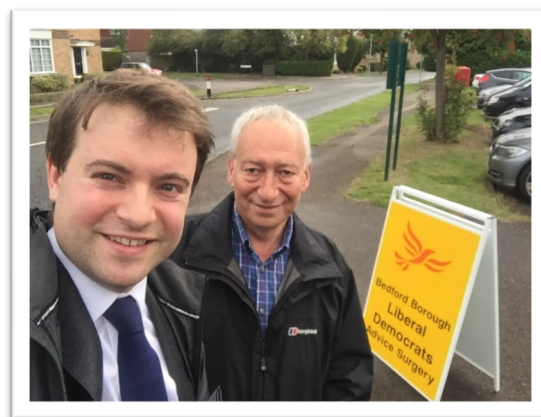


De Parys Borough Councillors Update to Brickhill Parish Council

March 2024

The area of Brickhill Parish that falls within De Parys Ward is best summarised as Brickhill Drive, Robin Hill, Rooksmead, Mallard Hill, and Eagle Gardens and Goldcrest Way.



Councillors Henry Vann and David Sawyer

1. New items

Tennis Courts. Following the press announcement on 22 January, <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/ParkTennisCourts>, we presented our petition and a motion to reinstate turn-up-and-play courts in Bedford Park and other locations in the Borough. We are delighted that our motion in support of our petition was supported by a vote at Full Council on 28 February, despite the disappointing decision to start work on the courts before the petition had been heard, and we are now discussing with the Council how this can be achieved.

Parish report. This is a regular report from the Liberal Democrat Group on Bedford Borough Council and updates on more general activity. It should be circulated to Parish Councillors for information and if you have any questions, please do direct them to Henry. It is attached at the bottom of this report.

2. Updates on any previous items

Drug dealing and anti-social behaviour. The Police are aware of continuing anti-social behaviour. Residents affected are asked to contact 101 (or 999 if appropriate) or make reports online and if any specific addresses or registration numbers of vehicles are known that is particularly helpful.

Winter Wonderland: We are very disappointed by the state of the site following the removal of the equipment, which will take many weeks to return to its proper condition. We have called for the Council to find a more suitable site for the 2024 event.

3. Standing items

Surgeries in March and April 2024

- Saturday 9 March:
 - Chiltern Avenue shops at 1pm.
 - Fox & Hounds on Goldington Road at 2pm.
- Saturday 30 March, Brickhill Drive Shops at 10am*
- Saturday 13 April:
 - Shaldon Court on Barnstaple Road at 1pm
 - Budgens on Kimbolton Road at 2pm
- Saturday 27 April, Brickhill Drive Shops at 10am*

*shared with Brickhill Ward Borough Councillors

You can also speak with us or another Lib Dem Councillor every Saturday morning 10:00am – 11:00am at Bedford Central Library.

Email communication. We keep residents up-to-date with developments in the ward area with our email list as a quicker alternative to FOCUS. If you have not yet signed up, then please do so. We won't bombard you and you can unsubscribe at any time. Sign up here: www.bedfordlibdems.org.uk/sign-up



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Working all year round not just at election time!

Published and promoted by Henry Vann on behalf of the Liberal Democrats a 5 Park Avenue, Bedford, MK40 2JY.

Reporting back to Parish and Town Councils

A briefing from Bedford Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group

Number 3, February 2024.

This is a report from the Bedford Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group for Parish Councils within the Bedford Borough area. It is part of our remit as a constituted group that we seek to communicate with parishes and residents across the Bedford Borough Council area.

We have asked your Clerk to circulate this to their Parish Councillors and we hope you find this communication helpful, and we welcome any feedback.

Dear Councillor.

Thank you so much for the feedback you have shared and the positive response we have received from previous reports to Parish and Town Councils; we hope that you find these helpful and if you have any suggested items for our Group to raise with Bedford Borough Council or any issues on which you would like us to report in the future, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

This briefing will include information about recent East West Rail briefings and proposed routes, flooding updates and how to sign-up for flooding news, and an update on the recent Budget passed by Bedford Borough Council and the nature of our objection to this budget.

The Council's Budget for 2024/25

Headline: Ward Fund saved, but additional funding for roads and pavements blocked.

The Council's budget was approved on Wednesday 7 February at a meeting of Full Council. We objected to the Budget and Capital Programme on the grounds of unsustainable levels of borrowing, a proposed 5% rise in council tax, and cuts to services as well as a lack of investment in roads.

The good news is that following our previous objections, the leisure complex and associated borrowing has been dropped, the community speed watch van has been saved, and so has the Ward Fund, which we know supports many Parish and Town Council projects.

The bad news is that our objection which included plans for £3m more for roads and pavement renewal, more funding for supporting bus routes, more refurbishment of playgrounds, and effective use of Community Infrastructure Levy was blocked, and the minority Conservative administration's budget was passed with support from Labour Councillors.

We will continue to push for the council to be equitable in any discounts they provide to residents forced to pay management charges whether the management company role happens to be undertaken by the council or not.

You can watch the full discussion (starting with recommendations from the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee) [on the council website](#).

GP services update

Headline: Successful motion backs campaign to secure GP estate funding

A great deal of concern has been raised about adequate GP provision across Bedford Borough. Until January 2023 there were plans in place to expand the GP estate but subsequently many of these proposals were dropped by the local NHS managers.

Bedford Borough Liberal Democrat group proposed a motion at Full Council, backed by Labour Councillors and others, to:

- Prioritise building of premises in Wixams, Wootton, Kempston and Great Barford.
- Work with the BLMK ICB to ensure that there are GPs ready to move into new premises.
- Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to request investment and adequate capital funding and revenue to develop new GP Buildings.

The full discussion can be seen here: https://bedford.public-tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/851220/start_time/797000?force_language_code=en_GB

East West Rail

Consultants appointed by the Council have published a new report. The report did not include a great deal of new information, but it did confirm that some of the proposed routes go through the Mayor's planned leisure village. Ultimately the reports confirm that 1) a connection to Bedford's main station is vital, 2) you do not need six tracks or demolitions, and 3) no route is without impact and any negative impacts need to be minimised.

As we know various routes threaten Priory Country Park and have a big impact on villages such as Elstow, Shortstown, Cople, Cotton End and Willington. We will be pushing for Parishes affected by the Mayor's newly considered routes to be invited to future meetings as they were not invited to the latest briefing.

Flooding updates

Many of you have raised concerns about the operation of the electronic flood signs and we have asked council officers to report back on what work will be undertaken to make sure they remain operational.

We will continue to work hard on your behalf and if you have any suggestions or requests for future editions of *Reporting back to Parish and Town Councils*, please do let us know.

With best wishes from Bedford Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group.

Henry and Jon

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