

Town & Country

Brought to you by Bracknell Forest Council

Voter ID and local elections

This May, parish, town and borough council elections will be taking place across Bracknell Forest. These happen every four years.

This year will mark the first time that voter ID will be needed at polling stations. Those without ID will not be able to vote in any elections in the borough.

This is a change being introduced by the UK Government and will apply to all local elections, referendums, recall petitions and Police and Crime Commissioner elections from May 2023 and all UK Parliamentary General Elections from October 2023.

What this means for voters in Bracknell Forest

Anyone voting at a polling station in Bracknell Forest will need to show an accepted form of photo ID before they can be given their ballot papers.

Accepted forms of photo ID

Voters are being asked to check in good time, whether they have an accepted form of ID.

Accepted forms of ID include a driving licence, passport, as well as some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or a blue badge.

The council's e+ card does not meet the government's required standard for Voter ID unless it falls into one of the categories listed above. i.e a concessionary



travel pass or PASS card.

You can find the full list on the Electoral Commission website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/

Voters will also be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.

Voter Authority Certificate

Those without an accepted form of ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate on the Electoral Commission website.

Voters will need their name, address, date of birth and national insurance number in order to progress their application. They will also need to provide a photograph.

Postal voting

You don't need photo ID to vote by post, so you don't need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if you choose to vote this way.

To apply for a postal vote, you will need to download the application form from the Electoral Commission's website.

Voting on the day

To vote in person, you will need to visit your designated polling station between 7am and 10pm on Thursday, 4 May. Once there, residents must tell polling staff their name. You do not need your poll card but bringing it with you can speed up the process.

To be eligible to vote, you must show your photo ID to the poll clerk. You do not have to show ID to enter the polling station or to anyone outside the polling station. Those requiring additional support can request a private area to show their ID.

Residents are encouraged to check the Electoral Commission website if they have any questions, or email: voting@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

What's inside



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Be who you've always been... a keen gardener

At Bickerton House care home being a keen gardener doesn't stop when you make the journey into care. Bring your life with you to a place you can call home.

Award winning, person-centred care for over 40 years.

If you're considering care for yourself or a loved one call **01344 963029**.

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Bracknell
careuk.com/bickerton-house

care UK



Leader's welcome

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

Spring brings new beginnings, we can enjoy extra daylight hours, warmer temperatures, flowers blooming and birds singing.

It may have been a colder winter than usual for many, due to the cost-of-living challenges, with people having to think twice before putting the heating on. March can be a very mixed month weatherwise, with everything from warm, sunny days to snow, so it's worth keeping blankets and thermal layers out for a while longer. Our community winter hubs are still open, with these locations offering a welcoming and safe space for residents to visit. You can find out more on our website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support.

We have some exciting events and activities planned for the coming months. The council is working together with The Lexicon to mark the occasion of The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, by creating Berkshire's largest coronation crown and also the coronation celebration, you can find out more on page six.

As you'll know from our front page, on Thursday, 4 May 2023, Bracknell Forest will host its borough, town and parish elections. This is your chance to vote for who you feel can best represent you and your community.

At these elections, you will need to bring an accepted form of photo ID to be able to vote at your polling station. This is the first-time voter ID has been required at an election. A wide range of photo ID will be accepted, including passports, driving licences and cards with a PASS Mark.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

If you have any questions about voter ID, I recommend visiting the Electoral Commission's website (www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID). There you will find out exactly what you need to do so you don't miss your chance to vote.

Take care and here's hoping the warmer, spring weather is soon here.

Cllr Paul Bettison OBE

Leader of Bracknell Forest Council

Town & Country Extra

Sign up to Town & Country Extra for the latest news and events sent straight to your inbox.

The free bite-sized newsletter is available to all and you can subscribe to it via our website or by scanning the QR code.

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/news

This is in addition to this printed Town & Country newspaper, which is distributed twice a year.



Updates from our climate change action plan



Ralf Geithe/Stock/Getty Images Plus

Air quality monitoring at schools

We are consistently monitoring the air quality in our schools. After successfully procuring a supplier for further monitoring, we are now able to track the levels of PM2.5 particles, these are small pollutants that are hard to track. 42 schools across three local authorities, including Bracknell Forest, are benefiting from this technology. All 28 schools that have so far been monitored are reported to be compliant with DEFRA's air quality objectives.

Anti-idling training in Bracknell Forest

Staff from the council's civil enforcement team have recently had anti-idling training. The training focused on collecting information about the location and occurrence of idling vehicles in Bracknell Forest when civil enforcement officers are out conducting their duties. The aim is to encourage drivers to change their habits and switch off their engines when they can, instead of leaving their vehicle running. Leaflets have been produced with information to explain the dangers of idling, and to help dispel some common myths about the topic. Data collected from the initiative will help the council to better understand the problem and take steps to encourage people to change their habits. For example, it will help identify the best location to put up signs to remind people to switch off their engine while waiting.

4 Register for your new My account at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk and click My accounts

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 -
<https://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

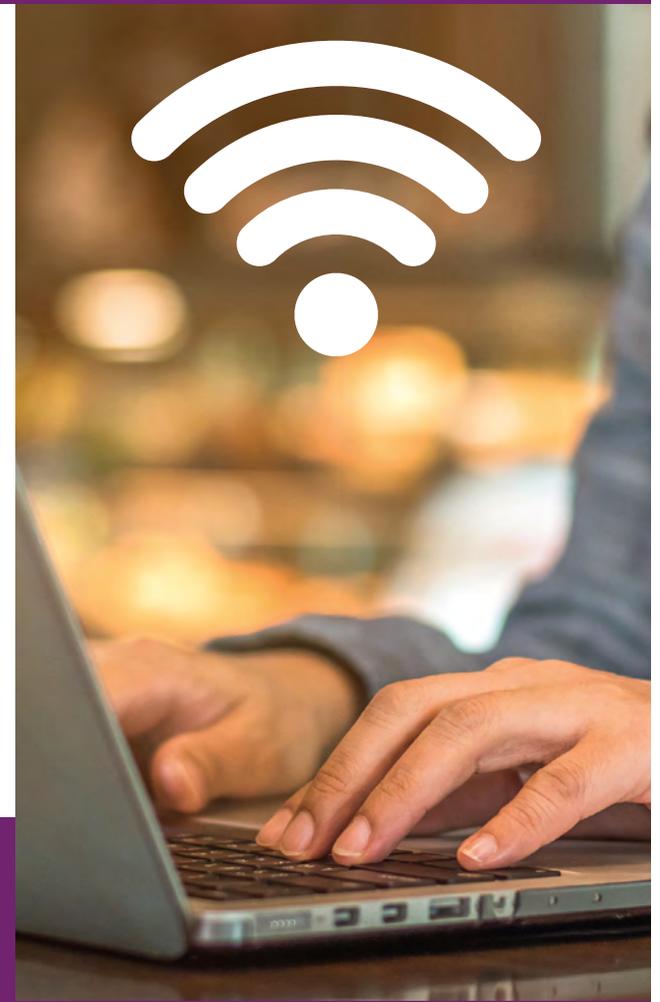
Brown bins - www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/garden-waste

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

Register for your new My account at:
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk and click My accounts



Follow Us

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Get our news direct to your inbox!

Did you know that we produce a monthly 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.

It is printed on environmentally-friendly paper.

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

Demand for Forestcare services



Forestcare is the council's year-round 24/7 emergency response control centre based at Waterside Park in Bracknell. The dedicated team offers a range of telecare solutions providing support and assistance to both individuals and organisations every day of the year.

In December, Forestcare continued to provide services to the wider community, whilst many other local authorities and housing associations closed for the Christmas break. This included navigating one month of housing repair calls in just one weekend.

During December Forestcare staff:

- answered a total of 25,487 calls
- made 297 referrals to the ambulance service
- made 52 referrals to the fire service
- dealt with 292 referrals for installations of assistive technology

The team was on hand during the Christmas break and between 23 December to 3 January, Forestcare answered:

- 5,500 emergency contacts from local residents
- 1,500 out of hours repair, domestic violence, highways, environmental health and other similar calls

Many of the calls taken by Forestcare allow early action which helps prevent many of our most vulnerable residents needing hospitalisation.

To find out more about the services offered by Forestcare, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/forestcare.

Do you want to **feel safe** both at **home** and when you are **out and about**?



Are you keen to retain your independence?

Would you have peace of mind knowing someone is there to provide emergency support and help 24 hours a day?

Forestcare can help with all these matters, and more!

For more information on telecare and the services offered by Forestcare, contact us for an initial chat.

Telephone: 01344 786599

Email: Forestcare.enquiries@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Web: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/forestcare



Keeping you safe and secure 24 hours a day.

Bracknell Forest's coronation celebration



Plans are now underway to help Bracknell Forest residents celebrate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort in May.

To celebrate the historic occasion, an event is planned at The Lexicon on Saturday, 6 May, including a screening of the service at Westminster Abbey. Following the ceremony, a host of entertainment will delight throughout the afternoon, showcasing the best of Bracknell Forest's creative talent.

If you are part of a local group that would like to take part, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from choirs, singers, dancers, musicians and other performers. For more information, email: discover@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

In the meantime, residents can take part in the creation of Berkshire's largest coronation crown. The council and The Lexicon are creating a collage of 2,023 photos in the shape of a crown as part of a unique piece of art to celebrate the coronation. This crown will be displayed in Princess Square in the weeks leading-up to the coronation.

To be part of the coronation crown, upload images to: www.thelexiconbracknell.com/events/coronation-crown by 10 March. There is no limit on how many images you can submit, however, you must have the full consent of any people featured.

In addition, there will also be events across the borough such as the Crowthorne Coronation in the Park on

6 May. Visit your local parish website or social media page for details on what is happening in your area.

Cllr Marc Brunel-Walker, executive member for economic development and regeneration said: "I can't wait to see residents gather in The Lexicon to celebrate the coronation in May. The Jubilee was a fantastic community event with a great atmosphere, so I'm looking forward to this historic event and sharing it with our community."

If you are planning to host a street party on 7 May as part of the Big Lunch for The King's Coronation, visit the council's website to find out if you need to apply for a road closure. Applications are free but need to be submitted by 7 April.

Help us create Berkshire's Largest Coronation Crown

Upload your image here
before Friday 10 March



Get active this year with Fit for All

Do you want to be more physically active this year but not sure where to start? Get fit in a supportive and beginner friendly environment with our free Fit for All classes.

Classes run in three different locations:

- New Priestwood Community Centre - Wednesdays, 9.45am to 10.45am
- Owlsmoor Community Centre - Wednesdays, 11.30am to 12.30pm
- Great Hollands Community Centre - Tuesdays, 4pm to 5pm

To sign up, call 07719 413355, or email: public.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Stop smoking

Have you tried, or are you planning to stop smoking this year? Get free specialist and tailored support from our stop smoking service, Smokefreelife Berkshire. The service supports individuals to quit via a range of methods, including face-to-face, digital and online support. The service also provides nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

Bracknell Forest Council residents can access the service for free by:

Calling: 0800 622 6360

Texting: QUIT to 66777

Visiting: www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com

Tai Chi classes for over 50s

Are you over 50, living in Bracknell Forest and looking to increase your fitness levels? Age UK, in partnership with Bracknell Forest Council, run Tai Chi classes in three different locations for £5 per session.

Classes run at the locations below:

- The New Priestwood Community Centre – Thursdays, 9.30am to 10.30am
- Owlsmoor Community Centre - Mondays, 12.30pm to 1.30pm
- Great Holland Community Centre - Fridays, 10am to 11am

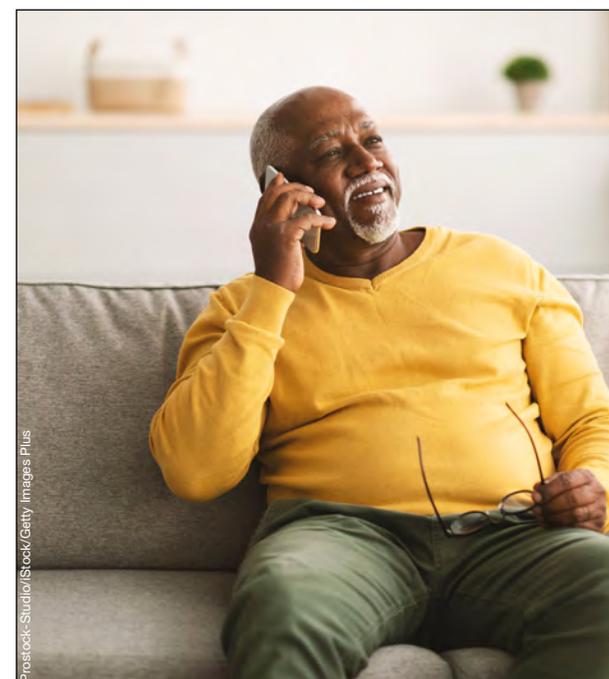
For further information, call 0118 959 4242 or email: info@ageukberkshire.org.uk.

Social prescribers are here to help

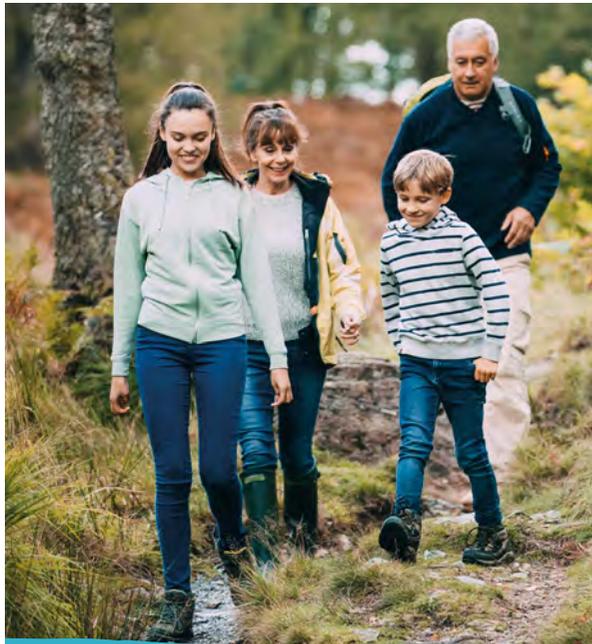
During the colder months it's understandable that people may feel lonely or isolated. If you are feeling that way, why not contact one of our friendly social prescribers?

Our team of social prescribers work with individuals to stay connected and combat loneliness by signposting to peer support, relevant community activities and online resources.

To self-refer, call 01344 352000 or self-refer via our public health portal: <https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/social-prescription/>.



Fostering with Bracknell Forest Council... can you help?



We are looking for a range of people who can foster for us and support us in providing a safe and warm home to children in our care.

We offer very competitive rates and comprehensive support packages. Please contact us now to discuss further.

fostering@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/fostering

 @BFFostering



The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon

The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon will be back on Sunday, 14 May.

Last year, over 800 competitors crossed the finish line in Braccan Walk. This longstanding race, which marks its 39th anniversary this year, is expected to attract more than 1,000 runners.

Managed by Everyone Active on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council and The Lexicon, it remains the biggest running event in the borough.

The event is a fast and flat half marathon taking in the views of Bracknell Forest. Spectators are encouraged to line the route and cheer on the runners as they pass, to help them reach the finish line.

All entrants will be expected to finish within three and a half hours. Free parking is available for entrants in a designated town centre car park, entrants just need to show proof of entry between 7am and 8.30am.

There is still time to sign up and train for this demanding, though exhilarating run, simply search The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon online.



Budget position 2023 - 2024

The council's budget proposals, including the agreed level of council tax for 2023 – 2024, were approved at the meeting of full council on Wednesday, 22 February.

The council is facing an unprecedented level of cost pressures from high inflation and demand for services. For the first time in over 20 years, the council will make an unplanned withdrawal from its reserves to supplement funding agreed in its approved budget.

The additional costs of inflation, rising demand for statutory services and income losses due to economic conditions will total £17m in 2023/24.



How your £1 is spent



Balancing the budget

To balance the budget, the council will make £7.5m of cost savings and will use £3.6m from its one-off reserves. An increase in council tax of 4.99 per cent will be used to bridge the remaining gap of £3.9m. The increase will equate to around a £1.41 increase per week for a band D council taxpayer and will ensure Bracknell Forest remains in the bottom 10 per cent of all unitary authorities, over £180 per year below the average level.

Financial support

For 2023/24, the council is providing a £75 reduction to council tax bills for working age households eligible for council tax support. This is a local scheme and complements government funded discounts of £25 for all council tax support claimants, including pensioner households.

Help is available to households who are experiencing cost-of-living increases, particularly the most vulnerable residents. A range of schemes are available both locally and nationally, including help with energy and food bills or council tax support and further information and advice on the support available can be found on the council's dedicated cost-of-living webpage.

Cllr Peter Heydon, executive member for transformation and finance, said:

"Every year the council faces financial pressures and challenges, but we have never before experienced the current levels. Inevitably, the current wider economic crisis is impacting us, like it is all households and businesses.

"As always, we have worked incredibly hard to identify £7.5m of savings without impacting on essential frontline services. The alternative would be to cut these vital services, which is simply not an option, particularly at a time when more people with increasingly complex needs are dependent on these services. It is vital we ensure both adult and children's social care can continue to support the borough's most vulnerable residents now and in the future.

"We understand an increase in council tax is never welcomed, particularly at a time when many residents are facing further financial challenges. However, it is the only permanent income source that helps us sustain the essential services that our residents depend on. We have always had in place a wide range of measures to help financially vulnerable households and I would strongly encourage residents to take a look at all the schemes available to see where they may be eligible for financial support if needed."

Adult Social Care

36p

Children and Families Social Care

20p

Support Services

10p

Waste Management

8p

Early Help and Early Years

6p

Other Services

5p

Debt Financing

4p

Highways Maintenance

4p

Planning and Regeneration

4p

Councillors and Democracy

2p

Libraries

1p

£75 council tax bill reduction for around 3,000 low income households.



No reduction to any council services.



Bracknell Forest council tax remains in bottom 10 per cent of all unitary authorities.



An increase of £1.41 per week for band D properties.



For information about help with food costs, energy costs and more, please visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support.

Support for residents facing financial difficulties

The financial pressures that households are currently experiencing due to the increased cost of living, has led to many people looking for additional support, or ways to save money.

If you are not sure what financial support you are eligible for, there is a handy online benefits calculator that you can use at: www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators.

On the council's website, there is a range of information and guidance to help residents get the support they need. Please visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support to find out what is available locally, as well as links to government support.

The council works with several community organisations to create a wrap-around support network to cover all areas that may be affected. This can include needing help with benefits not covering full rent, help finding affordable housing, and help with food and energy bills. Community organisations such as The Cowshed, First Days, Clothes Bank, Baby Bank and Storehouse can help with clothing (including school uniforms) or furniture. Citizens Advice East Berkshire can support with money management or debt. Details of all of these organisations are listed



on our cost of living webpages.

The community learning team, based at Bracknell Open Learning Centre, offers a range of drop-in sessions to help support adults. They can help those who are experiencing IT difficulties or may be struggling with their digital devices at home. A free IT support session runs on Fridays during term-time, 10am to 2pm. If getting to the centre is a problem, then the session can also be accessed online or over the telephone by arrangement.

For jobseekers, the weekly job club is on Thursdays at Bracknell Open Learning Centre, 9.30am to 4pm. Jobseekers can use computers to search for vacancies, update their CV or access the internet for free. There is also free job-seeking advice and an opportunity to book courses too, which

includes a range of IT courses in Word, Excel and more.

Find out more about the range of courses and support available with community learning, at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/community-learning.



Do you know a good cause?

Bracknell Forest Lottery has raised over £112,000 for the good causes in the borough since launching in 2019. That's over £37,000 for every year it's been running.

We are currently looking for more good causes to share in the proceeds.

If you know a good cause that deserves some of the extra benefits the lottery could bring, then please direct them to the Bracknell Forest Lottery website. We would love to hear from them.

www.bracknellforestlottery.co.uk



CALLING ALL GOOD CAUSES



- ✓ Charities
- ✓ Sports Clubs
- ✓ Schools and PTAs
- ✓ Social Enterprises
- ✓ Community Groups/Buildings

Here are some tips on making little changes in 2023 to help reduce climate change.

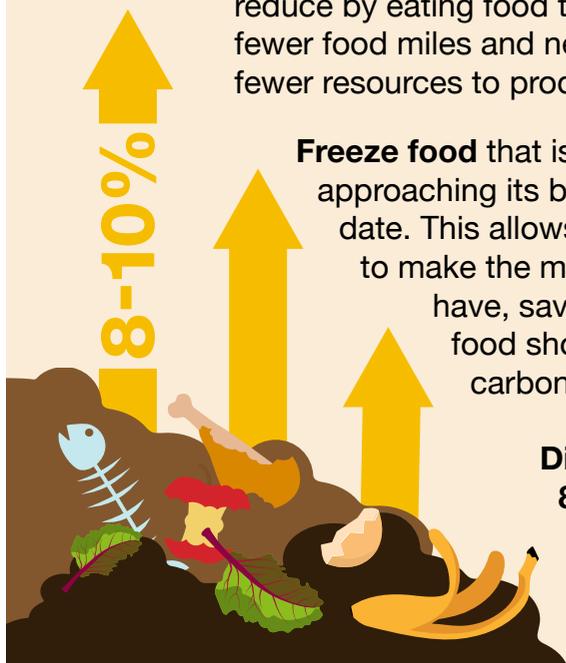


Try **Meat Free Monday**. (www.meatfreemondays.com) Your overall emissions will reduce by eating food that has fewer food miles and needs fewer resources to produce.



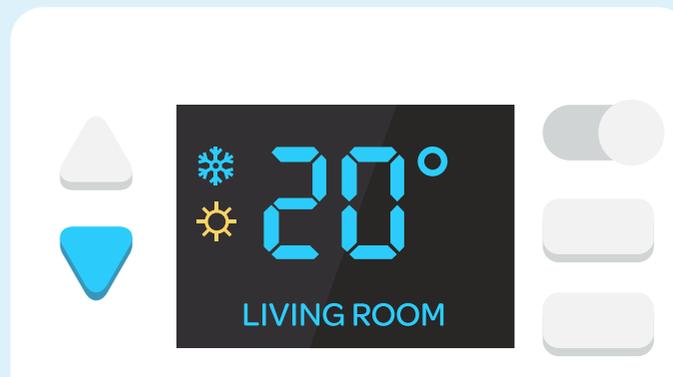
Freeze food that is approaching its best by date. This allows you to make the most out of the food you have, saving you money on your food shop and reducing your carbon emissions.

Did you know around **8-10 per cent** of global greenhouse gases relate to food waste?



About **10 per cent of heat loss** in the home comes from draughts. Reduce this by draught proofing letterboxes, windows, doors and floorboards.

Reduce your thermostat temperature by one degree, and save on average **£115** on your energy bills.



Check **petrol prices** (www.petrolprices.com) to find the cheapest petrol near you. Make the most of it by reducing idling and walking or cycling short trips if you can. Saving you money on your travel expenses and reducing your emissions.

Transport makes up **33 per cent of emissions** in Bracknell Forest, take a look at these schemes to earn while you actively travel –

- **Love to ride:** www.lovetoride.net/bracknellforest
- **Eco rewards:** www.ecorewards.co.uk/bracknell/



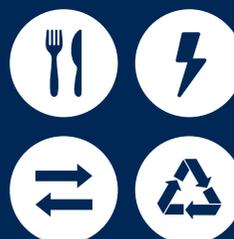
Instead of buying new, consider buying second hand. Fast fashion has the fourth largest environmental impact after transport, housing and food.

Visit shops with refill stations – where you can fill up your own containers with foods, toiletries and household products. Use the **Refill app** (www.refill.org.uk) to find refill stations near you. Check out the zero waste shop map at: www.localzerowaste.com



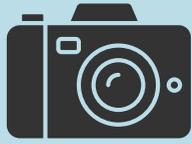
For further help and advice, visit the links below:

- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/climate-change-and-community
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/energy-supplier-grants
- www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support



Little changes
Big impact

Mood-boosting places



In 2022, we challenged amateur photographers to capture Bracknell Forest's mood-boosting places, as part of our annual, free-to-enter photo competition.

The theme was chosen to reflect the abundance of amazing local places, which makes Bracknell Forest a special place in which to live, work and play.

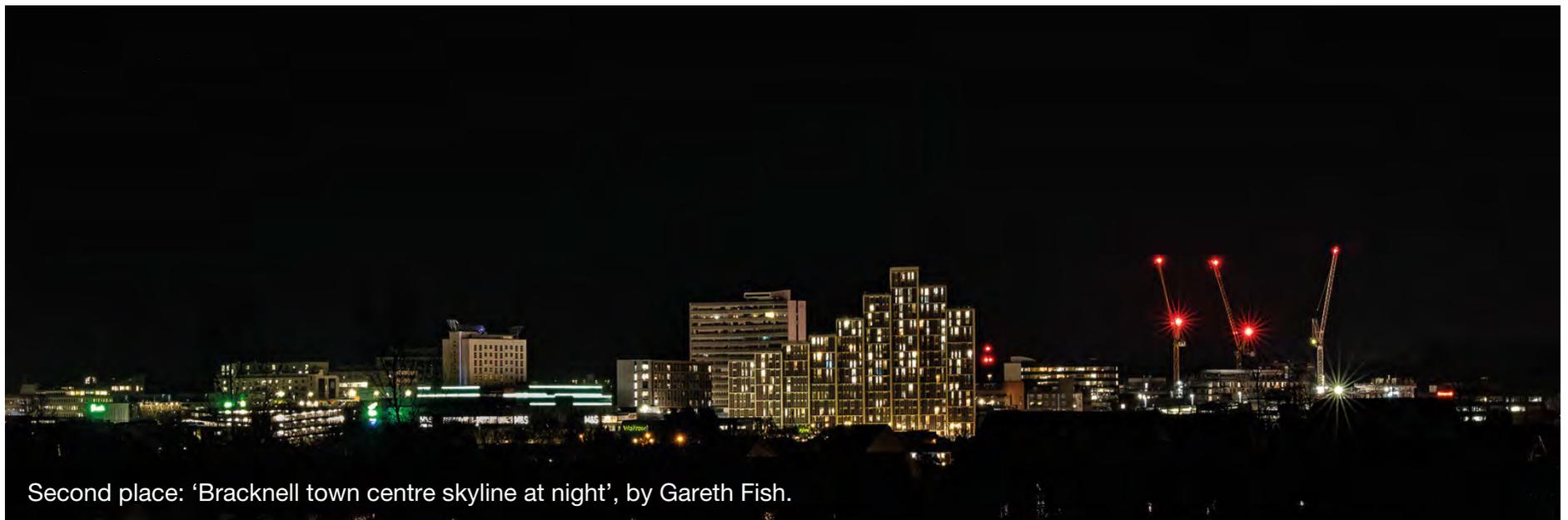
By the time the competition closed for entries at the end of October, we had received 133 fantastic photo entries. These were shortlisted to 21 images, with prizes awarded to photographers of the top five photos.

Cllr John Harrison, executive member for culture, delivery and public protection, said: "Thanks to all residents who took part, and to our fellow competition organisers who provided the prizes.

"It was great to hear how local places, especially parks and open spaces, are valued by residents in helping to boost their moods."



First place: 'Lift off at Mill Pond', by Ray Hewitt.



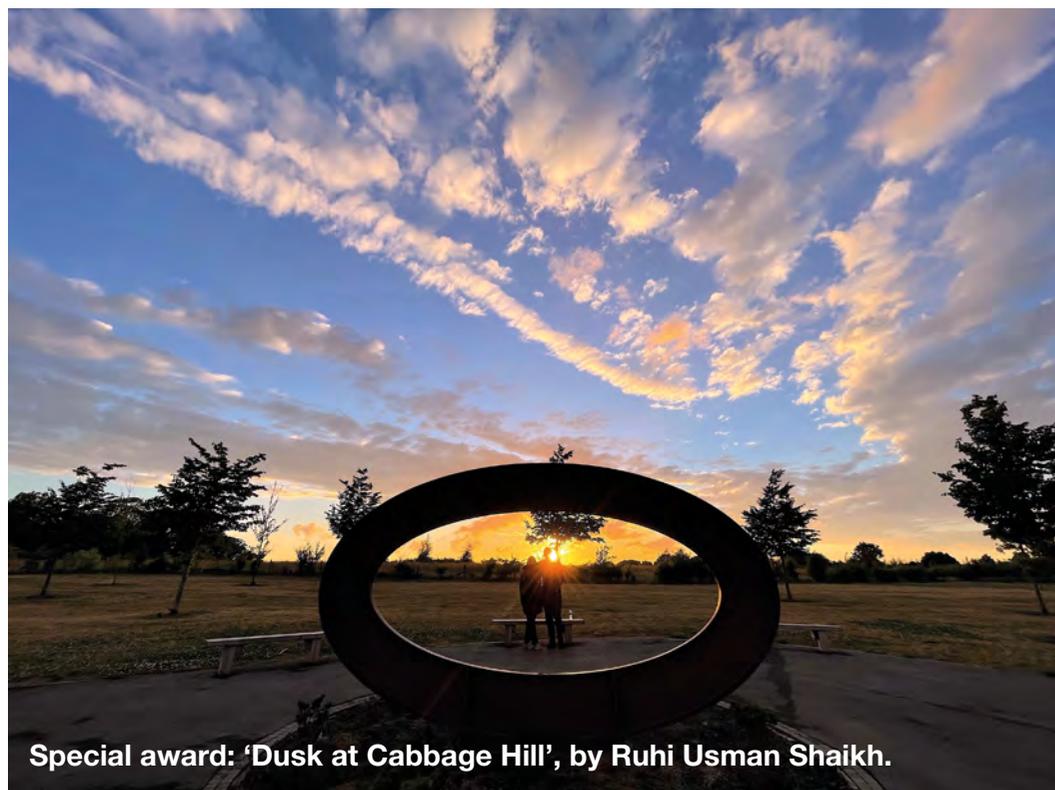
Second place: 'Bracknell town centre skyline at night', by Gareth Fish.



Joint third place: 'Misty Dawn - bird's-eye view over Windmill Meadows', by John Jacobs.



Joint third place: 'South Hill Park on a golden summer morning', by Claire Moore.



Special award: 'Dusk at Cabbage Hill', by Ruhi Usman Shaikh.

If you haven't yet seen the winning and commended images, you can do so on our YouTube channel. For further wellbeing help and support, including how to boost your mood, see the websites at the bottom of this page.

Images that just missed out

These photos didn't quite make our list of finalists but warrant a special mention, as they are great examples of mood-boosting places.



'The Lexicon lights', by Ray Hewitt.



'Balancing Pond in Sandhurst Memorial Park', by Thalia Milton.



'A dog's life at Buckler's Park', by Janine Tonkin.



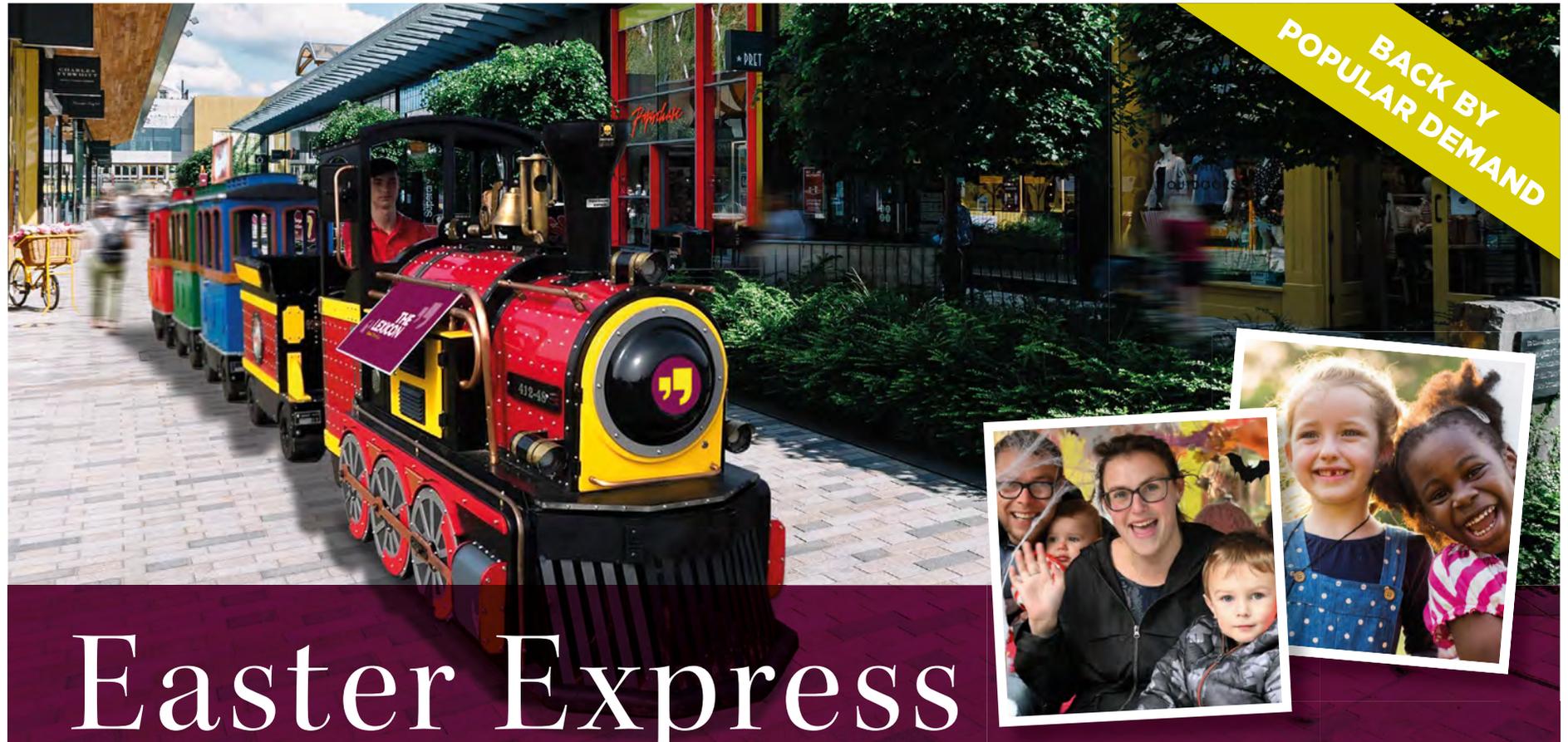
Further wellbeing help and support

Information and support for mental health, including advice about self-help, is available from the NHS.

www.nhs.uk/mental-health

Help and advice for a range of public health topics, including getting more active, is available via our public health portal: <https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk>.

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Easter Express

31 March - 16 April* All proceeds go The Lexicon Charity Fund

thelexiconbracknell.com

*Closed on Easter Sunday. Images for illustration purposes only. T&Cs apply.



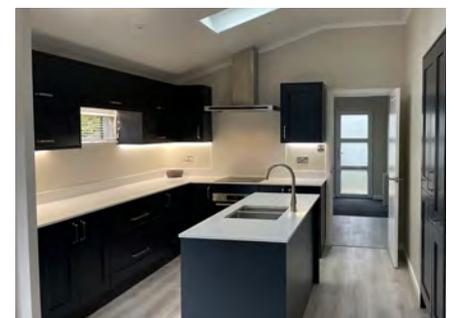

WARFIELD PARK

A Village Community

Established since 1947 with more than 400 privately owned park homes, and 75 Rental homes, Warfield Park's welcoming community is thriving.

Nestled in beautiful parklands, surrounded by greenery, we have become one of the most prestigious parks in the UK.

Our Community Association organises numerous social events and activities on the park. Pilates, the Garden Club and Games Night run weekly with additional weekend events at least once a month.



Lissett Odyssey For Sale

PRICED AT £495,000, AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

A fully furnished high specification Lissett Odyssey home (46'x22') with two bedrooms, dressing room, en-suite, family bathroom, lounge, dining room and study. Superior fixtures include Bosch appliances, pocket sprung beds and a rainfall shower. Set within a fully landscaped south-west facing rear garden with patio, detached garage and driveway parking.

01344 884 666
Contact us to arrange a viewing



The Mayor of Bracknell Forest's Opportunity Awards

"I hope everyone is enjoying a healthy and happy start to the new year.

When elected as Mayor in May last year, I decided the theme of my Mayoral year would be 'opportunity'. Bracknell Forest is the borough of opportunity and that is what I wanted to focus on and continue to recognise this year.

As part of this, I decided I wanted to recognise those who play a part in our communities by supporting others. I was delighted to recently meet some of these selfless individuals and formally thank them at a meeting of full council in January.

To go a step further and to continue supporting others helping residents in the borough, the Bracknell Forest Mayor's Opportunity Awards have been created.

These awards will recognise

community groups, voluntary groups and charities, who are making a contribution to the lives of people in Bracknell Forest, through a monetary award to support their work. Applications can be made to nominate local groups online on the Berkshire Community Foundation website: www.berkshirecf.org.

All the funds raised this year will be distributed between up to five charities, helping the residents of Bracknell Forest to create and realise opportunities. If you would like to donate to the fund to help local worthy causes, please do so by visiting: www.berkshirecommunityfoundation.enthuse.com.

My best wishes for the rest of the year to you and your families."

Cllr Ankur Shiv Bhandari



Reach out if you have money worries

Perhaps you need a bit of extra help with household bills, housing, council tax, benefits, or food and essentials?

Our **cost of living support** pages are a valuable hub, directing you to advice, support and key services.



Don't leave it, get help from those that can offer the right support for you.

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support

Kennel Lane forest project

Kennel Lane School has been making the most of their forest area on site and has created a variety of outdoor learning zones for young people to enjoy.

With help from the £500 that schools were awarded for attending the Bracknell Forest Council Student Climate Change Conference in May 2022, Kennel Lane has been able to create an outdoor mud kitchen, a bird friendly area with a feeding table and bird bath, as well as a gazebo for outdoor learning, all made from donated or recycled materials.

Pupils and members of the school council have been involved in creating these zones, learning the importance of preserving green spaces and biodiversity. The bird area in particular encourages different species to visit the school grounds, giving the students a better understanding of the local wildlife.

These zones have had a great impact on the school community so far, allowing students to learn outside, get creative and take responsibility for the area by maintaining and

cleaning it. Pupils actively contribute via their school council representatives about how to use the zones and what they want to add to them in the future.

Cllr Dr Gareth Barnard, executive member for children, young people and learning, said: "Well done to everyone at Kennel Lane School who has worked so hard to create this brilliant outdoor learning space.

"Giving students an alternative to the standard indoor classroom is a great opportunity to learn about the importance of our local environment and we are very lucky in Bracknell Forest to be surrounded by so much greenery.

"The children and young people at Kennel Lane have taken pride and ownership in their new and improved outdoor learning, which instills a respect and responsibility for the local environment that we should all aspire to."



HM Government **HELP PAYING FOR CHILDCARE** Childcare Choices

MONEY TOWARDS CHILDCARE

Any **one** of the following schemes...

<p>Age 0-11 <small>Or 11-15 (school)</small></p> <p>Get up to £2000 per child For working families</p> <p>TAX-FREE CHILDCARE</p>	<p>Age 0-15</p> <p>Claim back up to 85% of costs For working families</p> <p>UNIVERSAL CREDIT</p>	<p>Age 0-15 <small>Or 11-15 (school)</small></p> <p>Claim back up to 70% of costs For working families</p> <p>TAX CREDITS</p>
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... **can** be used with

FREE HOURS OF CHILDCARE

<p>Age 2</p> <p>For families getting certain government support</p> <p>15 HOURS FREE CHILDCARE</p>	<p>Age 3-4</p> <p>For all families</p> <p>15 HOURS FREE CHILDCARE</p>	<p>Age 3-4</p> <p>For working families</p> <p>30 HOURS FREE CHILDCARE</p>
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For full details visit childcarechoices.gov.uk

Getting childcare vouchers? Go to GOV.UK to find out more



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.



Bracknell Forest local plan moves towards adoption

Government planning inspectors provided feedback on the draft local plan in January, positively stating it is legally compliant and will set out a sound approach to development with some straightforward modifications.

The plan sets out where new homes, businesses and facilities could be located in the next 15 years.

The main modification the inspectors have set out is the removal of the proposed garden village at Jealott's Hill. This part of the plan looked to provide around 2,000 new homes, a neighbourhood centre, primary school, a new Science and Innovation Park and publicly accessible greenspace, including sports pitches, play areas and country parks, supporting the Agri-Tech research hub that already exists in this location.

They also suggested that small sites opposite Pope's Meadow in Binfield and Lower Church Road in Sandhurst should be removed – these accounted for about 50 homes.

Inspectors confirmed that removing the garden village and smaller sites in Binfield and Sandhurst would not undermine the plan and the borough would still have a suitable strategy for meeting housing and planning needs up to 2037.

They supported the proposal in the plan to have 35 per cent of all new housing allocated as affordable housing.

They concluded that the council has worked hard and in a professional manner to produce the plan and that with the recommended modifications it could be adopted. This is not a unique situation – nearly all councils are asked to make modifications by planning inspectors prior to adoption.

The council is working with the planning inspectors to agree the wording of the modifications. A consultation on the modifications is due to take place later this spring to allow the public to comment on the changes suggested.

Once adopted, the plan will have up-to-date policies to enable planning decisions that promote sustainable and high-quality development in the right locations.

Cllr Chris Turrell, executive member for planning and transport, said:

“Naturally, it is disappointing that the plan is not able to be adopted as it stands, especially as there were extremely important economic reasons why the Jealott's Hill development was put forward.

“However, we are grateful to planning inspectors for their invaluable comments and the recognition that we have worked hard to create a plan that meets the future needs of our residents and businesses.

“We're pleased they recognise it is legally compliant and could be adopted subject to some straightforward modifications. We are now working through all the recommendations and will soon consult on the changes to capture residents' feedback.

“I'd like to thank everyone who has taken the time to comment on the plan so far and want to assure our residents and businesses that we are working as quickly as possible to get the right plan adopted for our borough.



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

Don't let winter viruses linger

This winter, we saw high levels of flu and COVID-19. As the seasons change, the unsettled weather can extend the time that these viruses stay in circulation. However, with these simple steps we can help stop the spread and leave winter illnesses behind us!



1. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



2. Use a tissue to catch sneezes and coughs – then bin it and wash your hands



3. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean



4. Open a window to allow fresh air in if meeting others indoors



5. Take extra care to avoid close contact with anyone who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 or flu

Cllr Dale Birch, executive member for adult services, health and housing, said: "The unsettled weather we experience in spring can be a factor to the continued spread of viruses that are more prevalent in winter, including flu and COVID-19. "When the weather is cold and wet, we tend to meet with people indoors more often. These tips are essential to helping stop the spread of these viruses, and to help protect yourself and those around you."



**FREE
TASTER
SESSION***

*ts & cs apply

SMASH AWAY WINTER BLUES

Join our outdoor fitness class at South Hill Park, Bracknell, every Tuesday & Thursday at 7pm

 podiumfitness.co.uk
 07525 378844
 info@podiumfitness.co.uk

podiumfitness
Get fit. Feel great.


Bracknell
Forest
Council



We've launched a new **families newsletter**

- Where to get support and advice
- Key dates for schools • Family friendly events
- Leisure activities • Places to explore

To sign up to receive the e-newsletter scan the QR code or visit: <https://bit.ly/3SAV3MI>



Let The Look Out entertain you

The Look Out Discovery Centre has continued to go from strength to strength in to 2023.

Some highlights include:

- the provision of temporary indoor seating, opening up the capacity of Woodlarks Café during the winter
- the introduction of autism friendly sessions for children
- extra evening sessions for uniformed groups
- regular fire and light shows showcasing the power and danger of fire
- toddler days themed around the ever present power of music

A special mention goes to staff member Isabella Green for winning Attendant of the Year from the Loo Of The Year awards, held at the National Motor Cycle Museum on Thursday, 12 January. Her attention to detail helps keep facilities at The Look Out in tip top condition.

Later in March, the toddler shows return to The Look Out with a special pirate theme, as well as the return of bug and beastie toddler days. In May, a splash, bubble and balloon show will debut at the exhibition centre.

For more details on future shows and exhibits, be sure to visit the The Look Out Discovery Centre website: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/look-out.



The Look Out Discovery Centre

A great family day out whatever the weather!



Come and see our Splash, Bubbles and Balloon show in April.

For more information and to book tickets in advance please check our website and social media.

www.facebook.com/thelookoutdiscovery @thelookoutbracknell

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/thelookoutdiscoverycentre

Nine Mile Ride, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 7QW



Gritting season



Our winter weather teams have been very busy since the winter season started in October. The mild start to the season was followed by a very wet new year, an extremely cold end to January, with another cold spell in February. Our gritting trucks treated primary roads 50 times, along with three secondary route runs. 727 tons of salt were used. Our trucks often go out in the middle of the night to ensure conditions are as good as they can be by the time traffic peaks in the morning. Rock salt is most effective on road surface temperatures up to minus six degrees Celsius. When temperatures fall below that, water on the roads may still freeze, especially where leaks occur, or private ditches have

not been maintained and overspill onto the road. During extreme weather conditions, all road users should adapt their driving to the hazardous conditions, following the principles of the Highway Code: www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code. We're not at the end of the gritting season just yet and often gritters will go out well into April. You can find more information about gritting, including interactive route maps and advice on how you can help yourself and others during bad weather, by visiting: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk and searching 'gritting'.

Check your journey with One.Network

Travelling around the borough is easier with One.Network (<https://one.network>), the council's live roadworks map that allows residents to plan ahead by searching a postcode to view the current and planned roadworks in that area.

One.Network is free to use and does not require a log in. Users can find out the reason for local roadworks, how long they will last and what measures are in place to control traffic, for example traffic lights or road closures.

For more information on roadworks in Bracknell Forest, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/roadworks.

Community Learning at Bracknell Open Learning Centre



New courses for adults brought to you by Community Learning at Bracknell Open Learning Centre, offering the chance to refresh your skills, to relax, and to rejuvenate. We offer courses in computing, arts, well-being 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



Ukraine news

Last year saw the opening of the Vzi Razom Community Hub in Princess Square. The hub was designed as a place where all displaced residents can visit, gain valuable skills and meet other people in the borough.

Since then, the hub has recognised many landmark events, including:

- traditional and orthodox Christmas celebrations
- the anniversary of the invasion
- multiple lunch and learn events

The council marked the anniversary of the invasion with a one-minute silence, chosen because one minute is the traditional mark of respect in Ukraine.

The council has also hosted separate events for guests and hosts. These drop-in sessions offered information and guidance on local financial support, health and wellbeing, and charitable organisations keen to help.

There are more planned over the summer months.

Currently, over 500 guests have arrived in Bracknell Forest on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with many more coming privately. Although retention rates for guests remaining



with hosts in the borough are far above national averages, more hosts are always required.

If you have property available or want to open your home on a temporary basis, get in touch by emailing: Ukraine@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.



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?

Question thyme

Your most asked food waste questions answered!



Q: Which foods can be frozen?

A: Most foods can be frozen. We're talking eggs, cheese, milk, cream, bread, cake, nuts, pulses, meat, fish, herbs, fruit, veg - the list goes on and on! Freezing food is a brilliant way to press pause and stop it going to waste.



Q: How often can you reheat meat?

A: Once - you can reheat meat, but only once in the oven or microwave, just make sure it's steaming hot all the way through.

Q: Can rice be reheated?

A: Yes, but only once. And only if it's homemade and not from a takeaway. Rice must be cooled within one hour and can be kept in the fridge for up to 24 hours. Reheat until piping hot.

Q: What is the difference between 'use by' and 'best before' date labels?

A: These labels can help stop your food from going to waste. 'Best before' = quality
'Use by' = safety
And you can freeze your food up to and including the 'use by' date so it will stay safe for another time.

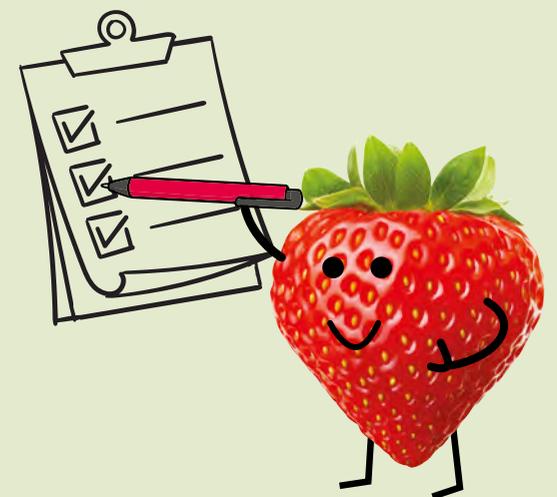
Q: How can I make potatoes last longer?

A: The fridge is the best place to store potatoes. They could last up to three times longer than if stored in a cupboard. Cooked potatoes can be frozen. If potatoes have sprouts, green or bad bits, just remove them before cooking.

Q: Can meat be defrosted at room temperature?

A: No. Meat should be defrosted fully in the fridge, not at room temperature. Once it's been defrosted, eat within 24 hours. Defrosted meat should only be reheated once.

In a rush? You can defrost meat in the microwave on 'defrost' mode.



For more tips on how to make the most out of your food and prevent waste, visit: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Thank you to our Take Pride litter pickers

Thank you to the amazing 360 volunteers who regularly give up their time to litter pick with our Take Pride scheme, carrying out around 60 litter picks every month!

In partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, the Bracknell Forest Council scheme aims to encourage volunteers and community groups who live and work in the area to help maintain a clean and green borough.



The Great British Spring Clean, the nation's biggest environmental campaign will take place from 17 March to 2 April. You can support the campaign by joining our Take Pride litter pickers, cutting litter and improving our borough. Here's what some of our litter picking stars have said:

Sally Munn, Take Prider since 2014: "Whilst litter picking, one of my routes is to go past the Downshire Golf Course. One day, I noticed that a few bits of litter needed picking up in their car park and surrounding areas and, without thinking, went in and collected them. Force of habit then made me repeat my action at least once a week. To add to that, I also started to collect any golf balls that had been driven through the wire fence on the road from the golf range and returned them to the course."

Julie Brown, Take Prider since 2020: "During the first lockdown, I used to take my permitted hour of exercise and go walking around the

neighbourhood. I realised that my time would be better spent having a go at collecting some of the litter that I saw. So, I bought a grabber from Poundland and began. I talked to Tricia Brown, a councillor, and we got together, and two years later we are still picking every Sunday morning."

Mike Cox, 1st Easthampstead Scout Assistant Leader: "On 22 October, a group of 14 volunteers from 1st Easthampstead Scout Troop took part in the Take Pride scheme. We arranged a weekend litter pick at Lily Hill Park for a few hours. This is part of a leaders Queen Scout Award to make a difference in the local environment but also, to get the scouts outside and take ownership of the local area."

Gemma Robertson, Taker Prider since August 2022: "I regularly go out litter-picking around Martins Heron and whilst it can be frustrating to see how much litter is collected within only a short distance, I am pleasantly

surprised at the amount of people that stop and thank me for doing so. It's incredibly rewarding to feel appreciated by the residents. Keep up the good work Take Pride volunteers!"

Cllr Mrs Dorothy Hayes MBE, executive member for environment, said:

"I'd like to say a huge thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and organisers at Taking Pride. To give up your time to help keep Bracknell Forest clean from litter is a true testament to your patience and kind nature. "With the annual spring clean coming up, now is a perfect time to try a litter pick with our Take Pride scheme. You can apply online, and you will be provided with litter pickers, high visibility waistcoats and gloves."

For more information and to take part, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/jobs/volunteering/take-pride.

Bracknell Forest Council meetings spring 2023

March

Tue 14	5pm	Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel
Thur 16	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Mon 20	5:30pm	Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee
Tue 21	5pm	Executive
Wed 22	7.30pm	Governance and Audit Committee
Thur 23	6.30pm	Planning Committee

April

Wed 19	7.30pm	Council
Thur 20	6.30pm	Planning Committee

May

Wed 24	7.30pm	Council
Thur 25	7.30pm	Planning Committee
Thur 30	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission

June

Thur 8	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Tue 13	5pm	Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel
Thur 15	6.30pm	Planning Committee
Tue 20	5pm	Executive

July

Thur 6	6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Mon 10	5:30pm	Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Committee
Wed 12	7.30pm	Council
Tue 18	5pm	Executive
Thur 20	6.30pm	Planning Committee

Details correct at time of going to press.



FREE PAINT

TAKE TINS OF USEABLE WATER-BASED PAINT FOR YOUR MAKE-OVER PROJECTS



REUSE AREA

WE WILL OFFER YOUR UNWANTED ITEMS TO A LOCAL CHARITY OR FIND THEM A NEW HOME.

BRIC-A-BRAC, BIKES, FURNITURE, TOYS, SMALL ELECTRICALS AND MORE ARE ACCEPTED.

IS IT TIME FOR A SPRING CLEAN AND DECLUTTER?

CHECK OUT OUR SERVICES

RECYCLING CENTRE LONGSHOT LANE, BRACKNELL

BOOKINGS REQUIRED AND AVAILABLE



www.re3.org.uk



COMPOST

PREPARE YOUR GARDEN WITH PEAT-FREE COMPOST MADE FROM RECYCLED GARDEN WASTE