



Social Value Awards

Best business contribution to social value

Legal & General Homes

Social value at Buckler's Park

Legal & General Homes is a new housebuilder, notable not just for the quality of the communities it is delivering but for its commitment to doing things differently. It is the **first housebuilder in the UK to formally incorporate** social value into its developments, helping ensure that the places it brings to life are inclusive and benefit their surrounding areas.

Its first development is Buckler's Park in Crowthorne, Berkshire, where Legal & General Homes' team has been working to create physical, economic, environmental and social benefits for the area since **long before** the first residents arrived in September 2018.

Once complete Buckler's Park will house a new community of over 1,000 homes. A 100-acre country park is returning previously inaccessible land to public use; the expansion of Crowthorne Church of England Primary School will bring much-needed primary school places to the area; a new care home will bring families closer together and a range of shops will open to complement the existing high street.

Through the hard work of the business and the local community, Legal & General Homes has to date delivered **£4,096,422** of social value for Crowthorne.

Creating healthier, safer and more resilient communities

In August 2017, before the foundations had been laid for the first home, Legal & General Homes worked with the Social Value Portal to develop and sign **the first Social Value Charter in the UK**. The aim was – and is – to monitor and communicate how much value its developments produce to the benefit of **local people**, ensuring a resilient, first rate and sustainable community is created.

In developing this, Legal & General Homes consulted with local businesses, faith groups, traders and parish councils and surveyed over 430 private residents to gather opinions. The resulting Social Value Charter has empowered local people and Legal & General Homes to narrow down the **needs, priorities, challenges and opportunities** that Crowthorne might face. This has allowed Legal & General Homes to channel its efforts into things that **matter most** to Crowthorne residents – from traffic and public transport to employment and the local high street.

Promoting social innovation

Crowthorne is a place with genuine community spirit – from church groups and school fundraising to the annual carnival – and residents are often giving their time and money to charitable causes. There are many to choose from, and priorities can change – which is why the recipients of Legal & General Homes' quarterly **£2,000 charitable grant** are chosen by the people who know best.

Residents can vote for one of three charities each quarter at the Buckler's Park Visitors Centre. The charity with the most votes receives the largest portion of the grant, ensuring the funds go to the causes most important to local people. Most recently the fund was shared by the **Crowthorne Royal British Legion, Sebastian's Action Trust and COATS**, with over 320 votes placed to determine the top choice.

Employees have also spent **287.5 hours volunteering in Crowthorne**, giving their time to initiatives such as regular community litter picks and carrying out much-needed refurbishments at a painting day at Edgbarrow School. At nearby Oaklands Junior School, Legal & General Homes worked with leadership team to design the Big Red Bus project – a new 'learning chill-out zone' for the children which was delivered with the support of the business' sub-contractors.

Supporting the growth of local businesses

Crowthorne's existing businesses and organisations – the florists, churches and the high-street tearooms – will be an important part of life for residents at Buckler's Park, who also represent new visitors, customers and opportunities for traders. Already, Legal & General Homes is helping make these businesses known to new residents through initiatives such as the **welcome hamper**, which are supplied by the local butcher.

For Legal & General Homes, building relationships with these organisations is vital. That is why in April 2018 it appointed **independent community coordinator Meena Bahra** to act as the dedicated conduit between the developer and the community – an identifiable face through whom opportunities, queries and concerns can be channelled.

These connections were best displayed when local businesses and residents were invited to be part of the July 2018 Summer Celebration launch event, so that when prospective buyers had their first chance to view the show homes at Buckler's Park they also got a flavour of the wider community they would be joining.

These relationships also helped Legal & General Homes identify a need for new Christmas lights in the centre of the village; it partnered with the Crowthorne Traders Association and donated **£7,912** for new decorations that will be enjoyed by residents old and new for years to come.

Promoting skills and employment

In a challenging economic climate it is no surprise that for many locals, employment and training are a large concern. Legal & General Homes understands the impact that the right employment decisions can have on individuals and communities: so far, **81 out of the 90 people** hired at Buckler's Park have come from the local area, including those who may struggle to gain employment elsewhere: **six young people** who were not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and **two long-term unemployed** and **one rehabilitating offender** have all found work at Buckler's Park.

Legal & General Homes is also going far beyond its own site and offices by offering help to local people before they reach employment – hosting **mock interviews for Bracknell & Wokingham College students** in June 2018 with more CV and interview sessions planned in the coming months.

Protecting and improving our environment

Sustainability and the environment are at the heart of Buckler's Park – before, during and after construction. **410,000m³** of

material which would usually be discarded has been used in the construction of roads, footpaths, cycle ways and parking areas on site. In not having to remove this waste, **27,000 HGV movements** have been saved – **vastly reducing CO₂ emissions**.

It doesn't stop when the houses are finished. Each property includes a **Hive electronic thermostat** and multiple heating zones as standard, helping residents **manage their energy usage** – good for the planet, and good for their savings.

Community wellbeing is integrated into the design of the whole development. Shared spaces include allotments, a central hub and the new Buckler's Forest. The parkland – which include 20,000 new trees – will **protect and enhance local biodiversity**, supporting flora and fauna while providing a new place for walks and outdoor activities, relieving the pressure on the trails in Swinley Forest. The design also references the site's heritage as the former Transport Research Laboratory – a major local employer – with the skid pan and test track now forming a gentle curving route around the site.

*“Our ethos is that we should build houses and communities where we would be happy to live with our own families. To do so we need to **listen to what our communities want**, which is reflected in our approach to social value. We understand the importance of a two-way dialogue from the outset, so that our investment in Buckler's Park has the **most positive impact it can**.”*

*“There's been a recognisable positive impact on the community already and this is **only year one** – there's a palpable excitement among all of us when we consider what's **still to come**.”*

– John Allan, Managing Director, Legal & General Homes



Energy Cost Victorian House vs Legal & General Homes



These calculations have been carried out using SAP90121 and rESAP methodology using standard occupancy and heating patterns. These values are therefore indicative and should not be interpreted as true heating cost predictions.



Clockwise from top left: some of the 100 acres of new parkland being delivered at Buckler's Park; the difference in energy costs paid in a Victorian house vs a Legal & General Homes property; local children learning about construction safety; painting at Edgbarrow School; Swinley Forest Bike Hub at the Legal & General Homes Summer Celebration in July 2018; the charity voting boxes at the Buckler's Park Visitors Centre