



## **Education**

We are delighted that works have been agreed for both Brickhill Lower School and Scott Lower School which will involve spending all of the allocated S106 funding agreed for schools in Brickhill. We are extremely fortunate that Bedford is now the top place in the country for children who attend either lower or primary schools. We are also pleased that this is feeding through to secondary schools and Bedford bucked the national trend with a 6%+ increase in GCSE results. With regard to the GCSE news, the DFE's data page on Bedford Borough shows very clearly what a stunning success story we have to tell. In the year when the national 5 A\* - C figure actually went down 0.2%, Bedford Borough's went up by a massive 6.3% from 53.4% to 59.7%! (Here's the link: <http://www.education.gov.uk/cgi-bin/schools/performance/group.pl?qttype=LA&no=822&superview=sec>) After many years of Bedford languishing behind other areas we can now be rightly proud of what our schools have achieved. Bedford Borough Council has just published that 99.1% of 1473 children were able to have their first preference school choice this year. We are building and investing in our schools and Mayor Dave Hodgson has allocated 48 million pounds capital improvements to school buildings, specifically the replacement of all temporary classrooms with brick built buildings. We believe that this is fantastic news as the eradication of temporary classrooms is something we very much welcome for children. Despite a national crisis in primary schools capacity, Bedford Borough's School Capital Investment Plan not only ensures sufficient places for all children now and in future years, but will also see that those places are provided in schools with facilities that allow for high quality teaching and learning.

## **More Funding for Footpaths**

Mayor Dave Hodgson has an additional £1 million pounds towards footpath repairs across the Borough. It is important that our roads and pavements receive funding after years of neglect by the County Council. Please report any problems which you see, call 01234 718003

## **Bus Stop Improvements.**

A major investment in bus stops has been agreed with improvements which will include raised kerbs, new shelters, more Real Time Information and hard standing. This is a much needed boost which will see an extra 1 million pounds allocated across the 650 bus stops in the Borough.

## **Littering**

Local newspapers and radio have picked up on the large fines imposed on people in Bedford, some in Brickhill, who have been caught littering. Two Bedford Borough residents have been ordered to pay a combined £779.50 in two separate littering cases heard by Luton Magistrates on Monday 24 January. Mr Danny Laverity of Amptill Road, Bedford did not appear before Magistrates and was found guilty of littering on Midland Road, Bedford in July 2013. Mr Laverity was witnessed throwing a cigarette end to the ground by an authorised officer and a fixed penalty notice was issued on the spot. The Magistrates fined Mr Laverity £200 and ordered him to pay costs of £173.50 along with a victim surcharge of £20. Ms Marie Goddard of Bromham Road, Bedford did not appear before Magistrates and was found guilty of littering on St Cuthberts Street, Bedford in July 2013. Ms Goddard was witnessed throwing a cigarette end from her vehicle by an authorised officer and was issued a fixed penalty notice via the post. The

Magistrates fined Ms Goddard £200 and ordered her to pay costs of £166 along with a victim surcharge of £20.

The council issues £75 fixed penalty tickets which people can pay with 14 days. The fines have been awarded by people who have not paid and have been taken to court. The court has praised the policy of the Borough Council and issues the fines accordingly.

### **Apprenticeships**

With the economy showing improvement across the Borough jobs are being created and Mayor Dave Hodgson has announced a the target of creating 2016 new apprenticeships by 2016.

Together with the high performance of the Jobs Hub in Greyfriars we believe that there is a great future for employment in Bedford.

### **Parking**

Please take advantage of the Mayor's Free Parking Deal which operates every Saturday. we are delighted that Bedford car parks have been really busy following the introduction of this free parking. This is one of the reasons why footfall has increased, vacant shops are down and businesses are reporting real improvement in Bedford. Allhallows multi-storey car park will close temporarily on Monday 10th March until Easter. The nearest alternative multi-storey car park is Queens Street. Lurke Street and River Street car parks are also available. Greyfriars surface car park is immediately across the road but has a maximum stay of 2 hours.

Refurbishment of the car park started last year and has already seen brand new public toilets opened and improvements made to many of the parking levels. The next stage of works includes the installation of new customer lifts and improvements to the vehicle exit and entrance ramps on Brace Street. The works are scheduled to be completed by Thursday 17 April, in time for the busy Easter weekend.



### **Town Centre Toilets**

There are now more toilets available to the public in Bedford than ever before. The Community Toilet Scheme has been a huge success and another great reason to visit Bedford. Bedford Borough Council's Community Toilet Scheme is going from strength to strength. The Community Toilet Scheme was launched by the Mayor in April last year and aims to increase and enhance the network of toilets in convenient locations for shoppers and visitors. The Bankers Draft on the High

Street and The Pilgrims Progress on the corner of Midland Road and River Street have become the seventh and eight premises to join the scheme. More businesses are looking to come on board and we hope to announce details soon.

### **Brickhill No Verge Parking**

The Extended No Verge Parking Zone has now been agreed as requested by residents at the Community Safety Forum meetings and supported by Brickhill Parish Council. The zone currently includes Falcon Avenue (*both sides*), Kestrel Road, Curlew Crescent, Plover Way, Brickhill Drive, Starling Way, Swift Close, Linnet Way, The zone will now extend to include Waveney Avenue (West), Dove Road, Pipit Rise, Merlin Gardens, Fulmar Road, Larkway and The Buntings.

We recognise that there are locations in the zone which may find particular difficulty and we will work with residents to find solutions, which may include grasscrete, or additional parking

restrictions such as yellow lines. In areas where it is not possible to introduce no verge parking we will seek to offer solutions such as grasscrete. Two areas which we have identified are in Rooksmead and Mallard Hill.

We have recently had more wooden bollards installed in Tyne Crescent and Kestrel Road and we are awaiting additional posts in Avon Drive outside the community centre.

### **Council Reports Road Signs, trees etc**

We have reported broken street name plates in Merlin Gardens and Linnet Way. In addition we continue to report potholes and broken street lights. Changes to the parking restrictions in Hawk Drive, Dove Road, Torridge Rise will be implemented soon. We have also asked for new yellow lines on the corner of Curlew Crescent and Severn Way at the Junction with Windrush.

We have asked for tree planting at numerous locations across the Borough including outside William Harpur House



*Wendy Rider in Rooksmead  
where we are proposing grasscrete  
from our ward funds*

### **Norse Road.**

We have been asked what is happening about the large area next to Go Outdoors where work has been taking place recently. Permission has been granted for a car wash and work is now underway. For more details see Ref. 13/00014/FUL.

### **Doctor Surgery 106 Tyne Crescent.**

We received further complaints about the surgery which we have reported and the Council has cleared away litter. It is disgraceful that an NHS funded facility is left in such a condition.

### **Black Cat Roundabout**

The Highways Agency is proposing to enlarge the Black Cat Roundabout at the junction of the A1 and A421 to the east of Bedford, and provide traffic signals on some approaches. The design of the roundabout is that the A1 approaches are signalised, with the A421 and Bedford Road, Roxton approaches remaining unsignalised. Works are currently anticipated to commence in May 2014 and complete in December 2014. The Highways Agency is currently reviewing the most appropriate times of operation for the traffic signals, with both full time and part time operation being considered. This will be confirmed at a later date. The roundabout is substantially larger than presently.

The A1 northbound and southbound approaches will be signalised, with Bedford Road and A421 approaches remaining as priority entries. Information provided by the Highways Agency's traffic consultants shows that the new arrangement will significantly reduce queuing and journey times compared to not making the change. Given the predicted increase in traffic levels in future years, Highways Agency predictions are that the net effect is to reduce queuing levels whilst maintaining current journey times through the junction. The scheme, therefore, prevents conditions from worsening as traffic grows, whilst making the junction easier to use and giving certainty about travel times.

Roadworks - Although much of the construction doesn't affect the current roundabout, there will

be some roadworks and potential for overnight closures as the scheme progresses and traffic moves from the old to the new layouts.

Future works - The long-term desire to provide a grade-separated junction here has not been included in the design of the roundabout. This will be addressed at the appropriate time in the future, when traffic flows and funding levels are less uncertain.

Contact Information Details on the project can be seen on the Highways Agency website at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/A1-Black-Cat-Roundabout-Part-Time-Signals--Chawston>

### **Local Care Homes - Highfield**

You may have heard that BUPA's contract will end 31 March 2014 and all homes will be managed directly by the Council. The council will take over the running of the care homes as now, with all staff and residents from 1 April 2014. Relatives, Residents and Care staff have been informed of the situation and we expect a seamless transition of management arrangements and have a detailed plan in place to achieve this.

### **Road Hump Improvements in Tyne Crescent.**

We have funded from our ward fund the improvements of road humps between Kennet Rise and Moriston Road. The new humps create less vibration and noise and will not cause damage to car tyres as did the previous ones.

### **Reporting App**

Do you love where you live and want to see environmental issues such as potholes, graffiti, fly-tipping and fly posting resolved in Bedford Borough? Bedford Borough Council has launched Clean Streets Bedford to enable residents and visitors to report problems in the street quickly and easily just by using their smartphone! Anyone can use the 'Clean Streets Bedford' app to report a problem such as an abandoned vehicle, dog fouling, fly posting, graffiti, fly-tipping, litter or potholes. It only takes 40 seconds to make a report and users can also send a picture and a GPS location, allowing the issue to be dealt with quickly and easily. Officers will deal with the report and you can be kept informed of progress using this web site, or we will send you a message when it is complete. This app is a great way for local residents to keep in touch with the Council and report any issues as soon as they find them. Users can send a picture and an exact location which makes it quick and easy for us to identify the problem and take swift action. The app is completely free to download and use and is part of our efforts to be transparent and work closely with local residents. The Love Clean Streets app is available for iPhone, Android, Windows and Blackberry, just search for "Clean Streets Bedford" to download the app

### **Conclusion**

There is a lot going on at the moment in Bedford Borough. A short walk around the town will show the new town centre development with the knocking down of the town hall, the new car parks and public toilets, the new bus station being built, the new tree lined walk along the River from St Mary's Gardens. It is an exciting time and we are pleased to be a part of the success.

**For more information** on what is happening in and around Brickhill and to keep in touch please visit our website [www.puttingbrickhillfirst.com](http://www.puttingbrickhillfirst.com)

Wendy Rider, 23 Orwell Close, Brickhill, MK41 7BQ 01234 303254 [wendyrider41@gmail.com](mailto:wendyrider41@gmail.com)

Charles Royden, The Vicarage, Calder Rise, Brickhill, 01234 309175 [charlesroyden@gmail.com](mailto:charlesroyden@gmail.com)