

News Central

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

**Are you
prepared
for the
winter
months?**

Issue 15 - November/December 2010

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**Central
Bedfordshire**



Welcome

Few people can have failed to notice that almost all public services face serious budget cuts. Our council is no exception and we have set a plan that will significantly change the nature of our organisation and our services.

We're used to managing change and saving money at Central Bedfordshire Council.

In our first year of operation we took £10m out of our annual budget and this year we're on course to save a further £12m. This has helped to prepare us for the challenges of the national spending review announcements, which will require all councils to cut budgets by 28% over the next four years.

Delivering these savings won't be

easy but we're determined to be rigorous in our approach, driving out every penny of unnecessary spend that we can. We also need to be realistic about what we can and can't afford and responsible, ensuring that the truly vulnerable members of our society are protected. These principles will drive us as we balance the books and protect council tax payers from further pressures.

You can find out more on pages 8 and 9, including contact details of how you can give us your feedback and questions.

Value for money is important to us, but it's not everything. We will continue to invest in the services that you value, such as those relating to community safety, which

consistently ranks as a top priority in your feedback.

In this edition we are featuring updates on these important services, provided in partnership with the police.

The clocks are now back to Greenwich Mean Time, and Page 3 offers sound advice when planning for harsh winter conditions. But whilst hoping for a milder season I would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas.

Cllr Tricia Turner MBE
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council



sNOw problem this winter...

Following last winter's horrendous weather conditions the Department for Transport has published a 'Snow Code' to guide residents and businesses on issues about clearing footpaths so that they are guarded against negligence claims.

The council has also been busily preparing for the months ahead and placed an order to completely refill our salt storage in the summer. Delivery was taken in October and our two depots are full.

As an extra precaution more salt is on order and this is scheduled to be delivered during the season when we estimate stocks will reduce. The majority of salt bins in Central Bedfordshire have been filled and those that haven't will be

replenished soon.

Last winter's salt shortages were a national issue and if there should happen to be another bad winter and salt supplies begin to run short nationally, then there is a possibility that deliveries could once again be managed by central government.

No one likes to think about emergency situations, but being adequately prepared is something for which we all need to take responsibility. Support systems are in place across Bedfordshire and Luton to assist in times of crisis - but if an emergency arose, would you know what to do and where to go for help?

Everyone can be ready for the unexpected by putting together an emergency supply kit to keep at home and in the car.

Let's talk central

Keep up to date with what Central Bedfordshire Council is doing and discuss local issues with the council and other residents through our interactive website www.letstalkcentral.com and other social media.



www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral
www.twitter.com/letstalkcentral
centralbedfordshire

Here are some recent comments from followers:

"I hope the council will continue to develop Central Bedfordshire as an area of interest for people to visit. There is so much to see and do."

There are lots of ways that Central Bedfordshire Council is developing tourism in the area. We promote Bedfordshire as a great place to visit through the website www.experiencebedfordshire.co.uk. We have also just reprinted the Experience Bedfordshire booklet which lists all the great tourist attractions in the area.

Have you had your cuts from central government yet and will the schools be part of these cuts?

Schools across Central Bedfordshire manage their budgets locally and many may hold discussions about how central government's Spending Review announcement will affect them. If you are concerned about what may be happening at your local school then you can contact them directly.



Baby Brasseries club launched

Central Bedfordshire Council has joined forces with the NHS and Bedford Borough Council to provide support to breastfeeding mothers across the county.

Baby Brasseries will be opening across Bedfordshire in a variety of easily accessible locations. These café style drop in groups aim to provide a relaxed, informal and social environment for mums to get to know other mums and also meet with qualified breastfeeding supporters.

Cllr Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, at Central Bedfordshire Council said:

"Having support as a new mother from both professional and other new parents is vitally important. Central Bedfordshire Council is proud to host these events at our Children's Centres."

Further information on breastfeeding can be found at: <http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk>

Your magazine

News Central is produced by the communications team at 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.

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

A Personal Invitation to Business Owners from Chief Executive Richard Carr

Central Bedfordshire Council's Chief Executive, Richard Carr would like to extend a personal invitation to business owners and managers in Central Bedfordshire to join him for a breakfast meeting on the 6th December at the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands at 7.30am. Discussion topics will include the direction of the council following the Government's recently announced spending review.

Also, during the morning...

Business Breakfast & How to Win New Business from the Public Sector

Have you ever thought about bidding for public sector contracts, but thought it would be too difficult or time-consuming for your business? Then join us for breakfast and take part in a very practical presentation, that will provide you with realistic solutions to consider when tendering for public sector work.

To book your place at this event, please call: 0300 300 5525

London 2012

Delivering the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games requires the procurement of goods, works and services from an enormous range of businesses. There will be hundreds of contracts resulting in supply chains that will consist of thousands of opportunities - from construction, engineering and manufacturing to creative, merchandising and retail.

Contract opportunities throughout the London 2012 supply chain are listed on CompeteFor - London 2012's chosen website for publishing Games-related contracts.

Businesses of any size can register as a buyer or supplier of Games-related goods and services.

Once registered with CompeteFor, businesses will automatically receive news of future tender opportunities and gain access to Games-related business news and events.

For more information visit www.competefor.com or call 0845 2177804

Innovation Vouchers to Help your Business

Innovation Vouchers are designed to assist businesses in the East of England purchase academic expertise from the region's universities and research institutes, to support innovation, collaboration and business improvement. They provide SMEs, social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations in the East of England with £3,000 worth of one-to-one collaboration with one of the region's universities or research institutes.

Successful businesses will benefit from a wealth of support to resolve business issues quickly and efficiently. Projects will be considered on a first come first served basis. The closing date is **30 November 2010**, and all work must be completed by **28 February 2011**. To find out more go to: www.bizmapeast.co.uk or call the East of England Development Agency on 01223 713900.

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

The Business Growth and Development Programme from Cranfield University

is the UK's longest running and most successful programme for the development of owner managers. The programme helps you create the future you want for your business, providing a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive and robust strategy for the future.

Scholarships worth up to half the programme fees are available through sponsorship from Central Bedfordshire Council throughout January 2011. If you are an established owner-managed business based in Central Bedfordshire with ambitions to grow, why not register to attend a BGP breakfast event at Cranfield?

Contact BGP Programme Director David Molian at d.molian@cranfield.ac.uk to learn more.

Pathways to Enterprise

If you're wondering what your next employment steps are, then our workshops and one to one sessions are here to help you. Our workshop **Can you give yourself a job?** will help you set up your own business, and our **Removing Barriers** workshop will help you identify your barriers and create an action plan to overcome them. Ongoing one to one support will help you to realise your ambitions.

For more details, contact 0845 60 20 101 or email 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

Looking for the BEaR necessities

Moving closer to a greener waste solution

Seven companies have been selected to progress to the next stage of the council's search for an alternative solution to landfill for the management of waste.

These companies will now present how they would approach the challenge. Different options are available to treat household waste that is not recycled or composted and the purpose of the BEaR (Bedfordshire Energy and Recycling) Project is to award a contract to the company who propose the most cost effective and environmentally friendly solution.

The shortlisted companies are (in alphabetical order):

- AmeyCespa
- Covanta Energy Limited
- Interserve Investments Limited
- New Earth Solutions Group Limited
- Veolia ES Aurora Limited
- Viridor Waste Management Limited
- Waste Recycling Group Limited

Currently, household waste that is not recycled is sent to landfill, where organic waste releases methane, a greenhouse gas twenty times more potent than carbon dioxide. An alternative disposal method is needed. There are many initiatives across Central Bedfordshire to help residents Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (see pages 13 and 14 for information about recycling); but we still need to find better and greener ways to manage the waste left over.

As well as bidding for the contract



to treat the household waste that is not recycled or composted, shortlisted companies are also required to put forward proposals for the following additional services:

- Re-developing the Household Waste Recycling Centres at Amphill, Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard and re-location of the Dunstable site;
- Providing gritting salt storage barns in strategic locations;
- Providing a Waste Transfer Station so that various types of waste can be bulked up before being sent for treatment;
- Providing a solution to treat organic waste collected from households.

An integrated contract will help to save the council money, as well as offering improved services for residents. For example, the re-development of the recycling

centres will provide convenient drop-off bays, improved recycling performance, easier access and parking and a better customer experience overall. New salt barns will also help the council to deliver gritting services and ensure that the road network runs efficiently during the cold winter months.

Over the next few months all proposals will be assessed, with a further short list of companies to be announced in spring 2011. The number of companies in the competition will reduce through several distinct stages of assessment until a 'Preferred Bidder' has been selected by the spring 2012.

To find out even more you can visit: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/bear

Building safer communities



Left: Offenders cleaning up at Melton Walk in Houghton Regis. Right: The finished article

What Community Payback can do for you

Residents in Central Bedfordshire could be benefitting from a range of services that are being carried out by offenders who have been ordered to complete Community Payback for their crimes.

Community Payback is a tough and rigorous punishment, whereby convicted offenders carry out up to 300 hours of unpaid work supervised by Bedfordshire Probation Trust for the benefit of local communities and forcing offenders to repay the community for the wrong they have done

Following a request by Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Safety Team, offenders were in Melton Walk, Houghton Regis for several weeks, cleaning up the overgrown pathway and cutting back overhanging trees and branches for the local residents.

John O'Connors Landscape Gardeners from Leighton Buzzard have supported this project by

assisting with the removal of shrubbery. Cllr David McVicar, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles at Central Bedfordshire Council said:

“Community Payback is about punishment and rehabilitation for the offenders, but it also has huge benefits for communities as a whole.”

“Things are tough financially and councils up and down the country are looking to make savings which could be achieved through certain cut backs to services. Community Payback is a useful tool which could fill voids left by any cuts, so instead of the council carrying out street clean ups, graffiti removal or grass cutting, we could consider using what is on offer here instead.

“I think that it is fair to say that the results speak for themselves and the offenders who worked in

Melton Walk have certainly made a positive contribution to the local community.”

Alison Harding, the senior manager at Bedfordshire Probation Trust responsible for Community Payback said:

“We're delighted to be working with the council on this and other projects. Community Payback is an excellent way of benefitting local communities and punishing offenders in a constructive way that enables them to regain their self-respect through worthwhile work.”

Local projects looking to benefit from Community Payback could be community based, or charitable organisation.

To nominate a Community Payback project please contact the Bedfordshire Probation Trust on 01582 735153 or visit their website www.bedsprobation.org.uk

Street Watch

Run by the community for the community, the Street Watch Project involves citizens 'walking' their local area, taking responsibility and helping to tackle low level issues that impact most in their communities.

The Watch members walk in pairs wearing high visibility jackets in order to provide reassurance, promote good citizenship and increase feelings of safety. Their positive engagement with all members of the community including those causing nuisance or being involved in anti-social activity is in an attempt to educate, and bring attention to the impact that behaviour has on others.

Street Watch can be considered a natural extension to schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and can work alongside existing Neighbourhood Watch Schemes or can be run independently.

The people involved are regular members of the community with no police powers. If they spot anything suspicious, all they are asked to do is report it to the police. They can also give active support to the community by providing

reassurance and a visible presence to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Early indications from Street Watch in Ampthill has shown a reduction in anti-social behaviour within the community. Watch members (pictured above) have engaged with young people around the area late in the evening, built up a rapport and encouraged a good level of behaviour. In car parks within the area, Watch members have checked motor vehicles for any valuables on display or in car-security devices. This has resulted in members of the public being given crime prevention advice and fewer offences in those areas.

Street Watch members only need to sign up to carry out a minimum of two hours a month, but can be as active as they want to be.

Over the next few months, across Central Bedfordshire it is hoped that there will be 12 schemes running and dog walkers are being encouraged to become Street Watch members. Bedfordshire Police have more information



on their website.

One of the key questions is whether Street Watch is an alternative scheme to local Police Officers? The answer is absolutely not, indeed the very opposite is true. Street Watch enables local Safer Neighbourhood Teams to work closely with communities and residents. When members of the community engage in patrols, it naturally attracts more police into the area. All Street Watch patrol dates can be accessed by local Police officers via the Street Watch website, and quite often officers attend a local area to support the Street Watch Group.

Acting Inspector Lisa Johnson from Bedfordshire Police is leading this initiative, together with John Plummer from Ampthill Community Safety Group.

For more information visit the Street Watch website www.street-watch.org.uk

Making the vulnerable safer with the Bobby Project

Personal safety and the fear of crime are key issues and concerns for vulnerable older people living in our community

In response, Adult Social Care and Community Safety recently completed a very successful pilot project working directly with

Bedfordshire Police and the Beds Police Partnership Trust.

The Bobby Project was aimed at preventing older people from becoming a target for criminals or victims of property crime, whilst physically improving security within their homes.

In phase one, most Bobby

Project support was provided to people who had been a victim of property crime.

Due to the success of the pilot, a second phase is now being launched so that more people can benefit.

For more information please call 0300 300 6647.



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 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. All of the feedback will be collated and presented to the Executive before the final budget is approved in February.



Keep up to date with what the Central Bedfordshire Council is doing and discuss local issues with the Council and other residents through our discussion website www.letstalkcentral.com and other social media.



www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral
www.twitter.com/letstalkcentral
centralbedfordshire

Facing the budget challenge together

In October, the government announced its budget plans for the next four years through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

This was an important announcement for all local authorities as it provided information on the level of funding they can expect for local services.

In Central Bedfordshire, preparations for the CSR announcement have been underway for many months and, based on an assumption that national government funding would be reduced by 25 per cent, the council published its local strategy on 21 October. This strategy includes a range of proposals to cut expenditure through efficiencies and service reductions.

Cllr Tricia Turner, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council said: "We have prepared ourselves to be able to face the budget reductions that were inevitable as the whole of the public sector contributes to the plan to reduce our national deficit."

"The decisions ahead won't be easy, but we have a strong track record in cutting costs."

The council's approach is to focus on efficiency first, driving out every penny of unnecessary spend and reshaping services, many of which could be delivered through collaboration with partners and communities. A range of service reductions is also proposed.

Some of the efficiency savings include:

- Smarter procurement and contract management – in areas such as printing and advertising, Children's Social Care Placements and Home Care.
- A revised approach to customer management – using the web and telephony more efficiently.
- Cutting running costs – on accommodation, IT licenses and other back office services such as payroll.
- Reviewing staff structures, terms and conditions – management reviews are proposed within service areas in all Directorates.

Service reductions are also proposed including:

- Reshaping the youth services with a greater emphasis on volunteering.
- Halting funding to the music service so that schools and parents meet costs.
- Discontinuing mobile library services, whilst retaining the Library Link service for house bound users and those in sheltered accommodation.
- Turning off street lighting between midnight and 6am.
- Closing the LuDun employment workshop.

Cllr Turner added: "We have already conducted early consultation and during the coming months we'll be actively engaging with local people as we shape the proposals into a robust budget. As we face the challenging decisions we are determined to be rigorous in driving out every penny of avoidable costs, responsible in protecting services to the truly vulnerable and realistic about what we can and cannot afford."

Our spending

Central Bedfordshire Council is spending £177 million this year on services across our communities with the following breakdown:

- 29 per cent on Adult Social Care
- 18 per cent on Children's Services
- 10 per cent on refuse collection and recycling
- 7 per cent on Highways
- 36 per cent on all other services, including Libraries, Leisure, Culture and Community Safety.

Where our money comes from

In Central Bedfordshire our services are mostly funded by Council Tax. This is not a matter of local choice, but a necessity because just 29 per cent of our income is from Government grants. This is very low compared to some councils in less affluent areas, such as South Tyneside, who get 78 per cent of their funding from Government, so they rely less on Council Tax.

Value for money

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to providing value for money. Nationally compiled information shows that the council spends on average £1,485.35 per person, which compares well with other local unitary councils (Bedford Borough £1,694.95, Milton Keynes £1797.62 and Luton £1,820.99).

Budget timeline- Key dates

- November - Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the budget strategy agreed by Executive;
- December - Local Government Finance Settlement confirms what grant Central Bedfordshire will receive;
- January - Draft budget presented to Executive and further reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- February - Final budget presented to Executive and Full Council. This will set the Council Tax for 2011/12;
- March - Council tax bills distributed.

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

Central Bedfordshire Family and Youth Information Service

Supporting all children and young people aged from 0 to 19 and their families.

Young People
Parents and Carers
Professionals

New 'one stop shop' for families
Family and Youth Information Service (FYIS) 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 the Family and Youth Information Service
 on the telephone **0300 300 8119**
 by email fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
 on the web www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis
 FYIS can also be found on Twitter and Facebook

Countdown to 2011 Census

Once every ten years, every person living in England is counted. and the next census takes place on 27 March 2011. Population information from the census determines how billions of pounds in government grants are allocated to fund health, police, education, housing, roads and other local services .

To find out more about the census and ask any questions visit a Census event at your local library.

- Flitwick** - Friday 3 December, 9.30am - 12 noon
- Shefford** - Friday 10 December from 10am
- Sandy** - Monday 13 December from 10am
- Houghton Regis** - Wednesday 22 December 9am - 12 noon
- Biggleswade** - Saturday 15 January, 9.30am - 4pm

The census also offers temporary local employment. Many full and part time jobs are available starting from February, going through to November 2011. Visit the Census jobs website at www.censusjobs.co.uk.

For more information about the Census visit www.census.gov.uk

Landlords!

Tenants are waiting for 2, 3 & 4 bed properties across Bedfordshire.

Lenwell are working in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council on the 'Let's Rent' scheme, supplying top quality properties to the council.

Benefits include...

- Competitive market rents.
- Rent arrears protection.
- Malicious damage protection.
- Tenant suitability interviews.
- Housing benefit fast track.
- Tenants allocated within seven working days.

t 01582 543680
e dunstable@lenwell.com
w www.lenwell.com

Lenwell
Property Services



Financial Investigations Unit: Hitting criminals where it hurts

Central Bedfordshire Council is one of only a handful of authorities that employs a specialist Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) to help combat crime in the area.

In late 2007, Bedfordshire Trading Standards Service secured sponsorship from the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) which led to the formation of the Bedfordshire FIU.

The remit of the unit is simple: to conduct criminal confiscation, money laundering investigations and cash seizures on behalf of local authorities and indeed any other public body.

The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 by local authorities to confiscate the proceeds of crime is one important weapon in the fight against organised crime, and individuals who use crime to support their lifestyles.

But the FIU haven't just been used in Bedfordshire, their work takes them all around the country on a number of cases that required

their expertise. These cases may have started simple, but many (including operations in Hull, Luton, Essex and Milton Keynes) went on to include drug seizures, the printing of counterfeit money, money laundering and in one case, the discovery of indecent photographs of children.

In September a benefit cheat in Luton was ordered to repay £55,274.84 or face a further 18 months in prison following a successful prosecution that involved the FIU. The man earned over £300,000 from a life of crime, but a thorough investigation by the FIU revealed that he still had considerable assets and he now has that debt for life.

There is also an Incentivisation Scheme that currently operates meaning that local authorities which are successful in confiscation proceedings can retain a proportion of any monies recovered in those proceedings. It is therefore very important that those proceedings are

Items and equipment seized during raids as part of Operation Troy

conducted carefully and thoroughly.

Tim Root, from the FIU said:

“The Proceeds of Crime Act is a powerful weapon which we will use in appropriate cases to recover from offenders, the profits derived from their criminal lifestyle. No longer will they be able to look forward to enjoying their ill gotten gains but instead could face losing everything they have. This can include their home”

Starting school? Now's the time to apply

Central Bedfordshire Council is now accepting applications from parents/carers with children born between 01/09/06 and 31/08/07 who will be able to start school from September 2011.

If you are a resident of Central Bedfordshire applying online is quick and easy: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/onlineadmissions

Alternatively you can get an application form from your local school or can contact the School Admissions Service General



Enquiries line on 01234 718120.

The deadline for applications is 15 January 2011.

Cllr David McVicar, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles at Central Bedfordshire Council added:

“By working together, Bedfordshire's councils and other authorities around the country can ensure that people who commit these types of crime will not get away with the profits of their offending. Instead they will be pursued and will be made to pay back their ill-gotten gains.

“I hope this sends out a clear message that our investigators will always use every legal source available to them to secure a confiscation order.”



what's on...

This Winter

For a more comprehensive listing – just click on 'What's On' at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

December

Clophill and District Flower Club

Thursday 2, 7.30pm

The Village Hall, Kiln Lane, Clophill Open Evening. Favourites Kate Russell and Patti Dawson return to demonstrate 'Christmas is coming - here we go again'.

Tickets are £4 including tea and biscuits – to book please call 01525 860604.

Christmas Quiz

Friday 3, 7.30pm

Tempsford Village Hall, Church St, Tempsford Bedford Rotaract are hosting the quiz on behalf of the Road Victims Trust. Entry is £10 each, includes a fish and chip supper. Please contact Louise Stafford at lous@rvtrust.co.uk to enter a team.

Aladdin

Friday 3, 7.30pm

Saturday 4, 10am, 2pm, 7.30pm Harlington Village Hall, Sundon Road, Harlington Harlington Performs celebrates its 25th year of bringing theatrical entertainment to the area by presenting the pantomime Aladdin. Tickets: £7.50 adults, £6 children and senior citizens, contact the box office on 01525 758874.

Christmas Fayre

Saturday 4, 12pm - 4pm

Gothic Mede Lower School, High Street, Arlesey Gift stalls, fun and games for the kids, Santa's grotto, refreshments and much more. Entry for adults is 50p and kids go free.

Birds on Fire

Saturday 4, 7.30pm

The Grove Theatre, Court Dr., Dunstable Join the award winning Phoenix Chorus for a fabulous evening of top level A Cappella harmony, exciting dance and surprises. Tickets £8/£10 from box office. Call 01582 602080 or visit www.grovetheatre.co.uk.

The Pirate Princess

Friday 10, Saturday 11, Sunday 12, Friday 17, Saturday 18

TADS Theatre Group present a new pantomime by Lea Pryer. Tickets are £8 for adults and £6 for concessions - book now to avoid disappointment.

HULA's Christmas Get-together

Sunday 12, 1pm-3pm,

Christmas raffle draw 3.15pm South Midlands Animal Sanctuary, Glebe Farm, Salford Road, Aspley Guise All proceeds from this event goes to the care and welfare of HULA's rescued animals. For more enquiries telephone 01908 584000 or email hularescue@tiscali.co.uk.

Christmas Robins at the Forest Centre

Monday 20, 10am, 11am and noon (3 sessions)

The Forest Centre, Marston Vale Millennium Country Park, Station Road, Marston Moretaine. Fun, facts and craft. Event aimed at 4-10 year olds but materials provided for younger kids to draw. Cost: £2 per child. Ring 01234 767037, or email info@marstonvale.org for more details or to book your place.

Bank Holiday Bird Walk

Tuesday 28 The Forest Centre, Marston Vale Millennium Country Park, Station Road, Marston Moretaine. Join expert, friendly Forest Volunteers to discover the birds and other wildlife in the country park.

Price: £3 adult, £2 child, £1 reduction for Forest Volunteers and Friends. Book in advance but pay leader on day. For further info and booking ring 01234 767037.

New Years Eve Disco

Weatherly Centre, Biggleswade, 31 December, 8pm-1am

Tickets are £15 including buffet. Proceeds go to Sue Ryder Care St John's Hospice and Keech Cottage Children's Hospice. For tickets call Gina on 01767 220718 or Bev on 01767 311454

January 2011

Woburn Area and Decorative Fine Arts Society

Thursday 27, 8pm

Village Hall, Woburn Lane, Aspley Guise Lecture: 'Libya Emerging from The Sand: The Cities of Cyrene, Leptis Magna and Sabratha'. A talk illustrated with photographs taken on a recent visit to this fascinating country. For details of attending or membership the contact is Peter Lomax, e-mail address: peter@lomaxnet.com.

REUSE NOW!

PLAY YOUR PART!

JOIN US AT OUR SWAP SHOP EVENTS!

Eco friendly fashion followers are promoting swap shop events as an easy and fun way to look good without giving into waste. In the UK, around **TWO MILLION TONNES** of shoes and clothes are thrown away annually and **75%** of that ends up in landfill.

To mark European week for waste reduction why not join us at one of our EVENING SWAP SHOP events for adults.

- Thur 18 November, 6.30pm** Dunstable Council Office, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1TF
- Mon 22 November, 7.00pm** Priory House Council Office, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

Is your home packed with baby clothes you have no need for? Do you wish you could swap them for something you do need, like the next size up in baby clothes, washable nappies or maternity clothes? Rather than binning your old unused items, why not join other mums in your area in finding a fun way to dress yourself and your baby without giving into waste.



Why not join us at one of our MUMS AND BABIES SWAP SHOP events

- Mon 15 November, 10-12noon** Downside Children's Centre, The Annexe, Downside Lower School, Oakwood Avenue, Dunstable, LU5 4AS
- Tues 16 November, 10-11.30am** Come and Play Group. Run by Flitwick Children's Centre, Methodist Church, Chapel Road, Flitwick
- Fri 19 November, 1-3pm** Tithe Farm Children's Centre, next to Tithe Farm Lower School, Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5JB
- Wed 24 November, 9.45-11.15am** TinyTots, Marston Village Hall, Bedford Rd, Marston Moretaine, MK43 0LD
- Thu 25 November, 10-12 noon** Parkside Children's Centre, next to Hawthorn Park Lower School, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5QN
- Thu 25 November, 9.15-11.15am** Flying Start Children's Centre at Stondon Lower School, Hillside Road, Lower Stondon, SG16 6LQ

THE RULES ARE SIMPLE

- 1) Everybody must bring at least two items of clothing, shoes, accessories or bags (for mums and babies' events items they can bring are baby and children's clothes, washable nappies or maternity clothes) that you are prepared to swap.
- 2) No-one can start to claim items until the swapping is announced as 'open'.
- 3) There is no entry fee but there will be a donation pot available at the event which will be donated to charity along with any clothes not claimed.
- 4) Name tags will be used to indicate items you would like, where there are multiple names, we will draw a name.
- 5) Please bring coat hangers for your items.



For more information on reuse and recycling please contact **Central Bedfordshire Council** on **0300 300 8631 (North)/8632 (South)** or visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/recycling



RECYCLE NOW!**PLAY YOUR PART!****CHRISTMAS RECYCLING****GUIDE****DON'T FORGET**

You can put all your paper, cardboard, cartons, all plastic food packaging including plastic bottles, tins, cans, aluminium foil and worn out textiles in your recycling container. You can also include Christmas cards and wrapping paper (no foil, tape or bows please). Please put your recycling in loose and do not put any other materials in.

You can also take recyclable material and household waste to your nearest

HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

They are open every day from 9.00am until 5.00pm. Sites will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day and will close early at 1.00pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Here's where they are:

AMPTHILL, Abbey Lane (01525) 403611
BIGGLESWADE, Bells Brook (01767) 313684
DUNSTABLE, Frenchs Avenue (01582) 609212
LEIGHTON BUZZARD, Shenley Hill Rd (01525) 371619

Remember you can take glass bottles and jars to your nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre or Local Recycling Site. For your nearest Local Recycling Site please call

0300 300 8000**WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

For more information on your waste and recycling collections over Christmas, please refer to your Christmas bin tag which will be attached to your wheeled bin at the start of December. If you don't receive yours, please call us on the number below.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Charity Christmas card recycling containers for the Woodland Trust are located in WH Smith, TK Maxx and M&S stores from Monday 3 through to Monday 31 January 2011.

**CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING**

Real Christmas trees can be recycled at your local Household Waste Recycling Centres. You can also put your real Christmas tree out for collection from 10 January 2011. Please place by your garden waste container on the day of your garden waste collection. Tree trunk to be no bigger than 3 inches in diameter. If height is over 6ft please cut in half.



For more information on Christmas Recycling call Central Bedfordshire Council on **0300 300 8631 (North)/8632 (South)** or visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/recycling

Central Bedfordshire

The Borrowers and their Leighton Buzzard origins

As we travel around, we may not give a thought to the buildings and areas that we pass, but there are some places in Central Bedfordshire that have a much more interesting history than you might at first think.

One of these is Leighton Middle School in Leighton Buzzard. While the buildings that make up the school, date back to 1086, settlers have been in the area since Saxon times, around AD 571.

But it is the building that is visible to everyone passing the school that holds the most interest for some. The main entrance to the school is a former house, The Cedars. This building dates back to 1855 and it's a former resident of this house that makes it so special.

Mary Norton lived in the house between 1918 and 1920 and is the author of one of the most celebrated children's books of all time, The Borrowers. As a small

child, Mary used to imagine 'little people' living under the floorboards of her home. The book focuses on one character in particular, Arrietty. She is a young teenage Borrower and it is her desire to develop friendship with the humans of the house that is the cause of chaos for her family.

Many of the rooms featured in the books are now classrooms or staff offices but many of them still hold original details that are featured in the book so you really can see where the tiny 'Clock family' used to hide from the 'Big People' they share their home with.

Despite being written so long ago, The Borrowers has been enjoyed the world over and has also been named as one of the most important children's books of the past 70 years.

It is still being made into TV and film adaptations and this year Japanese journalists visited the school, after it was announced that a new animated version of the film was being made. This new film, The Borrower Arrietty, is due for release in Europe early next year and is sure to create a whole new generation of Borrowers fans.



The school recently had coverage in Japanese magazine 'Moe'

Bus is something to RAVE about

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity has been working with Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils to provide a mobile venue which can be used for a wide range of activities and events.

The RAVE (Rural Area Vehicle for Education) bus has been out and about in the past months and has proved very popular. During that time, it has been hired by local councils, housing associations, youth clubs and voluntary organisations.

The bus holds up to 15 people, has a comfy seating area, small kitchen and is equipped with an access ramp and TV with DVD, CD and radio facilities. It is ideal for holding discussions and small group activities such as quizzes.

It has also been used by Parish Councils for carrying out youth consultation on their Parish Plan

and by Housing Associations who use it as a focal point in social housing areas to encourage residents to discuss their housing needs or problems in a relaxed setting. It is also regularly used by community safety groups for distributing information at village events and for youth outreach work.

If you would like to know more, please contact Roz for an Information Pack or to discuss your ideas. Email rozc@bedsrcc.org.uk or 01234-832612, or visit the website www.bedsrcc.org.uk/raveBus/ravebus1.html

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

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**Central
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