

Borough Councillors Report – May 2023

High level Borough Items

- **By-election in Wyboston Ward, Bedford Borough**

A by-election for a vacant seat in the ward of Wyboston in Bedford Borough will take place on Thursday 29 June 2023.

Residents will need to show approved photo ID to vote at a polling station. This includes a current or expired UK passport or driver's licence.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply online for free ID at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

- **East West Rail (EWR)**

The Government has announced its decision on the proposed route for EWR. This is the first time that Bedford Borough Council has seen this update, the Mayor and Council will now need to review the details of the proposals to better understand the implications for the people of Bedford Borough.

The Mayor and Conservative Councillors have gone on record to express his disappointment in the route choice stating deep concerns over the “deeply flawed 2019 consultation” and “lack of a proper business case” which has resulted a lack of information on the true costs involved in the project and viability of other routes.

- **Scheme of Delegation**

The mayor and officers are reviewing the “Scheme of Delegation” as a matter of priority and will provide an updated scheme that accurately reflects the new council in the near future.

The current scheme had not been updated since 2017/18 under the previous administration leaving it many years out of date – given the time restraints and need for continuity in the council the existing scheme will be used until an updated scheme is provided in the near future.

Wider Borough Items

- **Tulip bulb giveaway**

Bedford Borough Council is offering local community groups the chance to #ColourTheBorough as part of the annual tulip bulb giveaway.

Community groups that would like to collect some tulip bulbs should contact bugsandbees@bedford.gov.uk by Monday 29 May to make a request. When requesting bulbs, please ensure you specify the group you represent and the intended location where you will plant the bulbs.

- **Park Customer Satisfaction survey**

Bedford Borough Council is currently conducting customer satisfaction surveys for two of its award winning parks, Bedford Park and Addison Howard Park.

The survey should take between five and ten minutes to complete and will close on Sunday 18 June 2023 – to access the survey please visit the following links:

- www.bedford.gov.uk/BedfordPark
- www.bedford.gov.uk/AddisonHowardPark

The survey will help to ensure that the parks are meeting the needs of local residents and other park users, while informing the Council's understanding of where visitors would like to see improvements in order to enhance their experiences.

- **Government extends £2 Bus fare scheme**

The Department for Transport (DfT) led scheme caps all adult single fares at £2 and all return fares at £4 on bus services operated by participating companies. The scheme has now been extended to June 2023.

In Bedford Borough, the following operators have signed up for the scheme:

- Stagecoach
- University bus (Uno)
- **Ten-year anniversary of The Higgins Bedford**

There will be a 'We Are Ten' exhibition at The Higgins Bedford to celebrate ten years since the major redevelopment of our local museum and art gallery.

The free exhibition opens on Saturday 27 May 2023 and runs until Saturday 28 January 2024 and showcases the favourite artworks of various community groups, organisations and individuals who have worked with The Higgins Bedford over the last decade.

There will be two free tours available on Wednesday 21 June:

- Tour one will be 12.30pm – 1pm with Victoria, Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art
- Tour two will be 2pm – 2.30pm with Lydia, Keeper of Social History

Places are limited and so people will need to book in advance to be able to take part.

- **Great Big Green Week Events in Bedford Borough**

The Great Big Green Week will be taking place between the 10th and 18th June 2023. Bedford Borough Council has announced its participation and is planning a wide range of events around this week.

The Great Big Green Week is celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature.

Bedford will have Yoga and Wellbeing in the Park, Letters to Tomorrow, a number of walks, a plant sale, talks, litter picks and other events. Find details of everything that is planned in Bedford Borough at <https://greatbiggreenweekb.wixsite.com/my-site/eventsandactivities>.

Ward Specific Items

- **Bulky Waste**

Bulky waste collections in Riseley will be taking place 8th July 202, Villiage Hall Car Park, Gold Street (10:30-12:45).

Bulky waste collection costs:

- £37.55 for up to five items
- £57.95 for a collection of six to twelve items
- non-refundable administration fee of £18.80

If you receive Council Tax Support you may be entitled to a 50 per cent reduction of the cost of a bulky waste collection, for up to five items only.

For further information on bulky waste collections please visit the Borough website here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/household-bins-and-recycling/bulky-waste#:~:text=five%20items%20only.-,Book%20a%20bulky%20waste%20collection,once%20payment%20has%20been%20made.>