

Borough Councillors report to Turvey Parish Council July 2022

Footpaths

As I walked the parish two weeks ago – leafleting – I took more footage of the dangerous state of some of the footpaths and will be writing to the Portfolio Holder for Environment to again push for urgent action especially on Grove Road. May Road is re-scheduled to be done in this financial year but there are many areas of the parish roads and pavements that need attention.

The projects overdue are,

C13016: High Street: Turvey A428 Newton Lane Jacks Lane Kempston Rural Turvey Resurfacing Spring 2023

F10116: Footway Maintenance Carlton Road, Turvey Post Office May Road Kempston Rural Ward Turvey carried over from 2021-22

F10160: Footway Maintenance May Road, Turvey Carlton Road Norfolk Road Kempston Rural Ward Turvey carried over from 2021-22

Turvey Abbey Clock Appeal

Following the award from the Rural Grants committee where the amount of money requested was approved the Abbey have not yet received the funds. I contacted the Borough and asked why the delay but was told it would be sent to the Parish Council? I didn't understand why as it wasn't a PC request as TPC were donating not running the project. Not sure if the PC has been contacted on this yet?

Travel Funding Opportunity Missed

Central Beds received £3.7m to help with sustainable transport (buses) and in the latest Full Council Cllr Bywater asked the Portfolio holder for Environment why Bedford Borough had missed applying for these grants. We are all acutely aware that bus services – especially in rural communities – have been seriously depleted. What happened after she asked the question was not what should be expected in the Council Chamber. [Mayor asked to 'rein in' deputy mayor after "patronising" behaviour - Bedford Independent](#)

Village Hall Kitchen Refurb

I have allocated £4,000 from my ward fund to the above project.

Unauthorised Traveller Encampment in the Ward

We are all acutely aware of the disruption, concern, and fear for community safety we all felt following the arrival and development of this situation in Great Denham. The first 9 caravans arrived on the late afternoon of Thursday 16th June. The parish council Clerk and I reported to the Borough Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer and police that we had this encampment. Our local community Police Officer and Liaison Officer spoke to the encampment on Friday morning the 17th. Through this conversation they were informed that they had come to attend a funeral and would be gone by the 23rd. I believe this information was then given to the agents for the landowner (Bidwells) who then informed the landowner of the situation. The information back from the landowner was to give the encampment permission to stay until the 23rd!

The following day and on subsequent days more caravans turned up and estimates vary between 22-30. At this point the Parish Clerk informed the landowner of the growing numbers and advised acting immediately to get an order for removal. At the same time many residents were ringing and emailing about the developing situation and calling for the landowner to act. During all this, members of the travelling community were creating concern because of the Anti-Social Behaviour practice of racing motorbikes and quad bikes around the land close to houses and crossing public footpaths at high speeds. This was reported to the police using all 101, online and 999 functions but sadly the practice continued without disruption. When the growing encampment moved on, they only went as far as Great Denham Country Park. Both the Parish Clerk and I were in constant touch with Borough Liaison Officers Police and landowner's agent. Whilst neither of us could take direct action because the Parish didn't own the land in question, we did constantly bring pressure to bear on the parties involved.

During the encampment on the Country Park many residents were again disturbed by motorbikes and quadbikes in close vicinity to both homes and residents trying to use the Country Park and football pitches. Residents were also confronted with threatening behaviour and intimidation. Again, many residents contacted the police through various formats but again the disturbances continued to take place.

During all the social media responses from residents trying to establish what was being done to curb the behaviour and remove this second unauthorised encampment some unfair criticism of individuals and bodies was levelled. Most of this was fuelled – understandably – by concern for safety and wellbeing of residents. I did take to social media to explain the situation regarding land ownership and who could and could not act to remove the encampments. We also had a well-attended meeting with the Police Commissioner, which was attended by 50 GD residents, The Commissioner wanted to understand first-hand the impact that this has had on residents, and he has already spoken to the Chief Constable regarding Force response to the encampments and will be following up with me.

The Parish Clerk and I held a meeting with a senior Officer from the force to establish the chain of events. I believe the Police felt they could have done more and are looking at how improvements can be made in their responses. The big question to the landowners is how you intend to prevent a reoccurrence and when are you going to clear the land of all the rubbish left behind. I'm pleased to report that the Borough removed all the rubbish from the Country Park on Monday 27th, I have written to the landowner's agent and asked that they take immediate action to get the land cleaned up. Now over five weeks on and still rotting and putrefying rubbish all over the site.

2021 Census

In Bedford, the population size has increased by 17.7%, from around 157,500 in 2011 to 185,300 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800. The stats for Bedford are attributable to location growth in no small part, to Great Denham and Kempston Rural. The 2011 census showed that there were 1,110 people living in Great Denham with more younger people than the average in the Borough and less old people than the average of the Borough. The detail by parish from the census has not yet been released. There are now estimated to be 4,200 residents in Great Denham.

The growth in these two parts of the ward led to the Boundary Commission review and the subsequent changes in the warding arrangements. The new Bromham Ward will include Stevington, Turvey and Stagsden. Kempston Rural will sit in with Wootton but there is a proposed Governance

Review which could change the Kempston Rural parish boundary and see that also go into Kempston West.

Bedfordshire Police Chief Constable Retirement

Following the announcement that Chief Constable Garry Forsyth is retiring in the new year, some interim leadership arrangements need to be put into place. From 26 September 2022, Deputy Chief Constable Trevor Rodenhurst will become the Acting Chief Constable for Bedfordshire Police. Assistant Chief Constable Dan Vajzovic, currently Head of the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU), will join Mr Rodenhurst's team and undertake the role of Temporary Deputy Chief Constable.

Bedford Corn Exchange given special status by Historic England.

The Victorian building which hosted concerts throughout World War Two has been given special status. The mid-19th century Bedford Corn Exchange has been listed at Grade II by Historic England. During the Second World War the building located on St Paul's Square was used by the BBC Symphony Orchestra to host the BBC Proms.

It was also the venue for concerts by the American big band leader Glenn Miller. Additionally, Historic England has updated the listing of the Grade II* listed Harpur Suite to better describe its history. In becoming Grade II listed, Bedford Corn Exchange has joined several other buildings in the St Paul's Square area with special historic status.

The Church of St Paul is Grade I listed, as is a statue of John Howard. Bedford's Town Hall and Shire Hall are both listed at Grade II. Henry Vann, portfolio holder for town centres and planning at Bedford Borough Council, said: "The Corn Exchange is a significant and important building that played a central role during wartime history both globally and locally.

"It is only right that these buildings are recognised through this listing.

"These buildings have an incredibly rich history and deserve to have this recognised."

Bedford Borough Council Issues Nearly 500 Tickets for Illegal Parking Outside Schools

Bedford Borough Council Parking Patrol has already issued 483 parking fines to people parked illegally outside local schools since they started visiting schools during drop off and pick up. Introduced in November 2021 the Parking Patrol vehicle visits schools around the Borough during drop off and pick up times. Fines are issued to parents parked illegally at locations where danger is caused to school children, parents, and other pedestrians either on double yellow lines or on the zigzag keep clear lines.

The Council has also installed 63 Parking Buddies across 15 schools so far. These buddies remind drivers to park considerately and thank those who walk and cycle to school.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "Parking restrictions are in place to keep school children, staff, pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users safe. Dangerous and illegal parking outside schools is not acceptable and we are acting against it.

"Our council enforcement officers are committed to keeping people safe and I congratulate them on their dedication, often despite aggressive behaviour from parents.

“Our parking buddies are there to remind parents of their responsibility to keep children safe and consider their driving habits when parking near schools. Please, do remember park safely and lawfully and help keep our roads safe.”

Improvement Works on the Embankment

Bedford Borough Council has completed the first stage of a £1.5million investment in the Embankment, which saw the buff-coloured walkway resurfaced between Newnham Avenue and Bushmead Road.

During these works, fifteen benches down the Embankment have also been replaced. These new benches will refresh and enhance the look of the Embankment and provide better places for people to sit and relax in the beautiful location. The new benches are metal with recycled plastic slats.

These new benches were funded by the Welcome Back Fund, developed by the government as part of the Covid-19 response, comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and aims to support the high street and tourist attractions in welcoming back shoppers and visitors.

Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission consultation

Consultation is now taking place on the Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission. The plan was approved for consultation purposes by the Council's Executive on 27 April 2022.

The consultation will run for 6 weeks until 5pm on Friday 29 July 2022.

The Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission, a short summary leaflet and the supporting documents can be found below:

- [**Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission**](#)
- [**Summary leaflet**](#)
- [**Supporting documents**](#)
- [**Statement of Representations Procedure**](#)

Can I urge all residents to respond to this very important plan? Our protected Urban Gap and open green space (former golf course) needs to be accepted as a continuing green space in the 2040 plan.

E-Scooters

Many residents have expressed concern about the use of these scooters in and around the parish. In the UK, you are legally entitled to buy, sell, and own an electric scooter. However, it is currently illegal in the UK to use an electric scooter on public roads, pavements, or cycle lanes. Electric scooters can only be legally used in the UK on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said.

E-scooters are widely sold and seen in towns and cities but are currently only legal for use on private land. “I want to crack down on the private market and make it illegal to sell e-scooters which don’t meet the regulatory standards which we will bring in,” he told MPs. E-scooters are currently only

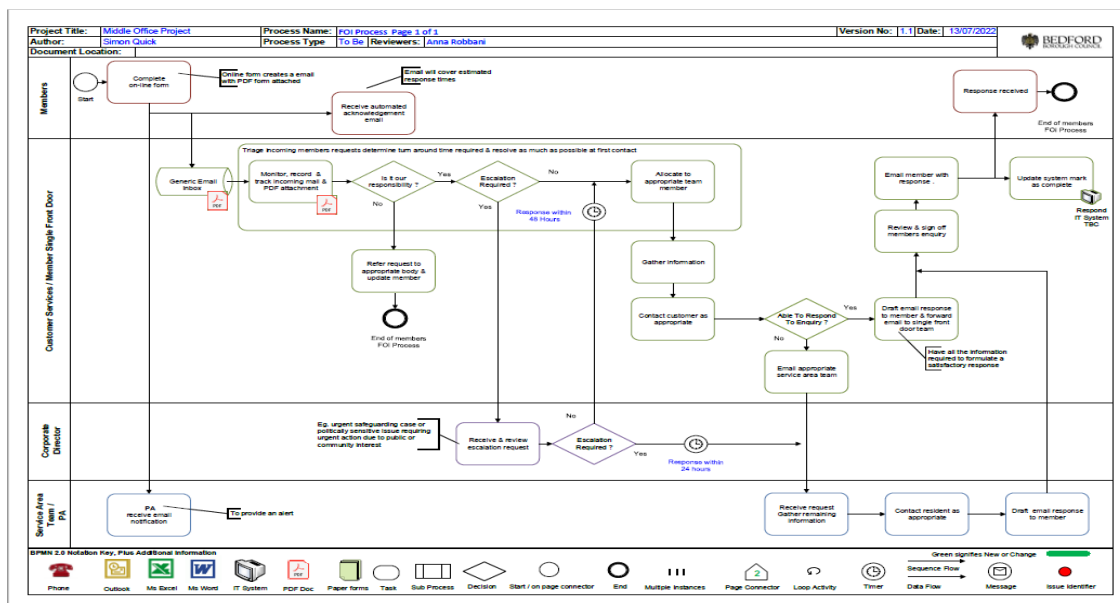
legal for use on the roads if they are hired as part of government trials, which have safety features such as speed limits of 15.5mph and automatic lights.

More than 30 areas - including London, Newcastle, Bristol, and Bournemouth - are already operating rental trial schemes.

Government figures show that there were 931 casualties involving e-scooters in the year to June 2021, and three fatalities. None of the fatalities involved official trials. Bedfordshire Police have already confiscated approximately 100 machines. New laws governing their use are due to be announced later this year.

And finally on a lighter but worrying note

This is the Boroughs proposed contact flowchart describing how Elected Councillors should contact Officers when acting for our residents!



This is my preferred and much simpler method

Jim Weir Officer Communication Plan



Member emails or rings
Officer



Officer provides answer
there and then or
within 48 hours

