

Borough Monthly

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‘Mr Bedford’ keeping us moving!

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BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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'Mr Bedford' keeping us moving



At an event held at Bedford Corn Exchange, Pete Smith won the Battle of Bedford bodybuilding competition, placing first in the Master's Category, 1st in the Overall Battle of Bedford, and winning the 'Mr Bedford' title.

Amazingly, this is not Pete's full-time job; he works for Bedford Borough Council as a Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Supervisor, part of the team coordinating gritting operations across the Borough.

The Council has already carried out several gritting runs this season, with each run covering around 480km of road, and with the temperatures dropping Pete and his team are about to get even busier.

Pete said "As a bodybuilder I have come face to face with many difficult challenges, some of which have threatened to end any chance of me competing. Yet with hard work, determination, and belief in myself I have overcome those odds."

In the same way our winter maintenance regime very much relies on the same combination of training, hard work and determination by the whole team, to keep Bedford Borough moving through even the most severe winter conditions."

Cllr Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for Transport said "Whatever weather this winter season throws at us we have the muscle to deal with it, especially with 'Mr Bedford 2018' as part of our Winter Maintenance Team. Thanks to Pete and all of the team for all they do to keep our roads moving, and good luck to Pete for further bodybuilding success!"

You can keep up to date with gritting updates on twitter follow @GritterTweets or online at www.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates.

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Support for Rough Sleepers over Winter



With temperatures falling, Bedford Borough Council has expanded its services which help and support those sleeping rough this winter.

The 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol' which has operated for a number of years is in place again this winter, with a shelter, run by The Salvation Army, opening when the temperatures are forecast below freezing for three or more consecutive nights. This year the shelter will be run at their outreach centre on Kennedy Road, off Elstow Road Bedford.

This offers those sleeping rough a warm and safe place to sleep, along with an evening meal and breakfast the next morning.

All agencies and organisations that work with rough sleepers receive an alert when the shelter is

open, and the Council website will also inform people when the shelter is open at www.bedford.gov.uk/wintershelter.

Working in partnership with SMART, who run the Prebend Day Centre, the Council will also be providing ten extra overnight beds which will be available all winter - from 1 November to 31 March. These beds are by referral only, managed by street outreach teams. This new extra provision is being funded following a bid by the Council to the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative fund announced earlier in 2018.

This funding is also providing additional outreach workers who have already supported ten people off the streets and into long-term accommodation. Six people have also moved into temporary

accommodation provided by our partners 'The Kings Arms Project', and are being supported to find employment and long-term accommodation.

If you are aware of someone sleeping rough we urge you to report their location and any details to Bedford's Rough Sleeper Street Outreach Partnership through the national rough sleeping report line at www.streetlink.org.uk.

Cllr Anthony Forth, Portfolio Holder for Adults Services and Operational Housing said "We work with our partners to ensure that overnight shelter and food is provided to those sleeping rough in the coldest weather this winter. No one should have to sleep rough, and we are working hard with our partners throughout the year to help people move on from homelessness."

Exhibition celebrating Polish Independence at The Higgins Bedford

11 November 2018 to 11 November 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Polish Independence – An Exhibition of Polish Heritage in Bedford

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Polish Independence, established after the First World War, The Higgins Bedford presents an exhibition celebrating and exploring the shared stories of Bedford's Polish community. The exhibition opened on 11 November 2018 in the Great Bedfordians Gallery and is free to visit.

The exhibition includes a film featuring 'history keepers' – young people from the Polish community who have been trained to interview parents, grandparents and older people about their experiences of migration, early lives in Poland and journeys to Bedford.

The Higgins Bedford has worked in collaboration with the Polish British Integration Centre (PBIC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund to launch the MYID Project, which has provided training workshops for young people to collect and showcase the stories, artefacts, and photographs presented in this exhibition.

Cllr Sarah-Jayne Gallagher said *"This project has uncovered some remarkable stories of survival and adventure that will now be part of the museum archive – a wonderful way for Bedford to celebrate its Polish Heritage."*

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Sports Awards 2018



The Bedford Sports Awards has become a key date in the local sporting calendar, with athletes, coaches and clubs all gathered to celebrate the dedication, hard work and successes over the year.

The event, organised by Bedford Borough Council, was held on Monday 10 December at the Bedford Corn Exchange. Over 90 nominations were received across 10 categories, with a panel of 18 judges deciding on this year's final winners.

Judging takes into account the huge diversity in the size, profile and resources available to our local clubs, individuals and teams to ensure that all nominations have an equal chance of winning, with specified criteria used for each award.

The Adults Sports Personality of the Year went to Alex Edwards for his achievements in Freestyle Kayak, representing Great Britain at the highest level. Bedford

Hockey Club Girls' Under 16s won the Sports Team of the Year, having become the most successful junior team in the club's history after winning the Tier 2 Midlands Area finals competition in April this year.

Cllr Sarah-Jayne Gallagher, Portfolio for Leisure and Culture at Bedford Borough Council said: "Congratulations to all the nominees and winners of this year's Sports Awards. These Awards have been running locally for over 20 years, and it's always fantastic to see the range of nominations that come in and hear about the commitment and achievements of local athletes, teams, clubs and coaches."

To see the full list of nominees and winners for this year's Sports Awards visit www.bedford.gov.uk/sportsawards. If you would like to be kept up-to-date with sports news, sign up to the regular Bedford Sport e-bulletin by visiting www.bedford.gov.uk/stayconnected.

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Speedwatch on Bedford Borough's streets



Bedford Borough Council's Community Speedwatch Vehicle is out and about on the Borough's streets.

Speeding is a common concern for local communities. The Council has heard those concerns and has created the 'Speedwatch vehicle', in partnership with Bedfordshire Police.

This van will travel around the Borough, with trained staff tracking the speed of vehicles. If a driver is speeding they will receive a warning through the post. They may also be visited by the Police, particularly if they are a repeat offender or are travelling at excessive speeds.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "Speeding is consistently one of the biggest concerns people raise with me,

in communities across the Borough. We have already introduced average speed cameras in a number of hotspot locations in response to local concerns. The Speedwatch vehicle will give us an additional, mobile means of responding to people's concerns and will enable us to cover a wide range of locations. We will be able to send the van out, be a presence on roads across the Borough and help make those roads safer for everyone."

Inspector Paul Ayling from the North Bedfordshire Community Policing team said: "Speed is one of the 'fatal four' driving offences and we urge drivers to comply with the limit. It is vital we pay attention to the speed limit and conditions and drive

responsibly. Our community policing teams work alongside the Speedwatch schemes, which enable volunteers to work within their community to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and to help control the problem locally.

"We all lead busy lives and there are times when we may be in a hurry and there's a temptation to put your foot down to make up a little bit of time. We want all motorists to be aware that the speed limit on a road is just that, a limit not a target, so to drive sensibly for the road conditions they face. The consequences of speeding can be deadly so drivers need to take care on the roads all year round."

State-of-the-art preschool opens in Wixams

A state-of-the-art preschool has opened on the single largest development in Bedfordshire to meet a growing need for local families.

Dawn until Dusk is running the site which has the capacity for 40 pre-school children and youngsters up to the age of 12 attending its breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs next door to Lakeview School at Wixams.

Bedford Borough Council secured matched funding from the Department for Education for the nursery after successfully completing negotiations with property development and investment company Gallagher Estates, which has been the master developer at Wixams, to acquire the nursery site.

Dawn until Dusk has been graded Outstanding by Ofsted 15 times to date within its early

years settings in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Alison Davies, director at Dawn until Dusk, said this was a much-needed facility for children primarily from the Wixams villages.

She said: *"There is no other provision like this on Wixams which is a development that is growing all the time as houses are built and families move in."*

"There are many young families in Wixams who need childcare and parents were driving 30 minutes or an hour away every day to drop their children off at nurseries."

"We are providing high-quality childcare all day, 51 weeks of the year."

"The children have settled in really well and we are providing a modern, innovative, state-of-the-art learning environment which involves using the ever-changing outdoors as part of their learning."

"Our aim is to work in partnership with Cygnets Nursery, Lakeview School and local childminders to help the children become strong, independent learners."

Dave Hodgson, Mayor of Bedford Borough said *"These high quality premises are enabling vital new nursery provision for the growing community of Wixams. We were pleased to secure the matched funding for construction of the site, at which nursery and other care will be provided for current and future generations of children in Wixams."*

Cllr Henry Vann, Portfolio holder for Education said *"We are delighted with this new nursery facility and it is another clear demonstration of our on-going commitment to provide high quality provision for children of all ages living in Bedford Borough."*

'Scoot to Santa' in Priory Country Park

Eleven schools in Bedford Borough took part in the Sustrans' Santa Challenge with children walking, cycling or scooting to school, building up miles towards an imaginary journey all the way to Lapland to meet Santa Claus.

At the end of the challenge, Sustrans organised a celebration 'Santa Scoot' at Priory Country Park. Families from all over Bedford took part in gentle scoot or walk to meet Santa Claus. Each child received a little gift before scooting back to Cloverdale Café for a hot drink and Christmassy treat.

Each child who walked, cycled or scooted during the two week competition gained a mile per journey, all adding towards the total target of 2,063 miles needed to reach Lapland. This year marked the fourth year in a row where the children of Bedford have been involved in the Santa Challenge.

In total, in Bedford Borough we had over 2,000 children travelling actively to school during the two

weeks of the Santa Challenge and hopefully this behaviour will continue throughout the year.

Research shows that active travel to school makes children more alert and better prepared to face the school day than if they had arrived in a car. Walking, cycling or scooting to school wakes up the mind and body.

Cllr Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport said *"The Santa Scoot was a great celebration for all the children and families who took part in this year's Santa Challenge. I know this Challenge captures the imagination of children on their journey to Lapland as part of their school community and hopefully will encourage them to keep walking, cycling and scooting to school all through the year."*

To find out what else Sustrans is planning in Bedfordshire please sign up to their Facebook (SustransBedsHertsMK) and Twitter pages (@SustransBedsMK).

Older people in Bedford Borough urged to get flu jab

Bedford Borough Council is urging its residents aged 65 and over to take up their free NHS flu vaccination.

The last batches of the vaccine were delivered to GPs and pharmacies across the country ahead of the flu season, which usually starts in December.

8,524 older people across Bedford Borough didn't take up their jab last year, despite being most vulnerable to flu's effects. Many of those will have caught the virus and needed NHS treatment as a result.

Cllr Louise Jackson said: *"If you're 65 and over, the single most important thing you can do to stay well this winter is to take up your free NHS flu jab."*

"GPs and pharmacies in Bedford Borough should now have enough stock to ensure that everyone eligible can be vaccinated before the start of the flu season, so if you haven't had chance yet or stocks had run low when you tried earlier in the Autumn, now is the time to go get protected."

While flu is a common ailment and many people can get over it with rest and fluids, for some people in high-risk groups, such as the elderly and those with long-term conditions, it can lead to serious and potentially life-threatening complications, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

Health chiefs believe that the new vaccine could reduce GP consultations due to flu by 30,000, hospitalisations by over 2,000 and prevent over 700 hospital deaths in England, alleviating some of the health burden that seasonal flu places on the population, workplaces and the NHS.

To find out if you're one of the 22million people who are eligible for vaccination head to www.nhs.uk/staywell.



More flu vaccine available now

If you're 65 or over, flu can be serious and lead to hospitalisation.

Speak to your GP surgery or pharmacy about getting your flu jab if you've not had it yet.

HELP US HELP YOU

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

nhs.uk/flu vaccine

NHS

Cheril Sowell, Nurse

What could you help achieve over 16 days?

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence, especially against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November to 10 December, started with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, ending with Human Rights Day and every year community and voluntary groups across Bedfordshire join the campaign.

The theme for this year was 'Hidden Victims' with the aim to reach as many of them as possible, telling them that it's time to talk about what is happening, it's time to get help and it's time to bring an end to domestic abuse and gender violence across Bedfordshire.

No one should live in fear of someone else in their life and when that person is a partner, husband, wife, boy or girlfriend, an ex or family member its recognised how difficult it is to acknowledge what is happening and how impossible it may seem to think about getting help to end the abuse.

If you are in a relationship where you feel you don't have a choice or a voice, where you feel you are not in control of what is happening to you or your family or you

feel like you or your children don't matter; then it's time to talk to someone and get help to try and move on.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will suffer domestic abuse in their lifetime (ONS 2015) this means that somewhere in the region of 77,500 women and 43,600 men across Bedfordshire will be affected (based on Census 2011).

Cllr Colleen Atkins, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services said *"Domestic abuse has no place in our society. If you're worried about your own safety or afraid for someone close to you, there is free, confidential help available. There are many events happening all over Bedfordshire during the 16 days, I urge anyone who can to get involved in the campaign."*

If you are worried about your own behaviour or frightened of someone else's, you are not alone, there is support available. If you or someone you know has been affected by domestic abuse or you just want to find out more, you can visit www.bedsdv.org.uk for advice or support services.



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