Autumn brings dark nights, cool breezes and for many, an early start for Christmas shopping. Too soon to talk Christmas, never!

Many of us are wondering what Christmas will be like this year. If you have not heard already, the Town Council is unable to deliver the Christmas Festival weekend, yet we have been organising some other activities to keep families and friends entertained in the build up to Christmas. Continued on page 2.
Continued from front page.

Throughout December, entertainers have been booked to amuse and engage shoppers within the High Street at different times each week and music will be played at a variety of other times as a backdrop to the shopping experience.

Throughout December, three large illuminated 3D present motifs will appear in the High Street, perfect for a winter’s evening walk and photo opportunity. We do so love a selfie!

It would be lovely to see visitors at the Christmas Market on Sunday 13 December where craft and gift stalls will line the High Street offering something for everyone and the perfect place to find a unique gift for a loved one.

But first come to the special Charity Christmas Market on Sunday 6 December for those wishing to support the many charities who support us in so many ways. Come along and buy something, take part in a fundraising activity, or find out more about the charities attending; perhaps get help from them or opt to become a volunteer.

Keep your eyes peeled when visiting shops as this year, we aim to recruit our shop keepers and businesses within the Town Centre for winter themed window dressing display. If you have a favourite shop, encourage them to join in.

Call for competition entries: if you are an independent shop keeper of a business within the Town Centre independent shop keepers!

Register for the ‘Best Dressed Window’ competition. Cash prizes to be won!

The perfect stocking filler!

Our reusable shopping bag folds into a handy little pouch to fit into your pocket and Christmas stocking. Only £2 each and all proceeds go to the Mayor’s charities.

You can pick one up exclusively from:

- Kings Road Fashions, 7 Peacock Mews / Dees Cards Ltd, 59 High St; Gennaro Organic Hair & Beauty, 4 Bridge Street / Happyledshery, 21 High Street.

It would be lovely to see you at the Christmas stocking. Only £2 each and all proceeds help charities in our community.

During my term of office I will be supporting the local branches of three charities that all do some amazing work - CHUMS charity, supporting children with bereavement and mental health issues; Homestart Central Bedfordshire, helping families facing some difficult life challenges and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Like most charities at the moment, all three are facing serious financial and staffing worries at a time when their services are needed more than ever and so I will do my small part as Mayor to raise awareness of the incredible work these charities do in our community as well as helping to raise much needed funds.

Fundraising is certainly challenging right now with the ever-changing restrictions due to the pandemic, but I have a number of online events already being planned and I am really hoping that local residents will support me in my efforts and have some fun along the way!

As much as is possible under current circumstances, I will also be supporting all local community groups, charities, businesses and events and I look forward to meeting residents and serving the community of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. The easiest way to be kept in touch with forthcoming Mayoral events is to sign up to the Council’s About Town newsletter: www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk/about-town-newsletters/

You can also contact the Council to have your name added to the Mayor’s email list.

Supporting the Mayor’s chosen charities:

Happydashery, 21 High Street.
Kings Road Fashions, 7 Peacock Mews
Gennaro Organic Hair & Beauty, 4 Bridge Street
Dees Cards Ltd, 59 High Street.
SHOPPING

TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

Those regular visitors to the Town Centre will be well versed in how things look and feel in the High Street these days.

There are no rose-tinted glasses here. COVID-19 has impacted on everyone with businesses and customers all interacting differently. It remains a difficult time for many and shopping locally is still key to the success of the Town Centre.

Having enough safe space to pass by is a key point for why our High Street received Central Bedfordshire Council’s attention. Across England, local authorities introduced temporary road closures and changes to traffic direction with many streets being pedestrianised. Social distancing is behind these changes.

The 2m distancing rule needs to be maintained. This means that if a shop can only allow 4 people inside, other customers wait outside. The queue that forms uses space on the pathway which then stretches in length. The consequence is that the space on the pathway is reduced and people are pushed more and more towards the road. If town centre parking remained available, people would try and walk between the parked cars and the queues jeopardising the safe distancing rules and highway safety.

Removing the parked cars created safe space.

Are queues really forming? It was noticeable that throughout April, May, and June, at times during the day, long queues did form for chemists, banks, and some large stores. Queues still form sporadically so safe space remains.

This is how it is for the Town’s market too. Although we had a temporary food only market operating in the Hockliffe Street (Library) car park, local businesses wanted it back in the High Street because our market attracts people into Town and our market attracts people into Town and businesses wanted that footfall in the Town Centre. Until the High Street was closed to vehicles, the Town Council could not offer a layout of stalls that would allow safe space and ensure emergency vehicle access if needed.

Space is also needed by our eateries. Government arranged for fast track applications for a pavement license allowing pubs and restaurants to move tables into the street outside their premises. It is of course the personal choice of the businesses whether they wish to do this, yet this would not be an option if the High Street were not closed.

Central Bedfordshire Council’s intention therefore is to facilitate a safely distanced High Street where businesses are supported. Their spokesperson said that in comparison to other towns in the municipal area, Leighton Buzzard appears to be fairing better. Thank you if you are shopping locally.

To further support the town, Central Bedfordshire Council confirmed it has introduced free parking on Saturdays for the two surface car parks (the multi-storey will still charge) as a temporary measure until January 31st. The existing free from 1300 hours parking continues on Wednesdays in Duncombe Drive car park.

Although this is a temporary change to the area, there is no end date established as this will depend on the national health crisis, government guidance and on-going feedback from users of the High Street.

The bollards found in Hockliffe Street and Bridge Street have been introduced to help with social distancing given the narrow pavement widths found here. The challenge here is to reconcile the needs of the businesses and the safety of pedestrians. To support the particular needs of the businesses in Hockliffe Street, a temporary loading bay has been created there. For some, business habits will have to be adapted as a compromise is sought that will hopefully meet the needs of all.

On that basis, if you as a business, customer or local worker and have an idea or a comment on what is taking place, please do offer your views by emailing paul.salmon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Next?
As part of the on-going trial, Central Bedfordshire Council plan to start on removing road markings, introduce additional planters, benches, and a parasol to support outdoor dining. The objective to ensure people enjoy using the space; another reason to visit our Town rather than anywhere else.

What’s

Answer to riddle: The Christmas alphabet has No L.

Please refer to the Town Council website for confirmation of any changes to planned activity.

Remembrance Sunday 2020

This year, Remembrance Sunday falls on Sunday 8 November and although the current pandemic means the usual parade and service sadly cannot take place in their usual format, the Council has been working closely with the Royal British Legion and All Saints Church to ensure that a commemoration can take place in Leighton Buzzard.

We would like to urge residents to follow the Government’s safety rules and to please stay at home to follow the commemoration this year. The brief service will be live streamed onto the Town Council’s Facebook page on the day. You will also be able to access it from 1500 hours on the All Saints Church website. Further details will follow nearer the time. Please follow the Town Council’s social media channels to find out more. Arrangements in Linslade are being led by St Barnabas Church.
FOCUS ON

involved.

People who love where they live and get who care. Normal people who love Street, which says it all.

Some organisations put a roof on top of a place like this and

thrived for over one thousand years is doing its best to survive and it has

Rome, not anymore.

Leighton Buzzard. Not right - the High Street,

We have coffee houses, clothes emporiums, family grocers and economy stores known nationwide for their prowess, all gathering in our High Street and sited nicely alongside Leighton Buzzard’s big names which are also founded on good family values. Local jewellers putting that extra sparkle into our unique Town Centre.

There’s hardware and haberdashery, eateries, real pubs, and restaurants... step right on in. Receive a welcome with a smile.

Bespoke carpenters, furniture, furniture makers and flooring shops for something to put your furniture on! Everything here for everyone... shake bars, takeways, ‘not takeways’, chocolate emporia... Tasty!

Electronics. Fashion. Click and Collect.

Click and Collect?! Yes! You did hear right. Even old fashioned, fuddy-duddy Leighton Buzzard has click and collect! Wow... and free Town Wi-Fi to boot. I bet even Oliver Cromwell never saw that one coming.

There’s the Charter Market and his Roundheads in 1644, it has almost destroyed by Oliver Cromwell and beyond who make the trek to relax and collect your thoughts. Watch the world go by as indeed the Cross itself has over many centuries.

So it is little surprise that there are so many visitors from all over Bedfordshire and beyond who make the trek to relax in the intimacy and ambience of our High Street.

Heck. We even hold our own Fairs, Remembrance Parades, Carol services, Gift Craft Shows and European Market Days here.

Our High Street. An eclectic mix of popular High Street chains and a kaleidoscope of Independent store owners which continues to adapt and thrive. It is local, it is determined, it is community. It has original spirit. It is the Street where all roads meet. Author: Clive Jacques of Latte Dah.

We love Clive’s articles. Especially when he describes the character of the place as “determined”. Seeing the town through someone else’s eyes is real lesson. How many of us come into town and walk our usual routes and forget to stop and look around us? We think we know what the town has yet it changes before our eyes. We are now well into the Christmas season and let us not be unrealistic, people will shop online for presents. This year, we strongly recommend you visit the town to take a look and talk to shop keepers about what you want, and be that person that is #KeepingItLocalLB.

WHAT A YEAR...

It has been a challenging year for Markets across the country. Leighton Buzzard has been no exception. We celebrated our traders joining us again in the High Street following a period of a food only market operating in the Library (Hockliffe Street) car park during the early months of lockdown. Alas we find ourselves once again limited to a food only market yet we will remain in the High Street and adhering to COVID-19 safe operation practice. We have also welcomed Street Food Heroes, Vegan Markets UK and France at Home visiting markets offering a plethora of new foods and gifts. These independently run and managed markets were enjoyed by many throughout the Summer and Autumn. The market team is actively seeking to secure such markets for the future.

COVID-19 distancing requirements means that we have some difficulty fitting specialty traders into the new layout, yet have focused on giving them the space where available on the regular speciality days. The ‘usual’ speciality area does not allow for adequate distancing. To assist those traders, and our casual attendance traders as well as those shoppers who like to see them, we added a monthly Thursday eXtra market team is actively seeking to secure such markets for the future.

As Christmas Day falls on Friday this year, it means our Saturday market (Boxing Day) will be brought forward to Christmas Eve (Thursday 24 December). The usual market days will resume from Tuesday 29 December onwards.

If you are yet to start using your local market, there is no better time than now. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for shopping at Leighton Buzzard Market.
Sustaining our success in securing Green Flag Awards 2020

Leighton-Linslade Town Council’s Grounds and Environmental Services achieved the international quality standard Green Flag Award for 5 parks including Linslade Memorial Playing Fields and Garden of Remembrance.

Linslade Memorial Playing Fields and Garden of Remembrance is the fifth addition to the Remembrance is the Linslade Memorial Playing Fields and Garden of Remembrance.

This year, people have relied on their local green spaces more than ever we have ensured all green spaces falling under our responsibility have remained cared for throughout what has been a tough time.

Volunteers have worked alongside the Council in many of the green spaces enhancing the floral landscape and upkeep.

Councillor Ray Berry – Chair of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee said “It is testament to the incredible dedication and hard work of parks staff and volunteers that, despite the challenges that went along with record numbers of visitors, Leighton-Linslade Town Council has achieved the highest international standards.”

The Green Flag Awards Scheme is run by Keep Britain Tidy. Awards are given on an annual basis and the Town Council has a track record to maintain; and we have.

Allison Ogden-Newton OBE, Keep Britain Tidy Chief Executive said: “This year, more than ever, our parks and green spaces have been a lifeline and we know that millions of people have used them to relax, meet friends, exercise or simply escape for a short time.”

Thank you to everyone who made a nomination for our inaugural Community Volunteer Awards!

The closing date has now passed and Council will be carefully considering all the nominations received. Watch out for more news at the end of January, with the very first Volunteer Awards!

Volunteer Awards!

The Living History Business Trail has been put together featuring 9 shops and establishments within the Town Centre.

Working alongside the Leighton Buzzard and District Archaeological & Historical Society we have uncovered building history from years gone by alongside the modern day history of those who work in the shops now and how their business came to be based in the town. Did you know one of the buildings on the trail was a pub from the 1500’s? Or that the foundations of the High Street were laid in the 14th century? Or even that one of the businesses celebrated 100 years of the business name in 2019?

Alongside the trail within the town centre, a collection of videos are being released across our social media channels and website. The videos will allow those who are required to stay at home to access the trail and will provide the same information as the town centre trail in a digital format. The trail runs until the end of November and trail sheets along with the answers can be downloaded from our website www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk/events/.

What mark will you leave?

“You can enjoy the Living History Trail online by downloading the App.”

Answer to Just For Fun: Fire escape on building behind Baptist Church and Delta House on West Street.

Leighton-Linslade COVID-19 Task Force

The Task Force comprises of representatives from faith, the community, homeless service, the Town Council and Bedfordshire and Luton Emergency Volunteer Executive as well as a corps of volunteers. The Task Force provides food parcels to those who find themselves in desperate immediate need, as well as arranging the collection of urgent prescriptions.

If you need help, or know of someone else who does, please telephone 07960 873554 or complete the online form at: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/covidhelp
Leighton Buzzard and Linslade has a plethora of small to medium sized business (SMEs) which work from home or based in small workshops and offices. These businesses do not have a High Street shop window and yet have adapted to take on COVID-19 challenges and continue to offer services and products behind closed doors.

Businesses within a 6 mile radius of the Market Cross are invited to add their listing to the Leighton-Linslade Directory, a new not-for-profit digital platform developed by local entrepreneur Andrena Carden-White with the support of Leighton-Linslade Town Council.

The directory is a ‘grower’ platform separately from the Leighton Buzzard and Linslade’s businesses. Andrena Carden-White is a well-established local entrepreneur delivering the Bee Local magazine for over 8 years. More recently she launched Buzz Radio, a not-for-profit organisation attracting regular listeners to shows by local volunteer presenters.

Town Twinning

Question: What is Coulommiers known for? And what administrative area known to the Town Twinning Forum is known for its Black Forest Gateau?

If you were part of the Town Twinning Forum, you would know the answer. Leighton-Linslade is twinned with Coulommiers in France and Titisee-Neustadt in Germany. You may have noticed this on the town gateway signs, or perhaps you have previously visited one of our twin towns. The arrangement is a civic one between the councils in the three towns but is supported by the wider community. In our town, the Town Twinning Forum meets throughout the year and arranges visits to both twin towns, as well as inviting visitors from both twin towns to visit us every third year. Sadly, the scheduled visit in 2020 could not go ahead and plans for 2021 are uncertain, but the Forum continues to promote and celebrate our twinning arrangements – especially as 2021 is the 40th anniversary of our twinning with Titisee-Neustadt. Usually in November, the Forum would be present at the switching on of the Christmas lights to promote Twinning and to provide some foreign delicacies for residents to try – especially as we have been unable to travel in 2020.

Answer: It is believed that the Commanderie of the Knights Templar is in Coulommiers. If you are more food minded, it is also known for its disk shaped soft ripened cheese made from cow’s milk, smaller and thicker than Brie, and with an edible rind. Titisee-Neustadt is situated in the Black Forest region. Titisee lies on the north shore of lake Titisee, in the mountainous region of the Black Forest. Neustadt is a spa town known for its hydrotherapeutic and curative waters. The Town Twinning movement emerged after the war with the aims of fostering relationships that had been broken. Nowadays the focus is very much on cultural exchanges giving people opportunities to experience other countries, appreciate and celebrate difference and see common ground. It builds links and relationships that develop into long-term friendships.
Whilst every effort has been taken to provide accurate information, the Council does not accept any liability for error or omission for information on services it is not directly responsible for. The Town Council does not necessarily endorse any business using advertising space.