



The Buckingham Society

Manifesto 2021

This Manifesto sets out the Buckingham Society's purpose, how we plan to achieve it and how you could help.



www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk





1. What is the Purpose of the Society?

Our purpose is to work with others to ensure that this wonderful market town continues to improve as a place to live and to work.



2. What does the Buckingham Society do to achieve this?

Since 1974 we have been committed to the aim of working with local councils and the Citizens of Buckingham to try to ensure that the town not only continues to be a great place to live and work but is continually improving.

We believe that by seeing what needs to be done, taking the initiative, talking to local people and working in partnership with organisations, businesses and individuals, we will improve the way that our town develops. The organisations that we work with include Buckingham Town Council, Buckinghamshire Council and other groups that share our aims. We also talk to developers with the aim of influencing their plans for the benefit of the town. Nationally, the Society is a member of Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England. This enables us to draw on the experiences and expertise of other groups from around the country and be involved at a national level.

The Buckingham Society is not opposed to growth and development. We recognise that Buckingham must develop and be commercially viable to survive and prosper. We aim to support the Town in welcoming the right sort of developments and new

businesses so that it provides a viable and pleasant place to live for those who work here and balances the living and working environments creatively and harmoniously.



3. What is Special about Buckingham?

Buckingham is a historic market and university town and has much that we are proud of and need to look after including:

- the medieval layout of the town (balanced against the need to keep traffic flowing)
- its many fine and historic buildings
- characteristic architectural styling on many existing buildings
- extensive green and open spaces around the town
- a fine and diverse range of trees
- the River Great Ouse flowing through the heart of the town
- a thriving, welcoming and harmonious town centre
- a welcome from the many excellent traders that visitors will remember with delight





4. Where is the Society active?

- a. **Building Development.** We monitor all applications for building developments and will work with Town and County Councillors with the aim of ensuring that developments enhance our Town.

New developments should be good quality and reflect the style of Buckingham's existing buildings. They should contain a mix of housing types and styles and cater for all social groups.

The Society recognises that modern and innovative buildings should be welcomed when appropriate. Developers should be creative, use high grade materials and recognise Buckingham's local distinctiveness, adding to the beauty and diversity of our town and using the local design code.

Developments must work for the people who use them. To this end, the local community should be fully involved, properly consulted and listened to over any major developments affecting the town. The Society will continue to help achieve this objective.

We will work to foster sustainable development by encouraging developers to, for example:

- use renewable and recyclable resources
- reduce energy consumption and waste
- create a healthy, environmentally-friendly environment
- protect the natural environment

Through its Design and Conservation Awards, the Buckingham Society will continue to try to encourage the creation of interesting and innovative buildings that enhance our town.



- b. **Green and Open Spaces.** We will work to ensure that our unique "town lungs" remain healthy and accessible for all.

Buckingham's residents are very fortunate in having walkable green space stretching from the eastern boundary of the town to the west as well as a network of footpaths and bridleways throughout the town and along the river. These spaces should always be protected and, wherever possible, new developments should add to public spaces in a way that encourages people to use and respect them. Developers should be encouraged to provide elegant spaces and places within developments and ensure that they will be maintained for future generations without burdening the home-owners.

The river is essential to the life of our town and is a vital habitat for fish, birds and animals. There is also a wide range of wildlife away from the river some of which are rare or endangered species. The Society is committed to maintaining and enhancing habitats and the wide range of wildlife. All new developments should recognise this diversity and aim to maintain or enhance habitats.



- c. **Transport.** Our vital transport services must be maintained but much now needs to be done to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are encouraged and protected.

Buckingham is a busy town with substantial traffic levels at certain times of the day and a bypass that is becoming noticeably more heavily used. The Buckingham Society is not anti-car but would support any measures aimed at reducing the amount of traffic on our roads and in particular in the town centre. Measures to reduce speeds around the town should be considered wherever feasible and a “pedestrian first” attitude adopted.

Buckingham is hilly and so is not particularly “bike-friendly”, however, encouragement should be given for people to cycle, walk or use public transport where possible. Future developments should always have an eye to reducing car use with pedestrian and cycle links to be included in all new developments.

Heavy vehicles should be excluded from the town as far as possible and transport solutions to this end should be at the forefront of transport planning.

- d. **Business and industry.** The Buckingham Society recognises the importance of local businesses and industry.

Not only are they good for the town’s economy but, by providing work for local people, they help to reduce the need for commuting and remove some of the strains on our roads.

Buckingham already has a diverse range of businesses based on the Industrial Estates. The Society recognises the need for a well-planned strategy to develop this further and to encourage more businesses to come here and to develop and grow.

- e. **Town centre.** The Charm of our Town Centre needs vision and hard work to ensure that it remains a great place to live and work.

Buckingham’s town centre is a mix of shops, cafés, restaurants and other services. As with most of the country, there are a number of empty premises. The Buckingham Society recognises that town centres are changing and that the future is likely to be a combination of small specialist traders with a mixture of services and residential and office premises. Such a mixed-use approach could help maintain the strength and vitality of the town centre and keep it alive.

The twice-weekly market is of vital importance to the town’s well-being and it is encouraging that new traders have set up stalls. The Town Council’s efforts in this regard are to be applauded and the Society will continue to support them wholeheartedly.

Through the annual Trader of the Year awards, the Buckingham Society has recognised the importance of local traders and will continue to seek ways to support them.

- f. **Heritage.** Buckingham is blessed with many fine and historic buildings. A large number are listed buildings and there is an extensive conservation area. Fortunately, the owners of the buildings, from large businesses such as the University to individual householders, take pride in what they own. They must be supported and the Buckingham Society believes that the conservation area must be protected and the local authority encouraged to take enforcement measures where necessary.

The previously mentioned Design and Conservation awards aim to recognise those who have worked to ensure that their own premises are maintained and improved to the benefit of our town.





5. What will the Society now do to improve and maintain the Town?

- Monitor the developing needs of the Town
- Work with others with the aim of fulfilling those needs
- Continue to sponsor the Design and Conservation Awards
- Organise and run the Buckingham Trader of the Year Award
- Lobby and seek to use influence at both Town and County level to support Buckingham
- Work with others to update design codes for the town



6. What could you do to help?

If you are interested in supporting the town, please join the Society – this QR code will take you to the relevant page on our website. You could also consider joining one of our groups. They include:

- Planning
- Transport
- Green and Open Spaces

