

Borough Monthly

Issue 2

November 2015



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Newsflash

Council opposes proposed closure of Bedford Magistrates' Court



The Council has set out its opposition to the proposed closure of Bedford Magistrates' Court. In its response to the Government's consultation on plans, the Council has detailed the array of harmful effects this proposal would have on its own operations and resources, on the local administration of justice and on local residents' access to justice.

Fraudsters fined!

Ekramul Choudhury, 31, of Bayham Close, Bedford has been ordered to pay nearly £1000 for fraudulently misusing his disabled son's Blue Badge to park.

Mr Choudhury's vehicle was subject to checks in July, and it emerged his son was at school while Mr Choudhury was using the badge to park in St Paul's Square, Bedford. In sentencing, Mr Choudhury was ordered to pay a £350 fine, £420 costs, £35 victim surcharge and court charges of £180.

Meanwhile borough resident Lisa Burnapp, 41, pleaded guilty to altering the date on an expired Blue Badge issued to CareTech, where she works as Deputy Manager. Miss Burnapp pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay a fine of £350, prosecution costs of £420 and a victim surcharge of £35; a total of £805. Burnapp's colleague, who was caught using the fraudulent badge at the time, has also been fined under the Fraud Act.

Be Vigilant and Protect Your Neighbourhood!



We are appealing for witnesses following a recent spate of vandalism including an arson attack at a children's playground in Russell Park. The fire, which destroyed a children's pod swing, has been accompanied by offensive graffiti and further damage such as the destruction of recently planted trees.

If you, or anyone you know has any information regarding the attacks, please contact Bedfordshire Police on 101. If you see individuals acting suspiciously or a crime underway, please dial 999. Information can also be forwarded to the Council by calling (01234) 276422 or emailing customerservices@bedford.gov.uk.

Council pledge to support refugees

The Council has submitted a pledge to UK Government to provide support for refugee children and families fleeing the devastating conflict in Syria. Councils across the UK have been asked by the government to inform it of how many of the 20,000 Syrian refugees the UK is taking it believes can be located in its area and we have indicated that four families a year over the five year period of the programme could be resettled in the Borough.

Wootton Lower School opens new site on Harris Way

Wootton Lower School has a new site at Harris Way and hosted a celebratory event for the opening on Thursday 5 November. Wootton Lower School's other site remains at Bedford Road.



Newsflash

Bedford Borough NQT retention rate higher than national average



This year, out of the 95 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) who completed their induction in Bedford Borough, 82 are still employed in our schools - a retention rate of 86%. The most recent DfE data indicates that nationally this figure is around 62%.

Kempston Outdoor Centre Improves Disability Access

The construction of a new walkway which will improve disabled access for visitors with mobility issues has started at Kempston Outdoor Centre. Fusion Lifestyle, who manage the centre on behalf of the Council, have announced that the walkway will improve access to the River Great Ouse and a range of exciting water activities.



Compost Bin Offer!



Are you a Bedford Borough resident? Want to recycle even more? Then why not take advantage of a subsidy on a compost bin for the home? 220 litre composting bins are available for only £10, reduced from the original retail price of £39!

For this and other great offers visit www.getcomposting.com, or call 0844 571 4444.

Cardington Shed restored

Following years of restoration work, which has seen it brought back to its former glory, Cardington Shed No.1 officially re-opened on Friday 16th October.



Have Your Say on our Budget Consultation!

We are asking for residents' views on our current savings proposals and innovative ideas about changes to services.

Since 2010, the Council has made savings of £81 million against annual budgets. However, current projections estimate that £25.6million further savings are needed by 2020 to 'balance the books', partly due to Bedford

Borough's growing and ageing population.

Bedford Borough's population is expected to grow by 10,000 people by 2021 and the 85+ age group is expected to grow by one third (32%) by 2021. These changes in demographics come at a time when the Government's funding is being cut by another 25 to 40%.

As such, to meet the required

savings set out by UK Government, we must make tough decisions on the services we provide to ensure budget targets are met while also delivering the best possible services.

Find out more and have your say online [here](#). You can respond by post at Consulting, Bedford, 6th Floor, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP, or by email at consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk.

A very Bedford Christmas is coming...



Bedford's annual Christmas Lights Switch On event will take place this year on Thursday 26th November, at 7pm, along The Embankment.

The 'switch on' is a hugely popular, family-orientated event, attracting thousands of people of all ages to line the Embankment and enjoy the spectacle. This year's event also marks the start of late night Christmas shopping in town.

Meanwhile the Bedford Christmas Fair will take place in Harpur Square and Midland Road between Friday 11th December and Sunday 13th December, where people can experience the sights, sounds and smells of a traditional Christmas with stalls throughout the heart of the Town Centre selling an array of seasonal gifts, foods and treats.

Throughout the three day event there will be seasonal street entertainment, music and shows filled with fun characters and it all kicks off at 10am!

The Bedford Town Centre Markets will be held on Monday 21st to Thursday 24th December during the week running up to Christmas, so there will be plenty of time to get all of your shopping done!

For further information on our Christmas events, visit www.bedfordevents.co.uk.



THI set to transform the High Street once again

The long-derelict former Porter Blacks building on the corner of Bedford's High Street and Dame Alice Street is among three more properties set to be transformed with help from the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme.



The owners of the former Porter Blacks at 100 High Street, Sira Building and Development Limited, have formally accepted a grant offer from the THI. The grant funding will be used to help reinstate the grand shop front and ensure this important gateway property is once again occupied.

The building's neighbour, 98 High Street, has also been offered a THI grant to help reinstate its traditional shop front and undertake exterior repairs,



which will help bring the property back into use after sitting empty for a number of years.

80A High Street, Kebabs at Millennium, is also looking forward to works starting on site, having recently accepted a grant offer. The project will reinstate the traditional shop front, restore the façade and secure a number of key structural repairs. The property is Grade II listed and believed to be the oldest building still standing on the High Street, however its appearance has been eroded over the years and its future now has to be secured.

It is hoped that all of these projects will be starting on site in the next few months.

For more information on successfully completed THI projects visit www.bedford.gov.uk/bedfordhighstreet.

Claiming Housing Benefit? Don't forget to tell us if anything changes!

If you claim housing benefit, you need to tell us when things change at home, or at work, because it might affect how much benefit you get.

Please let us know if:

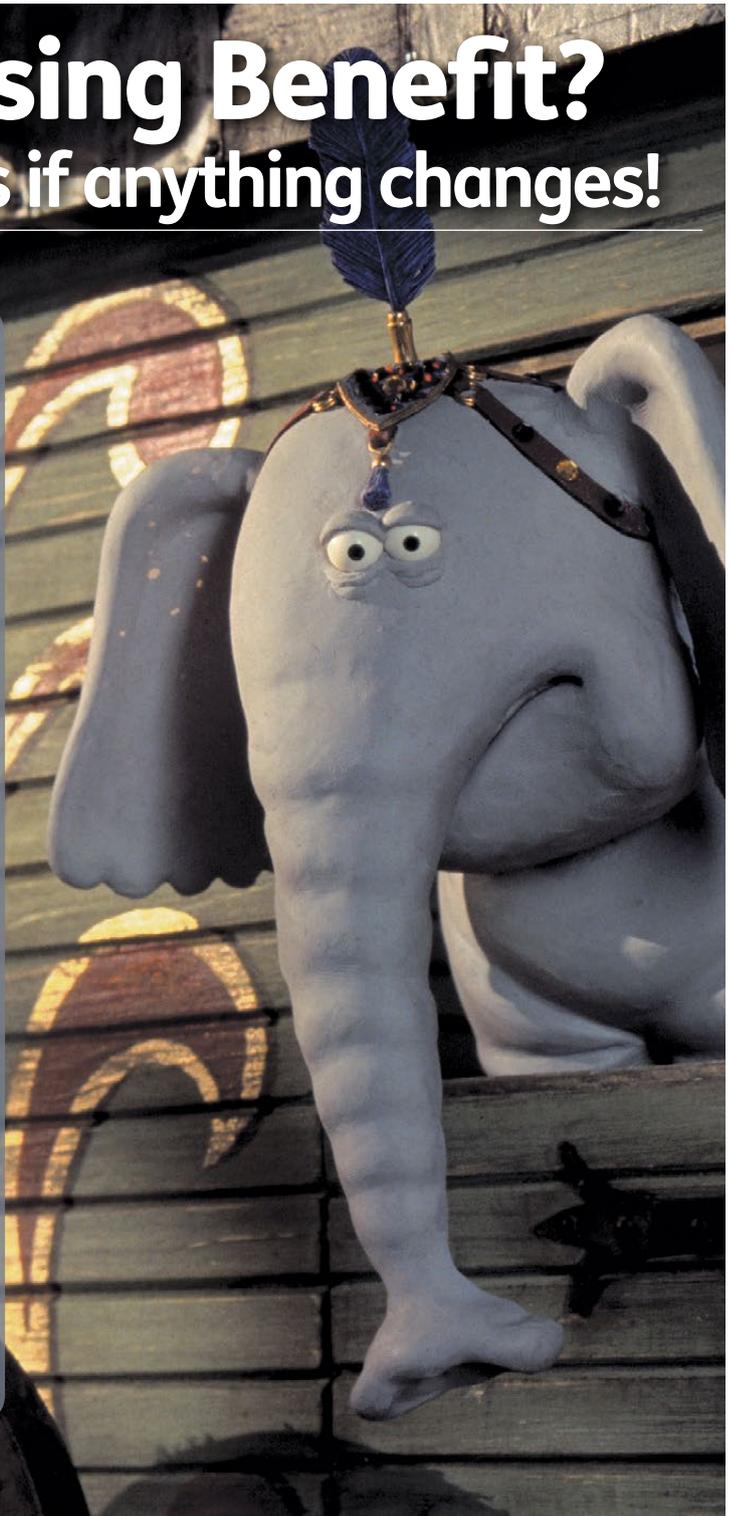
- A partner grown up child, other relative or friend moves into – or out of – your home.
- You have a pay rise or a pay cut, or the amount of money you have coming in changes.
- The number of hours you work each week increases or decreases.
- You or anyone living with you changes jobs.
- You start to get a pension, or the amount you are paid changes.
- You are lucky enough to receive an inheritance or a lump sum.
- Your rent goes up – or down.
- You move home.

If the change means you'll get more housing benefit, we can normally only start paying you extra from the date you tell us, not the date the change happens, so telling us early means you get more.

If the change means you'll get less housing benefit, you should still let us know as soon as you can because otherwise we might overpay you and then you'll owe us money.

All you need to do is go to:

- www.bedford.gov.uk/housingbenefits
- Or call us on 01234 718097



H
The Higgins
BEDFORD

'A unique opportunity to see all ten of
Bedford's Turners together for the first time.'

J.M.W Turner (1775 - 1851) The Great Falls of the Raichenbach, 1804, courtesy of the Trustees of Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

J.M.W TURNER
& THE ART OF WATERCOLOUR

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Call us on 01234 718618
or email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk
join in www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/join_in/friends
website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Free Entry
Saturday 10th October 2015
to Sunday 10th April 2016



Bedford Borough Eye Heroes



Bedford Borough schools have taken part in the first child-led campaign launched to tackle avoidable blindness in the UK.

The Eye Heroes Project has been launched by a team of experts in the field of ophthalmology and human centred design, supported by Moorfields Eye Charity.

Eye Heroes plan to work with schools, healthcare professionals and local authorities to engage

children through volunteer-run workshops in schools and after-school clubs, equipping them with the information and understanding required to spread the word to adults within their family and the wider community, and encourage them to have regular eye tests. Eye Heroes workshops have recently taken place at Priory Lower, Scott Lower, Shackleton Lower and Balliol Lower Schools.

The Council has a leading role in the Bedfordshire Eye Care Working Group (BECWG), and has supported the delivery of the project alongside Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

Visit www.eyeheroes.org.uk today, or for more information on eye health, contact the Council's Sensory Impairment team on 01234 228940.

From  Public Health England

Did you know?

From 1st October 2015 it will be illegal to smoke in vehicles with someone under 18 present.

The new law helps protect children from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

For more information and free, proven support to help you quit search **Smokefree**.

SMOKEFREE

BEDFORD CORN EXCHANGE CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHT

Disco Through The Decades

SATURDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2015

Let us make your Christmas party go with a bang this year!
Start the evening with a reception drink on arrival followed by a 4 course festive meal - Dance the night away to a live band and 'Disco Through the Decades'
Doors open at 6.30pm

Fancy dress optional! Tickets only £35.00 per person

For more information or to book, please contact Bedford Corn Exchange on 01234 718044 or email cornexchange@bedford.gov.uk

Bedford Corn Exchange & Number 13
13 St. Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SL
Phone: (01234) 718044
Email: cornexchange@bedford.gov.uk Web: www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk

Local Plan 2032 consultation opens



A consultation to allocate Bedford Borough's future development sites has launched.

The consultation will be asking for views on where new developments should be built up to 2032 and will help the Council prepare plans and influence where housing and jobs can be provided for the growing population.

The UK Government's National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities calculate their own development needs and publish Local Plans to show where and when homes, jobs and related infrastructure will be delivered.

At any given time, local authorities must be able to show that they have an appropriate supply of land allocated for housing development for the next 5 years. If authorities fail to do this then Government inspectors will make decisions about where development can take place, regardless of any local strategies.

Approximately 75% of the forecasted housing need has already been allocated through previous plans, sites which have planning permission and new developments that are already under construction.

However, to continue to incorporate residents' views and be able to control where new developments are being built until 2032, a new consultation has launched.

Why do we need more housing?

Latest population projections show that 17,367 dwellings are needed by 2032 in Bedford Borough. 12,847 have been allocated, leaving approximately 4,500 to find.

The consultation will invite residents' views on:

- Amount of housing, jobs and retail growth in the Local Plan
- Development strategy
- Local green space
- Call for potential development sites

The consultation will run until the 14th December

- Find out more on our website www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2032
- Information will be placed in the customer service centre and libraries in the Borough including the mobile library and also Rushden, Flitwick, Biggleswade and St. Neots libraries.
- Posters and leaflets will be distributed to Parish Councils

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

Use Bedford Borough Council's ICT Design & Repro Team



- Posters and Flyers
- Business Cards
- Leaflets
- Letterheads/ Compliment Slips
- Brochures
- Duplicate/Triplicate Carbonless Pads
- Envelopes
- Vinyl banners
- Large Posters (up to A0 size)
- Promotional Items
- Pop Up Display Stands

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 01234 228154

 design@bedford.gov.uk

