# Maids Moreton housing plans spark sewage crisis fears amid nationwide infrastructure strain



On the edge of Buckingham, the quiet village of Maids Moreton faces an impending crisis as plans to construct 153 new homes advance, despite the local sewage works being long overwhelmed. This pastoral setting, characterised by its thatched cottages and a medieval church, is now at the centre of a critical debate over infrastructure and environmental sustainability.

The primary concern for residents is whether these new homes should be constructed without a sustainable sewage system in place. Kate Pryke, a local campaigner, encapsulates the community's frustration: “You wouldn't dream of building a house that you couldn't connect to electricity or that was never going to connect to a road. But for some reason we're building houses that have nowhere to treat the sewage.” This statement highlights the disconnect between housing development and essential infrastructure planning, which is increasingly prevalent across England.

Notably, Maids Moreton's situation is symptomatic of a nationwide issue where outdated sewage facilities and chronic underinvestment threaten to derail ambitious government housing targets, which aim to deliver 1.5 million new homes within the current parliamentary term. Further illustrating this disjunction, the Environment Agency recently objected to an extensive housing project in Oxford due to similar sewage capacity issues, effectively placing 18,000 planned homes on hold. The agency’s stance stems from serious pollution risks to local waterways and the mounting pressure on Thames Water, which has struggled to keep pace with development demands.

Justin Neal, a solicitor at the environmental charity Wildfish, emphasised the scale of this problem, stating, “We think the problem is rife across England and Wales.” Back in Maids Moreton, Wildfish has been granted permission for a judicial review at the High Court to challenge Buckinghamshire Council's decision to allow development amidst these concerns. The charity argues that the council's planning decisions fail to adequately address the existing infrastructure's limitations.

Public sentiment has been vocal against such developments. In a recent protest walk through Maids Moreton, local residents, supported by MP Greg Smith and councillor Warren Whyte, rallied against a proposed 170-home project nearby. Their opposition is not merely about preserving their immediate environment but also about ensuring that existing community services, especially sewage management, are not further compromised. Having witnessed extreme rainfall events leading to overwhelmed drainage systems, Buckingham Town Council has called for legislative changes that would empower local authorities to implement stricter conditions on new developments.

Meanwhile, developers continue to push forward with projects in the region. A separate initiative has seen Lodge Park secure financing for a smaller scheme of 12 detached homes in Maids Moreton, indicating that while individual projects may proceed, the overarching issues related to sewage treatment and infrastructure remain unresolved. The ongoing tension between development pressures and ecological stewardship lays bare the critical challenges facing rural communities across England today.

As Maids Moreton stands at this crossroads, the fundamental questions posed are emblematic of larger societal dilemmas about sustainability, infrastructure capacity, and how best to manage growth without compromising the environment or residents’ quality of life.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/27/oxfordshire-housing-development-should-be-blocked-due-to-failing-sewage-system)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o), [[6]](https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/politics/council/sewage-capacity-matters-4510218)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/people/mp-and-councillor-join-protest-walk-against-170-home-development-near-buckingham-3570989), [[5]](https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/23801722.lodge-park-maids-moreton-secures-9-6m-for-12-homes/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.bucks.radio/news/local-news/secretary-of-state-grants-planning-permission-for-130-new-homes-in-buckingham/), [[6]](https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/politics/council/sewage-capacity-matters-4510218)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn055462jy1o> - This article discusses the dilemma faced by Maids Moreton, a village near Buckingham, England, where plans have been approved to add 153 new homes to the existing community. The local sewage works has been over capacity for years, raising concerns about connecting the new homes to the system and the potential impact on the nearby Great Ouse river. The situation reflects a broader issue across England, where ageing sewage infrastructure and under-investment threaten the government's housing targets. Environmental charity Wildfish has been granted permission for a judicial review challenging the planning permission granted by Buckinghamshire Council.
3. <https://www.bucks.radio/news/local-news/secretary-of-state-grants-planning-permission-for-130-new-homes-in-buckingham/> - The Secretary of State has granted planning permission for 130 new homes to be built in Buckingham, ending a four-year planning battle. The development includes a range of apartments and houses, along with new public open spaces and sports facilities. Despite over 100 objections from residents and councillors, the Secretary of State agreed with a planning inspector's recommendation for approval following a public inquiry held in October 2023.
4. <https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/people/mp-and-councillor-join-protest-walk-against-170-home-development-near-buckingham-3570989> - Over 100 people participated in a protest walk in Maids Moreton against a proposed 170-home development. The event, supported by MP for Buckingham Greg Smith and Buckingham East ward councillor Warren Whyte, was part of a national protest to save greenfield sites from development. The protest highlights local opposition to the development, citing concerns over infrastructure and environmental impact.
5. <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/23801722.lodge-park-maids-moreton-secures-9-6m-for-12-homes/> - Lodge Park, a house-building company, has secured a £9.6 million finance facility from Paragon Bank for their St Edmund’s Place development in Maids Moreton, Buckinghamshire. The project comprises 12 new five-bedroom detached homes and marks the 17th financing agreement between Lodge Park and Paragon. The development is located between Buckingham town centre and Bletchley train station.
6. <https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/politics/council/sewage-capacity-matters-4510218> - Buckingham Town Council has written to the Secretary of State to request new legislation that would allow local authorities to impose planning conditions to prevent new developments from overwhelming existing drainage systems. The council's concern stems from recent heavy rainfall causing pressure on the drainage system, leading to overwhelmed drains and sewers in some areas of the town.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/27/oxfordshire-housing-development-should-be-blocked-due-to-failing-sewage-system> - The Environment Agency has objected to plans for 1,450 new homes in Oxfordshire, citing underinvestment by Thames Water in the sewage system, which is unable to cope with the increased population. The agency warns that the pressure from the new development would pose an unacceptable risk of pollution to waterways, highlighting the broader issue of sewage infrastructure struggling to meet housing demands.