

BUCKLEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Town Mayor

Councillor Lorraine Rathbone



I had the honour of serving as Mayor of Buckley from May 2025 to May 2026, a responsibility I regarded with great pride. Throughout the year, I was privileged to attend a wide range of civic engagements, beginning with The Buckley Show, which was exceptionally well attended and enjoyed by residents of all ages.

The invitations I received from neighbouring councils provided valuable opportunities to promote Buckley, and I hope that my positive representation of our community has helped counter some of the negative perceptions that occasionally arise.

Among the most meaningful engagements were my visits to our nursing homes. Celebrating residents' birthdays and hearing their remarkable stories from earlier years was both humbling and inspiring. The Buckley Jubilee was another highlight, blessed with fine weather and an excellent turnout. As one of our town's most enduring traditions, I hope it continues to evolve gently so that it may be enjoyed for generations to come.

During my term, I also had the pleasure of attending a talent competition at our much-loved Tivoli. All Primary schools in Buckley and the surrounding area took part, and the courage and confidence shown by the young performers revealed some truly exceptional talent. While Buckley, like many communities, faces challenges with its younger generation, it remains essential that we continue to provide spaces where they can grow, feel valued, and realise their potential.

There were many other engagements throughout the year, each of which I found rewarding and enjoyable. I began my mayoral year with the steadfast support of my consort and husband, Paul, who was always by my side - whether offering practical assistance or engaging with councillors from other communities. Sadly, my year concluded without him, but I wish to formally acknowledge his dedication and the invaluable work he carried out quietly behind the scenes.

I extend my sincere thanks to my fellow members of Buckley Town Council for placing their trust in me and granting me the privilege of serving as Mayor. I am equally grateful to the staff for their guidance and support, and to the people of Buckley with whom I have shared conversations, experiences, and moments throughout the year.



Buckley Celebrates V.E. Day



May 2025 saw the town come alive for the 80th anniversary of VE Day, complete with nostalgic wartime songs, vintage cars, vibrant stalls, afternoon teas and even an appearance by Dad's Army! With kind weather throughout, the event was a joy for everyone.



Contents

Page 3	- List of Councillors / Council Priorities 2025/2026
Page 4-5	- Buckley Town Council Additional Achievements
Page 6	- Buckley Town Mayor & Deputy Mayor
Page 7	- Buckley Town Council Website / Community Grant Scheme
Page 8	- Buckley Town Council 2025/26 Events
Page 9-10	- Buckley Town Council Assets and Services
Page 11	- Buckley Town Council 2025/26 Financial Information
Page 12	- Buckley Town Council Committees and Membership
Page 13	- Historic Artefacts of the Town
Page 14	- Buckley Town Council 2026/27 Priorities
Page 15	- Could You Make a Difference?

One Voice Wales Membership

Buckley Town Council is a member of One Voice Wales.

One Voice Wales is our sector's representative body.

As a member, the Council receives access to a wide range of legal and governance advice and information, support services, sharing of sector best practice and access to training and development for its members.

One Voice Wales also lobby for the sector in consultation with Town & Community Councils



Buckley Town Councillors

In May 2022, 20 seats were available at Buckley Town Council.

Listed below are the appointed Councillors who will serve until the next elections in May 2027.

If you care about your community and want to help make it better, becoming a Councillor is a powerful way to contribute.

2025 / 2026

Buckley Mountain Ward

C Ellis *

C Cordery

L G Fox - Disqualified 15/01/2026

L Hughes - Appointed 25/03/2026

Bistre East Ward

A Parry

A Woolley*

J Jones (Deputy Town Mayor)

R Jones*

V Blondek

*Signifies Town Councillors
who are also County Councillors

Pentrobin Ward

D Mackie*

E J Hutchinson

H D Hutchinson*

I Peters

M Peers *

E L Preece

R Stewart

Bistre West Ward

C Preece*

D Ellis

L Rathbone (Town Mayor)

I Howes

D Rose*

2025/2026

Town Council Priorities

The Town Council has made strong progress against its priorities for 2025/26, delivering a wide range of improvements and initiatives that support the community and strengthen the Council's role within Buckley.

Developing a Vision and Mission for the Council

Work has been undertaken to create a clear Vision, Mission and Values for Buckley Town Council.

This has included Member engagement, public consultation and facilitated workshops to help shape a shared direction for the future. A draft document has been produced for formal consideration.

Improving Accessibility in Coronation Gardens

External funding has been secured to support improvements to Coronation Gardens.

Design work and public consultation have been completed to inform the next stage of development, ensuring the space is inclusive and accessible to all.



Re-launch of the Buckley Community Awards

A refreshed Community Awards scheme has been successfully developed and launched. A new policy has been adopted, and the first round of nominations has been received, celebrating the achievements and contributions of local people.

Governance and Continuous Improvement

Significant progress has been made in delivering the Finance and Governance Toolkit Action Plan, strengthening the Council's policies, procedures and overall governance framework.

Continued...

Supporting the Old Buckley Baths Project

The Town Council has continued to play an active role in supporting the Old Buckley Baths Working Group. This has included funding essential surveys and enabling initial remedial works to take place.

Progress is being made towards identifying a sustainable long-term community use for the site.

Improving Communication and Engagement

The Council has significantly enhanced its social media presence, increasing both the volume of content and public engagement. This has helped to improve communication with residents and raise awareness of local initiatives, events and services.



Follow the Town Council on Facebook
facebook.com/BuckleyTC

Additional Priority Work

Community Safety and CCTV Review

A full review of CCTV provision has been completed, including partnership arrangements with Flintshire County Council. This work will inform future improvements and investment in community safety.

Public Toilets Review

A detailed review of Buckley's public toilets (owned by the Town Council) has been carried out, including a public survey. The findings highlight the facility's importance to residents and visitors, and we will continue to identify sustainable options for the future.



Additional Achievements

Alongside the Council's core priorities, a wide range of additional achievements have been delivered during 2025/26, supporting the community, improving local services and enhancing the town environment.

Reporting Anti Social Behaviour

Police can't act until suspicious and anti-social behaviour is reported

3 ways to report...

- ① Live Chat
www.northwales.police.uk/police-forces/north-wales-police/areas/live-chat/
- ② Online reporting form
- ③ Call 101

Is it an emergency?
Call 999
 'only' in emergency situations like these:
 there is an immediate danger to life
 someone is using violence or a crime is happening right now

Buckley Town Council ASB Reporting Campaign *Live Chat has terms and conditions

Community Safety Initiatives

The Council has introduced new measures to improve community safety, including the launch of an anti-social behaviour reporting awareness campaign in partnership with North Wales Police.

As part of the crime prevention project, Smart Water kits were sold to local residents at a discounted rate.



Environmental and Community Initiatives

The Town Council has strengthened its environmental contribution by becoming a Keep Wales Tidy Litter Hub, encouraging community participation in keeping Buckley clean and welcoming.

Financial support has also been provided to local initiatives, including the Fit, Fed and Read programme, benefitting children and families.



Capital Improvements and Infrastructure

Improvements have been made to local infrastructure, including the installation of an additional access point on Higher Common to improve access for events. The Council has also supported investment in local play provision and contributed to the development of wider green infrastructure opportunities within the town.



Town Centre and Place-Shaping Activity

The Council has actively represented the community in local planning and regeneration matters, submitting responses to planning applications and consultations to ensure that development reflects the needs of Buckley residents. Work has also been undertaken with Flintshire County Council and partners to support town centre improvements, green infrastructure proposals and wider regeneration opportunities, helping to shape the future development and vibrancy of the town.



Grants, Bursaries and Community Support

Ongoing support has been provided to local organisations and residents through the Council's grant and bursary schemes. Improvements have also been made to application processes, with increased future funding provision in response to demand.

Supporting Governance and Operations

The Council has continued to strengthen its internal operations through a programme of policy updates and governance improvements, ensuring compliance and good practice. Staffing capacity has been enhanced following a full review of the Council's structure. Strong financial management has been maintained throughout the year, including effective budget setting, responsible management of reserves and securing best value through new contracts and investment decisions.

Annually, the Town Council appoints a Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.

The Town Mayor's role is primarily ceremonial and does not grant any additional authority. However, the Mayor serves as Chair of the Town Council, presiding over all Full Council meetings during their term of office. Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor also represent the Town Council at various civic functions throughout the year.

If you would like the Buckley Mayor to attend your community event please email:
townclerk@buckleytc.gov.wales



Remembering Paul Rathbone

The Town Council was deeply saddened by the passing of Paul Rathbone, Mayor's Consort and devoted husband of Councillor Lorraine Rathbone.

Throughout the Mayor's year of office, Paul carried out his role with dedication, kindness and integrity, accompanying the Mayor at numerous civic and community engagements, representing Buckley with warmth, dignity and genuine commitment.

Paul's contribution to civic life, and his steadfast support of both the Mayor and the wider community, will be remembered with great affection and gratitude.

Town Mayor 2025/26

Councillor Lorraine Rathbone's year was marked by a varied programme of civic, community and charitable engagements. Activities included attending civic services, the official opening of Theatre Clwyd, supporting local voluntary and community organisations such as the 3 Bags Full Stoma Support Group, 1st Bistre Scout Group, Sonia's Little Stars Stay and Play Café, and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, as well as meeting with community representatives through One Voice Wales.

The Mayor also celebrated residents' milestone birthdays, participated in remembrance events, promoted local culture through concerts by Fron Male Voice Choir and the Royal Buckley Town Band, and supported community celebrations throughout the year. She was pleased to officially open Berwyn Books and LY Hairdressing Salon, recognising the important contribution that local businesses make to the town's economy and community life.

In addition, she hosted a successful Charity Fundraising Ball, represented Buckley at charity events across the region, and supported initiatives aimed at enhancing community safety and wellbeing, including the launch of SmartWater in partnership with North Wales Police.

Fundraising totalled £3,717.78 during the year and was distributed amongst the Mayor's chosen charities of:

- **Royal Buckley Town Band**
- **The Community Fridge**
- **NEW Mind**



Buckley Town Council Website

The Town Council's website

www.buckleytc.gov.wales contains a vast range of information for the public to view.

The Town Council is committed to being open and transparent to the people it serves.

The following information can be found on the website:

- About Buckley
- Bursary Scheme
- Councillors
- Council Agendas
- Council Meeting Dates
- Council Minutes
- Council Policies/Documents
- Council Wards
- Declaration of Interests
- Events
- Financial Information (including): Budget, Audit Reports, Annual Returns, Members' Allowance and Elector's Rights.
- Financial Regulations
- Latest News
- Town Council Staff
- Town Events & News
- Town Mayor

You can also read the Town Council's

[Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Report & Action Plan](#)

and

[Well-being of Future Generations Report](#) on our website

Follow the Town Council on Facebook



facebook.com/BuckleyTC

Community Grant Scheme

Annually, local organisations can apply for a small grant from Buckley Town Council.

In 2025/26 the following groups were supported with financial assistance:

National Eisteddfod - £100

Urdd Eisteddfod - £100

Llangollen International Eisteddfod - £100

1st Bistre Scout Group - £400

Buckley Community Fridge - £400

Cross Methodist Church - £200

Buckley Cricket Club - £400

Buckley Hockey Club - £400

Buckley Jubilee Committee - £380

Buckley Ju Jitsu Club - £400

Buckley Society - £400

Drury Primary School PTA - £400

Shelby's Place CIC - £400

Wales Air Ambulance - £100

Buckley Town Council Bursary Scheme

The Town Council operates a bursary scheme to help residents with higher education tuition fees. Applicants must be attending, or planning to attend, a university or college of higher education.

In the 2025/26 academic year, the Town Council awarded a total of £3000 in bursaries, benefitting nine successful applicants.

The Council has increased the 2026/27 budget for both awards in response to the high volume of financial applications received.

Details of both schemes can be found on the Town Council website.

The Counselling Hub Support

Buckley Town Council funds the Counselling Hub Charity, supporting residents with suicide prevention, self-harm and depression. During 2025/26, 840 hours of therapy were provided.

In addition, the charity distributed Christmas gifts to local children in financial hardship, while the Council provided the charity with free office space in the Old Library Building.

Buckley Town Council Events

Buckley Town Council recognises the importance that community events play in bringing residents together, fostering civic pride and strengthening community spirit.

The Council is committed to ensuring that community events remain free and accessible to all residents wherever possible.

Town Council events for 2025/26 include:

Community Events

V.E. Day 80 Celebrations - May 2025

Annual Buckley Show May 2025

Remembrance Sunday - November 2025

Annual Fireworks Display - November 2025

Christmas Lights Switch on - November 2025

Litter Pick - March 2026

Community Coffee Morning - March 2026

Civic and Fundraising Events

Mayor's Civic Service - June 2025

Mayor's Charity Fundraising Ball - Nov 2025



Buckley Town Council

Buckley Town Council operates from its beautiful building in the heart of town, serving as a hub for civic and community life. The building's frontage is Grade II listed.

The premises include staff offices and a dedicated Council Chamber, while the first floor is leased to local businesses. Several areas within the building are also home to vital community services, such as the Community Food Fridge, School Uniform Exchange, Counselling Hub, Welsh Border Community Transport and Community Rooms for public use.



Staffing and Operational Support

In addition to its small core part-time staff team, the Council works with two contractors: one who provides cleaning services for Council buildings and facilities and another who acts as Town & Events Contractor.

During 2025, the Council's Town & Events Contractor resigned from their role after more than ten years of service. The Council records its thanks for their contribution and wishes them well for the future.

Following a review of service delivery arrangements, the Council separated the town and events functions and awarded a new events contract to support the continued delivery of community events.

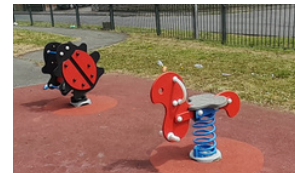
With a strong commitment to good governance, the Town Council ensures it has the resources and infrastructure needed to serve the town effectively and responsively.

Town Council Assets and Services

Coronation Gardens - The Town Council owns and maintains the Coronation Gardens for all residents to enjoy.

Town Centre Planting - The Town Council continues to provide colourful summer hanging baskets and flower troughs throughout the town centre.

Play Area Renovation - The Town Council invested £10,000 as matched funding to Gwella Wales in upgrading the Princess Avenue Play Area



Town Clock - The Town Council keeps the iconic Buckley Silver Jubilee Clock ticking.



Summer Playschemes in all four wards -

Buckley Town Council funds the Flintshire Play Development Team to deliver summer playschemes across all four wards.

During Summer 2025, 794 children attended sessions held over three weeks, 5 sessions per week at Higher Common (248), Drury Park (229), Lyme Grove (108) and Westwood School (209).

The playschemes continue to be well attended and provide valuable opportunities for supervised play and social interaction for younger residents.

The Council also supported the Fit, Fed and Read programme, benefiting children and families across the community.

Town Council Assets and Services continued..

2025/2026

Free Car Parking - Buckley Town Council co-funds the car parking subsidy in the Flintshire Council short-stay car park to enable 1 hour of free parking. During December, Buckley Town Council funds free parking in all Flintshire County Council car parks in the Town.

Public Conveniences - The fully accessible public toilets, which are owned and maintained by the Town Council are open all day and are free to use. Feedback from our 2025 survey highlighted just how important our public toilet facilities are to you.

Contribution to Maintenance of The Commons and Burial Grounds

The Town Council contributes funds to Flintshire County Council to maintain Middle and Lower Common. It also provides a financial contribution to Emmanuel Church, Bistre, St Matthew's Church and St. John's United Reformed Church towards upkeep and maintenance of the burial grounds.

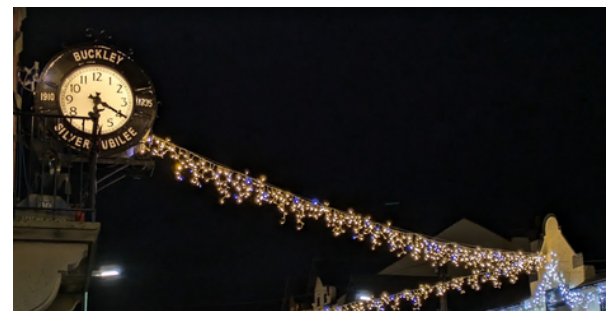
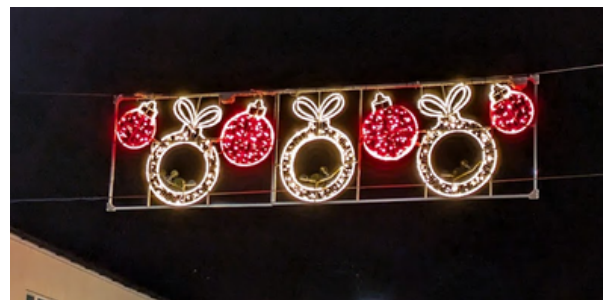
Christmas Lights & Town Centre Bunting -

Each year, the Town Council funds the installation and removal of Christmas lights in the Town Centre.

The Council funds both the installation and removal of the town-centre bunting, brightening the high street for the historic Buckley Jubilee celebrations and the summer months that follow.

Unfortunately, the Town Council is not responsible for Christmas lights in the Precinct due to it being under private ownership.

CCTV - The Council funds a range of CCTV around Buckley Town Centre to support public safety.



Financial Information

Buckley Town Council Finances 2025/26

Buckley Town Council set a budget to spend £477,575. Most of this is funded through the 'Precept'. Residents pay a proportion of the total precept, which is collected as part of your Council Tax bill. The remaining balance is earned through renting out office spaces within the Council building, community room hire, investment income and by spending the Town Council reserves.

At the year-end, the Town Council spent less than budgeted. Total spend = £431,472. This represents a modest variance against the original total. The Council has demonstrated good financial control throughout the year, adapting to emerging pressures while maximising efficiencies.

The full breakdown of the Town Council's budget, year-end financial statement / annual return and audit outcomes are published under the Financial Information section of the Town Council's website.

Expenditure Budget Area	Budget Set	Actual Spend
Finance Committee Covering: Staff salaries, Council building utilities, cleaning maintenance, Mayors, Members and Civic expenses, Town Centre & Events contractor, bursary scheme, mental health counsellor, I.T., printing, stationery, insurance, legal, community grants, membership, audit fees, free car-parking scheme, training and health and safety.	£326,537	£304,455
Highways & Leisure Committee Covering: Public toilets - cleaning, utilities and cleaning materials, renovation of the play area (Princess Avenue), contribution towards the maintenance of the Commons, summer playscheme, fit, fed & read, the annual Buckley Show, and maintenance of Coronation Gardens.	£65,290	£65,098
General Purposes Committee Covering: Annual fireworks display, Jubilee bunting, CCTV, Town Clock, elections, contribution towards maintenance of burial grounds, Christmas lights, town centre hanging baskets and flower troughs and defibrillators.	£64,248	£53,013
Earmarked & General Reserve	£21,500	£8,906
	<u>Budget Set</u>	<u>Actual Spend</u>
Totals:	£477,575	£431,472

Committees and Members

The Town Council has two Standing Committees which include all members of the Council and are held monthly on the same evening as the Town Council Meeting. These are:

- **Finance Committee**

Chair - Cllr E L Preece

Vice Chair - Cllr D Mackie

- **Planning Committee**

Chair - Cllr M Peers

Vice Chair - Cllr D Ellis

In 2025/26 the Town Council held a total of 25 meetings:
15 Council meetings and
10 Committee meetings;
and 2 Members Workshops

In 2025/26, the Town Council received four formal complaints in relation to the increase in precept, health & safety, noise and governance matters

In addition to the Standing Committees, the Council appoints the following Committees and Members to meet as and when required.

Staffing & Policies Review Committee

Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr E L Preece, Chair of Finance Committee, Cllr D Mackie, Vice Chair of Finance Committee, Cllr V E Blondek, Cllr D Ellis, Cllr R L Stewart.

Community Grants Sub-Committee

Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr E L Preece, Chair of Finance Committee, Cllr D Mackie, Vice Chair of Finance Committee, Cllr V E Blondek, Cllr C A Ellis, Cllr D Rose.

Bursary Award Sub Committee

Chair of Finance Committee - Cllr E Preece, Cllr V Blondek, Cllr A Parry, Cllr C Ellis, Cllr J Hutchinson, Cllr D Mackie.

Council & Community Communications Committee

Cllr M A Parry, Cllr V E Blondek, Cllr D Rose, Cllr E L Preece, Cllr R L Stewart.

Anti Social Behaviour Sub Committee

Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr I Peters, Cllr R B Jones, Cllr C M Preece, Cllr D Ellis, Cllr C A Ellis.

Financial Reserves Task & Finish Group reports to Finance Committee

Town Mayor, Cllr D Mackie, Cllr E L Preece, Cllr C M Preece, Cllr V E Blondek, Cllr I Peters.

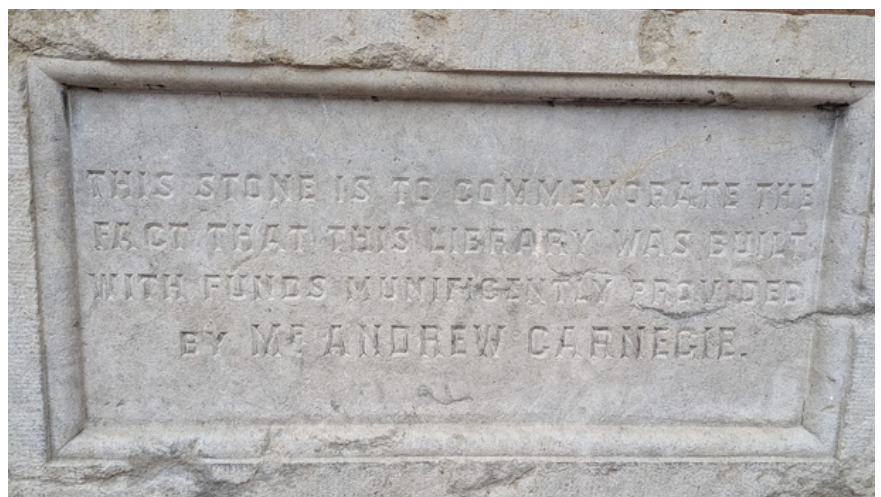
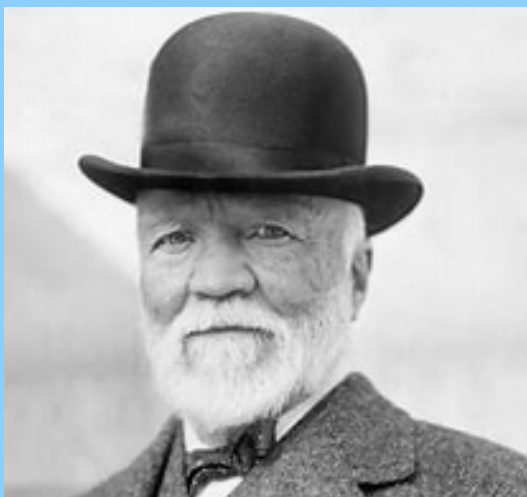
Buckley Heritage

‘What have Carnegie Hall, New York and the Old Library Building in Buckley got in common?’

They were both built with funds provided by Mr Andrew Carnegie - a Scottish born American industrialist and philanthropist.

He believed in the transformative power of reading and the importance of libraries as an essential, free resource for communities, providing access to knowledge and education.

The Carnegie foundation built 2,509 libraries between 1883 and 1929, Buckley being one of them.



2026/27 Town Council Priorities

Buckley Town Council has agreed a clear set of priorities for 2026/27, focusing on strengthening the town's identity, improving community infrastructure and enhancing the services provided to residents.

To develop a Buckley branding and identity programme, helping to promote the town, strengthen community pride and support wider place-making ambitions.

Work will continue to improve access to Coronation Gardens, with the project progressing to detailed design stages to prepare for future delivery and funding opportunities

The Council will explore options for the future ownership of Buckley Commons, including potential community-led management arrangements to secure long-term benefits for residents.

Further improvements to community safety will be progressed through enhancements to CCTV provision, including additional cameras and strengthened partnership arrangements.

The Council will continue to support the Old Buckley Baths project and work in partnership with Flintshire County Council on the delivery of the Buckley Place Making Plan.

Improvements will be considered to enhance accessibility and flexibility within the Council Chamber and reception areas, alongside improvements to support hybrid and online meetings.

Additional Priorities

A new contract will be procured to ensure a reliable and high-quality Christmas lights display across the town centre.

Looking Ahead

The Council will also continue to explore longer-term opportunities, including improvements to public spaces, future investment in community infrastructure and initiatives to support environmental quality and community wellbeing.

Could You Make a Difference in Buckley?

In May 2027, residents will have the opportunity to elect their Town Councillors for the next 5 years and help shape the future of Buckley.



Could you be one of our next Town Councillors?

Buckley Town Council is the level of local government closest to the community. Councillors are elected by residents to represent local views, make decisions on Council services, facilities and projects, and help improve the town for everyone.

The Council supports a wide range of community initiatives, including local events, environmental improvements, grants and bursaries, youth and wellbeing projects, town centre enhancements and support for community organisations. Councillors play a key role in guiding these activities and ensuring public money is spent responsibly.

Councillors come from all walks of life and bring different skills, experiences and perspectives. No previous experience is required, as training and support are provided. What matters most is a genuine interest in the community and a willingness to work together to make a positive difference.

Buckley Town Council has 20 Councillors representing the town's four wards, working together to serve residents and support the continued development of the community.

Council meetings are open to the public, providing an opportunity to see local democracy in action.

As the May 2027 local elections approach, residents are encouraged to consider whether becoming a Town Councillor could be an opportunity to contribute to the future of Buckley. Further information will be published nearer the election date, or you can contact the Town Clerk.



Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer - Mrs Karen Brown
Personal Assistants to the Town Clerk - Lynne George, Tracey Reece, Ceri Williams.

Buckley Town Council
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