

O L D W O U G H T O N

Spring 2020

News

The Newsletter of Old Woughton Parish Council



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Who's Who in the Parish

OLD WOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish of Old Woughton is divided into 4 small wards.
Details of your local Councillors are listed below.

Woughton on the Green North



Rob Grindley
 Planning, Projects,
 Liaison for Woughton
 Playing Fields/Pavilion,
 Transport

rgrindley@
 oldwoughton.org.uk

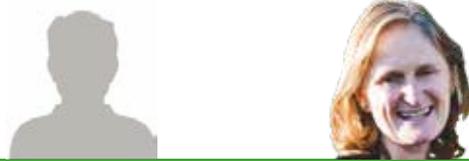
Roy Kenyon
 Allotments, Finance
 & Budget, Projects,
 Liaison for Transport

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 oldwoughton.org.uk

Phil Nash
 Allotments,
 Communications,
 OWIS/IT, Projects

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Woughton on the Green South



Ray Brown
 Allotments,
 Planning, Projects,
 Village Greens/
 Rights of Way

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Charlotte Hall
 VICE CHAIR
 Finance & Budget,
 Planning, Projects Lead, Liaison for Parks
 Trust, OWPC Representative - Welfare Trust,
 Communication

chall@oldwoughton.org.uk

Woughton Park



**Vanessa
 Freeman Gwynn**
 Planning, Projects,
 Liaison for MKC Consultations,
 Parks Trust, Liaison Canal and River Trust,
 Communications

vgwynn@oldwoughton.org.uk

Andrew Humphries
 CHAIR
 Finance & Budget,
 Village Greens/Rights of Way, Projects,
 Liaison for MKC Consultations,
 Woughton Playing Fields/Pavilion

ahumphries@oldwoughton.org.uk

Passmore



Mary Major
 Dog Bins,
 Noticeboards, Projects,
 Finance and Budget,
 Liaison for MKC Consultations,
 Liaison Canal & River Trust'

mmajor@oldwoughton.org.uk

Jeremy Morrison
 Liaison for Canal and River Trust,
 Communications Projects

jmorrison@oldwoughton.org.uk

The Borough of Milton Keynes is divided into larger wards, OWPC is part of the Campbell Park and Old Woughton Ward. *Your ward councillors are:*

Clerk



Julian Vischer
 Finance & Budget,
 Environment, OWIS/IT,
 Data Protection Office

clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk

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**Our Next Parish Council
 Meetings Are On Monday:**

**6th April 2020
 Parish Elections 7th May 2020
 11th May 2020 First meeting of new Council**

VENUE: St Mary's Church,
 Newport Road MK6 3BS

TIMES OF MEETINGS : 7.30pm

CONTACT US

- www.oldwoughton.org.uk
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 Milton Keynes, MK11 9GR



*Friends of
 Old Woughton PC*

Editorial

OLD WUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Is there any better confirmation of the season of renewal than the arrival of lighter nights and the clocks going forward, as they do on the 29th March?

Here at Comms HQ, therefore, we have been thinking about refreshing our governance arrangements – we are parish councillors after all – and we bring you pieces on:

- *The new budget for 2020/21 and the Precept (see the Chair's column)*
- *The OWPC all-out elections on 7th May and the role of the Clerk in supporting the new council (page 6).*

We've also been thinking about the prospect of getting back outside again with coverage of local cycling and the Redways (page 7), whilst our centrefold item is about the progress underway on your doorsteps through the local Ward Projects, which are about to enter their second year. Not only are these projects about our immediate 'public realm' and the concern for infrastructure and cleanliness, but they're also about investing in the local environment and the drive for greater bio-diversity - and we start from an enviable position in this parish, we think you'll agree.

You certainly seemed to appreciate how the pilot edition of the Old Woughton calendar caught our good looks from the comments we have received to-date, and the number of additional copies that were bought. Neighbours admired the photography and the quality of the product and we would welcome more feedback, as the decision about whether to produce a 2021 version and whether/how much we might charge will be with us before you know it. Do e-mail us here at communications@oldwoughton.org.uk and help influence those decisions.

Our physical appearance was also under the spotlight in the Conservation Area Review during the winter, when the character of the village was reviewed by MKC's Conservation & Archaeology Team. See the article below for their findings and learn about OWPC's response.

So, that's it for now. We urge you to enjoy your parish to the full – get involved in a local project; stand as a parish councillor; rent an allotment; and/or provide feedback on any article in these Newsletters. It's the people together that make our community.

Happy Easter!

The Comms. Team
Charlotte, Phil and Vanessa

STOP PRESS



The Chairman

OLD WUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

This issue I want to look both forward and back.

At the parish council meeting in November, we approved for consultation OWPC's draft budget proposals for 2020/21 and the sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that we again proposed not to raise the Precept. At the first meeting of 2020, therefore, I was able to announce that no public comments had been received and so for the 6th year in a row there will be no changes - only 10% of Milton Keynes' 49 parishes now have lower precepts than us. Although the formal consultation is now closed, if you think we are spending the right amount, too much or too little, please let us know at any point.

So, with that key decision now behind us, what does the coming year bring? The stand-out feature for all of us Old Woughton councillors is that our current terms of office come to an end in May and there will be fresh elections in all nine of the parish's seats (see details of how to apply on p.6). I thought you might like an insight into what being a local representative involves and the below describes a recent Sunday morning for me:

During a walk around Walton Lake, I spoke to the Parks Trust team busy bush clearing and asked them if they were still doing bug surveys - the tin plates where critters hide seem to have been in the path verges for years. They said yes. I inquired about bee-friendly planting measures in the parish and was given the name of their environment expert. I also took the opportunity to mention that some shrubs that had been cut back should be allowed to grow much thicker and taller so they provide a better sound barrier with the dual carriageway on the other side. This reminded me to follow up an outstanding meeting with the Head of Highways about the A421 noise problem. I later spotted a lot of litter along the side road to the Groveway canal bridge – one more for the Environment log. I then noticed a concrete BT wiring duct cover that appeared to have been broken by a heavy vehicle - something else to be reported. That afternoon I took a call from a national cement company to reassure me that they planned to fix and move their broken-down lorry parked on the slip road from the A421. Later that week I met with the Finance team and reviewed OWPC's Reserves Policy.

These activities give you a glimpse of what a parish councillor gets up to. It's always different, interesting and useful and you can choose to do just those things that 'float your boat'. If you feel like joining us at some point, just let us know. If we don't have a current vacancy, we can certainly alert you when one becomes available. Yet you don't have to be an elected representative to make a contribution. It's really good to see residents joining in, whether it's picking litter, helping with the towpath repairs, trimming vegetation or sweeping leaves. You get a good feeling because you are doing something to improve the area, and you will often meet residents you don't know, which does lots for community spirit.

Remember, Council Elections to OWPC are on Thursday May 7th. Everyone has an interest in our local affairs whether it's Council Tax, pothole repairs, preserving green spaces or spending public money wisely, so remember to 'have your say' at the ballot box - the more the merrier!

Report It! Sort it!

If you've spotted something that doesn't look right, do report it – a photo helps! Ring MKC on (01908) 691 691 or e-mail: customerservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk or online at: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pay-report-apply/report-it

On Your Doorstep

This issue we mark the first anniversary of OWPC's Ward Projects initiative. Introduced in the 2019/20 budget, each of our four wards was allocated £2,000 to tackle those matters right on neighbours' doorsteps. These can often be very small items or they may be a programme of work that will need to be funded across a number of years. Their distinguishing feature is that they are driven by you as parishioners, often as a result of a survey questionnaire from your ward members and here we set out the progress we are making on your behalves.



Passmore

Early in 2019, an OWPC consultation was circulated in Passmore, generating about 13 potential ward projects, after which some were removed and others added. We then engaged with landowners MKC and specifically its Landscapes team, who were supportive of four, though not those requiring removal of healthy trees. Quotations were received via MKC Landscapes from Serco for these tasks and after a few amendments and cancellations due to house owners' security concerns, the order was placed in October. In early February, work commenced on two tasks. The second two started mid-February, now all are completed. All tasks were to remove areas of shrubs, some of which contained brambles, ivy and other self-set wild shrubs. The shrubs were removed and grass seed laid down. On one area a one-meter layer of hedge was left at the side of the house, at the resident's request for security. The provision of an additional road sign for the cul de sac containing house numbers 2 to 10, is being progressed with MKC Highways. We are extremely pleased with the work carried out and are now seeking new projects for next year's budget.

Please contact your ward councillors if you have any suggestions for new projects.

Woughton Park - Village Green

Biodiversity Enhancement Proposals



Bio-diversity Plan
for the new Village Green



New Litter Bin
WALTON LAKE

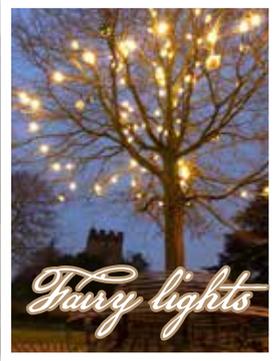


Before



After

Woughton on the Green



Whilst in Woughton Park, Andrew and Vanessa leafleted twice. Firstly, last March to discover the ideas people had and then again in June to test priorities given the 32 suggestions unleashed!

Happily, there was a great deal of commonality in all the contributions and three streams of activity were quickly identified. Works to the historic hedgerows along Newport Road; realising the potential of the new village green; and general maintenance issues, largely the responsibility of MK Council (eg footpath repairs; leaf clearing; and shrub maintenance).

For the village green a Landscape Architect was retained over the summer to scope proposals, which are now published in a **Bio-diversity Plan** available on the website here, <http://oldwoughton.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Woughton-Park-Biodiversity-Enhancement.pdf>. The Plan was lodged with MKC Landscape in October and we await approval to proceed. SERCO have already quoted for hedge management works between the new bus shelter and Saddington for completion before nesting season. Particular thanks go to Parks Trust colleagues for the new Litter Bin and additional rose planting at Walton Lake car park. Meanwhile, the photographs below capture some of the progress already being made:

Meanwhile, in the village itself, the wards of Woughton-on-the-Green North and South have combined budgets and embarked on a joint programme of activity. The first of these was the purchase of outdoor lights and baubles, which were enjoyed over the Christmas and New Year break, sited near the Church and the pub. These lights could be used for other community events - a picnic in the orchard maybe?

Other suggestions for projects are seasonally sensitive (e.g. there are plans afoot to replace dead trees on Baskerfield Road next autumn). If you think there are other trees that need replacing then let the team know so we can schedule this in at the same time. The combined Woughton on the Green team is working with South Central Ambulance Service with regards to the purchase of a public access Defibrillator. With the area an increasingly popular 'destination' with its range of sport and leisure activities such a facility would have great public benefit. A location has been identified.

Provision of bird and owl boxes has also been suggested. The team met with The Parks Trust and its Bio-diversity expert and we were advised that the owl boxes already in place in the parklands are not being used as there are lots of natural 'homes' locally. However, there is a need for bat boxes, as the area has a rich population (5 different species!), which would benefit from support, so that 6no. boxes have already been purchased, four of which will be placed near the 'Water Gardens' and the other two more centrally in the village.

The 'Water Gardens' have been a concern for a number of residents and since the Parks Trust meeting they have already been cleared of bramble, self-set trees and other excessive growth to open up the area. Further works will take place seasonally.

Wild flower planting is also being explored and those suggestions which were more 'partner-led' are also being actioned. For example, a meeting took place earlier in the month with MKC Transport Officers to look at traffic movements both at the bottom of Peartree Bridge and around the Jubilee Oak.

Our Clerk Writes

Life is interesting and busy as a parish clerk, since the role is a mixture of the admin that you might expect – agenda; minutes; parish finances; and then, of course, community involvement. The former constitute the core of the role, around which the parish revolves and legally depends, whilst the latter principally involves liaising with the principal authority, which is to say representing the parish's many interests. This can sometimes be frustrating as the parish is but 'small-fry' in the sweeping purview of the whole of Milton Keynes, but it can also be rewarding when results finally appear.

I first became a clerk after retiring from my career in landscape gardening. Previously, I had been a parish councillor in Milton Keynes for twenty years and saw clerking as a way to still be active and involved with local people. I undertook the foundation training and started out for a year before deciding to broaden my challenge and work for more than one parish council. It was at this point, some 6 years ago, that Old Woughton enlisted me.

Parishes are as different the one from the other as chalk and cheese. At the peak of my activity I was working for as many as five councils - three currently. Parish and Town Councils vary enormously in size, with the larger ones employing a full-time clerk with various assistants and managers, also running their own office. For the small councils that I prefer, the work is part-time (just 7 hours per week for OWPC), and all the roles merge into one. Myself, I am happy to work from home and although pay rates are not generous, they are adequate, being set nationally according to experience and service.

Parish and Town Councils may be styled differently, but they are the same legally, it depends on the traditional local area (eg Town Councils often have a Mayor), and together they form the First Tier of local government, then come Principal Authorities (e.g. Milton Keynes Council) and then central government, which provides the legislative framework, the duties and responsibilities, if you will, of those other tiers. As such their activities are governed by legislation, principally the Local Government Act 1972. A great deal of the training revolves around knowledge of the law. Further development training, known as a CiLCA or Certificate in Local Council Administration is available for those seeking career advancement.

As a first-tier council, OWPC may not support local community causes with a blank cheque, but under Section 137 of the Act, only up to an index-linked amount per head of the "relevant population" (ie the local electorate). In Old Woughton this cap is currently £6,614.

I began life in parish council-land as a councillor many years ago and that rewarding sense of getting things done for the community still permeates my role as clerk. Each of the parish councils I have clerked is unique - their outlook and styles as completely different as those elected to them, but always the common thread is working for their localities and, of course, it is all part of the greater Milton Keynes community - a unique project of itself. Old Woughton parish councillors are a hard-working and well-motivated bunch. There are always many things going on to be involved in. One of the

special qualities of Old Woughton parish is the sheer level of activity of its councillors - and the friendly and industrious way they get things done. May 7th is the date of the next 'all-out' elections and I look forward to that highlight of the new municipal season - opening the Parish Council meeting and inviting the nominations for Chair. ***Come along and see me in action on May 11th, at 7.30pm, but do be quick, as it takes but a couple of minutes until that first vote!***

Share the Space, Drop your Pace

A productive morning was had out on the towpath on Thursday 6th February as four willing volunteers joined me to deal with a partially fallen tree that was leaning over the towpath at just the right level for anyone over 5ft to bump their heads on! The tree was safely reduced to hedge height and the arising branches stacked in a gap in the hedge to make a habitat pile...the birds and bugs will be happy!

This is not the first time this group of volunteers have got their hands dirty - they have been working hard over the last few years to resurface the towpath through the Parish, with work on this set to continue this spring. Lots of different people use the towpath in this area, from ramblers, to dog walker and cyclists, to anglers. If you are out on the towpath, whatever type of user you are, please take a moment to appreciate the hard work the volunteers have put in and always remember to follow C&RT's Towpath Code: *Share the Space, Drop your Pace, so it stays safe and enjoyable for all.*



*Further repairs scheduled for mornings of
21st April and 19th May.*

Maybe see you then!

**Laura
Summerbell**

Volunteer Leader, Canal & River Trust

Cycling the Old Woughton Way

As the evenings begin to get lighter and the mornings are not so dark like many local people, my mind starts to think of cycling and Milton Keynes has very interesting cycle routes (Redways) that allow cyclists of any standard to "Get on their Bikes" and enjoy the fresh air and the open countryside.

AROUND THE REDWAY AND RELATED SYSTEM

For many, the Redways have kindled a love of cycling that stays with them for the rest of their lives. For most of my family the hours spent cycling around the Redways with sandwiches in pockets and drinks in the water bottle led to a passion that has lasted into adulthood.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Redway system and its associated roads and bridle paths there is an excellent pocket-sized map which can be downloaded here:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways-and-transport-hub/get-cycling-mk/cycle-routes-and-maps

For some the beauty of the countryside outside the boundary of the city also beckons and there are many recognised cycle routes and these are risk assessed by various sport bodies and these can be accessed via the link below and are recognised by British Cycling as suitable routes.

https://uk.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspart=imageadvan&hsimp=yhs-image-advan_001&type=171_003_89211650&p=Cycle%20routes%20England

Using these maps and routes you can cycle freely around our city for both pleasure and commuting. There is something about the freedom of a bicycle that enables one to get around the city and because a bicycle is pretty much silent you can also observe an unusual amount of wild life undisturbed. I can never forget the moment I was riding out towards Cranfield along the Redway that runs parallel to the H8 when as I came around a corner I was confronted by a Roe Deer standing in the middle of the track. Its big, dark eyes regarded me thoughtfully for a moment and then nonchalantly turned and just as casually it turned and moved back towards the copse next to the River Ousel. Another time I was riding along minding my own business when modern technology confronted me in the shape or shapes of a small fleet of delivery drones complete with their flashing orange flags!

The routes around the area of Milton Keynes do offer a remarkable opportunity to explore some of the beautiful countryside in winter, when it is not frosty you can smell dank earth, in the spring primroses and daffodils grace the hedgerows and in summer the gentle warm scent of Honeysuckle and Dog Roses fills the air. If reading this inspires you to get your bicycle out of the shed or the garage then just a few important safety tips:

PERSONAL PROTECTION

Helmet – always wear a helmet whether you are cycling on the Redway system or on routes around Milton Keynes. It is rare to get hurt, but if you do take a tumble head protection is vital

Clothing – be seen it may seem silly to wear bright high visibility clothing, but it is even sillier to be in an accident because someone did not see you!

Display lights - Always display bright flashing lights in daylight; white at the front/red for the rear. During darkness keep the rear red light flashing and put the front light on solid beam.

Foot wear – Sensible shoes. Some cyclists wear special cycling shoes which are great for the job and enable you to keep control.

COURTESY

Always ride with consideration for other Redway or road users. Keep to a reasonable speed. Alert other people to your approach by using your bell and thank them when you go past. Dogs and children can be unpredictable, so expect the unexpected and ride accordingly. Resist the temptation to ride as fast as you can if you want to do that get out on the cycle routes outside Milton Keynes. Treat Redways and their junctions as you would any other route. Namely be visible display lights and ride sensibly.



There is a series of 4no. circular Heritage Trails for cyclists in MK and the village is part of Route C: The Ouzel Valley.

"This trail takes you out of Willen Lake through the original Milton Keynes Village and then to the River Ouzel. You then cycle along the river bank through the medieval village of Woughton-on-the-Green and on to the picturesque Caldecotte Lake. Dobbies Garden World is on this route for a spot of retail therapy or just a quick cup of tea, before moving on to Fenny Lock."

Length: Full route - 12.6 miles, Short route - 4.5 miles

Duration: Full route - 3-4 hours, Short route - 1 hour

<http://www.destinationmiltonkeynes.co.uk/What-to-do/Sports-and-Activities/Cycling-in-Milton-Keynes/Heritage-Cycle-Trails>

Enjoy your cycling and being outdoors!

On the Wild Side of OWP

January: Already in our parks catkins were to be seen on birch and alder trees, but I think the prettiest catkin is that of the hazel. On close inspection of its branches, the minuscule crimson flowers were bursting through brown buds, which develop into the nuts much enjoyed by man and squirrel! A mixture of weather, with heavy rains over a number of days, filled local ponds and streams, causing the river Ouzel to flood on to the surrounding floodplains. After the rains, a quiet lull; a rare blue-sky day showed up a heron, usually seen statuesque on the riverbank, wading the shallow flood waters of the parkland, doubtless looking for an easier catch. A few cold days with frosty starts brought us beautiful sunrises, though generally there were grey skies and some unseasonably warm days, and snowdrops, primroses and aconites already in flower.

February: What a difference a week made, with earlier sunrises bringing forth the dawn chorus of birds singing their hearts out as they competed for nesting territories and potential mates. From winter's sodden fields, embankments and along the roadsides, daisies were flowering, seemingly not giving a 'hoot' to the mix of cold wet weather we experienced. It's hard to recognise this being late winter at all. On the bare trees we saw mossy yellow-green lichen clinging to branches - in sunshine, you'll be surprised how beautiful it is. You might even witness an early beetle or other insect coming out of hibernation from its mossy bed on a rare warm February day. This month brought storms Ciara, Dennis, then Jorge causing disaster and chaos as they battered a destructive path across the whole country, but with its seemingly protected micro-climate, MK often misses

extreme weather. Gusts of wind reaching 48mph were recorded by a Woughton weather watcher and the fierce wind through the poplar trees edging Newport Road sounded similar to that of a train thundering through a station! *Maybe March will come in like a lion and leave like a lamb?*

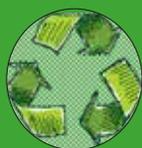


Best wishes, Julia Mason

EVENT CALENDAR

March * 20 Great British Litter Pick 10.00-11.30am <i>Woughton Park</i>	April * 06 Recognition Scheme Award 7.00-8.30pm <i>St. Mary's Church</i>	April 12 Easter Sunday <i>St. Mary's Church</i>
April * 18 Litter Pick 10.00 - 11.30am	April * 21 Towpath Work Party 9.45-11.00am <i>Rear of Community Orchard</i>	April ?? Brian Bells <i>St. Mary's Church</i>
May 03 MK Marathon 10.00am <i>Campbell Park</i> <i>mkmarathon.com</i>	May * 07 Local Elections 7.00am-10.00pm <i>Church Hall, The Green</i>	May 08 Celebrating VE Day - 75 years
May * 19 Towpath Work Party 9.45 - 11.00am <i>Rear of Community Garden</i>	May * ?? Litter Pick 10.00 - 11.30am <i>Woughton on the Green</i> <i>Turnpyn Court</i>	June 09 Discover: Tree Identification 7.00 - 9.30am <i>Ouse Valley Park</i> <i>MK Parks Trust tickets £5</i>

* contact clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk for more details



EASTER WASTE RE-CYCLING Bank Holiday Recycling arrangements

The household waste site at Bleak Hall is open from **8am to 8pm** from the **1st April to 30th September**. For further information

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/waste-recycling/>



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