

In this edition...

Had you heard of BLYS, the successful youth scheme that's been running in Burton Latimer for the last 12 months?

No, me neither – but Jan Smith's article on this page describes an impressive set-up that gets the thumbs up from teenagers and parents alike. The good news is that funding for the scheme is secure for the next six months at least.

It seems there's more to being a Town Councillor than meets the eye, and Debbie Russell – one of our council's newest recruits – describes some of the challenges she's faced in getting to grips with the role.

There's also a report on the public meeting held last November, which looked at future developments in Burton Latimer. The council is currently planning more local consultation on this important topic, and further details about this are expected soon.

And finally, thanks for your feedback on the new-look newsletter. I'm pleased to say the re-vamp seems to have gone down well!

Warwick Hunt
Editor, Burton Latimer News
January 2012

Local youth scheme hits the spot

Burton Latimer Youth Scheme (BLYS) has gone from strength to strength since it was set up 12 months ago.

The scheme gives young people in our town a safe place to meet, socialise and gain help or advice from trained youth workers, in total confidence. It is aimed at teenagers attending secondary school, and is funded by grants obtained by Burton Latimer Anti-Social Team (BLAST) – which also oversees the project.

Meetings take place at the Civic Centre every Wednesday and Friday between 7pm and 9.30pm, with a maximum of 30 young people attending each time. The scheme currently has 130 teenagers on its books, who enjoy various gaming activities – including pool, music mixing and craft activities. Some are also working towards NVQs and other recognisable achievements.

The meetings also offer life education sessions on subjects such as drug and alcohol awareness, and safe sex. The teenagers can also discuss personal matters with the youth workers, who will listen and help in a professional and totally confidential manner.

Parents say that the Centre provides a good safe place for teenagers to meet, and that this is helped by having trained staff in attendance to nurture and signpost the young people to further help or advice if required.

Feedback from the teenagers themselves is also very positive...

'It's fun and a great way to make friends – no matter who you are.'

'I've learned loads of things like drug awareness and sexual health. The youth workers are really easy to talk to and have a laugh with.'

'We are really lucky to have councillors who spend their money giving us somewhere to go.'

'I have much more confidence now and my behaviour is better. BLYS has definitely brought out the best in me.'

'The youth workers are amazing. They really do care and want the best for us. They're really sociable and good fun – they're BRILL!'

It's brilliant – with very sociable people'

Volunteers are welcome to help with the work undertaken at BLYS in the Civic Centre. For further information about the scheme please contact Jan Smith by email at jan.l.smith@btinternet.com or by 'phone on 01536 721261.

Book now for Burton Latimer's 2012 Summer Ball

Burton Latimer's first ever Summer Ball will take place at Harrowden Hall (the home of Wellingborough Golf Club) on Friday June 22nd 2012.

Funds raised at the event will support the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance.

Tickets are priced at £35 per head, and include a three course dinner and entertainment by the Hucklebucks and other performers.

To register your interest, please email council@burtonlatimer.org or phone 01536 721261 or 01536 725922.



Pocket park – volunteers needed

To ensure the Pocket Park survives it needs people to help in a variety of ways – including:

- Helping to organise events – such as the annual Duck Race, school visits and occasional social events;
- Fundraising;
- General maintenance – such as mowing, hedge laying, clearing areas and making bird boxes (the list is almost endless!);
- Publicity – telling others about the interesting wildlife, history, activities and stories going on in the park.



Helping with the Pocket Park can be very rewarding. You don't need to commit a huge amount of your time, as every little thing would help. And you don't need any special skills, as training and support are available.

This is an opportunity to develop new skills, improve the environment, learn about wildlife and meet others doing similar work.

If you are interested or want to know more, please contact Maureen Jerram by email at mjerram@tiscali.co.uk or by 'phone on 01536 725524.

Bus stop move gets a mixed response

The relocation of the High Street bus stop for the 49, 50 and X1 services has attracted a few unfavourable comments – mainly due to its proximity to the traffic calming outside the Band Club.

However, there are no plans to move it again from the new position

outside the library, as it is seen as the only safe option available.

The good news is that there is now an additional stop for the X1 service – which goes to Kettering Station, Kettering General Hospital, and then to Corby – opposite Westley Close in Finedon Road.

Local development plan: next steps

Over 130 people attended the public rally organised by Burton Latimer Town Council at Meadowside School on 2nd November 2011 to discuss future housing development in the town.

The meeting aimed to alert local residents to the need to create a community-endorsed plan for any future developments in the town – although several people commented that the publicity and objectives for the event had not been clear enough.

Addressing the meeting, Councillors outlined how new government planning proposals gave Burton Latimer the opportunity to put in well-thought-out suggestions that can be incorporated into Kettering Borough Council's overall plan – which will then go to a Government inspector for verification.

During the meeting many people expressed their concerns about recent developments and the apparent lack of policy regarding infrastructure to cope with the town's rapid expansion. However, the importance of producing a comprehensive plan for the future was generally accepted.

Reflecting on the event, Town Mayor Fergus Macdonald admitted that the Town Council hadn't got the publicity for the meeting right. "I apologise for the way we raised people's anxieties and expectations inappropriately. However, after a shaky start we had a very lively meeting, and I am pleased that we agreed a way forward."

Details about a second public meeting to consider this topic will be sent to all households in the near future. For more information, please contact Fergus Macdonald at h.macdonald1@sky.com, or by 'phone on 01536 725922.

County Council news

Funding issues

Growing demand across the county plus cuts in grants and a council tax freeze mean that Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is looking for ways to deliver services at lower cost – in other words, to become more efficient. They are also aiming to set a four-year budget to avoid having to make major savings without adequate preparation, as happened last year.

Street lighting

Comments on the street lighting reductions have increased with the darker mornings and evenings.

Although some lamps have been switched off by NCC, in some cases the problem is just a blown bulb.

Also, some lamps – notably in Cranford Road and Finedon Road – are maintained by Kettering Borough Council, not the County Council.

Problems with street lighting can be reported either online at www.lightingnorthamptonshire.com or by 'phone on 0800 0850 257.

Education & training

The latest performance statistics for our schools show good progress in early years and Key Stage 1, but less progress in Key Stage 2 onwards.

NCC is working hard to ensure that Burton Latimer has enough school places to meet the expected increase in demand as the town expands. The town's primary schools can just about cope with new admissions on their present admission numbers, but further work is needed to make sure that Burton's four-year-olds do not have to go outside the town in the future.

For those aged 14-19, the emphasis is on ensuring that more young people work towards useful apprenticeships rather than second rate degrees.

Burton Latimer's representative on Northamptonshire County Council is Christopher Groome.

He can be contacted by email at chris.groome@b-r-t.co.uk, or by 'phone on 07973 638742.



Being a new councillor isn't as easy as you think!

A Councillor's personal view

By Debbie Russell

Last May my friend – and Burton Latimer Town Councillor – Harry Fry asked me for the umpteenth time if I would stand as a local councillor, as there were not enough people coming forward for election.

I had always said I was too emotional to be able to enter politics in any form. But this time I agreed (against my better judgement, I sometimes think!), and was formally co-opted as a member of Burton Latimer Town Council.

At first it was all very much over my head and I think the best bit of advice I was given was to listen to what was going on for the first year, and then pass comment.

But I am a woman and we are not known for keeping quiet if we feel passionate about something!

Learning the ropes

The formality of the Council meetings was quite a shock to me. Speaking only “through the chair” was the first thing to get used to, along with the role of the Town Clerk – who keeps everything running smoothly and takes the minutes. These are very formal and have to be accurate as they are a public document.

It was all very frustrating to begin with – and in fact, it still is, but I am learning to hold my tongue and temper better sometimes!

Into the lion's den

And then in November we had a public meeting about the over-development of Burton Latimer – and I broke the golden rule: I spoke out passionately, as I was angered by the negativity and the hostility directed at the council members.

Some of the public were just shouting at us, but failed to see that we were all on the same side, and wanted the same things. That was an eye opener, and I admit I lost my cool and shouted back!

This is what I meant when I said I was too emotional for politics. But I feel that if I am at least trying to change things by being a member of the Town Council, then I am doing something for the local community.

As local councillors, we feel frustrated like you, and we feel anger like you – but we also try to change things. Unfortunately, “the system” and “the powers-that-be” sometimes get in the way.

So please, when you next feel that the local town council or your councillors are not helping you or not doing what you want them to do, think again and be a little patient. We are only human, with human failings, like everyone else.

And if you don't like what we do, then you can always become a town councillor yourself and try to change the system from the inside!

Diary dates

Burton Latimer Town Council meetings

All BLTC meetings start at 7pm, and take place at the Civic Centre

Full Council meetings

- Tuesday 7th February 2012
- Tuesday 6th March 2012
- Tuesday 3rd April 2012

Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings

- Thursday 16th February 2012
- Thursday 15th March 2012
- Thursday 12th April 2012

Planning Committee meetings

- Monday 20th February 2012
- Monday 19th March 2012
- Monday 16th April 2012

Burton Latimer Summer Ball 2012

- Friday 22nd June 2012 at Great Harrowden Hall

Tenants' rep wanted

Kettering Borough Council (KBC) is looking for someone to represent tenants of council housing in Burton Latimer.

The role will enable any problems or concerns residents may have about their tenancy to be highlighted.

It will involve attending one meeting each month (usually on the second Thursday) at KBC's offices, which will start at 6.30pm and end no later than 8pm.

If you are interested in taking this on or require further details, please contact Derek Zanger by email at derekzanger@kettering.gov.uk or by 'phone on 07973 289786.

Burton's going to be blooming in the spring

In the coming weeks we should see bluebells in the Pocket Park, daffodils along our main roads, and snowdrops and crocuses at other prominent places – such as outside the Civic Centre and along the 'bank' opposite the Manor House in Church Street.

Burton Latimer was given a variety of flowering bulbs by Kettering Borough Council in November – and these have now been planted around the town by the Community Payback Team.



Civic Centre update

Burton Latimer's Civic Centre has now been open officially for just over 12 months – and is proving to be a great asset for the town.

New furniture has recently been purchased for the main chamber – including tilting tables that can be stowed away easily when not needed, to make the space more adaptable for a greater range of activities.

There has been considerable interest in casual hiring of the main chamber and small conference room – with the Parish Plan steering group also finding the larger space ideal for displaying exhibition material at their public drop-in session in December.

Current activities at the Centre include: regular French language classes on Tuesday mornings; karate classes and ladies self-defence classes on Tuesday evenings; and a sewing class on the first and third Thursdays of every month.

The building also has a number of offices available for lease.

To find out more about the Civic Centre and what it has to offer, please contact Derek Zanger at derekzanger@kettering.gov.uk, or by 'phone on 07973 289786

Survey shows fewer HGVs in town centre

A recent traffic survey has found that the number of large lorries passing through the centre of Burton Latimer has fallen.

HGV traffic was a common concern for local residents who filled in last year's Parish Plan Household Questionnaire. But since then, new signs on the A14 and A6 have directed HGVs to the town's industrial areas along more appropriate routes.

To assess the impact of these Town Council-inspired changes, volunteers carried out a traffic survey in the town in October 2011.

During 16 hours of recording at key sites spread over several days the team counted only 22 lorries using town centre routes.

Three of these vehicles had a good reason for using the route, as they were on business in the town.


Of the other 19 lorries, three were foreign, and in another seven cases the company responsible couldn't be traced.


Eight of the remaining firms, when contacted, apologised for their drivers' actions and agreed to take steps to prevent future instances, while one refused to accept that they had done anything wrong.


Although this survey shows that the town centre situation has improved, lorries using the official HGV route along Finedon Road continue to cause difficulty for local residents. Unfortunately there is no immediate solution to this problem.

Contact Burton Latimer Town Council


Town Clerk: George Sneddon


 07732 331946

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KBC – Ruth Groome, Jan Smith and Derek Zanger represent Burton Latimer on Kettering Borough Council

NCC – Christopher Groome represents Burton Latimer on Northamptonshire County Council