

Borough Monthly

.....

Issue 25
February 2018

Mayor announces largest ever investment in Town Centre roads...

► find out more on page 2...



**BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

In this issue...

Taking the hassle
out of parking

► see page 5

70,000 cigarettes
seized

► see page 7

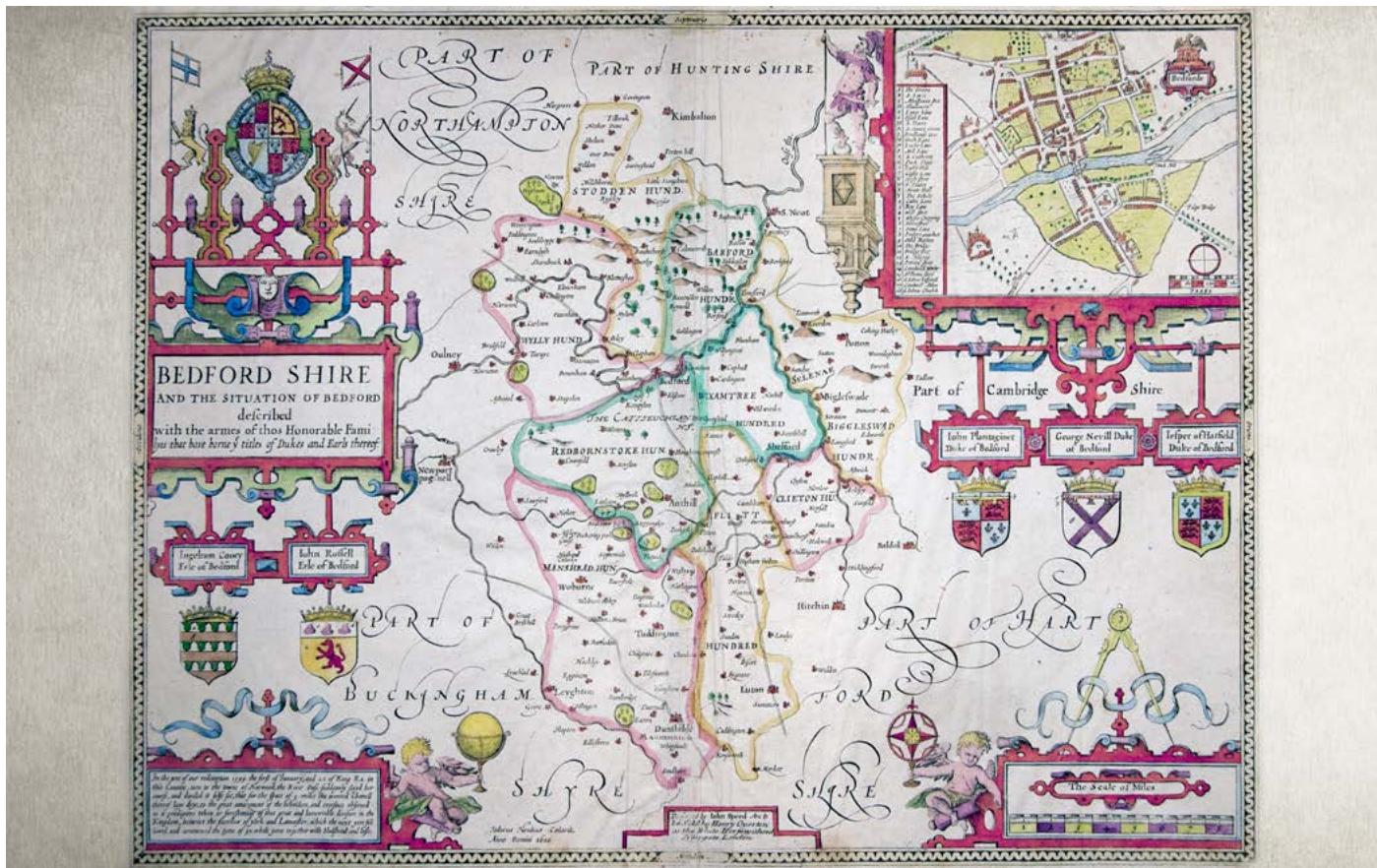
40th Anniversary
Bedford River Festival

► see page 8

Have a say in how
your hospital is run

► see page 9

Mayor announces largest ever investment in Town Centre roads



Mayor Dave Hodgson has announced 'Transporting Bedford 2020', an £18 million investment to tackle traffic congestion across our town centre.

Major works will take place at key points in the Bedford road network to reduce congestion including the creation of a 'Smart Corridor' on Ampthill Road; the signalisation of Shakespeare Road/Ashburnham Road junction; and increased capacity round the Hospital with modifications to the Ampthill Road/Brittannia Road/Kempston Road junctions.

A number of other traffic signalled junctions will be modernised and the town's urban traffic management and control system - which controls all the traffic lights across the town - will receive a major overhaul.

We will also carry out major refurbishment works in the heart of our town centre with traffic reduced to one lane on the High Street, creating more space for shoppers. Alongside improvements on St. Paul's Square, this will give a significant boost to our thriving town centre.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "Never before has so much money been invested in our town centre roads and work will see targeted works to tackle congestion at key traffic hotspots. This will cut congestion, improve safety for all road users and significantly boost the local economy. I want everyone to get involved in this major project to deliver real improvements to our roads so please visit our website to find out more and give us your thoughts."

All road users will benefit, including pedestrians and cyclists. Additional pedestrian and cycling bridges at Cow Bridge junction will make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to use this route, while increasing capacity for cars and other vehicles and so reducing congestion.

The announcement follows confirmation that the Council's bid for Government funding was successful, after winning the support of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

Plans will be finalised in the coming months with works beginning next year and expected to continue to 2021. To find out more about the plans and give us your views, please visit www.bedford.gov.uk/transportingbedford2020.

Executive send ‘Local Plan 2035’ for Public Consultation

Bedford Borough Council’s Executive has agreed to send Bedford Borough’s Local Plan 2035 for public consultation. The Council is required by the Government to plan for the ‘Objectively Assessed Need’ for housing in the Borough to be met in full.

This requirement means that the Council must plan for 19,000 dwellings to be built by 2035. However, with allocations and permissions already in place for the majority of this number, new sites are required for just under 8,000 of these dwellings.

The Council must also make sure that sites are available for new jobs to be created alongside housing. Employment sites identified in earlier plans provide enough space for future requirements. For this reason no new strategic employment land needs to be found at this stage to meet the Borough’s needs.

The focus for housing growth continues to be urban area of Bedford and Kempston, with brownfield sites accounting for around 80% of the new homes planned in the urban area.

In order to limit the impact on existing communities, the Plan also includes a proposal for one new settlement - Colworth Garden Village - which would provide around 2,500 homes by 2035. The proposals include a new parkway rail station to help ease congestion on the A6, alongside two new access roads from the A6 one of which would provide a new access to Santa Pod Raceway and Colworth Science Park thereby taking traffic away from existing villages and rural roads.

The Plan includes a range of provisions to ensure sustainable growth including infrastructure requirements, green energy, and local employment. The consultation period runs until 5pm on March 29th 2018.

You can respond to this consultation online at www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035. Responses can also be emailed to planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk or sent by post to Local Plan 2035, Planning Policy Team, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Bedford, MK42 9AP.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Colleen Atkins said “*This Plan will set out how our Borough will grow and develop in the coming years and will now go out to its fifth public consultation in recent years, each of which has helped to shape the emerging Local Plan 2035.*”



Fraud Investigation Blue Badge Enforcement Day



Bedford Borough Council carried out a Blue Badge enforcement morning on Monday 18 December, to check and verify the use of disabled parking permits (Blue Badges) in Bedford and identify any cases of misuse.

Of the 105 Blue Badges checked, 3 badges were seized, 4 badges were identified for further investigation and 2 Penalty Charge Notices were issued.

Cllr Michael Headley Portfolio Holder for Finance said: “Feedback received from genuine Blue Badge holders tells us they are happy to see the Council checking to see that the scheme is not exploited. Breaking these rules takes away vital parking spaces from the people who need them, impeding their access to vital services. Those who commit Blue Badge fraud will face criminal proceedings.”

Fraudulent Blue Badge applications will be investigated by Bedford Borough Council and legal action taken against those who abuse the system.

You can report any concerns regarding the use of Blue Badges to the Council by:

- Calling Freephone number 0800 917 8491.
- Visiting the Council’s Customer Care centre in Horne Lane.
- Filling in a form online at www.bedford.gov.uk/bluebadge.

£490k boost for ‘Pioneering’ Programme bringing new homes, jobs and investment to the County

- Regeneration of Bedford’s town centre
- Health and care integration
- Police and Fire and Rescue collaboration
- Regeneration of former RAF base at Henlow

Funding of £490,000 has been announced for Bedfordshire as part of a national scheme to make best use of public sector assets.

The One Public Estate (OPE) programme is a pioneering initiative aimed at improving the management of public sector land and property that is currently underused or has the potential for improvement and development. OPE are working with almost three quarters of Councils in England with the aim of creating 44,000 new jobs, developing 25,500 new homes and reducing public sector running costs by £98 million.

The funding will support a number of new initiatives including:

- Developing plans that could see shared headquarters and collaborative working for Blue Light Services in the County.
- Exploring the options for employment, housing and regeneration in a major mixed use development at RAF Henlow.

- Planned roll out of Health Hubs, providing more joined up care for residents across the county.

Dave Hodgson, Mayor of Bedford Borough said: “*This programme is about public bodies working together to make best use of local publicly-owned land. That's what residents rightly expect of us, and we were already working on this basis here. That's why we have been well placed to press ahead on a series of fronts, and we're delighted to have won more funding to help unlock more homes, jobs and economic growth.*”

Cllr James Jamieson, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council said: “*Here in Bedfordshire we're proud to be working across the public sector to develop and deliver innovative projects that are as much about financial efficiency as they are about improving services to local people.*”

Paul Fuller CBE, Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service said: “*Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have been collaborating on a number of initiatives to deliver a more effective and efficient service to the public since 2016. This has included co-locating at Community Fire Stations, joint procurement of a drone and working together*

on locating missing persons and other initiatives. The funding made available today will enable us to carry out a feasibility study into a range of options for creating a joint headquarters to discover which might yield the greatest benefits to the local taxpayer and the two services.

“No final decision has been taken at this stage. A joint headquarters for the Police and Fire and Rescue Service could provide savings on capital and revenue costs and increase the range of opportunities to work together more closely in pursuit of overall service improvements. Both Police and Fire will retain their independence and identity whilst gaining from the benefits associated with co-location.”

The OPE programme involves working in partnership with a number of organisations including the Bedfordshire Police, the NHS, Network Rail, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and local housing associations; already this has achieved a number of successes through cross organisational working.

Adoption in Bedford Borough

You don't have to live in Bedford to adopt a Bedford Borough Child

Start your adoption journey with us today

Give us a call today

01234 718718

Or drop us an email

@ adoptionandfostering@bedford.gov.uk
www.bedford.gov.uk/adoption



Taking the hassle out of parking



New signs are making it even easier to visit the town centre.

Four new 'Variable Message Signs' have been installed at key entrances to Bedford town centre, giving directions to car parks and real-time information showing how close to capacity each car park is.

These signs are up on Clapham Road, St. Peter's Street, Kingsway and Prebend Street, with two more on the way in the new year on River Street and Bromham Road.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "We have made supporting our town centre, local shops and shoppers a priority with a range of free parking offers available across Bedford town centre. This latest addition to our car park infrastructure will take the hassle out of finding a space, and make it that much easier to visit and enjoy our town."

These signs are currently being used to provide information about car parking, but they are extremely versatile- keep an eye out for changes in the future.

Keeping Children Safe by Cracking Down on Counterfeit Toys

Mr Ranvir Banghar of 'Retail Therapy' on Greyfriars, Bedford, has been ordered to pay £4,333 after pleading guilty to breaching toy safety Regulations and the Trademarks Act.

An investigation by Bedford Borough Council of 'Retail Therapy' found a significant number of unsafe toys and counterfeit items which were seized for investigation.

Officers found toys that did not meet safety standards and were a danger to children, including 'yo-yo balls' which have been banned in the UK since 2003, as they are a serious safety risk to children through strangulation. The items seized also included fake Disney, Marvel, Hello Kitty and Thomas the Tank Engine toys.

Upon sentencing Mr Banghar, the Court made the following comments "...the number of items exposed for sale was large and it represented the potential of at least 172 children being put at risk to health and safety."

Cllr Colleen Atkins, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Regulatory Services said "With Christmas approaching consumers should be aware that if the price for a toy or another item seems too good to be true, then it probably is! Counterfeit toys may be cheaper than genuine branded toys but they are often of a lower quality and can also represent a serious safety risk as they will not have undergone the same safety testing."

The Borough Council's advice to retailers is that they should only source toys from reputable suppliers who can evidence that the toys are the genuine articles and that they are compliant with the relevant safety standards. Retailers in any doubt as to their obligations and responsibilities should contact their local Trading Standards Service for further advice.



Network Rail to close Ford End Road for Bridge Reconstruction

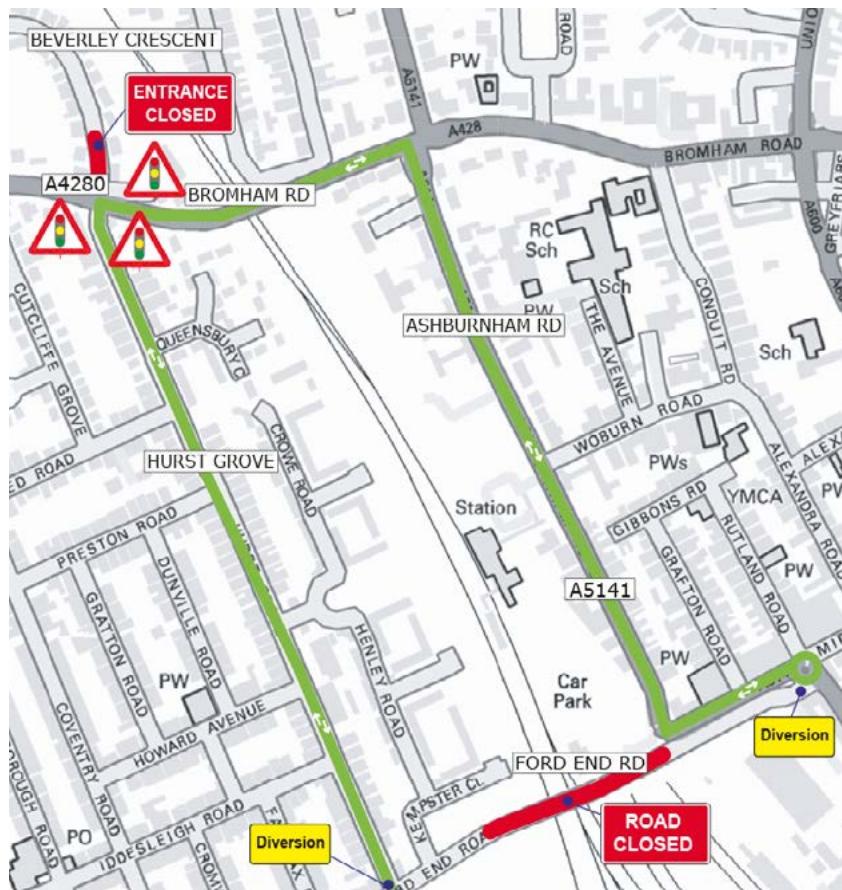
Following the successful completion of preparation work last year, Network Rail will carry out the demolition and reconstruction of a section of Ford End Road Bridge from mid-February.

These major works will take place between 19 February and August 2018 and require the road over the bridge to be closed to vehicles during this time. The Ford End Road pedestrian footbridge will remain open and a vehicle diversion will operate via Hurst Grove and Bromham Road (A4280) - see map.

There is currently insufficient clearance under the third bridge span from the west for overhead wires to pass safely beneath. Work is therefore needed to raise this section so that the Midland Main Line passing through Bedford can be electrified.

Please allow more time for journeys and thank you for your patience during this work.

For more information visit www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements or call the Network Rail helpline on 03457 11 41 41.



Stay Connected!

Don't forget for regular, timely information on the Council, you can follow us on Twitter @bedfordtweets, Facebook @bedfordboroughcouncil and via our website, www.bedford.gov.uk.

Stay connected

Northampton Man Ordered to Pay Over £600 for Abandoning Car in Bedford

Mr Mark McLetchie of Crispin Street, Northampton was prosecuted by Bedford Borough Council for abandoning his vehicle and ordered to pay £614.58.

A black VW Polo was reported as abandoned on Cardington Road in April 2017. When a Council Officer inspected the vehicle,

it was found to have accident damage and a flat tyre.

Mr McLetchie was asked to remove his car but failed to do so, and was then found guilty in his absence of abandoning his vehicle by Luton Magistrates Court and fined £220, plus costs and a victim surcharge.



70,000 cigarettes seized

Officers from Bedford Borough Council's Trading Standards Team, supported by Bedfordshire Police, carried out an operation looking for illicit tobacco and counterfeit alcohol focusing upon several suspected shops in Midland Road and Ford End Road areas of Bedford.

Three of the shops searched were found to have large quantities of illicit tobacco and alcohol stored in vehicles associated to the premises.

'Illicit tobacco' describes counterfeit or 'smuggled' foreign tobacco upon which the appropriate duties and taxes have not been paid, and it usually does not comply with UK legislation around packaging. Counterfeit cigarettes are particularly dangerous as the ingredients used come from unknown sources and have been

found in many cases to contain non tobacco vegetable matter.

The stores who were selling the illicit tobacco are now facing further enforcement action by Bedford Borough Council, while the Council and Bedfordshire Police will continue to work together to prevent the sale of illicit and counterfeit alcohol and tobacco in our Borough.

Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, Cllr Colleen Atkins said "*This was a successful partnership operation carried out by Bedford Borough Council's Trading Standards Team supported by Bedfordshire Police. We are particularly pleased the illicit alcohol and possibly dangerous counterfeit cigarettes have been taken off the streets.*"

Bedfordshire Police's Community Safety Sergeant Liam Mitchell said: "*This is an excellent example*

of partnership and multi-agency working. Our priority is keeping the public safe, part of which is ensuring that customers know what they are buying. The production and sale of counterfeit or illicit tobacco is often linked to organised crime and we work closely with the council to take a robust stance with any licensed premise that breaks the law. We are pleased to have assisted in taking such vast quantities of potentially dangerous products off our streets."

Cllr Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for the Environment said "We will always try to work with the owners of abandoned vehicles to find a solution and ensure the vehicle's prompt removal. However, when this isn't possible we will take further action to enforce against this criminal offence."

Your brand new Mobile Library is here!

A new and improved Mobile Library service is here with the launch of a brand new vehicle on the Borough's roads.

The Mobile Library visits communities across the Borough and welcomes all ages with stock on board to interest everyone. This includes children's fiction and nonfiction, adult fiction and nonfiction picture books, and spoken word CDs.

The previous vehicle was purchased in 2007 and had done ten years of service. As well as being more efficient, the new state of the art Mobile Library vehicle is one of only a handful in the country to be equipped with a self-service machine, making it even easier for residents to check out books and other media.

Cllr Sarah-Jayne Holland, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture said "I know how much local residents value the Mobile Library service, and we have worked hard to keep it running and keep every single one of our libraries open. I am delighted that this new vehicle will be making its way across the Borough, taking our fantastic libraries on the road."



40th Anniversary for Bedford's River Festival



First held in 1978, the 20th bi-ennial Bedford River Festival will take place on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th July 2018.

Now recognised as one of the largest outdoor events of its kind in the UK, the 2016 festival saw over 250,000 visitors enjoy the unique mix of carnival, music and nautical. This year's River Festival promises to be even more popular with the event celebrating its 40th birthday.

Events on the river include competitions for the best decorated narrow boats and cruisers; an illuminated boat parade; kayak slalom; the ever popular Dragonboat races on Saturday, and raft racing on Sunday, culminating in a spectacular fireworks display.

New features this year include St. Mary's Garden which will showcase local arts and crafts and the Continental Market highlighting cuisine from around the world.

In addition, 2018 marks the end of the World War I and the Heritage Village will be commemorating this by showcasing all aspects of the war with over 50 re-enactors, displays and demonstrations.

The Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson, said *"It is fantastic to be celebrating 40 years of the River Festival. This wonderful event is powered by Bedford Borough's community spirit and there is always a vast array of attractions for people of all ages to enjoy, and I am looking forward to seeing how this year's event develops."*

Applications for participation in the Dragon Boat races, raft races and Carnival Parade are now open, as are opportunities for businesses to get involved through sponsorship or trade stands. For information about getting involved please email events@bedford.gov.uk.



Have a say in how your hospital is run

As you will have seen, plans have been announced to explore a merger between the Bedford and Luton and Dunstable Hospitals. Should the hospitals merge, the newly formed NHS organisation will be a Foundation Trust.

Ahead of this, both hospitals are encouraging local residents, particularly those from Bedford Borough, to sign up as Foundation Trust members, to ensure future membership of the newly integrated Foundation Trust will fully represent the population that both areas serve.

The Luton and Dunstable Hospital is already a Foundation Trust, with 16,000 members. To provide a balance we need to increase the membership of those currently served by Bedford Hospital.

Foundation Trust members have a say in how the hospitals are run, how healthcare is provided to patients and can voice their concerns or make suggestions about future plans.

As a member, you can decide how involved you would like to become. You can receive updates on developments, attend events and medical lectures or if you want to get more involved you can stand for election as a Governor. Foundation Trust members vote in the Governors who then hold the Trust Board to account.

Anyone can become a member, it's free and easy to sign up and you can help to influence the way your hospital is run. Please consider joining up as a member yourself and pass this on to anyone else you think would like to support Bedford Hospital and represent their community.

Details about how to sign up for either hospital are available on the Luton and Dunstable Hospital website. Please [click here](#) or call 01582 718333.

Seeing Bedford in the best light!

New lights have been installed on Bedford Town Bridge and The Embankment by Bedford Borough Council as part of a successful funding bid. This latest LED remote-monitored street lighting not only helps to keep residents in the town safe, it also remains in keeping with the historic importance of the area.

In 2015, Bedford Borough Council was awarded Department for Transport (DfT) funding after successfully completing a bid for the DfT Maintenance Challenge Fund. The monies were awarded to replace the Council's street lighting stock with the latest LED lanterns and to replace columns that could

not be restored. The borough also contributed capital money to the scheme.

The Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson, said: "*The updated street lights offer reduced power consumption and yet are brighter than previously. So we are keeping residents safe while saving a considerable amount of energy. The end result is ideal for the location, complementing its historic, picturesque character.*"

Bedford's Town Bridge has historically been the subject of numerous paintings and drawings. The most famous artist to have featured it was J.M.W Turner, who in 1831 painted a view of the

bridge in his 'Picturesque Views in England and Wales'.

Some areas within the borough have specialist lighting equipment, therefore the Council's challenge was to match the existing equipment and replace it with new Content Management System (CMS) controlled LED lanterns. Integrated CMS gives the Council centralised control of their luminaires; this allows them to react even faster to any failures and to dim lights outside of peak hours. The Town Bridge and surrounding Embankment were a specific area of focus.

