



Biggleswade Community News

APRIL 2022



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HAPPY EASTER!

On Good Friday 15th April Churches Together plans to hold the walk of witness and service in the Market Square on Good Friday as usual. It will start from Dan Albone Car Park, leaving at 10.30 am and proceed into the Town Centre via Trinity Methodist Church. for a service in the Market Square (11.00 am start). After the service hot cross buns will be distributed.

On Easter Sunday 17th April Biggleswade Social Club are holding a Kids Afternoon Easter Egg Hunt, with fun, music and games. Adults are free but it will be £3 on the door for the kids.



Published by Biggleswade Community Group tel: 01767 310163

Copies are available from Newsagents, Community Centres, Town Hall, Library, Churches and Eateries. Also online at

www.biggleswadecommunitynews.uk

This newsletter is produced by volunteers free of charge
but donations towards costs are always welcomed.

NEWS FROM BIGGLESWADE ORGANISATIONS



We are now on the home straight in our goal to welcome, resettle and integrate a refugee family to Biggleswade. With attention on refugees arguably as high as it's ever been, we are committed and determined to submit our plans to the Home Office and look to be matched with a refugee family. We have recently had our application checked and approved ready to go and we are now finalising the paperwork.

As always, we are truly grateful for any donations or support you can offer on our Just Giving page at

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/biggwelcome

The ongoing horror in Ukraine has deeply saddened us all and if you are considering the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, or have signed up, please feel free to email us at biggwelcome@gmail.com and we would be pleased to see if we can offer you any support or advice.



* **FAB (Future Action Biggleswade)** recently celebrated Fairtrade Fortnight by launching a series of YouTube videos featuring Fairtrade issues, the author of eco-conscious children's books and Central Bedfordshire Council's Sustainability Plan (see <https://tinyurl.com/FABF14-2022>).

* Plastic Free Biggleswade will be holding a River Clean on Sunday 10th April (10am-2pm) at the Dan Albone car park near Sainsbury's, in association with FAB and "Adopt a Street". All are welcome to come along and help. FAB will be providing Fairtrade refreshments for the volunteers.

* If any youth groups are looking for free input on Fairtrade or Green issues for badges or a themed meeting, FAB are keen to help. We can be contacted at fab@fabweb.org.uk.



The Biggleswade Churches frequently hold joint services. The last was for the World Day of Prayer held last month at Trinity Methodist Church. Keep up to date at www.biggct.org



BATS THEATRE GROUP CELEBRATE THE JUBILEE

At their pre-show planning meeting at Trinity Church at the end of February, Biggleswade Amateur Theatre Group shared ideas on how to celebrate the Queen's jubilee this year. The result is to be a variety show based on each decade of the Queen's reign. Each part will include dance, singing, comedy skits, from each of those eras, from the 1950s up to the present day. The exact performance date is yet to be finalised but will be in June or July, probably at one of the local schools.

It's not too late to join the group. They meet at 8pm each Monday in the Footlights Room at Trinity Methodist Church in Shortmead Street. Just come along and you will receive a warm welcome. Men are particularly welcome!!

For over 16s, BATS was formed in 1984 and usually perform three productions a year including plays, musicals, a pantomime and festival entries. For more information email bats.theatre.society@gmail.com or you can contact them through their website at www.bats-theatre.com. If performing is not for you, you could help front or back of house or with make-up, costumes, choreography, scenery production, or even direction!

BATS are also available to perform outside shows of 1 to 2 hours duration, including music or drama, and murder mysteries.



IVEL FLIX
COMMUNITY
CINEMA

Shows films monthly in the Footprints Room at the Methodist Church in Shortmead Street. You are invited to go along and will be made very welcome. Last month they showed "We Bought A Zoo" a PG starring Matt Damon and Scarlett Johansson. It was well attended including several families taking advantage of the free admission for children.

The next film on Saturday 9 April 2022 will be EAT PRAY LOVE (cert 15). Liz Gilbert (Julia Roberts) is a modern woman on a quest to travel the world while rediscovering and reconnecting with her true inner self. At a crossroads after a divorce she takes a long break from her job to see the world and unexpectedly finds inner peace.

For more details see www.ivelflix.org.uk. Admission is just £4 per person; children free. No need to book. Just turn up and pay on arrival. All welcome! There is disabled access and limited on site parking but nearby car parks are free at weekends.

ABOUT THE TOWN

BIGGLESWADE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE COMMENCES

By the time you read this Central Bedfordshire Council's main contractor, Galliford Try, should have started to clear the unused land owned by Network Rail next to Biggleswade Railway Station, ready for construction to begin in September. The modern new bus and rail interchange should make it easier for people to use public transport for their journeys. It should also support our town's future growth.



It will include bus stops, a bus turning circle and improved pedestrian access. The scheme will include new public space and landscaping with seating, plants, trees and a rain

garden. The town centre will continue to have bus stops at Hitchin Street.

Additional plans for the railway station include a Department of Transport funded Access for All programme. This will be delivered by Network Rail and will provide an obstacle-free accessible route to and from the railway station platforms. There will also be toilets / baby changing and, we are told a much yearned for lift.

Construction work should be completed by 2023. More information is available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/biggleswade

Biggleswade Carnival Court Selection

Application forms are available from Sapphire Hair and Beauty Academy, Sweet Alley and The Therapy Lounge, or online from the Carnival Web Site and Facebook page. **Judging is on 24th April at 2pm in Biggleswade Social Club.**

Applicants must be within these ages on the Parade day:-

Carnival Princess or Carnival Prince age 6-10 years (£50 Prize)

Carnival Queen or Carnival King age 11-18 years (£75 Prize)

and must be available to attend the Parade plus several events between 10th June and 2nd July.

Parade day 18th June 2022.

RECONFIGURATION OF BIGGLESWADE LIBRARY

Consultation now open and ends on Sunday 5th June 2022

Library phone no: 0300 300 8055



Central
Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to refurbish and reconfigure Biggleswade Library to provide a modern facility for our town. Situated on the corner of Chestnut Avenue opposite the Stratton House Hotel, there is a car park opposite with free parking for an hour or you can pay to stay longer. There is also a small car park nearby,

further along The Baulk, where you can park for up to 2 hours free of charge.

Proposals would include a Children's Centre, Registration Services and a satellite office for council staff co-located within the community. This would provide opportunities for joined-up working between these three services, working together at the Library for the benefit of the community. Crucial improvements also need to be made to the building itself, together with updating its current equipment.

The proposals result in a decrease of public Library space of just 1% due to the new furniture, shelving, study areas and IT zone. Total public facing floorspace will increase 15%.

Floor plans and paper copies are available at the Library or visit <https://centralbedfordshire.researchfeedback.net/s.asp?k=164380221114> to view the documents on line and take part in the consultation.

Events taking place on the highway

If you are intending to hold a jubilee event on the highway or other council land, you will probably need to apply for a temporary road closure so that the event can run safely. You will need to inform us by submitting details of the event and the associated risks. It is the responsibility of the organiser to make sure that people are safe.

Visit Central Beds Council website at www.centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk and search for road closures. You can complete the form on line and there is no charge for a small community event. The Council prefers community events to be located in side roads.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CORRIDOR 'BIGGLESWADE MOVES' CONSULTATION



We apologise for the lack of clarity in this map, but it gives an idea of the routes for which the proposals are currently being consulted on by Central Bedfordshire Council, to find sustainable ways of linking up, or different types of sustainable travel routes, between Biggleswade's Transport Interchange (more information in our next edition) and new developments

to the east of Biggleswade. Mainly this concerns the proposed Garden Village settlement on land to the east of Baden Powell Way, and the country park it will include. Significant investment has been made in our town to accommodate these new developments, which already make Biggleswade one of the fastest growing urban conurbations in the country, with a 3% population growth since the 2011 census, according to the Office of National Statistics.

Unfortunately the Community Engagement events arranged by our Town Council at the Orchard Centre on the 25th March (1.30-5pm) and 26th March (1-4.30pm) to seek the views of our local community, were not available in time for our March edition, before it went to print, but these are publicised widely on line.

We will also endeavour to inform our online subscribers before those dates, if we can publish our online edition before then. (To ensure you get your copy as soon as possible, you can sign up for an on line subscription at the website below).

Full details are available on the Biggleswade Town Council's website at <https://biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk> where you will be signposted to the Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation webpage. The consultation finishes on the 8th April 2022, and we are sorry that lack of space prevents us from giving you more information.

Changes to Station Road in connection with the transport interchange at Biggleswade train station

On the 17th March 2022, Central Bedfordshire Council published a number of Notices for public comment, in connection with changes on the highway in Station Road, Biggleswade. These include the introduction of a zebra crossing, extending the 20mph speed limit to beyond the transport interchange outside the station, and introducing further no waiting restrictions on various parts of the roadway. The notices also include provision for a dropping off zone, and waiting spaces for up to 3 hrs no return within 1 hour.

To view the various documents and plans, visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices and type in Station Road Biggleswade That should lead you into the documents and maps.

Comments are requested by 8th April 2022. Please note that any comments received will be redacted of personal information and uploaded onto the Central Bedfordshire Council website as part of a report on the scheme a few days before the proposal is discussed at the relevant Traffic Management Meeting, where it will remain in the public domain. If you do not want your comments to be part of the report please state this explicitly within your response.

THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY will be holding a PLANT SALE at the Weatherley Centre, Eagle Farm Road, on Sunday 22nd May, 10am to 2pm. Plants at affordable prices and contactless payments are available.

NEWS AND EVENTS



Hosted by
Russ Williams

Lots of comedy, football
auctions and fun.
**FOOD AVAILABLE
FROM 7PM**

**Comedy Night
starring
BOBBY DAVRO**

Saturday 7th May 2022
19:00pm - Until Late

£25 per person

The Weatherley Centre, Eagle Farm Road,
Biggleswade, SG18 8JH

Biggleswade Football Club invite you to join them at their Comedy Night in May. Tickets are available on match days at Biggleswade FC or online. Phone Paul Ison (07725 069170) or Ben Weldon (07921 860617) for details.

www.biggleswadefc.co.uk/events/comedy-night-starring-bobby-davro



BIGGLESWADE SOCIAL CLUB ROCKS

Last month it was a packed house to see and dance to Queenenergy and their accompanying warm up guitar duo. The large round tables and new seating was spacious and comfortable, still leaving room for some energetic dancing! During lockdowns the main hall has been completely refurbished through the hard work of club members and volunteers, and ventilation was good. The club's next Saturday night entertainment events are '**Blues Brothers**' on 9th April and, postponed from January because of Covid, is the return of the **Robbie Williams tribute show on Saturday 14th May**, that last performed there in 2019. Tickets for both shows are £5 on the door. Among the regular events is Charity Line Dancing on Tuesday evenings 8-10pm at £3 per session, where you can dance or make friends. **CRAFT FAIRS** are now being held each month to support local businesses 10am to 3pm with free entry. The next one is on the 7th May. See their Facebook page [@crafteventsatbiggs](https://www.facebook.com/crafteventsatbiggs). On Easter Sunday 17th April the Club are holding a Kid's Afternoon Easter Egg Hunt, with fun, music and games. Adults are FREE but £3 on the door for the kids. Come along and support the Club in Church Street, at one of the largest venues in Biggleswade, located adjacent to Asda supermarket. There is ample parking in the nearby Rose Lane Car park which is free in the evenings and at weekends.



ICKWELL MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS RETURN

The annual **Ickwell May Day** is a celebration of spring held at Ickwell village in Northill parish. Only ½ mile separates the two villages. The earliest documented May Day was in 1565. In 1872 the Squire of the town erected a permanent maypole on the green and left a bequest in his will to fund the annual celebration. A new maypole, donated by the Shuttleworth Trust, was recently erected.

Satnav directions are SG18 9EG

Monday 2nd May, celebrations in the car park of The Crown Public House at Northill. At 11.30am there is the Morris Men dance followed by the children assembling with their decorated hoops, with judging taking place at 1pm. At 1.30pm the procession leaves for the walkdown to Ickwell village green. The May Queen is crowned at 2pm followed by the children dancing around the maypole. From 10am there are stalls, refreshments and entertainment on the Ickwell village green. Seats in the arena are available from 12 noon. Adults £2 and children under 16 are £1. For more information visit their website at www.ickwellmayday.co.uk or visit their Facebook page.



AT THE WEATHERLEY CENTRE

Eagle Farm Road SG18 8JH (rear entrance to their car park is off Orchard Close SG18 0NE) The next Comedy night is on Saturday 23rd April. Doors Open 7pm; show starts 8pm This month's lineup includes **ANGELOSEPITHEMIU** – A comedy legend and award-winning burger van owner! **TOM HOUGHTON** - He is the Edinburgh Fringe's

favourite posh boy, star of **Comedy Central's 'Roast Battle'** and critically-acclaimed star of BBC and Channel 4 and First Dates! **Plus Biggleswade favourite Paul Revill will host the show.**

Tickets £15.40 incl. booking fee from www.wegotickets.com/event/535537



Northill & Ickwell Drama Group are putting on a production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* – a wonderfully barking spoof, on Thursday 28th, Friday 29th and Saturday 30th April. Tickets are £8 for Thursday evening, and £13 each for the Friday and Saturday performances. To book ring 01767 627725

COVID UPDATE



From April all adults over 75, all those adults living in care homes, and all over 12s that are vulnerable or immuno-supressed will be offered another booster. For the vulnerable, who may already have had their 4th jab, this will be their 5th.

These boosters will be offered 6 months after their previous vaccination. With 5m in total, it will take some time for the NHS to contact them all. The reasoning behind this is that the vaccines wane over time, but are now the main tool to combat falling seriously ill with covid. Cases are rising again as are hospitalisations, but thankfully deaths are similar to those expected in a normal winter.

Things can change very quickly, but it is expected that any surge could be dealt with locally without any more lockdowns or serious restrictions. Mask wearing and social distancing is still recommended for those who are vulnerable, and all visitors to their loved ones in care homes will be expected to have had a negative lateral flo test.

The good news is that, although from April 1st lateral flo test kits will no longer be free, except to the clinically vulnerable and certain workers, the price has dropped considerably to as low as £1.99 per test at pharmacies and shops such as Superdrug. Larger kits have also reduced in price.

In addition to the above, ALL children aged 5-11 will be offered 2 lower doses of vaccine, and it is hoped many of those jabs can be offered during the coming school holidays. But it is not expected for schools themselves to be involved with the vaccinations.

FREE CAVITY WALL AND LOFT INSULATION

For a limited time Central Bedfordshire Council are offering residents free insulation for their homes.

To get the free insulation you must have a household income of less than £30,000 a year and have an EPC (energy performance certificate) rating for your home of E F or G. Visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and search for Home Insulation. To find an energy certificate for your home visit www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate

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2022/23 COUNCIL TAX INFORMATION/ENERGY SUPPORT

Council Tax rates for Biggleswade will be Band: A £1,461.03
B £1,704.54 C £1,948.03 D £2,191.55 E £2,678.56 F £3,165.57
G £3,652.58 H £4,383.10

To help with energy costs the Government is providing a one off rebate of £150 to all households living in a Band A to D property. IT IS NOT A REDUCTION IN COUNCIL TAX and will not show on bills. It is a one off rebate and does not have to be repaid. It is government funding passed to Councils who will make the payments on their behalf.

Central Bedfordshire Council will make these payments directly into your bank account if you use direct debits to pay Council Tax, but only after a direct debit instalment for your 2022/3 bill has been successfully paid. If you do not pay by direct debit they will contact you to ask you to provide your payment details. You should not contact the Council yourself.

if you are on low income and live in a property in Council Tax bands E to H, you may be eligible for a discretionary payment to help with your energy bills. More information will follow.

IN ADDITION THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO REDUCE EACH HOUSEHOLD'S FUEL BILL BY £200 IN OCTOBER, But unlike the £150 payment, this will be repaid through fuel bills over the next 5 years, i.e. at £40 per annum.

Warm Home Discount is also available through larger fuel suppliers and will be expanded to allow around 3m low income pensioners and vulnerable people to get help with fuel bills. It is usually open to applicants from March to October each year. To apply contact your supplier.

The Core Group are pensioners who receive pension credit. The DWP work with fuel suppliers to identify households within this group and the rebate is usually automatically applied.

The Broader Group are those with low incomes, pensioners not on pension credit and the vulnerable. The funding for this group has an annual limit and needs to be applied for.

The Warm Home Discount receives no government funding but is wholly paid for by the fuel companies through a levy made on all their customers' bills. This amounts to a contribution of around £20 from every household in the UK.

If you feel you meet any of the above criteria, but do not receive a Warm Home Discount, contact your supplier. Nearly 1 million pensioners who may qualify for pension credit, have not applied. To find out if you are one of them, contact Citizens Advice (01767 601368) or use an on line benefits calculator such as www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support