

## **Borough Councillor's Report July 2022**

**Contact Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on 07773371190**

**or email at [ajfieldfoster@outlook.com](mailto:ajfieldfoster@outlook.com)**

### **Jubilee Celebrations**

I would like to thank all residents who helped to organise the wonderful celebrations in our villages over the Jubilee weekend. I attended as many of the events as I could and enjoyed every one of them. I am always impressed by the amazing community spirit in our rural villages and the hard work residents put in to make our villages such wonderful places to live.

### **Rural Bulky waste**

Due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, shortage of HGV drivers, and the need to prioritise the collection of household bins, the rural bulky waste collections did not take place in 2020 and 2021. This free service is now returning for 2022, starting on Saturday 18 June and going around the rural areas of Bedford Borough throughout the summer with the last collection on Saturday 24 September. These collections are for household waste, to enable residents in the rural areas to safely and responsibly dispose of items. Domestic bulky waste in the Ward will be collected as follows:

Carlton and Chellington - 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – Entrance to Village Hall from 08.00am-10.00am

Harrold - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 – Village Green from 8.00am – 10.00am and Peaches Close from 10.30am – 12.00pm

Odell - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 - Village Green near The Bell from 1.00pm – 3.30pm

Podington - 20<sup>th</sup> August - Hornbeam Close from 08.30am to 12.00pm

Wymington - 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 - Memorial Hall Car Park from 1.00pm-3.00pm

For the details of what will be accepted please see the council's website [www.Bedford.gov.uk/bulky](http://www.Bedford.gov.uk/bulky)

## **Contacting the Council**

While many services have moved online - which I am aware can cause serious problems in accessing services, the Council does still provide a telephone service for those who have complex enquiries or who need help to carry out a task online. The Council's phone number is 01234 267422. If you have issues accessing services then please do let me know by email and I will try to help. My Conservative Councillor group has recently contacted the new Chief Executive about the high number of calls to the Council and the delays in answering. My contact email address is [ajfieldfoster@outlook.com](mailto:ajfieldfoster@outlook.com)

## **Parking in Odell**

I am aware of the parking issues in Odell caused by a combination of the ongoing building works at the Old Mill and large vehicles parked constantly outside the flats on the High Street. Please be assured that I am liaising with the Borough's Highways Department and also representatives from other organisations concerned in an effort to resolve these issues. This is causing problems for residents, particularly those who are less mobile than others and need to get around the village and local businesses.

## **Final Local Plan 2040 Consultation Begins**

Bedford Borough Council has launched its Local Plan 2040 for the next and final stage of consultation and I would encourage residents to respond to it. The Local Plan 2040 sets out where new homes and jobs will be located in Bedford Borough up to 2040, in order to meet nationally determined growth targets. It also plans for new services and infrastructure, including transport, schools and public open spaces to support sustainable communities.

The Local Plan 2040 focuses mainly on a strategy to guide housing and employment growth to meet the government's targets, and the infrastructure needed to support it. The Council is legally obliged to plan for a set number of homes: 1,355 per year to 2040. The Plan's Strategy focuses new development first in the urban area, including suitable, previously developed 'brownfield' sites.

The Plan then focuses on growth at sites just outside the urban area that will help to deliver green infrastructure projects such as Bedford River Valley Park, Willington and at new

locations on the East West Rail / A421 corridor that benefit from good access to planned rail stations.

The Plan proposes two new settlements close to new rail stations on the proposed East West Rail line; at the former brickworks at Kempston Hardwick and at Little Barford to the east of the Borough, where the East West Rail line is planned to cross the East Coast Main Line. This Plan also focuses on encouraging high-skilled employment opportunities alongside housing development, with up to 26,700 jobs planned at a number of sites across the borough.

This new draft Local Plan is now open for its final public consultation before submission, and comments are welcome until 29 July 2022. Please visit [www.bedford.gov.uk/LocalPlan2040](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/LocalPlan2040) to find out more and have your say.

The Council will be hosting drop in sessions where you can talk to the team and find out more, at: The Howard Centre, Bedford, MK40 1UH from 11am-2pm on: Wednesday 20 July and Saturday 23 July.

The consultation documents, a summary leaflet, and a set of FAQs about the consultation can be seen at [www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2040](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2040). The summary leaflet should by now have been delivered to every home in the Borough and you can also request information in paper format and/or a paper response form by calling 01234 718070. You can also respond by post to Planning Policy Team, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, MK42 9AP.

If you have any questions not addressed in the FAQ, the team can be contacted on 01234 718300 where you can leave a message and someone from the team will come back to you, or by email at [planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk).

### **Bedford Borough Council Issues Nearly 500 Tickets for Illegal Parking Outside Schools**

I have received reports of parking issues outside schools in the Ward. I know it is not always easy to get children to school, particularly on rainy days but would ask parents to please be considerate and park safely at school pick up and drop off times.

The Borough introduced a new Parking Patrol in 2021 and these officers have issued 483 parking fines in the Borough to people parked illegally outside local schools since they started visiting schools during drop off and pick up. The Parking Patrol vehicle visits schools around the Borough during drop off and pick up times. Fines are issued to parents parked illegally at locations where danger is caused to school children, parents, and other pedestrians either on double yellow lines or on the zigzag keep clear lines. Parking restrictions are in place to keep school children, staff, pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users safe.

### **E-Scooters**

We are seeing more and more e-scooters in use in the Borough. In the UK, whilst you are legally entitled to buy, sell, and own an electric scooter, it is currently illegal in the UK to use an electric scooter on public roads, pavements, or cycle lanes. Electric scooters can only be legally used in the UK on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Government figures show that there were 931 casualties involving e-scooters in the year to June 2021, and three fatalities. Bedfordshire Police have already confiscated approximately 100 machines. New laws governing their use are due to be announced later this year.

### **Bedford Corn Exchange given special status by Historic England**

The Victorian building which hosted concerts throughout World War Two has been given special status. The mid-19th century Bedford Corn Exchange has been listed at Grade II by Historic England.

During the Second World War the building located on St Paul's Square was used by the BBC Symphony Orchestra to host the BBC Proms. It was also the venue for concerts by the American big band leader Glenn Miller. Additionally, Historic England has updated the listing of the Grade II\* listed Harpur Suite to better describe its history.

In becoming Grade II listed, Bedford Corn Exchange has joined several other buildings in the St Paul's Square area with special historic status. The Church of St Paul is Grade I listed, as is a statue of John Howard. Bedford's Town Hall and Shire Hall are both listed at Grade II.

The Corn Exchange is a significant and important building that played a central role during wartime history both globally and locally.

## **Improvement Works on the Embankment**

Bedford Borough Council has completed the first stage of a £1.5million investment in the Embankment, which saw the buff-coloured walkway resurfaced between Newnham Avenue and Bushmead Road.

During these works, fifteen benches down the Embankment have also been replaced. These new benches will refresh and enhance the look of the Embankment and provide better places for people to sit and relax in the beautiful location. The new benches are metal with recycled plastic slats.

These new benches were funded by the Welcome Back Fund, developed by the government as part of the Covid-19 response, comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and aims to support the high street and tourist attractions in welcoming back shoppers and visitors.