

Alison Foster, Borough Councillor

Update for Harrold Ward – March 2013

Podington, Hinwick, Fardish, Wymington and Little Wymington, Harrold, Odell, Carlton

Flooding

Further to my last report the Borough's Highways team has now completed its investigations into the pipework outside the Country Park and at the junction of the Odell Road and High Street (Odell). The CCTV survey found the pipework to be damaged at both locations. I have been informed that the repairs will be starting within the next couple of weeks, as soon as the team has finished its work on replacing the drainage system at the Wymington railway bridge on the Podington Road which has also flooded very badly and frequently this winter.

I hope this work will resolve the problem.

Wind Farms

Nun Wood

As mentioned in my last report the Public Inquiry is to be held in the Council Chamber, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Caudwell Street, Bedford commencing at 10.00 on 11th June 2013 and is estimated to sit for eight days.

Podington

The High Court has now set a date of 9th July 2013 for the Borough's challenge to this development to be heard. This will be at the High Court in London.

Council Tax 2013/14

At its meeting on the 27th February the Council approved its Council Tax Resolution for 2013/14. The Council has accepted a freeze grant from the Government which means that the Borough Council's precept will remain the same as last year. The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Bedfordshire Police have decided to increase their precepts by 1.998% and 2% respectively.

The overall average Council Tax for Band D properties for 2013/14 will be £1,570.47. This is an increase of 0.44% or £6.88 from 2012/13. The payments due for each property band in all areas of the Borough can be seen at the following link to the 27th February report to Full Council at Appendix A;

<http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s21453/Item%2014%20-%20Council%20Tax%20Resolution.pdf>

Riverside North

The consultation for the proposed Riverside North scheme for a new cinema, hotel, restaurants, and retail and residential property on the site of the Town Hall has been extended to the 13th March. The planning application is scheduled to be heard at the 25th March Planning Committee meeting. The consultation can be accessed online at the Council's home page (www.bedford.gov.uk), or at the Customer Services Centre on Horne Lane and Bedford Central Library. There is a campaign against this development and the website address for this is www.TowardsABetterBedford.org.uk

Local Hospital Review

Healthier Together, a review of services at five hospitals in the South East Midlands area is to be scaled down into a more localised assessment of services. This means that the review will now explore the possibility of shared services between Bedford Hospital and Milton Keynes Hospital. The central aims of the review are to concentrate specific services on one site with a view to reducing costs and improving the quality of care.

More information can be found at <http://www.healthiertogethersoutheastmidlands.nhs.uk/>

Education Consultation

The Council is currently consulting on a new education strategy entitled, 'Strengthening Partnerships with Schools' until the 28th March. The document sets the aim of improving attainment and the standards of schools in the Borough. The consultation can be accessed at the following link;

<http://apps.bedfordshire.gov.uk/comweb/>

Cafe and Museum Opening Dates

Two new Council owned leisure sites are to open in the spring. 'Number 13' is a new café at the site of the former Saracens Head pub which will act as a front of house refreshment area for the Corn Exchange. It is set to open in March.

The £5.8m refurbishment of The Higgins (formally the Cecil Higgins museum) is nearly complete and the site will open in May. It will have a range of new displays and exhibitions as well as a new shop and café.

Contact Alison

If you have any issues or concerns you would like to raise with me directly I can be contacted on my mobile 07773371190 or by email on afield_foster@btinternet.com