

Borough Monthly

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Bedford's Town Centre goes from strength to strength...

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BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Potential New Special Educational Needs and Disabilities School in Bedford Borough

Bedford Borough is one of only 19 Councils in the country to have had an expression of interest granted for a new school that would provide education for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

In April 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) approved applications for 131 new schools, creating more than 69,000 places.

These schools will be led by high-performing institutions, including a grammar-school-led multi-academy trust (MAT) and the largest state boarding school in the country.

For more information on the Government's new free school proposals, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-130-new-free-schools-to-create-more-good-places>.



Local landlord ordered to pay over £15,000

Local landlord and property developer Mohammed Saleem of Bromham Road, Bedford was ordered to pay over £15,000 at Luton Magistrates Court on 4 July 2017 after being found guilty of a string of waste offences in Bedford,

after Bedford Borough Council's Enviro Crime Team investigated three large fly tipping incidents in Bedford and Stagsden in 2013 and 2014.

Blue Badge Fraud costs woman over £2,000



A woman who fraudulently used a blue badge in Bedford town centre has received a criminal conviction for fraud and been ordered to pay a fine of £484 and costs of £1,670.

In July 2015, Mrs Clare Louise Scarfe, of Eccles Road, Ipswich was seen by a Civil Enforcement Officer parked in a restricted area in Ram Yard, Bedford, just 100 yards from the High Street, with a disabled persons parking permit or 'Blue Badge' on display.

The expiry date on the Badge had been obscured and the Civil Enforcement Officer established that it had expired three years earlier.



We've reached our carbon reduction target!



Adopted in March 2011, Bedford Borough Council's Carbon Management Plan set out a programme of action for us to achieve a 40% carbon reduction target.

We are proud to announce that we have exceeded the target of 40% and have reduced our carbon footprint by 43%.

This huge energy saving is the result of a range of projects and investments across our buildings. These include the largest energy conservation project ever undertaken by the Council - RE:FIT- which saw works completed at a number of sites including Borough Hall, Bedford International Athletics Stadium, Central Library, the Kempston Centre and Allhallows car park.

There was the installation of hundreds of solar panels, with over 200 installed at Allhallows alone. Other works included the conversion of Borough Hall's heating system

to work on natural gas rather than oil, various lighting upgrades and improved building management systems.

Our work and investment in green energy production, including the construction of the River Great Ouse Hydro Power Station, was recognised at the Public Sector Energy and Sustainability Awards 2016, where the Council was announced as National Champion for Sustainability.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said *"It is fantastic that we have exceeded our carbon reduction target and that our work has been recognised on a national level. Climate change is one of the biggest challenges the world faces, and local authorities have a responsibility to take action for the benefit of the local and wider environment. The measures we've taken have helped to cut energy use and energy bills, benefitting both our environment and local taxpayers."*



Green Flag success for our local parks!

Four of the Borough's superb parks were awarded Green Flag status during this year's 'Love Parks Week', which saw many local people get in touch to tell us all the things they love about our parks and green spaces.

The Green Flag Award recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces and is recognised in the UK and around the world as a mark of quality.

The parks awarded Green Flags this year are Addison Howard Park, Bedford Park, Harrold-Odell Country Park for the 10th year running, and Priory Country Park for the 16th year running!

If you are interested in volunteering at one of our parks or green spaces and helping the park rangers, gardeners, litter pickers or other grounds staff please visit www.bedford.gov.uk/volunteering.



Bedford Borough's longest serving school crossing patrol steps down



Joan Loft (pictured above, with Head Teacher of Wootton Lower School Chris Tavener and Deputy Mayor Cllr Charles Royden), Bedford Borough's longest serving School Crossing Patrol, is retiring at the end of term after nearly 43 years serving the community in Wootton.

It is estimated that Joan has seen more than three hundred thousand children safely across the road during that time, and she is now crossing the grandchildren of some of the children she crossed at the start of her service.

Cllr Charles Royden, Deputy Mayor said *"Every day, through all kinds of weather, rain or shine, hot or cold, our school crossing patrols carry out their duties and dedicate themselves to the safety of local children. Joan has been helping children get to school in Wootton since September 1974, and I would like to thank her for this amazing contribution to the community and the school. I know Joan will be much missed by the children and parents of Wootton Lower."*

Head Teacher of Wootton Lower School, Chris Tavener said *"Joan is a lovely lady and will be sorely missed by everyone she meets on her crossing. She greets the children with a wonderful smile and ensures they arrive at school happy and ready to start the day. It is amazing how many people she has helped over her time here."*

If you are interested in becoming a School Crossing Patrol, please contact the Council via the website www.bedford.gov.uk, email road.safety@bedford.gov.uk, or give us a call on 01234 228618.

Could you be a School Governor?

28 school governors and clerks were invited to a celebration evening at Borough Hall in recognition of the commitment and dedication (those attending had 278 years' worth of experience between them!) of the governors and clerks of schools across Bedford Borough.

They were presented with awards by Mayor Dave Hodgson in a variety of categories, having been nominated by colleagues, parents and teachers.

Bedford Borough Council is currently looking to recruit more governors for Bedford Borough schools.

If you are interested and would like to explore this opportunity, please complete the online application form on our website www.bedford.gov.uk (click on 'Education and Learning', 'Schools and Colleges', 'School Governors' and 'Becoming a School Governor').



Longer Library Opening Hours with Library Plus

Library PLUS
Your Self-Service Library

From 4 September this year your local Library service will be changing.

Library users will be able to take advantage of our new flexible Library Plus service, offering the extra choice to use libraries with extended opening times. The Council is facing a huge financial challenge, but these changes will enable us to make the necessary savings while continuing to protect and improve our library service for local residents.

Our libraries are a fantastic local service where you can meet with family and friends, browse the stock, borrow books, use a PC or access free Wifi, and, following extensive consultation last year the opening hours at all five libraries will be reorganised with an overall increase of over 40 hours, including Bedford Central Library opening on Sundays.

With the introduction of Library Plus at Bedford Central Library, Bromham Library and Wootton

Library users will have extra choice and flexibility - and the ability to use the libraries through a mixture of staffed and self-service hours, when you can use your library card and PIN to enter the library. During the extensive consultation it became clear that Kempston and Putnoe Library users felt that Library Plus wasn't suitable for those branches, so there will be some reduction in opening hours instead, to make the necessary savings.

To access the libraries during self-service hours you just need to sign up to Library Plus. It's really easy, just pop along to Bedford Central, Bromham or Wootton Libraries and ask a member of staff!

For more information about your libraries please visit www.bedford.gov.uk/libraries or sign up to our libraries email bulletin at www.bedford.gov.uk/stayconnected.



Bedford town centre going from strength to strength



Latest footfall figures have shown that Bedford town centre is thriving, with a 5.3% increase in town centre footfall in the first six months of this year compared to the same period in 2016.

Footfall has increased every single month this year, compared to last year and we are on track to see footfall increase for the fourth year in a row.

Footfall figures provide an indication of how many people are using the town centre and have

shown that Bedford is going from strength to strength, outstripping both regional and national performance.

The town centre continues to see investment and improvement with exciting projects on the horizon. This summer has seen several new restaurants open at Riverside Bedford, including Zizzi's, Miller&Carter and MEXICO, alongside the return of a town centre cinema to Bedford with the Vue Cinema opening.

'Healthy Smiles'

at the Haven 2000 Nursery and Preschool



Mayor Dave Hodgson and Councillor Louise Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, went to The Haven 2000 Nursery and Preschool to see 'Healthy Smiles', a tooth brushing programme for Bedford Borough schools and early years settings, in action.

Tooth decay is the most common oral disease in children but it is almost entirely preventable. The 'Healthy Smiles' tooth brushing programme supports services working with young children to improve the dental health of the children in their care.

Promoting a positive oral health message, reducing the frequency of sugary food and drinks given to children and introducing 'Healthy Smiles' is expected to have a really positive impact on children's dental health.



Pictured from left to right: Sue Jordan (Assistant Director, Community Dental Services), Karina Ward (Oral Health Promoter, Community Dental Services), Councillor Louise Jackson (Bedford Borough Council), Maria Riley (Nursery & Preschool Manager, The Haven 2000 Nursery and Preschool) and Mayor Dave Hodgson (Bedford Borough Council)

Do you need help with design? Want to get something printed?

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Water Safety warnings installed



Pictured from left to right: Pictured Support Manager, Thomas Warner (Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue), Sgt Ben Dimmock (Bedfordshire Police) and Cllr Colleen Atkins (Bedford Borough Council).



Extra signage has been installed within Priory Country Park, Priory Marina and along the River Great Ouse, to warn people of the dangers of entering into open water.

Following the deaths of three people who entered open water in recent months, Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue are working together to ensure messages regarding water safety get out to the public.

Cllr Colleen Atkins, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, said: "We can't emphasise enough that people should not enter the water. It doesn't matter how fit you think you are, cold water shock and hidden currents can catch anyone out."

Sgt Ben Dimmock at Bedfordshire Police said: "I don't want another family to feel the bitter pain that

comes with losing a loved one to the water. The advice is simple, never enter the water. The river is central to the county's beauty, but it must be respected at all times. I hope this new signage will help people to think twice before they consider putting their lives at risk."

Steven Allen, Homes, Roads & Leisure Safety Manager at Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue, said: "Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service urge the public to avoid swimming in open water for leisure and entering open water to help someone else thought to be in trouble. Cold water, strong currents and submerged hazards can quickly overwhelm the strongest of swimmers.

"The best way to help someone else in trouble is to immediately notify emergency services using 999, keep the person under observation and confirm their location to assist with rescue. Lifebelts or other flotation devices, where available, can be thrown to support a person in trouble until help arrives."