

Borough Monthly

Issue 14

January 2017

Visitor numbers up at The Higgins Bedford...

► *find out more on page 6*

*Edward Bowden (1903 – 1989) Brighton Pier, 1958
© The Edward Bowden Estate - Courtesy of the Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery*



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Man fined for abandoning a vehicle

Sebastian Geslowski of Edward Road, Bedford has been ordered to pay £647 at Luton Magistrates Court after being found guilty of abandoning a vehicle.

Mr Geslowski's vehicle was reported as abandoned in Spenser Road, Bedford and when a council officer inspected the vehicle it was found to be in poor condition, unlocked and without up to date tax or MOT.

Despite receiving a written request to remove the vehicle,

Mr Geslowski failed to do so and was subsequently charged with abandoning a vehicle contrary to The Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978.

Mr Geslowski failed to attend court and was found guilty in his absence at a hearing in December. Magistrates imposed a fine of £400 and the defendant was also ordered to pay £207 in costs and a £40 victim surcharge.

Abandoning a vehicle carries a maximum fine of £2,500.

Trees removed from Rothsay Place

Six ailing Horse Chestnut trees have been removed from Rothsay Road and Rothsay Place, Bedford.

The trees had been declining for several years and suffering from an infection that is currently affecting a high number of Horse Chestnut trees nationally. The infection causes the drying out and death of branches, leading to an increased chance of branch collapse. A further 12 trees required pruning as a preventative measure.

The remaining trees will continue to be monitored regularly and those that have been removed will be replaced with appropriate trees in order to retain the character of the area.



Cyclist fined in Bedford town centre



Dominic Smith of Leven Walk, Bedford has been ordered to pay £351 at Luton Magistrates Court, after pleading guilty to cycling in the pedestrian area of Bedford Town Centre.

Mr Smith was stopped by a council officer while cycling in Midland Road in June. Mr Smith was issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice and after failing to pay the matter was referred to Luton Magistrates Court.

Magistrates imposed a fine of £145 and Mr Smith was also ordered to pay costs of £166 and a £40 victim surcharge.

The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) restricts cyclists from riding bikes through the main pedestrian area of Bedford Town Centre between 9am and 6pm. Anybody riding a bicycle between the designated times set out in the order will be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £75. PSPOs can be enforced by the Police and authorised council officers.

Keeping your bins safe



Bedford Borough Council has recently received reports of vandalism and theft of wheeled bins. Although instances are very uncommon there are some simple steps that all households should take to make sure their wheelie bins are safe and secure.

Be sure to mark your wheelie bin clearly with your house name or number, using paint or stickers. Although wheelie bins are the property of the Council you are free to label your bins.

In addition, place your bin out for collection by 6am on the collection day; and after collection be sure to retrieve it as soon as possible. If you are away from home or unable to move your bin on your collection day ask a neighbour to help out.

Although Bedford Borough Council provides wheelie bins for residents it is your responsibility to ensure your wheelie bin is as safe and secure as possible from theft or vandalism. A replacement bin carries a cost so please take these precautions to ensure your wheelie bins are secure.

If your wheelie bin is damaged at the point of collection by our crews you will receive a new bin free of charge. Additionally, if your property has not previously been provided with a green or orange lidded bin and you would like one, one will be provided free of charge, simply fill out a bin request form online [here](#).

Keeping an eye on litter with your dash cams!



The Council is urging drivers with dashboard cameras to submit any footage of littering in the Borough.

Litter can be anything from a sweet wrapper or cigarette end to a bag of rubbish. Dash cam footage can provide the Council with the vital evidence they need in order to prosecute people throwing litter from their vehicles.

Bedford Borough Council has a zero tolerance policy towards environmental crimes, including littering. If you are seen littering in Bedford Borough you will be issued with an on the spot Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for £75.

Enquiries made through access to the DVLA database help to identify those people seen littering from a vehicle and being liable the perpetrator will then receive a fixed penalty notice through the post. If the FPN is unpaid the case will go to court where the accused will face a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

Between April and December 2016 270 FPN's were issued to people caught littering in Bedford Borough and 53% of this number were issued to people caught littering from their vehicles. The Council now spends over £1.3m a year on street cleaning.

Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Environment Councillor Charles Royden said *'We spend thousands of pounds every year clearing our roads and verges of litter discarded from peoples' cars, and with many people receiving dash cams for Christmas, footage from the cams can provide invaluable evidence to help us bring these criminals to justice. Littering is a crime and Borough residents are fed up of selfish people tossing rubbish from their cars.'*

Send your footage to enviro-crime@bedford.gov.uk.

21 years of service recognised



Frank Moss with pupils from Scott Lower School and Cllr Charles Royden (Deputy Mayor) pictured left

Scott Lower School paid tribute to 84 year-old Frank Moss at the end of last term, for his 21 years of service as a school patrol officer.

Frank, who has always worn a collar and tie while on duty, was

based on Hawk Drive and serviced Beauchamp Middle School, Scott Lower School and St. Thomas More Upper School.

Ofsted give top marks to our schools

Ofsted has confirmed the excellent standards of Bedford Borough Schools, with 94% of all Bedford Borough schools (deemed primary and secondary) judged good or outstanding, compared with 88% in the rest of the country as a whole.

The Ofsted Annual Report is based on figures for inspections carried out during 2015/16. The report showed 95% of primary pupils attended Good or Outstanding schools and 80% of secondary pupils attended Good or Outstanding schools in Bedford Borough.

The Council has recently invested more than £48 million into a School Capital Investment Plan in order to ensure that we have sufficient pupil places for the future, in high quality classrooms.

In terms of rankings, Bedford Borough is ranked 2nd in the region and 11th nationally for primary pupils. For secondary pupils, Bedford Borough is ranked 7th in the region and 63rd nationally. To view Ofsted's data in full visit www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Linda thanked for 27 years of care

Linda Cornfoot, Home Manager for Bedford Borough Council, retired last month after providing 27 years of care to vulnerable adults.

Linda was thanked by colleagues for her long service and dedication, having originally joined Bedfordshire County Council in 1989 at Abbotsbury residential home as a part-time night care assistant.

'Good' care home rating

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has reported that all Bedford Borough Council care homes taken over from BUPA are rated as good.

The CQC's report judged accommodation for individuals over 65 years of age who require nursing or personal care, with perhaps dementia and/or learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The service was deemed to be good in all five key areas, demonstrating that it was safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led.

On 1 April 2014, The Council took over the running of six BUPA care homes following the expiry of a long-running contract. In January 2015, the Council approved the ongoing in-house management of a number of former BUPA care homes for older persons, including an investment programme of £4million to enhance the accommodation and facilities for residents.

To view the CQC's report in full, visit www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-1332839285.

Project to transform the High Street draws to a close



82 High Street, before the THI Scheme...



...and after, as Coffee with Art

After making vast improvements to 16 properties along the high street and St Paul's Square, the 'Townscape Heritage Initiative' (THI) Project has drawn to a close.

The project launched in September 2011 with an aim to offer grants to improve traditional properties that were either derelict, in poor repair and/or vacant.

The project has helped to further increase footfall figures; with this year's numbers being the highest for 6 years.

The project delivered £5m of investment into heritage buildings, using funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Bedford Borough Council and Bedford BID. The project also levered £3m of private sector investment from property owners and tenants to create new shopfronts, 36 new homes and bring 33,000 sq ft of vacant space back into use, creating a new vibrancy for the area.

If you would like more details on the THI project's accomplishments visit www.bedford.gov.uk (and search for 'THI').

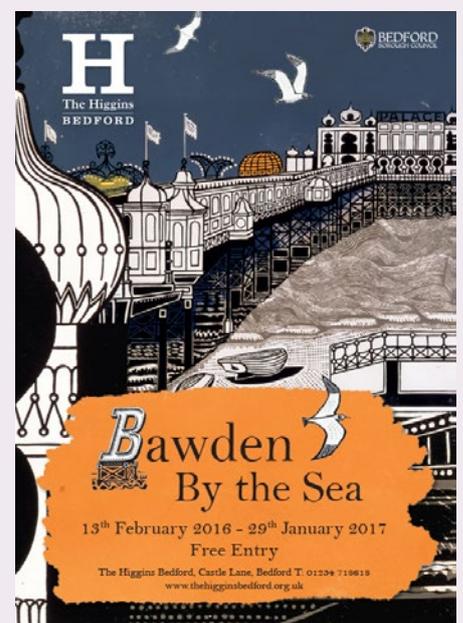
Visitor numbers up at The Higgins Bedford

Congratulations are in order for The Higgins Bedford, who had their most successful year ever in terms of visitor numbers.

The attraction welcomed over 42,500 visitors between January and December 2016, meaning visitor numbers were up by 24%.

Last year The Higgins Bedford hosted a jam-packed events schedule and a number of

popular exhibitions, including Picasso & the Masters of Print, Bedford's War Machines (which marked the centenary of the Battle of the Somme and explored the stories of Bedford's home-front contribution to the Great War) and many exciting family events over the school holidays, all of which contributed to foot fall.



i-Lab welcomes new tenants



Pictured, from L-R: Assistant Centre Manager Syreeta Kalyan, Head of Economic Development Mark Oakley, Mayor of Bedford Borough Dave Hodgson and i-Brand Centre Manager Simon Dunning.

The Bedford i-Lab has seen a prosperous start to 2017, welcoming a number of new businesses and taking occupancy to record levels at over 90%.

Operated by Bedford Borough Council, the Bedford i-Lab provides flexible and affordable office accommodation tailored towards innovative and exciting businesses, including start-ups.

The new tenants include 'The Church Agency', a creative industry consultancy; and 'Medisa Services Ltd', a provider of medical and clinical information to the pharmaceutical, bio-technology and medical device industry, who are relocating to Bedford from Portsmouth.

Also relocating to the i-Lab are manufacturers 'Tectonic Elements Ltd' who make audio and electronic components and were formerly based in St Neots; as well as medical diagnostics company 'Map Sciences Ltd', previously of Witney, Oxfordshire.

Mayor of Bedford Borough, and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development Dave Hodgson said 'If the i-Lab and its tenants are succeeding it is another measure of the vitality of the local economy, so it's great news that occupancy is above 90% and new businesses are moving here from outside the Borough.'

'The i-lab is unique in the flexibility it offers to small and growing firms. It's been great to see so many tenants grow in the i-lab and even outgrow it in many cases, over the years. We wish the new tenants every success, and offer them a very warm welcome to this unique business centre.'

For more information about the support, facilities, costs and serviced office accommodation available at Bedford i-Lab, please visit www.bedfordi-lab.com.

Shelf help on offer to Bedfordshire teenagers

At a time when 1 in 10 young people have a diagnosable mental health issue, Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council are launching the 'Reading Well for Young People: Shelf Help' Scheme in libraries across Bedfordshire.

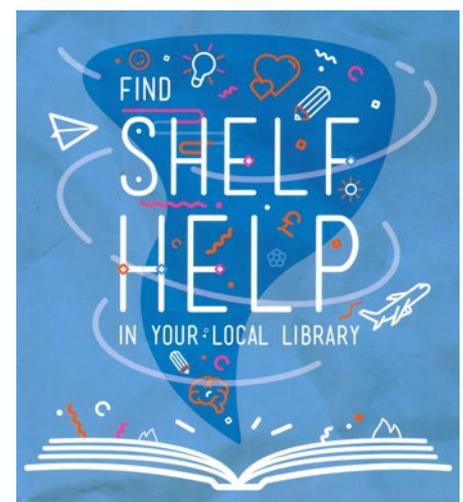
Shelf Help is part of the hugely successful 'Reading Well: Books on Prescription' Scheme and provides 13-18 year-olds with high-quality information, support and advice on a wide-range of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm; as well as difficult life experiences, like bullying and exams.

A reading list of 35 books have been specially selected by mental

health experts and young people, and is available at a number of libraries across Bedfordshire. [The Shelf Help reading list](#) includes a wide range of self-help and information titles, as well as memoirs, graphic novels and fiction.

The Reading Well Shelf Help Booklist launched on 16 January and the full selection of books are now available at [Bedford Central Library](#), [Putnoe Library](#), [Kempston Library](#) in Bedford Borough, as well as [Biggleswade](#), [Dunstable](#), [Flitwick](#), [Houghton Regis](#), [Leighton Buzzard](#), [Sandy](#) and [Shefford](#) Libraries in Central Bedfordshire.

To view the full list of books and find out more about Shelf Help please [click here](#).



**THE
READING
AGENCY**