

## **WORK PROGRESSES TO SET UP THE NEW COUNCIL FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

It's now only 12 months until the new single council for Buckinghamshire goes live on 1 April 2020. It will be called Buckinghamshire Council and will provide all local government services for residents. The five current councils – the county council and the four district councils – will cease to exist from that date. Until then the county and district councils remain responsible for services as normal.

An interim 'shadow authority' is being formed to oversee the creation of the new council and all current county and district councillors will have a seat. However the first meeting can't be convened until the necessary legislation has passed through the parliamentary process. Currently we estimate this will be mid-May, but that is dependent on the necessary parliamentary time being available.

In the meantime, the county and district councils are working together to plan the work needed for the new council to come into operation. To help shape our plans, we'll be engaging with Parish and Town Councils in the next few months, more information to follow.

## **VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN UPDATE**

The independent Planning Inspector has agreed AVDC's proposal to reduce by 1400 the number of new homes to be built up to 2033 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). VALP is the blueprint that will shape the size and locations of housing and other developments over the next 14 years and beyond in the Aylesbury Vale. This latest development brings the end of a thorough and complicated process in sight, with modifications to the plan being considered by the Inspector and, it is hoped, a public consultation to follow this spring.

The full text of the Inspector's response can be seen at [www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/inspectors-interim-findings](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/inspectors-interim-findings)

The biggest change that the Inspector has agreed is to reduce the numbers of homes that need to be built within the Vale to 30,100 homes from the 31,500 he asked for previously.

AVDC is working on the detailed modifications to VALP, which involves gathering a significant amount of new evidence and revising large numbers of policies. When these alterations have been made and sent to the Inspector, AVDC hopes to quickly put in place a six-week public consultation. The council hopes that the plan will then be adopted for use by mid-2019, although this depends on the Planning Inspector.

AVDC is encouraging Aylesbury Vale residents to get involved in this year's Great British Spring Clean!

AVDC is proud to be taking part in Keep Britain Tidy's 'Great British Spring Clean', the country's biggest mass-action environmental campaign, taking place between Friday 22 March and Tuesday 23 April. The aim of the campaign is to inspire people to work in partnership with community organisations, businesses and councils to collect and safely dispose of litter from Britain's streets, parks and beaches.

The Great British Spring Clean encourages local residents to organise a community litter picking event. From Monday 11 March, we'll be promoting the campaign and highlighting how AVDC can support community litter picks. This includes AVDC's arranging for all litter that is collected to be removed from a predetermined and agreed location, as well as supplying collection bags to support events, which community litter pick organisers can collect from the reception at AVDC's Gateway Office.

Last year we supported 25 volunteer groups, community groups and parishes in their litter picks and this year we're looking to beat that number to help keep the Vale clean and green.

Contact officer: Conor Ferguson [cferguson@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:cferguson@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

## **BUCKS BEST KEPT VILLAGE**

The 2019 Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition is underway with information and entry forms going out to Parish and Town councils across the county. The Best Kept Village Competition is sponsored by George Browns, Motts Coaches, RT Machinery, Chiltern Brewery, Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes Council and Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and Wycombe District Councils.

The Best Kept Village competition has always proved very popular with the county's villages and towns. This year's competition joint chairmen Richard Pushman and Bill Chapple, are hoping that this year, will be no exception: "If a village or small town is considering the Best Kept Village competition, we can't stress enough what a great community activity entering can be. The competition gets communities working together towards a common goal and it is a great way of getting to the heart of what really makes a community tick.

The competition is not difficult to enter and we don't want any of the county's villages to feel that they haven't got what it takes to do well. The Best Kept Village competition is not just for 'pretty' villages – we want to see communities where everyone makes an effort to keep their surroundings well maintained. The competition is a good opportunity for villages to celebrate all the positive aspects of life in their village and say 'well done' to the people that get community projects up and running."

Further information regarding the competition is available from the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village Competition Administrator by email at [bkvbucks@gmail.com](mailto:bkvbucks@gmail.com) or by telephoning 07734 886540. The deadline for entries is 30 April 2019 and judging will take place in June and July. The winners will be announced by the end of July, and the presentations will take place in the winning villages on 14 September.

## **MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE**

AVDC has prepared a protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure, based on National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) guidance. Whilst the protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of H.M. The Queen, which involves the most detailed ceremonial duties, parts of the procedure can also be adapted for use in the event of the death of other senior local or national figures.

The AVDC protocol is part of the Buckinghamshire protocol which, in turn, is part of the national plan. It documents the formal ceremonial duties, including flag flying and reading of the Proclamation, in Aylesbury. For parish and town councils that want to make their own preparations, a copy of the NACO guidance and AVDC protocol is available on request via the Parish Liaison Officer.

Contact officer: Hazrat Hussain [parishsupport@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:parishsupport@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

## **CHANGES TO THE WAY YOU GIVE FEEDBACK ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

As you may know already, the online system that members of parish councils use to give feedback on planning applications is changing. This upgrade will connect better with AVDC's other IT systems and enable us to provide a better service, although the system will look a bit different. You may be aware that we recently invited all parish councils to a drop-in session about the changes, and many attended. We are currently working on a user guide to help make the switch as easy as possible and will be providing that to you as soon as it is completed.

For more information contact Parish Liaison Officer Hazrat Hussain on 01296 585047 or [parishsupport@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:parishsupport@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

## **WATERSIDE FESTIVAL**

After successfully making a splash for its debut event, Waterside Festival is back for 2019. With so many of the favourites from last year's event returning, including; the beautiful floating market, outstanding performances from local musicians, choirs and dance groups and the canoeing, kayaking and paddle-boarding sessions,

there's a full day of summer-fun awaiting festival-goers. There'll also be a whole host of new and exciting activities to suit everyone. Enjoy waterside wildlife themed arts & crafts, childhood games, merry-go-round and swing boats and be sure to refresh and recharge by visiting the delicious food court!

Waterside Festival is a non-profit community event co-ordinated by Aylesbury Town Centre Partnership. More information can be found by visiting [www.watersidefestival.org](http://www.watersidefestival.org)

Contact officer: Diana Fawcett [dfawcett@aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk](mailto:dfawcett@aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk)

## **LET'S GET BUCKS BUZZING**

Pollinating insects like bees and butterflies are in decline nationally, yet they are vital to our environment. Bucks Buzzing is a project by the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership that encourages everyone to help pollinators and the habitats that support them. Everyone can do something to help: building a bug hotel, mowing less frequently, avoiding pesticides, or growing wildflowers.

To help you get started, Bucks Buzzing is providing free wildflower seeds to residents and organisations in Bucks & MK. Get involved by signing up on the Bucks Buzzing website: [www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing](http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing)

On the website you can also find information and advice on how you can help, and share photos and tips from your own projects. Bucks Buzzing also supports schools, street associations and community groups; if your group has a project in mind, please email: [nep@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:nep@buckscc.gov.uk)

## **AQUA VALE GIVEN NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

The Aqua Vale Swimming & Fitness Centre in Aylesbury is undergoing a boost to ensure it continues to cater for local residents long into the future.

An investment in excess of £500,000 has been made to modernise and refresh the centre, and the refurbishment project will see customers enjoy a number of enhancements including improved changing facilities and aesthetic updates. There have also been upgrades made to improve the centre's energy efficiency.

The project has been carried out in phases to minimise disruption to customers. Phase one has been completed and the entire project is due to be finished by the end of May 2019.

Customers are already able to enjoy the new private showers and access the new disability changing areas whilst the Aqua Vale's unique tropical theme has also been updated. The next phase will see new toilet and shower facilities and new lighting to further improve the customer experience.

Cllr Julie Ward, AVDC Cabinet Member for Civic Amenities, commented:

"Aqua Vale is an incredibly popular venue, with thousands of residents visiting and enjoying the site every week. From swimming to gym workouts to five-a-side football, Aqua Vale is the place to go for sports and leisure activities in Aylesbury and the surrounding areas.

"Of course, there's always room for improvement, so we've listened to feedback from visitors, and through our partnership with Everyone Active we've begun to make Aqua Vale even better than before.

"If any local residents haven't yet visited the centre, I'd encourage them to drop by to experience the fantastic facilities the site has to offer."

For more information and to book classes and activities please visit:  
<https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/aqua-vale-swimming-and-fitness-centre>

## **INCREASE TO MAXIMUM NEW HOMES BONUS MICRO GRANT!**

Some good news for Parish and Town Councils and voluntary and community sector organisations! You can now apply for a maximum of £2,000 from the AVDC New Homes Bonus micro grant scheme.

Since the scheme launched in September 2017, 64 Town and Parish Councils and community groups have benefitted from these micro grants, using the funds for a variety of purposes for projects with total project costs of less than £10,000 and the purchase of equipment.

The total amount available in 2019/20 will remain at £80,000.

To find out more about the scheme, town and parish councils or representatives of community organisations should go to [www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/newhomesbonus](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/newhomesbonus) and/or contact the Grants Officer, Jan Roffe, at [jroffe@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:jroffe@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk) for an application form.

Applications from community organisations must be endorsed by their local Town or Parish Council, and the closing date for applications is the 15th of each month.

Contact officer: Jan Roffe [jroffe@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:jroffe@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

## **AYLESBURY GARDEN TOWN UPDATE**

It's an exciting year for Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT), as we develop the Masterplan that will set out the framework for the future through to 2033. Alongside that, a longer term 'Vision' is also being drafted, establishing the key principals for the Garden Town, looking ahead to 2050. Both these documents will help to define what's special about AGT and will go to stakeholder consultation in May, at which Parishes within the Garden Town and adjacent to it, will be able to input.

A wide-ranging AGT public engagement process is continuing. At the end of last year a pop up exhibition was held in Friars Square shopping centre. More than 450 people dropped by and shared their thoughts on some of the key themes that are emerging, such as sustainable transport and green infrastructure. All the comments have fed into the Masterplanning process. You can find a full report on the findings from the exhibition on the website and you can also share your ideas there too, just go to [www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk](http://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk)

Contact officer: Ceri Perkins [cperkins@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:cperkins@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

## **OUR VALE CROWDFUNDING CONTINUES TO GROW**

Thank you to everyone who attended the Our Vale project workshop last month at Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre. There was a great turn out with lots of interest, enthusiasm and project ideas. Crowdfunding is a fantastic way to turn project ideas into reality and help transform our local communities for the better. We hope the workshop helped inform your crowdfunding plans and wish you all the best of luck with your projects!

If you need any help or couldn't attend the event but have questions, please contact Sam Ovens [sovens@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:sovens@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)

Contact officer: Sam Ovens [sovens@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:sovens@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)