

## **Borough Councillor Update – October 2019**

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### **Bedford Town Centre**

Bedford High Street has been awarded a £2m grant as part of the Government's 'Historic High Streets' initiative. This will enable the improvement of shopfronts and buildings on the High Street and the adjacent roads (namely Mill Street, Lime Street and Lurke Street) and public realm works on Silver Street.

Bedford has also been invited by the Government to bid for £25m of the £3.6bn 'Towns Fund' to improve economic growth. Further details are awaited from the Council as to the scope of its bid. Proposals should relate to 'transport, broadband connectivity, skills and culture.'

A consultation on the future of the town centre ended on the 17<sup>th</sup> September. Its responses will inform the Council's forthcoming Town Centre Plan.

### **Wixams Railway**

At its meeting in September, the Council's Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee was provided with an update on the proposed Wixams railway station

A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been formulated which anticipates 866,000 passengers a year using a two-platform station. This has been shared with the rail industry for discussion before it is submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). DfT's preferred route for the East West Rail (EWR) line from Oxford to Cambridge will have a bearing on how the Wixams station is taken forward.

### **Average Speed Cameras**

The Council intended to implement average speed cameras at a number of sites around the Borough by the summer. Officers have confirmed that these schemes have been delayed, with phase one now expected to be completed by the end of 2019 and phase two by spring 2020.

### **Hydrotherapy Pool Closure**

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body responsible for organising NHS services locally, has decided to close the hydrotherapy pool situated at Gilbert Hitchcock House at Kimbolton Road, Bedford.

The pool, which was closed temporarily in November 2018 due to maintenance issues, was used primarily by patients with conditions such as chronic pain, arthritis and neurological disorders. The BCCG says the £120k cost of refurbishing the pool is unaffordable and that in future hydrotherapy sessions will be provided at various pools around Bedford.

### **Ward Fund**

The Ward Fund allows councillors to support community schemes. Please do get in touch if you would like to discuss any potential projects. The deadline for highways and greenspace projects has now passed, but applications can still be submitted for litter bins and salt bins (deadline 22<sup>nd</sup> November) and projects supporting external organisations (13<sup>th</sup> December).

### **School Admissions**

Applications for school admissions in September 2020 are now open. For more information search 'Bedford school admissions'.

### **'Active Adults' Exercise Classes**

The Council is taking bookings for its 'Active Adults' exercise class programme including football, golf and walking, which started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September (for those aged 35 and over). There are also classes available for those aged 75 and above. For more details search 'Active Adults Bedford'