

News Central

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

**There's no
place like home
in Central
Bedfordshire**

● ● ● **Issue 11 - March 2010**

● ● ● **Inside**

- A new lease of life in sheltered housing - Page 6
- Community Focus on volunteering - Pages 8 & 9
- Tackling anti-social behaviour - Page 10
- Children love healthy eating - Page 12

**Central
Bedfordshire**

Welcome!

Birthdays can make us wonder 'where did that year go?'

Central Bedfordshire is just one year old at the beginning of April and as we approach our anniversary we've been reflecting on our first year and the challenges our communities and the council have faced.

We brought together the new council at a time when the country was suffering from recession and an economic downturn. As more people have looked to us for help, our finances have come under increasing pressure and the need for us to be more efficient is more important than ever.

We understand how much more we have to do.

Since we only receive one third of our necessary funding from central government (the rest must come from council tax) we have developed a shared sense of purpose and determination to succeed in delivering better value for money. As part of our Every Penny Counts initiative, we've introduced many measures to help us save money including reducing our management overhead by 20 per cent, cutting IT budgets and managing our contracts more efficiently.

Another way in which we're looking to spend less is to change the way we produce News Central.

During this first year we've distributed

the magazine every month, to help introduce you to the new council and the services we provide. From the spring, we will reduce the number of editions of the magazine and we'll introduce advertising to help us offset the costs of production.

Thanks to those of you who have told us that you like the magazine. We hope you will continue to do so in future and will understand why we are changing the way we provide this service to make every penny count!

Cllr Tricia Turner MBE
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council



Your feedback

February's edition of News Central featured Central Bedfordshire's Library Service and the growing popularity of the Virtual Library – available online 24/7 as a convenient way to reserve and renew books, source information and find out what's on.

Writer Peter Wade-Wright is researching a book about Egypt and has praised the detailed references and advice he received through the Virtual Library from Daniela Vuolo, Senior Librarian at Dunstable Library. He writes:

"Many, many thanks for all

this. If the book I'm trying to write ever sees the light of day, you and the library will get a full mention... I have used the reference section of Dunstable Library a lot over the last ten years and it is a fantastic resource."

Go to www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and click on Libraries for more information.

Bedfordshire Highways gritting teams have been working round the clock during the severe winter weather doing everything they can to ensure that the roads are as clear as possible, despite the national shortages of salt.

Local resident Jemmie Elson sent News Central some photographs of snowy scenes at Millbrook saying:

"With everyone complaining about local councils and their handling of the weather, we wanted to demonstrate what a good job the highways gritting lorry did in the village of Millbrook on 6 January when heavy snow fell that afternoon. The highways staff gritted the undulating hilly roads in the vicinity, needing to reverse up the main road in the village to obtain access."

We're saying snow to potholes

The We're Saying Snow to Potholes campaign was launched by Central Bedfordshire Council to encourage road users to report dangerous potholes caused by the severe cold weather.

Bedfordshire Highways has made repairing dangerous potholes a top priority as part of the council's commitment to maintaining all roads and highways to the highest standards.

The snow and icy conditions create a 'freeze-thaw cycle' that causes potholes to appear in areas of weakness on the carriageway, so it is

important to repair them as quickly as possible.

Road users are urged to call the Potholes Hotline on 0300 300 8049 to report any severe potholes.



Your magazine

News Central is produced by the communications team at Central Bedfordshire Council.

It is delivered to every household in the area by Royal Mail, so may be accompanied by unrelated 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.
- Email newscentral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk, or use the contact details on the back cover to get in touch.

Council meetings

- For details about Central Bedfordshire council meetings, call 0300 300 8000 or visit our website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Time to get a new bus pass

Bus passes issued by the former Mid or South Beds District Councils will expire at the end of March – but there's no need to worry.

Central Bedfordshire Council will be sending out new concessionary travel permits to all current bus pass holders in mid March, so you don't need to do anything unless you have moved or your circumstances have changed.

To let us know, call 300 300 8041 (Mid Bedfordshire permits), 0300 300 8641 (South Bedfordshire permits), or email us at customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk. Please call us after Easter if your pass does not arrive in March.

To find out if you are eligible for the National Concessionary Travel scheme visit your nearest Customer Service Centre, or go to www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and search for 'bus pass'



Jump on the bus

Youth groups across the area can jump on a Central Bedfordshire Youth Bus to have fun at affordable prices.

Many youth groups want to organise outings such as ice-skating or bowling but don't have the budget or transport to do so. Now they can hire a bus to take parties of six to 80

young people within a 50-mile radius of their starting point in Central Bedfordshire.

All youth groups have to do is to join the Central Bedfordshire Youth Bus Operational Group. They pay a £25 annual membership to get bus hire, starting at £3 return per person, with free travel for adult supervisors. The service has been extended to all

youth groups in Central Bedfordshire for a one-year trial, so make the most of it by calling Rachel Stanton on 01525 373838 to join.

The group includes Central Bedfordshire Council, Leighton Linlade Town Council, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and Bucks and Milton Keynes Transport Partnership



Visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

There's no place like home

There's no place like home and we want to make Central Bedfordshire a place where people can find the housing, jobs and community support they need to enjoy life to the full.

A new housing strategy is being developed for Central Bedfordshire, which prioritises more affordable housing, reducing homelessness and improving the quality of private sector properties – particularly for vulnerable people.

Central Bedfordshire Council owns over 5200 properties – including sheltered housing for older people – and provides a range of housing services for our tenants. We are also working with housing associations, private landlords and developers to increase the number of good quality, low-cost homes for people to rent or buy.

Bedfordshire Homefinder – the council's new choice-based lettings system – was launched last year as a fairer way of allocating vacant rental properties across the area to people on the housing register. Other new

schemes such as HomeSwapper and Let's Rent are also helping to widen the range of housing options and release properties for people on the waiting list.

A new joint tenants forum for north and south Central Bedfordshire is being formed to consult council and housing association tenants. They are helping to draw up a new set of service standards on everything from repairs and maintenance to anti-social behaviour issues.

Councillor Rita Drinkwater, Central Bedfordshire's Portfolio Holder for Housing, (pictured above) said:

"Meeting people's housing needs is a priority for Central Bedfordshire Council and we are doing all we can to secure new opportunities for the area despite the difficult economic situation.

"We are particularly concerned with providing quality housing for vulnerable people, whether they are elderly

Finding a new home

Bedfordshire Homefinder means applicants can 'bid' for available properties online by telephone or text message, or see what's on offer using computers in the council's housing offices.

For more information visit the Bedfordshire Homefinder website on www.bedfordshirehomefinder.co.uk, or call the Home Choice Team on 0300 300 8007.

The new Let's Rent scheme will provide the option of good quality private property for people on the housing waiting list, through a pioneering partnership between the council and local private sector landlords. Find out more on 0300 300 8007.

The HomeSwapper service is free for council tenants and is another way of helping people to move to a more suitably sized property or area of their choice by exchanging

Central Bedfordshire Cllr Rita Drinkwater chats to residents at Dale Court Sheltered Housing Scheme, Barton Le Clay

and need extra support, young people looking for their first home or families having difficulty paying their mortgage.

"Our council tenants are actively involved in shaping the standard of service and give us valuable feedback about improving their communities."

Did you know?

Just over 250,000 people live in Central Bedfordshire in around 107,000 households.

their council or housing association homes. Over 300 people have registered on the website at www.homeswapper.co.uk.

One successful home swapper said:

"I found my new house in a week and moved very quickly. I would highly recommend this to anyone looking for a new home ...so much better than looking through books."

New homes on the horizon

Central Bedfordshire attracted over £24million investment from developers and housing associations last year, bringing 200 new affordable homes for the area.

Now, three large housing schemes have been shortlisted for government 'Kickstart' funding to provide more low-cost homes for people to buy or rent, potentially bringing in an extra £4million of investment.

An extra 95 affordable homes are due to be built on developments at College Farm in Silsoe, Sandringham Drive in Houghton Regis and The Edge in Dunstable over the next 18 months.

To find out more about Homebuy schemes in Central Bedfordshire, contact Orbit Homebuy Agents on 03458 502050, or visit www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk

Vision for growth

Central Bedfordshire has been awarded a government grant of over £1.3million for having a high rate of housing completions over the last year - compared to

other local authorities - and for setting out its vision for future developments.

The core strategy is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and outlines how the council will be

meeting targets for new homes and jobs in the area.

Visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to find out more

Amazing Grace!

Grace Cherry has lived in the same council house since it was built in 1949, making her one of Central Bedfordshire's longest residing tenants.

Now nearly 90 years-old, Grace still has her original rent book for her Hockcliffe home showing the rent was just over £2 a week, the rates were nineteen shillings and five pence and the water rates were two shillings and nine pence.

Grace and her late husband Albert were delighted to have been allocated the Luton Rural District Council property after the Second World War and brought up their only son there. The house has hardly changed apart from the double-glazed windows and newly installed kitchen, of which she is very proud.

'Cherry by name and cheery by nature', Grace was a stalwart of the

village community in her younger days. She worked as the school lollipop lady for 30 years, helped to run the local youth club and was treasurer of the Women's Institute in the village.

Having lived in the same place all her life, Grace has seen many changes – for better and for worse – but with her sister and son close by, she would not want to live anywhere else in the world.

Grace Cherry still has her original rent book from 1949

Turn over to find out about the benefits of living in sheltered housing →





Kit Burr loves living in her flat at Gale Court

A new lease of life in sheltered housing

Sheltered housing can offer the best of both worlds for older people who want to live independently within a safe, friendly community.

Wardens are on hand in case of an emergency and the council takes care of jobs such as the gardening, external decoration and window cleaning, giving residents extra peace of mind.

Central Bedfordshire manages over 500 individual sheltered properties and is holding a series of open days to help people aged 55+ and their families find out first-hand about the benefits of living in such schemes.

The first open day at Gale Court in Barton le Clay was a chance to look around and talk to some of the residents – a lively group, who often meet in the communal sitting room.

Vic Evans, aged 84, moved into one of the 24 flats seven years ago when his old, damp cottage got too much to cope with. He said:

"I should have come in ten

years earlier. I am very happy here. The company is very nice, it is warm and cosy and I have everything I want."

Vic, who represents residents' views on the council's Sheltered Tenants Action Group (STAG), added:

"You can live completely independently and choose to join in as much or as little as you want. The rent includes your heating, communal cleaning and the security, so you can call the warden if you need anything, which is reassuring."

Many of the residents used to live in the village and remember the housing scheme being built in 1974.

"At first I did not think I would like it but I soon got used to it and I love it here now,"

said Kit Burr, aged 93, who enjoys regular visits from her family.

For more information, call Central Bedfordshire's Sheltered Housing Team on 0300 300 8146

Keeping high standards

Scrutiny of parliamentary expenses has highlighted the high ethical standards set for your locally elected unitary, town and parish councillors. Unlike MPs, all councillors have to sign up to a Code of Conduct – and can be suspended or even banned for life if they fail to keep to it.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Standards Committee is the driving force behind the Code of Conduct, working to ensure you can have complete trust in your councillors

and the important work they do on your behalf.

The committee has ten elected councillors (five unitary and five town or parish) and five independent members, who are local residents with no connection to the council. It is chaired by an independent member, as is any panel set up to hear a complaint about a councillor's behaviour.

The committee is supported by the council's monitoring officer, who gives legal advice and investigates complaints for the committee's panels to consider.

Standards Committee Chairman Councillor Keith Ford said:

"Most councillors carry out their onerous roles honestly and ethically, but it's good to know that there is a group of people keeping an eye on things."

Full details of the Code of Conduct, and membership of the Standards Committee can be found on the Council website

Providing quality care

New essential standards of care are being introduced gradually across all health and adult social care services in England from April 2010.

The new system means that you can expect services to meet essential standards of quality and safety that respect your dignity and rights.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the new independent regulator of health and adult social care, will license services if they meet essential standards and constantly monitor them to make sure they are lawful.

NHS trusts are the first to come into the new system. From April 2010, for the first time all NHS hospitals must by law be registered with CQC.

Find out more on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.

Phone a friend



A public telephone box in Arlesey has been saved for the community with the support of local councils.

British Telecom wanted to remove the damaged pay phone on House Lane but have agreed to replace it after Central Bedfordshire Council and Arlesey Town Council worked with residents to show how much it was needed.

Thirty-five residents signed a petition against the removal of the phone box, organised by Ward Councillor Ian Dalgano and the town council.

Central Bedfordshire Council researched statistics to show BT that the phone box was used frequently by the small community, including many elderly people who are unlikely to own mobile phones and cannot walk far. It is also on a busy junction where there have been several accidents, so it is useful in emergencies.

Giving you value for money

Every penny counts in Central Bedfordshire, where we are continuing our initiative to find further efficiency savings and continue to provide value for money services.

During the past year we have achieved efficiency savings of over £10 million and are promising to provide more value for money in 2010/11 whilst investing £177 million in public services like community safety, street cleaning and recycling, transport, education and housing.

Unlike many other councils we only receive one third of our necessary budget from central government (the rest must come from council tax) and we face a growing challenge to continue providing the services that local people want and need. The recession means more residents need our help and increasing demand for critical services like care for older residents, children and those with disabilities. There has also been a 20 per cent increase in people seeking benefits.



Councillor Maurice Jones, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources at Central Bedfordshire Council, says:

"Value for money remains top of our agenda, but we face some tough choices when making savings which may be unpopular with some. However, as we confront a future of falling government support for local councils, we need to be positive and ensure that wherever possible we involve you in helping us make these decisions."

Money matters

Paying your council tax by direct debit is simple and secure and saves the council money, so helps to keep your council tax down. For more information call 0300 300 8010 and select option 2 or visit our website.

If you want help and advice about claiming council tax or housing benefit our staff are ready to help. For more information call 0300 300 8010 or visit our website.

If you need help with debt or other financial issues your local Citizens Advice Bureau has trained advisors to help you in confidence. Alternatively visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Our full budget plans have been published on our website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

You will soon receive your council tax bill and a leaflet packed with information on what we spend your money on and how we've been making efficiency savings during the past year.



Community focus

on volunteering



Many people who see themselves as 'just helping out' are volunteering in valuable ways to support our communities.

Central Bedfordshire Council's recent residents' survey revealed that just 13 per cent of people volunteer about once a week but staff at the volunteer centre in Leighton Buzzard believe the true figure is much higher.

Volunteer centre manager Lucy Crayk explains:

"Many people don't think of themselves as volunteers but it turns out they help at their children's school, with the football club or at church. They see it as 'just helping out' as and when they can – but they are in fact volunteering. Two or more hours a week is not uncommon.

"If you think about the time it takes to plan, prepare for and travel to activities, then clear up afterwards – in addition to the activity itself – local people contribute an enormous amount.

"The next volunteering survey is being carried out during March 2010 and we hope people will realise that this time really does count for something."

Twins Shaun and Wesley Nottingham, aged 18, make an important contribution to their local tennis club by teaching the sport and umpiring matches. They agreed:

"We never thought of it as volunteering, just helping. We like to help when we can. It's fun, all valuable life

experience and good to put on our CVs."

Carol Sanderson is now retired and has been helping in the community since she was a child. These days she is on the rota for the church flowers and the church shop and loves doing both. For many years she was also a member of a group that raised funds for local charities and had a great time doing it. Carol said:

"You don't think of yourself as volunteering, you just do it. I don't know why more people don't help, they'd probably find it very enjoyable and rewarding."

The Volunteer Centre Central Bedfordshire works with over 300 organisations and has more than 650 volunteering opportunities on offer. You can search for volunteering opportunities online at www.action-centralbeds.org.uk or go to www.do-it.org.uk

Contact the Volunteer Centre on 01525 850559, email volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk or visit the offices at Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1DA

Want to make a difference?

Volunteers are needed to work with young people in Houghton Regis and Dunstable as part of the area's Community Transformation Programme.

Central Bedfordshire Council is working with the nationally recognised charity Youth at Risk to transform the lives of young people aged 15-19, so they can build a worthwhile future and become valuable members of the community.

Adult volunteers can play a vital role in supporting these young people

to achieve their potential in a range of ways including helping them to enrol on the programme, acting as weekly mentors, or taking them on a residential trip.

Training is available and all volunteers appointed will be subject to enhanced CRB checks and references.

For more information about volunteering opportunities, contact Olwen Davies, olwen.davies@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk, or call 01582 818483

Volunteer to help with disasters and emergencies

In Central Bedfordshire, the emergency services, local councils and voluntary organisations work together to prepare for emergencies through the Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BLLRF).

Whatever the emergency, fast action is needed and volunteers can play an important role by joining the Bedfordshire and Luton Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee (BLEVEC). This is a local partnership

of charities, community groups and volunteers who help to prepare for – and respond to – emergencies.

Residents can join Central Bedfordshire's emergency volunteers and train to specialise in emergency response or join one of the organisations that is already a member.

To contact BLLRF email volunteering@bllrf.org.uk, call 01462 611145 or visit www.bllrf.org.uk

Volunteers training to respond to flooding emergencies

Did you know?

Central Bedfordshire's next volunteering survey will take place 15-20 March 2010. The results could bring government funding to develop local voluntary and community action.



Volunteers in Central Bedfordshire help out in lots of ways to support their communities including church flower arranging, responding to emergencies, caring for the environment, helping children read, and making cups of tea.



Tackling anti-social behaviour



Anti-social behaviour can significantly affect everyday life in our communities and reducing it is a priority for Central Bedfordshire.

The council's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team works closely with residents, housing providers and other agencies across the area to help resolve problems through advice, co-ordinated investigation, intervention and enforcement.

How can communities help?

Communities can often deal with minor issues in a reasonable way without the need for outside help. Sometimes a little give and take is all it takes to resolve a problem and avoid confrontation. However, when anti-social behaviour cannot be resolved locally, it's important to report what's happening.

Who do you talk to?

If you are concerned about on-going anti-social behaviour you can talk to the council's ASB team, your neighbourhood police officer or police community support officer, local councillor, or the Citizens Advice

Bureaux (CAB). Tenants can also ask their housing provider or landlord for help.

What can be done?

If a significant problem is identified, the ASB co-ordinator will call a problem-solving meeting where all the relevant agencies can agree action to address the behaviour.

Interventions can include warning letters, home visits, restorative justice, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and a range of support, particularly for young people. Serious problems may lead to enforcement action being taken such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), injunctions or breach of tenancy.

Does it work?

Co-ordinated intervention with two 13-year-old boys recently led to a 50 per cent reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the Sandy area. The council's ASB team worked with the teenagers, their families

There has been a 20 per cent reduction in anti social behaviour since a new skate park opened in Tithe Farm, Houghton Regis last year. The project was started by enthusiastic young people from Houghton Regis Youth Voice Experience (HYVE) – with the support of Central Bedfordshire's Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS), local police, Houghton Regis Town Council, Groundwork Trust Luton and South Bedfordshire

and schools to provide a range of support with monitoring by the Safer Neighbourhood Policing team.

Improving community safety

Young people, neighbourhood watch co-ordinators and residents were among the 130 who gathered for Central Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership's first open meeting to highlight concerns and discuss priorities for the coming year.

The January event at Priory House, Chicksands, included talks about drugs and domestic abuse and

20 stalls highlighting the work of partners. Another open meeting will be held in south Central Bedfordshire later this year.



Cllr David McVicar, Central Bedfordshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, said:

"It was great to see local residents and groups meeting

representatives from the partnership to discuss our emerging priorities for next year.

"The Community Safety Partnership is committed to increasing public confidence, combating anti-social behaviour and reducing crime. All partners will be working closely together to make our local communities a safer place to live."

Young inspectors

Young people are helping to improve the services they use across Central Bedfordshire by becoming 'young inspectors'.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Integrated Youth Support Service is working with the Look Listen Change consortium, which includes Youth 4 U and the British Youth Council, to give young people greater influence over services in their area.

The Young Inspectors programme is about training and supporting young people to assess local services and recommend improvements. The role also gives them the opportunity to gain accredited awards and earn money.

Inspections might include mystery shopping, observing activities, interviewing staff, checking that premises are young people-friendly, filming and making test phone calls.

The council is looking to train a team of 50 young people to carry out inspections with support. The young people receive two days initial training and are paid £75 following each completed inspection.

Fourteen young people have already carried out three inspections as part of their training and their feedback has been welcomed by the services involved.

Central Bedfordshire's first young inspectors say:

"I joined the programme to boost my confidence and give me some new skills. This seemed like an ideal opportunity and also allows me to improve services for young people at the same time." Hazel Cooper, aged 18.

"People need to be accountable for their service delivery and to have young people agree

that the service is meeting their needs. They need to show that young people think it's a good service." Cameron Kaye, aged 17.

"I think it's a really good scheme as you get to have a first hand view of services and it allows young people to have input into how things are run." Katy Hoskyn, aged 16.

Find out more

If you are a young person aged 13 to 19 (or up to 25 if you have a disability) and want to become a young inspector, or you are a provider who would like your service to be inspected by trained young people, contact Allison Guitton, Senior Youth Worker, on 0300 300 6458 or email allison.guitton@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Time out for young carers

Young carers have created a handy Time Out Card to help get the extra support they need to balance schoolwork and free time with looking after a family member.

The aim is to raise awareness of young carers' situations and feelings, so they can feel happier at school, keep up with their homework and enjoy leisure activities.

The Time Out Card has been developed by a group of young carers, aged 8 to 13 years, working with Central Bedfordshire's Children's Participation Development Officer, Marianne Dent. It is currently being piloted in schools.

The pocket-sized sized pouch contains useful information about the young carer and the person they care for. It is colour-coded with green, amber or red to let teachers or tutors know when they need support and understanding (shown right).

Young carers say:

"It's good and it helps us! It will keep us safe and calm."

"It is making my life at school easier."

"It's colourful, looks cool and you can personalise it with your own stickers and information."

If you think you are a young carer and would like more information about the Young Carers group, call Jane Lightfoot on 01234 857826. To try the Time Out Card, call Marianne Dent, Children's Participation Development Officer



what's on...



News Central can only highlight a few of the events coming up in Central Bedfordshire. More comprehensive listings can be found at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk (click on what's on).

Woburn Sands Big Band Society

Thursday 18 March, 7pm for 7.30pm

Ellen Pettit Memorial Hall, Woburn Sands

Listening to Swing, Blues and Jazz on good quality sound equipment.

Members £2, non-members £3. Free parking behind High Street

Call David Higgs, 01908 583937, or Rex Harris, 01908 281235

Armchair Travellers

Friday 19 March, 8pm

All Saints' Church, Campton

Talk by two teachers who climbed Everest.

Doors open 7.30pm. Tickets £5 (includes a beverage)

Call Linda Garton 01462 819074 or benefice.office@yahoo.co.uk

Proceeds to the National Heart Foundation and All Saints' Church.

Jumble Sale

Sat 20 March, 1pm

Flitwick Village Hall

In aid of Windmill Pre School, Flitwick

Refreshments available

Gardeners' Question Evening

Wednesday 24 March, 7pm - 9pm

Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine MK43 OPR

An evening with three local Bedfordshire gardening experts.

Tickets £6 per person or £5 concessions including refreshments.

Book on 01234 767037

In aid of Forest of Marston Vale Community Forest Charity.

Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday 28 March, 2pm - 4pm

St. John's Hospice, Moggerhanger, MK44 3RJ

Family fun, egg hunt, games, face painting and stalls.

Call Danielle Brandon on 01767 641044 or email danielle.brandon@suerydercare.org

Rock Chorus

Every Tuesday 8pm to 9.30pm

Dunstable Icknield Lower School, Burr Street

Fun singing for all, ages 13 to 75 years.

For more information go to www.rock-chorus.com or call 01582 668211

April

Easter Bunny and egg hunt

Friday 2 to Monday 5 April, 11am - 4pm

RSPB The Lodge Nature Reserve, Sandy, SG19 2DL

Watch bunnies and birds on the heath and follow bird pictures on an egg hunt trail - £2 per trail sheet.

Art and Craft Fair

Saturday 3 April, 10am - 3.30pm

Bedford Square, Houghton Regis

Business units at Ridgmont and Stotfold - 0300 300 4122

Industrial units at Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard - 0300 300 5086

Retail and office units in

Free face painting for the children and a chocolate egg.

Free entrance. Fundraising for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Call Pauline Ross on 07877364228

Chairman's Charity Ball

Friday 9 April, 7pm for 7.30pm

Warren Weir, Luton Hoo

Hosted by the Chairman of Central Bedfordshire Council, Councillor Brian Spurr, with dancing to Chris Smith & 'The String of Pearls' in aid of three charities: East Anglian Air Ambulance, RNIB and Help for Heroes.

Tickets: £65.00 each call 0300 300 5214

Hitchin Band Concert

Saturday 10 April, 7.30pm

St. Swithun's Church, Sandy

In aid of The Leprosy Mission

Colin Osborne 01767 682032

Nearly New Sale

Saturday 24 April, 2pm - 3.15pm

Flitwick Village Hall

Mid Beds National Childbirth Trust (NCT)

Maternity wear plus clothes, toys and equipment for children under seven.

Call 0844 243 6206, or email midbedsntnns@hotmail.co.uk

If you have an event in Central Bedfordshire you would like to publicise, please email brief details at least six weeks in advance to whatson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Dunstable town centre - 0300 300 5182

Call to find out more about terms or email property.enquiries@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Championing healthy eating

School children in Central Bedfordshire have been using their culinary and artistic talents to show the benefits of healthy eating.

To celebrate Healthy Eating Week in February, all schools in Bedfordshire were invited to invent new school meals, design posters or draw comic strips to tempt their classmates to choose healthy food.

The week was championed by Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council and NHS Bedfordshire. The competitions were run by Eden Foods, which provides meals for 166 schools across the area

and works with children all year round to highlight healthy eating.

Sutton Lower School pupils William Bentley, aged seven, and Lara Bentley, aged five, won the local recipe competition by making their nan's parsnips and cheese quiche, which will now be served - along with other recipe winners from across Bedfordshire - in all schools catered by Eden Foods.

William and Lara were helped by their nan, Sally Bentley, who said:

"I am so pleased to see a recipe that has been in our family for generations win a



William and Lara Bentley with their nan, Sally Bentley, share their family's parsnips & cheese quiche recipe with Cliff Gore, Development Chef at Eden foods

competition. William and Lara enjoy cooking with me and it was lovely to see all the children enjoy the quiche. It's so nice to see children excited about healthy eating".

Family health matters

Children's centres in Central Bedfordshire educate people about healthy living by promoting a whole family approach to eating well and keeping active.

Tithe Farm and Parkside Neighbourhood Centres in Houghton Regis are in the fifth year of the national Healthy Under Fives initiative. Children get together

to enjoy snacks chosen from the weekly menus and take part in 'active morning' fun exercise sessions, which also help to develop their speech and language skills.

'Little cooks' sessions give the children the chance to prepare, cook and eat their own meals with their families. The five-week cooking courses at Parkside have proved extremely popular with families since they began last year. Children have made delicious healthy meals from scratch, including pizza, apple crumble and lemon fish fingers with potato wedges.

Parents say:

"Amelia gets so excited when I say its 'cooking with Carla' day. She loves it and this is a fantastic chance to learn more healthy recipes. Plus she has really enjoyed the games and stories. Thank you."

"We really enjoyed the cooking session. I think children are more willing to try new foods if they have a hand in helping make it."

Children's centres offer support and advice on a wide range of family health issues including breastfeeding, healthy eating and exercise, dental health, stopping smoking, accident and injury prevention.

For more information, call the Families and Youth Information Service on 0300 300 8119



Looking for commercial property?

Central Bedfordshire Council supports business and enterprise by letting commercial property across the area including:

Business units at Ridgmont and Stotfold - 0300 300 4122

Industrial units at Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard - 0300 300 5086

Retail and office units in

Dunstable town centre - 0300 300 5182

Call to find out more about terms or email property.enquiries@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

A-Z of Central Bedfordshire services

For general enquiries, call 0300 300 8000

Service	Mid Beds	South Beds
A		
Abandoned / End of life vehicles	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Access to Children's Services Records	0300 300 8094	
AddAction	01234 352220	
Adoption and Fostering	0300 300 8090	
Adult Education Community Learning	0808 100 3140	
Albion Archaeology (Commercial Service Provider)	0300 300 8141	
Archaeology and Historic Environment Record Advice	0300 300 8091	
Arts Development	0300 300 8096	
Automated Payments	0300 300 8030	0300 300 8630
B		
BEaR Project	0300 300 8034	
Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service	01234 228833	
Bedfordshire Music	0300 300 8102	
Benefit Fraud Hotline	0300 300 8022	
Biggleswade Recreation Centre	01767 315651	
Births, Deaths, Marriages	0300 300 8089	
Blue Badge Scheme	0300 300 8035	
Bogus Callers	08454 040506	
Building Control (general enquiries)	0300 300 8635	
Building Control (Inspection Hotline)	0300 300 8116	
Bulky Waste Collection	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
C		
Carers Helpline	0300 300 8036	
Cemeteries	01234 353701	
Children with Disabilities	0300 300 8097	
Child Protection	0300 300 8149	
Choice Based Lettings	0300 300 8697	
Commons and Village Greens	0300 300 8084	
Community Development	0300 300 8117	
Community Grant Aid	0300 300 8637	
Community Safety	0300 300 8000	
Concerns about your child's school	0300 300 8105	
Concessionary Bus Passes	0300 300 8041	0300 300 8641
Conservation	0300 300 8692	
Consumer Advice	08454 040506	
ContactPoint	0300 300 8118	
Contaminated Land	0300 300 8642	0300 300 8643
Coroner's Office	0300 300 8143	

Service	Mid Beds	South Beds
Council Housing	0300 300 8007	
Council Housing Repairs	0800 0740263	
Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery, Housing Benefit Overpayment	0300 300 8011	0300 300 8611
Council Tax Direct Debit Hotline	0300 300 8012	
Country Parks, Country Walks and Countryside Sites	0300 300 8085	
D		
Dangerous Structures / Buildings	0300 300 8690	
Deaf and Hearing Impairment	0300 300 8115	
Dog Warden Service	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Domestic Violence	0300 300 8103	
E		
Economic Growth / Development	0300 300 8644	
Elections and Electoral Registration	0300 300 8008	
Emergency Out of Hours Service (eg Repairs, Homelessness, Noise Nuisance)	0300 300 8098	
Environmental Health - general enquiries	0300 300 8642	0300 300 8643
F		
Family History and Genealogy	01234 228833	
Family Youth and Information Service (FYIS)	0300 300 8119	
Flytipping	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Food Safety Advice and Enforcement	0300 300 8642	0300 300 8643
Footpaths and Bridleways	0300 300 8085	
Free School Meals	01234 228948	
G		
Garages - Council owned	0300 300 8686	
General Enquiries	0300 300 8000	
Grass Cutting	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
H		
High Hedges	0300 300 8692	
Highways	0300 300 8049	
Home Care Service	0300 300 8087	
Homelessness	0300 300 8650	
L		
Land Charges	0300 300 8052	
Learning Disability	0300 300 8100	
Leisure Centres		
• Dunstable Leisure Centre	01582 608107	
• Flitwick Leisure Centre	0300 300 8045	

Central Bedfordshire Council has Customer Service Centres in the following locations:

Amphill: Woburn Street
Biggleswade: Saffron Road
Dunstable: High Street North

Houghton Regis: Bedford Square
Leighton Buzzard: West Street
Shefford: Priory House, Chicksands

Service	Mid Beds	South Beds
• Houghton Regis Leisure Centre	01582 866141	
• Sandy Sports & Community Centre	0300 300 8075	
• Saxon Pool & Leisure Centre (Biggleswade)	0300 300 8076	
• Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre	01525 375765	
Libraries and Library Services		
• Amphill Library	0300 300 8053	
• Barton Library	0300 300 8054	
• Biggleswade Library	0300 300 8055	
• Library Dunstable	0300 300 8056	
• Flitwick Library	0300 300 8057	
• General enquiries	0300 300 8060	
• Houghton Regis	0300 300 8058	
• Leighton Buzzard	0300 300 8059	
• Library Link Service	0300 300 8061	
• Mobile Library	0300 300 8062	
• Potton Library	0300 300 8063	
• Renewals	0300 300 8064	
• Sandy Library	0300 300 8065	
• Schools service	0300 300 8066	
• Shefford Library	0300 300 8067	
• Stotfold Library	0300 300 8068	
• Toddington Library	0300 300 8069	
Licensing (taxi/private hire)	0300 300 8647	
Listed Buildings	0300 300 8692	0300 300 8670
Local Development Framework (LDF)	0300 300 8000	0300 300 8071
M		
Minerals and Waste Applications and Policy	0300 300 8693	
N		
Nationality Checking	0300 300 8144	
Noise Nuisance	0300 300 8642	0300 300 8643
Nurseries, Playgroups	0300 300 8119	
O		
Occupational Therapy	0300 300 8050	
Older Peoples Team	0300 300 8033	
Older Persons Housing and Careline Services	0300 300 8146	
P		
Parent Partnership	0300 300 8088	
Parking	0300 300 8005	
Pavements	0300 300 8049	
Physical Disability	0300 300 8124	
Planning	0300 300 8692	0300 300 8670
Planning Enforcement	0300 300 8121	
Play Ranger	0300 300 8072	

Service	Mid Beds	South Beds
Pollution (air quality, water quality, land contamination)	0300 300 8642	0300 300 8643
Potholes	0300 300 8049	
Private Sector Housing Standards, Grants and Advice	0300 300 8700	
Public Rights of Way	0300 300 8085	
Recreational Open Space and Natural Play	0300 300 8671	
R		
Recruitment Applications	0300 300 8073	
Recycling	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Revenues and Benefits Customer Accounts	0300 300 8010	0300 300 8610
Road Safety	0300 300 8074	
Road Salting	0300 300 8049	
S		
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults	0300 300 8122	
School Transport	0300 300 8133	
Schools Admissions	01234 718120	
Social Services Emergency Duty Team	0300 300 8123	
Special Educational Needs	0300 300 8128	
Street Cleaning	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Street Naming and Numbering	0300 300 8678	
Student Awards	01234 718400	
T		
Tastes of Bedfordshire	0300 300 8079	
Theatres		
• Dunstable Grove Theatre	01582 602080	
• Leighton Buzzard Theatre Box Office	0300 300 8125	
• Leighton Buzzard theatre Administration Office	0300 300 8130	
Tourist Information Centres		
• Dunstable	01582 890270	
• Luton	01582 401579	
• Sandy	01767 682728	
• Woburn	01525 290631	
Trees and Landscapes	0300 300 8692	
W		
Waste Collection	0300 300 8631	0300 300 8632
Waste Permits	0300 300 8080	
Welfare Rights	0300 300 8112	
Whistleblower Fraud Hotline	0800 587 8277	
Y		
Youth Offending Service	01234 276400	
Youth Participation	0300 300 8681	
Youth Support Service	0300 300 8082	



Central Bedfordshire in contact



on the telephone...

0300 300 8000



by email...

customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



on the web...

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Alternatively, you can write to:

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

Serving our communities

Find out more...

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

More information

Për Informacion

للمعلومات

ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ

برای اطلاع

Per Informazione

معلومات کے لئی

Informacja

Za Informacije

তথ্যের জন্য

Don't forget!

This magazine is
100% recyclable

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

**Central
Bedfordshire**