
- Wizardly Wonder Colouring Competition
- Yellow Brick Road 'Make & Take' Crafts (in aid of The Lexicon Charity Fund)



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 **Bracknell
Forest
Council**

Recycle right for Bracknell Forest

Recent statistics show that around a third of items thrown away in green bins could be recycled.

Therefore, residents across Bracknell Forest are being encouraged to think twice when separating their waste and recycling.

Recent analysis into waste produced by Bracknell Forest residents has shown the following materials have been put in green bins as rubbish, when they could have been recycled:

- 10 per cent paper and card
- 10 per cent garden waste
- seven per cent films and wraps
- six per cent plastics (e.g. pots, tubs and trays)
- five per cent textiles
- five per cent glass
- two per cent tins and cans

Many of these materials can be recycled in kerbside collections or at local recycling sites such as bottle banks, reuse sites or the local re3 recycling centres.

If residents are unsure of how to dispose of a certain item, the Recycle Now recycling



locator can help: www.recyclenow.com.

For more information about what can and can't be recycled in kerbside collections

and how to reduce waste, visit the bins and recycling pages: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling.

Bracknell Forest's Family Services Directory and SEND Local Offer



Providing free, impartial information and advice about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and all other family matters.

- SEND information all in one place - how to access services and support including Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Education, childcare and early years funding
- Leisure and holiday activities
- Advice and support services
- Brokerage service for those struggling to find childcare

Family Information Service: fis@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

01344 353133

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/localdirectory



Where can I get help with an EHCP?

Where is my nearest baby clinic?

I'm struggling with my child's behaviour – where can I get help?

How do I apply for free 30 hour childcare funding?

Actions to tackle climate change



Residents can now invest in renewable energy through a group-buying scheme called Solar Together Berkshire.

The group-buying scheme offers:

- solar panels with optional battery storage and electric vehicle charge points
- retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels

Working with the council, Solar Together Berkshire can help residents afford cleaner and greener energy, while making sure they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

It's free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

Cllr Mary Temperton, leader of Bracknell Forest Council and executive member for council strategy and climate change, said:

"This is a great opportunity for those who have been thinking about making the switch to solar panels or improving their renewable energy source set up.

"We all need to do our bit to reduce our carbon footprint and joining this scheme gives residents the chance to make a huge difference and help contribute to the borough wide target of being carbon neutral by 2050.

"As well as being great for the environment, making the swap could save you money on your energy bills."

Local businesses are also encouraged to sign up and check their eligibility for the scheme.

For more information and to sign up, visit Solar Together Bracknell Forest: bit.ly/SolarTogetherBF.

Our action towards net zero 2050: 2022/23 progress update

Passed a motion reaffirming our commitment to action in the face of the climate emergency



Carbon Dioxide emission estimates for the borough reduced by 10% down 43 ktCO₂e, to 393 ktCO₂e

Supported over 60 vulnerable households with energy efficiency improvements through the Warm, Safe and Well and Green Homes Grant schemes



Completed a feasibility study for an EV charging hub on London Road

Reduced the council's direct carbon dioxide emissions by 21%

Held a secondary schools' climate change conference featuring Chris Packham



Awarded each secondary school £500 to kick-start climate projects



Launched a business climate working group to engage with key partners



Rolled out food waste collections to an additional 640 flats



132,507 miles of green journeys logged on the EcoRewards active travel scheme



Achieved a 54.5% waste recycling rate



Delivered 32 new EV charging points



Launched the My Journey Bracknell Forest website to support active travel



Launched a climate change e-learning module for council staff



Left some grass areas uncut to improve biodiversity, signposted with bee signs



Ran two Recycling Collection events for small electricals and textiles



Continued to replace conventional vehicles in our fleet with EVs



Published 36 climate change-related articles



Launched our Little Changes, Big Impact behaviour change campaign



Planted 1,300 new trees across the borough



Planned £1M of work to improve the energy efficiency of council buildings



Reader survey 2023

Tell us what you think about Town & Country and you could win a £30 voucher for Fenwick.

We want to know what you think about the publication and how else you receive council news and updates.

Your feedback is important and will help shape the way we communicate with residents.

The survey can be completed online at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/tc2023. To request a printed survey, email: comms@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or call 01344 352323. It will be open until Wednesday, 23 August.



YOUR RECYCLING CENTRE

Longshot Lane,
Bracknell RG12 1RL
www.re3.org.uk



re3 online booking form available in over 130 languages

BOOKINGS REQUIRED AND AVAILABLE

Dispose of your excess waste - book a slot at the Recycling Centre

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Book now!

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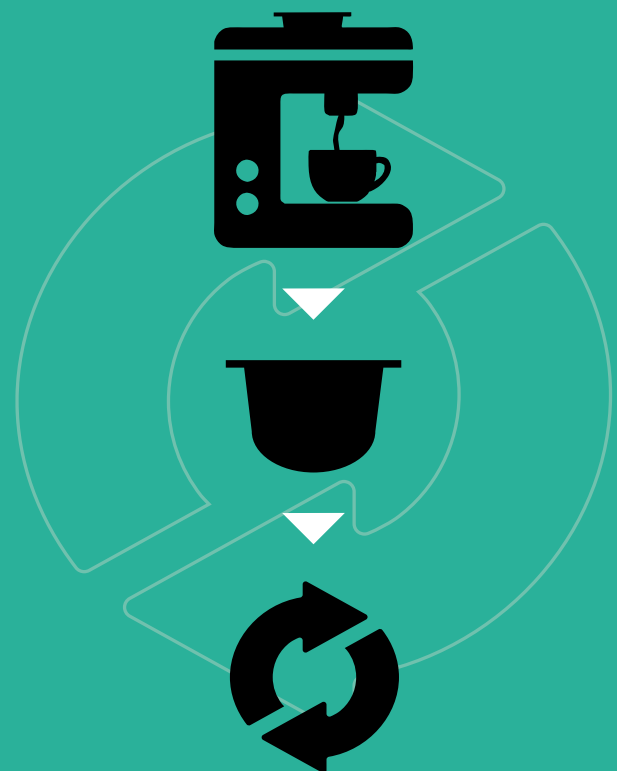
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donate items

Recycle your coffee pods at re3 recycling centres.

You can now drop off your coffee pods for recycling.

Please keep your aluminium and plastic pods separate and follow the instructions at the centre.

For more information visit podback.org



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