

**Dear Buckland Residents,**

**Your Parish Council and fellow residents need your help.**

***Issue:***

Noise levels in our village have increased significantly since the Bucks County Council resurfaced the A41 bypass in 2013.

Residents of this village were given assurances by the Highways Agency during the public consultation process in the 1990s that high quality/low noise road surface materials would be used.

When the bypass opened in 2003, premium materials were used and the road was significantly quieter.

In 2013, Bucks County Council resurfaced the road, using low cost ordinary materials, and this has significantly increased the noise levels.

Complaints were received by the Buckland Parish Council and Councillor Clive Carlile formally complained to the Bucks County Council. Bucks County Council initially ignored then refused our complaints.

We would like to take the matter to the Local Authority Ombudsman and we need your help for this.

***What are we asking for?***

If you are affected by the increased noise levels since 2013, please use our template letter (or write your own) and register a formal complaint with the Bucks County Council.

Please let us know when you send your complaint and keep us notified as and when the BCC responds. It is important to maintain all our complaints as individuals as well as acting in unison.

Please email Parish Council Clerk Fiona with any questions, issues you may have and we will endeavour to respond to them.

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Buckland Parish Council

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## Background

As many of you would recall, the A41 Aston Clinton bypass was opened in 2003. Again many of you may recall that there was a long process of planning and public consultations that took place between 1990 and the final go ahead.

Back in 1990, local residents had registered their concerns over the possibility of increased noise levels for Buckland and other surrounding villages. At that time, assurances were given to the residents that the road surface would be of the highest specification, low noise materials. With these assurances in place, the residents' concerns were brushed aside and the Highway Agency went ahead to build the bypass using the high quality/low noise materials. Bucks County Council was put under an obligation to maintain the low noise aspect of the bypass when they took over the maintenance of the section. BCC was even given a £1M grant to spend on the future maintenance of the bypass as per the initial high quality/low noise material, which now seems to have evaporated!

From 2013 onwards, residents started to notice significantly increased levels of noise and this coincided with the Bucks County Council's resurfacing of the section of A41.

It has then become quite clear that the County Council ignored the assurances that were given to the residents and resurfaced the bypass using ordinary surface materials, either negligently or incompetently or even intentionally.

In 2013, a formal complaint was submitted to the County Council by Buckland Parish Councillor Clive Carlile, on behalf of the Buckland Parish Council. Clive's complaint was initially ignored, then refused and finally turned down within the three stage complaints procedure of the county council.

Acting for and on behalf of you, the Buckland Parish Council would like to take the case to the Local Government Ombudsman.

However, as BPC we are unable represent our case at this level; we will need the support of local residents as the ombudsman only investigates issues raised by individuals.

Therefore, we would like you, the residents, to lodge individual complaints with the BCC first, go through their complaints procedure and if still not satisfied we will collectively take our case to the ombudsman.

We expect that the County Council will ignore our complaints and we would have to go through their three level complaints process individually. Only when we have exhausted our efforts with them can we go to the Ombudsman and then we will have a fighting chance of getting this put right.

To that effect we have produced a template complaint letter that you can fill in with your details and please feel free to improve upon it. If we all act together but as individuals the BCC will need to respond to each and every one of us individually and they will understand how resolute we are in terms of this issue.

## Brief History

1990 – Assurances were given by Highways Agency that the road surface would be built using high-cost/low-noise materials.

2003 – A41 bypass opens. The noise levels are low. The maintenance of the road is passed on to Bucks County Council along with the conditions regarding future maintenance using low noise materials.

2013 – Bucks County Council resurfaces the road, using **ordinary** materials. Noise levels increase to unbearable levels. Buckland Parish Council starts a complaints procedure.

2015 – Bucks County Council refuses to acknowledge and remedy the situation having exhausted their three stage complaints procedure.

2016 – Parish Council would like to take the matter up to the Local Government Ombudsman and need your help.

Dear Sir,

Re: Noise Levels in Buckland

I would like to bring to your attention and formally register a complaint about the unbearably excessive levels of traffic noise in our village. Since 2013, traffic noise from the A41 bypass is having an adverse effect on our lives at the village.

We find that we are constantly tormented by the noise, during the day as well the night. It has become impossible to open windows, spend time in the garden and enjoy our lives without being constantly disturbed by the A41 traffic noise.

The A41 bypass, when opened in 2003, was noticeably quieter. It appears that following the resurfacing works in 2013, the noise levels have reached these unbearable levels.

Please can you remedy the situation and resurface the bypass using low noise materials at once as it was prior to 2013.

Many thanks

Yours Sincerely