

Borough Councillor Update – December 2016
Contact Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on 07773371190
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Post 16 School Transport Policy Consultation

Sixth Form pupils could be charged £1000 a year to access school transport under plans being considered by the Mayor's Executive.

In a move to save the Council £150k, a public consultation is requesting views on 2 options to amend the Council Post Statutory School Age Transport Policy, namely:

- Provide transport assistance for eligible students of post statutory school age and charge the full cost of transport based on the average cost per pupil (it is estimated that the cost would be approximately £1000 per pupil per year), or;
- Remove all transport assistance for students of post statutory school age.

The Policy will not apply to pupils subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The consultation ends on the 13th January 2017. You can respond via the following:

By post: Consulting Bedford, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

By email: consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk

By phone: (01234) 276713.

There will also be a meeting where officers will discuss the options with residents at Borough Hall on the 19th December at 2pm.

Great Ouse Primary School

The Sharnbrook Academy Federation (SAF – Sharnbrook Upper School and its feeder schools) is to open a new school north of Bedford for pupils aged 5 – 11 after the plans were agreed with the Department for Education.

The location of the Great Ouse Primary Academy is not currently known despite its proposed opening date of September 2017.

Autumn Statement

The Chancellor, Phillip Hammond MP, has confirmed Government funding for 2 new infrastructure schemes linking Cambridge and Oxford which will in turn benefit Bedford Borough.

Firstly, around £100m has been guaranteed to deliver the western section of the East West Rail scheme which will link Oxford and Bedford, as well as a number of stops in between, including Milton Keynes. The intention is then in future years to extend the line from Bedford to Cambridge via Sandy.

Secondly, £27m has been set aside to provide a new 'expressway' between Oxford and Cambridge. This could be delivered through a number of options including improving existing road links and developing a new road between Oxford and Milton Keynes.

Car Parking Charges

Motorists will be able to park at Queen Street Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) for 2 hours free of charge every day from January 2017 as part of an array of changes to charges at the Council's town centre car parks.

There will also be a number of charge rises, however, as part of a plan to increase parking income to the Council by £60k a year. The standard 2 hour charge at Lurke Street and Allhallows MSCPs will, for instance, rise to £1.90, while the charge for 30 minutes of on-street parking will go up to £0.80.

IVF

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body responsible for organising health services locally, has agreed to retain IVF treatment after considering ending the service. Following a public consultation it was agreed that 1 cycle of treatment will continue to be offered.

Bedford Roman Villa

Bedford Borough Council's Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee meeting on the 17th November was entirely devoted to receiving a presentation on the Roman dig on Manton Lane.

The presentation was jointly delivered by Stephen Cockings and Elizabeth Sayer, both part of the Bedford Roman Villa Project team.

The Committee was presented with the story of the excavations as well as a possible scenario as to the role of the site in Roman Britain. Part of this story is developing evidence that Bedford in the later Roman Empire may have been the site of a major administrative centre managing wheat production in the Ouse Valley. Described as the 'bread basket' of Roman Britain, what may have been a large imperial estate could have been responsible for supplying the Roman army defending the frontiers of both Hadrian's Wall and the Rhine.

Winter Weather Updates

The Council has a dedicated winter updates page on its website to keep residents informed of changes to public, school and adult services transport as well as waste collection changes. There is also information on road gritting. The page can be accessed via www.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates

Residents can also report highways issues to the Council by using the 'ReportIt' tool. Matters can be logged on the system include, but are not limited to potholes, flooding and traffic signals. The issue will then be followed up by Council officers who will provide an update of action taken on the map. You can access the service at <https://highwaysreporting.bedford.gov.uk>

Advice on Keeping Warm in Winter

Age UK Bedfordshire is offering advice to older persons about staying warm this winter. For more information call 01234360510 or visit <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire/>