

Renhold Parish Council: Borough Councillors' Report – July 2019

Roadworks

A number of roadworks are underway in and around Bedford, including Network Rail's reconstruction of the railway bridge on Bromham Road as part of the electrification of the Midland Mainline. This has led to the closure of the bridge from the 24th June, lasting until spring 2020. A diversion is in place via Clapham Road and the A6.

Works are also taking place as part of the Council's Transporting Bedford 2020 road decongestion project with the installation of a new traffic light system and widened roads at Manton Lane and a closure of one lane at Britannia Road adjacent to Bedford Hospital from the 20th July. In addition, works have started, lasting until December, to rebuild a one-mile stretch of the A6 at Wilstead.

More details of current roadworks can be found via an interactive map on the Council's website. Search 'Bedford Council Roadworks'.

Black Cat Upgrade and New Bypass

Highways England has ended a consultation on its plan to upgrade the Black Cat roundabout and build a new bypass between the junction and Caxton Gibbet in Cambridgeshire. The roundabout is to be reconfigured and will become three-tier, with the A1 passing beneath the junction and the A421 over it. The new bypass will run south of St Neots before turning north to link with the A428. The estimated cost of the project is £810m - £1.4bn. As with the previous Black Cat redesign, the work will almost certainly have an impact on local roads, particularly at peak times.

For more information search 'Black Cat Highways England'. The Highways England website provides a useful video showing how the junction will work.

Statement of Community Involvement Consultation

The Council is reviewing its 'Statement of Community Involvement' setting out how it will engage with residents and community groups in relation to planning matters. The document, which was recently subject to consultation, provides details of how publicity and consultation will be undertaken, as well as guidance on community involvement in neighbourhood planning. For further details see <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/sci>

Bedfordshire Police Grant

Bedfordshire Police has received an £800k grant to tackle gun, gang and knife crime. This sum will be used to establish a Violence Reduction unit where the Police, councils (including the Borough Council), NHS and community groups will share information to identify the drivers of violent crime. The grant is in addition to £1.38m awarded in May and £4.57m in November to address violent crime in Bedfordshire.

Mental Health Resource for Children and Young People

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the organisation responsible for organising local NHS services, and Bedford Borough Council have commissioned a new online mental health resource for children and young people.

The service, called 'Kooth', offers emotional and wellbeing support to children and young people aged 11 – 19. It provides one-to-one counselling and self-help materials on issues including exam stress and anxiety for 1700 users logging in every day around the country. For more information see <https://www.kooth.com/>

Ward Fund

The Council Ward Fund allows us to support community schemes in the Ward in 2019/20. Please do get in touch if you would like to discuss any potential schemes. The following deadlines apply: highways and greenspace – 13th September; litter bins / salt bins – 22nd November, and; projects supporting external organisations – 13th December.

'Shared Lives' Initiative

In June the Council promoted its Shared Lives scheme which sees volunteer carers provide short or long term support for individuals with adult learning disabilities. The aim is for the carer to share their everyday life through activities such as going to the cinema, a football match or community event.

For more information search 'Bedford Shared Lives', email sharedlives@bedford.gov.uk or call 01234 228426. An allowance is payable to carers.

Over 70s Exercise Classes

The Council is running a programme of exercise classes for over 70s during the summer. The sessions, covering sports such as archery and table tennis, cost £4 each and will be held at the Athletics Stadium, Bunyan Centre and Bedford Central Library. For further details call 01234718835 or search 'Bedford Council exercise classes'

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