



A Bicester Town Council
Newsletter for
the Community

BICESTER

GARTH GAZETTE

January 2024



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Garth Gazette Information

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For editorial contributions and diary entries, please call or write to Phil Evans on: **01869 252915** or at: **phil.evans@bicester.gov.uk**. To advertise, please call Lucy Lavers on: **07813 846569**.

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Get in touch

If you don't see your organisation, group or activity listed or covered in the Garth Gazette, please email at: **lucy@psmkt.co.uk** or call on: **07813 846569** to find out how to get free editorial space or book advertising.

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Find us on Facebook: **www.facebook.com/BicesterTownCouncil**



Find us on YouTube search: **BicesterTownCouncil**

Welcome

Happy New Year. What a fantastic year of events we had in Bicester in 2023. We were so pleased to have hosted the Illuminated Light Trail in Garth Park again last year, and I'd like to personally thank Bicester Village for sponsoring it. In this edition, you'll also see photos from Remembrance Sunday; the event is always oversubscribed so this year we made changes to allow more of the community to attend. There were also the Christmas Lights Switch-On and The Santa Fun Run. Our community pages are another reflection of the generosity of Bicester's residents who give their time and energy to make life easier and/or more enjoyable for others.

I am really looking forward to all we have planned for 2024; please be sure to follow us on Facebook and check the Town Council's websites for dates, updates and news.

Phil Evans - **Town Clerk,**
Bicester Town Council

20mph zones in Bicester – Have your say

The county-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project was initiated by Oxfordshire County Council, as Highway Authority responsible for all roads, to fulfil an election pledge by newly-elected County Councillors following widespread calls for lower limits during their election campaigns.

The main priority is to reduce accidents, as even a small reduction in average speed can lead to a reduction in accidents. 20mph limits are also intended to also encourage more sustainable travel. An additional benefit is that slower speeds will improve the environment and help people feel safer where they live.

The County Council will not impose lower speed limits where they are not welcomed by the community. There will normally be a range of views, but the Town Council and local County Councillors are considered to provide the best reflection of overall local opinion.

For Bicester, local County and Town Councillors have indicated that they support the idea of 20mph limits in principle - but only where they have the support of the community. Speed limit changes must go through a

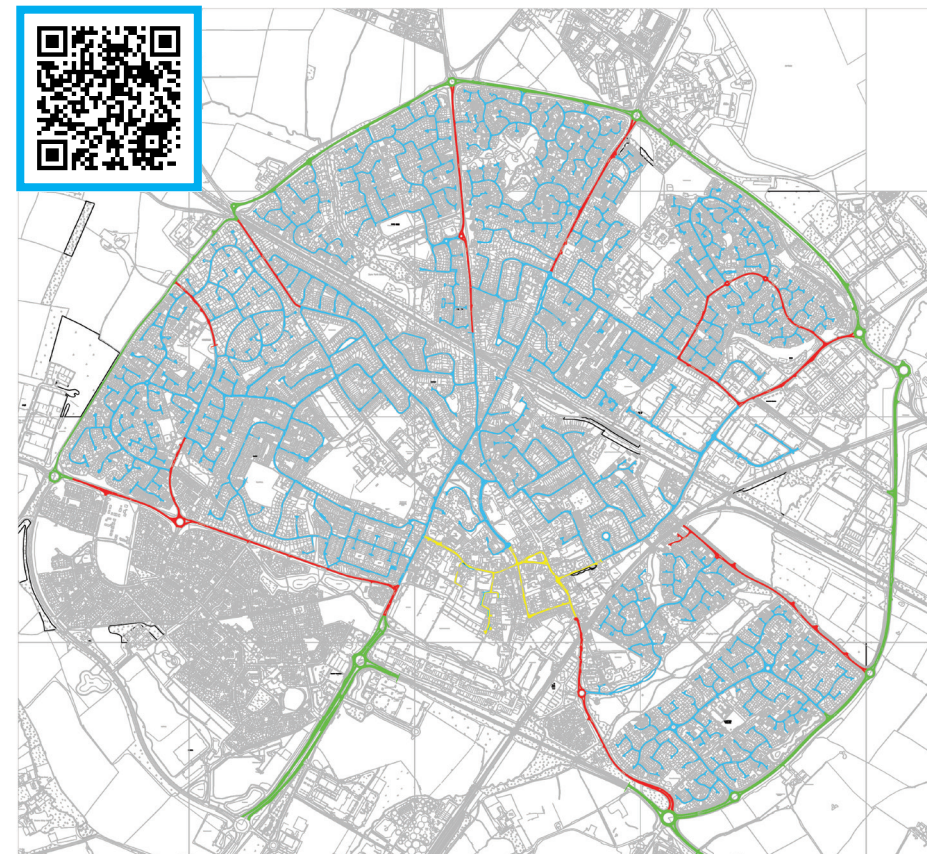
statutory consultation process in which all responses are considered by the County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Management before a final decision is made.

The consultation in the Garth Gazette reflects the Town Council's and local County Councillors' wish to gauge residents' views, and the results of this consultation will help form the recommendations in the statutory consultation process. Everyone is also encouraged to submit their views for this later process, and details of how to do so will be made available at the time.

We have a survey for your feedback on the 'Lets Talk' consultation portal:

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/bicester_informal_20mph2023 or scan the QR code below.

The survey will close on 28th February 2024.



Proposed 20mph

Existing 30mph

Existing 20mph

Existing 40mph

Survey questions

Where would you like to see 20mph limits?

- Outside schools
- On main routes such as Banbury Road, Buckingham Road, and Launton Road
- On parts of main routes which are more open, such as further out from the central area
- On roads within housing estates
- Outside parades of shops

Your response options for each question:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Remembrance

Early last year, Bicester Town Council agreed to make some changes to the structure of the town's Remembrance Sunday Event, held on November 12, so that more Bicester residents could take part.

As usual, hundreds of people from uniformed organisations and local military units took part in the parades, which were led by ATC 2507 (Bicester) Marching Band with members of 1 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal British Legion. They marched twice from St Edburg's Church to Market Square for an outdoor service, where they were lined up by a Parade Marshal from 1 Regt RLC in readiness for the service and wreath laying by local dignitaries.

Mayor Harry Knight; the Commanding Officer of 1 Regt RLC Lt Col Lucinda Butler MBE; and Deputy Lieutenant Miranda Markham took the salute, before the parade

marched back to the church where wreaths from other groups and individuals were laid by the Honour Guard at the memorial.

The main Service of Remembrance was then held at St Edburg's Church.

Mr Knight said: *'This event is staged in conjunction with Bicester Garrison, St Edburg's Church, the Royal British Legion and the Council and is a significant day in the Town Council's calendar. Both the outdoor and indoor services are always oversubscribed, so we felt that moving part of it to a larger space would give more people the opportunity to take part.'*





Bicester Town Christmas Lights Switch-On

As always, this wonderful event brought Bicester families out to celebrate the town and the start of the festive season.

During the day there was a Christmas Market with stalls selling gifts, crafts and food, and lantern-making workshops for the parade leading up to the main event. The festive lights were switched on by the mayor's Christmas card competition winner, Sophia, and the mayor himself, Cllr Harry Knight.

Elsa, Anna, Olaf and Kristoff, characters from Disney's Frozen, were there to say hello to everyone, and the evening was hosted by MCs Sparky and Sprite, with performances from local groups Adele Peters Performing Arts School, Rock Choir and Russell Jones, a former X Factor contestant.



Garth Park's Illuminated Light Trail

Back for the third year running, and with almost 10,000 people visiting in 2022, the Illuminated Light Trail returned to light up Garth Park, and was bigger and better than ever. The park and light trail were accessible to buggies, mobility scooters and wheelchairs so whole families could enjoy the evening together.

Garth House came alive with a festive light show, and then visitors continued their evening with a walk around the park that had been transformed into a magical land of beautifully lit walkways, festive music and light displays. Santa was also back, welcoming children into his grotto before they enjoyed the fair rides, stalls, and refreshments from Savoir Fare Café.

Phil Evans, Town Clerk at Bicester Town Council commented: 'We want to thank Bicester Village for their generous sponsorship of the Illuminated Light Trail; it wouldn't be possible to create such a magical event without their support.'





Santa Fun Run

The Santa Fun Run was held again at Pingle Field Sports on 17th December.

While some Santas had their eyes on the prize, a lot of Santas were just there to wear the suit, have fun and eat the bacon butty after finishing the 5k course. The top three runners this year were Owen Stocker, Edward Jolliffe and Richard Gould. All proceeds raised from the event were given to the mayor's chosen charity, which this year is Bicester's Baby Bank.



BEAUTY & BICESTER PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES

My name is Gong Xi (Eddy), I am Bicester's well known friendly neighbourhood cameraman, my aim is to provide you with high quality and stunning images, supported by exceptional service and speedy delivery to exceed your expectations. I offer a number of services for business and private clients:

Event Photography & Videography, Architecture & Interior Photography, Drone Photography & Videography, Promotional Video, I also sell Bicester Photobook, Calendar, Greeting Cards and original high-res photographs of Bicester.

Please contact me for a bespoke quotation to fit your business needs. My rates include local travel and unlimited images.

[f](#) [ig](#) [yt](#) [envelope icon](#) BeautyandBicester@gmail.com



ABILITY is your local bus service operating across West Northamptonshire and North Oxfordshire. We are far more than a bus service. We offer a caring, affordable, safe, timely comfortable mode of transport that is open to everybody! Fares are payable in cash, also valid concessionary bus passes are accepted.

BICESTER



As the **ABILITY** bus made its weekly Friday journey into Bicester town centre, sounds of laughter and people chatting filled the air. Most people aboard were on their weekly shopping trip but others were off to meet friends for a coffee. It was always an enjoyable journey and time for a good catch up to find out what had been happening in the previous week. Getting out of the house was like a breath of fresh air, time to look for something nice for dinner or just enjoy some time with people. Life can sometimes feel very isolating and being around others is very uplifting. The bus had been called a "social club on wheels" as the socialising and interaction was just as if not more important than remembering to get all the items on the shopping list. **ABILITY** had a good level of passengers on the run but always wondered how many more people they could help. With members from a few years to over a hundred, it was a bus for all.



ABILITY is a LIFELINE - FRIEND - HELPING HAND - COMMUNITY ENABLER

Your journey with us STARTS HERE - call us today to see how we can help

01327 604123

admin@abilitycic.org.uk

www.abilitycic.org.uk

FRIENDS OF
**Reducing
the Risk**
of Domestic Abuse



Have you got more than 3 friends?

If so, one of them will be a victim of domestic abuse at some point

Want to help? Become a DA Friend



They Listen



They Link



Lend a hand to
raise awareness

To find out more friends@reducingtherisk.org.uk
If you need support [Oxfordshire Helpline 0800 731 0055](tel:08007310055)



THE OPEN DOORS CAFE

SHARING ♥ SUPPORTING ♥ COMMUNITY

Turning surplus food into
tasty meals

All welcome
every Friday
12:00–1:30pm

Pay as you feel – run by volunteers



[Location icon](#) Methodist Church, Sheep Street, Bicester, OX26 6JQ
hello@bicesteropendoors.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/OpenDoorsCafe>
<https://bicesteropendoors.org.uk>





Your old laptops and phones can transform lives!

Getting Oxfordshire Online provides refurbished devices, connectivity and support to help local people to get online. We've supported more than 2000 individuals and families so far. Your excess devices can make a real difference.

Our hub at Bicester Green refurbishes donated laptops, tablets and phones including secure wipe and minor repairs. We also take screens, keyboards, batteries, chargers, etc.

Who we help

We are here for anyone struggling to get online. We partner with local charities and community groups to help solve the unique barriers affecting:

- Jobseekers, along with help job searching, CV writing, interviews and building confidence
- Refugees, who are helped with language and introduction to UK life and processes
- Families, with support for parents and children to stay safe online
- Disabled people, including technology and resources to fit their needs
- Homeless people, including accommodation and community support

Bicester Green are asking local businesses, business owners and the public to donate unwanted laptops for those in need.

Why give your unwanted devices?

1. Recycling and reusing your own or your organisation's devices for the good of others can clear space in your business and demonstrate your commitment to your local community at the same time!
2. Don't worry about security – Getting Oxfordshire Online's technical staff ensure that rigorous security measures are taken when repurposing devices, with each one 'triple wiped' and meeting the most demanding standards.
3. Donating devices is easy – they can be dropped off at Bicester Green, or collection arranged for bulk donations.

We'd like to thank British Bakels, Viridor, Ashton Fire, Instron, Activate Learning and Dematic for their donations so far; these have made a huge difference.

Get in touch with us at: goo@bicestergreen.org.uk or call in to see us at 16 Sheep Street, Bicester.

Bicester Round Table Fireworks Display

Bicester Round Table, a charity founded over 50 years ago to help like-minded people come together in the town, hosted its annual fireworks display at Pingle Field on 4th November. Bicester residents turned out in force to celebrate this uniquely British event.





Christmas fun and entertainment to support cancer charity

The Hummingbird Centre injected some festive sparkle on 9th December when it opened its doors for its annual 'Light the Light' celebration.

The cancer support centre in Launton, near Bicester, hosted performances in its courtyard by Launton Village Players and Bicester Military Wives Choir, and of course Father Christmas also made an appearance. As well as the entertainment, there were stalls selling Christmas crafts and gifts, a tombola, bottle stall, raffle, games, and refreshments including mulled wine and cakes.

Ahead of the day, Hummingbird Centre volunteers carefully unwrapped 1500 tiny hearts each bearing the name of a loved one, to be hung on two large Memory Trees.

CEO Renee Booth (pictured with Santa) said: 'We were delighted to open our doors once again this Christmas, after the disappointment of having to cancel our summer festival. We do hope people will continue to support us and help raise funds to enable us to keep offering our essential services to people with cancer and their families across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.'

For more information call: **01869 244244** or visit: **www.thehummingbirdcentre.org.uk**.



Bronze medal for Bicester bridge team

October 24th 2023 was the date of the biannual bridge tournament - The Local Teams' Challenge Cup.

Bicester Bridge Club sent a strong team and came third in the tournament. King's Sutton Bridge Club were the hosts for twelve teams from six clubs. Players were welcomed with a glass of wine and enjoyed tea and cakes from a local farm shop at half time. As well as the Bicester team there were nine other sides from Bridge clubs at Summertown, Buckingham, Bloxham, King's Sutton and Quainton. The winners were from Summertown, with a Bloxham team second and Bicester third.

All the competitors agreed that King's Sutton Village

Hall, with its two halls and well-equipped kitchen, had once again proved that there are few better places to hold a bridge tournament.

Bicester Bridge Club welcomes new bridge players to its Monday night duplicate session at the Highfield Social Club. More details on the website: **Bridgewebs.com/Bicester**.

King's Sutton Bridge Club is always happy to welcome new players from beginners to experts. Call Ken on **07850 616069** for details or look at the website: **Bridgewebs.com/kingsutton**

Greetings from the Bicester Hospital League of Friends

We hope you all had a good year. It has once again been a quiet year for the League of Friends, as we are still unable to go into the hospital and give our usual help to the wonderful staff, but we hope this will soon change.

We held our Christmas coffee morning/bring-and-buy at the Littlebury Hotel at the end of October. We had a lovely morning with a cake stall, Christmas cards, raffle, and 'bric-a-brac' and managed to raise £348.21. Thank you to those who came and supported us, and also a huge thank you to Michael and his staff who once again hosted us.

The committee agreed that the donation made by Mr Ron Haynes to purchase awnings for the wards could be used to purchase air conditioning for each ward instead. We hope to see this completed in 2024.

Once again our Santa, Ray Rushby, was at the hospital on Christmas Day to distribute gifts to the patients that we have sponsored. It was Ray's 25th consecutive year

of going into the hospital for us, so a BIG thank you Ray, from the League of Friends, the patients and staff.

If you feel you could become a volunteer, please contact Wendy, who will be able to point you in the right direction.

Mrs Wendy Buckmaster on: **buckmaster@my.com**

We are always pleased to receive donations; cheques should be made payable to League of Friends Bicester Community Hospital, and sent to me at the address below.

Rose Stratford, Bicester Community Hospital League of Friends, 8 Queens Court, Bicester, OX26 6JX or e-mail: **roseljstratford@outlook.com**.



Wanted: VIPs for school governor roles

The Bicester School is looking for passionate people to become school governors at our thriving school.

We all want the best for schoolchildren, and governors play a key role in leading, supporting and improving our schools. Becoming one can be a rewarding experience; you can have a truly transformative impact on outcomes for children and the community, while developing your own professional skills. Plus, it may not be as time-consuming as you think, and we offer lots of training and support.

It doesn't matter whether you have children or not, what role you have in an organisation or whether you know anything about education: everyone brings a unique perspective. All you must be is aged over 18, and possess the necessary skills, attributes, and time to positively impact our learners.

What do school governors do?

School governors set the strategic vision and direction, approve budgets, support staff recruitment, monitor school performance, approve school policies and procedures, and hold the senior leadership team to account.

Governors need to commit to:

- Taking part in regular governors' meetings, usually four times per year with additional committee meetings as required.
- Spending time on training and getting to know the school through termly link governor visits.
- Occasionally sitting on appointments panels, or panels that handle staff or student discipline issues or complaints against the school.

To find out more, please contact Heledd Walker, Head of Governance and Compliance via email at: Clerk@alet.org.uk

Can you help The Hygiene Bank?

The Hygiene Bank is a national charity that was started 5 years ago, and now has over 200 projects around the UK, all run by volunteers.

Many thanks in advance from Anna Willmore, Coordinator, Bicester Hygiene Bank.

We collect unopened, donated personal and domestic hygiene products which we then distribute to our community partners, who are organisations working with local people living in poverty or deprivation.

I began coordinating here in Bicester in late April this year, and we now have 7 community partners to whom we have distributed more than 500kg of hygiene products in 2023.

If you would like to donate any unopened hygiene goods, we would love to receive them. If you use it then the chances are someone living in poverty needs it.

So, perhaps buy one or two extra and drop them off at:

- Boots, Sheep Street, Bicester.
- Boots, Bicester Shopping Park.
- Bicester Pharmacy, Buckingham Crescent
- Perch Eco Business Centre, Elmsbrook, Bicester
- Tesco Superstore, Lakeview Drive, Bicester

The Hygiene Bank also has a JustGiving page where you can make a donation:

[justgiving.com/page/the-hygiene-bank-bicester](https://www.justgiving.com/page/the-hygiene-bank-bicester)

You can find out more at: thehygienebank.com.



Bicester Camera Club

Here is the winner of the Reflections monthly-theme - The Lakes by Ben Cripps.

Each month the club has a monthly challenge that members can submit two images for. They are then voted on by the members. The Camera Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, and welcomes members of all ages and abilities. More details from: lynnehooper@virginmedia.com



St Edburg's Church Christmas Tree Festival

The Christmas Tree Festival returned from 8th-10th December, with over 70 trees provided by the church but decorated by Bicester business, organisations and individuals.

The festival attracted a lot of visitors over the three days; they wandered through the forest of decorated trees, enjoying live music and refreshments, and soaking up the atmosphere.

A spokesperson for the church said: 'The festival is an opportunity for organisations to be part of a spectacular display within this beautiful medieval church by decorating a Christmas tree in the theme and style they choose.'

'It is not a competition, simply a great opportunity to show your organisation in an imaginative and festive way and to be part of a unique mixture of heritage, community expression and fun.'

What's On at Bicester Methodist Church 2024

MONDAY

Age UK Strength and Balance 12pm – 2.30pm,
call 01235 849403 or email info@generationgames.org.uk for more information.
BMC Wives Club 2.30pm- 4.15pm friendly group, new members welcome.

TUESDAY

Forget Me Not 9.30am – 3pm, Friendship, activities and Lunch club for seniors'.
Email mail@forgetmenotbicester.co.uk or phone 07507 749 931 for more info.
Bicester Townswomen's Guild 1.30pm – 3.30pm, 1st Tuesday of the month.
Tuesday Fellowship 2pm, call for dates (not 1st Tuesday of month)
Bicester Floral Club – call for dates and more info 07449506637

WEDNESDAY

Turning Point closed group 9.30am – 1.30pm
Homestart Drop In 9.30am – 11.30am every Wednesday during term time.
Email info@home-startbanbury.org.uk for more information.
My Life My Choice 11am – 1pm, call for dates 01865 204214
Cloud 9 Choir 2pm,
Email cloud9musica@gmail.com
Scrabble Club 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, 2pm – 4pm,
contact Margaret for more info 01869 244637
Bicester Memory Cafe 2pm, - 3.30pm 2nd Wednesday of the month
Email info@dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk
Bicester Art Club 2pm – 4pm. Please call for more info.

THURSDAY

Forget Me Not, 9.30 am -3pm, Friendship, activities and Lunch club for seniors'.
Email mail@forgetmenotbicester.co.uk or phone 07507 749 931 for more info.
Narcotics Anonymous every Thursday night in the Primary room, 7pm – 9pm
help, support and advice. Helpline 0300 999 1212 or go to www.ukna.org
Limitless Bicester Youth Club, 7pm – 8.30pm, for 11- 16yr olds, term time only
in the Church, more info:youth@bicesterelimchurch.org.uk

FRIDAY

Turning Point closed group 9.30am – 1.30pm
Open Doors Community Cafe in partnership with Bicester Foodbank,
12pm – 1.30pm, choice of dishes served by our friendly volunteers, pay as you
feel.
Citizens Advice Drop In 12pm – 1.30pm, please note this is NOT a full advice
session, our hub team are there to talk to you about your problem and discuss the
best way forward, Adviceline 0808 278 7906 www.citizensadvice.org.uk

SATURDAY

Bicester Crafters 1st Saturday of the month in Primary room, 10am – 3pm
Open Doors Coffee Morning in the Church Foyer 10am – 12pm, every
Saturday, come for a cuppa, make new friends.
Alcoholics Anonymous every Saturday night in the Primary room, 7.30pm –
9pm, help, support and advice. Call free 0800 9177 650 or email help@aamail.org
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

SUNDAY

Bicester Methodist Church Morning Worship 10.45am – all welcome!
Bicester Elim Church Afternoon service 2.30pm – all welcome!

Please watch this space for new events as we have an ever changing programme!
We also hold regular meetings in the evenings for Rainbows, Brownies, Rangers and Guides, Beavers and Scouts and Explorers.

Please note: most classes are term time only and run subject to availability.
For more information on any of the above classes, or to enquire about hiring our halls,
please email churchadmin@bicestermethodist.org.uk
Or phone the Church office on Bicester 323030 (answerphone out of office hours)



Bicester Town Council's
2024 Events

We are planning lots of events this year.
Please follow us on Facebook and visit:
www.bicester.gov.uk