

Your

Bracknell Forest

2026 edition



Your Bracknell Forest

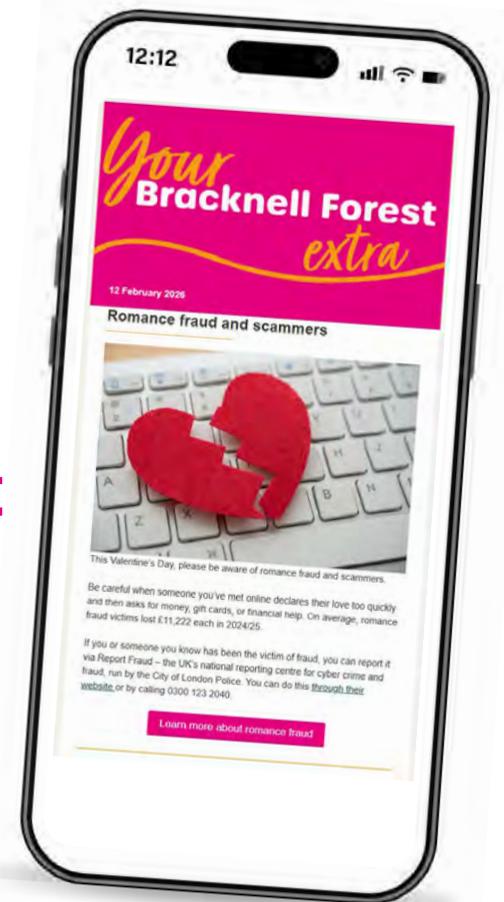
The final print edition

This is the last printed issue of Your Bracknell Forest (previously Town & Country). But you can stay connected with everything happening in your community by signing up to **Your Bracknell Forest Extra**, our regular e-newsletter.

Get the latest news, updates, events and local highlights delivered straight to your inbox. It's the best way to keep up to date with what's happening across the borough.

Don't miss out.
Stay informed.
Stay connected.

Sign up today by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknell-forest-extra



A year as the Mayor



It has been a great privilege to serve the people of Bracknell Forest, first as Deputy Mayor and then as Mayor. As a newly elected councillor in 2023, it has been a steep but rewarding learning curve, and a journey I have enjoyed immensely.

Over the year, I have learned a great deal about the services and charities that support those most in need across our borough. The two charities I supported this year, Stepping Stones and the Pilgrim Hearts Trust for the homeless, are just a small example of the outstanding work

carried out by dedicated volunteers and community groups.

I have attended a wide range of events, including:

- The launch of Trilakes Nursery and Pre-School within the grounds of Jake's Playworld.
- A vibrant Diwali celebration.
- The Binfield Tennis Association awards, showcasing strong community spirit.
- The Warfield Village Fete, wonderfully organised and enjoyed by many.
- Local cycle races, where I had the honour of starting the race.

- The Royal Military Awards Day, a proud celebration of our Armed Forces.
- Crowthorne's late night shopping evening, full of Christmas spirit despite the weather.
- Visits to care homes, always a pleasure and a reminder of the kindness shown to our vulnerable residents.
- Easthampstead Park Cemetery and Crematorium's annual open-air memorial service, a meaningful moment for the bereaved.
- Remembrance Sunday, paying tribute to lives lost in conflicts past

and present.

- Presenting an award to the Royal British Legion, another organisation doing vital work for veterans.

I visited many more organisations throughout the year and was always met with warmth and generosity.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year exciting and fulfilling, and to all the residents who make our borough the wonderful place it is. I am proud to call it home.

**Cllr Janet Cochrane,
Mayor of the Borough of
Bracknell Forest.**

Council budget 2026 to 2027

The council's budget for 2026 to 2027 will see more than £136 million spent on day-to-day costs (revenue budget).

Meanwhile, more than £12 million will be invested in things like roads, play areas and leisure facilities. This money will come from the council's capital budget. It will include spending:

- £6.8 million to maintain and improve highways
- £95,000 in play area upgrades
- £650,000 in local leisure facilities
- £50,000 investment in Bracknell Day Services to create extra space and support for adults with learning disabilities

How we've balanced the budget

Bracknell Forest Council has the lowest spending power increase of any unitary authority over the next three years.

The squeeze on the council's budget has been caused by:

- recent changes to government funding (Fairer Funding Review). This will see government grant support fall by £18 million over the next three years
- years of central government underfunding
- rising inflation
- extra demand for essential services, like social care and home to school transport

Cllr Paul Bidwell, cabinet member for economy and regeneration, said:

“The council's budget for 2026 to 2027 reflects what people have been telling us – we must protect essential services like social care and road maintenance and reduce non-essential services.



“We will also invest in our communities, protect vital services and make improvements through our capital budget, so the borough remains one of the best places in the country to be born, grow up and grow old.”

Savings of more than £3 million will be made in 2026 to 2027. This includes reducing staffing, reviewing contracts and stopping some non-essential services.

More than £5 million of reserves (savings) will also be used.

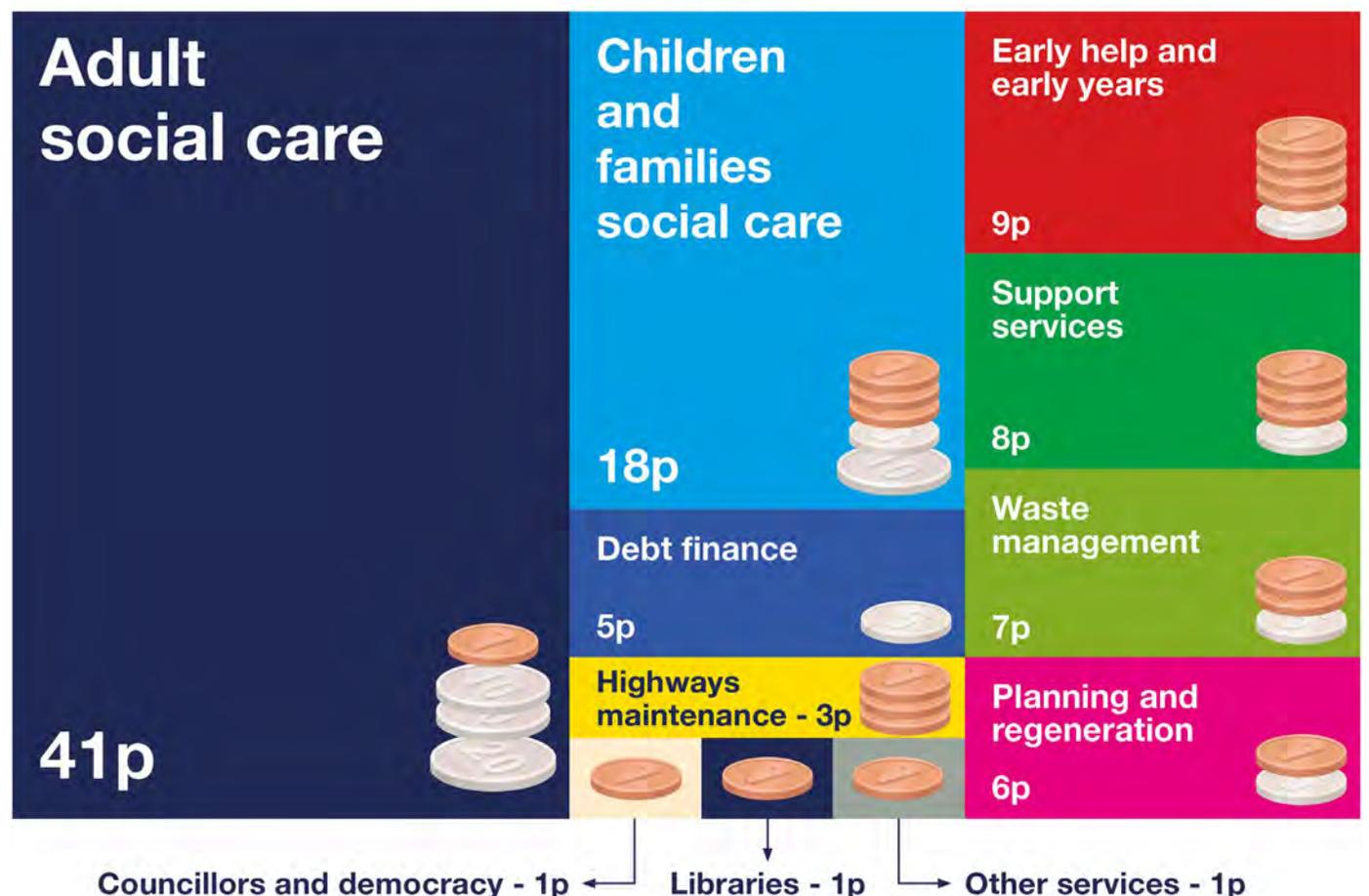
Council tax will rise by the government's expected 4.99 per cent from April to balance the budget.

Cllr Bidwell added: “Sadly, as we have been given the lowest financial settlement of any unitary authority in the country from government, it means we have no choice but to raise council tax by 4.99 per cent from April to help plug the funding gap.”

Support available

To support the lowest income households, a further £50 discount from council tax bills will be applied to all working age and pensioner households receiving council tax support.

How your £1 is spent



How council services impact your life

Carly, 44, and Sara, 47

After 20 years of being together, Carly finally popped the question last year and we said I do in April! We knew there'd be lots to organise, and it would be a stressful (as well as happy) time, so we were grateful for the advice and guidance of the council's registrars.



From giving our notice to marrying us at the registry office in South Hill Park, the whole thing was easy and professional. We're expecting a little girl in March, so we'll be using the team to register our daughter's birth, and we are also thinking of planning a naming ceremony through them.

Patel family: Amit, 45, Priya, 43, Maya, 13 and Rohan, 7

As a family, we use many council services. The school admissions team made starting school smooth. Maya cycles safely thanks to the cycle lanes. Amit quit smoking with the council's smoke-free services. Rohan loves the parks, and we've spent weekends at The Look Out, Coral Reef and South Hill Park. We also enjoy the free family events in the town centre, which help keep entertainment costs down. All these services make a real difference to our daily life.



Chloe, 29: single mum to Emily, age 3

As a single parent on a low income, I qualify for a council tax reduction. This helps me stretch my budget further to cover essentials like food and bills. When I fell in to rent arrears last year, the housing team was able to provide expert advice and support so Emily and I could carry on living in our home.



I get 30 hours a week free childcare administered by the council, which means I can work part-time without having to pay full childminder fees. Emily's childminder regularly attends training by the council's early years team – this gives me extra reassurance.

Reuben, 34: single, with a disability that impacts mobility

The council issued my blue badge, which allows me to park closer to shops, medical facilities, and other public places. They also support community transport services, which provide accessible transport for people with mobility issues.



I live in an accessible home, which was adapted with help from the council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). They helped fund my ramp, wider doorways, and a stairlift, making my home safer and easier to navigate.

Taking the bins out can be difficult, so I signed up for assisted bin collections. The council's team collects my waste and recycling directly from my doorstep, making this everyday task much more manageable.

Many of Bracknell Forest's parks, pathways, and public spaces are designed to be accessible. The council's adult social care services provide carers and personal support for people with disabilities. They also run wellbeing programmes and disability support groups that help me stay connected with the community. Thanks to these council services, I can live independently, stay active, and remain part of the community.

Peter, 72: retired

At 72, I'm enjoying new ways to stay connected with my family. Thanks to the council's free tech support sessions, I've learnt how to videocall my grandson. I also go along and watch my grandson play for his junior football team on Saturday mornings at Farley Wood.



These pitches are looked after by the council with free parking and facilities on site.

Swimming has always been my favourite way to stay active. I enjoy the senior sessions at Bracknell Leisure Centre, which make it easy and fun to keep moving. I like living in an area that's got lots of sporting and leisure facilities – it helps me to keep fit, healthy and connected.

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What your council tax pays for

Your council tax pays for the council's revenue budget. Around £91m out of the £136m revenue budget comes from council tax alone. It pays for a wide range of services, including:

- £ Social care
- £ Registration and electoral services
- £ Libraries, leisure facilities, and family hubs
- £ Bin collection
- £ Road repairs and street cleaning
- £ Housing and homelessness support
- £ Climate change and biodiversity projects
- £ Public health and safety services
- £ Cultural and family activities

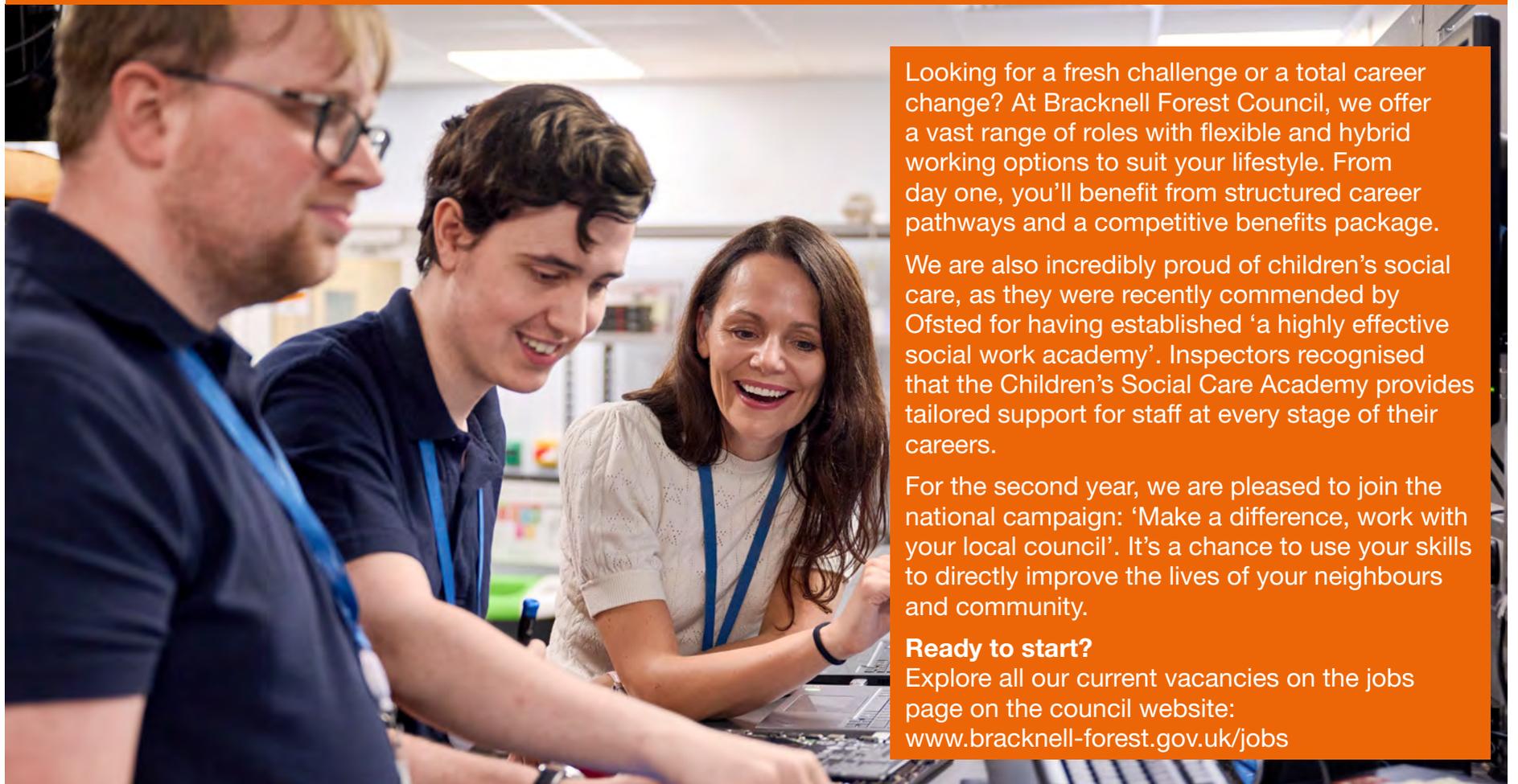
Your council tax also includes a 'precept' – that's money that is collected by the borough council but does not go to the borough council. It pays for parish and town councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Council tax does not pay for things in the council's capital budget. This is paid for by the sale of assets (for example, buildings the council owns), money developers pay us, grants and some borrowing.



Dimple Bhati/iStock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Make a difference: Build your career with Bracknell Forest



Looking for a fresh challenge or a total career change? At Bracknell Forest Council, we offer a vast range of roles with flexible and hybrid working options to suit your lifestyle. From day one, you'll benefit from structured career pathways and a competitive benefits package.

We are also incredibly proud of children's social care, as they were recently commended by Ofsted for having established 'a highly effective social work academy'. Inspectors recognised that the Children's Social Care Academy provides tailored support for staff at every stage of their careers.

For the second year, we are pleased to join the national campaign: 'Make a difference, work with your local council'. It's a chance to use your skills to directly improve the lives of your neighbours and community.

Ready to start?

Explore all our current vacancies on the jobs page on the council website:
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/jobs

The big picture



Meet your local reps

From your ward councillors to our Mayor, these are the voices working for you in the borough.

Our Mayor

Cllr Janet Cochrane has been the Mayor of the Borough of Bracknell Forest since May last year.

Cllr Peter Frewer has been supporting the Mayor as the Deputy Mayor, since May last year.

Your ward councillors

Your local councillors are your first point of contact for many council services and issues.

Adam Webb/iStock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

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

*correct at time of going to press in March 2026

Make sure you're registered

While our next local elections aren't until May 2027, staying registered ensures you can vote in any by-elections or national polls. If you've recently moved or turned 18, register to vote via the GOV.UK website. For more details on local democracy, visit the elections and voting section of the Bracknell Forest Council website.



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Recycling right in Bracknell Forest

Whether you're visiting a recycling site or sorting your household waste, follow these simple steps.

Recycling at home

Our waste analysis found that last year, 78 per cent of our green general waste bins could have been recycled.

Food waste and textiles made up 42 per cent of the green bin waste. Since the end of 2025, all households in Bracknell Forest can recycle food waste at the kerbside. This includes coffee grounds and tea bags, not just your vegetable peelings! Unwanted clothing and textiles can be recycled at local recycling sites, donated to charity or sold second-hand.



Paper and cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic trays, plastic pots and tubs, empty aerosols, cans, tins and foil and Tetra Pak cartons can all go in your blue recycling bin.



Garden waste can be recycled in your brown garden waste bin or garden waste sack.



Glass kerbside collections are proposed to start from March 2027 (delayed from autumn 2026). Keep an eye on our website for more information. In the meantime, take your empty glass bottles and jars to a local recycling bank.



Local recycling sites

Check before you go – you can generally recycle glass, textiles and shoes at local recycling sites. Locate your nearest and check what they accept using: [recyclenow.com/recycling-locator](https://www.recyclenow.com/recycling-locator).

Don't leave any waste on the floor – if bins are full, please find an alternative recycling site or take it back home. Report any full containers using our online form: [bracknell-forest.gov.uk/report-recycling-site](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/report-recycling-site).

If you do leave rubbish behind, you could be fined up to £400 for fly tipping.

Easter collection changes

There will be changes to bin collections over the Easter period.

Good Friday collections will take place as normal. There will be no collections on Easter Monday, so all collections that week will take place one day later than usual, running up to and including Saturday, 11 April.

Check your collection dates and what you can and can't recycle at: [bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bins).



Cllr Helen Purnell, cabinet member for the environment, community and housing, said: "We have very good recycling rates in the borough, and I thank everyone who is already doing their bit to recycle and reduce climate change. However, with 78 per cent of recyclables being thrown away, there is still more we can all do."



Nature on your doorstep



Skylark, by Rob Solomon

Enjoy peaceful, accessible green spaces close to home at sites like Buckler's Forest and Peacock Meadows. These specially managed green spaces provide great places to walk while helping protect nearby heathlands and rare ground-nesting birds such as the Dartford warbler. Find all local sites at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/SANGs

Spring walking tips

Prepare – use our footpath, bridleway and byway map to plan your route: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/about-rights-of-way

Explore – try one of our scenic walking routes: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/countryside-walks

Protect – keep dogs under control, especially around ground-nesting birds and livestock: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/dog-walking

Larysa Pashkevich/Stock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Community Learning at Bracknell Open Learning Centre



Grow your skills, nurture your wellbeing

Discover our range of courses for adults in computing, arts, wellbeing and employability skills.

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



Our greener borough



Switch Together Solar

Switch Together Solar, formerly Solar Together, will return in 2026 to help residents install solar panels, battery storage and electric vehicle charging points at competitive rates. The group-buying scheme uses pre-vetted installers, giving households an affordable way to access renewable energy. More than 200 Bracknell Forest residents have already taken part. To learn more and sign up for updates ahead of the summer registration period, search 'switch together' on the council website.

Warmer Homes

The Warmer Homes scheme offers fully funded energy improvements to help reduce household bills, lower carbon emissions, and keep homes warm. Support can include insulation, heat pumps, or solar panels. You may be eligible if you own or privately rent your home, have an EPC rating of D or below, and have a total household income under £36,000 or receive a means-tested benefit. To register your interest, visit: www.warmerhomes.org.uk or call the freephone number on 0800 038 5737.

Bracknell Forest Community Climate Action

Founded by local volunteers in 2025, Bracknell Forest Community Climate Action (BFCCA) is a charity supporting residents to respond to the climate and biodiversity crisis. They run regular events, including the annual Community Climate Summit, and share inspiring climate action stories from across the borough. BFCCA is also developing new projects, such as a Repair Café in Bracknell, to help residents live more sustainably. Find out more and get involved at: bfcca.org.

Climate Action Grant Scheme

Bracknell Forest Council launched its Climate Action Grant Scheme at the end of 2025 to support local organisations in delivering the council's 2025–2026 action plan. Nine charities and schools have received a total of £15,000 to run impactful climate projects. Funded initiatives include sustainable cooking workshops for the Ukrainian community by Vsi Razom, a solar panel feasibility study at College Town School, and the creation of a wildflower meadow at Jealott's Hill Community Landshare.

Helping you travel more sustainably



Bikeability cycle training

Over 1,500 children in years 5 and 6 have completed Bikeability training, learning how to stay safe and confident on the road. Younger children can build early cycling confidence through our Learn to Ride sessions. We also offer Bikeability training for adults, helping them feel ready to cycle to work or ride for leisure.

Free bike repairs with Dr Bike

We've been running Dr Bike sessions at local schools and community centres, offering free bike checks and repairs. Mechanics look over brakes, gears and other essentials to ensure every bike is safe to ride. If you haven't been to one yet, more Dr Bike sessions are scheduled across the area throughout the year.

Take a look at the Avanti Cycling website for more information on Bikeability and Dr Bike: avanticycling.co.uk/bracknell/

Bracknell Cycle Festival

More than 1,000 people joined last summer's Cycle Festival with Avanti and Trek. Crowds enjoyed stunt shows, a pump track, Learn to Ride sessions, mountain bike skills and an instructor led ride from Crowthorne. The festival is back on 7 June in Bond Square (The Lexicon) — save the date!

Eco Rewards

Eco Rewards is going from strength to strength, encouraging greener travel across the borough:

- 20+ schools taking part
- 750,000 green miles logged
- 206 tonnes of CO₂e saved
- hundreds of pounds in prizes won

Events

At the Summer of Fun, we chatted with hundreds of residents about how to make walking and cycling easier. Families enjoyed BMX try-outs, a fun obstacle course and plenty of maps, advice and freebies.

Infrastructure upgrades

We've been busy improving routes and crossings to help everyone travel safely:

- new South Road path/cycleway linking Buckler's Park and King's Academy Easthampstead Park
- new pelican crossing on Broad Lane
- new zebra crossing on Birch Hill Road
- speed reduction scheme at Winkfield Row

Results

Our latest counts show more people getting active:

- cycling up 33 per cent
- adult walking up 11 per cent
- child walking up 12 per cent



Still outstanding, always improving

Ofsted once again rated Bracknell Forest Council's children's services as 'outstanding'.

Following rigorous inspection in late 2025, the report praised our "unwavering dedication" to local families. Inspectors highlighted our effective early help, the strong voices of our young people in decision-making, and the exceptional support provided to care leavers.

This top rating confirms that our borough remains one of the best in the country for safeguarding and supporting children. While we celebrate this achievement, our focus remains on continuous improvement – particularly as we strengthen our SEND services to ensure that every child in Bracknell Forest can thrive and reach their full potential.



Room to rent?

Rental costs and charges covered when you host a 16+ year old into independence

- ✗ Fostering
- ✗ Parenting
- ✓ Supporting
- ✓ Mentoring

Bracknell Forest Fostering



Scan me, to find out more!

Search Supported Lodgings Bracknell
or visit www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/supported-lodgings

Do you regularly help a friend or family member who cannot manage alone?



They might need support because of illness, disability, age-related difficulties, mental health issues, or addiction.

You could be helping them:

- cook, clean, or shop
- get out of bed or to appointments
- wash, dress, or eat
- manage money
- collect prescriptions or take medicine
- communicate
- with emotional support

If you do this regularly, without pay, you may be an unpaid carer. This could be for someone in your home or elsewhere.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, SIGNAL4Carers may be able to help with:

- finding practical support, like arranging for someone to step in when you need a break

- contingency planning, in case you can't provide care in an emergency
- finding local support groups so you have people to talk to
- advice on claiming benefits to help with money and well-being needs

SIGNAL4Carers is commissioned by Bracknell Forest Council to provide a carers' support service. Find out more about SIGNAL4Carers at: www.signal4carers.org.uk or call 01344 266088. Visit the 'support for carers' page of the Bracknell Forest Council website to learn more about how unpaid carers can be supported: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/support-carers.

"I can't express how grateful I feel to have so much support and guidance from wonderful people [SIGNAL4Carers] and carers I have met over the years."
Carer to family member

Carers under 18

Unpaid carers aren't just adults. A young carer is anyone under 18 who provides support to a parent, sibling, or friend.

Children and young people who provide care and support can have a free assessment to explore their needs, with support options that could make things easier. This will also allow them to register as a young carer with Bracknell Forest Council and access:

- practical help, emotional support, and advice
- a range of fun activities and clubs with other young carers

For further information, email: young.carers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

"I love going to young carers on a Thursday evening. It's a cool place to hang out and the staff are really nice." Young carer



Staying safe at home

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own home. Bracknell Forest Council is committed to supporting residents affected by domestic abuse and making sure no one has to face abuse alone.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. Help is available.

Spotting the signs

Domestic abuse can be hard to recognise, even for those experiencing it. It isn't always physical; it can be hidden or difficult to talk about. Abuse may be emotional, psychological, economic, financial, or controlling.

Things to look out for may include:

- **withdrawal** – becoming quieter than usual, feeling nervous, anxious, cancelling plans, or making excuses not to see friends or family
- **control** – a partner or family member closely monitoring phone use, sending frequent messages, limiting contact with others, controlling money and daily routines
- **physical signs** – unexplained injuries or changes in clothing to hide marks
- **belittling behaviour** – being put down, criticised, or made to feel worthless

Speaking out and being believed

Telling someone about domestic abuse can be frightening.

In Bracknell Forest, anyone who reaches out for help will be listened to, taken seriously and supported. You are not to blame and help is available.

Our response

In Bracknell Forest, our priorities are focused on: prevention and early intervention, support for adult and child victim survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and partnership working.

How to help

If you're worried about someone, listen without judgement and offer reassurance and support.



simonapilolla/Stock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Confidential support is available from Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) who support people of all genders. You can call on 0808 801 0882 or visit the website: www.berkshireromensaid.org.uk.

In an emergency, call 999. If you cannot speak, press 55 when prompted.

For more information about domestic abuse and support services available, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/domestic-abuse.

If reading this information puts you at risk, try to seek help when it is safe to do so.

White Ribbon Day

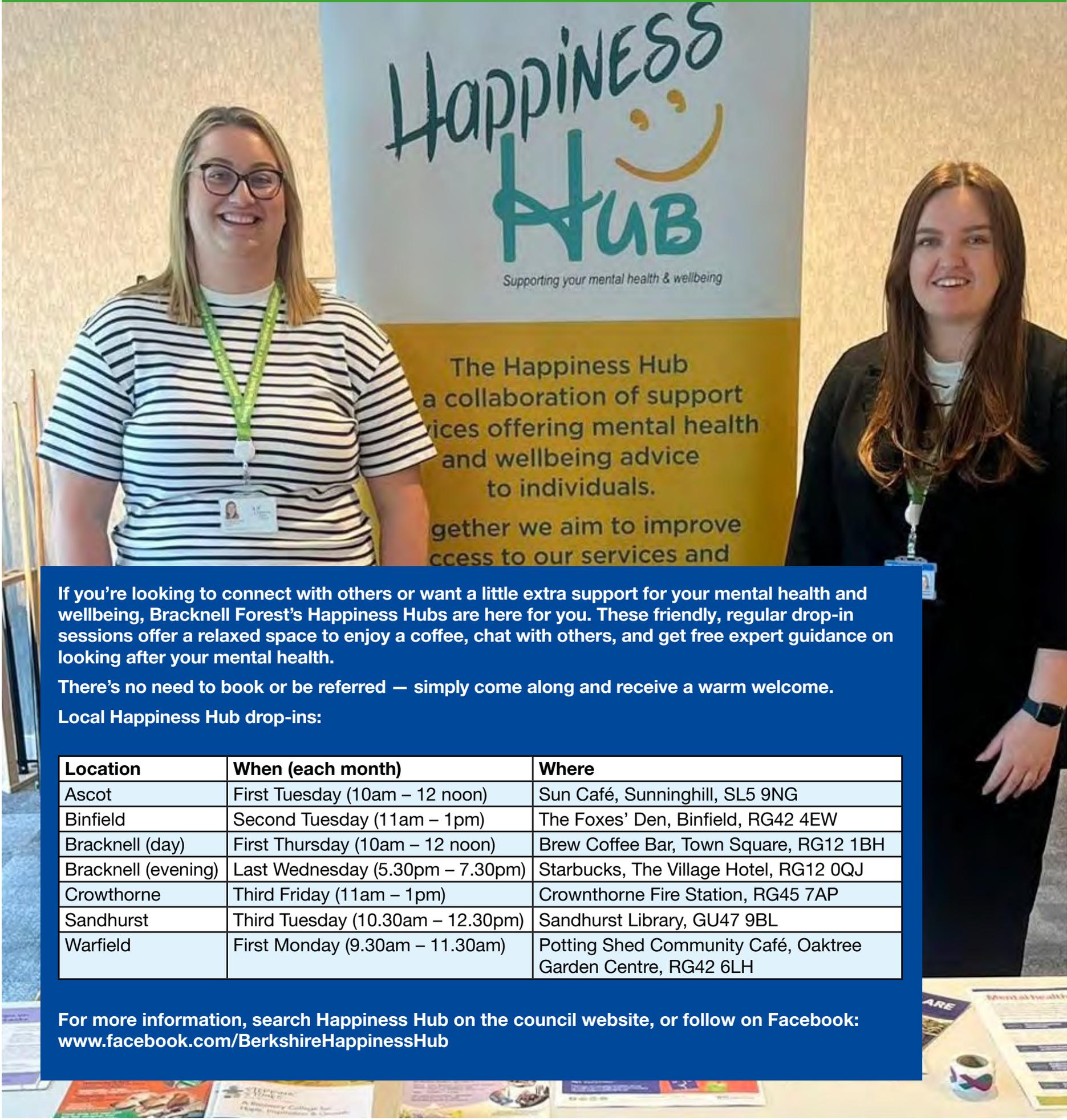
Bracknell Forest proudly supports White Ribbon Day each November. We encourage everyone to challenge harmful behaviours and make a promise to never excuse or remain silent about violence against women or girls. Together, we can break the stigma, change the culture and keep our community safe.



Cllr Megan Wright, cabinet member for adults and public health, said: "We all have a role to play in ending domestic abuse and supporting those in need. If you or someone you know is at risk, please use the resources provided – there is a dedicated network ready to support you."



Reach out and feel supported: visit a Happiness Hub



If you're looking to connect with others or want a little extra support for your mental health and wellbeing, Bracknell Forest's Happiness Hubs are here for you. These friendly, regular drop-in sessions offer a relaxed space to enjoy a coffee, chat with others, and get free expert guidance on looking after your mental health.

There's no need to book or be referred — simply come along and receive a warm welcome.

Local Happiness Hub drop-ins:

Location	When (each month)	Where
Ascot	First Tuesday (10am – 12 noon)	Sun Café, Sunninghill, SL5 9NG
Binfield	Second Tuesday (11am – 1pm)	The Foxes' Den, Binfield, RG42 4EW
Bracknell (day)	First Thursday (10am – 12 noon)	Brew Coffee Bar, Town Square, RG12 1BH
Bracknell (evening)	Last Wednesday (5.30pm – 7.30pm)	Starbucks, The Village Hotel, RG12 0QJ
Crowthorne	Third Friday (11am – 1pm)	Crowthorne Fire Station, RG45 7AP
Sandhurst	Third Tuesday (10.30am – 12.30pm)	Sandhurst Library, GU47 9BL
Warfield	First Monday (9.30am – 11.30am)	Potting Shed Community Café, Oaktree Garden Centre, RG42 6LH

For more information, search Happiness Hub on the council website, or follow on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/BerkshireHappinessHub



Artist Impression

Hawthorn Academy

Work has now started on the construction of the new social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) school building in Bracknell Forest, the Hawthorn Academy.

The new school, on the old Warfield CE Primary School site in All Saints Rise, will provide 50 school places for 11 to 16-year-olds with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Breakthrough Supported Employment

Breakthrough Supported Employment helps those with learning disabilities and/or autism to secure and retain paid work.

The service includes:

- vocational profiling, job seeking support, CV writing, and interview practice
- practical training for independent travel and onboarding
- in work support for employees and employers

For more details, search Breakthrough Supported Employment on the council website.

Email: breakthrough.employment@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Call: 01344 307554

Preparing for Adulthood Roadshow

In January, the third Preparing for Adulthood Roadshow took place at Bracknell and Wokingham College.

Over 350 young people aged 14 to 25 with SEND came along to find out more about the options and support available after leaving school. They were able to speak to over 30 exhibitors offering advice.



SEND newsletter

A new SEND newsletter for parent carers and young people has been launched.

The newsletter offers updates, advice, and information regarding SEND services and support in Bracknell Forest. The newsletter is complemented by a new SEND Facebook page.

If you're a parent carer of a child or young person with SEND, you can sign up for free on the council website or follow the Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/BracknellForestSEND

New: Best Start in Life - supporting families every step of the way

The NHS Best Start in Life website is now live and ready to help parents and carers feel informed, confident, and supported from pregnancy through to starting school. Whether you're preparing for your baby's arrival, navigating early years development, or getting ready for their first day in childcare or reception, this easy-to-access site brings together trusted guidance, practical tips, and useful tools in one place.



With support from your local family hubs, Best Start in Life covers everything from health and wellbeing to childcare and early education. We'll be linking our own website to this site later this year, so stay tuned!

1. Pregnancy
2. Feeding and nutrition
3. Parent-infant relationships
4. Early years and childcare
5. School readiness

Sign up for the parent newsletter via: beststartinlife.gov.uk



Family hubs - here for you and your family



At Bracknell Forest family hubs, families can get professional help, join fun groups, and connect with other parents.

For more information, search family hubs on: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Or visit the 'Bracknell Forest Family Hubs' page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BracknellForestFamilyHubs

Our family hubs currently offer:

- **fun programmes** – family play, messy play, active play (open to all!)
- **health services** – appointments and drop-ins
- **parenting support** – tips and advice for managing children's emotional needs
- **'helping your child' programmes** – help your child's language and emotional development
- **community connections** – links to healthcare, childcare, relationship advice, jobs, and housing

For more information on Best Start in Life and family hubs, take a look at our family services directory: bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk

Need help finding local family services?

Our **Family Services Directory** and **Additional Needs Info Hub (SEND Local Offer)** makes it easy to access support for:

- ✓ special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- ✓ childcare and early years funding
- ✓ leisure and holiday activities
- ✓ parenting and family support

✉ fis@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

☎ 01344 353133



Get free, impartial advice tailored to your family's needs.
bracknell-forest.gov.uk/localdirectory

Childcare support – are you eligible?

Eligible working families can apply for up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week to use from the term after their child turns nine months until they reach school age.

- If you are not eligible for the working parent offer, 15 hours universal funding is still available for ALL three and four year olds
- If you or your child receive some additional forms of support, you may be eligible for 15 hours early learning for two year olds (targeted two year old funding)

Childcare support helps your little one get a great start while giving you more flexibility with work and family life.

Check what you're eligible for and apply today at: www.beststartinlife.gov.uk.

For local childcare options and more information, contact our Family Information Service:

✉ fis@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

☎ 01344 353133

🌐 www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/localdirectory



What's new?

Find out about some of the improvements our parks and countryside team has been making in recent months.

Forest focus

We are improving woodland at Nine Mile Ride and South Hill Park by removing invasive plants and replanting them with native trees and bulbs. The work is boosting biodiversity, with new saplings and native plants already returning.

Fruitful work

We have planted a new community orchard at Shepherd Meadows. It contains apple, pear, cherry, and plum trees. This includes several heritage varieties, which were once grown across Berkshire. Managed for both people and wildlife, the orchard will provide spring blossom for pollinators and summer shade. Its autumn fruit can be enjoyed by birds, mammals and visitors alike.

Time to play

Cabbage Hill (Warfield) – the new playground features balance ropes, tunnels, and grassy mounds to encourage imaginative play.

Evenlode Way (Sandhurst) – underwent a refresh in 2025, with a new swing set, roundabout, multi-play unit, climboo and a new fitness trail.

Ready to explore? Find your nearest site via the Bracknell Forest Playground Directory: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/playground-directory



Rangers and the Hedgerow and Woodland Conservationists running a hedge laying course at Lark's Hill, January 2026.

Events round-up

Bracknell Forest Pride 2025 and the Culture and Community Day brought residents together for vibrant celebrations filled with performances, activities and community spirit. Thank you to everyone involved in making these summer events a success – keep an eye on the council website and social media for what’s coming up in 2026.



Digital Vision/iStock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images



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Bracknell Leisure Centre

Bracknell Leisure Centre features three pools, a fully refurbished spa, and extensive athletics facilities.

Top tip: check your eligibility for the Leisure Saver Scheme. Residents receiving certain benefits can access significant discounts on activities using their free e+ card.

Coral Reef Waterworld

Budget-friendly ways to visit:

Off-peak savings: adult off-peak swims can be significantly cheaper than peak weekend sessions.

Early years: children under four can often swim for free, and for those slightly older (under five), tickets are available for as little as £1.25 (plus a small booking fee).

Senior specials: residents aged 64+ can enjoy the Senior Spa Afternoon on Thursdays for approximately £10.60, which includes spa access and complimentary tea.

Local resident discounts: Monday and Friday (excluding holiday periods), and Saturday and Sunday from 3.30pm (proof of address required).

Cllr Iskandar Jefferies, cabinet member for leisure, culture, public protection, and democracy, said:

“Residents living in Bracknell Forest can benefit from a wide range of open spaces and activities that are free or low cost. Staying healthy doesn’t need to be expensive, getting out and exploring in our borough can be fun and great for mental and physical health.”



The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon



Now in its 42nd year, The Lexicon Bracknell Half Marathon brings a strong sense of community spirit, with residents, volunteers and runners uniting to support and celebrate one another. Organised by Everyone Active, Bracknell Forest Council and sponsored by The Lexicon, runners will once again take to the streets on Sunday, 10 May 2026.



Events at The Lexicon – don't miss out

The Lexicon has an exciting line-up of activities planned for 2026, with the vast majority being free and family friendly.

Visitors can look forward to the return of much loved favourites such as Live at The Lexicon, an unforgettable day of music and theatre featuring a blend of local and national acts. Plus, many new events will be unveiled later in the year.

Make sure you don't miss out on all the fun by regularly checking The Lexicon's website and social channels. Or, to stay fully up to date, why not sign up for The Lexicon's newsletter: www.thelexiconbracknell.com/sign-up/email.

Supporting local community groups

The Lexicon Charity Fund will be stepping up its fundraising activity this year as it works towards its next round of funding in 2027.

Launched in 2018, the fund supports charities, schools and community groups based in or benefiting residents within Bracknell Forest. So far, it has supported 16 local groups, including: Pilgrim Hearts Trust, Meadow Vale

Primary PTA, Age Concern Bracknell Forest, Chance to Dance Stars, and Jealott's Hill Community Landshare.

To find out more about the work of The Lexicon Charity Fund, visit: www.thelexiconbracknell.com. The Lexicon Charity Fund is managed in conjunction with Berkshire Community Foundation (Charity Number: 1155173), an independent charity that connects local people with local causes and projects.



Working in the rooftop bee garden above Princess Square car park, the team has produced 260kg of honey since 2021 and helped raise over £3,500 for The Lexicon Charity Fund.

Roads, parking and transport information



Michael Gane/iStock/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

For up-to-date travel and maintenance information across the borough, visit: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport to find:

- current and planned roadworks
- how to report road repairs or issues, including overhanging vegetation and potholes
- information on car parks and other parking information
- gritting routes and winter maintenance updates

Our highways team carries out routine inspections across Bracknell Forest, but reports from residents help them identify and prioritise repairs. If you spot a pothole or other road issue, please report it at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/potholes.

Cllr Guy Gillbe, cabinet member for planning, transport and countryside, said: “Our highways team has worked extremely hard over the past year, continuing to improve the local roads, paths and bike lanes. This consistent maintenance and repair work is essential to help keep our roads and footpaths safe for residents.”



Planning permission granted for new community hub

A new community hub in Warfield has been given the go ahead following a meeting of Bracknell Forest Council’s planning committee in February.

Warfield Community Hub will be owned and operated by Warfield Parish Council and is a joint project with Bracknell Forest Council. The hub will be located on Priory Fields and will provide a wide range of modern facilities for people of all ages. It will be designed to be environmentally

friendly, and will aim for zero carbon emissions when operational, as well as a BREEAM Excellent rating.

When complete, the hub will open seven days a week, and will include:

- a café
- multiuse spaces available for hire including meeting rooms and function hall
- a large sports hall suitable for a variety of activities
- a modern dance and fitness studio
- enhanced sports pitches at Priory Fields
- a new children’s play area

- improved greenway and bridleway routes for walking, cycling and horse riding
- car parking and cycle stands
- a new base for Warfield Parish Council

Initial vegetation removal will begin on site, with construction due to start in late spring 2026. More information and a proposed site plan can be viewed on Warfield Parish Council’s website. The hub will be built by Neilcott Construction. The hub is anticipated to be operational in 2027.





April

Wednesday 22, 7.30pm
Council

Thursday 23, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Tuesday 28, 6.30pm
Cabinet

May

Wednesday 13, 7.30pm
Council

Thursday 14, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Tuesday 19, 6.30pm
Cabinet

Thursday 21, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

June

Tuesday 2, 5pm
Corporate Parenting
Advocacy Panel

Thursday 4, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Thursday 11, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Thursday 18, 7.30pm
Licensing and Safety
Committee

Tuesday 23, 6.30pm
Cabinet

July

Wednesday 1, 7.30pm
Employment Committee

Thursday 2, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Tuesday 14, 6.30pm
Cabinet

Thursday 16, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Wednesday 25, 7.30pm
Council

August

Thursday 13, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

September

Thursday 3, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Tuesday 7, 5pm
Corporate Parenting
Advocacy Panel

Wednesday 9, 7.30pm
Council

Thursday 10, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Tuesday 22, 6.30pm
Cabinet

October

Wednesday 7, 7.30pm
Employment Committee

Thursday 8, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Tuesday 13, 6.30pm
Cabinet

Thursday 15, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Thursday 22, 7.30pm
Licensing and Safety
Committee

November

Tuesday 3, 6.30pm
Cabinet

Thursday 5, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Thursday 12, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Wednesday 25, 7.30pm
Council

December

Tuesday 1, 5pm
Corporate Parenting
Advocacy Panel

Wednesday 2, 7.30pm
Employment Committee

Thursday 3, 6.30pm
Overview and Scrutiny
Commission

Thursday 10, 6.30pm
Planning Committee

Tuesday 15, 6.30pm
Cabinet

If you need to report an issue – like a missed bin or a broken streetlamp – you can do it quickly and easily online: search ‘get in touch’ at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.



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



Shop, Dine & Unwind

The Lexicon is the ultimate destination for shopping and leisure. Featuring over 100 fashion and beauty brands, a diverse selection of dining options and incredible family events to enjoy all year round. Find out more at thelexiconbracknell.com



MANGO

Fenwick

M&S
EST. 1884

TKmaxx

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PRIMARK

cineworld
CINEMAS

