

SECONDARY SCHOOLS BECOMING ACADEMIES

In Bucks all the grammar schools and half of the upper schools are already Academies or committed to becoming one. One primary school has also taken the decision. This makes them independent of the local authority. Academies can set their own entrance requirements, and those that already select by 11+ can continue to do so, although new ones may not, but may have other selection criteria. This all has a major knock on effect for the County Council, and for parents, for which schools children with special needs can attend, for administering the 11+, and for the whole catchment area system, and school transport entitlement.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Some changes to school transport have already been made, affecting those for whom it is not a legal requirement to provide transport, i.e. for those aged 16 and over. In the summer all subsidies were withdrawn, and the annual or termly charge to parents of pupils in this group became very expensive and way above bus fares on regular commercial routes. This is because County charges full whack for the administration of the system, plus the cost of the seat on the privately contracted bus service. However, on some routes to some schools, there are no places available even at this price, and parents are having to make their own arrangements for their children.

Changes to statutory entitlement, that is children under 16 travelling more than 3 miles were successfully postponed in the summer, but new proposals will have to be put forward and consulted on this November before they and their parents make their preferences known for which secondary school they wish to attend come September. Parents have already been notified that some preferences may have a transport cost attached.

A 4K WALK ON IVINGHOE BEACON OPEN TO MOBILITY SCOOTERS

On 5th November this new walk will be officially opened. It has involved the replacement of 17 gates and stiles, as well as track improvements. The National Trust Ashridge estate has worked with Bucks County Council rights of way group with additional funding from the Dunstable Bogtrotters Walking Group and Dunstable Rotary Club to the Chiltern Society's 'Donate-a-Gate' Scheme to make a fantastic circular walk on the eastern side of the Beacon, accessible from the main car park.

IVINGHOE LIBRARY

Emma Huxley or Steven Swinbank have been on behalf of the friends of Ivinghoe Library working group to Cheddington, Slapton, Ivinghoe and Pitstone Parish Councils and have still to go to Edlesborough and Mentmore, with a short presentation on the Community Library plan, a request for a small contribution in proportion to parish usage, and what the library already offers.

FREIGHT QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

Just a reminder that the beacon FQP previewed its website at the last Local Area Forum www.beaconfqp.org.uk and that the working group is continuing its work slowly but meaningfully.

LOCAL AREA FORUM

Both the FQP and the Library groups will be updating parishes at the next Local Area Forum on November 15th at Ivinghoe Town Hall, starting at 6pm with a drop in session, business to follow at 7. The lawn opposite will be open for parking.

LAF chairmen have been asked to release Transport for Bucks staff as soon as possible from the meeting. I will bring all transport items to the beginning of the meeting, but remind you that the pre meeting surgeries from 6pm are the best time to talk to Paul Foot and Simon Dudley.

SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

I think you all already know that the speed limit changes are to be implemented in January 2012. Thank you everyone for such a fantastic show of determination back in the summer to get this done.

AVRIL DAVIES
COUNTY COUNCILLOR
IVINGHOE DIVISION