

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: *Uncovered*

## 2020 REPORT



**Celebrating 20 years  
of connecting people who care  
with local causes that matter.**

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# Uncovering Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire is perceived positively and it's not difficult to see why.

Over a quarter of the county is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there are low levels of unemployment and education attainment is high. However, when we dig a little deeper, we discover families living in poverty, problems with obesity and mental health and a high risk of isolation and loneliness amongst the growing elderly population.

Heart of Bucks have collected local and national data on Buckinghamshire in order to make comparisons within the county. In addition to informing us and our supporters of the needs locally, we also hope our findings will help other local organisations make Buckinghamshire a better place to live, work and take part in leisure activities.

While Buckinghamshire formed a new unitary council in April 2020, historically data on the county has been collected and reported by the four former districts of the county: Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks. To provide the best possible snapshot of the county in recent times, we have therefore presented the data by district to give a good and thorough indication of where Buckinghamshire is thriving and where help is needed most by area.

To download the full version of this report, please visit:  
[heartofbucks.org/research](http://heartofbucks.org/research)

## About us

Heart of Bucks is the community foundation for the county; a charitable funding organisation that awards grants and loans to local causes, charities and community groups.

Part of a national network of community foundations, we are one of 46 foundations dedicated to improving the lives of people in a defined local geographical area. We bring together the financial resources of individuals, families and businesses to support non-profits in the community.

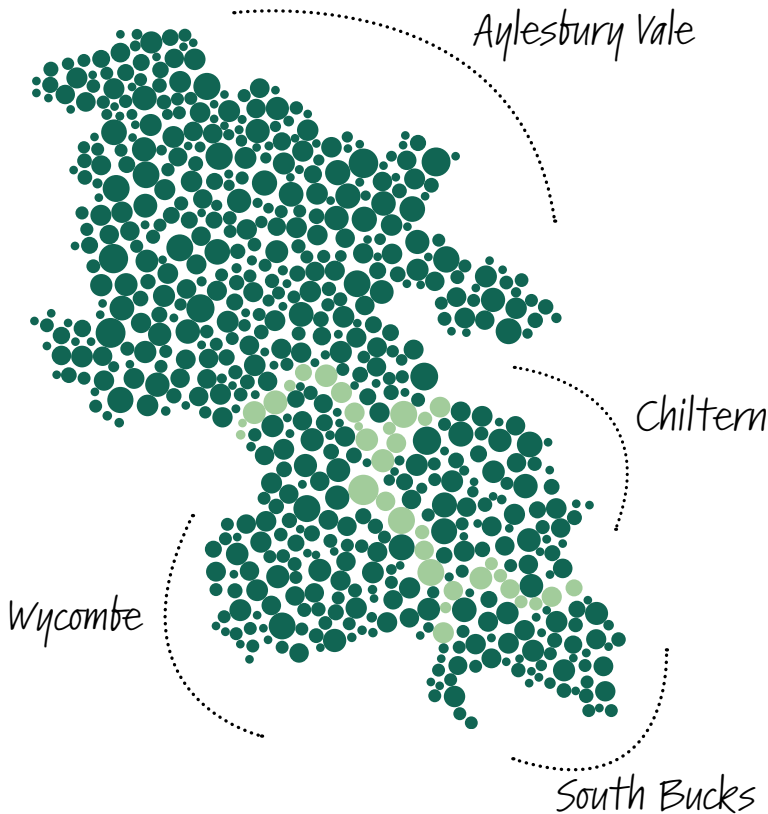
As one of the largest non-statutory funders in the county, together with our donors, we have supported more than 3,500 community organisations since our first grant payment in 2000. To date, we have distributed over £8.7m in grants and loans across Buckinghamshire.

One of the strengths of Heart of Bucks is our unique understanding of the needs of Buckinghamshire. Through research and outreach work we ensure that funding reaches groups and charities who need it most and can use it effectively.

Every three years Heart of Bucks undergoes an independent quality accreditation as part of our membership of UK Community Foundations (UKCF). We are also registered with the Fundraising Regulator.



# Buckinghamshire profile



## Bucks has...

540,100 residents  
51% are female  
49% are male  
20% are children  
61% are working age  
19% are aged over 65

The overall population is projected to increase by nearly one fifth (17.4%) by the year 2037

The population of residents age 65+ is also projected to increase dramatically by three quarters by 2037

## A message from Henry Allmand, CEO

Buckinghamshire Uncovered is our most detailed study of the county in our twenty years as the Community Foundation for Buckinghamshire. With this report, we aim to show a balance of aspects to Buckinghamshire: the areas that are thriving and where help is needed most.

It is a time of great change for Buckinghamshire. A new unitary authority gives hope to an even more distinct identity for our county. We are encouraged by the formation of new Community Boards that will establish truly local links between the authority and the community, and we hope that this independent analysis of Buckinghamshire will be as helpful to our partners in local government, as the charities and communities they represent.

The chapter for a new decade in Buckinghamshire is being defined. Our county's response to the impact and disruption of the coronavirus pandemic has been exceptional. Now more than ever, a deep understanding of the needs and requirements of our county is needed. Looking to the future, Heart of Bucks will strive to continue to provide detailed research and analysis that our whole community can access.

This graphic report shows the highlights of the full Buckinghamshire Uncovered report, which can be read at [heartofbucks.org/research](https://heartofbucks.org/research).

The data for this report was collected from mid to late 2019, providing an invaluable snapshot of the county just before the coronavirus pandemic.



# Physical & mental health, wellbeing & safety

## Key findings



South Bucks has the highest proportion of children who are **overweight or obese**

22% of adults aged 16+ in Wycombe are considered **inactive**

64% of adults in Aylesbury Vale are **overweight or obese**



Residents in Bucks **live longer** compared to the national average

When considering a range of lifestyle factors, the '**healthiest**' district is Chiltern

**Sickness absence** for Bucks is above the national average, with the highest rate in Wycombe



13% of Bucks residents have a life-limiting **long-term illness or disability**

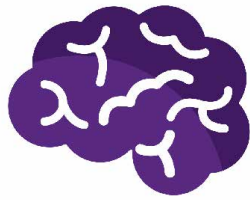
29% of all deaths in Bucks are as a result of **cancer**

The mortality rate from **cardiovascular disease** in Bucks is significantly below the national average



**Alcohol-related deaths** are below the national average in all 4 Bucks districts

13% of residents in Wycombe and South Bucks are **smokers**



Bucks has a lower prevalence of **mental illness** compared to the England average

The **suicide rate** in Bucks is lower than the national average

Nearly 10% of Aylesbury Vale residents are estimated to have **depression** (9.7%). The national average is 9.9%

“

*A clear distinction is often made between 'mind' and 'body'. But when considering mental health and physical health, the two should not be thought of as separate.*

Mental Health Foundation

”



### *Meeting the need: Meet & Mingle*

Meet & Mingle provide activities that focus on the physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing of women. Their aim is to help build self-esteem, confidence, friendship and networking to enhance community cohesion. In addition to giving women an opportunity to learn new skills, the group helps to reduce isolation and loneliness. Meet & Mingle also hosts a cancer support group and recently launched a men's group.

Heart of Bucks awarded Meet & Mingle a grant of £3,000 from our Comic Relief Local Communities Fund which was used to provide a variety of activities including fitness, crafts and cooking classes for their cancer support groups in Wycombe and South Bucks.





# The arts, culture & heritage

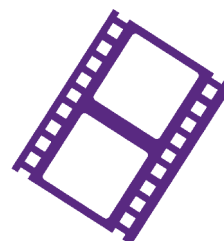
## Key findings



There are 3,475 **creative businesses** in the High Wycombe and Aylesbury area

In the High Wycombe and Aylesbury creative communities, **nearly 15,000 people are employed in creative industries**

In terms of the number of businesses, the fastest growing sector is **film, TV, video, radio and photography**



All 4 districts attend more **arts events, festivals and performances** than the national average

The national average for **museum and gallery attendance** is 47%. All 4 districts rank higher, with Chiltern sitting at 58%



**Public library use** is below the national average of 35% in Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks

Aylesbury Vale has the **lowest overall engagement** with arts, culture and heritage of the 4 districts





“When we talk about the value of arts and culture to society, we always start with its intrinsic value: how arts and culture can illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. This is what we cherish. However, we also understand that arts and culture has a wider, more measurable impact on our economy, health and wellbeing, society and education. It's important we also recognise this impact to help people think of our arts and culture for what they are: a strategic national resource.”

Arts Council England

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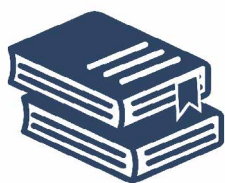
## Meeting the need: Bucks County Museum Trust

Bucks County Museum Trust seeks to distribute exhibitions, talks and activities across the county. The museum features permanent displays about Bucks history, the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery and a programme of temporary exhibitions each year.

Their school programmes provide national curriculum-linked workshops based on the stories of Roald Dahl with discovery, science and literacy themes for over 15,000 children each year, with a new addition of a prehistory workshop part-funded by our Kop Hill Climb Fund in 2018. The workshop brought together families from a range of different backgrounds and benefitted approximately 280 people from the local Aylesbury community, including at least 120 school children from two of the most deprived wards in Aylesbury.

*“My favourite bit was when we dug up the bones, pottery and coins. It really was the best day, thank you” - feedback from an attendee*





# Education & employment

## Key findings



86% of female Key Stage 2 pupils are reaching the expected standard in **reading**

Male Key Stage 2 pupils are achieving below the England average in **writing**

Bucks students who took their **A Levels** between 2016 and 2018 achieved an average grade of B-.  
The England average was C+

The majority of male **lone parents** in Bucks are **working full time**, while only one third of female lone parents work full time

Across the county, women are claiming less in **out of work benefits** than men



District-wide, a higher proportion of males are **economically active** compared to females. The largest difference between economically active men and women is in Aylesbury Vale, where the gap is 12%



Buckinghamshire has a lower **unemployment rate** than the England-wide average

Chiltern has the largest **pay gap between men and women**, with men earning an average of £294 more in gross weekly pay than women

The lowest gender pay gap is noticed in Wycombe, where men earn £18 more than women in gross weekly pay on average



“

*For people with low levels of education, the emphasis on its importance can make it harder for them to develop a social identity, which in turn can negatively affect self-esteem and wellbeing.*

Economic and Social Research Council, 2014

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### *Meeting the need: Volunteer it Yourself*

Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) combines DIY and volunteering by challenging young people aged 14-24 to help repair and refurbish youth and community buildings and facilities, whilst learning vocational trade skills on the job. Young people are mentored by professional tradespeople, and gain Entry Level City & Guilds trade skills accreditations at the same time as developing broader employability skills. The majority of young people who take part are disengaged (or at risk of disengagement) from mainstream education and training, and/or unemployed.

VIY received a grant from our #iwill Fund for a project taking place in Aylesbury Vale. 23 young people participated in the project, all of whom were first time volunteers who had not previously engaged in social action. One of the participants, Ben, had struggled at school and been unemployed for two years. He contributed over 60 volunteer hours to the project, achieved multiple City & Guilds trade skills accreditations, and successfully progressed into a job at a fibreglass factory in Aylesbury. He also still volunteers with VIY as a peer mentor.

**Ben said:** “VIY has meant I can make up for what I missed out on at school or college. It’s also very motivating because you can help others and your community whilst helping yourself.”







# Community cohesion

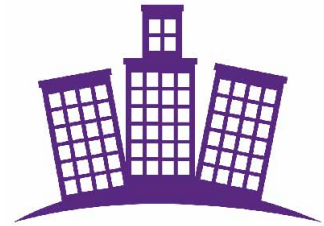
## Key findings



According to the Thriving Places Index, South Bucks is the third-worst performing district nationally in terms of **equality measurements**



There are more **charities** in Buckinghamshire compared to the national average



The Thriving Places Index places Chiltern top of all districts in England in the category of '**local conditions**'



There are fewer instances of **violent crime** in Bucks per 1,000 residents compared to England as a whole. However, there are significant differences at a local level



South Bucks has the lowest recorded instances of **anti-social behaviour** at eight incidents per 1,000 residents. The England average is 22 instances per 1,000 residents



Aylesbury Central ward has over twice the number of **violent crimes, sexual assaults and drug crimes** than the national average and almost twice the amount of anti-social behaviour than the national average



Three wards in Aylesbury and one in Chiltern have higher levels of **drug crime** than the national average

“

*There is no 'magic bullet' that can create or sustain community cohesion. A range of factors contribute to shaping social relationships, and what works in one place may not be suitable elsewhere. Hence in order to build strong communities it will always be necessary to adopt a flexible and multi-pronged approach, underpinned by an in-depth understanding of the characteristics and needs of the communities in question.*

Involve Foundation

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### Meeting the need: Tingewick Football Club

Tingewick FC are a junior and youth football club that offer grassroots football for local children. When they applied for grant funding, the club had one under 16s team, which had started as an under 14s team when the club was launched two years previously. They were looking to grow the club in order to reach more children and offer more football opportunities to the wider community.

As a result of the grant from our Gawcott Fields Community Solar Fund, Tingewick FC were able to set-up an under 10s and an under 11s team and supply them with full kit, purchase equipment and train a parent volunteer as a level 1 coach.

*“Being able to set up two new football teams has been of huge benefit to the community. It has promoted health and wellbeing for a large number of children whilst at the same time encouraging parents to spend fun, quality time with them.” - Mandy Putman, treasurer*







# Isolation & disadvantage

## Key findings

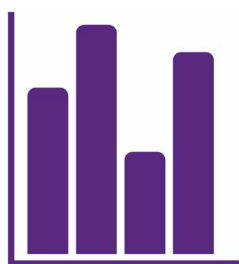


Buckinghamshire as a whole has a lower rate of **child poverty** than the national average

In Wycombe, 38% of children in Oakridge and Castlefield live in poverty, compared to 3% in Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens



In 2019, Aylesbury **food banks** provided 27,342 meals to local people in crisis, which is a 54.2% increase from the previous year



Aylesbury Vale experiences the most **deprivation** of the four districts in Bucks, while Chiltern is the least deprived

In 2019, Chiltern ranked as the third least deprived local authority in England



People living in wards situated in the heart of a town, including Aylesbury Central, Amersham on the Hill, Oakridge and Castlefield, are at high risk of **loneliness**

Small communities in Wing, Stoke Poges, Chartridge and Bledlow have a very low risk of loneliness

“Research shows that loneliness is associated with a greater risk of inactivity, smoking and risk-taking behaviour; increased risk of coronary heart disease and stroke; an increased risk of depression, low self-esteem, reported sleep problems and increased stress response; and with cognitive decline and an increased risk of Alzheimer's. What's more, feeling lonely can make a person more likely to perceive, expect and remember others' behaviour to be unfriendly. This can increase social anxiety and cause them to withdraw further, creating a vicious cycle.

Office for National Statistics

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### Meeting the need: Black Park Shed

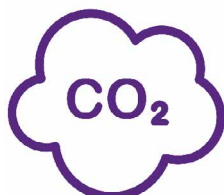
Black Park Shed is a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practise skills and enjoy making and mending whilst developing social connections and building friendships. The shed aims to combat the negative impact of loneliness and isolation on a person's health and wellbeing. Shed members are often unemployed or retired and welcome the opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and skills in a safe and enjoyable environment. Established in 2017, they were set up to meet the needs of the local area at the request and with the assistance of Buckinghamshire County Council.

A grant from our Bucks Masonic Fund and the Heart of Bucks General Fund enabled them to purchase furniture, equipment and tools prior to opening the shed to members of the public.





# The environment & public spaces



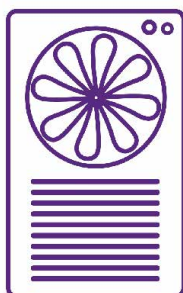
A reduction in **CO2 emissions** was recorded between 2010 and 2017 in all four Bucks local authorities

The highest CO2 emissions per person was noticed in South Bucks, with more than double the CO2 emissions of Chiltern in 2017

Approximately half of the Chiltern Hills, an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), is within Buckinghamshire

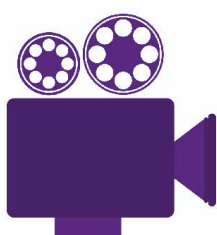
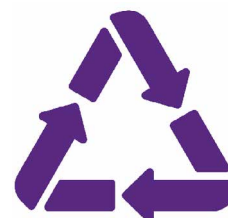
Chiltern district has the majority share of AONB areas at 70%

In terms of the percentage of each district that is covered by **green space**, South Bucks ranks the highest at 10.7%, while Aylesbury Vale ranks the lowest at 1.4%



**Air quality** is best in Aylesbury Vale, while South Bucks has the highest score in Bucks for pollutants in the air, indicating poorer air quality

56.5% of all **household waste** in Buckinghamshire was recycled in 2017/18, however a large portion (43.5%) of household waste is going to landfill



In a 2018 survey by GoCompare, Buckinghamshire was named the **second most filmed county**

From Star Wars to Bond films, Midsomer Murders to Killing Eve, the county's countryside and historic buildings are frequently featured on screen



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*What humans do over the next 50 years will determine the fate of all life on the planet.*

David Attenborough

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### *Meeting the need: Chiltern Rangers*

Chiltern Rangers is a social enterprise who work with communities to provide practical habitat management. With a £4,774 grant from the #iwill Fund, Chiltern Rangers ran both engagement and practical sessions for 114 young people who were guided through the process of conceptualising, planning and delivering a public engagement project, increasing their awareness of local and global environmental issues and how young people can make a difference through collective social action.

The project involved a thorough clean up of the local woodland and river, creating environment-themed murals and a full campaign day named 'Community Environment Day', where the young people were able to share the learnings from their sessions with their families and the wider public.

The participants felt empowered to take newly learned information back to their schools and community groups and spread the message regarding the environmental impact of litter, pollution and single-use plastics.

*"It didn't look like there was much litter in the river. As I went in it opened my eyes and showed me how much there really is. I'm 100% coming back to make more difference" – N.Khan (aged 16), participant.*



Thank you for reading Buckinghamshire Uncovered. I am immensely proud of my colleagues who have worked so hard to produce this research and grateful to everyone who has supported us throughout our twenty years. A particular thank you to our kind and generous donors, without whom none of our work would be possible.

Henry Allmand, CEO

With thanks to

Local Insight, for access to local data.

Chesham Foodbank, Aylesbury Foodbank and One Can Trust for data on foodbank usage.

The whole team at Heart of Bucks, whose hard work distributing grants to local charities, organisations, community groups and individuals continues to make a huge impact on the county.



*Get in touch*

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**UK COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS**  
GIVING FOR LOCAL GOOD



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