

13th July 2020

To: Town Mayor and all Members of the Partnership Committee

Town Councillors: **D Abbott, D Jones, K Wattingham, Vacancy**
CBC Councillors **Y Farrell, S Goodchild, P Hamill, A Ryan (Chair)**
CBC Officers **Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager**

(Copies to all Houghton Regis Town Councillors for information.)

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a virtual meeting of the **Partnership Committee** to be held on **21st July 2020** commencing at **7.00pm hours**.

This meeting is being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. If members of the public would like to attend, please pre-advise the Head of Democratic Services (louise.senior@houghtonregis.org.uk) by 3pm on the day of the meeting in order for appropriate access to be arranged.



Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED ¹**

AGENDA

This meeting is being held virtually due to Covid-19. To assist in the smooth running of the meeting please refer and adhere to the Council's Virtual Meeting Guidance. Virtual Meeting Guidance can be found on the Houghton Regis Town Council website.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR²

¹ Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.

The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

² The Joint Committees terms of reference provide that:
The appointed Chair and Vice-Chair will hold their post for a period of one year, after which they may stand for re-election.

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a vice chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

3. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)

To receive questions and statements from members of the public in respect of any item of business included in the agenda, as provided for in Standing Order No.s 1(f) and 1(h).

5. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

6. MINUTES

Pages 5 - 8

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020.

Members are requested to note that due to the re-focussing of work due to Covid-19 the task and finish group set up to consider the Town Centre Benchmarking report had not had the opportunity to begin work.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020.

7. HOUGHTON CHALK PIT

Natalie Hills, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council will be attending the meeting to update members on issues relating to Houghton Regis Chalk Pit.

8. HRN2 COMMUNITY BUILDING

A verbal update will be provided by Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Rev Skinner will be attending the meeting to respond to any queries in relation the Expression of Interest as submitted to CBC.

9. IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Pages 9 - 12

In October 2019 the Committee received a report from CBC on a new approach by CBC to improve health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis.

Since then Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health has commissioned Community Action Bedfordshire to deliver a community development project, called Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis. The project will use community mobilisation and asset-based approaches to engage and work with existing and new residents, communities and other stakeholders, in the growing town of Houghton Regis. The project commenced in May 2020 and will be delivered over the next three to five years. Members will find attached a Stakeholder Briefing note which outlines the project.

John Gelder, Director, Community Action Bedfordshire will attend the meeting to outline the project to members and respond to any queries or comments.

10. PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION³

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to determine which council will provide the administration for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

11. PARTNESHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

Members are invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee. In this regard the Terms of Reference for the Committee state:

Co-option

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals can either be taken by the whole Town Joint committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.
2. The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee

Members are invited to consider.

12. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Page 13

³ Either Council can administer the Town Joint Committee, according to their own Standing Orders. The Committee will decide annually which Council is to administer the Committee.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 28th JANUARY 2020**

Present: Town Cllrs: J Carroll (Substitution), D Jones, K Wattingham and
Vacancy
CBC Cllrs: A Ryan (Chair), Y Farrell, S Goodchild
CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

In Attendance: Mr S Caldbeck, Place Programme Manager

Apologies: Cllr Abbott, HRTC Councillor
Cllr Hamill, CBC Councillor

Members of the public: 2

840 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr P Hamill and Cllr Abbott (Cllr Carroll substituted)

841 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Information was requested on the Woodside Link footpaths, and whether they would undergo improvements now ownership had been returned to Central Bedfordshire Council.

842 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8, CBC Community Assets Grants Scheme, as she is a ward representative where the pavilion is located. She would declare this interest at any discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council at the time.

Cllr Farrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8, CBC Community Assets Grants Scheme, as she is a ward representative where the pavilion is located. She would declare this interest at any discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council at the time.

843 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2019.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

844 TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING REPORT

Members received the Houghton Regis Town Centre Benchmarking report.

Mr S Caldbeck, Place Programme Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council was in attendance to facilitate a discussion on how to take the report forward. As part of this discussion members considered establishing a task and finish group to consider the scope of findings and to develop a prioritised action plan to address identified issues or opportunities. Members were advised that it was intended that should a task and finish group be established that meetings would be held during normal working hours.

Members were advised that the report would be available to view on the Central Bedfordshire Council website in two to three weeks from the date of this meeting.

Members were advised, in order to determine areas of priority, that the production of an action plan was needed by the end of the calendar year, which would be reported back to the Town Partnership Committee.

Members raised concerns regarding the accuracy of data within the report. Members were advised to highlight errors to the Town Clerk who would feed the information back.

A member of the public requested permission to use the Benchmarking report by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It was advised that the report could be used.

Members were invited to put their name forward for the opportunity to become a member of a task and finish group.

Councillor Jones, Councillor Farrell and Councillor Wattingham volunteered to join the task and finish group.

In their absence, it was requested that Councillor Hamill and Councillor Abbott be contacted to ask if they wished to become members of the group. If neither Councillor accepted, Councillor Goodchild would attend.

Resolved: To establish a task and finish group with the following Committee Functions and Terms of Reference:

1. To consider the scope of findings of the Houghton Regis Benchmarking Report
2. To develop a prioritised action plan to address identified issues
 - To report back to the Partnership Committee
 - To comprise 4 members

845 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

Members were also requested to consider the workplan for 2020/21. A suggested Draft Workplan was attached.

This was an important forward planning document. Items for consideration should be those of significant importance to the town. There was some scope for flexibility so that items could be scheduled earlier or later.

It was queried that some items on the workplan for the current year had not been included on the agenda. Members were advised that some items had rolled forward from previous meetings as more details were needed.

Members confirmed that the specific requirements of the committee regarding the Chalk Pit was of its future management and maintenance. In relation to Tithe Farm car park, was over its ownership and management. It was agreed that this information would be CBC shared by e-mail.

Members raised concerns regarding the parking strategy. Members were advised that there had been a delay in the publication of the report, the report would be fed back to the committee when available.

Regular updates were requested on:

- The feasibility study for the Kingsland site.
- The health hub.
- Addressing health and wellbeing inequalities
- School places, as consideration may need to be given to bringing forward the building of an additional primary school.

846 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report.

Members raised concerns over illegally parked cars in Houghton Regis. It was queried whether Parking Attendants visited the town to enforce parking restrictions.

Members were advised of the removal request of payphones following Ofcom guidance. Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council would be objecting to their removal.

Members were advised that nominations for the 6th Cheering for Volunteering awards were open; the closing date was April 2020. It was requested that Houghton Regis Town Council promote the event on their website and on social media.

Resolved: To note the report.

847 CBC COMMUNITY ASSETS GRANTS SCHEME

Members were advised of the format of this grants scheme by Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, CBC.

Members were updated on the HRTC consideration of potential grants under this scheme by Ms Evans, Town Clerk, HRTC. Members received the report to Town Council which detailed options and made the following recommendation:

To support a grant application being made to the CBC Community Grants Scheme for the refurbishment of Orchard Close pavilion subject to CBC ward councillor endorsement.

As the Town Council had supported the officer recommendation, the Partnership Committee was asked to consider and endorse the HRTC grant application.

Resolved: To endorse the Town Council application for funding for the refurbishment of Orchard Close pavilion.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.11pm.

Dated this day of 2020

Chairman

TIME 2 CONNECT HOUGHTON REGIS – STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health has commissioned Community Action Bedfordshire to deliver an exciting community development project, called *Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis*. The project will use community mobilisation and asset-based approaches to engage and work with existing and new residents, communities and other stakeholders, in the growing town of Houghton Regis. The project commenced in May 2020 and will be delivered over the next three to five years.

Strategic Aim

Using community mobilisation and asset-based approaches, the project will reduce health inequalities among the population of Houghton Regis by:

- driving change to improve mental health and wellbeing for people of all ages;
- enabling people to optimise their own and their family's health and wellbeing;
- ensuring that growth delivers improvements in health and wellbeing for current and future residents.

Purpose

To develop the social infrastructure needed for healthy, well-connected and vibrant communities so as to reduce social isolation; improve residents' well-being and mental health; increase community connections among residents and enable them to become actively involved in their community.

Objectives

1. To work with residents, community groups and service providers to facilitate, identify and map community-assets in Houghton Regis and residents' priorities, issues and aspirations.
2. To enable (new and existing) residents to increase access to local services and community-assets; and their participation in social networks, cultural activities, community groups and opportunities for social and community action.
3. To empower (new and existing) residents to build connections with others and opportunities for social interaction between people, neighbours and communities; and improve their well-being.
4. To empower residents to share their skills, knowledge, time and increase community-assets through access to local volunteering opportunities and timebanks, and facilitate a pool of volunteers, from within the community, prepared organise social networks, cultural activities, community groups and opportunities for social and community action.
5. To empower residents to take an interest in, and engage with, local issues affecting them or their community through local forums, consultations and other media.
6. To manage the development of new social infrastructure in a way that makes best use of the resources available and identifies the lessons learned from evidence-based practice and outcomes.

Core Values

The project is underpinned by the following core values:

Asset-based approach – everyone has something to contribute, with each person having knowledge, skills, experience and strengths and communities having a wide range of assets. It focuses on what's already strong in the community, rather than on the deficits, by building on people's strengths, motivations and passions.

Social inclusion – a sense of belonging where people from different backgrounds feel valued for the part they play in making their community a better place to live, as well as having the ability to network beyond their own neighbourhood.

Participatory governance – empowering citizens, individually and collectively, to identify their own potential; to have a greater say in decisions that affect their community and to be involved in a forum or network that is inclusive, open and participatory, which is owned by and accountable to the community.

Empowerment – individuals, groups and communities are empowered to take control of their future by organising themselves, becoming active agents in their own development and able to act with reducing levels of external support.

Community self-help and support – building confidence and the capacity of individuals and groups to plan and deliver community-led activities and programmes to meet local aspirations through structures that are supported and maintained from within the community.

Partnership working – public, private, voluntary and community service providers are coordinated and there is a commitment to open, honest and effective communications between service providers and the community to build trust and effective relationships.

Our Approach

Our asset-based approach focuses on what's already strong in the community, rather than on deficits, by building on people's strengths, motivations and passions. Everyone has something to contribute. It will take time, be gradual, painstaking and dynamic. Our approach will therefore be gradual, careful and sensitive, and will seek to identify what's important to residents while managing people's expectations about what can and can't be achieved.

Community Engagement and Asset Mapping

Starting with initial conversations, engagement and, as community interest and capacity grows, asset mapping and working with the community to identify aspirations, priorities and outcomes.

Using our existing knowledge of community groups and facilities in Houghton Regis, along with further research, and an active community engagement approach, we will use participatory approaches as best we can (given the current social distancing requirements needed to tackle the Coronavirus pandemic) to build community knowledge. This will include online public events and meetings with community groups, public sector partners and residents to identify local community assets; key local services, including those delivered by VCS organisations and the public sector.

Our participatory approaches and IT platforms will enable residents to self-identify their own skills, knowledge, experience, interests, strengths and passions. Those who want to engage in volunteering will have access to our Volunteer Connect platform, which enables residents to identify/apply for volunteer roles, share information on their skills and/or join our Volunteer Bank. Residents who would like to engage in a more reciprocal approach will be able to join the Chiltern Vale Timebank (covering Houghton Regis and surrounding areas) utilising our *Time Online2* platform, an asset-mapping tool for individuals to identify and exchange time and skills with others.

Building Community Connections

Community Connections Advisers will seek to bring residents together to build effective and trusting relationships with one another, encouraging them to make connections with others in the locality and to identify priorities and outcomes they want to work on.

They will seek to do this by encouraging residents to:

- make connections with others in the locality, especially where there are common interests/concerns, but also with people they may think they have nothing in common with;
- develop their knowledge about, and access, local services;
- develop a greater awareness of their personal relationships and view them as partnerships that invite and inspire all parties to learn and grow together, and challenge each other in trying new things;
- demonstrate an openness and warmth towards others; a curiosity and an interest in their experiences, stories and perspectives;
- make sense of experiences using group activity to create new ways of seeing, thinking and doing; looking beyond individual responsibility for change;
- develop opportunities to reflect on what happened rather than what went wrong;
- increasingly live and move towards more fulfilling lives.

These interactions are the art of conversation and of making, and maintaining, connections with themselves, others in their lives, and others in their locality.

Community Mobilisation

Community mobilisation empowers communities to engage directly with the issues that affect them the most, to organise themselves and become active agents in their own development; instigating, planning, resourcing and providing their own community-based activities and bringing about sustainable change. Community Mobilisers may need to support individuals to:

- identify the outcome they want to achieve
- scope and plan what they want to do
- strengthen existing links and relationships
- mobilise and involve others, including enabling communities to support the inclusion of marginalised, minority and socially isolated groups
- share, acquire and develop the community-assets needed
- plan, publicise and organise the activity
- review and evaluate what they do; celebrating skills, strengths, assets and achievements
- develop and sustain the activity, if appropriate.

Who's Involved

We aim to involve/mobilise everyone who is a resident in Houghton Regis – recognising the diversity of residents who may be engaged or not engaged with community life. Residents may belong to several communities: their neighbourhood, a community of interest and a community of culture; they may be part of the established community or a new arrival. Some may not feel part of any community or want to be involved.

Those already involved can contribute early in the asset mapping; these groups/individuals will be crucial in taking the project forward and will be key stakeholders in this.

The challenge is to reach all residents. Those who are quite confident can be very easy to work with; the challenge is to work with those who do not feel engaged, empowered or involved; those who are isolated, hard to reach and who may need the most support to be involved too. Individuals at most risk of poorer health and more likely to experience lower wellbeing outcomes are most likely to benefit.

Our asset-based approach builds on people's skills and strengths. Everyone has something to contribute and everyone could have a role to play in delivering the project and helping it achieve the outcomes. They may be active neighbours, participants, leaders, facilitators, community organisers or activists. They may join their Nextdoor Neighbourhood or a community group, volunteer with a public sector organisation, become a Timebank member or Nextdoor Street Warden, sharing their knowledge and skills with others.

Our partnership working approach with public, private, voluntary and community providers will seek to build open, honest and effective communications between service providers and the community.

Communications and Community Engagement

We will engage those already involved in the community and those who aren't and who are most likely to benefit from the project. It's important to reach those who are most at risk of poorer health and/or are socially isolated and unlikely to be engaging with local community groups, support groups, networks etc. We'll identify these individuals by engaging with GPs, other health/care professionals, social media, community newsletters and meeting people in the community.

A new Facebook Page for the project, along with our website and use of our existing social media, will promote the project, campaigns and events; provide information on how local people can get involved, the benefits of doing so, and how to access local services; and encourage residents' participation in community life.

Through our partnership with Nextdoor UK we'll encourage residents to join their Nextdoor neighbourhood, link-in with other neighbourhoods and use the platform to full effect.

We will use our communications channels to ensure the project is informed by a diversity of views and voices from across the community and to facilitate communications between service providers to improve collaboration.

We are mindful that people with a strong social media presence can still be socially isolated through a lack of personal contact and physical presence with others and will address this. We will seek to find new ways of people developing and maintaining contact with others while maintaining the current social distancing requirements needed to tackle the Coronavirus health crisis.

Outputs, Outcomes and Sustainability

The key outputs expected to demonstrate delivery of the project are:

- Number of residents or households that have registered with the project.
- Number of agencies and organisations engaged in the project.
- Number of activities (e.g. meetings, activity sessions, events etc.) run or hosted by the project.
- Number of residents who participated in an activity run or hosted by the project.
- Number of residents signed up to Nextdoor (and as % of total households).

The principle outcomes expected to demonstrate improved health, wellbeing and resilience among Houghton Regis residents are the number of people who state, as a result of participating in social networks, activities, community groups or other services offered or promoted by the project,

- they are better informed about local services.
- they have made new friends or formed new social relationships with other residents.
- they are actively involved in the community.
- they feel less isolated or lonely.
- their physical, emotional or mental health and wellbeing has improved.

The effective use of an asset-based community development approach will create a legacy of evidenced outcomes for the improvement in wellbeing of residents and reductions in health inequalities, sustained beyond the timescales of the project.

Further Information

For further information on *Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis* or to find out how to get involved, please contact Gina Croxford, Community Engagement Manager, at Community Action Bedfordshire by email to gina@cabeds.org.uk or phone on 07555 904174.



**HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE –
WORK PLAN 2020-2021**

WORK PLAN 2020-2021 - Draft

Meeting Date	Regular Updates	Work Plan 2020-2021
July 2020	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group	<p>The following suggestions are put forward, the timings of these reports / presentations will be confirmed once the content of the work plan has been agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Buildings in Houghton Regis (inc. HRN 2 Community Building, Bedford Square Community Centre) • Estate Regeneration • Chalk pit • Kingsland / HR Leisure Centre • Windsor Drive Recreation Ground / future development • Tithe Farm sports provision • Improving Health & Wellbeing In Houghton Regis
October 2020	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group	
January 2021	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group	
April 2021	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group	

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: FOR INFORMATION

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COVID-19 SUPPORT

Summary of support activity during the pandemic



We have sent out **1,715** emergency food parcels feeding **2,025** people.



Since 19th June an additional 65 residents are shielding. Of the **13,077** residents who are required to shield, we have successfully contacted **11,783**. We are continuing to contact the rest.



We've referred **2,952** people to our network of volunteers. **1,715** are for ongoing support with food and prescriptions, **1,133** are for befriending calls and **114** are being supported by Citizens Advice.

Local welfare provision



A total of **13,896** households are receiving some support towards some or all of their 2020/21 Council tax bill. This figure can fluctuate due to changes in individuals' circumstances.



This is an increase of over **852** since the start of 2020. The total amount of Council Tax Support awarded amounts to over **£15.9m**.

Business Grants



Under the initial scheme we have awarded **3,310** grants totalling **£39.95m**. This is **87.3%** of the allocation.

We have received **4,159** applications in total.



We've now issued **217** discretionary grants amounting to over **£2m** which is **88%** of our allocation. Additional grant payments will be issued next week.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

CCTV REPORTS

FEBRUARY 2020

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
06/02/2020	16:20	Bedford Square	Drug deal	0
08/02/2020	11:41	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
08/02/2020	17:12	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0

MARCH 2020

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
02/03/20	11:27	Bedford Square	Drugs	0
05/03/20	14:30	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
08/03/20	18:46	Bedford Square	ASB	0
10/03/20	15:15	Bedford Square	Sexual Assault	0
11/03/20	22:32	Bedford Square	Alcohol Related	0
27/03/20	19:10	High Street	Missing Person	0

APRIL 2020

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
16/04/20	01:36	Dog Kennel Walk	Suspicious Activity	0
25/04/20	00:10	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
30/04/20	09:18	Bedford Square	Street Drinking	0

MAY 2020

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
02/05/20	09:58	Bedford Square	Street Drinking	0
18/05/20	13:05	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
19/05/20	15:38	Bedford Square	Breach Of CPN	0
19/05/20	15:38	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
19/05/20	15:41	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
23/05/20	19:08	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
23/05/20	21:28	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
24/05/20	22:38	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
24/05/20	23:30	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0

JUNE 2020

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
09/06/20	00:00	Bedford Square	Assault	3
10/06/20	15:47	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
11/06/20	22:51	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
16/06/20	10:17	Bedford Square	Breach of CPN	0

Chalk Pit

All agencies are continuing to work hard to ensure the Quarry is safe and to ensure both anti-social behaviour & criminality is reduced. We are working with the private landowner although there are limitations to what both the Council and Police can do under relevant legislation.

We have been proactive in our approach and we chaired a multi-agency problem solving group on 1st July where Councillor Yvonne Farrell was in attendance.

So far, we have actioned the following:

- Footpath bushes/hedges clearance is due to start on 20/07/20 and will be completed in 2 days. The footpath shall be closed temporarily and this will closure will be publicised.
- A letter drop was completed on 2nd July in relation to regular cars visiting the Quarry. Since our letter drop no vehicle details have been supplied by residents.
- We have contacted BOVIS (Developers) and make them aware of the issues of concern at the Quarry. BOVIS have confirmed on 07/07/20 that they have ordered signs and will be putting them up on lampposts about recording vehicles using the area. These are due to be installed by 31/07/20.
- The Police will be doing a site survey and this is in the process of being arranged.
- Police are continuing to patrol the area and they recently seized a nuisance motorcycle under Operation Meteor.
- We are seeking advice from our Legal Team on our legal options in relation to the Quarry.

Further to these actions a lot of work has been completed by CBC's Rights of Way Officer in identifying public access and CBC land ownership. CBC are limited by the legislation in granting access to the public and prohibiting people from accessing public land. However, the kissing gate located on the right-hand side of the public footpath (from Fieldstone entrance) has been gated off to prevent pedestrian access into the Quarry. The public footpath cannot be closed under any legislation, it remains a public right of way.

Further work is continuously being carried out regarding these issues and the Council will welcome any reports from residents of anti-social behaviour. We request that all reports of a criminal

nature are reported directly to the Police on 101 or if it is an incident requiring immediate attention where there is threatening or abusive behaviour to call 999.

LEISURE, LIBRARIES & COUNTRYSIDE

HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE

The Government have now given leisure operators the green light to reopen and the leisure centre will be reopening on Saturday 25th July. The leisure centre will be operating a slightly reduced service due to social distancing guidelines. The gym, swimming pool and sports hall will be available for use, but all activities must be booked in advance, booking is available through SLL's website. Communications have been sent out to all centre members to make them all aware of the new procedures including a video of how the leisure centre will operate.

HOUGHTON HALL PARK

We achieved:

- Continued engagement with the local community despite not having an events programme or visitor facility.
- Ongoing management of park, community kitchen garden and formal garden.
- Newsletters, monthly photography themes, social media presence allowing for input from the community as well as delivery of updates and messages from site team.
- Essential contractor capital works undertaken adhering to Covid risk assessments.

Key highlights:

- Volunteer involvement either working from home or volunteering on individual tasks adhering to social distancing.
- Imaginative displays in lieu of events planned, created in visitor centre windows and enjoyed by park visitors. Themes including VE day, Mothers' day and thanking key workers.
- Being flexible due to restrictions, allowing activity to still be available, such as delivery of buggy fitness sessions via online video.

Key issues:

- Pressures on delivery of project outcomes due to restrictions on event delivery and other approved purposes of HLF grant funding.
- Lack of visitor facility and café – community hub for residents of Houghton Regis.
- Financial pressures with no events programme, café income or room hire at visitor centre facility.
- Planned events on hold – missing key period for delivery of planned activities (half term, spring and summer holidays). Large amount of planning and administration was dedicated to this schedule of events.

Looking forward

We are planning:

- 'Stick Man' trail in park with associated downloadable resources to avoid social contact.
- A number of imaginative themed wooden fairy doors hidden in park with associated trail, with creative design from volunteers.
- Reintroduction of Buggy Fitness outdoors alongside 'Fitness in the park' sessions for adults.

LIBRARY SERVICES

We plan to re-open our Libraries during July, with the exact date of re-opening being determined by preparations being completed to ensure our libraries are safe.

When we re-open we will be following guidance from the library sector and providing a 'select and collect' service only. This allows customers to order books by phone or online, then collect and return books at libraries without entering library buildings. This approach to service delivery is being developed by the majority of library authorities across the country to ensure continued access to books but in a Covid safe way.

In addition to this new service, our existing online service which enables borrowing from home including e-books, e-audio books, magazines and music; as well as providing access to online resources such as Ancestry and Encyclopedia Britannica, will continue to be offered as normal.

During lockdown many existing and new customers have chosen to access our range of services and we hope to continue to attract more new readers.

COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

All countryside spaces remain open to the public to offer informal recreation opportunities. Those with car parking facilities are also now fully open. The safety of the public, volunteers and staff is our priority and re-opening of facilities as lockdown restrictions are lifted will need to be gradual and phased over time. We are following government guidance and working with our countryside partners to respond to changes in the advice as quickly as we can.

While visitor centres remain closed to the public, external toilets and take away refreshments at Dunstable Downs and Rushmere Country Park are now available again with social distancing measures and other precautions in place.

Activity programmes and events remain suspended although some limited volunteering is now taking place where social distancing can be maintained.

The visitor centre at Houghton Hall Park including the café remains closed at present although works have continued in the kitchen and formal garden throughout the lockdown. Where possible maintenance and improvement works have continued throughout the lockdown subject to risk assessment and availability of materials.

While it is positive that many more people have been exploring local open spaces, some of the key issues the service has faced during the COVID-19 restrictions has included an increase in litter, inappropriate and illegal parking, damage to fences and signs where facilities have closed and lighting of fires and BBQ's despite warnings not to. Additional use of social media to promote the Countryside Code, how to use the countryside responsibly along with other services re-opening aim to reduce this impact.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS – CBC MANAGED SITES

Central Bedfordshire play areas re-open from Saturday 18 July 2020.

Specific guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms was published by Government on 26 June. While the guidance is of a general nature and includes all types of outdoor play, it did trigger a lot of questions and concern for owners and operators including ourselves in how to respond and minimise COVID-19 transmission risk.

While we had planned to re-open play areas from the 4 July, the publication of specific guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms was published by Government on 26 June, this prompted a decision to delay this until we had further opportunity to review our risk assessment, messaging and consider the need for additional control measures. This also provided an opportunity to consult with other owners/operators as well as national bodies representing the play industry. Having completed this review including our risk assessment and signage we feel is appropriate in response to the government guidance, Central Bedfordshire play areas will re-open from Saturday 18 July 2020.

As stated in the guidance, each owner/operator needs to apply the guidance to the facilities they are responsible for and conduct their own risk assessment(s). This should be a specific COVID-19 risk assessment that addresses issues including (but not limited to) social distancing, hygiene and communicating with parents/carers. This includes specific considerations for each play area taking into account size, equipment and location. Owners/operators also need to consider implementing processes to inform and protect both the users of equipment and staff in relation to COVID-19.

The official guidance has been issued by Government but to assist our approach in re-opening play areas, we have considered additional guidance and responses from the Association of Play Industries (API) and Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) which you may also find useful. Links to both of these and the government guidance are included below and at the end of our risk assessment.

To support re-opening we have developed specific COVID-19 signage that will be placed in each play area. This is in addition to existing signage already displayed concerning safe use of play equipment. We have also prepared non-branded versions which can be found in the [folder](#) we have previously shared with town and parish councils

There are three types of sign we will be using. The number and location for each will depend on the specific nature of the individual play areas but will be a mixture of;

Play area guidance sign. This will be the main sign to notify users of specific rules and restrictions we have decided are appropriate for our play areas. Your risk assessment may determine the need

to different messages but for information ours will state the following. This will be prominently displayed in each area;

In order to stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19, please abide by the following rules and restrictions:

- If you are displaying symptoms stay at home.
- Wash your hands before and after visiting.
- Bring your own hand sanitiser and wipes to clean your hands and the equipment before and after use.
- Follow current social distancing guidelines.
- Only one household to use one piece of play equipment at any one time.
- If others are waiting, maximum 5 minutes per piece of equipment
- Remind your children not to put their mouths on the equipment or touch their face or mouth after touching the play equipment.
- No food or drink is to be consumed in the play area or whilst on the equipment.
- All litter, including used PPE, must be disposed of using the bins provided or taken home to be disposed of.
- Supervise children while using this equipment to ensure they follow the guidance.
- If the play area is busy, consider coming back at a later time.
- Use of this play area is at the user's risk

Floor sticker signs. Similar to those seen for queuing at supermarkets etc. Ours however will not be used for queuing but to re-enforce the social distancing message where the surface is appropriate.

A4 poster sign, printed on 1mm Rigid PVC with holes drilled for cable ties. These will supplement the main sign to remind keeping a safe distance and hand washing. Likely to be mounted on perimeter fencing, facing inside the play area.

We have taken the view that as our play areas are predominantly local in use, unlikely to attract people from a wider catchment and are also unstaffed and not part of a larger complex or visitor attraction, some of the guidance is either impractical or not applicable. This has influenced our messaging and how to communicate the key messages around safe use during COVID-19. This includes being clear about the need for users to maintain social distancing and ensure good personal hygiene etc. As well as the signs that will be displayed on site, key messages will also be promoted through the website and social media feeds.

BUSINESS, INVESTMENT & SKILLS

During this lockdown period the team have continued to contact local employers through our engagement programme and have been responding to circa 600 general business/self-employed/residents requests for help whether it's signposting residents for food parcels, fuel top-up to claiming benefits. With regards to businesses we've been signposting them to government business support packages, including working with our Revenue and Benefits team to support businesses to claim the small business and discretionary grant scheme.

We've also been gathering intelligence on economic impacts to local business/sectors and supporting particularly the visitor economy businesses with re-opening. In addition, we have been identifying businesses that are making redundancies and offering our help through the National Careers Service by offering support with CV writing, Online Job Searching, Application Forms and Interview Techniques.

BEDFORDSHIRE EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS SERVICE (BESS)

During the past few months, the Council's Employment and Skills Service (BESS) has continued to deliver programmes via its in-house teams and a range of external training providers working as part of the BESS partnership.

Many courses are enrolling during July and August. Some are accredited so residents can work towards qualifications to help them gain work or support a career change or career progression.

The BESS curriculum includes:

- English
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Maths
- IT and digital skills
- Support with wellbeing and mental health
- Preparing for employment
- Working with and supporting children and young people
- Apprenticeships

A list of workshops and courses with information and how to enrol can be seen by looking at our [upcoming course list](#).

An overview of the workshops and courses available can be seen by looking at our [curriculum map](#).

If residents would like someone to help them get started on the right course they can [contact us](#) with their details. They should use the comments box in the online form to let the BESS team

know what learning they are interested in. An adviser or the relevant training provider will then get in touch to help them you started.

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING

ALL SAINTS VIEW

Work restarted on All Saints View after a pause due to COVID-19. The workforce is necessarily reduced to allow for social distancing and lots of measures have been put in place to keep workers safe.

Work has progressed to the top floor and roof in block A (the section facing the High Street) and lots of work is going on inside, screeding floors and starting the mechanical and electrical first fixes.

The current phase of work at the Red House is complete. There is more to do but the immediate work of making the building safe is finished. It is an important landmark in Houghton Regis which will become part of the whole All Saints View site, so it will be hoarded up again soon when the next phase of work starts.

Residents have been reminded that the footpath past the site is now open again and the site gateman is encouraging any pedestrians to use it.

There is no need to walk in the road. There is still some fencing up as the work isn't completely finished but the path is clear for use.

Latest updates, including before and after photos of the Red House, can be found at www.facebook.com/allsaintsview.



ADDRESSING HEALTH & WELLBEING INEQUALITIES

Provision of community engagement and collaboration with residents and stakeholders to improve health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis:

Following an open and competitive tender process Central Bedfordshire Council awarded the contract for this work to Community Action Bedfordshire (CAB) in March 2020. It is a contract for at least 3 years and work started immediately, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. A dedicated project worker has been recruited and will start on July 1.

CAB have developed a Delivery Plan and are busy with initiation work, including engaging with stakeholders. Representatives from HRTC have commented on the Stakeholder Briefing and "Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis" has been agreed as the working project name. A Project Advisory Board has been set up to monitor performance and progress, which meets monthly. Communications and branding are being developed to raise the profile and support wider engagement activities across a range of platforms.

YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Youth Services across Central Bedfordshire have continued to offer a comprehensive virtual youth offer during lockdown and are beginning to transition to a blended offer of virtual and physical over the summer period.

The Houghton Regis Youth Club is being delivered by Zoom Monday – Thursday each week. Young people who engage with pop up café have been the keenest to utilise the virtual offer.

The process of making youth centres COVID Secure so physical youth offer can be resumed in some form is being progressed.

At the end of May there were 190 NEET young people in Central Bedfordshire of which 32 (16%) live in Houghton Regis. Tithes Farm and Houghton Hall wards have the highest number.

Information, advice and guidance has been regularly shared on social media channels @cbcyouthsupport and Find Your Future website around education, training and employment opportunities

PUBLIC PROTECTION

POLLUTIONS UPDATE

We have served Environmental Protection Act Notices on every developer (at least 6 in total) on the large HRN2 development to avoid further complaints of construction noise starting before 8am. A Control of Pollution Act Notice has also been served on the contractor working on Parcel 8 for dust.

PLANNING

The two main Houghton Regis North (Linnere and Bidwell West) sites are currently under construction.

Several detailed applications have been considered and approved for Bidwell West. At this moment in time, the Council have approved 1,846 dwellings associated with this development. Further applications are expected for a local centre, an employment area and a primary school.

The Linmere site has been subject to several recent planning applications which have been approved. These include two sites for housing which cumulatively total 460 dwellings. A new 2FE primary school (to form an extension to Thornhill Primary School) and for a 32ha employment site, which will serve as a regional distribution centre for Lidl, have also been granted planning permission. The Linmere consortium are also currently consulting on an area masterplan for land to the west of the Woodside Link. This consultation can be viewed at - <https://linmere.com/public-consultation-area-masterplan-3/>

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WARD COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME- COVID-19 EXTENSION

Councillors are to be given extra funding so that they help local groups in their area affected by the impact of COVID-19.

Each year, as part of the Ward Councillor Grant Scheme, councillors are given £2000, which they can allocate to groups in their area which aim to improve the lives of local people.

At a meeting on Tuesday 16 June, our Executive agreed a proposal to extend the existing **Ward Councillor Grant Scheme** and allocate an additional £1000 to each ward councillor. This is to enable them to support local groups that are dealing with the direct consequences of the current public health emergency. Unlike the existing scheme, bids for the additional funds do not require match funding.

Many local voluntary and community groups, both new and well established, have stepped up to help as part of their response to the pandemic, playing a phenomenal role in their parishes, villages and towns. This will undoubtedly have put pressure on their resources.

Local councillors know their area best and are well placed to spend the money where it will make the most difference. For some groups a small grant can make a big difference to how they make it through this pandemic.

The scheme has already funded 15 applications totalling £9,244. In many cases multiple Councillors have brought together their funds to provide a more significant impact.

WARD COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME

The Ward Councillor Grant Scheme has now funded 103 applications totalling £65,555 with the funds allocated to Councillors in the 2019/2020 period. With the new allocation on funds in April 2020 Councillors have provided grants to 8 different organisations totalling £5,012.

COMMUNITY ASSETS GRANT SCHEME

Following the success of bidding round 1, where 15 projects were awarded a community asset grant, round 2 of the community asset grant scheme opened for bids on the 1 July 2020 and closes at 5pm on 1 September 2020.

£260,000 is available in this bidding round and eligible groups can apply for a grant of up to £25,000 to improve or provide new community infrastructure. Match funding is required to cover 50% of the total costs of the project seeking funding.

The grant scheme is open to a range of Central Bedfordshire organisations, including voluntary and community groups, not-for-profit organisations, parish or town councils and social enterprises.

CHEERING VOLUNTEERING

We are re-thinking our annual Cheering Volunteering event due to COVID 19 and the restrictions on public gatherings. Meanwhile nominations and photos can be submitted at the [following link](#).

LOCAL OUTBREAK AND CONTROL PLAN

On 22nd May 2020 the UK Government announced that, as part of its national strategy to reduce COVID-19 infections, it required every upper tier local authority in England to create a Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP). Local Directors of Public Health are responsible for producing these plans.

The Central Bedfordshire COVID-19 LOCP builds on existing health protection outbreak plans, using evidence-based health protection measures to outline how we will prevent and respond to outbreaks of COVID-19 across Central Bedfordshire. It highlights how agencies will work together to achieve this and the important role of residents in keeping Central Bedfordshire safe for everyone.

The plan is iterative and will be revised to reflect updates and developments in national, regional and local guidance and intelligence. It addresses the following seven themes identified by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

- 1 Care Homes and Schools**
Prevent and manage outbreaks in specific individual settings (e.g. schools, care homes)
- 2 High Risk Workplaces, Communities and Locations**
Prevent and manage outbreaks in other high-risk locations, workplaces and communities
- 3 Mobile Testing Units**
Deploy local testing capacity optimally
- 4 Contact Tracing in Complex Settings**
Deliver contact tracing for complex settings and cohorts
- 5 Data Integration**
Access to the right local data to enable the other 6 key themes
- 6 Vulnerable People**
Support vulnerable people and ensure services meet the needs of diverse communities
- 7 Local Boards**
Make and implement local decisions to restrict movement, locally or regionally, and communicate with the general public

[For more information on the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Outbreak and Control Plan.](#)

Alongside the Outbreak Plan , targeted and appropriate communications and engagement with local groups and networks will be vital and Town and Parish Councils can help us develop those lines of engagement with points of contact in the community.

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS

Details of current and upcoming consultation activity undertaken by the Council are provided by the Knowledge & Insight Team. For more information about this update please contact Clare Harding, tel: 0300 300 6109 (ext. 76109).

Current consultations

Subject	Description	Start	End	Lead officer
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Local Plan	Consultation of additional evidence.	18 June 2020	12 August 2020	Caroline Danby 0300 300 6771
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Upcoming consultations

Subject	Description	Start	End	Lead officer
Leighton Buzzard Day Centre	Consultation on the future of Leighton Buzzard Day Centre	14 Feb 2020	Paused due to covid-19	Tobin Stephenson 0300 300 4098
Short breaks and Personalisation	Consultation on the longer-term options for the development of the funding and delivery offer for non-residential Short Breaks for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and their families.	3 Mar 2020	Paused until schools return	Branwen Harris 0300 300 6863