



## **Bedford and District Newsletter June 2026**

### **When will there be good news?**

This is the title of a book by Kate Atkinson first published in 2008 but the title is the only inspiration I have for the content of this Newsletter. I am writing this listening to Radio 4 and wondering whether we shall still have the same Prime Minister at the end of the day, so certainly it will be out of date by the time you all receive it in June. The rest of the news is depressing and shocking, therefore I am picking out the few interesting stories that have caught my attention this week and that should not be out of date before the ink dries.

Romy Neeves  
Editor

### **Chair Report**

I write this still waiting for the Spring weather to warm up a bit, but things do seem to be hotting up in Westminster. As an individual citizen, I must confess to becoming increasingly disillusioned with our politicians of all persuasions. We have now had ten years of squabbling, infighting and changing of Prime Ministers on a regular basis, and it is still going on. The impact of this is uncertainty with respect to the country's governance, which in turn has led to a steady increase in the cost of living and an erosion in the purchasing power of our pensions. This continuous shuffling of leaders and ministers makes it all the more difficult for the CSPA to campaign on our behalf, so maybe we should begin to make our dissatisfaction known more clearly to our local MP's and ask them what their own opinion and position is with respect to the

present eight CSPA campaigns and not just accept the standard fact sheet of the government of the day by way of a response. Nothing makes them take more notice than them gaining the impression they might lose a local vote at election time. For those with access to the internet the CSPA campaigns are presented on the CSPA website, and regular updates are given in The Pensioner.

The Bedford Group Annual General Meeting was held on 13th March 2026 and was attended by 23 group members. The speaker was Christine Buckley, Editor of The Pensioner, who updated those present with the latest news of the Executive, and progress with the CSPA campaigning. Interestingly, Christine told us she had started her journalistic career at Bedford on one of the then regularly published newspapers.

At the AGM we also welcomed Fran Hunter formerly Secretary of the Peterborough Group to our committee. When Bedford is asked to incorporate groups from the CSPA Eastern Region which have failed, we do try to take on a member of that former group's own committee to represent its members, who can then act as a point of contact should any member have a problem that requires further investigation by the Executive Council. Finally, we await feedback on the survey and meetings relating to the proposed change of status of the CSPA to a Company Limited by Guarantee that I concentrated upon in the March Newsletter. If you undertook the survey, or gave your views in more detail, may I offer my thanks, and we will await the outcome of the motion that will be presented by the Executive at the CSPA National AGM to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October this year.

**John Abington, Chair**

### **Meeting of the Norfolk/Suffolk CSPA Group.**

Last year, the members of the CSPA Cambridge Group were incorporated into the Bedford and District Group when the former group folded. This included a considerable number of CSPA members who live in Suffolk and have Ipswich postcodes. I have been advised by Richard West of the CSPA Norfolk/Suffolk Group of a meeting to be held in Ipswich on 15<sup>TH</sup> July 2026. This will be at St Mary Stoke Church Hall, Stoke Road, Ipswich IP2 8BX at 2pm. I draw your attention to the provision in the CSPA Rules, that members may join any CSPA group of their choice, and suggest that members living in Bury St. Edmunds and Brandon may wish to consider joining the Norfolk/Suffolk group as being more local than belonging to our Bedford group situated some 60 miles away. If you do wish to change, then please contact Margaret Noble by email [margaretanoble43@gmail.com](mailto:margaretanoble43@gmail.com) or by phone on 07999 413950 who will be able to help make the necessary arrangements. Please do therefore consider attending the above meeting to find out more about Norfolk/Suffolk group if you are able to.

John Abington

### **A few of the key bills to be introduced, taken from the King's Speech on 13<sup>th</sup> May and for you to chart any progress!**

European Partnership bill: Create new legal frameworks for increased trade with the EU and new opportunities for young people, as part of the Government's reset of EU-UK relations.

Small business Protections (late payments) Bill: Forces larger businesses to pay smaller suppliers on time.

Clean Water Bill: Water industry reforms to tackle sewage dumping and clean up waterways.

Northern Powerhouse Rail Bill: Gives legal backing to the delayed rail project.

Highways (Financing) Bill: allows roads to be built faster.

Education for all Bill: Raises standards in schools and overhauls the system for children with special educational needs.

Sporting events Bill: To make it easier to deliver big sporting events.

Police Reform Bill: Overhauls police standards, with a focus on accountability.

NHS Modernisation Bill: Strips put layers of NHS managements, shifts the focus towards preventing illness, and supports the Government's 10-year health plan.

Sovereign Grant Bill: Sets the amount the monarch will receive in funding.

Immigration and Asylum Bill: Reforms the current system.

Energy independence Bill: scales up homegrown renewable energy and expands the National Grid.

Tackling State Threats Bill: Gives security services new powers.

National Security Bill: To introduce measures to protect British people from extreme violence.

### **Nature/climate change**

So, given that we are reputedly a nation of tea drinkers, I read in my newspaper this week that the familiar taste of tea is under threat from climate change, which could deliver a more bitter flavour in our cuppa, campaigners have warned.

Rising temperatures and worsening weather extremes in countries such as Kenya, India and Sri Lanka could make tea more bitter and harsher with less consistent flavours, according to the report published by aid agency Christian Aid.

And disruptions to harvests caused by the changing climate are likely to cause price spikes, rising costs and unreliable supplies of the staple British drink.

The report explained that tea production relies on stable temperature and rainfall conditions, which are now shifting in producer nations – with optimal growth

within a relatively narrow temperature range of between 13C and 30C and with adequate but not excessive rainfall.

Tea flavours and quality depend on a balance of compounds such as catechins, amino acids and polyphenols, according to the report, but higher temperatures increase the production of more astringent compounds while reducing sweetness, leading to a more bitter taste. In addition, erratic rainfall can dilute compounds that give tea its depth and character.

### **And just Science!**

Researchers uncover why Antarctic sea ice suddenly plunged after 2015.

Sea ice in Antarctica melted to record lows after a series of compounding climate change-driven events suddenly hit the frozen landscape, scientists have found. The southern ice-covered continent appeared to defy global warming trends as ice levels continued to grow up until 2015, but this suddenly reversed.

Researchers from the University of Southampton said they have now discovered why, after identifying three events that flipped the surrounding Southern Ocean out of balance and drove sudden ice melt.

According to their findings, human-driven climate change has fuelled stronger winds. These began pulling warm, salty water from the deep ocean closer to the surface around 2013.

Then, in 2015, intense wind mixed the deeper heat directly into the surface layer, rapidly melting sea ice, particularly in East Antarctica. Since 2018, the ice-ocean system has been trapped in a cycle where – with less ice to melt – the surface remains salty and warm so that ice cannot recover. The change has been so extreme that an area of ice the size of Greenland has melted.

### **Energy**

Households will be given £15bn in grants and loans to install solar panels, heat pumps and batteries to help lower bills, under legislation to boost energy resilience in the UK. A new Energy Independence Bill, announced as part of the King's Speech, will also seek to shave money off people's bills if they use power

during sunny or windy periods when the grid is producing excess electricity. But the most eye-catching element of the new legislation is the creation of the new Warm Homes Agency, which will oversee the Government's vast roll-out of energy electrification over the coming years.

Under the Warm Homes Plan, money will be made available to fund free home improvement plans for low-income families.

The packages would be tailored to what would be most suitable for people's homes, whether that is installing solar panels, heat pumps, insulation or draught proofing.

It is expected that households with a total income of around £35,000 or less would receive a grant of between £9,000 to £12,000.

The plan will also provide around £2bn of government funding to back no-interests to fit heat pumps etc., to help take them off the "roller coaster of fossil fuels"

### **Personal Finance**

According to my newspaper this morning (14<sup>th</sup> May) Britons have lost up to 19p for every pound they have save since 2020 in real terms, with inflation having outpaced the average rate offered on the market.

The purchasing power of households with money in typical easy access accounts has been systematically eroded, a report by financial website Moneyfacts warned. Even savers with top-tier easy-access rates have lost 5p per £1 over the same period, it added.

The financial crunch is driven by the prolonged gap between stagnant bank interest rates and high cost of living spikes, with inflation expected to rise from the current 3.3 per cent to as high as 6.2 per cent later this year due to the conflict in the Middle East.

An estimated £612bn remains in stagnant UK accounts yielding under 3 per cent, Moneyfacts found.

### **And finally, Health**

Isn't it great when science indicates that one of your favourite foods is good for you? Researchers announced recently that eggs may help keep Alzheimer's disease at bay.

Eggs were the original superfood but concerns over their cholesterol and fat content led them to being seen as bad for the heart. So, what do and don't we know about the effects of eggs on our health?

Eggs were seen as good for us for a long time because they are high in protein, as well as providing a range of vitamins and minerals.

They became the perfect breakfast food, with "Go to work on an egg" the British Egg Marketing Board's slogan until the 70s. But their health halo started slipping because of increasing concerns about heart disease being caused by cholesterol and saturated fats, both found in eggs.

For a while, common health advice was that we should avoid eggs, or at least, not eat too many. Or stick to egg whites, as it is the yolk that has the fat and cholesterol.

By 2007, when the now-British Egg Information Service wanted to resurrect its old slogan, the advert was banned on health grounds.

But, as thinking about the causes of heart disease has evolved, the pendulum has swung back.

According to a researcher in nutrition at Newcastle University, it turns out the original advice to avoid cholesterol in food was wrong – because most cholesterol in blood does not come from the diet but is made by the body.

Blood cholesterol levels are more affected by how much saturated fat we eat. Eggs do have some saturated fat, but it is only about 1.5g in a large egg. The NHS advises that women should have no more than 20g a day and men 30g.

The NHS now advises eating eggs as part of a balanced diet, without mentioning an upper limit. The British Heart Foundation says they are a "healthy, affordable source of protein and other nutrients".

And thanks to this bundle of nutrients, eggs are thought to have a range of other benefits, including for the brain and eyesight.

Eggs are a rich source of vitamins A, D, B12 and folate, as well as the minerals iodine and selenium. All these substances are often deficient in the British diet, according to the Government's last National Diet and Nutrition Survey, from 2025. Many of these nutrients are

important for brain development in the womb, and in childhood.

The latest study suggests these nutrients may also support brain functioning in later life. It found that people who ate at least five eggs per week had a 27 per cent lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

There's even a further reason for returning the health halo to eggs. There used to be a risk of catching the bacterial infection salmonella from raw eggs, but the Food Standards Agency said there was no risk from eggs stamped with the "British Lion" mark, as this shows the hens had been vaccinated. It seems that "Go to work on an egg" could have been good advice after all.

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