

Borough Councillor Update Turvey – Nov/Dec 2022

My Question at Environment Committee to Chief Officer Highways Re Turvey High St

Matthew thank you for responding to my written question and I will be happy to meet with Andrew Prigmore to discuss any options that might be available to improve the safety and nuisance that is caused by the ever-increasing number of LGV's using the A428 passing through the High Street in Turvey. The letter from a concerned resident clearly spelt out the issues of narrow pavements and passing issues as well as a crumbling surface which I know you are aware of. (And part of the issues is clearly illustrated here). The last traffic survey through Turvey was done in 2019 and part of the data set showed that approximately 169k LGV passed through the High Street on an annualised basis. This equates to over 3k every week give or take.

The Date of the survey was 28th June 2019 to 4th July 2019.

Westbound traffic totals **33,931** exceeding speed limit **75**

Eastbound Traffic totals **33,462** exceeding speed limit **190**

Total Traffic 67,393 total exceeding speed limit **265** (0.39%)

Bear in mind that if that was replicated over a whole year – give or take –

Total Traffic 3,504,436

Total exceeding speed limit 13,780

Figure now includes 168,896 HGV's per year

Ideally a 7.5 tonne limit would be the most desirable and I know there must be a balance of inputs, but it all seems to be weighted towards commercialism, so safety and nuisance are massively outweighed. Can the survey be repeated so that we can track the changes and use that data to inform what actions the Borough can take to make the High Street section at its narrowest safer and mitigate the vibrations and noise caused by the poor surface?

I also pointed out that the drains from Pics Farm down to Station End were blocked and surface water was causing unsafe driving conditions. I asked if they could be cleared as soon as possible.

Response: Clearly there must be a balance for traffic being there for legitimate reasons. But let's not prejudice any future actions and let's see what a new survey produces and what the data tells us. When Andy Prigmore is back from leave, I will tell him to speak with you and arrange another survey. (He also said he would send inspectors out to examine the drains as outlined.)



Barncroft Footpath Surface

Following several complaints from some senior residents about the uneven surface of the footpath I asked the Borough to consider another “Social Value bid” from Hanson’s Contractors. (This is where the contractors do freebies for the Borough as part of the contractor’s social responsibility activity) I met with the delivery manager for Hanson’s two weeks ago and we walked the length of the footpath to assess if the “social value bid” kitty would cover the necessary repairs. Delighted to say that I had confirmed today that they would be able to carry out the work within their budgeted spend. Work will not however start before Christmas.

Governance Review

Kempston Rural Parish is to undergo a Governance Review. Whilst the ward boundaries are changing, we didn’t expect parish boundaries to change. However, Kempston West and Kempston Town Council have asked for the review, their reasoning is that Kempston Rural properties in the Wilkinson Road area would be better served by being part of Kempston West and as part of Kempston Town. Given that Kempston West was only created in 2011 and Kempston Rural Parish in 1896 the PC and I can’t see the relevance. If it concludes that the changes, go ahead then Kempston Rural Parish will lose 900+ residents and 550 properties. This would effectively reduce the parish by half. The parish is outraged at this land grab attempt by Kempston West.

Executive Decisions

4th November - To agree the content of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for the proposed new conservation area in Little Barford.

11th November - To award Citizens Advice Bedford £100,000 to deliver the support and provide the extra help much needed for local people who are currently struggling due to wholesale gas and electricity prices.

11th November - To approve the acceptance of grant funding for tree planning and support. Funding is coming from the following grants:

- i. Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF)
 - a. The Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF) is a simple fund with a total value of £9,800,000. It is designed to provide financial support to increase the capacity of specialist skills within local authorities enabling them in turn to accelerate the delivery of tree planting and woodland creation commitments. It is delivered by the Forestry Commission in partnership with DEFRA.
- ii. Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF)
 - a. The Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) is part of the Government’s Nature for Climate Fund. £5.4 million was available through LATF this year (spring 2022) for planting trees outside woodlands. Up to 100 grants worth £50,000 to £300,000 were available for local authorities, working together with community groups, volunteers and NGOs.
- iii. Urban Tree Challenge Fund
 - a. The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) first opened in 2019 and to date has held 4 rounds of funding that supports both block bids and individual applications. This is delivered through the Forestry Commission and DEFRA.

Children in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes protected from cleaning product injuries in RoSPA campaign

Families in Luton, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes are being urged by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to take action to protect their children from the risks of household cleaning products.

The Take Action Today, Put Them Away campaign, is funded by the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (UKCPI), and launched on 10th November 2022.

Mayor's Climate Change Fund helps reduce energy costs for local school

Bedford Road Primary School successfully applied for £10,900 of funding. This enabled them to replace old single-glazed windows with double-glazed PVCU windows.

The new windows will make an estimated saving of at least £2,455 a year.

Local graduates invited to apply to the National Graduate Development Programme at Bedford Borough Council/Bedford council's apprenticeship scheme receive inadequate rating from Ofsted

Recruitment is now open for the talented National Management Trainees (NMT's) living, working or studying in Bedford to join the Council from autumn 2023 on a two-year fixed-term contract, with a starting salary of £28,371 per annum.

The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) provides a range of placements with Bedford Borough Council. Each placement offers the opportunity to develop valuable skills and knowledge whilst influencing, shaping and improving services for local residents. The successful graduates will also complete a fully funded postgraduate qualification in leadership and management from the Institute for Leadership and Management (ILM).

However, an Ofsted inspector gave Bedford Council's apprenticeship scheme the lowest possible rating of inadequate.

The inspectors stated that the leadership and management is inadequate, the other four categories of the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and apprenticeships 'require improvement'.

Bedford Borough Council successfully joins Art Council England's Investment Programme

Bedford Borough Council has been successful in joining ACE's national portfolio of funded organisations (NPOs). The Higgins Bedford has received a conditional funding offer of £65k per year for three years from 2023-2026.

Homes for Ukraine 'Thank You' Payment Increased to £500

In addition to the £350 thank you payment received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Council is now adding a discretionary increase of £150 taking the total up to £500 per household.

The monthly £350 is paid to the hosts (i.e. the UK individuals and families providing the accommodation) and the additional £150 will also be paid to the hosts.

The additional thank you payments of £150 per month plus £500 in March, will be paid from the un-ringfenced grant of £10,500 per guest received from the Government. It is important to note that whilst the grant is referred to as un-ringfenced, it can only be used to provide support to Ukrainian guests.

High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ)

The High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) is a £95 million government-funded programme, which is being delivered by Historic England, and will unlock the potential of high streets across England.

In Bedford, works under the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) continue with exciting progress being made on 58a-c High Street, which includes Sundaes Gelato.

The works currently taking place aim to reinstate the traditional shopfront with the potential to add more flexible retail space in a prime location on Bedford High Street.

Fly-Tippers/FPNs/Cameras

Since 2016/17 fly tipping incidents have increased in Bedford with almost 1000 more incidents in 2020/21. Only 1 fine was issued in 2020/21 which totalled £200 against a tipper lorry load cost of a little over £18,000 to clear up the rubbish left.

The Mayor has invested in CCTV cameras to tackle fly tipping which have produced 17 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for illegally dumping rubbish on the street. If we compare this to 2020/21 fly tipping incidents the number of FPNs issued amounts to a little over 1% of incidents.

Compared to our peers in Central Bedfordshire, in 2020/21 Bedford Borough had 2393 (357%) more incidents of fly tipping.

Safer Streets Fund to Make Streets Safer for Everyone

Bedford Borough is to benefit from funding from the Home Office for local Safer Streets projects.

The funding is for specific projects that reduce the risk of violence against women and girls, reduce criminal activity in local hotspots and create safer places for everyone.

In Bedfordshire there are two projects taking place – in Bedford and in the High Town area in Luton.

eCargo Bikes hit 1,800km

eCargo Bikes used by Bedford Borough Council have travelled over 1,800km since being introduced in December 2020. The six eCargo bikes, purchased by the Council with Government funding, have travelled over 1,800km by several council teams and Flamme Rouge, saving approximately 200kg of CO2.

The carbon emissions of manufacturing a cargo bike is 280kg of CO2 (compared over 8800kg for an electric vehicle) and they produce around 4.5g of CO2 per km to run – 10 times less than an EV.

Bedford Borough Council Awards Over £30,000 in Rural Grants

Bedford Borough Council has announced plans to provide £31,085 to rural communities in Harrold, Odell and Renhold through their Rural Grants scheme.

- £25,000, is being awarded to All Saint's Church in Renhold, it will help with the cost of replacing the church's floor
- £3,085.42 is being awarded to Odell Parish Council, which will go towards diverting two existing public footpaths.
- 3,000 is being awarded to Harrold Parish Council, who plan to repair the lych gate at St. Peter's Church on Church Walk

Avian influenza A(H5N1)

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have now confirmed there is avian influenza A(H5N1) in wild bird population within Bedford Borough following positive results in wild dead birds removed from the river Great Ouse on the embankment in Bedford.

Please **DO NOT TOUCH** any sick or dead birds. If any residents find dead or visibly sick birds in the local area, please do not feed or touch them. Instead, cases should be reported to Defra's GB helpline by calling 03459 335577.

If you keep poultry or other birds, please wash your hands and clean and disinfect your footwear before tending to them.

Warm spaces

Bedford Borough Council has launched its Warm Spaces Network. This is a list of places throughout the borough that people can go to during the day to keep warm as we enter the winter months.

As more venues join the initiative, they will be added to the directory. The online directory will allow residents to choose a Warm Space based on location, opening hours and the facilities on offer, such as refreshments, free Wi-Fi, TV, books, magazines and games.

Traffic Management Act and new Borough powers

As part of the Traffic Management Act (2022) the Government will be giving councils the option to apply for powers to enforce against moving traffic offences. Bedford Borough Council applied for these powers by the deadline of 20th May 2022 and the powers were granted unofficially in June 2022. The Borough is still awaiting the official letter and no updates have been given on its status.

Flu Jab

Bedford Borough Council is encouraging residents to get their flu jab this winter.

Several types of flu vaccine are offered, including the Fluenz nasal spray for children. If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine on the NHS, you'll be contacted and offered one that's most appropriate for you.

Flu vaccination appointments are available at GP practices, selected pharmacies and midwifery services also offer the flu jab to pregnant women. Primary, lower, middle and secondary school children will receive their vaccination at school. Booking is straightforward and the appointment itself can take less than 10 minutes. People who are not eligible for a free flu jab can pay for one at their local pharmacy.

COVID-19 Booster

The autumn booster jab will be offered to everyone aged 50 and over, those who are at higher risk from serious illness such as pregnant women and people with long-term health conditions, along with frontline health and social care workers.

Since Monday 12 September an autumn booster can be booked online for anyone who is:

- 65 or over
- Pregnant
- Aged 5 and over and at high risk due to a health condition or weakened immune system
- Aged 5 and over and living with someone who has a weakened immune system
- Aged 16 and over and is a carer
- A frontline health or social care worker

To find out more about the autumn booster or to book your vaccination [visit the NHS website](#).