

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 2 February 2016.

PRESENT

Cllr P A Duckett (Chairman)
Cllr J Chatterley (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs K Ferguson
R W Johnstone
J Kane

Cllrs T Swain
N Warren

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE
D McVicar

Members in Attendance: Cllrs S Dixon
R D Wenham
Deputy Executive
Member for Corporate
Resources
Executive Member for
Corporate Resources

Officers in Attendance: Mrs K Aspinall – Consultation Manager
Mrs D Broadbent-Clarke – Director of Improvement and
Corporate Services
Mr D Galvin – Head of Financial Performance
Mr J Partridge – Head of Governance
Mrs R Preen – Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mrs G Stanton – Chief Communications Officer
Mr C Warboys – Chief Finance Officer

Public 0

CR/15/53. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 December 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CR/15/54. Members' Interests

None.

CR/15/55. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel (OSCP) had recently convened and agreed future methods of working. In addition, Members were working closely with officers and

departments to support increased efficiency savings across the Council in light of the recent financial settlement.

CR/15/56. **Petitions**

None.

CR/15/57. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CR/15/58. **Call-In**

None.

CR/15/59. **Requested Items**

None.

CR/15/60. **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources informed the Committee that the tender for data centre management had recently been released. The tender would determine the Council's future IT model and enable the Council to evaluate IT security and defences. The Executive Member confirmed that no agreement had been reached with Unions regarding the National Joint Council Pay Award and that the national living wage would come into effect from 1 April 2016. Members were being encouraged to join a trial of paperless meetings and it was anticipated that by the middle of 2016 the Council would be fully paperless where possible.

Members discussed the need for robust infrastructure to support a paperless Council and the Executive Member confirmed that incompatibilities with some devices were being investigated.

In light of a Member query the Executive Member confirmed that the impact of National Living wage rises would be minimal in 2016/17 due to the fact that most staff were at or near the threshold. There would be a greater impact in 2019/20 when the living wage rose further. There were no plans to raise pay scales directly above the minimum tier but the Council always sought to pay appropriately and competitively.

In response to a Member concern the Executive Member reassured the Committee that the Council had a strong track record at identifying efficiency savings without arbitrary cuts to services.

CR/15/61. **Draft Budget, Capital, HRA and MTFP 2016/17**

The Chief Finance Officer delivered a report highlighting financial pressures, proposed efficiency savings, consultation timelines and a proposed increase to Council Tax of 3.95%, 2% being ring fenced for Social Care funding. The Committee were provided details of specific challenges and efficiencies

identified within the Improvement and Corporate Services directorate, particularly with regards to staff restructuring, shared services and a fundamental review of procurement procedures. The Executive Member highlighted the need to ensure the impact of the Capital programme on the Revenue Budget was kept to a minimum and careful management of the sale of Capital Assets. The Executive Member confirmed plans to rebuild reserves as it was not sustainable to use them in the long term.

In light of the report Members discussed the following:-

- The difficulties the Council faced in light of the government settlement and that any increase in Council Tax would not provide additional funds, but help mitigate the unexpected shortfall.
- Whether the level of NNDR the Council was permitted to retain was guaranteed; the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that figures were estimates but as accurate as possible and Central Bedfordshire's ability to attract business investment would help generate income.
- Whether income from housing growth had been taken into account and the pressure on children's services and adult social care as result of continued growth. The Executive Member was confident that housing growth figures could be maintained.
- Concerns regarding the government settlement taking into account the Council's reserves figures; the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the settlement was calculated based on the Council's capacity to raise council tax.
- Concern that the 2% ring fenced precept for adult social care would set a precedent for further government interventions by way of extended ring fencing. The Executive Member confirmed that another authority had a precept for flooding which suggested a possible trend whenever specific financial pressures were identified.
- The need to be proactive to secure appropriate business growth.
- As regards the Landlord Business plan (HRA Budget) concerns that changes to social rent would impact revenue streams and the ability to deliver social housing.
- The importance of maintaining investment as part of the Council's ongoing Landlord business plan.

NOTED the report and endorsed the proposed efficiencies as detailed within the Draft Budget, acknowledging the strong position with regards to debt repayment measures in the HRA.

CR/15/62. **Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy**

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources introduced a report, highlighting the Council's robust approach to Treasury Management. The Chief Finance Officer provided details of debt management, compliance with CIPFA indicators and the flexibility afforded to the Council due to the short term nature of interest rates.

AGREED that the Committee endorse the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy and acknowledge the strong performance of the department.

CR/15/63. Traded Services to Schools & Academies – Proposed charges for 2016/17.

The Head of Financial Performance and Support delivered a report which detailed charges for non statutory traded services to schools and Academies for 2016/17.

In response to a Member query it was confirmed that the Council sought to ensure any charges covered the costs incurred as it was against regulations to generate profit.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Committee endorse the document for Executive approval.**
- 2. That the Children’s Services OSC be requested to explore efficiencies with regards to debt recovery, pre payment methods and appropriate pricing of services.**

CR/15/64. Developing News and Information Services

The Chief Communications Officer provided Members with details of the changing nature of news and information services, improvements to digital channels across the Council and the importance of website access using any mobile device. Members were also advised of efficiency savings identified due to the withdrawal of distributing News Central to individual homes.

Members queried the methods by which the Council monitored online traffic and comments, including those received out of hours. The Head of Communication Channels and Campaigns confirmed that as many sites as possible were monitored and where appropriate responses provided.

Members commented that the process of developing the new website had been positive and queried whether it was possible to charge other agencies for using the Council’s website space. The Executive Member confirmed that ensuring the Council’s need was met was a priority but there was potential to expand and work with other agencies in the future.

NOTED the presentation

CR/15/65. Scrutiny Enquiry on Council Responsiveness

The Head of Governance provided Members with an overview of resident survey data detailing resident satisfaction relating to customer contact and influence on Council decision-making.

NOTED the presentation and agreed that a working party comprising Cllrs Duckett, Kane and Chatterley be created to progress the enquiry over the coming months.

CR/15/66. Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan

RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Resources OSC Work Programme be agreed subject to the addition of the following:-

- 1. The Assets Strategy – June 2016**
- 2. Digital Transformation – June 2016**
- 3. Working Smarter – June 2016**
- 4. Scrutiny of the Council’s Insurance Policies – October 2016**
- 5. The Shortfall of Later Life Housing Accounts – October 2016**
- 6. The Council’s Debt Collection Process – October 2016**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.02 a.m. and concluded at 1.30 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Date.....

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Developing our News & Information Offer

Corporate Resources Overview and
Scrutiny Committee – February 2016

Purpose of the item

- To share the changing nature of news & info consumption
- To update Members on how we are improving our digital channels
- To explain why we are changing our approach
- To explore local partnerships to develop other channels and build digital skills.

News consumption is changing

free become a member sign in subscribe search jobs dating more ▾ UK edition ▾

theguardian

home UK world politics sport football opinion culture business lifestyle fashion environment tech travel all

home › UK › media society law scotland wales northern ireland education

Newspapers

Newspapers now the least popular medium for news, says Ofcom study

Just 31% of the UK population read a newspaper to get their current affairs fix, down 10 points on 2014 figure



And so are our customer's preferences



95% use internet daily
72% have smartphones
86% have laptops



And older people?
94% use internet daily
44% have smartphones
73% have laptops



Majority prefer electronic communications rather than postal

So we have been developing our mix of conventional and digital media



Evolutionary change

Central Bedfordshire

Welcome to Central Bedfordshire Council

Search

Your council

BBQ this weekend? 1|2|3|4|5
Make it a great summer BBQ!

Follow us on [talk](#) [f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [y](#) [f](#) [l](#) [i](#) [k](#)

Summer survival!
We have top links to help you survive

Do it online

Apply for it now
Report it now
Pay for it now
Book it now

Apply for it now: Benefits, Blue Badge, Bus pass, Jobs
Report it now: Flytipping, Missed bin, Pothole, Street light

Where you are

Enter postcode e.g. SG17 5TQ
Find your nearest
Search

My account

What is my account?
[Log in](#) [Register](#)

Bin collections

- A-Z of services
- Benefits
- Business
- Council & democracy
- Council tax
- Environment & waste
- Health & social care
- Home & housing
- Jobs
- Learning & schools
- Leisure & culture
- Planning
- Travel, parking & roads

Tweets

Following
Followers
Favorites
Lists

Photos and videos

1 summer walk
15 pm on... 15 pm on...
Sunday 3rd July 28 Monday 3rd July 28

Who to follow - Refresh - View all

- Clare McKenna @Localpolice
- Jk Jordan @JkCorda
- Jack of Kent Blog @JackofKent

United Kingdom Trends - Change

#NationsThe KING IS BACK IN BEAN TODAY

Central Beds Council
@letstalkcentral
Central Bedfordshire Council - follow us for the latest news!
Central Bedfordshire - centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

6,709 TWEETS 538 FOLLOWING 2,990 FOLLOWERS

Tweets

- Central Beds Council @letstalkcentral
RT @what_would: There is a @metoffice heat health watch (level 2) for #Bedfordshire. Find out more info ... [ow.ly/1Zu6N](#)
Epsad
- Central Beds Council @letstalkcentral
This year's Summer Reading Challenge theme is 'Creepy House' and its now underway at our libraries! Find out more ... [ow.ly/n7o6N](#)
Epsad
- Central Beds Council @letstalkcentral
The deadline has been extended for our talent comp! Aged 12-18 & have a talent to share? Enter before 31 JULY ... [ow.ly/1Zp6T](#)
View photo
- Central Beds Council @letstalkcentral
@what_would Thanks for the #FF!
#Viewcounter
- Central Beds Council @letstalkcentral
You can now read e-magazines for free through our new library service. Find out more ... [ow.ly/n5dh6](#)
Epsad

Let's Talk Central is on Facebook.
To connect with Let's Talk Central, sign up for Facebook today.
[Sign Up](#) [Log In](#)

Central Bedfordshire

Let's Talk Central
1,863 likes · 252 talking about this

Community/Government
Central Bedfordshire Council, SG17 5TQ
0300 300 8000

About Us
FAQs
Fostering

Let's Talk Central
14 hours ago

The RAVE Bus is making its latest stop next week! It's the place to go to get information from us, our partner and voluntary organisations on social care, health and housing services.

It will be at Market Square, Leighton Buzzard next Tuesday so go along and find out more!

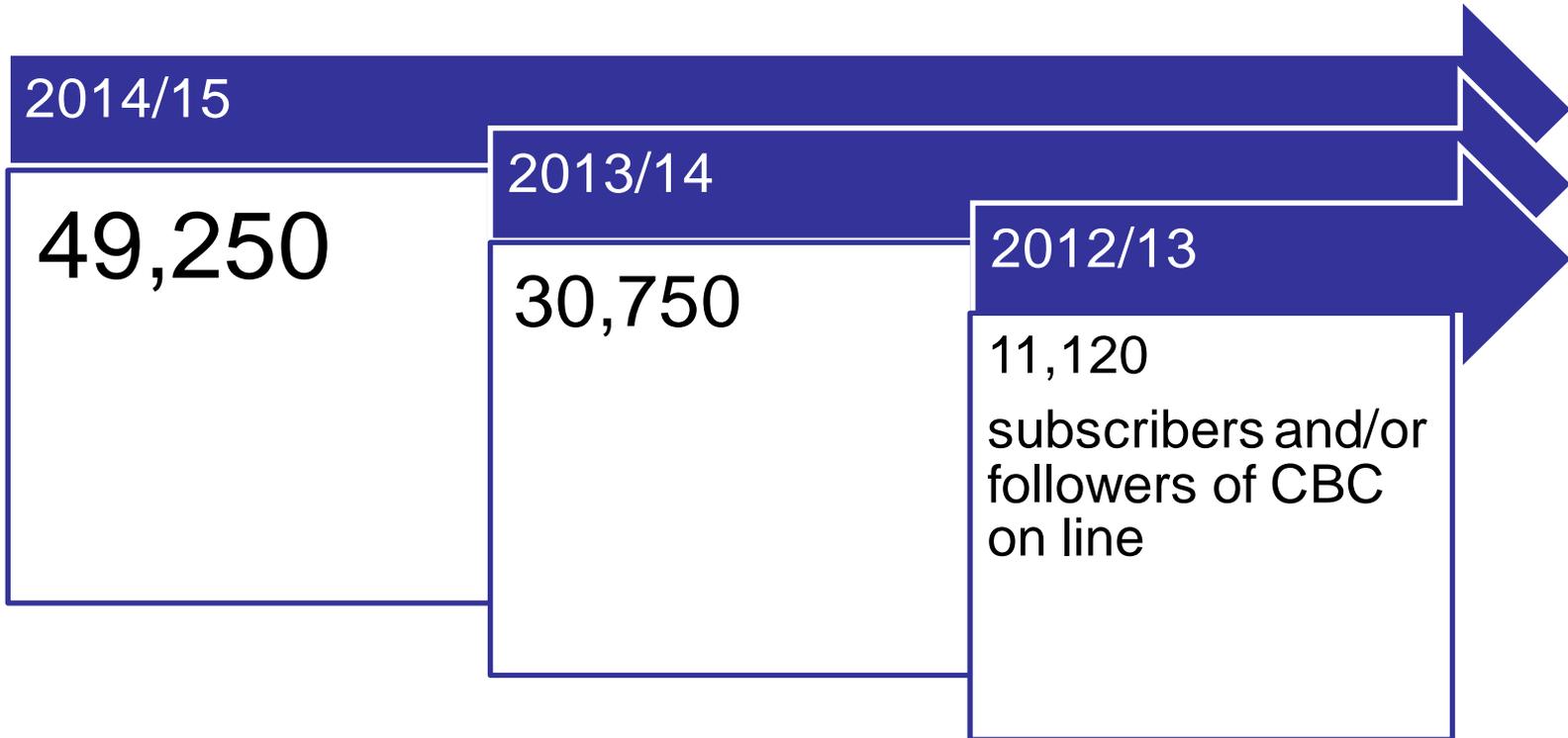
Recent Posts by Others on Let's Talk Central

- Jo Rainbow**
Also see you still have hundreds of complaints regarding th...
Wednesday at 14:21
- Jo Rainbow**
Any chance of you sorting out the potholes Canesworde R...
Wednesday at 14:14
- Central Youth Volunteering Project - North**
Any young people aged 13-18 living in Central Bedford loo...
Wednesday at 02:10

Central Bedfordshire Council
Updates

Central Bedfordshire

Our growing on line community



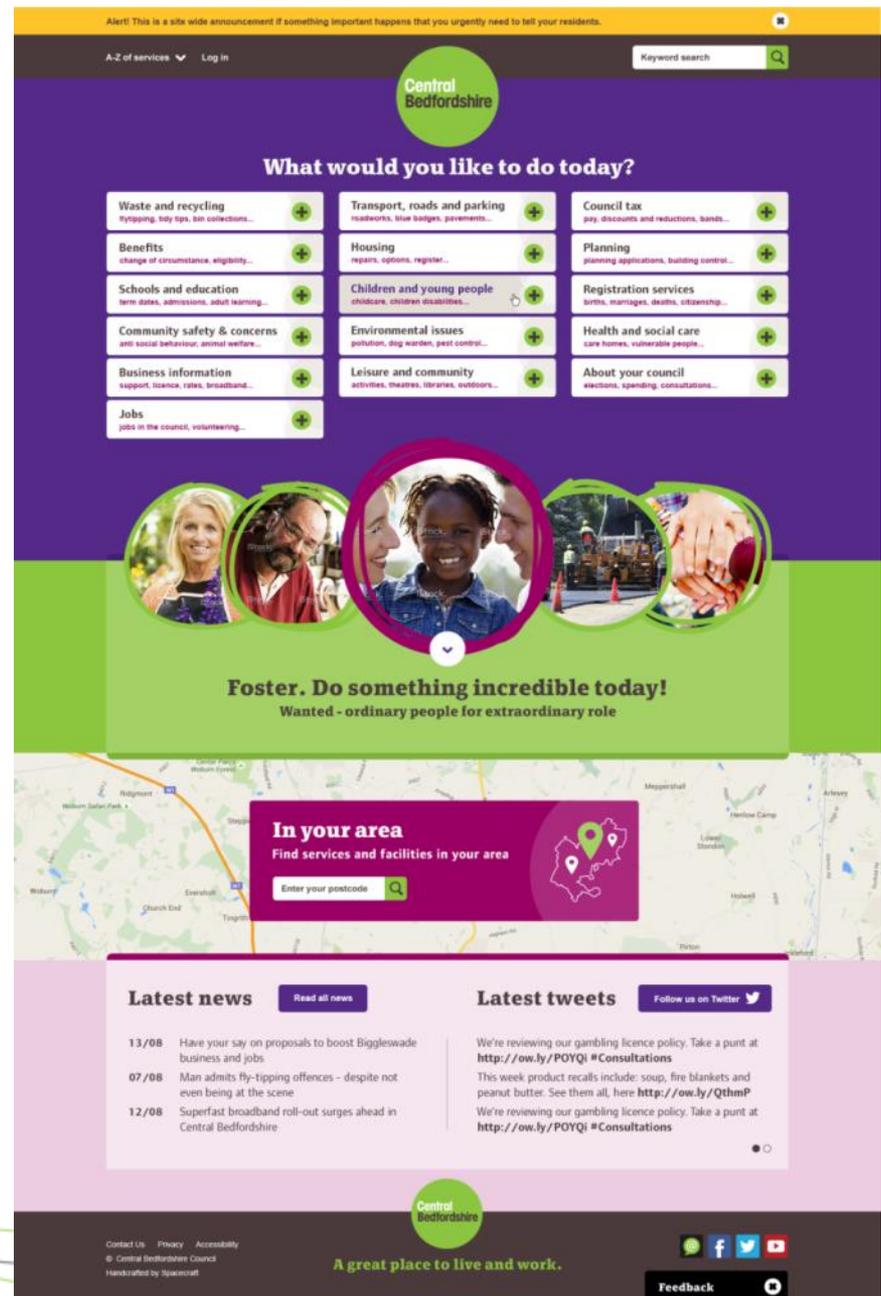
A further shift in the balance

- Increasing move from print to digital
- Conversational not broadcast comms
- Localised news content
- Human interest
- Images and film
- Maintaining media relationships
- Moving from quarterly News Central to annual Info Central
- Exploiting others publications and channels



Our new website:

- Refreshed content
- Enhanced design
- Improved marketing and news functions



Central Bedfordshire

Headline title of the promoted event.

Central Bedfordshire

Headline title of the promoted news story.

Home > Events

Events

25/07

Event number one
Location: Dunstable Time: 13:00 - 15:00
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas sagittis mi tortor, vel cursus risus pellentesque non. Vestibulum non metus dapibus fells.

More info Book

27/07 - 29/07

Event number two with a long title
Location: Dunstable Time: 13:00 - 15:00
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas sagittis mi tortor, vel cursus risus pellentesque non. Vestibulum non metus dapibus fells.

More info Book

01/08

Event number three
Location: Dunstable Time: 13:00 - 15:00
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas sagittis mi tortor, vel cursus risus pellentesque non. Vestibulum non metus dapibus fells.

More info Book

05/08 - 15/08

Event number four with a long title
Location: Dunstable Time: 13:00 - 15:00
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas sagittis mi tortor, vel cursus risus pellentesque non. Vestibulum non metus dapibus fells.

More info Book

25/07

Event number five
Location: Dunstable Time: 13:00 - 15:00
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Maecenas sagittis mi tortor, vel cursus risus pellentesque non. Vestibulum non metus dapibus fells.

More info Book

Central Bedfordshire

Home > A-Z of services > Log in

Keyword search

Foster. Do something incredible today!

Home > Could you foster?

Could you foster?

Wanted - ordinary people for an extraordinary role!

Every day, foster carers play a vital role in the lives of thousands of children and young people who come into local authority care for a variety of reasons. At Central Bedfordshire Council we have children of all ages, from babies to teenagers, waiting for someone to make that huge difference, but we really need people who can take sibling groups and teenagers.

We offer extensive support and training to all our carers during the assessment process and into the placement. We also provide dedicated mentor, social worker, financial support, which includes a paid fee and access to therapists.

We're interested in people from all backgrounds who want to take on this extraordinary role. The only thing we ask is that you have a spare room and you are able to drive.

If you would like to find out more about fostering, just give us your email address and we can send you more information. Of course, if you'd rather have a chat straight away, call us on **0300 300 8181** and one of our friendly staff can go through the process with you.

You can read more about fostering in Central Bedfordshire on [our website](#).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Enquire now

Enter your email address

Submit

Central Bedfordshire

A great place to live and work.

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Central Bedfordshire

Home > News

News

20/07

Have your say on gambling licensing policy

Central Bedfordshire Council is launching a consultation on its revised licensing policy around gambling. The new policy will close for up to six months to allow the work to take place.

16/07

Development of Bells Brook tidy tip to start in early August

Central Bedfordshire Council is launching a consultation on its revised licensing policy around gambling. The new policy will close for up to six months to allow the work to take place.

Peak preview of comedian's Edinburgh Festival show

Edinburgh Kevin Precious previews his new Edinburgh Festival-bound show "Gecko" on Thursday, July 16th at Lightfoot Buzzard Library Theatre.

Actor make his RSC debut

Edinburgh Theatre will screen the Royal Shakespeare Company debut of Makram J Khoury, one of the most talented actors, as he plays Shylock in Polly Findlay's production of The Merchant of Venice on Thursday, July 16th.

Business skills for women

Central Bedfordshire Council's "Business Skills for Women" programme has today been granted a further £50,000 of funding from the Skills Funding Agency.

More of the mobile library vehicle

Central Bedfordshire Council is launching a consultation on its revised licensing policy around gambling. The new policy will close for up to six months to allow the work to take place.

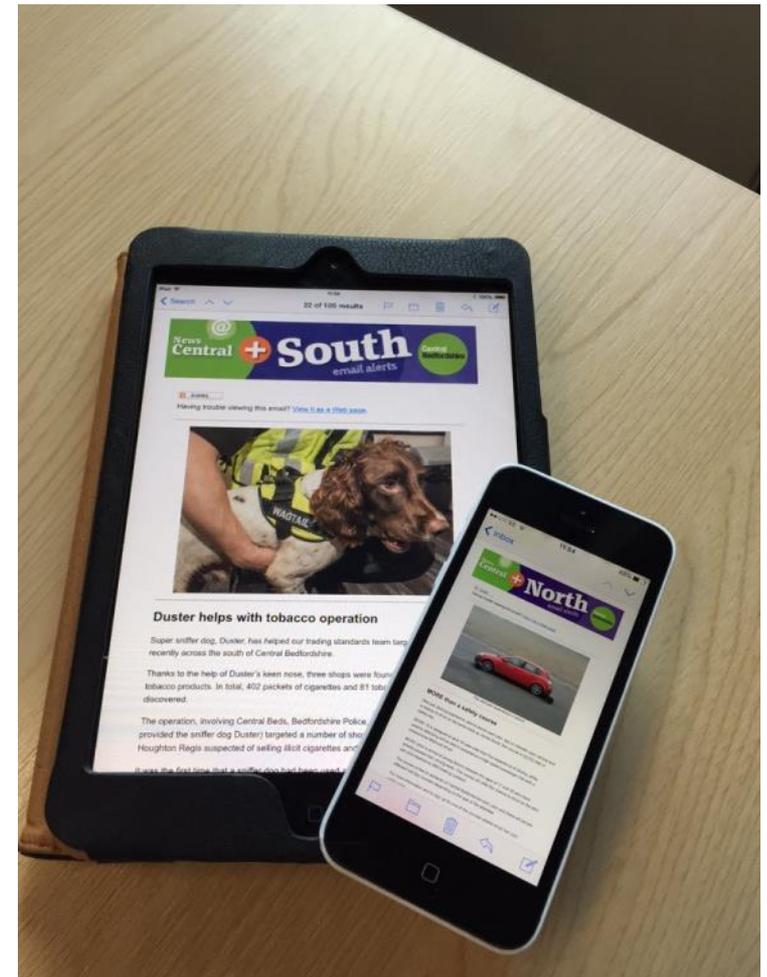
Next page

include: soup, butter. See them on the map.

We're reviewing our gambling licence policy. Take a punt at <http://ow.ly/POYQI> #Consultations

Localised Bulletins

- Launched in November 2015
- 5,000 new subscribers
- 2,000 unique subscribers
- Open rates average at 42%
- Some up to 70%



Video

We can use video to reach a large audience. Most recent video has had:

- 4,200 views
- 68 likes, 47 comments, 26 shares on Facebook
- 67% of people watched full video
- The story behind the video has also featured in local papers.

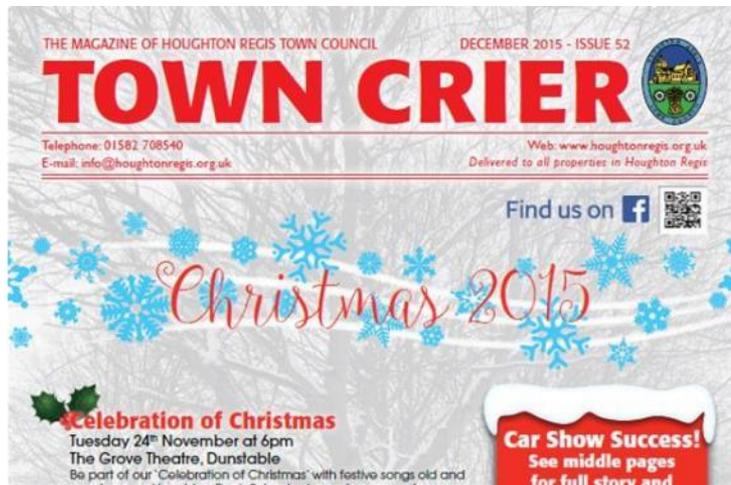
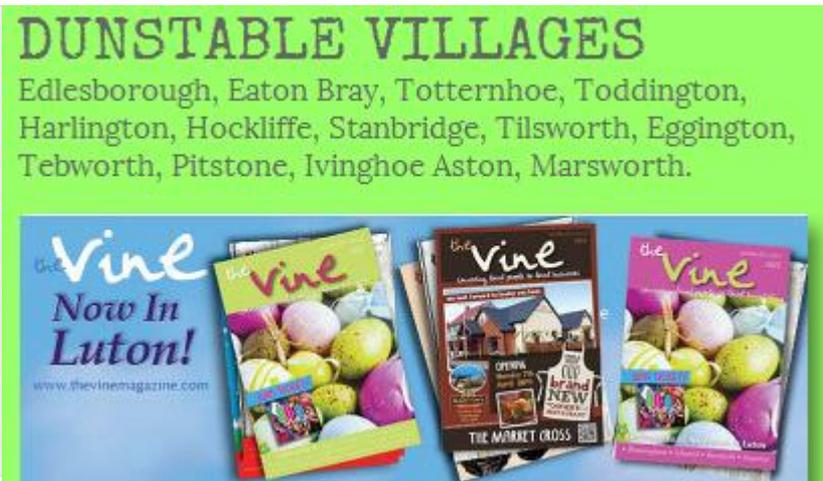


A new annual direct mail: Info Central



- **How to contact us** – multi channel, including service standards
- **Your services-** an A-Z
- **Your Councillors** – who's who and webcast promotion
- **Your money** – Council Tax explained and payment options
- **Your feedback** – how to comment, complain or compliment

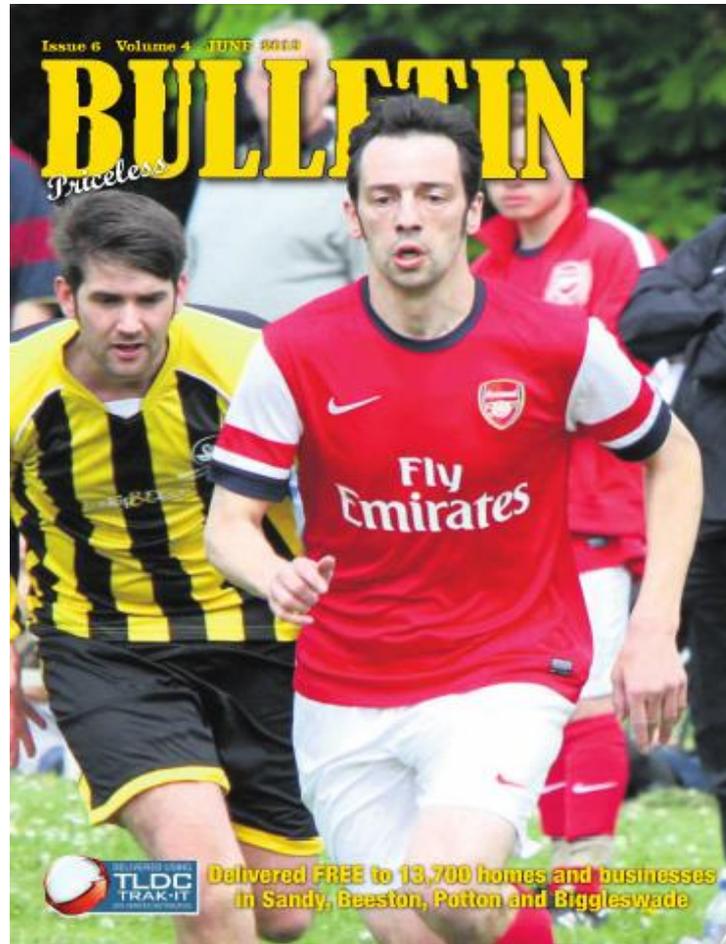
Exploiting other channels



Exploiting other channels

The Oracle Directories

On the Button

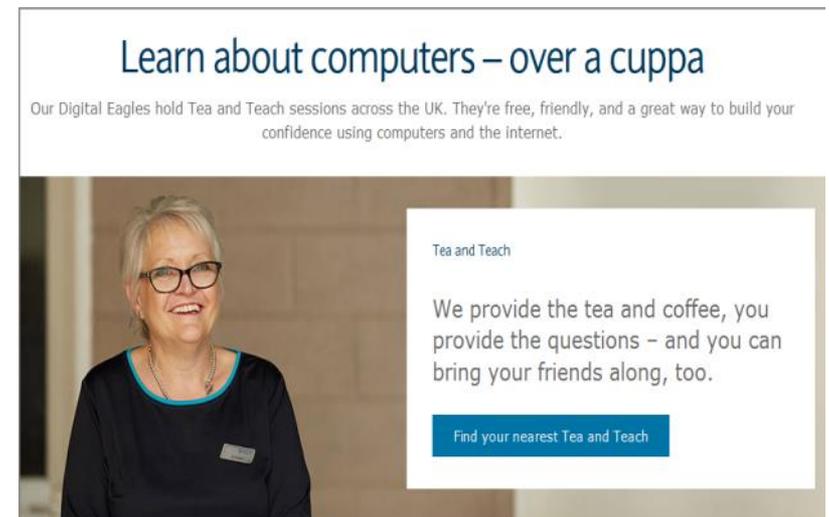


About Eversholt

The Hockliffe Herald

Confidence and Capabilities

- Building on what is already happening
 - housing gadget session
- Building alliances – Barclays and Citizen's Advice
- Reaching the target audience - Age UK
- Making spaces available for tea and teach sessions
- On line guides:
 - Staying safe
 - Setting up email
 - Using search engines
 - Shopping on line
 - Using Skype/You Tube
 - Setting up community groups



The screenshot shows a website page with the following content:

Learn about computers – over a cuppa

Our Digital Eagles hold Tea and Teach sessions across the UK. They're free, friendly, and a great way to build your confidence using computers and the internet.



Tea and Teach

We provide the tea and coffee, you provide the questions – and you can bring your friends along, too.

[Find your nearest Tea and Teach](#)

Ultimately it's the stories that matter...

- Not the Minister
- Not the Leader
- Not the first housing in forty years.

It was all about newlyweds Dean and Helen, their story, their home and their future.

