

O L D W O U G H T O N

Summer 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

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& Budget, Projects,
Liaison for Transport

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Communications,
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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

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Woughton Park



**Vanessa
Freeman Gwynn**

Planning, Projects,
Liaison for MKC Consultations,
Parks Trust, Liaison Canal and River Trust,
Communications

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Andrew Humphries
CHAIR

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

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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

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

14th September 2020

9th November 2020

VENUE: to be advised

TIMES OF MEETINGS : 7.30pm

CONTACT US



<https://oldwoughton.org.uk>



01908 465811



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*Friends of
Old Woughton PC*

So, how are you and how have you been?

With the cancellation of the Spring Newsletter, it seems ages since we've been in touch and whilst it has been half a year since our Winter edition, we have leafletted on several occasions and been keeping the parish's Noticeboards and website up to-date with latest guidance and advice. Nonetheless, the conditions have been so extremely strange that time itself seemed to be moving in a separate dimension. This meant a distressing period of isolation and disconnection for many neighbours on the one hand, and yet, an opportunity to experience a welcome change of pace for others. Your parish councillors were all out and about ensuring that important business was still recorded and it has been truly rewarding to hear neighbours really appreciating their local environment as a safe space to enjoy.

Thinking further along these lines, therefore, this edition carries items on local cycling and the Redways (page 6), whilst our centrefold item is about the progress underway on your doorsteps through the local Ward Projects, which are now in 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 received and the number of additional copies that were bought. Neighbours admired the photography and the quality of the product and we would welcome an early indication of interest of a 2021 version (see article on page 8). Our physical appearance was also under the spotlight in the recent Conservation Area Review, when the character of the village was reviewed by MKC's Conservation & Archaeology Team. See the Stop Press below for the very latest position.

In closing, OWPC expresses its sincere condolences to everyone in Old Woughton who has lost family or friend, but as we hope this newsletter captures, this a fine community in which to recover and look to the future and as life begins to return to normal we urge you to enjoy your parish to the full - get involved in a local project; rent an allotment; and/or provide feedback on any article in these Newsletters. It's the people together that make our community, as we have so conspicuously proved these last months due to your many efforts. Thank you, thank you all very much!

The Comms. Team -
Charlotte, Phil and Vanessa

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

The Corona Virus emergency has changed the national plans for local elections and the way we hold our meetings. We have thus skipped a year for elections with parish councillors remaining in post until next May. We had no Annual Meeting or AGM; these will take place next year. As a result of a change in the rules we were able to hold a trial formal meeting in May using Zoom. Since this went well, we will hold our next one on the 13th July in the same way. All residents are welcome to attend so please wait for the agenda for details of how to do it. If you have any reservations or concerns, get in contact and we will be happy to allay them.

Throughout this period our public services have worked overtime to reduce the impact of lockdown. For example, and thankfully, MKC has continued to maintain its recycling operations and volunteers have delivered prescriptions to the over 70s. It is also good to see that MKC reactions to issues such as an abandoned vehicle, wind-damaged vegetation and requests for information have been really prompt.

We have not sat on our hands in the parish. We have issued information leaflets to every home, placed announcements on our notice boards and the website and, sent out emails using our handy info/alert system. Let us know if you want to be included; just let us have your email address and we will put you on the list. Your parish councillors have also been vigilant to the needs of our neighbours but in particular those who have been confined to their homes. As much as possible we are continuing 'business as usual' especially ensuring that services such as the dog bins are maintained, environmental issues and planning matters are dealt with promptly and, looking to the future of our Ward eco projects.

It has been great to keep in-touch with so many of you, whether 'clapping for the NHS', celebrating VE day or simply passing by in the park on daily walks. Recently there have been some tentative socialising in gardens (how beautiful they are looking!) and street coffee mornings. It is very noticeable how community spirit has grown even stronger and the regular litter-pickers amongst you have not been deterred. With the beginning of a relaxation of the social distancing rules, let us hope that the light at the end of the tunnel is at last visible.

*** STOP PRESS

The Conservation Area Review process has been completed in terms of Consultations and will be determined at a Delegated Decision Meeting (MKC) in late August / Early September.



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





Woughton Park

Whilst in Woughton Park, Andrew and Vanessa leafletted twice. Firstly, in March 2019 to discover the ideas people had and then again in June 2019 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 ideas a Landscape Architect was retained over the summer to illustrate 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-BiodiversityEnhancement.pdf>. The Plan was lodged with MKC Landscape in October 2019 and we now have formal approval to proceed (including some Health & Safety guidance). Further discussions were held with neighbours in May about phasing these works and MKC will now be approached about possible changes to the mowing standard and rose bed maintenance.

Meanwhile, SERCO has already undertaken hedge management works between the new bus shelter and Saddington; they will return to complete ground cover control. Thanks also go to Parks Trust colleagues for the new Litter Bin and additional rose planting at Walton Lake car park. Meanwhile, the photographs capture some of the progress already being made. Keep the ideas coming!

Woughton on the Green

Bat Boxes for guests



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.

Other suggestions for projects are seasonally sensitive. Discussions are underway with MK Council and their suppliers to select and order trees for planting in Baskerfield Grove this 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.

After consultation with the South Central Ambulance Service the team has now purchased a Public Access Defibrillator. With the area being an increasingly popular 'destination' with its range of sport and leisure activities this facility will have great public benefit. A huge thank you to Rapport Dentistry for allowing us to site the device on their building and supply power for the 'heated box' in which the equipment is stored.

Provision of bird and owl boxes had 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. Six bat boxes (2 types) have now been bought and four of which have been placed near the 'Water Gardens' and the other two near the old pond North of the Church.

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.

Live and ready to use



Cycling the Old Woughton Way

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.

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 are recognised by British Cycling as suitable routes.



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:

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!
Jeremy Morrison

When I wrote this article about cycling in and around Milton Keynes it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. If it had been published in its original form the reader would not find any references to "Social Distance". As time has gone on lock down has been eased and even at the height of lockdown, we were all allowed to exercise for one hour either walking running or cycling, so an opportunity to view the array of treasures locally that are accessible by bike. The Redways and bridle ways let the novice and the experienced cyclist alike to enjoy a summer at home.

Remember whilst Covid-19 is still around our community it is essential to stick to government social distancing guidance which for the cyclist is as follows:

Respecting the government defined distance currently 1 metre plus?

Only cycle in company with people in your permitted bubble

On return wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water

Share the Space, Drop your Pace

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.

Laura Summerbell C&RT

Covid – covered!

The pace of life may have slowed locally these last months, but quietly and unnoticed – almost! – neighbours have been looking out for neighbours.

Here at OWPC, we have received mailings most days from the myriad of organisations bearing the brunt of the pandemic response and we have tried to manage that on your behalf to ensure that only the most relevant guidance and information affecting our daily lives is forwarded to you. We hope very much that we struck the right balance, but here for the record is what played out and, as ever, we welcome your feedback:

Scrubs up nicely!



- we delivered to every household the core guidance from MK Council and official sources, also ensuring that key agency contact details were made available, including signposting to respected sources that would provide further detail and help.

- whilst restricted in our own movements, we prepared two leaflets that were delivered by hand to every home. This also gave us the opportunity to re-present the contact details of each of our parish councillors thereby ensuring points of contact in OWPC's four wards.

- we have been mindful that not everyone uses the internet and so wanted to ensure there was a telephone network available so that no-one would 'fall through the net'.

- this information was mirrored on the OWPC website and Noticeboards, whilst more regular updates were available to those signed up to OWPC's 'notification system'.

- as the weeks progressed, the extraordinary response by our communities and agencies has led to a number of layers of support being set up. For example, within our own parish a 'buddy' network has served to support residents with shopping, the collection of medicines, telephone contact, dog walking and more. This was especially important for those who did not necessarily fit into a particular 'category' directly targeted by official agencies.

- we supported the collection of materials for our residents who have been sewing gowns, scrub bags and masks, and also food collection for the central MK Food Bank.

- our community rallied as neighbours to support each other and find solutions. There have been hundreds of acts of kindness and we recognise especially our 11 NHS Volunteer Responders (managed by the Royal Voluntary Service), who remain active in the parish offering mental health support, transport to hospital, and contact for those isolated.

On The Wild Side



How often have we wished we had more time to enjoy the beautiful season of Spring and who could have imagined that a deadly virus, more conceivable in a science fiction novel, would have such a halting effect on our lives and give us that time?

With government advice to remain at home for weeks on end, and with more time to 'think', a universal recognition that nature has an essential part to play on our mental and physical wellbeing. That by observing nature through our windows, on our daily walks or by television nature programmes it helps us to stay positive.

We are a fortunate community here in Old Woughton with, if not being able to go out for a walk, there's a garden or park to sit in close by, so as to hear bird song; enjoy the sunshine; and inhale the fresh air.

We've watched the kaleidoscope of spring and summer colours and scents unfold these past weeks: trees unfurling from winter's earthy colours, birds nesting, butterflies flitting, bees busy collecting nectar from garden and wayside flowers. The cycle of nature's seasons is as it should be and goes on unheeded for us immerse ourselves into, enjoy and look forward to 'normal' life in the near future.

Linda Mason

So what next?

As a Parish Council we welcome any suggestions and ideas of how we can further help as we feel our way out of lockdown and wholeheartedly thank everyone for all that they are doing.

Meanwhile, *if you would like to join OWPC's on-line Notification system go to:* communications@oldwoughton.org.uk and leave your preferred e-mail address.

Something to look forward to....

We hope that you are still enjoying OWPC's first calendar. It seems quite unbelievable that we are already in the second half of the year, but then what a year it has been!

Since the feedback on the 2020 version was so positive, OWPC has decided to produce a 2021 version – a reminder of how fortunate we were to have access to such lovely open spaces, if you will. However, we have also heard the feedback, that electronic calendars are more useful for some households and, therefore, the 2021 version will be available free to every Old Woughton household, but on an opt-in basis only. All other arrangements remain the same, in that we will deliver your complimentary copy to your door and will also have further copies available to purchase, as we now know that many of you sent extra copies as gifts.

The calendars will be available earlier in the year, hopefully, by the end of October and will be larger at 300mm x 300mm. So, if you would like to receive your free copy please e-mail: communications@oldwoughton.org.uk, as soon as you've decided and we will immediately acknowledge your request. You can also order extra copies at the same time, which this year will be available at £5.99 each and 3 for £15.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to phone your order through then please ring Charlotte on 07885-330797.

Finally, don't forget that you are welcome to submit your own photographs for inclusion in the calendar or any edition of the quarterly Newsletter, just forward your entries to the Comms. Team: communications@oldwoughton.org.uk. Thank you!



We will be holding three litter-picking sessions during this time across the parish:

**SATURDAY 12TH, 19TH AND 26TH
FROM 10.00 - 11.00AM.**

If you would like to join us then please let us know (**Charlotte: 07885 330 797**) : The first session will be in Woughton on the Green and we will meet on the seat opposite the pub. Throughout, of course, we will apply all necessary distancing etc required.

Thank you !

Have your say!

We would very much appreciate your feedback on our role through the pandemic (page 7 refers), to help us understand whether we got the balance right between sufficient visibility and appropriate messaging. Please provide any comments below and post them through the letterbox of your local ward councillor and don't forget to provide your contact details if you'd like a reply.

Alternatively, e-mail directly to:

Communications@oldwoughton.org.uk.

It could be you!

At its virtual Parish meeting on 13th July, OWPC reviewed a large number of its official policies, one of which was about volunteering with us. As a result of the discussions leading to the new document, a dedicated area has been set up on the OWPC website <https://oldwoughton.org.uk/volunteering/>. You are very welcome to view it if you are considering getting involved with any of the following activities locally:

- Allotments
- Buddying with a vulnerable neighbour
- Litter-picking
- Open Spaces projects
- Photography for Old Woughton
- Newsletters & Calendars
- Towpath repairs
- Parish Gardeners
- Woughton Heritage events

Alternatively, if you've spotted a gap in the market and have ideas about starting a new voluntary project for Old Woughton please contact the Clerk and we will see what we can do to help you: clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk.



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