2018: The year so far...

This summer has been another very busy one with a number of events and open days as well as projects and initiatives helping people get active, fit and involved in the community.

We’ve also continued with our goal to help residents get all the right skills they need to move up in their careers and improve their job prospects – with help for young people and those who just need a bit of steer with which way to go.

There have also been projects and development in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors with the linking of schools and local business and industry. This should help inspire the next generation of specialists in these important sectors.

We were also delighted to celebrate five years of the busway—an excellent service for residents that has been providing a useful connection since it was opened and its reach and links continue to grow.

In this period we also celebrated 80 years of our airport. It was a chance to look back on its history as well as look forward to its growth and expansion and our airport company was keen to hear residents’ views.

Finally arts and culture continue to flourish with grants for local projects awarded and yet more developments in the cultural quarter. It is wonderful to see the area transforming before our eyes.

Cllr Hazel Simmons MBE
Leader of Luton Council
Active Luton announced the LINK initiative for residents. Funded by the European Social Fund it focuses on supporting adults who are unemployed and not in education, or those working less than 16 hours a week who want to upskill. A range of free courses are being offered, enabling people to gain experience and build their confidence to take on qualifications. Many of the programmes lead to nationally recognised qualifications or provide openings to volunteering opportunities and possible jobs.

Nine local arts projects successfully bid for funding from the Luton Arts Fund which was established in 2017. The Arts Fund is generated through contributions from Luton Council, Luton Culture, Arts Council England, University of Bedfordshire and Capital & Regional. The fund is available to individuals, organisations or collectives for new and activities already taking place within Luton.

The council’s Executive approved its Waste Strategy 2018 - 2028 which sets out its vision for Luton to Waste Less, Recycle More. The strategy focuses on reducing the amount of waste produced, improving recycling and ensuring tax payer’s money is well spent.

The adoption of the strategy mean changes to the frequency of black bin collections, moving to alternate weekly collections for properties with their own bins, fortnightly kerbside glass collections extending to all households and 3,000 households added to the existing garden waste collection service.

Active Luton’s impact report for 2017/18 was published highlighting over half a million pounds worth of investment in Luton’s leisure centres and around one and a half million visits made.

The report shows Active Luton’s work to tackle inactivity and improve opportunity through its commitment to inclusive and accessible sport and leisure facilities. New services include the integrated wellbeing service and an award from the European Union Community Led Local Development Programme to improve training opportunities for the unemployed, people working less than 16 hours a week and looking to upskill or those not in education.
The Mayor of Luton opened the first ever STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Champion Conference at Stopsley High School. The event aimed to inspire and encourage careers in these sectors.

Designed and delivered by Develop and STEM Champion, an organisation founded by university students, the event was well attended by the students as well as those from across seven other Luton secondary schools.

Students had the opportunity to experience the different STEM industries through a range of workshops led by local companies: Vauxhall, Roche PI and Interserve.

A new car club was launched in Luton offering a convenient alternative to running a car for those who don’t need to use one every day. With four brand new Nissan LEAF electric vehicles in the town, residents and local businesses can book for as little as one hour, to up to several days at a time. The scheme has been launched as part of the council’s sustainable travel plan, to support improving air quality and address parking issues and congestion in Luton.

The electric vehicles can be found at Midland Road outside Luton train station and Inkerman Street.

Primary schools from Luton took part in the Athletics Quad Kids finals of the Big Games at Bedford International Athletics Stadium. Over 900 children from Bedfordshire attended and to qualify each school had to win their local or town competition.

Pupils at Pirton Hill Primary finished in first and second place.

Year five and six Pirton Hill pupils competed in four disciplines: sprint, howler vortex throw, 600m long distance run and long jump against top schools from across the county.

Chantry Primary Academy came first in their Quads Kids competition with year three and four pupils at Pirton Hill coming second. Wigmore Primary came second and Bramingham Primary came third in golf. Wigmore Primary won gold and bronze medals in cycling. Hillborough Primary finished first in rounders.

London Luton Airport (LLA) celebrated its 80th anniversary throughout the month with staff, passengers, and the local community. Celebrations included the launch of a limited-edition birthday Campari cocktail from Oriel Grande Brasserie inspired by Lorraine Chase, and goodie bags and macarons for passengers.
The University of Bedfordshire held the ‘topping out’ ceremony of a new £40m STEM building.

Vice Chancellor Bill Rammell, together with representatives from the contractor RG Carter, the architects MCW, and engineering firm AECOM, added the final bolt to the roof of the new four storey building.

A programme of course development will see the university expand its STEM course portfolio to include new courses in Mechanical Engineering, Automotive Engineering, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Healthcare and Optometry.

The building is due to be open to students in September 2019.

The University of Bedfordshire was awarded over £850,000 of National Lottery funding to further develop a new safeguarding framework for vulnerable children and young people.

This new approach will explore, understand and respond to young people’s experiences of significant harm, which often occurs outside their family environment. It will also look into the different relationships that young people develop in their neighbourhoods, schools and online.

Barnfield College and West Herts College announced they would be merging.

Barnfield College has two campuses in Luton in Enterprise Way and New Bedford Road; they will continue to be known by the same name. It is anticipated that the new combined college will be launching in spring 2019.

The 16 x 16 young people’s programme, held a highly successful conference over six days, at the University of Bedfordshire. Over 1,400, year nine students from over seven local schools took part. Students attended five workshops covering subject areas from resilience to art in action.

Over 16 organisations, including the council, supported the market place workshop, where employers gave a short presentation and students had the opportunity to speak to them and find out more about working for their organisation. The conference was an excellent opportunity for students to visit a university, improve their employability skills, meet local employers and find out about local careers and apprenticeship opportunities.

The implementation of the Public Spaces Protection Order in the town centre was launched which aims to reduce and prevent a range of anti-social behaviours. The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team undertook over 200 actions to enforce breaches of the order in the first four weeks alone.

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Synergy architects were appointed to develop Hat Studios on a vacant site in Guildford Street acquired by Luton Culture in June. The new building will be part of the Hat District cluster and provide additional workspace for creative businesses and retail. Work to clear the site started in September.

Over 50 professionals attended the ‘Services for Women’ themed coffee morning, hosted by Luton All Women’s Centre. The events are part of the council’s Strategic Community Services (SCS) regular networking to provide an opportunity for professionals from both statutory services and voluntary sector to increase dialogue, share ideas and develop partnerships.

The relaxation room and corridors at the Mind BLMK Wellbeing Centre received a makeover from corporate volunteers from local employer TUI. Mind BLMK were pleased with the results and said would make a difference to their users. The corporate volunteering scheme is part of the council’s SCS initiative to support the voluntary sector and build relationships with local businesses who support their employees to do volunteering in the local community.

High Town welcomed over 2,500 visitors to its sixth annual festival. There were over 70 stalls, three entertainment stages, and a large dose of blazing sunshine. High Town Road felt more like a large village fete, with the Women’s Institute serving cream teas, children’s entertainers doing magic tricks, and local poets presenting their work, all to the backdrop of sound from local bands. Visitors had plenty of choice of ‘around the world’ food and crafts by local people and a chance to visit the health and wellbeing area.

The council’s volunteer team partnered up with Active Luton to organise a corporate volunteer day for over 40 participants from TUI. A vast amount of work was completed by volunteers who transformed a very tired looking Hart Hill adventure playground. Both inside and outside received some very much needed TLC just in time for the community open day in July.
August

- Students across Luton received their GCSE results and it’s been another good year. Eighty per cent of the students who took the English exam achieved a grade nine to four, and 13 out of 14 maths students achieved a nine to four. Grade nine is the highest; grades five to nine count as a ‘strong pass’ and grade four is a ‘standard pass’.

Luton Adult Learning also announced that 100% of learners that took a Maths and English GCSE this year passed their exams.

- The second ‘Meet the buyer’ event was held at Luton Hoo by the procurement team of Volker Fitzpatrick-Kier (VFK), who are the appointed contractors for the DART project. The event enabled small and medium-sized enterprises who may be interested in supplying materials and services to support the Luton DART such as facilities, training providers, accommodation hotels, temporary and permanent signage, solar and green energy services.

- Luton’s approach to early year’s language development was praised by Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education. This followed a visit to Luton in April by the Secretary of State and Nadhim Zahawi, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

The Secretary of State mentioned Luton when launching the Government’s new ambition to improve school readiness, which is part of a wider strategy to improve social mobility.

- Ryanair announced an investment of £156m at LLA with two new based aircraft for its winter 2018 schedule and it added six new routes including Alicante, Athens, Barcelona, Bologna, Cork and Malaga and more flights on its existing Vilnius route. Ryanair’s winter 2018 schedule from LLA will now deliver a total of 21 routes.

- Arriva began operating a 24 hour busway service linking Luton Airport, Luton and Dunstable. The service operates at least every 30 minutes overnight, enabling holiday-makers, commuters and airport employees to rely on the bus no matter the time of day or night.

- The council’s airport company, LLAL completed its initial consultation on the proposed expansion.

The consultation asked for comments about four options for development of the airport, and LLAL’s outline approach to minimising and mitigating impacts.

More than 1,700 people visited a series of 19 community events which took place during the consultation period.

More than 800 online and paper feedback forms, emails and letters have been received which are now being recorded and analysed.

The views and feedback received will help shape and inform the proposals, and LLAL plan to consult again next year on more detailed plans before they prepare and submit an application for consent to the Secretary of State for Transport.
After a successful launch, the Aspiration Centre entered its second phase. Locations have been selected based on footfall and visitor needs and it continues to provide local people with access to local employment opportunities, careers advice, and training opportunities, all in one place. The centre has experienced increased interest from local employers and partners, and has improved the experience and outcomes for visitors to the centre. The following new partners come on board; Maximus, Diverse FM, Guidant and Noah.

The new doggy face was found for the annual responsible dog campaign. Hugo, the Labradoodle will be helping educate dog owners on a range of issues such as animal welfare, microchipping requirements and prevention of straying dogs.

As You Change, So Do I’, a Luton Culture arts project, curated Space-18 for the town’s talented emerging artists from 16 August to 8 September at The Storefront, Bute Street. Artist Haleema Ali, who created a Human Wire Sculpture with human rights quotes and local calligrapher Abu Yahya were interviewed by BBC Look East. Abu also appeared on two Pakistani TV channels. Anna Fairchild and sisters: Fiona Martin and Elaine Lister exhibited their work in August. Space-18 was a rare opportunity for emerging artists to run workshops, develop their work and engage with the local community.

Tara Lewis from Public Health delivered two day accredited training on Youth Mental First Aid as part of the council’s SCS support to the voluntary and community sector.

A variety of training supported by Luton Clinical Commissioning Group and Luton Council in partnership with Voluntary Works is available for small to medium voluntary sector organisations in Luton.

Inspire: Luton Sports Village and Lewsey Sports Park and Pool retained their Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) marks. It is aimed at encouraging greater physical activity levels among disabled people and people with health conditions by providing and promoting inclusive opportunities and access to leisure facilities and services. Both centres achieved an overall rating of ‘good’ against the criteria set by the Activity Alliance – formerly the English Federation of Disability Sport – and were praised for their accessibility and inclusive gym equipment.

Limbury Baptist Church hosted the first Your Say Your Way (YSYW) decision day of the autumn round of funding. Applicants from Bramingham, Limbury and Icknield wards presented their project ideas to members of the local community, in the hope of being voted for.

A total of £10,000 was awarded to eight projects ranging from sports activities; youth groups and toddler stay and play sessions. Managed by the SCS team and working in partnership with Luton Adult Learning, YSYW is a creative way of allocating money for local projects across the town. For more information www.luton.gov.uk/YSYW
Passport to Employment was launched by the council, initially in partnership with Vauxhall Motors and Jobcentre Plus to help achieve the LIF aim of local jobs for local people. The programme will also be rolled out to other employers.

This exclusive and bespoke programme has been designed to assess the needs of the local workforce and provide support to overcoming barriers in order to access the labour market. The course will equip people with all the right skills to be ready to enter into the world of work by focusing on various educational and training options.

The council announced a £3.2m grant for Peugeot SA, securing the Vauxhall van factory’s future and the creation of over 400 new jobs. Work is now underway to support the recruitment of additional workers needed for the plant’s expansion and to help to secure permanent jobs there.

September

The procurement team of VFK held the third and final event at Luton Hoo for businesses interested in providing products and services for the £225m infrastructure scheme. This gave companies involved in the installation and supply of equipment and services in mechanical works a chance to meet the procurement team. Opportunities included the provision of pipework and steelwork, electrical cables and equipment, internal and external air-conditioning and computer control equipment, lighting and alarm systems, ventilation, sanitation, hot and cold-water systems.

Bushmead Primary School students were in for a surprise when they returned from the school holidays. The playground, memorial and school garden, play equipment and benches had been transformed with the help of 35 volunteers from TUI’s Commercial Relations and Retail Business support team and a team from Volker Highways. The day was organised by SCS team volunteering and voluntary sector support team. The school were so pleased with the outcome they have put together another list of things to be completed and will welcome a new team later in the year.

August was a busy month for Discovery Days for TUI staff, the name they use for employee volunteering in the community. A total of 80 volunteers and three days transformed Wigmore, Sundon and Denbigh primary schools during the summer closure so that students returning from the summer break came back to a refreshed playgrounds, classrooms and gardens.

Organised by the SCS team, corporate volunteering days have enabled many voluntary sector organisations and schools to benefit from businesses wanting to ‘give back’ to the local community in Luton. For more photos of the transformations that have taken place visit Facebook @VolunteerLuton.

(LLA) welcomed 1.7m passengers, a 3.1% increase on the previous year making it the busiest August ever and the nineteenth consecutive month that over one million passengers have travelled through the airport.
Superdry has been announced as the latest retailer to join The Mall Luton, following frequent shopper requests for the brand to be added to the current mix of fashion and lifestyle offerings.

The British lifestyle brand has agreed a 10 year lease and will open in the old HMV location, taking approximately a 2,300 sq ft unit.

The retail offer at The Mall supports Capital & Regional’s long-term programme to introduce a mix of uses in the town centre, including new space for the NHS, Adult Learning and the council in Arndale House, to complement existing retailers and local businesses.

Luton Culture invited the local community to see behind the scenes of the organisation as part of Heritage Open Days 2018 to discover hidden spaces around its venues. Several events including ‘The Secret Garden Tour’ at Stockwood Discovery Centre and ‘Explore the Stores’ at Wardown House, Museum and Gallery were sold out. Heritage Open Days is England’s largest annual festival of history and culture celebrating heritage, community and history.

Luton Culture has secured additional funding of £200,000 for Hat Works from Historic England through a repairs grant for heritage at risk. It is a grade II listed building constructed of Luton grey bricks and is believed to be the town’s oldest hat factory. Hat Works is part of the charity’s Hat District project that will be restored into unique, affordable workspace for creative start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop and collaborate in Luton. Call 01582 547470 or visit www.hatdistrict.co.uk to find out more.
Ward councillors and members of the local community met at the Chaul End Centre for their ‘Let’s Talk’ in Challney meeting. These events which are held in wards across the town give local people the opportunity to have a dialogue with councillors and partner agencies to discuss issues of common concern that affect them in their neighbourhood and to identify/set priorities for the ward. There was a great attendance at this meeting and if you are interested in getting involved and attending future events you can find the contact details of your ward councillor at www.luton.gov.uk/councillors.

A PB Funding 2018 event in Dallow Ward welcomed over 45 residents, local community groups and councillors came together to vote for projects being presented at the Dallow Centre. Projects were awarded funding as part of the council’s Your Say, Your Way programme that gives small grants to local initiatives that promote community cohesion, improve the environment or provides support to vulnerable people or develop the health and wellbeing of local residents.

The community can now benefit from the six projects funded in Dallow ward which include activities to tackle poverty and loneliness, provide employability advice to local unemployed residents and increase the visibility of neighbourhood watch initiatives.

A great turn out for a workshop, a session designed to give information to prospective volunteers about what to expect and what roles are on offer. The session delivered by Tracey Attard from Luton Adult Learning in partnership with SCS is a way of engaging local people who are considering sharing their time for good causes in the community. Over 30 local residents attended the session.

Following a successful couple months of recruitment, volunteers attended their induction training before they are go off to their various placements which include Flying Start Children’s Centres, the council’s customer services, day centres with adult social care and various event volunteering.

The scheme run by the council in partnership with Adult Community Learning provides local people with training and placements to learn new skills, giving them vital experience that could benefit them getting closer to the labour market. It also supports the many volunteers also give up their time and share their skills for the good of the community.

The Luton Dunstable busway celebrated its fifth birthday with a public event at Luton Station interchange. A cake was cut and the council’s Travel Luton team attended to help people to plan their journeys and increase their activity levels.

The busway is run by Luton Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, with Arriva, Centrebus and Grant Palmer providing bus services. It links the airport and Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Luton town in just 15 minutes with services every seven minutes at peak times.

Over 10.5m passengers have used the busway since its launch and it remains the second longest busway in the world and the longest in an urban environment.

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Skills & Opportunities in Luton

Do you want to know about jobs and opportunities in Luton?

Are you interested in changing career?

Would you like to know how to improve your job prospects?

Are you unsure about possible career pathways, training courses and skills required for jobs?

If so, come and visit the mobile Aspiration Centre.

Our experienced staff and partners will be on hand with information on jobs and opportunities across Luton.

You can also find out about developments taking place in the town as part of the Luton Investment Framework – a transformation plan that is changing the town.

To find out more about the Aspiration Centre and when it will be coming to your area email LIF@luton.gov.uk or visit www.luton.gov.uk/aspirationcentre

www.luton.gov.uk/LIF