Lutonline
Luton Borough Council’s newspaper for local people

Your normal Lutonline is inside

Issue 138  September 2013
www.luton.gov.uk

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Luton Borough Council’s newspaper for local people

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Busway services operated by:

Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council working together

ARRIVA

Centrebus

Find out more about the busway at www.travelluton.co.uk
Bus services start on Wednesday 25 September 2013

More information can also be found by visiting www.travelluton.co.uk

The Busway is coming

The revolutionary transport link that connects Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Luton and London Luton Airport is coming soon.

Bus services on the Luton Dunstable Busway will begin on Wednesday 25 September, with Arriva, Centrebus and Grant Palmer operating four new routes.

Together, these provide core services between Dunstable and Luton up to every seven minutes at peak times.

Journey time on the traffic-free guideway between the two town centres will be just 15 minutes – now that’s fast, frequent and reliable!

Buses will be able to travel at up to 50mph on the guideway, enabling the Busway to offer a premier service. But tickets will not be at premium prices. The operators will charge the same on their Busway services as they do for the equivalent trip using current road routes.

The world’s second longest guided busway, and the longest in an urban environment, has been pioneered by Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils to give people a high-quality real alternative to the frequent and frustrating traffic queues between Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Luton.

It also opens up a wealth of opportunities for speedy and hassle-free journeys to work, university, college or school, shopping, the theatre or just catching up with friends.

Via the new bus-rail Interchange at Luton Station and London Luton Airport there are also quick and easy onward connections available to the capital together with regional, national and international destinations.

The scheme is supported by the Department for Transport and forms part of the two councils’ plans to encourage sustainable economic growth, provide better access to jobs and look after the environment across the conurbation by improving the public transport network.

With real-time passenger information, level boarding and CCTV at key stops, it’s now even easier to turn up and go by bus!

Smooth operator

The Busway is both flexible and quick, making it the best way to travel.

Of the 6.1 miles of segregated bus-only road, a concrete track has been built along a 4.8-mile section to take the two small guide wheels fitted at the front of standard buses, so vehicles can be guided along smoothly and hands-free at speeds of up to 50mph.

The buses can switch seamlessly between the track and normal roads, making it far more flexible than rail and more reliable than conventional bus services.

Check the timetable

Check out the full timetables to find out when the buses are running. An information leaflet also with detailed maps will be widely available shortly, in the meantime timetables for routes A, B, C and E are online at www.travelluton.co.uk. Real-time information displays at bus stops will also help you on your journey.

Concessionary bus passes are valid on all Busway services under the same terms and conditions as all other bus services in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.
The Council has agreed a new allocations policy to ensure that priority for social housing goes to residents who need it most.

With more than 8,000 people currently on Luton’s housing waiting list, the new rules have been introduced to ensure that allocations can be better managed given the severe shortage of social housing and limited land available to build on.

A new local connection rule means that applicants must have lived in Luton for three years, or worked in the town for 12 months or more, to be accepted onto the waiting list.

Applicants with no connection to Luton will no longer be accepted. The previous policy allowed applicants from anywhere in the world, making the waiting list unmanageable.

Other changes mean that homeowners, people with housing or council tax debt or anyone with a history of violence will no longer be given priority for social housing.

A new category of assistance has also been introduced for injured former armed services personnel.

The review of the policy was also prompted by a change in the law which allows the Council to arrange for homeless families seeking help to be given a property in the private sector and not necessarily in a council or housing association flat or house.

The new policy also reflects the Government’s Welfare Reform Act in supporting Council tenants under-occupying their home by offering priority for a transfer to downsize. This will open up opportunities for currently overcrowded households who need to upsize.

Cllr Tom Shaw, Portfolio Holder for housing, said: “We have a massive challenge in Luton with demand for housing far exceeding our very limited supply. I am therefore pleased that we now have a fair and transparent policy in place that ensures that priority is given to those who need and deserve it most.

“I also want to make it clear that anyone who has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour such as domestic violence will not be given priority.

“I would like to thank residents who actively took part in the consultation which helped shape the new policy.”

The changes will be phased in over the coming months.
“Less crime means fewer victims,” said Chief Constable Colette Paul after Bedfordshire Police again recorded some large reductions in crime rates.

Figures published nationally in July showed Bedfordshire’s overall crime rate fell by 11 per cent in 2012/13, with other significant reductions in burglary and violent crime.

Ms Paul said: “It is important to acknowledge that this achievement is against the backdrop of challenging funding cuts but since I arrived at Bedfordshire Police I have been overwhelmed by the determination and ability shown by all our staff to find new and creative ways to meet these challenges. We have cut costs while improving our performance and that is something we should all be very proud of. “While we must celebrate success where we can, I am not complacent and our focus must remain on victims of crime to ensure they get the best service we can deliver, while also protecting the wider public so they feel safe as they go about their day-to-day lives.”

“We have one way to go to satisfy the victims and there are of course still areas where we need to work even harder and be more creative with the resources we have to keep reducing crime.”

That is why South Beds Dial-a-Ride received around £130,000 through a combination of funding direct from Luton Borough Council and a donation from London Luton Airport.

Customers who had booked a journey, or who now need to do so, are asked to contact Shopmobility on 01582 739036, open every weekday from 9am-2pm. Clients using the service should be in possession of a concessionary bus pass. For further information or advice, customers should contact the Council’s Passenger Transport Office on 01582 547219, open from 8am-5pm.

We have understandably been focusing on vulnerable customers receiving care packages, and those with severe mobility issues, and we apologise if other transport needs have not or cannot be met in the short term.

A review of how this service might now be provided in the future is already under way. In the meantime I am additionally obliged to colleagues within the Council’s own transport service who have brought in extra vehicles and drivers who are taking on the workload.

Customers who are able to access general bus services can of course also continue to use their concessionary passes in line with terms and conditions.

It was amazing to learn recently that local residents have given up more than 10,000 hours of their own time in the last 12 months as part of the Council’s volunteer scheme.

This milestone serves as a useful opportunity to remind people about the various ways they can give something back to the community – and gain valuable experience.

Volunteer roles have included community centre activities, working with vulnerable adults, event management and promoting initiatives to improve local communities.

Now the Council is looking to recruit new volunteers for day care centres, in community roles, adult learning, as health champions or as part of the recently-launched cancer awareness team.

Volunteering with the Council is an opportunity to meet new people, gain a reference and, where apropriate, undertake a qualification. In fact, more than 50 volunteers have received formal qualifications and specialist training to help them increase their chances of securing work in the future.

We ensure that volunteers’ own needs and goals are at the heart of their placement – whether it’s building confidence, giving something back, learning new skills or providing a pathway into employment, education or training.

Volunteering is something to be really proud of and can be a life-changing experience. If you would like to find out more, please call 01582 54 87 73 or email volunteering@luton.gov.uk
Seven Green Flags for our town’s great parks

Luton is celebrating a huge coup after seven of the town’s parks were awarded Green Flag status this summer.

In recent years Wardown, Stockwood, Memorial and Brunwood Parks, as well as Kidney Wood have all been recognised among the UK’s leading green spaces.

This year People’s Park and Manor Road Park also achieved the accolade. Over the past year several ‘friends of the parks’ groups have worked hard alongside Council staff to improve their local areas by carrying out a variety of projects.

Friends of Manor Park secured almost £50,000 of funding to upgrade the formal gardens, resurfacings, pathways, landscaping and installing new benches and noticeboards.

People’s Park is a diverse area and includes a County Wildlife Site which is home to the Great Pignut, a plant species only found locally.

The park has benefited greatly from the involvement of local people over the last few years, with events including a Jubilee Tea Party in the recreation area and the Love Luton Festival which took place on the area known as Pope’s Meadow.

The Friends of High Town have also worked tirelessly alongside the Council and the local Groundwork Trust to secure funds to plant hedges and make access improvements.

At Kidney Wood a number of local businesses and organisations have got involved in woodland management activities as part of their community and social responsibility programmes.

Groups of volunteers regularly give their time to undertake tasks in Luton’s parks and green spaces or to organise events for local residents to enjoy.

Cllr Mohammed Ashraf, Portfolio Holder for parks, said: “I am delighted that all seven parks that we nominated for Green Flag awards were assessed as meeting the award criteria.

“We are extremely proud of our parks and green spaces in Luton, our own employees and a lot of local people work hard to ensure that everyone can enjoy them.

“Parks are a fantastic place to unwind and very important to the local economy, helping to attract people and businesses to the town. I am pleased that we now have seven parks that are recognised as being among the best in the country.”

The Council has launched a pilot scheme asking residents to confirm online that they are entitled to the single person discount on their council tax.

An initial batch of 2,000 letters was sent to residents in July, asking them where possible to register online and confirm their entitlement. A further 25,000 customers will receive letters by December.

Cllr Robin Harris, Portfolio Holder for finance, explained that by using the online service residents will be helping the Council save money and allow staff to focus on helping vulnerable customers.

He added: “We are already really pleased with the success of the pilot and are listening carefully to what our customers are telling us.”

Further details are available at www.luton.gov.uk – see the link to council tax on the home page.

Essential works at Chapel Viaduct

Motorists are advised of overnight road closures to allow for essential maintenance on the Chapel Viaduct over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The eastbound carriageway will be closed for three nights from the evening of Friday 23 August until the morning of Monday 26 August. A signed diversion will be in operation via Telford Way, Guildford Street and Park Viaduct.

This work was originally programmed for late July but had to be postponed for reasons beyond the Council’s control. The bridge serves the town’s busy inner ring road and any disruption is inevitable while work takes place to replace expansion joints.

The road closures will take effect from 8pm-6am each evening. However, the carriageway will remain open from 6am-8pm each day. All works are dependent on dry weather.

Similar works to the westbound carriageway of Chapel Viaduct and Park Viaduct have recently been completed.

Mayor’s Award

Mayor of Luton Cllr Sheila Roden will be honouring an outstanding resident at the upcoming Community Awards.

The Mayor’s Award category recognises ordinary people who make an extraordinary difference to the lives of others.

It could be that they help the vulnerable or disadvantaged, give their time to charity or fundraise for different groups. Anybody can be nominated.

Closing date for nominations is Monday 2 September. Shortlisted nominees will be contacted before the ceremony on Thursday 24 October at Venue Central in Leagrave Road.

Go to www.communitycommunications.co.uk for further details or to contact the Council’s community communications team on 01582 547262 or go to www.everythingregulation.org.uk/
Young riders’ free training

A popular training course supported by the Council for young moped, scooter and motorbike riders is to continue for a third year.

Take Control is a free half-day course delivered by local instructors on behalf of the Motorcycling Matters partnership and is open to any young rider aged between 16 and 20 years who lives, works or attends education within Bedfordshire or Luton, and has completed their Compulsory Basic Training.

Chief Insp Richard Hann, from the Beds and Herts roads policing unit, said: “Young riders are over-represented in our casualty statistics. With improved hazard perception and anticipation capabilities some of these collisions may have been avoided. Additional training, such as Take Control and BikeSafe, enables young riders to increase their riding knowledge and abilities, and potentially prevent these collisions occurring.”

● For further information visit www.motorcyclingmatters.org/training/take-control

Winner Ben

Winner of the Green Line 757 competition featured in the July/August edition of Lutonline, claiming a fabulous family weekend in London, was Ben Woodley, of Luton.

Love parks?

Tell us what you think about Stopsley Common and Lothair Road Recreation Ground.

Visit www.GreenSTAT.org.uk

www.luton.gov.uk/parks

Farewell picnic for headteacher Lynn

William Austin Infants hosted a whole-school picnic to celebrate the retirement of headteacher, Lynn Alexander at the end of the summer term after a career in education stretching back more than 36 years.

Mrs Alexander worked in Luton schools for 28 years, including 16 years as head of William Austin Infants.

She said: “I have loved being a headteacher. It has been incredibly rewarding to work with infant school children and their families, making sure that children get the best possible start in their education so that they achieve high standards, and that school is a happy place for them.”

“At William Austin we have employed lots of very talented and committed teachers and support staff who all work together to do the best they can for the children. I have also been very fortunate that our school governors have been committed and supportive and this makes a huge difference.”

Mrs Alexander oversaw many changes at the school including its expansion from 360 to 450 pupils aged from four to seven years, making it one of the largest infant schools in the country.

She was particularly proud of taking part in Luton’s ‘Flying Start’ initiative that the Council introduced before the Government’s Sure Start programme was rolled out nationally, which encouraged family learning and pre-school education.

Mrs Alexander added: “When I became a headteacher, fewer than ten children in our school had been to pre-school before they joined the reception classes and it showed, not just in their readiness for school but in their confidence. The development of children’s centres has made a real difference, not just for the children but for their families.

“I am very proud of the work that our school and others in Luton have done to promote family learning, and also of our community where children and families from different backgrounds get on together and enjoy sharing each other’s celebrations and special times.

“When I meet former pupils, many of whom are now in their early twenties and see how well they are doing, I feel proud that I have played a part in their lives.”

After spending some well deserved time with family and friends, Mrs Alexander is hoping to still be involved in education on a part-time basis.

Cllr Waheed Akbar, Executive Member with responsibility for children’s services, said: “Lynn’s wealth of experience has been invaluable in raising standards in Luton schools and we are very grateful for her many years of service, helping to give Luton’s children the right start in life.”

Cash boost to tackle empty properties

A number of empty shops and office units in Luton town centre will be transformed into 30 affordable homes for families in need, it was announced this summer.

Thanks to a £600,000 Government grant from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), the Council will work with Omega and Aldwyck housing associations to bring the derelict properties back into use.

Nationwide, the HCA scheme aims to deliver almost 2,000 new affordable homes by refurbishing empty commercial and non-residential properties.

Cllr Tom Shaw, Portfolio Holder for housing, said: “This is fantastic news for Luton as it will ensure a number of local families can move into affordable homes that they so desperately need. These properties have been a real eyesore so I am very pleased to have worked with both Omega and Aldwyck to make this happen.”

“Empty homes are not only a wasted resource and a financial burden for owners but also attract crime, arson, vandalism, squatting and antisocial behaviour. We will therefore continue to work closely with homeowners and residents across Luton to bring empty properties back into use.”

The Council has a number of programmes aimed at tackling the blight of empty properties, including helping homeowners with various grants that are available for renovations.

● If you own an empty house, or think a house is not being lived in, call 01582 54 63 70 or email empty.homes@luton.gov.uk

Don’t let fraud ruin your Hajj

With this year’s Hajj approaching from 13-18 October, Council trading standards officers are warning the local Muslim community not to fall victim to fraudsters who steal hundreds of thousands of pounds every year from pilgrims travelling to Mecca.

Criminals posing as legitimate travel operators often offer discounts of up to 50 per cent on the average price of the trip – but shortly before the departure the ‘operator’s closes, leaving the victim with no tour and no refund.

Some pilgrims have lost up to £20,000 and been left to sleep on Mecca’s streets.

The Association of British Hujjaj estimates only 10 per cent of Hajj fraud is reported, so the true extent of the crime is yet to be uncovered, leaving fraudsters free to operate undetected.

Hajj fraud victims are urged to report this crime and help bring these criminals to justice.

Cllr Mohammed Ashraf, Portfolio Holder for leisure and community, said: “Most Hajj tour operators provide a reliable service and offer the appropriate protections and accreditations. But please do your homework before booking and don’t ruin your once-in-a-lifetime trip.”

Tips to avoid becoming a Hajj fraud victim include:

● look for the ATOL (Air Travel Operators’ Licensing) mark on your travel operator’s promotional material
● check the company’s name on the online database – www.packpeaceofmind.co.uk
● before confirming your booking, check an ATOL certificate will be provided once payment has been made
● check the booking in writing
● To report a fraudster please call Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 or the police.
Love where you live!

Dozens of volunteers gathered for two community clean-up days recently, supported by funding from the Council’s Your Say Your Way programme.

In Lewsey an initiative was led by Lewsey Farm Empowered, a local organisation that aims to help young people achieve their potential through sports and other projects.

Attendees included councillors Hazel Simmons and Aslam Khan plus colleagues from the council’s community development service, with support from local businesses.

Teams were split into four groups and covered a large area of Lewsey Farm including Dominic Square, Brunei Park, Beadlow Road, Tomlinson Avenue and Sussex Close.

Youth team leader Mohammed Uzayr said: “It was great to see people come together for a common cause. This was an identified priority for Lewsey and we hope we can replicate this in areas all over Luton.”

“The event was a colossal success and bears testament to the positive community relations and collaborative work Luton is so good at delivering time and again.”

In Biscot an equally wide-ranging effort was led by the Young Muslim Organisation that also supported the Lewsey clean-up.

Leader Muhammed Muhit Miah said: “We organised this event because we feel cleanliness of oneself and the local environment is an integral part of Islam. We feel there is a huge difference between people saying we care for the environment and practically doing something about it. An activity such as this unites people of different backgrounds and breaks all barriers.”

Pupils to learn more about county’s history

The Bedfordshire and Luton Archive and Record Service has received a grant of £82,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help young people find out more about the rich history of their county over the next three years.

The award will pay for a learning officer to work with all 290 schools in the county and provide pupils with material they need for projects in topics including history, geography, religious education and science.

New documents, school visits and video conferences are planned. A spokesman said: “This grant will enable us to use the latest technology to really open up the archives to children and young people, helping them to learn about their heritage. The service will be looking for a passionate person to fill the role, someone who is brilliant at inspiring young people. This is a wonderful opportunity to support students and we want to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for the support in making this possible.”

Stockwood ‘excellent’ says TripAdvisor

Stockwood Discovery Centre has received the TripAdvisor certificate of excellence. The accolade is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding reviews on the world’s largest travel site website, and maintain an overall rating of four or higher out of a possible five.

Karen Perkins, director of arts and museums at Luton Culture, said: “We always strive to give visitors a warm, welcoming and wonderful experience at Stockwood Discovery Centre and are pleased that families and visitors of all ages love the place as much as we do.”

Chance to join the peace walk

Luton’s annual peace walk is taking place on Saturday 21 September this year, and will be supporting the town’s food bank.

Meeting at the Town Hall at 1.45pm, the walk will give people the chance to visit the Guru Nanak Gurudwara, the Holy Ghost Church and the Jamia Ghousia Mosque before finishing at around 6.15pm.

Everyone will be able to learn more about the cultures of others in a fun and informative way, and before setting off there will also be an opportunity to make donations for the food bank.

Recommended groceries include tins of fish, meat, vegetables, fruit or tomatoes, powdered or UHT milk, dried rice, fruit juice, 500g packs of breakfast cereals, pasta or sugar, biscuits, jam, rice pudding, custard, soup, baked beans, pasta sauce, teabags and instant coffee.

● For more information call 01582 41 69 46 or email info@lutonfaiths.org

Fitness fundraiser

A fundraising event organised by Active Luton at Inspire: Luton Sports Village in June could raise up to £3,000 in support of a Luton lung treatment centre.

Fitness activities, NHS health checks, a silent auction and book stall aimed to pay for a new exercise bike for the Luton Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Centre, whose customers regularly use Inspire’s gym as part of their rehabilitation from the life-limiting condition.

Are you affected by the Benefit Cap?

The Benefit Cap is a limit on the amount of benefit working age people can receive.

If you are directly affected by the cap and want more help and advice:
• read the letter and booklet sent to you by the Council
• see www.luton.gov.uk/benefitchanges
• speak to a specialist welfare benefits advisor on 0300 790 0345
• visit a specialist welfare benefits advisor at the Town Hall.

www.luton.gov.uk
Lots to enjoy at summer festivals

Luton’s summer of fun has been in full swing with community festivals taking place all over the town.

Residents from many wards have come together over the last few months to enjoy music, games, activities and much more.

Already festivals have been held in Park Town, Chaliney, Bushmead, Farley and Marsh Farm, giving local people the opportunity to meet others from their area.

The days also provided a valuable opportunity for residents to get involved in local decision making through the ‘Your Say, Your Way’ scheme.

Council employees attend the festivals to find out how residents think the area could be improved, and how, when possible, money should be spent to benefit the community.

Later, residents are given the opportunity to vote on projects which they think are most worthy of being supported at decision days.

Cllr Khtija Malik, Portfolio Holder for community development, said: “As ever, it’s fantastic that we have had another packed summer of fun family festivals.

“We know from how well the events are supported that local people thoroughly enjoy these events, and they provide a great opportunity for us to find out directly from communities how they think the area could be improved.”

● For more information about the Your Say, Your Way programme, visit www.luton.gov.uk/neighbourhood.

Checks to be made if you are buying a dog

If you are thinking about buying a dog, make sure you use a known or reputable source.

The Council recently seized two puppies under anti-rabies laws because their owners could not produce genuine legal documentation. One dog was found in the town centre and another in Stopsley following concern raised by members of the public.

Rabies is a serious infection. It invariably kills any creature, including humans, bitten by a rabid animal and can spread throughout a neighbourhood at an alarming rate.

Although the seized animals had pet passports from other European countries, neither had received a rabies vaccination. One of the two dogs seized was bought for £300, even though it would normally have been sold from a reputable source for up to £1,500.

Cllr Mohammed Ashraf, Portfolio Holder for trading standards, said: “If you are thinking about buying a puppy, check the paperwork carefully. If you have any concerns then call trading standards for advice on 08454 040506.”

Avoid dogs being sold at below the market price or from dealers in private houses as this may indicate the animal is an illegal import. Pay particular attention if the documentation is not in English.

Any imported animal with or without an invalid pet passport will be seized to protect this country from rabies and kept in quarantine. Unless the owner can prove the dog is here legally, they will be billed for costs which can be up to £1,000.

Both the seized dogs have now been vaccinated, placed in quarantine and appear to be free from the rabies virus.

● If you have any information about a dog which may have been illegally imported into this country, please call the Council on 01582 547202 or email tradingstandards@luton.gov.uk

Contact us to book your September place by emailing us at info@iodt.org or www.iodt.org

Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Sector - CTTLS

The Institute of Development and Training, also known as IODT, is a leading provider of high quality professional courses, designed to deliver the key skills that will help you take your career to the next level.

With over 15 years of experience designing work-based professional development training programmes, IODT is active across Luton and the UK. Our courses are geared towards maximising your expertise for increased business results, and keeping you in work. Our qualifications will help you to increase motivation, skills and gain a competitive edge to secure success for the future.

New You! IODT Diploma in Counselling - Entry Level to Level 4 qualification programme

Counselling has become an increasingly recognised and important social resource in recent years, as shown by the rise in counselling services across the UK and the corresponding rise in demand for qualified counsellors. The IODT Diploma in Counselling - Entry Level to Level 4 is designed to respond to this need by training participants to an adequate professional standard in terms of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, allowing them to obtain all of the necessary elements towards their professional accreditation. The programme provides SUPERVISION, and CLIENTS (required by BACP) to complete the course. We will provide an excellent high level of teaching and course materials to ensure you are trained to the highest possible standard.

18 Month Programme £8,000

New Courses! Level 3 Certificate in Personal Training

The course is amongst the industry gold standard for training which will allow you to immediately apply for work or set up your own business as a self employed Gym Instructor or Personal Trainer. This course is ideal for aspiring personal trainers who are looking to enhance their existing skill set. The course covers elements of nutrition, physiology, anatomy, customer service and health & safety, as well as focusing on how to develop appropriate personal training sessions for your students.

6 Month Programme £2,700
6 Week FAST TRACK Course £3,000

New Skills! Level 3 Certificate in Career Development Programme AWARD WINNING!!

Regardless of where you are in your career, there may be moments when you feel that you are not achieving your full potential or are not able to deal with changing circumstances as well as you would like. This award winning Level 3 Certificate in Career Development Programme, designed by IODT and accredited by NCFE, is designed precisely to create a challenging, however stimulating context in which delegates can focus on themselves to develop action plans for their continuous professional development and future growth.

12 Week Programme £995

Your Career Starts Here!

The Institute of Development and Training, also known as IODT, is a leading provider of high quality professional courses, designed to deliver the key skills that will help you take your career to the next level.

With over 15 years of experience designing work-based professional development training programmes, IODT is active across Luton and the UK. Our courses are geared towards maximising your expertise for increased business results, and keeping you in work. Our qualifications will help you to increase motivation, skills and gain a competitive edge to secure success for the future.

Accredited, Vocational Qualifications, Programmes for Personal & Professional Development

Contact us to book your September place by emailing us at info@iodt.org or www.iodt.org

Telephone: 07783471290
Freephone: 0808 1685904

Your Say, Your Way programme, visit www.luton.gov.uk/neighbourhood.

www.luton.gov.uk
New housing licence rules come into effect

A change in the Council’s rules means more local landlords now need to license their properties.

The new rules apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) which make up around a quarter of households in the private rented sector in Luton.

An HMO is a building, or part of a building such as a flat, occupied by unrelated people or households who share facilities such as a bathroom, toilet or cooking facilities.

From 1 August any property which is occupied by three or more people, forming two or more households, now requires a licence.

Previously landlords only required a licence if they were renting out three-storey HMOs shared by five or more people.

The Council has introduced the changes to improve the standard of local housing, as it will now have more power to stop landlords renting out unsuitable or unsafe properties.

The cost of an HMO licence will vary depending on the size and number of bedrooms.

Landlords registered to Luton’s Landlord Accreditation scheme are eligible for a discount. A full breakdown of the fee structure is listed on the Council’s website.

Housing officers have begun inspecting properties affected by these changes and the Council is able to specify conditions on the licence that the landlord must comply with or face legal action.

Landlords who are renting out properties that are damp, cold, dirty, unsecure, too small or without the appropriate number of bathrooms or toilets will be required to bring them up to a suitable standard before the licence is issued.

The Council is asking for landlords affected by these changes to get in touch now and avoid a fine. Licences will be valid for five years.

Clr Tom Shaw, Portfolio Holder for housing, said: “We are committed to improving the standard of housing of Luton and protecting the health and wellbeing of tenants who rent in the private sector. Applying a licence is a way of controlling the management and operation of HMOs to prevent landlords acting irresponsibly.”

Smaller HMOs, including one and two-storey properties, will also need to be licensed in the future, and announcements will be made closer to the time.

For information about the new rules, including details of the standard required and to license your properties, go to www.luton.gov.uk and search ‘HMO’. Alternatively call 01582 54 72 22.

Waulud Primary’s year six pupils signed off their time at the Marsh Farm school in style after putting on a fantastic performance of Malcolm Sircom’s musical ‘Olivia’ at the end of the summer term.

Having rehearsed over six weeks, the 50 schoolchildren involved welcomed around 120 parents and friends to the show.

Tiegan Dempsey excelled in the lead role while Devdan Ndagi and Femi Adesanwo gave great supporting performances as the whole cast delivered some fantastic songs.

The pupils also helped to create the backdrops and lent a hand to staff who made all of the period costumes.

Headteacher Patricia Griffin said: “All of our year six pupils spent a great deal of time preparing for the show and it was fantastic that their hard work paid off with such an amazing performance. It was a great way to engage our local community and get people to enjoy something together.”
A 20 minute health check can add years to your life

If you are aged between 40-74 years old and have not been diagnosed with heart disease, stroke, diabetes or kidney disease, contact your GP today

Free NHS Health Check

Helping you prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and dementia

Help us improve the health of your family, friends and community by spreading the word.
Council cuts costs by vacating offices

Having already vacated four buildings over the last two years, now the Council is looking to save more money for Luton’s council tax payers by moving out of another two offices in the town centre.

The programme involves a major refurbishment of the five-storey Town Hall Extension in Upper George Street which will not only extend its life by another 30 years but also enable the Council to vacate the floor it rents at Wesley House in Chapel Street, and also dispose of the four-storey Unity House owned by the authority in Stuart Street.

The savings generated in rent, service charges and associated costs make the project one of the most important currently being undertaken by the Council, explained Portfolio Holder for finance Cllr Robin Harris.

“It will lead to long-term savings of more than £1.1million every year that can be reinvested in frontline services in Luton, and will also generate a capital receipt that will go a long way towards offsetting the cost of the work,” he said.

With the Government’s ongoing deficit reduction programme tightening our purse strings seemingly at every turn, Luton Council has already had to save £36m over the last two years yet still has to find a further £49m by 2016.

“Money is extremely hard to come by for all councils at the moment, particularly in Luton, and at a time when we are having to review all the services we provide, it is also right that we continue to identify savings from within our own estate.”

The new-look Town Hall Extension will provide a fit-for-purpose and functional open plan working environment. By carrying out this work, and by extending the Council’s agile working policy, it will be possible to significantly increase the number of staff based there. The building will also be more energy-efficient.

Cllr Harris said: “I emphasise that the design is not in any way lavish. Budget for the programme is £5 million, which mostly needs to be spent on renewing the heating, ventilation, electrical and IT systems that are now up to 30 years old and at the end of their useful lives. And we will of course be making every effort to get the work done for less.

Much of the work is being done by the Council’s own team at very competitive rates, and sensible efficiencies are being made such as re-using desks and chairs wherever possible.”

Having completed on time and on budget the Inspire Luton Sports Village, Tokko youth space and major works at six Luton schools in recent years, projects with a combined value exceeding £200 million, the Council has shown that this is true. We have had lots of positive responses from the learners as to how much better they were feeling after attending the weekly sessions. 

Cllr Mohammed Ashraf, Executive Member with responsibility for parks, said: “We were extremely pleased to host this project in one of Luton’s Green Flag parks. Luton’s parks and green spaces are extremely important to the health and wellbeing of local people and provide opportunities for relaxation, meditation and quiet contemplation.”

Adult learners gain green skills

Nine people from Luton received the John Muir Award recently after completing a 12-week course on gaining green skills.

Run by Groundwork Luton & Bedfordshire and Mind BL MK, with the support of the Council and with funding from the Luton Trust Community Learning Fund, the aim was to help delegates increase their confidence and improve their mental wellbeing through exploring conservation and wildlife in Wardown Park and other green spaces in Luton.

Attendees constructed wooden insect homes, completed a tree survey and crafted bird feeders out of willow as well as learning about the history of Wardown Park. They were also able to develop information-sharing skills through photography, creative writing and displaying information for the public.

Vicky Duxbury, environmental education officer for Groundwork, said: “It is well documented that getting outdoors is good for your mental wellbeing, and this course has certainly shown that this is true. We have had lots of positive responses from the learners as to how much better they were feeling after attending the weekly sessions.”

Cllr Mohammed Ashraf, Executive Member with responsibility for parks, said: “We were extremely pleased to host this project in one of Luton’s Green Flag parks. Luton’s parks and green spaces are extremely important to the health and wellbeing of local people and provide opportunities for relaxation, meditation and quiet contemplation.”
Buy With Confidence
Looking for a good, honest trader?

See [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk) and [www.luton.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.luton.gov.uk/tradingstandards)
All businesses in the scheme are checked for customer service and compliance with consumer protection law.

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<td>Leagrave Motor Company</td>
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<td>Stopsley Village Cars Ltd</td>
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Improvements agreed for sheltered housing

The Council recently agreed a series of measures to improve the town’s sheltered housing service.

The recommendations were put forward following suggestions from staff, tenants and their families during a 90-day consultation on the future of the service.

The consultation revealed that scheme managers, often referred to as wardens, are highly valued by tenants who use them, particularly where they live on site.

It was therefore agreed that the managers will remain on site at ten sheltered housing schemes in Luton and both of the town’s ‘extra care’ schemes.

In addition, and as many schemes do not currently have on-site managers, the Council will be introducing neighbourhood scheme manager teams who will offer targeted support to tenants across the sheltered housing service.

The consultation revealed that tenants and their families during a 90-day forward following suggestions from staff, the Council has decided to employ a dedicated activities coordinator across the sheltered housing service to ensure there are more opportunities for tenants to get involved and socialise.

The authority further agreed to invest in a programme of works to improve the condition and security of Luton’s sheltered housing schemes and modernise communal lounges.

Cllr Tom Shaw, Portfolio Holder for adult social care, said: “The reason we have sheltered housing schemes is to ensure older people aged over 55 years can lead healthy, active and independent lives in their own homes. We therefore really appreciate all of the feedback we received from tenants during the consultation which has helped us shape the future of this important service.

“By telling us what is important to them, we have been able to come up with a positive solution which ensures tenants can have access to the right support when and where they need it.”

Skates on

Pupils at Sundon Park Junior School found a different way of keeping cool at the end of the summer term as an ice rink was installed to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity.

Children paid £1 each to wear a bandana, and a bench was unveiled in memory of year three pupil Reece Nelson.

Who’s sleeping in your house?

Have you got a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) who is staying with you for 28 days or more and you are not the parent, close relative or legal guardian with parental responsibility? If yes, in the eyes of the law you could be deemed to be a private foster carer.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement between a parent and another adult who has agreed to look after their child. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, someone previously unknown to the family, a member of the extended family such as a cousin, or great aunt but not a relative as stated in the Children’s Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or step parent.

Private fostering arrangements could involve:

- young people living apart from their families following a divorce or family breakdown
- teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children sent to this country to access education and healthcare
- parents working or studying involving unceasing hours, making it difficult to use ordinary day care or after-school facilities.

Why must the Council be informed?

By law, the parent and/or the private foster carer must inform the Council as it has a legal duty to ensure the child’s needs are being met, including making sure they are safe, well looked after, healthy, receiving a proper education, and living with someone who helps them value their culture and sense of identity. A specialist worker will work together with the child, parents and private foster carer to ensure the best possible arrangements are in place, and will offer support and advice to help the carer look after the child and provide them with details of any financial benefits they might be entitled to.

The parent retains parental responsibility for the child and must be available for any important decisions as well as provide the Council and the carer with as much information about the child as possible, including health records, dietary preferences, school records and hobbies.

For more information or to register a private fostering arrangement, telephone Luton Borough Council referral and assessment team on 01582 54 76 53.

www.luton.gov.uk
Society as a whole has never been less exposed to death. As a result, fear of the unknown means that people sometimes avoid others who are ill or dying, and do not feel able to support them.

“The thought of dying scares most people. However, a bit of thought now will make things easier for you and your family later.”

Why should I talk about death? Isn’t it morbid?

Not at all! We all live and we all die, and life is something to be celebrated through to death.

Talking about dying and death is something people understandably feel uncomfortable about, but it is something we all need to do – otherwise we (or our loved ones) may not die in the way we want.

Not talking about dying and death has many unwanted consequences:

- If relatives and loved ones do not know a person’s preferences, they may make decisions about care the dying person does not want
- Close relatives may be unaware of how best to help and support a person who is approaching death
- Those nearing death may feel isolated, distressed or frightened, which can impact on the level of pain they experience
- People may die without writing a will, or relatives may be unsure about funeral wishes

The stats

- 81% of people have not written down any preferences around their own death
- 25% of men and 35% of women have not told anyone about the funeral arrangements they would like to have after they die
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of us would prefer to die at home, yet of the 500,000 people who die each year in England, 53% die in hospital.
- Nearly two-thirds of people (60%) have not written a will – including a quarter (25%) of over-65s.

We want to get people talking. Look out for us around town during October.

www.dyingmatters.org

[Image of a person and a child]
Ramridge receives good Ofsted report

Pupils and staff at Ramridge Primary School are jumping for joy after being assessed as ‘good’ by Ofsted inspectors.

Having been issued with a ‘notice to Improve’ less than a year ago, staff and governors have worked hard for Ramridge to be recognised as a school that has made significant improvements.

Headteacher Carolyn Doherty said: “I feel very proud of the pupils, staff, parents and governors and I am lucky to have a committed team who are determined to achieve the best outcomes for our children.

“With support from Luton Borough Council we put detailed plans in place to deliver rapid results and we are very pleased that our hard efforts have paid off and the school is now on the right track.

“We appreciate there is still more work to be done and are determined to further improve the level of achievements.”

Ofsted said the achievement of pupils, quality of teaching, leadership and management, and behaviour and safety of pupils were all ‘good’.

Inspectors acknowledged improvements in learning and found evidence of outstanding teaching in some classes, with children in the nursery and reception making good progress. Gaps in achievement have closed.

The report said pupils enjoy attending school and work hard in lessons, highlighted valuable pupil visits to places of interest and also noted opportunities in art and music.

A strength is the school’s partnership with parents and the wider community.

Lead inspector Philip Mann said: “Senior leaders have created a positive and inclusive climate for learning where the efforts of pupils, staff, parents and carers are valued. And school leaders demonstrate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.”

Parents who spoke to the Government officials were full of praise for what the school has achieved in a short space of time.

The report recommended further raised achievement in English and maths, and improved links between governors and middle managers.

Cllr Waheed Akbar, Executive Member with responsibility for children’s services, said: “Early years learning is a great way to get young children off to a flying start with their formal education. Nurseries help pre-schoolers develop confidence, independence, communication and interpersonal skills.”

Would you like a greener garden next spring?

Why not make your own compost now?

Not only will it save you money, but you will be helping the environment too. By composting at home you can stop a third of your waste going to landfill.

Order your 220-litre* compost bin now for just £15 and get a second for only £7.50.

To take advantage of this exclusive offer from Luton Borough Council and Evergreener, visit www.luton.getcomposting.com

Please note a delivery charge of £5.49 per order also applies.

*(R.R.P £39.99) + height 900mms, diameter 740mms

‘Graduation’ from nursery school!

Graduation came several years early for pupils at Pastures Way Nursery School when they took part in a ceremony to mark the end of their time there.

Their graduation took place in the school’s garden where more than 85 pupils donned mortar boards and gowns to receive certificates in front of around 300 parents and grandparents.

Headteacher Jan Allen said: “It was an opportunity to celebrate with parents their children’s learning and to acknowledge the progress they have made. It was also a fitting end to a school year and a great way to say goodbye to our pupils who are moving on to infant school.”

Cllr Waheed Akbar, Executive Member with responsibility for children’s services, said: “Early years learning is a great way to get young children off to a flying start with their formal education. Nurseries help pre-schoolers develop confidence, independence, communication and interpersonal skills.”
Be part of the challenge

Stoptober is back. All over the country people will take the 28 day challenge to stop smoking during October. Last year over 160,000 people successfully quit smoking for Stoptober, thanks to the wide range of quitting support on offer.

For more information search ‘Stoptober’ online or visit www.smokefree.nhs.uk/stoptober. Alternatively, speak to your local Stop Smoking Service on 08000 130845 or text Quit to 60003.
Firms offered cheaper energy

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Luton are being given an opportunity to join a collective energy switching scheme that could mean a massive reduction in their bills.

The Council has joined six other local authorities in the ‘Ready to Switch for Businesses’ scheme to help local SMEs access cheaper gas and electricity prices and free advice on how to avoid pitfalls such as expensive rollover contracts.

The scheme encourages businesses to come together to use their potential bulk-buying power to get a better deal on energy prices.

It works by means of a reverse auction in which suppliers will be invited to bid the lowest price to provide the energy to all SMEs signed up. Businesses will then be sent an offer to switch provider at lower rates.

There is also no obligation for businesses to switch at the end of the process – every registered SME will receive their own personal offer and it’s up to them whether they accept or not.

Cllr Hazel Simmons, Leader of the Council, said: “Business success is vital for Luton so we are doing everything we can to help local SMEs prosper. This scheme is easy to join and will help business owners who do not have the time or do not know where to start looking for a new energy supplier. “This is a great opportunity to get cheaper energy by simply registering your details. There is absolutely nothing to lose.”

Chief executive Trevor Holden added: “Lots of Luton households are already saving money thanks to the domestic energy switch scheme and we want to give local businesses the same opportunity in order to help them grow and boost the local economy.

“We know that many SMEs struggle to find the best deal for their gas and electricity because they are not as readily available as domestic ones. We also know that a lot of owners are paying up to 35 per cent more than they need to. The more people that sign up the better, as this will drive better deals for businesses.”

The Council has selected two brokers to manage the scheme on behalf of Luton businesses – ‘Ichoosr’ and ‘Lumina’.

For more information or to register go to www.readytoswitch.co.uk or www.luminaenergy.co.uk. All that is needed is the name of your current supplier, tariff and energy usage. Registration is open until 16 October 2013. For more information about the brokers call 01582 54 79 70.

Who is affected by cancer?

Worried about cancer affecting your friends and family?

Why not join the Luton Cancer Awareness Team?

Would you like to help others understand more about the disease, and how they can help themselves?

We’re on the lookout for volunteers to reach out within their own community to help people spot the signs and symptoms of cancer, get them signed up to screening programmes and seek help early if they have concerns.

More and more effective treatments are now available for cancer. But doctors need people to understand risks and symptoms and to contact them if they are worried so any treatment needed can be offered quickly.

In Luton in particular, many people are consulting their doctors about symptoms very late, which may affect their chances of surviving the disease. This situation affects some communities more than others.

If you care about the health of your community and think you have the qualities to help people know the risks and spot the early signs of cancer, we can offer you training and support for a really rewarding volunteering role – one that will offer you proper development opportunities and give real benefits to people in your community.

Interested in volunteering?

You can get in touch by calling tel: 01582 548773 or emailing volunteering@luton.gov.uk

Help us beat cancer in our communities
Are you worried about your company's high energy bills?

Do you want to make savings?

Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) in Luton have a unique opportunity to join a collective energy switching scheme that could mean massive reductions in your energy costs.

Luton Borough Council has joined the scheme to help give local SMEs access to cheaper gas and electricity prices, as well as free advice on how to avoid energy contract pitfalls such as expensive rollover contracts.

The scheme encourages businesses to come together to use their potential bulk buying power to get a better deal on energy prices.

Energy suppliers will be invited to bid the lowest price to supply the energy to all SMEs signed up to the scheme. Businesses will then be sent an offer to switch provider at lower energy rates.

For more information or to register go to www.readytoswitch.co.uk or www.luminaenergy.co.uk

All that is needed for the registration process is the name of your current supplier, tariff and energy usage. Registration is open until 16 October 2013.

Telephone: 01582 54 79 70

“There is absolutely nothing to lose as there is no obligation to accept any resulting offers.”

“This is a unique opportunity to get cheaper energy by simply registering your details.”

www.luton.gov.uk
Come along to our funding fair

 Anyone who works in the voluntary sector is invited to make a note in their diary for the Luton Funding Fair on Wednesday 18 September.

 The event takes place at Futures House Community Halls, Marsh Farm, LU3 3QF from 10.30am-4pm, when some of the UK’s most prominent funders will be represented.

 The day will provide a fantastic opportunity for people who are looking for financial support to network and receive advice, with a number of workshops led by national funders including the BIG Lottery Fund, Charity Bank and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

 Everyone is welcome, regardless of whether you represent an organisation who would like hundreds of pounds or thousands.

 Cllr Sian Timoney, Portfolio Holder for economic development, said: “This funding fair gives local groups the opportunity to meet some of the largest investors in the country.

 “Now more than ever it is crucial that voluntary groups know about all of the support that is available to them, so I would really encourage everyone to come along.”

 Workshops will run on a first-come, first-seated basis, so attendees should allow plenty of time to secure their place.

 To book your place at the event, email events@voluntaryworks.org. For more information, call 01582 54 62 71.

 Help to change your life

 The Council is also joining forces with Job Centre Plus, Community Interest Luton and other local organisations to support Luton’s Employment, Training and Skills Fair on Tuesday 10 September at Venue Central, 15-17 Chapel Street, Luton LU1 2SE, from 10am to 4.30pm.

 The free event is designed to help local employers, and education and training apprenticeship providers and career advisers, to meet potential candidates and showcase the wide variety of training, volunteering, apprenticeships and job opportunities available in Luton.

 Cllr Sian Timoney, Portfolio Holder for regeneration, said: “We want to help our workforce gain new skills and to help local employers address any recruitment issues and skills gaps. It is nonsense to suggest there are no jobs or relevant training opportunities in Luton and the Council is doing everything it can to help and encourage people to expand their minds, find jobs and prepare for the future.”

 Everyone is welcome including those still at school through to ages 50 years plus, including young people not in education, employment or training, graduates, lone parents, lifelong learners, experienced working adults and anyone unemployed.

 Zoo provides New Horizons

 Whipsnade Zoo and the Council’s New Horizons service have been working together over the last six months to deliver training opportunities for adults with learning disabilities.

 Trainees have been involved in a number of on-site jobs including gardening, painting, cleaning and feeding animals.

 Each week the team were given tasks by the supervisors at Whipsnade and they worked through the morning to complete these to a standard replicated in real employment.

 Cllr Mahmood Hussain, Portfolio Holder for adult social care, said: “We are very grateful to the team at Whipsnade for letting people trial new challenges and gain vital work skills. The confidence and self-worth of adults with learning disabilities can really be boosted through developing new skills which helps them reach their true potential.”

 “If you are interested in running a similar scheme with New Horizons, contact Chris Brandom on 01582 54 83 71 or email christopherbrandom@luton.gov.uk"

 LASAGNE
 Recipe by Lyndon Gee

 This can be made in advance so is perfect for entertaining as you can completely assemble the dish, then pop it into the oven one hour before it’s needed. The recipe is enough for a big lasagne so halve the ingredients for a smaller version or divide into two separate dishes and freeze one ready for next time!

 | SERVES: 6 |
 | PREP: 30 mins |
 | COOK: 65 mins |

 HOW TO PREPARE

 1 Add oil to a large pan, cook the onions until lightly browned, then add the minced beef and cook for three to four minutes, stirring regularly until cooked through and breaking up any clumps with the back of a spoon.

 2 Now add the mixed vegetables, garlic, herbs, pepper and tomatoes. Mix well, turn down the heat, cover and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

 3 Meanwhile, dissolve the cornflour and 1 of dried basil

 4 In a lightly-oiled ovenproof dish (around 5-6cms deep) spread a spoon of remaining cheese.

 5 Bake at 180ºC/gas 6 for 45 minutes until the top is golden brown.
Helping you get around

Meet Travel Luton champion William Billington

William Billington, a 75-year-old marathon runner and a member of the Stopsley Striders club, signed up to Travel Luton in May when he spoke with an adviser on his doorstep about his local travel patterns.

He requested information about local walking and cycling routes and took a Travel Luton challenge to keep walking regularly.

The Travel Luton team had the chance to go back and speak to William recently as he was nominated as a project champion – an inspirational individual helping motivate other residents in Luton to use active travel.

He said: “The Travel Luton project is a great idea. Getting people active is good, and it has all the information to help people get started with an active lifestyle.”

William has been running competitively for more than 20 years, winning several trophies and raising money for various cancer related charities in the process. He first took part in the London Marathon in 1988 and completed the gruelling 26-mile course in a very respectable 3hrs 28mins.

More recently he has won veterans titles in the Three Counties League, at Sandy and in the Doug Anderson Memorial 5k.

On running, William said: “It’s great. You meet lots of people, it’s cheap and it’s good for your health.”

And advising people who want to do more walking to benefit their health, he added: “Go to your doctor and get checked out first to make sure you are OK. Good shoes are essential too. Then just get out there and do it – run and walk, and be sure to pace yourself.”

We hope William’s experience is an inspiration for you to take up walking or running in Luton. To find out more about local walking routes in the town, contact the Travel Luton team today on 0800 0281 755 or email info@travelluton.org.uk and we can provide you with maps and advice to get started.

The Upper Lea Valley Way is open!

Eric Morecambe’s daughter Gail Stuart unveiled a portrait of her father in sheet steel to mark the opening of the Upper Lea Valley Way.

The cycle way and footpath links our town, where the much-loved comedian was a director of Luton Town Football Club, with Harpenden, where he lived.

Situated across the valley from the Luton Hoo and its walled garden, the portrait bench also celebrates Capability Brown, the landscape designer who remodelled its grounds in the 1700s, and the First Luton Sea Scouts, formed in 1909, who use the lakes on the River Lea.

The route was developed by Sustrans in partnership with Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils.

It forms part of National Cycle Route 6 which continues to St Albans one way and to Leagrave the other.

Access points are near Luton Airport Parkway, by the Lower Harpenden Road, or at Waveney Road, Harpenden. There is also a new leaflet for the Upper Lea Valley printed by Sustrans which can be downloaded from www.travelluton.co.uk/cycle

www.travelluton.co.uk
Cigarette U-turn disappointment

Luton Council is disappointed following news that the Government will not introduce legislation requiring standardised packaging on cigarettes and other tobacco products.

With more than 200,000 young people in the UK starting to smoke before their 18th birthday each year, the need for action was clear, said Luton’s director of public health Gerry Taylor.

Luton says evidence showed that cigarettes in plain standardised packaging are far less attractive to young people, and that the health messages on boxes are noticed more on plain packs. Standardised packaging also helps to dispel myths that some cigarettes are ‘safer’ than others, which in turn means that young people would be less likely to take up smoking.

In Luton, smoking attributable deaths from heart disease, hospital admissions and the number of pregnant women who continue to smoke are particularly high. Ms Taylor, who is also chair of the Tobacco Free Luton Partnership, said: “We want to do absolutely everything we can to ensure that as few young people as possible take up smoking. Many cigarette packs these days are designed to look ‘cool’ and particularly appealing to young people. It is simply unacceptable to use packaging to try to influence young people.

“The introduction of standardised packaging would have helped to reduce that appeal, and we are disappointed that the legislation was turned down.”

For help and advice on quitting smoking, visit the Tobacco Free Luton website www.tobaccofreeluton.co.uk, call the NHS Stop Smoking Service 0800 013 0845 or text Quit to 60003.

Neighbourhood Watch AGM

The annual general meeting of Luton’s Neighbourhood Watch takes place on Tuesday 24 September from 7-9pm at Futures House, The Moakes, Marsh Farm LU3 3QB.

The meeting will be looking at how local Neighbourhood Watch can adapt to meet community needs with police and Council resources being reduced.

Everyone is welcome. For more information about becoming a volunteer or co-ordinator call 07580 326426 or email nhw4luton@gmail.com.

Councillor advice surgeries

Labour

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<th>Councillors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barnfield</td>
<td>Rachel Hopkins</td>
<td>Second Saturday of every month, 10.30am-12noon, Bushmead Community Centre, Hancock Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscot</td>
<td>Mohammad Ayub Naseem Ayub Tahir Khan</td>
<td>First and last Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, Bury Park Community Centre, 161 Dunstable Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalneley</td>
<td>Khtija Malik Tom Shaw Tahir Malik</td>
<td>Every Saturday, 10am-12noon, Chaul End Community Centre, 515 Dunstable Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>Melvin Cato</td>
<td>First and third Saturday of every month, 9.30-11.30am, Hart Hill Adventure Playground, Brooms Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallow</td>
<td>Mohammed Ashraf Mohammed Farranq</td>
<td>Last Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, and last Thursday of every month, 3-5pm, Dallow Community Centre, 234 Dallow Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farley</td>
<td>Sian Timoney Mahmood Hussain Robin Harris</td>
<td>Every Saturday, 10am-12noon, Housing Office, Farley Community Centre, Delphine Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hightown</td>
<td>Andy Malcolm Rosanna Whittaker</td>
<td>Every Thursday, 10am-11am, Hightown Community Centre, Concorde Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leagrave</td>
<td>Waheed Akbar Shelia Roden Desline Stewart</td>
<td>First and third Saturday of every month (excluding August), 10am-12noon, Hockwell Ring Community Centre, 65 New Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewsey</td>
<td>Joan Bailey Aslam Khan Hazel Simmons</td>
<td>Every Saturday, 10am-12 noon, Lewsey Farm Community Centre, Landrace Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limbury</td>
<td>Jacqueline Burnett Stephen Lewis</td>
<td>Second Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, Leagrave Library, Marsh Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwell</td>
<td>Roy Davis Don Worlding</td>
<td>First and third Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, Futures House, Marsh Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Green</td>
<td>Yaqub Hanif Mark Rivers Mohammed Zia</td>
<td>Every Saturday (excluding August), 10-11.30am, 3 YeoVil Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saints</td>
<td>Mohammed Riaz Raja Saleem Asma Rathore</td>
<td>Last Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, Saints Community Centre, Solway Road North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Keir Gale Amy O’Callaghan Dave Taylor</td>
<td>First and third Saturday of every month, 10.30-11.30am, Park Town Community Centre, Bailey Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundon Park</td>
<td>Syd Knight</td>
<td>First Saturday of every month, 10am-12noon, Sundon Park Community Centre, 210 Sundon Park Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liberal Democrats – please contact the numbers below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnfield</td>
<td>Martin Pantling</td>
<td>07944 048 759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>David Franks</td>
<td>41 49 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopsley</td>
<td>Jenny Davies Michael Dolling</td>
<td>72 69 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundon Park</td>
<td>Doris Hinkley</td>
<td>59 25 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigmore</td>
<td>Peter Chapman Diane Moles Alan Skepelhorn</td>
<td>48 06 29, 72 32 93, 75 89 36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservatives – please contact the numbers below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnfield</td>
<td>Gilbert Campbell Katie Foord</td>
<td>57 22 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icknield</td>
<td>Michael Garrett John Tittmass</td>
<td>57 56 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MPs’ Advice Surgeries

Luton’s two MPs, Kelvin Hopkins and Gavin Shuker, hold regular Advice Surgeries and are always happy to help their constituents.

Luton North

Kelvin Hopkins MP

Covering: Barnfield, Bramingham, Chalneley, Icknield, Leagrave, Lewsey, Limbury, Northwell, Saints and Sundon Park

Please call Kelvin’s office on 488 208 for an Advice Surgery appointment

Luton South

Gavin Shuker MP

Covering: Biscot, Caddington, Crawley, Dallow, East Hyde, Farley, High Town, Round Green, Slip End, South, Stopsley and Wigmore

Please call Gavin’s office on 457 774 for an Advice Surgery appointment
As this year’s Summer Reading Challenge is drawing to a close, it is time to make sure all those creepy books have been read!

**Summer Reading Challenge:**
**Creepy House**
Ends 7 September
All Luton Libraries

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**Baby Time**
Monday 9 September, 10-11am
Stockwood Discovery Centre

Sensory play for babies and young toddlers aged from birth to two years. All children must be supervised by a parent or carer. Please book by calling 01582 546722.

£3.

**Talk Like a Pirate Day**
Thursday 19 September, 3.30-4.15pm
Luton Central Library

Lots of swashbuckling pirate activities for ages five+ years. Free, drop in.

**Toddler Time**
Friday 20 September, 10-11am and 12-1pm
Stockwood Discovery Centre

Fun and creative activities for three to five years. All children must be supervised by a parent or carer. Please book by calling 01582 548600.

£3.

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**Celebrate Roald Dahl’s Birthday**
14 and 21 September, various times
Various Luton Libraries

Lots of whizzpopping fun and games for five+ years. To find out more about times and venues visit www.lutonlibraries.co.uk

Free, drop in.

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Luton Central Library
St George’s Square, Luton LU1 2NG
01582 547418

Stockwood Discovery Centre
Old Bedford Road, Luton LU1 4LX
01582 548600

Wardown Park Museum
Old Bedford Road, Luton LU2 7HA
01582 546722

The Hat Factory
65-67 Bute Street, Luton LU1 2EY
01582 878100

Luton Library Theatre & Visitor Information Centre
are located within Luton Central Library
Exhibitions

**Monster Creepy Crawlies**
29 March – 3 November
Stockwood Discovery Centre

Discover a world of giant animatronic bugs. An interactive exhibition featuring human-sized models.
£3.95 adults, £2.95 children/concessions/Culture Card, £12 family of four (two adults maximum), £15 family of six (three adults maximum).

**A Stitch in Time**
Until 8 September
Wardown Park Museum

Closing soon – come and see a small collection of beautifully embroidered childhood samplers, sewn by local children in the 1800s. Be amazed at the level of their needlework skills and get an idea of why samplers were made.
Free, drop in.

**Hats off to High Town**

High Town shoppers may have already spotted a colourful new addition to High Town Road. **High Hats** was created by the High Town Team to help the local community discover more about the local hat-making industry.

The hat shop and micro-museum, which is being run by Luton Culture and local volunteers, is in the exact building in which a straw hat manufacturer named Minnie Bonner worked over a 100 years ago, from 1894 until about 1898.

**High Hats** has an assortment of hats and fascinators for people to look at and buy, including some hats that are perfect for ladies with weddings to attend! Prices range from £5–£200, and there is lots to capture the interest of locals too, with displays about local headwear company Snoxells and workshops on everything from creating your own fascinator to decorating hat-boxes.

**FACT FILE:**
Within High Town there were hat block manufacturers, bleachers and dyers, bonnet sewers and box makers, as well as suppliers of feathers, ribbons, flowers and other materials. The High Town area contained a mix of larger factories and houses with rooms built onto the back for use as family businesses. Many families produced hats which were sent to destinations all across the world.

**Where:** 77 High Town Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 0BW
**When:** Thursday and Friday 11am-6pm and Saturday 10am-5pm
**See:** www.lutonhats.com

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**Theatre and Dance**

Griffin Players present
**The Vicar of Dibley**
12 – 14 September, 7.45pm
plus Saturday matinee at 2.30pm
Luton Library Theatre

See www.griffinplayers.co.uk for more information.
**Museum Makers: The Launch**  
Saturday 14 September 2013, 12-6pm  
Wardown Park Museum

Come along. Find out. Sign up. A community team of Museum Makers is being challenged to transform Wardown Park Museum into a thriving hub of activity, innovation and culture for the whole community to enjoy. All ages are invited to drop in on the mayhem and dream some new dreams for the future of this special museum. Free, drop in.

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**Ghost Hunt**  
Saturday 7 September, 8pm-2am  
Wardown Park Museum

Dare you spend a night at haunted Wardown Park Museum? Strictly 21+ years. Booking is essential; please call 01582 546722. £30 per person. Coffee, tea and finger buffet included.

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**Luton Book Festival 2013**  
28 September – 2 November

If you love a good book (and who doesn’t?) then you will be delighted to hear that the wonderful world of words and imagination is throwing open its doors once again this autumn for the Luton Book Festival. With loads of events from talks with authors to illustration workshops, performance poetry to story slams, there is bound to be something for you. Check [www.lutonlibraries.co.uk](http://www.lutonlibraries.co.uk) for more information and updates on all Luton Book Festival events.

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**Groups and Societies**

**Luton Poetry Society**  
Last Saturday of the month, 2pm  
Luton Central Library

£3, free for Poetry Society members.

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**Luton Writers’ Group**  
First Friday of the month, 8-10pm  
The Hat Factory

Tickets are available at the box office; please call 01582 878100 or 547474. £5, £2.50 concessions.

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**Saturday Speakers**

A series of fun afternoon talks on a variety of topics. For further information visit [www.lutonlibraries.co.uk](http://www.lutonlibraries.co.uk) or call Neil Rowland on 01582 547426.
Music

Music on Mondays: Frith Piano Quartet
23 September, 7.45pm
Luton Library Theatre

Music on Mondays welcomes one of the finest chamber musicians playing in Britain today, pianist Benjamin Frith. This will be a celebration of Scotland and major works from the Celtic nations, showcased alongside early virtuoso showpieces by Beethoven. Box office: 01582 547474. £14, £8 concessions, under 18s free on the door.

Music on Mondays: Simon Callaghan
30 September, 7.45pm
Luton Library Theatre

A virtuosic solo piano recital specially devised by this brilliant young player. Callaghan will present music written by teenage composers alongside juvenile gems from Chopin and Prokofiev. Box office: 01582 547474. £14, £8 concessions, under 18s free on the door.

Coming Up

PDM Raw
Friday 4 October, 8pm
The Hat Factory

Come along to watch or to collaborate with other musicians, including house band Good Little Roses. If you are new to performing or have loved it for years, then this is your chance to show your talent. Register to perform at raw@lutonculture.com. Box office: 01582 878100 £3.

Friday Afternoon Films
Friday 18 October, 2.30pm
Stockwood Discovery Centre

Join us for tea, coffee and a selection of historic British Pathe films. Booking essential; please call 01582 548600.

Comedy: Gina Yashere
Friday 18 October, 8pm
Luton Library Theatre

16+ years
Box office: 01582 547474.
£15 in advance, £17.50 on the door.

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16+ years
Box office: 01582 547474.
£15 in advance, £17.50 on the door.

Children’s Theatre: Captain Calamity’s Adventures in Story Land
Wednesday 30 October, 2-3pm and 4-5pm
Luton Library Theatre

Captain Calamity presents an all-new three-man show. Follow his adventures through story land as he spreads cheer, solves problems and uses his special powers of magic, song, dance, balloons and bubbles to make your childhood dreams and wishes come true. £10, £8 concessions.
Try something new today at an Active Luton centre near you

- **Hightown Community Sports & Arts Centre**
  Concorde Street, Luton LU1 0JD
  Tel: 01582 419548

- **Lea Manor Recreation Centre**
  Northwell Drive, Luton LU2 3TL
  Tel: 01582 599888

- **Lewsey Sports Park**
  Pastures Way, Luton LU4 0PF
  Tel: 01582 604244

- **Inspire: Luton Sports Village**
  Hitchin Road, Luton LU2 8DD
  Tel: 01582 393230

- **Stockwood Park Golf Centre**
  London Road, Luton LU1 4LX
  Tel: 01582 413704

- **Stockwood Park Athletics Centre**
  Farley Hill, Luton LU1 4BH
  Tel: 01582 722930

Learn to Dive at Inspire

Spaces now available

From 5 years to adults

Find out more about this exciting sport at www.activeluton.co.uk/hydra/learn-to-dive, email Diving@activeluton.co.uk or scan this QR code with your smart phone. If it doesn't have a QR reader, there are lots of free apps to download.
**The Busway Made Simple**

A fast, frequent and reliable way to travel both during the day and after dark – services A and B run seven days a week, services C and E six days a week.

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**Getting on Board is Easy**

**Arriva**

*Service A from Parkside, Houghton Regis, to London Luton Airport via Dunstable and Luton Station Interchange.*

Monday to Saturday services approximately every 15 minutes at peak times (hourly in the late evening), plus regular Sunday service.

- **Journey time example:** Houghton Regis centre to Luton Station Interchange in just 25 minutes!

**Fare example:** £2 single, £3.50 return, £5.95 Tango return for two adults (plus two children at weekends and school holidays), £8 weekly.

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**Centrebus**

*Service B from Downside estate to Luton Station Interchange via Dunstable.*

Monday to Saturday services approximately every half-hour at peak times (no Sunday service).

- **Journey time example:** Downside Jardine Way to Luton Station Interchange in around half-an-hour!

**Fare example:** £2 single, £3.50 return, £5.95 Tango return for two adults, £8 weekly.

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**Centrebus**

*Service C from Beecroft estate to Luton Station Interchange via Dunstable.*

Monday to Saturday services approximately every half-hour at peak times (no Sunday service).

- **Journey time example:** Hillcroft, Dunstable, to Luton Station Interchange in around half-an-hour!

**Fare example:** Dunstable to Luton Station Interchange £2 single, £3.50 return, £8 weekly.

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**Centrebus**

*Service E from Toddington Green to Luton Galaxy Centre via Dunstable.*

Monday to Friday services approximately every half-hour at peak times, plus regular Saturday service (no Sunday service).

- **Journey time example:** Toddington Green to Luton Galaxy Centre in 26 minutes!

**Fare example:** Toddington Green to Luton Galaxy £3.50 single, £6 return, £22.50 weekly.

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**Services A, B and C from Dunstable Winston Churchill to Luton Station Interchange in under 15 minutes!**

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More information can also be found by visiting www.travelluton.co.uk
HIP-HOP TICKETS – THE SMART WAY TO GET AROUND

The multi-operator Hip-hop ticket, which is accepted on all Arriva and Centrebus services across Luton and Dunstable Zone (Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis), is being extended to allow passengers to travel on the Grant Palmer C service using the Busway.

Day and Week Hip-hop tickets were introduced two years ago in response to demand from residents for a ticket that allows travel with more than one operator, and will allow real flexibility as passengers can just turn up and go when the next bus arrives, whichever operator that may be.

Just jump on the service you need, and either show or buy a Hip-hop ticket from your driver.

Day tickets: £4.60
Weekly tickets: £18.50
For further information go to www.travelluton.co.uk

EASY-TO-USE BUS STOPS

All bus stops along the guideway and many others across Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis have new high-quality, well-lit shelters and level boarding so people can get on and off the bus without needing to step up or down. This will make journeys easier for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs.

To help passengers with disabilities or visual impairment, where space allows there are wide footways around the new bus shelters, and special paving currently used at pedestrian crossings marks the edge of the track at stops on the guideway.

REAL-TIME PASSENGER INFORMATION

Real-time passenger information displays provided at busway stops and elsewhere across the conurbation show when the next buses are due to arrive.

This system uses GPS tracking and can pick up on any congestion or incidents on the roads to provide more accurate predictions of bus arrivals.

It is also “REACT 3”-enabled so that visually impaired customers can be alerted when they are near a bus stop and can have this information read to them. REACT 3 key fobs are available from both Luton and Central Bedfordshire Councils.

SHARE THE PATH, SHARE THE JOURNEY

When the Busway opens, walkers and cyclists can begin sharing a new path built alongside.

Cycling and walking are easy ways to incorporate exercise into your daily routine, saving you money and getting you fit. Regular cycling or walking has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke and some cancers. Both are good for the environment too!

The entire route will have a high-quality surface, with crushed limestone and smooth blacktop sections.

This dedicated route will be the perfect way to link the town centres of Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis, and enable walkers and cyclists to enjoy the benefits of a traffic-free journey into work, college or the shops.

The path also provides a direct link to and from National Cycle Network Route 6 with connections to Leagrave and Harpenden. There are great opportunities to get out into the countryside with links to Blows Downs, Warden and Galley Hills and great views of Luton Hoo from the Upper Lea Valley.

LUTON STATION INTERCHANGE

As part of the busway works a new passenger transport interchange has been built at Luton Station. This includes 13 bus stands with high quality shelters, CCTV, help and information points, real-time passenger information and two large displays showing bus and train departures, weather and information.

Bicycle racks, which are covered, well-lit and monitored by CCTV, can also be found here.

More information can also be found by visiting www.travelluton.co.uk