

Monthly Borough Report October

Safety Issues Saxon Way and Great Portway

A new give way sign will be fitted at the junction of Saxon Way and Kingswood Way. A member of the traffic management team will be visiting to look again at the TO and yellow lining on Great Portway following a number of complaints regarding access and exit from properties on the odd number side. It would be helpful if a member of the PC could also be in attendance when this review is taking place.

Looked after children (LAC)

As a Borough Council all Councillors have a “corporate parent” responsibility. This means we have to provide a safe environment for children under a number of different circumstances when they have to live away from home, these are LAC. We have to place them in suitable and in most cases supervised and supported homes. Sadly this sector of society that provides these homes is many times over subscribed in our Borough and we have to place children out of the Borough. We will always plan to use providers within the Borough that meet the criteria for placement. I know that concerns have been expressed regarding one such location in Great Denham and I have asked the Chief Officer of Children’s Services to investigate the status of this home on a number of points. I will report when findings are complete.

Update: *“We can see that the organisation, Athena are now registered with Ofsted and having just checked the Ofsted site this address did not appear on the list of Athena addresses although I know that usually once the organisation registers then all the addresses are included, we may be able to clarify the situation from Ofsted directly”.*

South Midlands Authorities (SMA)

Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire are the six members of the above. This was for the past year or two called the Central Area Growth Board. The idea was to look at economic growth strategies throughout the six authorities along with the Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLP). After government withdrew funding for the LEPs SEMLEP was dissolved in March this year. As there was still residual funding and various functions that still needed to find a place in our region the six authorities have now taken on the responsibility under the SMA banner. Also, since the change of government the potential for more devolved regions has been offered. Last month the SMA signed an expression of interest to become one of these devolved regions. We are now waiting for the framework for devolution to be available then we can discuss and determine if this is something that would work better for us all and deliver more routes to better funding and decision making.

Flooding

The Council is working closely with National Highways regarding the flooding on the A421. To address the flow of traffic the Council has suspended several schemes around the Borough to help ease congestion and aid traffic flow. Additionally, once the water has cleared the road

will need to be inspected and any repairs made, more information will be shared on this in due course.

The new flood reserve has also been deployed and local flood groups can access this funding to help alleviate the impacts of flooding. Council staff and teams have also been working round the clock to assist residents and address any flooding issues in the Borough. Really appreciate the hard work around the clock that staff and Officers have been putting. The volunteer group “React” has been giving tremendous support on helping those residents affected by the unprecedented amount of rainfall.

If flooding is occurring, please contact the Council on:

Tel: 01234 267422

Email: floodrisk@bedford.gov.uk

EWR

The Mayor met with the new Chief Executive in September to discuss the project.

The project is essentially on hold until the next budget when the Government can either decided to no longer proceed with the project or give it the green light.

Town Update

Earlier this year the Council purchased the historic former Debenhams store which represents progress towards the Councils plans to regenerate and rejuvenate the Town Centre and create meaningful change.

The ground floor is available for rent for two to three years until the wider development have been decided.

Free Parking

To encourage visitors to the Town Centre and assist the local economy, Lurke Street Multi Storey Car Park will be free for 4 hours every day, starting from 1st October until the end of January 2025.

This will run alongside the 4 hours free parking at Allhallows and the first 2 hours free at Queen Street Car Park.

CIL

On the 4th March 2020, the Council had been made aware of £532,458.37 in funding for unparished areas. The money has been left unspent until now (now grown to £700k).

The Administration held a CIL meeting on the 11th September where it was formally recognised that these funds were available with the committee agreeing to distribute them under the headings already agreed for unparished areas which include funding for:

Average Speed Cameras

- Grass Verge protection
- Parking measures
- Cyle infrastructure

Customer Hub

The Bedford Borough Customer Hub has officially opened its doors and will serve as an in-person one stop shop for residents needing face to face assistance with Council Services.

This will enable the Council to offer a tailored service to residents who prefer face to face contact or are not comfortable with online forms of communication, ensuring all residents have equal access to the advice and services they need.

The opening hours for the Bedford Borough Customer Hub are:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday: 9am-5pm
- Wednesday: 10am-5pm

The Bedford Borough Hub can be found at:

2 Horne Lane
Bedford
MK40 1RA

Tel: 01234 267422

Virtual Parking Permits

Bedford Borough Council announced its transition to a fully virtual parking permit system which would mean there will be no need to display a physical permit. To apply for this please visit: www.bedford.gov.uk/parking-permits.

For residents that are unable to access the online form, the Council encourages them to visit the Customer Service Team at The Bedford Borough Hub, 2 Horne Lane. Staff will be able to answer any queries and assist them through the process.

Jubilee Skate Park

The Council completed the refurbishment of Jubilee Skate Park on the 12th September (funded by S106 contributions) which included installing new railings, adding a new grind rail and installing a new surface that provides better grip and durability for our avid young skaters.

This sees another community asset improved.

PWC Building Control Services Ltd (PWC)

With the unexpected closure of PWC Building Control Services Ltd (PWC), residents can contact the Bedford Borough Council's building control services for assistance if needed.

The Building Control Team can be contacted on:

Tel: 01234 718081

Email: buildingcontrol@bedford.gov.uk

Winter Wonderland

A planning application has been submitted for this year's Winter Wonderland event which would grant temporary permission.

If the application is approved the event is expected to run from November 23rd 2024 to January 5th 2025.

More information can be found on Bedford Borough Council's planning portal, reference 24/01668/MAF.

New Active Adults courses

On the week commencing the 30th September the Council have unveiled a new selection of Active Adult courses. There will be a total of 36 courses and 18 activities which include yoga, archery, woman's boxing, Jazzumba and much more. The courses will run for 8 weeks running from September to November and are aimed at over 35 year olds, to foster a healthier lifestyle.

Bookings will open at 12.30pm on Tuesday 3 September 2024 and more information can be found here: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-sport/sports-and-physical-activity/activities-adults>.

Oasis

Oasis Beach pool has welcomed more than 10,000 visitors in August, increasing substantially over previous months since its re-opening. More information on visitor numbers can be seen in the table below.

(Please note the participation data below for May is only for the last part of May, not the full month)

OASIS	May	June	July	Aug
	1,765	2,723	6,324	10,323