

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: *Uncovered*

Shining a spotlight on our county of contrast



Introduction

On the surface Buckinghamshire is an affluent and prosperous place to live and work. Our county is often characterised by the rolling Chiltern Hills, an outstanding education system, and peaceful rural villages. The Office for National Statistics reports that there are no indicators they measure where the county of Buckinghamshire scores below the median average.

But scratch the surface and there are parts of our county which suffer from the same entrenched social problems found in areas across the UK. We believe that looking at Buckinghamshire through the lens of county-wide averages means that some places, people, and issues are often ignored or overlooked. Buckinghamshire's most disadvantaged households are victims of this reliance on averages, generated from communities that are vastly different in so many ways.

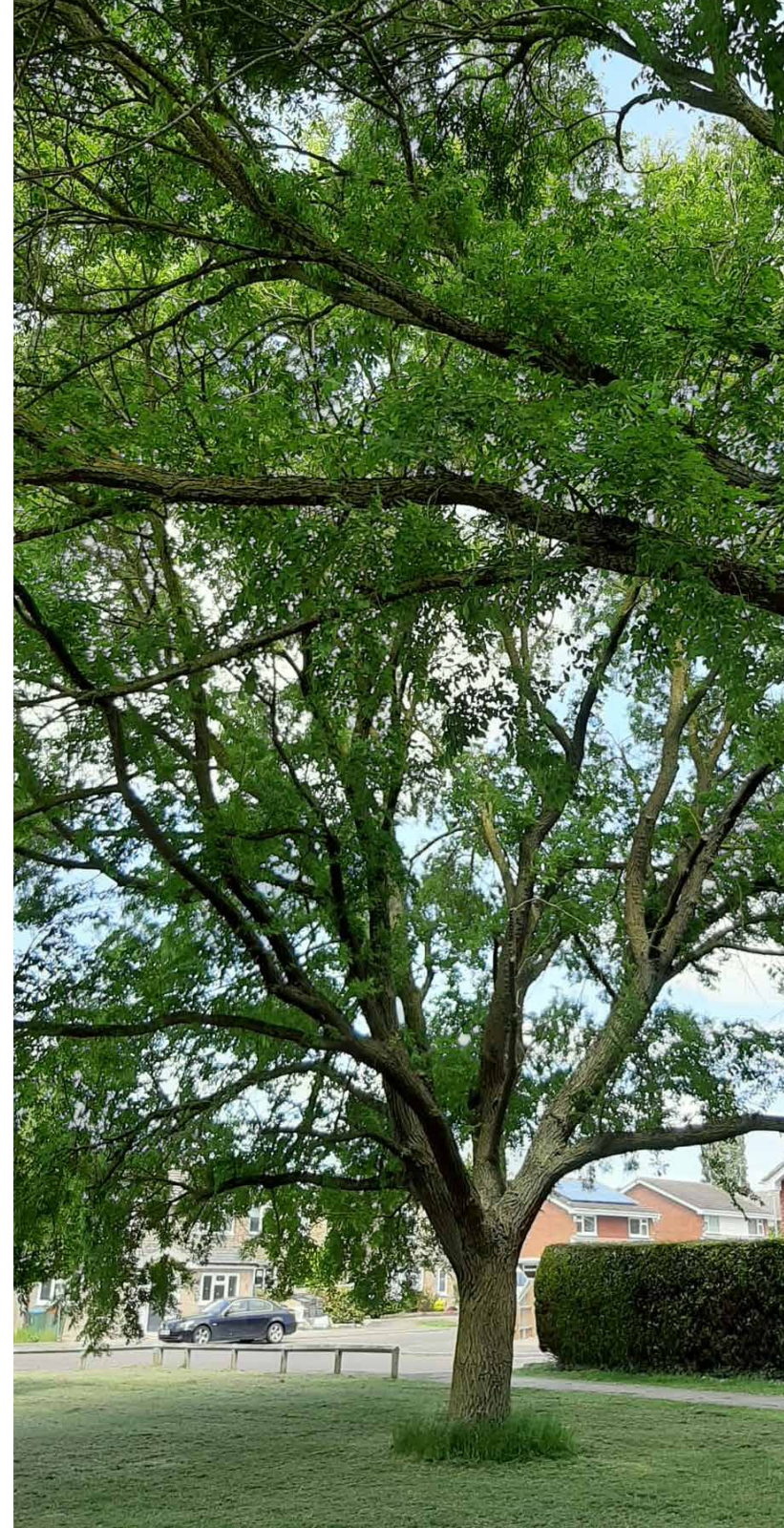


Photo: Simon Barker

Whilst local comparisons are important, we also need to consider how Buckinghamshire contrasts with the UK generally, alongside other local authority areas. There are some surprising disparities and factors which are often overlooked or disregarded.

We are pleased to introduce our 'Buckinghamshire: Uncovered' report series, where we will lift the lid on some of the challenges faced in a county that are too often masked by reliance on statistical averages and pockets of extreme wealth. By delving into the data and statistics, as well as personal anecdotes and stories, we will paint a comprehensive picture of the county today.

Join us as we uncover the complexities and realities of life within Buckinghamshire and these disparities compared to the wider UK.





These reports will raise awareness of the important issues affecting those who live and work in our great county, as well as highlighting some of the critical work being done by local charities, community organisations, the public sector, and the business community to address these challenges.

This insight report series will spotlight important issues and topics, across our broad thematic areas of focus as a foundation:

Health & wellbeing

Isolation, disadvantage & poverty

Arts & culture

Education & skills

Safe & cohesive communities

Environment & climate change

Did you know?



38% of children in High Wycombe are classified as overweight or obese, compared to the county average of 31%.^[1]



The Cost of Living: Vulnerable households indicator score for Booker, Cressex and Castlefield is 2.48 (England average 1.5, Bucks average 1.1, South East average 1.22).^[2]



Buckinghamshire receives 20p of funding per capita from Arts Council England. The national average is nearly seven times more at £1.32 and in London it is 13 times more at £2.58.^[3]



Nearly 3% of 16-64 year olds in Buckinghamshire claim unemployment benefits. There are huge disparities between different areas of the county - showing as low as 1.2% in more affluent areas, and as high as 8% in the more disadvantaged areas of High Wycombe (England average: 4%).^[4]



There is a 257% greater rate of offending in Wycombe compared to Haddenham and Waddesdon.^[5]



Buckinghamshire produces more kilotonnes of carbon emissions per person (5.2) than neighbouring Hertfordshire (5.0).^[6]

Next steps

While we face hidden challenges, we also know there are a great many opportunities to overcome them. The committed partnerships that exist in Buckinghamshire are already helping to address the inequities and challenges in our county, as we strive to make Buckinghamshire the best possible place to live and work.

Buckinghamshire: Uncovered will be powered by the Bucks Data Exchange, using data to evidence local needs and challenges. We will also be talking to people in our communities, helping to bring these issues to life. Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, this project is a long-term commitment by Heart of Bucks to listen, engage, and act to support our county. The series will continue to explore the county in depth, delving into the statistics and stories that shape it and the initiatives that are being taken by our committed partners and stakeholders to address the issues.



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References

- [1] <https://bucksdataexchange.org/data/overweight-and-obese-children/>
- [2] <https://bucksdataexchange.org/data/cost-of-living-vulnerable-households-indicator/>
- [3] <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants/project-grants-data>
- [4] <https://bucksdataexchange.org/data/unemployment-claimant-count/>
- [5] <https://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/local-profiles>
- [6] Buckinghamshire Council Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy

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