

# News Central

The magazine from Central Bedfordshire  
Council for everyone living in our area

## Laying the foundations for our educational future

Issue 16 - January/February 2011

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- Countdown to final budget - pages 8 and 9
- Keeping your New Year's resolutions - page 13

**Central  
Bedfordshire**



## Welcome

### The Romans named January after Janus, the god of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances.

We are on the threshold of major change in Central Bedfordshire. In the coming weeks your councillors will be finalising the council's budget and setting the council tax for 2011/12. We have been examining every pound of our expenditure to identify where we can make savings while protecting front line services as much as we can and shielding residents from council tax increases. You can find out more about how our budget is shaping up on pages 8 and 9.

Clearly, we need to have a dialogue with local communities

about what we can and cannot do in the future, as well as what the service users can expect from the public sector. Those discussions, that are also about understanding local needs and issues so that we can work with others to deliver greater added value, have already started through the Let's Talk Together meetings featured opposite.

Despite our immediate financial pressures I am confident that during 2011 we will see positive signs emerging for the long term economic health of Central Bedfordshire. Towards the end of last year I was pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond MP, to Central

Bedfordshire to see for himself the potential route of the A5/M1 link road. This together with the emerging town centre masterplans, featured on page 5, will help unlock Central Bedfordshire's economic potential.

I hope you have a healthy and happy 2011 and for those of you who have made New Year's resolutions I hope that our feature on page 13 will offer some useful advice in helping you achieve your goals.

Cllr Tricia Turner MBE  
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council

## Instant updates on council services

### Residents across Central Bedfordshire can now see how adverse weather conditions are affecting local services at the click of a button.

At the start of winter Central Bedfordshire Council launched a new information portal at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/weather](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/weather) to keep people informed about how services such as gritting, waste, leisure and highways are operating during times of snow and ice.

An extra link on the new webpage is a 'State of Schools' portal that offers real-time updates for both

parents and staff about schools and school transport being affected by the weather.

Over 3,500 people have already registered at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS) and now receive:

- Up to the minute status of schools and school transport routes
- The ability to request status changes by email
- Up to date highways status reports
- Ability to sort schools by name, type, status and last update

- Explanation of why the school has closed
  - Transport provider details, should you use taxis to get to school
- Schools have agreed to update the site as soon as they decide to close in bad weather, giving parents more time to make alternative arrangements. The local media also have access to the site so they can give up to the minute status updates too.

The 'State of Schools' portal will be in addition to schools' own 'text message' system for alerting parents to closures and other events.

### Your magazine

News Central is produced by Central Bedfordshire Council.

It is delivered to every household in the area through an independent company and may be accompanied by leaflets or flyers.

### Tell us what you think

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine and we welcome your comments or suggestions for future editions.

To get in touch email [newscentral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:newscentral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or call us on 0300 300 8301.

### Council meetings

For details about Central Bedfordshire Council meetings, call 0300 300 8301 or visit our website at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Let's Talk Together

### Are you concerned about something that's affecting your community, and want to know what's being done about it? Do you want more information about volunteering, community safety, health services or business support or a range of council services such as roads and transport?

If you're a resident or a member of a community group and you're keen to engage, then come along to a Let's Talk Together meeting being held in locations across Central Bedfordshire from January 2011.

### What is a Let's Talk Together meeting?

Let's Talk Together meetings are an opportunity for residents to discuss any issues and concerns with representatives from organisations, such as the police, fire, health, the council and many others.

### What happens at a Let's Talk Together meeting?

The first part of the meeting will be a drop in session where you can speak individually with the organisations attending.

The second part of the meeting will be an open discussion where we can talk about the issues that are affecting you and your communities. The priorities identified during this part of the meeting will also help the police to set the policing and community safety priorities for that particular Safer Neighbourhood Area.

You can attend for as much or as little of the meeting as you like. We'll be making a note of all issues raised throughout the meeting and any queries that can't be answered straight away will be taken away for

action by the relevant agency.

The priorities agreed will be available on the Central Bedfordshire Together website [www.centraltogether.org.uk](http://www.centraltogether.org.uk) a couple of days after the meeting and from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Cllr Richard Stay, Deputy Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance said:

"This is a critical time for local services. As organisations are having to scale back on spending and services we want to hear directly from residents about what issues they want us to focus on. We want to embrace the principles of the 'big society' and have a discussion about how people can do more for themselves."

"I hope people will respond to this invitation and make use of the opportunity to access all agencies in one place, and be part of this vital dialogue."

We will shortly be setting dates for the rest of 2011, please let us know if you have a suitable venue near you.

For further information please contact Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager at [sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Let's Talk Together

meetings in your area

**Sandy and Biggleswade**  
24 January 2011, 5-7pm  
Biggleswade Fire Station,  
Chesnut Avenue,  
Biggleswade, SG18 0LL.

**Shefford, Stotfold and Arlesey,**  
2 February 2011, 5-7pm  
Priory House, Monks Walk,  
Chicksands, Shefford,  
SG17 5TQ.

**Leighton Buzzard and Linslade area,**  
15 February 2011, 5-7pm,  
Leighton Buzzard Day Centre,  
Duncombe Drive, Leighton  
Buzzard, LU7 1SD.

**Dunstable, Houghton Regis and rural area**  
28 February 2011, 5-7pm  
Bedford Square Community  
Centre, Tithe Farm Road,  
Houghton Regis, LU5 5JF.

**Amphill and Flitwick area**  
8 March 2011, 6-8pm  
Redborne Upper School and  
Community College, Flitwick  
Road, Amphill, MK45 2NU.

**Leighton Rural**  
22 March 2011, 5-7pm  
Toddington Fire Station,  
Dunstable Road, Toddington.



Central  
Bedfordshire  
Together

## Winning public sector contracts

### Have you ever considered bidding for public sector contracts?

Alongside our neighbours, Luton and Bedford Borough Councils, we are providing workshops that will enable your company to acquire realistic solutions when tendering for public sector work. Find out how your business can overcome barriers to this tendering process, and discover how other businesses have successfully won a range of contracts from the public sector.

### To secure your place at one of these workshops:

**Central Bedfordshire - 9 February**  
contact Jennie Webb at jennie.webb@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or call 0300 300 8079.

**Luton - 17 February**  
contact Paul Chalkly at paul.chalkly@luton.gov.uk or call 01582 547332.

**Bedford - 22 February**  
contact Simon Dunning at simon.dunning@bedford.gov.uk or call 01234 276261.

## TakeITon

TakeITon is a campaign run by the East of England Development Agency to help improve and increase business use of information and communications technology. Through the TakeITon programme, businesses can access free practical support to help improve and develop their business IT. As well as a series of workshops and 'How-To' videos, businesses can receive a free consultation with a Business Link Advisor who will give their business an 'IT Healthcheck'.

A new website has just been launched for SMEs to get IT advice, access TakeITon social networking videos and read the latest blogs from expert advisors. Just go to:

[www.takeiton.org.uk/About-campaign.asp](http://www.takeiton.org.uk/About-campaign.asp)

## Can you give yourself a job?

**Luan Hall has defied the odds and fulfilled a dream. Not only has she started her own business selling children's toys, she has already grown out of her first shop and moved into larger premises in the centre of Ampthill.**



Supported by the Building Enterprising Communities project, Luan visited Wenta where she met Steve Pryor, Business Adviser. He went through her plans with her, setting targets and ensuring that everything necessary had been

The **Economic Growth Skills & Regeneration Team** at Central Bedfordshire Council can provide you with a wide range of support and advice for your business including: help with funding opportunities and grants, start-up business advice, commercial property search, skills and training. **For more information call a member of our team on 0300 300 5525**

considered. This combined support and funding package helped Luan to get her business off the ground, accompanied by many hours of commitment and dedication from Luan and her family! Why not take a look at her website: [www.fairiesnfrogs.co.uk](http://www.fairiesnfrogs.co.uk)

**Mandy Brace set up her business 'Personalised Sashes' in January 2010. Her initial expectations were to make 25 sashes a week, however the success of her business surpassed all her expectations and by April she was producing 600 a month!**

To help her make the right decisions for her new enterprise, Mandy engaged with Business Link East and Wenta, for training and structured business advice to give her the best possible start.

She has now diversified into car ribbons, t-shirts, banners, table runners and eco friendly bags. This extraordinary success was recently rewarded when Mandy earned 2nd place in the Federation of Small Businesses, Self Employed Person of the Year Award 2010. Congratulations Mandy and here's to your continued success!

## Why not explore whether you can give yourself a job?

Contact us on 0845 60 20 101 or email [info@exemplas.com](mailto:info@exemplas.com)

## Like to keep in touch?

Sign up to receive the latest business news and advice.

Send your details to: [sue.king@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.king@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Creating a blueprint for the future



An artist's impression of how Dunstable could look in the future

**During 2011 Central Bedfordshire Council is looking to finalise a number of plans which will guide big town centre developments that will cater for our rapidly expanding area. Once agreed the plans will be formally adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council as planning policies. These will guide discussions with developers and ultimately the determination of planning applications relating to the town centres.**

## Leighton Buzzard Town Centre

January sees a public consultation starting on Bridge Meadow and land south of the High Street in Leighton Buzzard, with a view to creating new retail, healthcare and leisure opportunities.

A public exhibition will be held at Leighton Buzzard Social Centre in Duncombe Drive on Saturday 29 January between 10am and 3pm where local people can see two possible options for redeveloping each site and give their views. After this, there will be a display at Leighton Buzzard library throughout February.

The views of local people will help shape final proposals for each site, which will be consulted upon later in 2011.

For more information visit [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leightonplanningbriefs](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leightonplanningbriefs)

## Biggleswade Town Centre

In February there will be a local exhibition for people to see and comment on the proposals for Biggleswade town centre. Over the last 18 months the local community has shaped the development of a masterplan and strategy, suggesting projects and improvements.

For more information visit [www.biggleswademasterplan.info](http://www.biggleswademasterplan.info).

## Dunstable Town Centre

Work continues to develop a Masterplan for Dunstable Town Centre. This includes a larger consolidated retail offer within the Quadrant shopping centre area and associated parking. It also proposes a new medical centre with ambulance station, new library and the possibility of a multi-screen cinema. New homes, predominantly

for families and older people could also be included.

A big public consultation on the draft Masterplan took place last year. The results of this process together with other information on the Masterplan are available at [www.dunstablemasterplan.info](http://www.dunstablemasterplan.info).

## Houghton Regis Town Centre

Parts of Bedford Square have been redeveloped to provide a new library and medical centre, complemented by refurbished open spaces and walkways, following a masterplan developed in 2008. Other initiatives are also planned for other key sites in the town centre.

Further information can be found at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/houghtonregismasterplan](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/houghtonregismasterplan).

## Transforming learning and our relationship with schools



Laying the foundations for a successful future at the new site for Roecroft Lower School, Stotfold

### Central Bedfordshire Council has launched a major new programme that will help transform learning for all of our pupils and students.

The Transforming Learning Programme is geared towards delivering the Council's Education Vision. This has been formed around a number of core principles, agreed by councillors following consultation with Headteachers on what education will look like in the future. These include:

- Higher education standards and better outcomes for young people
- Continuity of provision from age 0 to 19 so that children and

young people have a seamless journey through their education.

- Schools based around communities and their needs
- Any changes centred on what is best for children and families
- Services being delivered locally as far as possible
- Schools engaged in new models of leadership and governance.
- Improvements reflecting recent curriculum reform.

Central Bedfordshire has been divided into four areas to roll out this programme with Dunstable and Houghton Regis being the first under consideration.

A group of head teachers and chairs of governors nominated from schools within Dunstable and

Houghton Regis have been working with Council officers to develop proposals that they believe will improve education in their area.

Reviews will then take place in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, Mid Bedfordshire and Sandy and Biggleswade.

The findings of the review group will be shared initially with all schools in the area and with local councillors. Members of the communities around these schools along with other local organisations, parents and pupils will have the opportunity to comment via a public consultation as the process continues.

In addition to this a number of our schools are responding directly to the government's new academy

programme by pursuing the option to change their status and become independent of the Council. One school that has recently been established as a new academy is Lark Rise in Dunstable. This is in addition to one academy that is already in existence – All Saints in Houghton Regis.

Cllr Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

“We want to ensure that by the time every child reaches the age of 19, their education will have provided them with the knowledge, skills and qualifications to enter society as a happy and confident young adult.”

### More good news from Children's Services

Work is well underway to relocate and expand Roecroft Lower School, Stotfold to a new site south of town



Staff and pupils at Haynes Lower School were delighted to attain an outstanding Ofsted inspection recently. Thumbs up to them!

ready for Autumn 2011.

Central Bedfordshire Council and the Governing Body of the school agreed that a move was necessary to serve the families occupying the new area of the town and to enhance the learning environment for pupils at the 'outstanding' school.

Cllr Lewis said:

“As Portfolio Holder I am delighted to be able to support the new build for Roecroft Lower School. The new building will double the capacity

of the school and ensure that the children will learn in classrooms that are fit for purpose and suitable for a 21st century curriculum.”



Coordinator will meet the child, their parents and the people caring for them to ensure they are safe, their needs are met and to offer practical support.

Contact the Private Fostering Coordinator on 0300 300 8090 for more information and advice or to tell us about a private fostering arrangement.

## Private fostering explained

**If you have a young person living with you who isn't an immediate family member, the law says this is a 'private fostering' arrangement and either you or the child's parents have to tell the council so that we can give you help and advice.**

The Council's Fostering Service is responsible for supporting anyone involved in a private fostering arrangement. Private fostering applies to young people under the age of 16, or under 18 if disabled, living with someone outside their immediate family for more than 28

days. An immediate family member is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, or step-parent. Examples of private fostering arrangements are:

- An older teenager living with their friend's parents due to a family breakdown.
  - A child living with a family friend whilst a parent is recovering from an operation.
  - A child attending school in this country living with extended family (such as cousin) or with a host family whilst their family live abroad.
- The Private Fostering

## Council spending plans for 2011/12

### Executive councillors in Central Bedfordshire have proposed a freeze in Council Tax levels for the year ahead as part of their spending plans for 2011/12.

"For the first time in over a decade, families in Central Bedfordshire will see no increase in their Council Tax bills", said Cllr Tricia Turner MBE, Leader of the Council.

"As a new council, we promised to make value for money an absolute priority and have already delivered £22million of efficiency savings. Despite a sharp reduction in the government grant, we've developed a budget that means this promise will be kept."

The budget proposes that in the region of £180million should be spent on local services including libraries, support for schools, social care, planning and leisure services. Additional investment of £1million is recommended for children's services and another £900,000 has been earmarked for social care for adults to meet an increased demand for services.

The proposals for the next financial year, from April 2011 to March 2012, also include savings of nearly £20million. The majority of these (£12.7million) will be delivered through cutting running costs by streamlining and reshaping services.

"To protect front line services as much as possible we've worked hard on cutting management and staff overheads and finding cheaper ways of delivering services," said Councillor Maurice Jones, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People.

"Where we can, we will work with communities and our partners in towns, parishes and voluntary

organisations to find new ways of delivering some of the services we are no longer able to provide ourselves," he added.

Funding for services such as youth, play and sports development is to be cut under the budget proposals, which include measures to deliver £6.7million of savings from such service reductions.

Cllr Tricia Turner added, "Nobody would deny that there are some difficult choices to be made by Councillors who would all prefer not to reduce services. But, being part of the wider public sector which is shrinking in response

to the need to reduce the national debt, we have to be realistic about what we can afford. We will continue to manage our budget robustly to be efficient as possible and ultimately, maintain our responsibilities to protect the most vulnerable."

Residents can continue to comment on the spending proposals until 25 January. Public feedback, together with comments from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committees will be fed into the final budget report which will be presented to Executive and full Council in February.



## Getting the formula right at Arlesey Library



**When the threat of closure hung over Arlesey Library in 1997, the Arlesey Resource Centre Partnership and the town council stepped in to ensure that the facility remained open to the public and it has gone from strength to strength since.**

The Centre, which is open Tuesday to Saturday, is situated in the same building complex as the town council, village hall and doctor's surgery and has parking and easy access for people with disabilities.

Although Central Bedfordshire Council provides the books and library management system, the town council organises staffing and supplies the resource centre which offers a range of leaflets, together with free advertising space for local organisations and

publicity for local events. A wide range of business services are also offered including colour copying/printing, faxing, laminating, use of the Internet and word processing.

Cllr Ken Matthews, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Skills and Regeneration at Central Bedfordshire Council said:

"Arlesey Library provides an impressive blueprint of how communities can work with the council to ensure that the services that they value most do not disappear.

"This type of community hub that is in operation in Arlesey is a focal point for the town's residents and an important part of day-to-day life in the area."

## Let's talk central

To find out more and watch Central Bedfordshire Councillors being interviewed about the proposals and have your say please go to [www.letstalkcentral.com](http://www.letstalkcentral.com)

Alternatively you can write to us at FREEPOST RSJS-GBBZ-SRZT, Budget Strategy, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ. You do not need a stamp.

Hundreds of residents have already taken the time to visit [www.letstalkcentral.com](http://www.letstalkcentral.com) and to find out more about the budget proposals and many have left comments on the site.



**Keep up to date with what Central Bedfordshire Council is doing and discuss local issues with the Council and other residents through our discussion website [www.letstalkcentral.com](http://www.letstalkcentral.com) and other social media.**



[www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral](http://www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral)  
[www.twitter.com/letstalkcentral](http://www.twitter.com/letstalkcentral)  
[centralbedfordshire](http://centralbedfordshire)

Central Bedfordshire Council  
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis

**Family & Youth Information Service**

**We can provide information and advice on:**

- Choices and support for young people aged 13 to 19 years
- Childcare and early education
- Out of school clubs and holiday care
- Leisure activities
- Family support services
- Positive activities from 5 - 19 years

**Contact us:**

☎ 0300 300 8119

✉ fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

🌐 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis

📘 Find us on facebook.com/letstalkcentral and

🐦 follow us at twitter.com/letstalkcentral

## Funding advice just a click away

**Is your community group or small business looking for external funding? Central Bedfordshire Council offers access to GRANTnet, a straightforward free-to-use funding database.**

The service allows community and voluntary groups, clubs, schools, social enterprises and small businesses to search for opportunities in the UK and European Community. There are hundreds of schemes available from Government departments, local authorities, charitable trusts, loans and corporate sponsors.

Once you have registered with GRANTnet, you will be emailed a password to access the system. Once you have logged on and answered a few simple questions about your organisation and the project which you wish to undertake; GRANTnet will give an overview of all the opportunities available.

To find out more go to the Grants page under the Advice and Benefits section of the council's website [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or visit [www.grantnet.com](http://www.grantnet.com)



## Careline can be your guardian angel

**Residents who use Central Bedfordshire Council's Careline service will now receive extra protection following an improvement to the emergency response package.**

Careline is a 24-hour alarm call system for people who are elderly, disabled, have health problems or who simply want the peace of mind of having help at the touch of a button. By pressing a button on a special pendant worn around their neck, customers can speak to a Careline operator through the alarm unit and immediately alert the team if they are in trouble.

Previously, customers had to give Careline details of two emergency key holders. Now, however, customers can have a keysafe installed at their home, so that the Council's Sheltered Housing team and the emergency services will be able to access their house using a keysafe code if there is cause for concern.

Cllr Rita Drinkwater, Portfolio Holder for Housing at Central

Bedfordshire Council said:

**"This change will particularly benefit those people who do not have any family or friends living nearby or who may not know anyone they can trust to be a responsible keyholder."**

A Careline alarm unit can be installed quickly and easily, provided that the customer has a modern telephone socket and a nearby electrical socket. The service is available for less than £3 a week, along with additional charges for the keysafe installation and any call out costs sheltered housing staff respond to if the alarm is raised.

In addition to their main service, Careline also provide users with various telecare sensors, fall detectors and big button telephones.

If you are interested in subscribing to the Careline service please contact Careline on 0300 300 8146

## Are you prepared for the digital switchover?

**The digital switchover is coming to homes in the Anglia TV region from 30 March 2011.**

Existing analogue TV channels are being switched off region by region and replaced with Freeview digital TV and radio services.

Switchover will extend digital coverage to all UK homes by 2012. It will also free up airwaves for new services such as ultra-fast wireless broadband and mobile television.

**What happens at switchover and what do viewers need to do?**

The Anglia switchover will happen in two stages:

On March 30, BBC Two will stop broadcasting in analogue and BBC digital channels will become available for the first time to viewers watching local 'relay' transmitters.

On April 13, the remaining analogue channels will be permanently switched off and replaced with additional digital services.

All Freeview, BT Vision and Top Up TV viewers will need to retune

their equipment at both stages of switchover.

Most people have already converted their main TV to digital. Viewers must ensure that their TVs are capable of receiving a digital signal in order to continue receiving television services after switchover. Virtually any TV, even black and white ones, can be converted with a digital box. Anyone buying new TV equipment should look for the 'digital tick' logo which identifies equipment designed to work through switchover.

**orbit** HOME BUY AGENTS

SEE OUR NEW VIDEO AT [www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk](http://www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk)

**HomeBuy** UK Government

**Thought you couldn't afford a home of your own? Think again!**

We are the HomeBuy Agent for Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, and we help people of all ages in all sorts of circumstances to find their dream home. In this role, we act as the first point of contact for all those seeking a home through one of the range of HomeBuy low-cost home ownership and discounted market rent products.

**Open the door to your new home with Orbit HomeBuy Agents**

Visit [www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk](http://www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk) or call 03458 50 20 50

Terms and conditions apply - ask for details. Orbit HomeBuy Agents is managed by Orbit Homes (2020) Limited, a member of Orbit Group Limited which is an exempt charity registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965.

## Get Back Into

**January is traditionally a time when we look to turn over a new leaf in our life. This might involve trying something new, giving ourselves a new look, or indeed making changes to the way we live our lives. If one or more of these are likely to apply to you then how about trying an activity from the 'Get Back Into' project ?**

Delivered through team BEDS&LUTON, the County Sports Partnership for Bedfordshire and Luton, the project is all about giving anybody aged 16 or over the opportunity to take part in a sport or physical activity. This may be something that you have done and enjoyed in the past, or something brand new.

Residents can take part through a series of weekly coached taster

sessions. The focus is very much on providing activities that are relaxed, enjoyable and a great way to meet new people.

An individual's ability or fitness levels do not matter. It's all about giving people the opportunity to get active again.

The project is now well established across Central Bedfordshire. Project manager Graham Simpson is clearly excited by the size and variety of opportunities available.

"Our January programme promises to be our biggest ever. A wide range of opportunities across a variety of sports and physical activities will be available. Activities on offer will include Nordic walking, golf, squash, cricket, badminton and a wide variety of physical activity sessions."

Graham was also keen to thank Central Bedfordshire's Sport Development Unit and the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity for their help and support with the programmes, particularly in the more rural parts of the county.

"We really appreciate the help and support we receive from Tim Herrod and his team at Central Bedfordshire and also the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. Their local knowledge and experience is a real asset to us."

To find out about opportunities in your local area and to book online visit [www.getbackinto.co.uk](http://www.getbackinto.co.uk) or call team BEDS&LUTON direct on 01582 813766

## Keep those resolutions!

**Many of us mark a new year with new resolutions to make our lives better in some way.**

Here we take a look at some of the most popular resolutions and highlight the help and advice that is out there to guide you on your path to a new you.

### A healthier, leaner you

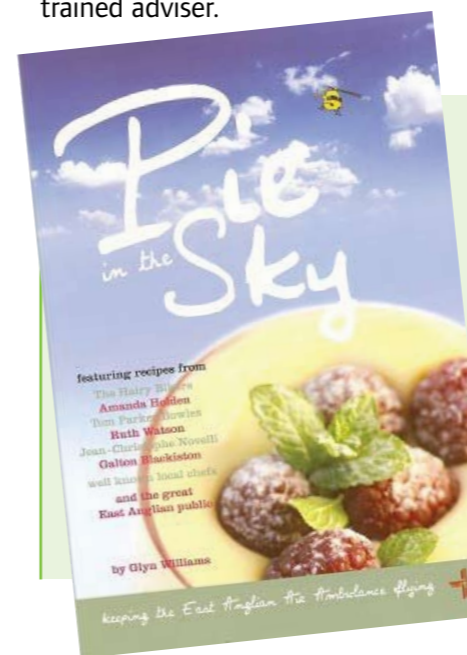
Making small changes to your diet can add up to a happier, healthier future for you or your family. The Change4Life programme offers lots of ideas including recipes, quizzes and information about sports and other activities in your area to help you and your family get healthier.

For more information visit [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

### Stop smoking

Going smoke free is one of the resolutions that most people find it hardest to stick to. Getting help will increase your chances of success.

There are lots of free NHS services available to help you and the [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk) website has lots of tips. You can also call the free NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 022 4332 to speak to a trained adviser.



### Tackle your finances

If you are struggling to manage your finances, especially after Christmas, there are lots of organisations offering free, confidential and independent help.

Try calling the National Debtline on 0808 808 400 or you could visit the Citizens Advice Bureau offices in Biggleswade, Ampthill or Leighton Buzzard. There is also online help from organisations such as Consumer Credit Counselling Service ([www.cccs.co.uk](http://www.cccs.co.uk)) or Payplan ([www.playplan.com](http://www.playplan.com)).

### Recycle more

With your help we have increased recycling to 50 per cent - from just five per cent in 2000. This year we want to go further and have set an ambitious target of recycling 60 percent. With an enhanced recycling service accepting numerous materials, together with green and food waste collections we can get there if residents continue to reduce, reuse and recycle. For more information visit [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com)



### Get fit, get out

You don't have to spend money to get fit and meet new people. Central Bedfordshire offers plenty of opportunity to get out and enjoy superb green spaces and invigorating fresh air.

Whether you are looking for a quiet spot to enjoy a picnic with family and friends, a space with views for some down-time, or a strenuous up-hill climb to stretch your body there is always somewhere that will fit the bill.

Visit [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside) for more information and ideas.

## ... but don't forget to treat yourself

**The proof is in the pudding for the East Anglian Air Ambulance service, who are raising funds by selling a recipe book devoted to desserts.**

Council Chairman Peter Hollick has endorsed the book, entitled 'Pie in the Sky', which features sweet recipes from famous chefs.

Priced at £9.99, proceeds from the sales will help to keep two air ambulances flying.

The book is available from most bookshops in Luton, Book Castle in Dunstable, County Books in Bedford and the Air Ambulance Headquarters at Flitwick Town Council. You can also buy it online at [www.angliaone.org.uk](http://www.angliaone.org.uk).

# GET BACK INTO

a healthier lifestyle

## New Year... New You?

Choose from an exciting range of Sport & Fitness activities in your area... there's almost certainly something for everyone!

Sessions vary in price, but the majority of activities cost only £3 per session and with most of them pay as you go, why not come along and try an activity or two?

Golf at Millbrook, Tilworsyth & Bedfordshire Golf Clubs  
Swimming at Houghton Regis & Tiddenfoot Leisure Centres

Other Sport activities available: Badminton, Fencing, Hockey, Table Tennis.....  
Other Fitness activities available: Aqua Tone, Box & Tone, Pilates, Yoga.....  
Using Local Venues: Most of the Leisure Centres, Flitwick Village Hall, Collings Well Hall, Chalgrave Memorial Hall, Lidlington Village Hall, Redbourne Upper School, Brooklands Middle School, Vandyke Upper School



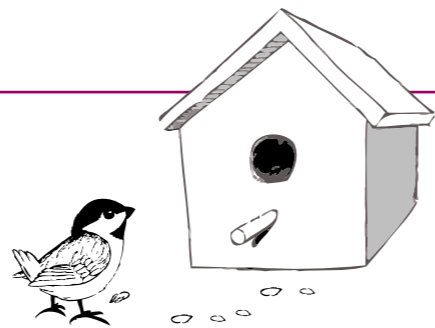


For all the details and to book your place, visit [www.GETBACKINTO.co.uk](http://www.GETBACKINTO.co.uk) or call 01582 813760

We're on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/getbackinto](http://www.facebook.com/getbackinto)

# what's on...

February  
March



For a more comprehensive listing – just click on ‘What’s On’ at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## February

### Barnstormers Comedy Club Thursday 10, 8pm

Leighton Buzzard Theatre, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard. Top quality stand up comedians from the London circuit together with the ever popular compere Kevin Precious. Over 18's only. Tickets £9 in advance, £11 on the door. Groups of 6+ will receive a 10% discount. To book ring 0300 300 8125 or email [lbtboxoffice@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lbtboxoffice@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).

### Valentines abseil

#### Saturday 12, 9am-4pm

Abseil down Bedford College Tower Block in aid of CLIC Sargent – the UK's leading Children's Cancer Charity. £10 to register, minimum £100 sponsorship required. For further details and to register please call 01865 767 049 or email [clare.norrish@clicsargent.org.uk](mailto:clare.norrish@clicsargent.org.uk).

### Make a nestbox

#### Saturday 12, 11am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 3pm

The Lodge, RSPB, Sandy. Come and make a nestbox to take home to your garden. £7 per nestbox. Children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information about this event phone 01767 680541.

### Crazy Heart

#### Saturday 12, 3pm (doors open 2.30pm)

Space for Sport & Arts, Holmemead School, Mead End, Biggleswade.

Ivel Flix present a film that will get you in the mood for Valentine's Day.

Tickets £3, visit [www.iveflix.org.uk](http://www.iveflix.org.uk) for more information.

### Doris Day evening

#### Saturday 12, 7.30pm

Leighton Buzzard Theatre, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard. Remember Que Sera Sera, the Deadwood Stage and Sentimental Journey? Rediscover Doris through this musical cabaret tribute. Tickets £12.50 adults, £11 concessions. To book ring 0300 300 8125 or email [lbtboxoffice@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lbtboxoffice@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).

### Tree planting

#### Sunday 13, 11am-3pm

The Forest Centre, Marston Vale Millennium Country Park, Station Road, Marston Moretaine. Come and plant a tree at Shocott Spring. Shuttle buses will run from the centre to the site. All you need to bring are some warm clothes, waterproof footwear and a whole load of enthusiasm. For more information, visit [www.marstonvale.org](http://www.marstonvale.org).

### Leighton Buzzard Art Society

#### Thursday 17, 8pm

Leighton Buzzard Day Centre, Duncombe Drive, Leighton Buzzard. Dee Cowell will give a demonstration using watercolours to create an "African Scene".

### Gardening and willow weaving

#### Sunday 20, 10.15am-4.15pm

The Forest Centre, Marston Vale

Millennium Country Park, Station Road, Marston Moretaine. Come and help us weave the willow sculptures in the Sensory Garden and the willow huts on the Wetlands Nature Reserve. For further details contact [anna.charles@marstonvale.org](mailto:anna.charles@marstonvale.org) or 01234 762614.

## March

### Organ sequence dance

#### Saturday 5, 7.45pm-11pm

The Weatherley Centre, Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade. With Ken and Barbara Street and the live music of David Last. £5 per person, everybody welcome. Ring 01462 700471 for more details.

### Jazz evening

#### Sunday 13, 6pm-9.30pm

The Grove Lock, Grove, Leighton Buzzard. Fairtrade Leighton Linslade host a jazz evening, including a 'Show off Your Label' - Fairtrade fashion show. Live music with a full menu available until 8pm. To book a table, phone 01525 380940. Free entry.

### The magic of Gilbert and Sullivan

#### Saturday 19, 7pm

Trinity Church, Shortmead Street, Biggleswade. Songs and scenes from Gilbert and Sullivan operas. £10 including refreshments. Contact the box office on 01767 313798.



## Making it easier to contact the council

We have introduced a series of eight new telephone numbers, designed to make it easier to access council information and services.

Calling one of these numbers will connect you to a customer service advisor dedicated to dealing with calls for that area. If you need more specialist help they can put you in contact with the service you require.

This will reduce the number of calls required and help improve your overall customer experience.

On the reverse of this page is a list of the eight new telephone numbers, along with examples of the types of queries that can be answered by each customer service advisor, to help you choose the category of the enquiry you wish to make.

Please cut along the dotted line at the side of this page and keep a copy for your records.



## Grants for cavity wall and loft insulation

Central Bedfordshire Council has entered into a partnership with Miller Pattison Ltd to offer homeowners in the area, grants towards installing cavity wall and loft insulation.

Miller Pattison, based in Biggleswade, is a national installer of high quality, innovative energy saving solutions.

Reducing the amount of heat escaping through your walls and through your roof helps reduce fuel bills by up to 35%, makes homes feel more comfortable and helps protect the environment by cutting carbon usage.

If you don't have the recommended depth of insulation in your roof, you could be

throwing money away. As well as keeping houses warmer in winter having the correct amount of insulation will keep your home cooler in the summer. So you will benefit all year round.

### All or part of your costs covered.

The grants will cover part of the installation costs and for people over 70 could cover all the cost.

Miller Pattison will be delivering letters to homeowners around Central Bedfordshire, advising them of grants that they may be



eligible for. These will be followed up by a visit from a surveyor to see if you are interested.

If you would like more information on this scheme, or would like a Miller Pattison surveyor to contact you, please contact Private Sector Housing Team at Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 8007 or Miller Pattison direct on 0800 731 3346



# Central Bedfordshire in contact

Why not cut out and keep ...



## Council and democracy

including elections, jobs, consultation

0300 300 8301

## Home and environment

including Waste & recycling, housing, births, deaths & marriages

0300 300 8302

## Health and caring

including adoption & fostering, social care for adults & children

0300 300 8303

## Learning

including young people's services, adult learning, education welfare

0300 300 8304

## Leisure and culture

including libraries, parks, sports & arts

0300 300 8305

## Money and benefits

including council tax, grants, benefits (housing & council tax)

0300 300 8306

## Planning and business

including planning & building control, trading standards, business advice

0300 300 8307

## Travelling

including highways, Blue Badges, bus passes

0300 300 8308



## Email:

customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



## Write to:

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ.



## Website:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

## Also available

Get in touch if you would like more copies, a large-print edition or more information about News Central.

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When you have finished reading it, put it in your recycling bin or bag.

## More information

Për Informacion معلومات کے لئے

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برای اطلاع তথ্যের জন্য

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