

Borough Monthly

Issue 4

March 2016

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Bedford Western Bypass

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BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Newsflash



Watch the progress on the Bedford Western Bypass here!

The Bedford Western Bypass is coming together ready to open this spring. You can view the latest progress video from our contractors Breheny here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMNXOiUTco0

Bedford Lions Club raises £3K for the Child Development Centre

The Bedford Lions Club has presented a cheque for £3,000 to the Friends of the Child Development Centre (CDC) to be spent on updating the nursery. This is funding the club raised from their Santa's sleigh collections when the CDC was chosen as one of the recipients.

The Child Development Centre is committed to helping children with disabilities and special needs to live their lives to the full. This special place - recognised as a centre of excellence - brings dedicated and experienced staff together to work with children and their families.



Funding boost for roads hit by bad weather

An extra £200,000 will be spent on repairing damage to Bedford Borough's roads caused by winter weather. The money will fund the repair of at least 2,000 extra potholes across the Borough, in addition to the 1,100 pothole repairs already made each year.

The pothole hit squad service was launched by the Council in January 2011 to provide a quick response service to carry out permanent repairs to potholes. Since its launch, the service has repaired more than 12,000 potholes across the Borough.

Police and Crime Panel Approves Council Tax Rise to Protect Policing!

Members of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel have approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed budget for 2016/17 at their meeting on 4 February. The agreed plan means that the policing precept will increase by 6p a week (£3.18 a year) for a Band D Council taxpayer in Bedfordshire. The Police precept for a Band D Council taxpayer currently stands at £159.67 and will rise to £162.85 in April.

The Commissioner presented his budget plans to the Panel, reporting that the precept increase would help protect the Force's frontline capability as well as increasing the number of special constables and volunteers combined with forward planning to keep future budget gaps to a minimum.

Rogue trader given suspended prison sentence

A rogue trader who conned customers out of hundreds of thousands of pounds by overcharging them for his services has been given a suspended prison sentence for breaching the terms of an Enforcement Order.

The sentence was issued to Mohammed Shamrez, director of Express Plumbing Ltd, which also traded under the name 'London Emergency Plumbers', by Luton County Court. Mr Shamrez, 30, of Iddesleigh Road, Bedford, was also ordered to pay Bedford Borough Council's costs of £40,643 within 28 days.

The Court heard how Trading Standards Officers had received dozens of complaints starting just weeks after the Enforcement Order was granted, and which continued right up until February this year.

Funeral services at Bedford Crematorium and Cemeteries now listed online

Bedford Borough Council has introduced a new service which shows details of every funeral taking place at Bedford Crematorium, Norse Road Cemetery and Foster Hill Road Cemetery on our website.

The diary at www.bedford.gov.uk lists the time and location of the service, the name of the deceased and the funeral director.

The family of the deceased can also request a more detailed online obituary which may give information including the date and place of death, age, names of close relatives and arrangements for flowers.

The decision to publish these details online is part of our ongoing



commitment to provide first class services to our residents, reaching out to those in our more rural communities, who may have less access to other channels of information than those living in urban areas, and shows our commitment to delivering better services for bereaved families in the Borough.

The Council's bereavement

service manages the Bedford Crematorium, Norse Road Cemetery and Foster Hill Road Cemetery. As well as maintaining the Borough's cemeteries, the bereavement service helps families with funeral arrangements.

For more information about the bereavement service, call 01234 718150 or visit the Council website at crem@bedford.gov.uk.

Improvement works continue at Tavistock Street



Significant improvement works at Tavistock Street are still ongoing.

The works are necessary to carry out due to a lack of drainage that has caused

flooding to homes and businesses and damage to the road. The 150m stretch of road between Peel Street and the Harpur Street/Broadway junction is being completely reconstructed and an entirely new drainage system put in place to serve local homes and businesses.

The area has been subject to recurring flooding and the road conditions need to be addressed now before it becomes unsafe for drivers.

The road will remain closed between Peel Street and Harpur Street for the duration. Full diversion routes are signposted around the town centre and on major routes around the borough. Further closures will be

required to complete the junction with Harpur Street but this work will take place overnight towards the end of the scheme.

Businesses will remain open as usual throughout the works.

Key improvements in the scheme include:

- The introduction of a new drainage system to stop the flooding of properties and businesses along the route and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- Improving the road surface, removing the need for ongoing maintenance and regular pothole repair
- New energy efficient LED traffic signals and LED street lights, reducing the annual running costs

Shaping the future of Bedford Borough Libraries

We are looking to shape the future of our library services and we need your help!

Local views are required as part of a public consultation to develop a new Library Strategy that will set out the vision for library services in the Borough over the next few years.

We have developed a

questionnaire as the first stage of this process. It is on our website at www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/libraries and paper copies are also available in all of our libraries, including the mobile library.

So tell us how you use our libraries - which services you find the most useful, which services you feel should be prioritised and

how you think money could be saved going forward.

The questionnaire is open until Monday 4 April 2016.

This review comes as we face further government funding cuts and pressure on our services, which will mean that savings of over £25 million need to be made by 2019.

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Planning ahead for the River Festival! Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 July 2016



The 2016 Bedford River Festival is fast approaching and The Embankment, Russell Park and our riverside meadows will once again be full of visitors enjoying the region's biggest free festival!

This year's festival promises plenty of new developments to keep everyone entertained as well as the return of traditional favourites. There will be an added emphasis on the 850th anniversary of the sealing of the Royal Charter this year, with a special

12th Century village set up on site.

If you have a business, product or service you would like to promote to an audience of over 250,000 people then you may want to get involved!

Each year, approximately 250,000 spectators and participants will be on-site across the weekend in total. This year, we expect even larger crowds as the festival continues to build on its previous success.

The Bedford River Festival is free to attend and offers numerous opportunities whether you are looking to participate, or just relax and enjoy the vast array of activities and performances set over 105 acres.

Trade packs, sponsorship, information and application forms are available now!

Call 01234 718044 (press option 2) or download information via www.bedfordevents.co.uk.

For more information about the River Festival, visit www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk or email events@bedford.gov.uk.

Weaving Narratives

This March, Bedfordshire Archives will be launching 'Weaving Narratives' - a project encouraging eager crafters across Bedfordshire to visit the archives as inspiration to create textile works celebrating the history of our county's boroughs and towns in this landmark 850th year.

Anyone can take part! Participants will be offered an introduction to the archives service and the chance to take part in three workshops. Assisted by archive professionals, they will be given special access to original archive materials representing hundreds of years of Bedfordshire's history and



Girls knitting party, at Ridgmont, 1940. Lace making evening class, at Amphill, 1949.

encouraged to use these to follow threads of research linking themes of community, identity and growth. The form and nature of each textile work will be entirely up to participants, and works can be created by groups if desired.

The project will culminate in the autumn with a series of exhibitions, to be held at venues in Bedford, Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

The workshops will be held at Bedfordshire Archives, Riverside

Building, Borough Hall, Bedford on Saturday, 2nd April and 11th June, from 10am -12pm. Anyone wishing to take part should book a place either by emailing archive@bedford.gov.uk or telephoning 01234 228833.

Places are limited and will be first come, first served. No charge will be made for the workshops, but participants will need to provide their own craft materials.

Bedford town centre to be more pedestrian friendly

Bedford town centre is set to be more pedestrian friendly thanks to a new legal power.

The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) will restrict cyclists from riding bikes through the main pedestrian area between 9am and 6pm. Cyclists will still be able to ride through the town centre

from 6pm to 9am.

Bedford Borough Council is keen to encourage more people to make journeys by bike and provides a number of safe cycle routes across the Borough. However, cyclists must act in a safe and appropriate manner at all times.

Claiming Housing Benefit? Don't forget to tell us about any changes!

Our campaign to encourage residents claiming housing benefit to act promptly and advise us of changes to their circumstances is still ongoing.

An Aardman Animations elephant has been clearly visible on posters, banners, leaflets, digital advertising and other campaign materials distributed across the borough since late last year and the campaign remains as important as ever.

Changes to circumstances can affect the level of benefit that

residents receive may include;

- A partner moving into the home (or out);
- Other changes to the make-up of the household (such as grown-up children moving out, or other relatives moving in);
- An increase or decrease in earned income;
- Other changes in income/savings (for example, an inheritance);
- An increase/decrease in rent;
- Or a change of address

Certain claimants could also be considered to be at 'high risk' of

incurring overpayments:

- Those on an 'earned income' (i.e. in paid employment rather than on benefits) as changes to income are common;
- Part-time workers and those on zero hours contracts;
- Short-term accommodation (because they will be moving fairly regularly);
- Landlords

It's easy to let us know about changes, just get in touch! Email customerservices@bedford.gov.uk or call 01234 718097.



Claiming Housing Benefit?

Don't forget to tell us if you change jobs, move home or if someone new moves in – *it might affect how much benefit you get.*

All you need to do is go to:

@ www.bedford.gov.uk/housingbenefits

☎ or call us on 01234 718097

