

NEED A LITTLE HELP?

English and Maths Courses starting after Easter

Do you need an English or Maths qualification to help you gain work, or to progress with your career, or just to brush up your skills for everyday life? Our small group delivery, adult learning provision has courses starting after Easter. Why not 'have a go' and get back into learning. Sign up at

<https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/BESSAdultLearning.ofml>

Changes to Additional Restrictions Grant criteria

Central Bedfordshire Council has amended the eligibility criteria of their Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG2) to enable more businesses to apply for higher values of grant funding. They now are only required to have been open and actively trading from 5th November 2020, not from the 11th March 2020. They have reduced the income reduction from 50% to 25% and increased the grants to £4,000 for the self-employed and for businesses with fewer than 5 employees the grant is now £6,000. With more than 5 employed it is now £9,000. The Council will analyse all grants that were rejected because of the original 11th March 2020 trading date and the 50% income reduction and award further grant money as necessary. For more details visit

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/26/public_health/737/coronavirus-covid-19/7



A first point of contact for information and reporting many problems and issues. They are responsible for matters such as highways, trading standards, waste removal, social services etc.....

0300 300 8000 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Visit www.biggleswadecommunitynews.uk to

- view our newsletter online and register to save paper by receiving it in your mailbox.
- Make a voluntary donation towards our printing and internet costs.



Biggleswade Community News

APRIL 2021



Email: editor@biggleswadecommunitynews.uk Tel: 01767 448954

OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Biggleswade Town Council are producing a Neighbourhood Plan. This gives the community the power to create policies that will shape future development and growth in Biggleswade. Once adopted it will sit alongside the Local Plan prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council. The Neighbourhood Plan expands, extends or amplifies Local Plan policies, but does not oppose or contradict them. A Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, carries significant weight in determining future planning applications located in or affecting the parish.



The Town Council previously held community engagement events and undertook a local survey. Comments from these have been fed into a questionnaire which you are invited to complete by 3 MAY. The findings will be used to form the policies in the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan.

For more information or to complete the questionnaire on line visit their website at www.biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk. If you require a paper copy ring Lisa King, Biggleswade Community Agent, on 07534 484750 who will deliver a questionnaire and FREEPOST return envelope to you.

For further information about the Neighbourhood Plan, or assistance with completing the questionnaire, please phone Jemma McLean at BedsRCC on 01234 834932 or email her at jemmam@bedsrcc.org.uk

published by Biggleswade Community Group tel: 01767 310163

ABOUT THE TOWN



Work has started on the new Lidl store opposite the retail park. Some jobs have been advertised but look out for more by visiting

<https://careers.lidl.co.uk/job-search>



STRATTON HOUSE HOTEL REOPENS



Stratton House will be opening their outside spaces and welcoming back customers at mid-day on the 12th April and then again on Friday 16th. Opening hours for the rest of April will be Fridays and Saturdays 12 noon to 9pm and Sundays 12 noon to 3pm. Food and drink will be served all day on their sunny front terrace (pictured) or in their heated marquee erected in

their grounds. To book a table ring 01767 312442 or visit www.strattonhouse-hotel.co.uk/wine-dine

IVEL SPRINTER IS BACK ON THE ROAD!

The Ivel Sprinter is pleased to announce that its services will start again on Thursday 1st April with the Cambridge route starting on Wednesday 5th May. The service uses one minibus to operate most of its scheduled routes Monday to Saturday except on a Wednesday when both buses go on the popular service to Cambridge. The second bus is available for private hire by clubs and charities, for details contact Graham Barbet 01767 260485.

The Ivel Sprinter is staffed and managed by Midas trained volunteer drivers, and is one of Bedfordshire's Community Bus Schemes and is operated as a registered charity by East Beds Community Bus Ltd. It takes passengers from outlying towns and villages into Biggleswade, Sandy, Bedford, St. Neots and Cambridge. Concessionary fares are valid and children travel half fare – under 5's free. Covid restrictions limit numbers to 8 passengers instead of the usual 16. Wearing of masks is compulsory unless a person is exempt. Our timetables can be found in local libraries or on our website www.ivalsprinter.org.uk or phone Terry Woods on 01767 261047 for information.

Central Bedfordshire Council takes over Test and Trace from national NHS team

Our Council have become one of the first local authorities in the country to bring contact tracing in-house in a new pilot scheme for local residents. All local positive cases are directed straight to our team instead of the national Track and Trace teams. Previous test and trace process could take up to three days for the local team to receive cases. Under the new process our team are alerted to new cases just an hour after a positive test.

Contact tracing is a key element of reducing transmission of COVID-19 and allows the local team to offer local support and ensure residents can self-isolate safely during this pandemic.



● On transport matters Richard has raised with the Minister the question of the lack of flexible tickets available to those who travel from Arlesey, Sandy and Biggleswade stations. He said "Those who travel from Bedford on the Midland Mainline are able to buy carnet tickets, something which is needed now more than ever as travel patterns change due to COVID-19, but it is an issue of much frustration amongst constituents that the same availability of flexible tickets is not open to commuters from Arlesey, Sandy and Biggleswade stations. I look forward to hearing more from the government as the lockdown roadmap progresses."

● Richard has also welcomed the news that the government will strengthen police powers and create a new criminal offence to tackle unauthorised encampments by targeting trespassers who intend to reside on any private or public land in vehicles without permission, and where they are causing significant disruption distress or harm to local communities and reflecting badly on the wider nomadic community as a whole, the majority of whom are law-abiding. The new offence carries a prison sentence of up to 3 months or a fine of £2,500 or both.

COVID ROADMAP COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN

29th March

- Rule of 6 or 2 households – outdoors only. No households mixing indoors
- Outdoor sports and leisure facilities
- Organised outdoor sports allowed – children/adults
- Outdoor parent and child groups (up to 15 parents)
- Minimise Travel – no holidays

Not earlier than the 12th April

- No household mixing indoors
- Indoor Leisure and Gyms open for use individually or in household groups
- Outdoor attractions open i.e. zoos, theme parks, drive ins
- Libraries and Community Centres reopen
- Personal care, including hairdressers and barbers
- All retail and outdoor hospitality
- Indoor parent and child groups (up to 15 parents)
- All children's activities
- Domestic overnight stays away – households only and only if self-catering and in self-contained accommodation
- Wakes and weddings increased to 15 attending
- Events pilots begin
- Minimise Travel – no international holidays

Next step – not earlier than 17th May. Then if cases remain low all restrictions are due to be lifted not earlier than 21st June

Remember Vaccinations are now bookable at Weatherley Centre OR Biggleswade Hospital. If you live or work in Central Bedfordshire and come into contact with the public, or pregnant women and their partners prior to key maternity appointments can take a rapid lateral-flow test at Saxon Pool each day 8am-8pm except Tuesdays and Saturdays 8am- 8pm when there is a PCR testing centre for those with covid symptoms. It takes 15 minutes to self-administer and 30 minutes for results by text or email within 2 hours. If not received ring 0300 300 8830

Improving Insulation at Stratton Park Homes

Central Bedfordshire Council have extended their Green Homes Grant, after receiving nearly £4m of extra funding by the Government, to enable the installation of cladding and insulation for park homes at an extra 12 sites across Central Bedfordshire. Stratton Park Homes in Biggleswade are one of the sites that have benefited and will reduce fuel costs for the residents.

Contact 01332 874688 or info@grangeparkhomes.co.uk for more details



TOWN COUNCIL RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

The Council offices will remain closed to members of the public until further notice. Tel: 01767 313134

It is likely that from April 12th the Charter Markets will include non-essential stalls. Measures will remain in place for social distancing and hand sanitising and it is expected that stallholders will wear masks at all times.

From April 1st parking charges/restrictions will come back into force. Visit the Town Council's website for more information at www.biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk

Only 2 of the 3 tennis courts in Drove Road reopen on the 29th March to allow for social distancing

The football pitches at Stratton Way, Eagle Farm Road and The Lakes will re-open on Monday 29th March 2021 but changing rooms remain closed.

The Orchard Centre will probably open on the 12th April.

Queries: peter.tarrant@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 07940 389085



Free meals and Easter holiday activities for disadvantaged children in Central Bedfordshire

With the help of Government funding our Council will provide free meals to 5,700 children over the Easter period to support disadvantaged families. Families will receive a £40 supermarket voucher for each child or young person in their household who is eligible for free school meals. This includes £15 for each week and £10 towards financial pressures during the recent cold months. The Council will also be offering some of these families free holiday activities during 2021 school holidays to over 5's, virtually or through holiday clubs funded through the Government's holiday activity and food programme.

To find out more about free school meals visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/53/benefits/4/free_school_meals

Central Bedfordshire rated as third least polluting region in the East of England

A study measuring how much CO2 is produced by vehicles idling in England has found that Central Bedfordshire is the third least polluting region in the East of England.

The study, completed by SaveOnEnergy.com, measured the average of hours of delay as well as the average kg of CO2 per vehicle across all local authority regions, using data published by central government. Using this data, the study found that the East of England region is the least polluting region, with Central Bedfordshire third across this area. Central Bedfordshire was 25th out of 159 local authority areas across the whole of England.

NEW LEADER AT CENTRAL BEDS COUNCIL

Cllr James Jamieson, who has led Central Bedfordshire Council since 2011 has stepped down as Leader to focus more on his Chairmanship of the Local Government Association (LGA). He is replaced by his deputy, Cllr Richard Wenham, who represents Arlesey.



ACCREDITED COUNCIL OFFICERS WITH MORE POWERS TO DEAL WITH ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Central Bedfordshire Council has introduced 15 new officers within their Community Safety Team to assist in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour across the area. Trained and accredited with a range of additional powers usually only available to police, the officers will be able to issue fixed penalty notices up to the value of £400 for certain offences. These powers will also help officers tackle local issues and low-level incidents, to help serve communities better and keep them safer by sharing local intelligence with the police.

The wider Community Team will be undertaking regular patrols and visits to towns and villages, talking to residents and businesses about any issues that are affecting them and what could be done to make their lives better. The Team shares local intelligence with the police and is able to respond to issues fast. During the current pandemic, officers will offer advice and support and undertake regular checks to ensure businesses and the public are meeting government COVID-19 guidelines.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE NEWS

Proposed modifications to the Local Plan

Residents can have their say on the proposed modifications to the Local Plan. The consultation is open for six weeks until 12pm Wednesday 5th May 2021, for full details visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy/468/local_plan/19 or email localplan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

The Local Plan, which is currently being examined by independent Planning Inspectors, outlines proposed development across our area until 2035. This Main Modifications Consultation follows on from public hearings that took place during summer 2019 and December 2020.