

Borough Cllr update Oct/Nov2020

Motion to save Great Denham Golf Course and keep 'urban gap'

Following a debate on the petition tabled at the previous Full Council which received full support a motion proposed by Cllr Jim Weir (Kempston Rural Ward) was accepted at Full Council on Wednesday 14 October. This stated that the Council must endeavour to uphold and give full weight to policies and conditions that the Golf Course acts as an urban gap and that any development in the area must be made in connection with a golf course. The motion was passed unanimously. A proposal to Bidwells by Cllr Weir and the Chair of the Save the Golf Course & Urban Gap Group (Brian Cox) was made on the 5th October. This suggested that a 9-hole golf course could be utilised, and the Greenkeepers Compound could be extended to accommodate a smaller clubhouse. The land could also be designated as a "public recreation area" and thus allow the landowner to claim under the "public money for public good" scheme. On the 27th October this was turned down.

Village Medical Centre

Both myself and Cllr Rigby (Bromham & Biddenham) have been in communication with the medical centre and also a number of residents who have outlined the continual failings – especially communications – like not being able to get appointments and the phone going unanswered. I was informed in an email exchange with Dr Prasannan that 60% of calls were diverting to "ghost lines". A local resident who is also a Business Analyst offered help, for free, to look at the set up and see if a better working system could be attained. I have still to hear back if this is something they want to take forward. I have also written to the Clinical Commissioning Group (today 2nd Nov) to outline that things had not improved sufficiently and more needed to be done. I have asked that we meet as a matter of urgency.

Maternity Services in Bedford

A motion proposed by Cllr Phillippa Martin-Moran-Bryant (Great Barford Ward) was passed at Full Council on 14 October, asked the Mayor to write to the chief Executive of Bedford Hospital to ask them to increase the number of appointments a birth partner could attend during pregnancy. Though the Hospital have not come in line with national guidelines they have allowed partners at 11-14 wk as well as 20wk scans. They are also allowed to attend the delivery suite further than just the established labour. Whilst this is a good change we are hoping the Mayor's letter can help bring them in line with national guidelines.

Veolia Awarded Waste Contracts for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils

Veolia have been given the Bedford Borough Council waste contracts which means the Covanta incinerator site in Stewartby will begin taking in waste from both Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire too. We will continue to look for ways to mitigate the effect of this decision on those living in the vicinity of the Covanta plant and who are most likely to be concerned by the invisible particulate matter that the facility will emit. We continue to believe the Mayor and Borough Council should be looking for ways to destroy the business case for Covanta rather than using it to burn Borough waste and that of our neighbouring Council.

Response to planning white paper

The Conservative Group have submitted a response to the consultation "planning for the future". In our letter the main points were:

- Unhappy at proposals to give local democracy less say, feel that this is vitally important to planning process
- Support the use of the neighbourhood plan as we believe the time put in by local residents led to plans that are beneficial to local communities.

- Also agree with BBC submission that there needs to be a solid plan regarding affordable housing

Boundary commission

As I am sure you will be aware the boundary commission has made its proposals and we now have until 7 December to comment on them. In general there are a lot of improvements we feel need to be made and you can find out more the consultation here: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/bedfordshire/bedford>

It is worth remembering you need to follow 3 key factors for proposing new wards, there are as follows:

1. New wards should leave each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.
2. New wards should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries should be identifiable. Consider transport links, community groups and facilities, natural or physical boundaries, parishes and shared interests.
3. New wards should promote effective and convenient local government. Consider the number of councillors for, the geographic size of, and the links between parts of the ward

Please do submit a response at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/20441?bbox=474108.5,235922,537332.5,275234>

Marking Remembrance and Armistice Days In 2020

Due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, and the importance of slowing the spread and keeping our communities safe, Remembrance and Armistice Days will be marked very differently in Bedford this year.

Remembrance Sunday falls on Sunday 8th November. Normally this would see crowds of people join an event on Bedford's Embankment, but this year, organisers at the Bedford Branch of the Royal British Legion are asking people to stay away to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

A socially distanced service for members of the Royal British Legion and local representatives will take place and the Royal British Legion and Bedford Borough Council are looking at plans for this to be broadcast online.

Lane Closure into Bedford Started on Monday 19 October

Cadent Gas are carrying out essential works to divert gas services that will see a lane closure from the A6 Paula Radcliffe Way roundabout to Clapham Road.

This will see one lane closed travelling southeast into Bedford past Sainsbury's from 10am. This lane will be reopened by the middle of December, at the latest.

This is part of wider works to make improvements to these roundabouts and help ease congestion as part of the A6 Northern Gateway. As part of the wider Transporting Bedford project, road and junction improvements have been carried out across the town which will improve congestion and road safety.

School Admissions

Bedford Borough Council's online admissions system is now open to all parents and carers whose children are due to transfer to secondary or upper school in September 2021.

Parents who live within the Borough who have a child in year 6 at primary school or year 8 at a middle school will need to transfer their child to a secondary school or upper school in September 2021. The transfer to Secondary 2021 round and the transfer to Upper 2021 round is available from 12 September 2020 via the Council website, closing 31 October 2020.

For parents who have a child due to transfer to middle school in September 2021, the transfer to middle school application form will go live from 26 September 2020 until 15 January 2021.

For children starting school in September 2021 (date of birth between 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017), applications will open 26 September 2020 and will close 15 January 2021.

For further information go to www.bedford.gov.uk/onlineadmissions

COVID-19 update

Bedford is borough currently at medium local COVID alert level (tier 1)

Latest COVID stats:

<https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Social%20Care%20Health%20and%20Community/Covid19/covid19-weekly-statistics-28Oct.pdf>

More information available at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>

Track and Trace App

The government has released new legislation as part of its efforts to drive down the rate of coronavirus infection and support the test and trace system.

On Friday 18th September it became law for hospitality venues to enforce the rule of 6 or face a fine of up to £4,000 and to log contact details for customer, visitors and staff as part of NHS Test and Trace.

From Thursday 24th September, this has been extended so that it will be a legal requirement to display an official NHS QR code poster to help people check in to venues.

The NHS COVID-19 App also launched today across the country. It can be downloaded via <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>

New COVID-19 Marshals Operating In Bedford Borough

In October we saw the first COVID-19 marshals take to the streets in Bedford town centre, providing advice and information about how to stay safe and slow the spread of coronavirus locally.

Funding has been provided by the Government to support and encourage the public and businesses to follow coronavirus measures to keep themselves and our communities safe.

The marshals will be working with the public, shops, businesses and partners to provide advice and information about the situation locally and action to take to tackle the virus.