

## An update from Rita Drinkwater, Central Bedfordshire Councillor.

29 November 2009

Dear Parishioner,

It has been many months since the set up of the new Unitary Central Bedfordshire Council and I thought it would be a good time to give you an update. The Council's priority from day one was to continue the delivery of services seamlessly and without disruption, that has been largely achieved. The next stage is for restructuring and looking at the way in which services are delivered. Partnership working with the voluntary sector, the PCT and Police can bring benefits and also financial savings.

### Housing

Many of you will have taken part in the 'Talk to Mid Beds' public consultation, where sites for potential development were put forward by land owners and residents were given the opportunity to comment, either through the internet or at the public meeting held at the village hall. This information was then collated and another consultation took place to look at criteria for grading these sites. Two sites have been put forward in Stondon, one behind the Petrol Station on Bedford Road for 13 dwellings and the other on the field behind Bedford Road and Station Road for 70 dwellings, to include B1 and community facilities. A public consultation will take place in Feb/Mar 2010 and I have asked officers to look at what the community can expect by way of community facilities ahead of the consultation so that residents can be fully informed. I have also asked for a similar exercise to take place on a site allocation in Meppershall.

### Buses

The number 89 went back to its original timetable in November, this followed complaints from residents who had previously enjoyed an extra half an hour in Hitchin. The 89 was changed to take residents to Shefford from the Village Hall in Hillside Road, sadly the take up from residents was not enough to warrant a permanent change.

### Persimmons

The Cherry Trees development still needs completion but I am hopeful that we are now at the final stage. (how many times have I said that!) The difference is that the developer has been in consultation with Central Bedfordshire for approval of the surface material. They have already had the works priced and a contractor is already in place. So providing the council can approve the surface material condition then, weather permitting the works can begin. In addition the two play/open spaces will be inspected by officers over the coming weeks and providing they are up to adoptable standard the process will begin where the council can take ownership.

### Henlow Camp Enhancement to the Shopping area

I have reported many times on these works, it has been a long and sometimes tortuous process where officers have drawn and re-drawn and re-drawn proposals. They have consulted both Henlow and Stondon Parish Council and have visited and spoken to shops and businesses in the area affected. The latest proposal will now be seen by the Portfolio Holder in January 2010 and he will make the final decision on whether this is an acceptable scheme.

Rita Drinkwater

Central Bedfordshire Councillor

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