

Borough Councillor Update – December 2019

**Contact Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on 07773371190
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Rail Network Consultation

A consultation has been launched on a new timetable for the East Midlands Railway (EMR) network from December 2020. EMR is the line providing fast trains to Bedford (i.e. those travelling to and from St Pancras in around 40 minutes), although this service have not been serving the station in peak hours since May 2018 due to the upgrade to the Midland Main Lane. Earlier in the year, the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded the EMR franchise to 'Abellio', which took over from Stagecoach in August.

EMR's consultation document states:

- EMR services 'will resume calling at Bedford and Luton in both directions during weekday mornings and evenings'
- The peak service between Wellingborough and Bedford will resume, instead of a replacement bus, although passengers will need to change at Wellingborough to access destinations further north such as Nottingham and Leicester
- The average journey time to London St. Pancras will be 'just over 40 minutes'
- There will be a 40% increase in seats. Services will run every half an hour from 6am – 10pm every day

You can see the full consultation document, with details on how to respond, at <https://www.eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk/december2020> Page 24 (of 32) summarises the changes for the Bedford service.

Bedford High Street

The Council has released further details of planned changes to Bedford High Street set to take place next year. This is part of the 'Transporting Bedford 2020' project undertaking amendments to the road network across the town.

The key change to the High Street is that it will have one lane of traffic only and a 20mph speed limit will be enforced via average speed cameras. According to publicity material, pavements will be widened and new materials used 'to create a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers.' For more information search 'Transporting Bedford 2020'. Leaflets setting out the changes across the wider network are also being distributed to individual households.

Rough Sleeping

The Bedford Homeless Partnership, which co-ordinates efforts to support rough sleepers in the town, is publicising its new 'Real Change' fund. This will allow members of the public to donate directly to the provision of services supporting rough sleepers such as clothes for a job interview or a deposit for a flat. For more information visit <https://www.bedfordhomeless.org.uk/>

Covanta

A campaign group's attempt to overturn the decision to grant a permit for the operation of the Covanta waste incinerator at Stewartby has failed in the Court of Appeal.

The Bedfordshire Against Campaign Incinerator (BACI) group argued that the Environment Agency had not following correct procedures in granting the environmental permit to Covanta, but this was dismissed in a judgement issued on the 19th November.

Gritting

As the weather turns colder you can keep up to date with the Council's gritting routes at <https://apps.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates/> This also provides details of any weather-enforced changes to transport services and waste collections.

Town Centre Christmas Shopping

Many of Bedford town centre's shops will be open until 8pm on Thursdays in the run up to Christmas. For more details search 'Bedford late night shopping'

'Safe and Well Visits'

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service provides Safe and Well Visits on the behalf of elderly and vulnerable people. These are designed to check over houses to identify safety hazards and provide advice to improve wellbeing and prevent crime. Email safeandwell@bedsfire.com if you know of someone who might benefit.

School Admissions

The admissions process for transfer to secondary schools in the Borough closed on the 31st October, but remains open until the 15th January 2020 for children beginning primary school in September 2020. For more information search 'Bedford school admissions' or call 01234718120.