

Bicester - Community Profile: October 2017 update

1. **Map and overview**



**Source: *Guardian*, 19 January 2017**

Overview

* Bicester is a thriving market town in Cherwell District with 30,000 residents.
* Bicester is 24km to the north-east of Oxford, and 28km to the southeast of Banbury.
* Bicester has good road and rail links and infrastructure and significant further investment is planned. It is within the “golden triangle” created by Oxford, Cambridge and London, with direct trains taking less than an hour to London and Birmingham and the M40 nearby.
* There are two railway stations; Bicester North and Bicester Town. Chiltern Railways operate services from Bicester North between Birmingham Snow Hill and London Marylebone. Branch line services to Oxford (via Islip) operate from Bicester Town. East West Rail will link Oxford to Milton Keynes and Cambridge via Bicester.
* Bicester is a has grown rapidly in the last 50 years and further significant growth is planned. Major new development is underway with the North-West Bicester Eco-Town development of around 6,000 homes.
* Bicester has been chosen as one of ten UK locations where healthy living will be promoted as part of the built environment and the eco-town development aims to be environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.
* Britain’s largest self-build development is at Graven Hill, an attractively wooded former Ministry of Defence site near Bicester where 1,900 families can buy a plot and build their own home.

Employment

* Employment in the town is mainly in the distribution and manufacturing sectors. There is significant out-commuting from Bicester to Oxford, London and elsewhere. Many people commute to work from Bicester. In 2001, Bicester South and Bicester North wards jointly had the second highest percentage of workers in Oxfordshire travelling 60km or over to work (8.8% each).
* The 2011 Census shows this continuing with over 3,000 people leaving Bicester for work each day.
* Bicester Village is an internationally significant tourist attraction.

Town Council

* <http://www.bicester.gov.uk/>
* Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, OX26 6PS
* 01869 252 915

Other community websites

* Growing Bicester: <http://growingbicester.co.uk/>
1. **Deprivation**

## Parts of Bicester suffer from problems of deprivation such as poor housing and low incomes. in the central Bicester Town ward there are many people on low incomes, a concentration of older people (Bicester presently has a relatively young population), many people with long-term illnesses and a significantly lower life expectancy than people living in the newer housing areas.

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## **Service overview**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Children’s Centre** | **Day Centre** | **Transport** |
| Brookside and Glory Farm children’s centres have closed. Oxfordshire County Council is providing a new integrated service from the Children and Family Centres across Oxfordshire.We are providing support and advice to children and families – with a special emphasis on supporting the whole family. [Didcot Children and Family Centre](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/bicester-children-and-family-centre) will be one of these new centres. | From 1 October 2017, health and wellbeing centres and learning disability support services are changing. They are being replaced by a new, centre-based Community Support Service. The CSS will delivered from 8 dedicated buildings, including [Bicester Health and Wellbeing Centre](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/bicester-health-and-wellbeing-centre-0) | Bicester is well-served by trains and bus services.Subsidies were cut July 2016 for 8, 22, 23, 24, 25, 25A, 37, 81, 81A, 118, T94.  |

## **Distance to services**

Distance to services is not a particular issue for Bicester. However, services are not always within easy reach for specific pockets of people who do not own a car.

## **Community assets**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Notes** |
| The Garth | Town Council |
| Bicester Community Building | The building will accommodate the new customer services LinkPoint for Cherwell District Council, County Library for Oxfordshire County Council, and commercial tenants |
| Bure Park Primary School |  |
| Langford Village Community Centre |  |
| West Bicester Community Centre |  |
| Bicester East Community Centre |  |
| Southwold Community Centre |  |
| St Mary's Catholic Primary School |  |
| Emmanuel Church |  |
| Pingle Field Pavilion |  |
| John Paul II Centre |  |
| The Bicester School (formerly Bicester Community College) |  |
| The Cooper School |  |
| Brookside Primary School |  |
| Five Acres Primary School |  |
| Southwold Community School |  |
| St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School |  |
| King's Meadow School |  |
| Langford Village Community Primary School |  |
| Glory Farm Primary School |  |
| Longfields Primary School |  |

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## **Community activity: overview**

| **Theme** | **Group** | **Contact** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Children** | Busy Bees | 1 Barberry Place, Bure Park, OX26 3HA01869 321522 | Private child care nursery |
|  | Toad Hall Day Nursery (Bicester) Ltd   | 232-234 Buckingham Rd, Bicester OX26 4EL01869 248488 | Private child care nursery |
|  | Rainbow Playgroup | Hendon Place, Sunderland Drive, Bicester OX26 4YJ01869 323613 | Private child care nursery |
|  | Outset Day Nursery  | Keble Rd, Bicester OX26 4TP01869 321301 | Private child care nursery |
|  | Kings Preschool   | Bicester East Community Centre, Keble Rd, Oxon OX26 4TP 07913 185630 | Preschool |
|  | Child First | 32 Launton Rd, Bicester OX26 6PY01869 323730 | Preschool |
|  | Jack & Jill Pre-School | Bowmont Square01869 600671 | Preschool |
| **Skills** | Bicester Job Club | Held in the Bicester Library, Franklins House, Wesley Lane OX26 6JU | Every other Friday between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm. Annual Bicester Job Fair Service includes CV advice from the National Careers Service, Benefits advice, Voluntary work advice and opportunities, Training and education advice from Banbury and Bicester College, Job vacancies and application forms, Laptops for online job searching, Mind - mental health support. |
|  | Banbury and Bicester College | 0808 1686 626 | 14-19 and adults, career-related training, support for NEETs, work skills development, career advice |
|  | Bicester Library | Franklins House, Wesley Lane OX26 6JU01869 252181 bicester.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk   |  |
| **Older people** | Bicester East Community Centre | Keble RoadBicester OX26 4TPContact: 07934427029 | The centre is available for hire at reasonable rates. Pre-school sessions, craft, dance, over 50s activities, ‘Real Results’ |
|  | Langford Community Centre | 8 Nightingale PlaceBicester OX26 6XXContact: 07778062743[www.langfordlife.org.uk](http://www.langfordlife.org.uk)  | Aikido, Brownies, Cubs, Toddler, Ballet, YogaAvailable for hire |
|  | Southwold Community Centre | Holm SquareBicester OX26 3UU07742 488762 | Available for hire |
|  | West Bicester Community Centre | Shakespeare DriveBicester OX26 2GJ07845 787885 | Available for hire. Large space. Kitchen. Family activities |
|  | Bicester Good Neighbours | Bicester Health and Wellbeing Centre Launton Road OX26 6DJ01869 242808 | Well organised group of volunteers who support older local people who may feel isolated, often with physical disabilities that prevent them from going out alone. |
|  | Nursing homes: Fewcott House and Wyndham Hall |
|  | Bicester Seniors Forum |  | Run by Cherwell District Council. discuss issues, support base for each other. |
|  | Bicester and KidlingtonCommunity Information Network | 0345 450 1276Age UK07957 981381troybryan@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or 07827 235410libbygriffin@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk  | Community information team helps people to find activities and support near to where you where they live. Community [information events and drop-ins](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/community-information-network/information-drop-ins/). Home visits. |
| **Adults** | Bicester Local History Society  | Bicester Community Building | Monthly talks; visits to local places of interest; exhibitions; producing various publications and historical walks. |
|  | Bicester Floral Club | Methodist Church Hall, Victoria Road, Bicester, OX26 6JQ7.15pm 4th Tue in month07868 246882 | Encouraging interest in the art of flower arranging.  |
| **Transport** | Volunteer Connect  | Banbury | Volunteer scheme covers the whole District |

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## **Summary of key local issues**

The town has retail, leisure and other services but further improvement is needed. The provision of new services, facilities and infrastructure in Bicester has not kept pace with population growth. The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 highlights the lack of sufficient services and facilities in Bicester for a town of its size. Infrastructure isn’t keeping pace with housing. Bicester has 30,000 residents but just one butcher and no independent greengrocer. Food purchasing is dominated by a new Sainsbury’s in the centre and Tesco on the edge.

There is a need to improve standards of education and training in Bicester, areas of which are among the worst 20% in England in terms of skills, education and training.

The Local Plan also notes the need for improved library provision, facilities for young people, a museum, theatre and public art. Bicester has existing deficiencies in open space, sports and recreation amenities. There is a shortfall of junior football pitches, rugby pitches, parks and gardens, natural/semi-natural green space, children's play space, tennis courts, a bowling green and allotments. There are variations between wards within these deficiencies. The new development that is coming to Bicester provides an opportunity to rectify the infrastructure and service deficiencies if it is well co-ordinated. Cherwell District Council is developing a Masterplan for Bicester, to establish an integrated delivery plan for the growth of the town.

The vitality and viability of Bicester town centre needs attention to make it more attractive to both residents and visitors.

The town’s new community hospital has just 12 beds.

Some of Bicester's employment areas are ageing and in need of rejuvenation and there is a need to make Bicester more attractive to new businesses, particularly knowledge based and high-technology companies.