

OLD WOUGHTON

News

The Newsletter of Old Woughton Parish Council



OWPC
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*Wishing you and yours
the most peaceful of seasons*

Winter on Woughton Park

PO Box 7575
Milton Keynes
MK11 9GR

E: clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk
T: 01908 465811
W: www.oldwoughton.org.uk

Who's Who in the Parish

OLD WUGHTON 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,
Green Spaces, Transport

rgrindley@
oldwoughton.org.uk

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

rkenyon@
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Phil Nash
Allotments,
Communications,
OWIS/IT, Projects

pnash@
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Woughton on the Green South



Ray Brown
Allotments,
Planning, Projects.

rbrown@oldwoughton.org.uk

Charlotte Hall
CHAIR

Finance & Budget,
Planning, Projects Lead, Liaison for Parks Trust,
OWPC Representative - Welfare Trust,
Communications

chall@oldwoughton.org.uk

Woughton Park



**Vanessa
Freeman Gwynn**
VICE CHAIR

Projects,
Liaison for MKC Consultation and Parks Trust,
Communications
vgwynn@oldwoughton.org.uk

Geoff Long

Dog & Litter Bins, Projects, Green Spaces,
Liaison for Canal & River Trust

glong@oldwoughton.org.uk

Passmore



Mary Major

Liaison for Parishes Forum,
Projects, Noticeboards, Finance & Budget

mmajor@oldwoughton.org.uk

Emma Wilson
Projects

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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



Charlie Davies

Finance & Budget,
Environment, OWIS/IT, Data Protection
Office, Responsible Financial Officer
clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk



Terry Baines

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Charlotte Hall

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Our Next Parish Council
Meetings Are On Monday:

10th January 2022 & 14th March 2022
Times of Meetings : 7:30pm

6th December Annual Parish Meeting
at 7pm

Venue: St. Mary's Church

CONTACT US



<https://oldwoughton.org.uk>



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clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk



OWPC, PO Box 7575,
Milton Keynes, MK11 9GR



Friends of
Old Woughton PC

Editorial



So here we are again, in the deep Mid-winter and hurtling towards the festivities. Yet there is a rather reflective mood as the year draws to a close, with the nation seeing uneven economic growth. We know that in the parish too, whilst many neighbours continue to thrive, others face starker choices about their spending priorities.

OWPC itself has not been immune from these decisions and, as you know, Old Woughton News has been carrying centre-page articles through the year about the council's budget – how it's raised, managed and spent to meet local requests. In a unique moment in our history, the parish council has decided to recommend a small increase in the Precept, which funds our activities. Nothing of much consequence in the scheme of things (36p per calendar month for a Band D property), and quite an achievement that it has taken 10 years of tight controls before this point has been reached. There is an opportunity to talk with councillors about these proposals over a mince pie at the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm on 6th December – remaining copies of the 2022 calendar will also be for sale on the night, if that helps your decision as to which size you'd prefer (see p.8).

Also, on the centre pages is Charlotte's first annual review of OWPC activities since she became Chair elect last November. It makes for interesting reading and it is clear that she is never so much at home than when she is at work as Old Woughton's chief custodian. No surprise then that Charlotte was a 'Women of Action' award winner at MK Soroptimist's centenary event this year – congratulations Chair!

Another action woman features on page 6, where the new Clerk – Charlie Davies – introduces herself and why she was attracted to the OWPC role. We wish Charlie every success and look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

That's it for now, other than to promote Cllr. Wilson's fine Christmas colouring page (p.7). We hope this provides lots of fun for our youngest readers or may be visiting little ones over the holidays. If you send a photo of the finished masterpiece to the Comms. Team, we will print the winner in the Spring edition, as well as posting it on the website: communications@oldwoughton.org.uk

Merry Christmas one and all!

THE COMMS TEAM - Charlotte, Phil & Vanessa



LANDSCAPE UPDATE

On 28th October, MKC convened a meeting with our Chair & V. Chair and MK Parks Trust colleagues to revisit the potential for a new local landscape delivery arrangement for our parish. The meeting made good progress in establishing common cause and I look forward to updating you further in the Spring Newsletter.

Chair, OWPC

The Chair

OLD WOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

'Uncertainties and Opportunities...'

Well now...! It has been a year since I took up the reigns of the PC, as interim Chair in November 2020 and formally elected in May 2021. I give a brief overview timeline on page 4. reflecting on the challenges and activity that your PC has faced and delivered over the last year, which I hope might be a convenient prompt for chat and discussion at our Parish Meeting on the 6th December. This together with the Draft Budget proposals presented on page 5 allows for both a look backwards and our vision going forwards.

There has been no handbook for us or for any of you with a chapter entitled: 'A guide to a Modern Day Plague – what you need to know!' We have all travelled a journey which has been, and continues, without doubt very worrying at times and marked with terrible loss and yet at the same time filled with enormous compassion, kindness, sacrifice and community.

In so many ways the last months have been very constrained as we have all had to work through lockdowns and measured restraint. So I look forward to 2022 with optimism (with a touch of healthy cautiousness!) and know that it is the right time for us as a PC to be bold in our planning for the future of our very special community.

With this in mind we have sketched out our draft budget (page 5.) for 2022-2023 and precept recommendations which we believe will allow us to tackle uncertainties of the year ahead and beyond and to be able to be in the best position to take up opportunities such as the possibility of a different landscaping delivery arrangement and more.

I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank my colleagues and look forward to continuing to work with them.

I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and New Year!

Charlotte Hall

Seven seasons

and a million zooms!

With the dramatic arrival of a global pandemic we could not meet for our normal public Annual Parish Meeting in 2020. So, this is a condensed reflection of the last 20 months and the issues, decisions and challenges we faced during this period:



MARCH 2020

THE WORLD CHANGED

We were locked down and retreated behind closed doors both as individuals and as a community. Yet OWPC had to find a way to continue to work and deliver support – being unable to meet in person, how could we do this? Our first focus then was to find the best way we could communicate as a group and so we quickly subscribed to Zoom as delivering the safest and most economical platform to give us the tools to function. It was also a legal way to hold our formal parish meetings.

We also recognised that we needed to deliver information and support through other forms of communication and that every resident needed to know we were here to help. So, we embarked upon a series of hand delivered leaflets ensuring that all of our residents had contact details and signposted support to ensure that no-one felt that they had nowhere to turn. In addition, we populated our website, expanded the Notification Service and refreshed our noticeboards regularly with the latest guidance and advice.

We also recognised the need for practical help and so a network of volunteer 'buddy' neighbours was set up to assist with food deliveries; welfare support; collection of medicines; and 'Talk and chat' telephone support. Some of our Councillors even signed up to volunteer with NHS. Our amazing community drew together to clap hands on doorsteps; sew gowns; make masks; bags and so much more...



NOVEMBER 2020

Our long-standing Chair and Clerk both retired raising significant governance practicalities. An interim Chair was appointed and a 'remote' and virtual recruitment campaign put in place to engage a new Clerk. We turned to our neighbours and the highly qualified Clerk from Broughton & Milton Keynes Village PC - Vicky Mote - came forward to support and guide us and continues to do so today - with our thanks!



JUNE 2021

Our community voice was heard in the first 5G Mast planning application process, leading to a Refusal. Like many, OWPC recognises the need for connectivity, but sought a better location. Our Summer Newsletter delivered the residents survey, as we continued to develop a draft budget for 2022/23, whilst considering the Precept decisions we would need to make early in 2022. Our newly-appointed Clerk stepped down due to personal circumstances.



SEPTEMBER 2021

The Autumn Newsletter announces the appointment of a new Clerk and shares residents' survey responses, whilst our community made its voice heard again with a second Refusal of 5G Mast planning application, where little enough had changed in the new application to alter the outcome. We watch this space....



FEBRUARY 2021

A new Clerk was appointed, immediately facing our annual statutory Audit! Management door-step discussions became all too much the norm! As a Parish Council we had also reached a point in our own development that meant we had now to financially scope out a robust plan of action which would meet the needs and potential needs of our Parish going forward. Thus, our Spring 2021 Newsletter delivered our history and background as the start of a series of articles to bring on board and engage with residents and lay the foundations for the Parish Survey.



MAY 2021

Just to add to the excitement and the in-box! – all nine Parish Councillors had to formally stand in the May 2021 elections. A term of office is normally 4 years, but due to the pandemic this was elongated to 5 years. Consequently, the current term is shortened with elections due again in 2024. Then we faced the challenges of carrying out meetings without the use of Zoom as those emergency Regulations lapsed and public meetings had again to be held - adhering to COVID guidance.



NOVEMBER 2021

A draft budget is now prepared with recommendations for a Precept rise in 2022/23 (see opposite). An exhaustive consideration of all budget lines has been conducted, but uncertainties remain (eg insurance premium where our broker warns of high increases). We also need to invest in professional training for our new Clerk, whilst being equipped to embrace any opportunities such as the devolved landscaping discussions between MKC and the Parks Trust.

OWPC also feels strongly that we should continue to engage with

our residents and continue and build on the huge community spirit that kept us going during some of the most challenging times. The demography of Old Woughton is changing as we welcome younger families.

JOIN US

Opportunities



Not only take stock of the last 2 years (almost!), but also to look at the future opportunities for our Parishwe have planned boldly and on page 5 you see how we have listened – reflected – and reached our draft budget proposals.

So do please come and have a mince pie and a chat on the **6th December** at our Parish Meeting at 7-8.30pm.

BACKGROUND

Articles in the Spring and Summer newsletters explained in detail the finance history of your Parish Council.

In summary, large reserves were accumulated in OWPC's first year, 2012/2013, when MKC set our precept at the level of Woughton Community Council of which we were previously a part. In the second year the precept was just halved as we waited until the pattern of regular operational spending became clearer and we learned how to manage the parish effectively before making a drastic cut.

In 2014/15 a precept of £9,103 was set, the aim being to cover regular operating expenditure and for capital projects to be funded out of the reserves. There has been no increase in the precept. Since 2014/15, inflationary rises have seen these annual costs rising to above £13,000 and with no increase in the precept, these increases have been subsidised from our reserves.

CAPITAL SPENDING

In the early days new or refurbished notice boards were provided and we made a much needed investment in the Patch allotments. However we were under intense pressure by the auditors to reduce our reserves and there followed the allocation of a budget to each of the wards to spend for improvement projects.

RESERVES

OWPC decided to aim for a reserves figure of about £18,500, a figure which would be in line with the auditor's demands.

CURRENT SITUATION

The subsidy for our annual operating costs has now reached approximately £5,000 p.a. and reluctantly we must now start to increase the precept each year until we reach the point at which we at least cover those annual operating costs, plus any capital expenditure we wish to fund. The route we are considering will mean we will be able to fund capital projects to the tune of an average of £2,000 p.a. while heading towards a closer balance between precept and expenditure.

THE PROPOSAL

We propose to raise the precept by 20% each year, probably for the next four years.

For a Band D property the precept would rise to £26.20 (increase of 36p/month), rising to £45.27 in 2025-26 (a total increase over four years of £1.95/month).

SO, HOW DID WE GET HERE - AGAIN?

In the Finance Team's Explainer (above), we are reminded that on its creation in 2012, OWPC inherited funds of £59,931 from its predecessor body Woughton Community Council. A cautious approach to expenditure was operated until the new parish council had a clear grasp of its liabilities – particularly in respect of the Patch Allotments. Accordingly, in the next two years there were staged reductions in the precept down to £9,103 and there has never been an increase. Nonetheless, comments by the Auditor were routinely made about the size of the remaining Reserves. In 2018, therefore, OWPC decided to establish small Ward budgets to facilitate local projects in each of its four wards and these have proved popular with ideas still coming forward, even though the Reserves have been reduced as planned.

So, what is to be done now? Through parish councillors' many face-to-face exchanges with local residents, through formal PC meetings and specific feedback as recorded through this year's Parish Survey, OWPC has prepared a draft budget for public consultation, which runs until **December 20th**.

In recommending our first Precept increase, we hope you can see how your collective views have influenced our decisions.

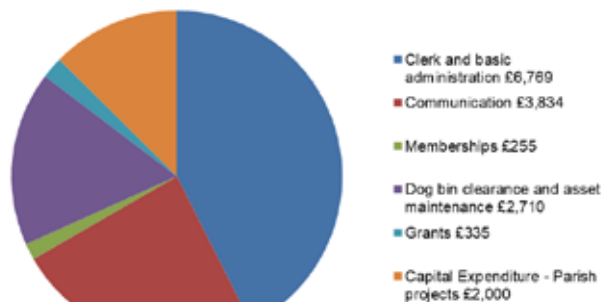
We have maintained our original Ethos of efficiency and economy. We have protected the existing Communications activities (Noticeboards; Newsletters; the OWPC email Notification service and Website; and targeted leaflet drops), which so many of you clearly value. We have moved the parish calendars to a wholly self-funding basis (ie produced by volunteer hours at no cost to the Precept). A range of other voluntary works are also supported including litter-picking and towpath repairs. We are looking at migrating OWIS, the PC's current IT platform from Google to Microsoft 365 to reduce on-going costs. The Clerk's hours are maintained at 7 per week. Provision for Ward projects is reduced to £2k per annum for the parish as a whole.

Please do take a few moments to provide your feedback to the Communications Team: communications@oldwoughton.org.uk

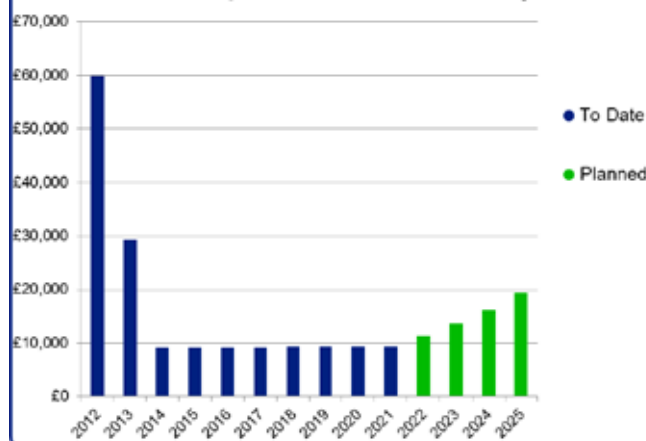
PROPOSED CALENDAR MONTHLY INCREASE



DRAFT Budget 2022 - 23, Planned Expenditure £15,903



Total Precept amount received each year



HOW IS MY CURRENT COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION AFFECTED?

... any increase for a working age person on CTR results in them paying 20% of that increase. Any increase for a person who is pension age on CTR has no impact"

MKC Officer

Charlie - Who is she?

Born and raised in MK, working within the not-for-profit sector of Milton Keynes.

I have had the pleasure of working with councillors, community groups and Resident Associations, across many estates in MK including Netherfield, Lakes, Fullers and Conniburrow.

My passion is equality and opportunity and as an MK citizen I will always work within the sectors that connect to the heart of our community.

I have two daughters attending school and I myself am continuing higher education.

I have now been in the Clerk role for OWPC for 10 weeks approximately and I am settling in great- the team are extremely supportive and passionate, making my welcome a positive one. The team are super flexible and understanding as we all juggle many 'hats' and relate to a busy lifestyle.

The most refreshing things about being with OWPC is the ethos to keep its heritage and community spirit.

Although this role is small and my time is limited I hope to be able to contribute to the team and enable them to continue to do their best to provide Old Woughton residents with a proactive, positive and efficient Parish.



The Strength of a Community Voice - Again!

Following our letter delivered to all households across the parish in September and our email through the Notification service, there has again been an enormous response to the planning application: 21/02588/PANOTH by CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd, for the installation of an 15.0m (50 feet) high 5G Mast and associated cabinets and works opposite the entrance to Baskerfield Grove on Newport Road. More than 90 comments and views were posted on the Milton Keynes Planning portal from residents and interested parties, for or against the proposal. Although not all residents were against the planning application, the huge majority, including Old Woughton Parish Council, objected specifically to the proposed siting position.

We can now report that on the 15th October the MKC Planning department refused the application. The Decision Notice can be viewed on our website Parish Council Notice Board as can the full 27 page Application Delegated Report. This shows the material grounds on which it was refused.

This may not be the end of the story, so we will keep a watchful eye on this case.

A big thank you to all those who took the time to make their views known.

We will keep you updated !



OWPC CALENDARS 2022 - ACT NOW!

Thanks to all you early birds, who've placed your orders already, it was very helpful in enabling us to judge the size of the print run. There are still some copies remaining: £7.50 for the slim version (like 2020) and £10 for the large (like 2021).

There will be an opportunity to buy copies at the Annual Parish Meeting at St. Mary's on the 6th December at 7pm, otherwise contact: communications@oldwoughton.org.uk.

Stock is now genuinely limited, so act fast!

WOUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA LATEST

In the Summer 2020 issue, we were able to advise that MKC had completed the consultation phase of its Review and that the next stage in the process was for MKC Officers to make their recommendations to a Delegated Decision meeting. Although 18 months have since passed, this meeting will finally take place at 5.30pm on 7th December at the Civic Offices.

Go to the OWPC website for the breaking news: <https://oldwoughton.org.uk/2019/10/06/conservation-area-review/>

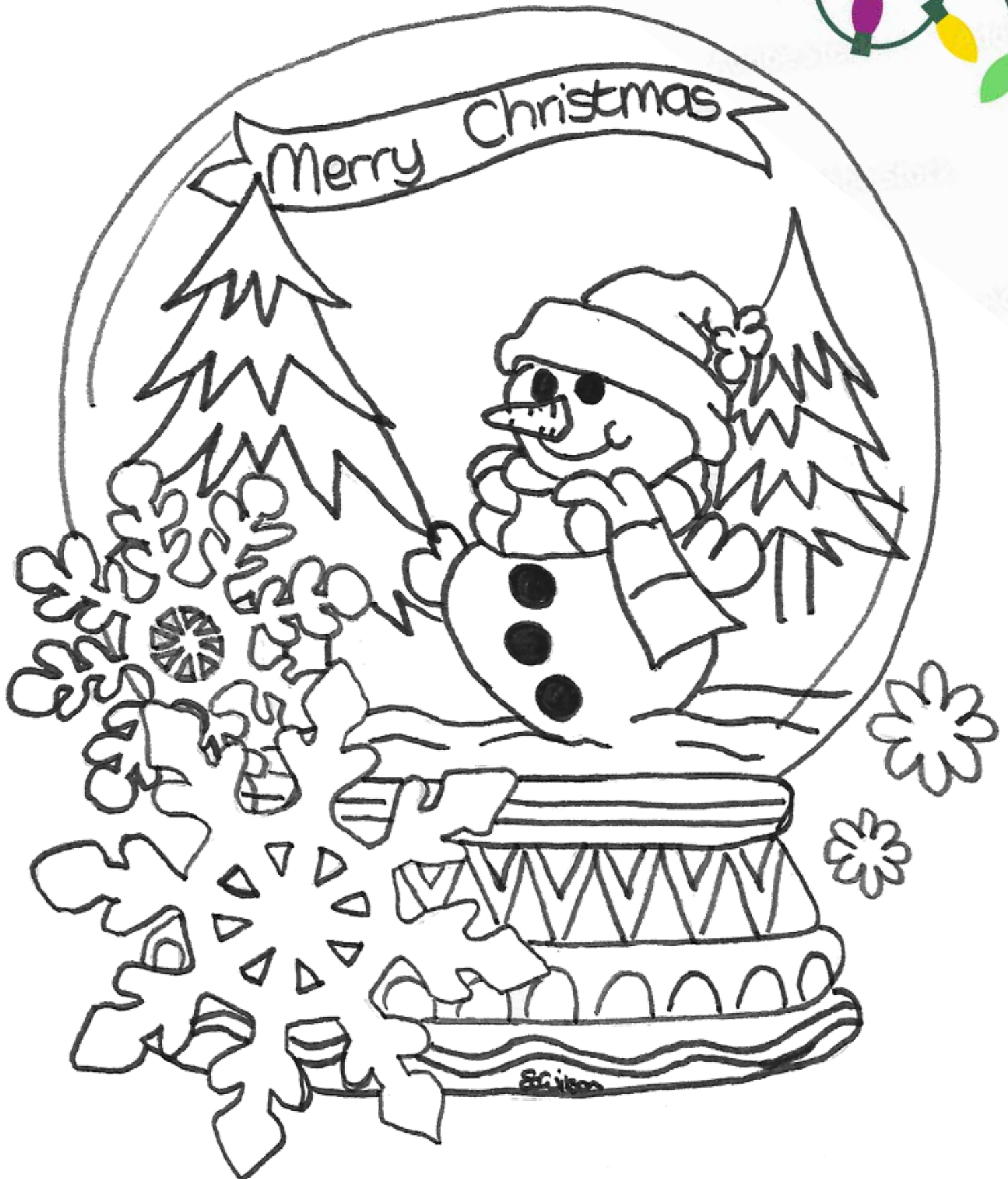


"I had the lovely opportunity to meet the new owners of Woughton House Hotel and was pleased to hear that they are hoping to open in the New Year. We will keep you updated and really look forward to seeing the hotel back in business again!"

Chair



COLOURING IN
for our younger readers



St. Mary's Church

Woughton on the Green MK63BS

"CHRISTMAS JOY!"

Saturday, 17th December 21

10am to 4pm

Christmas Flower Displays, Cake Sale,
Tombola, Refreshments, Music and
Bumper Raffle.

All Proceeds to St. Mary's Audio Visual Fund.

FREE ENTRY. Please bring cash, we do not have a card reader.

Get into the "Christmas Joy!"

UK Last Posting dates - don't be late

18th Dec. 2nd Class and 2nd Class Signed For
21st Dec. 1st Class, 1st Class Signed For,
Royal Mail 24 and Royal Mail
Tracked 48
22nd Dec. Royal Mail Tracked 24
23rd Dec. Special Delivery Guaranteed

For more info:

<https://royalmail.com/christmas/last-posting-dates>



If you would like to view
an electronic copy of the
newsletter just scan the code



Christmas Recycling Wordsearch

There is a lot of rubbish created at Christmas, but not all of it can be recycled. Check out our Naughty and Nice lists, and find them in the wordsearch.

Naughty items - into the black rubbish bag

Nice items - into the clear recycling sack



P	C	H	N	A	P	K	I	N	S
L	A	R	N	O	O	P	A	T	W
A	C	A	N	S	L	R	U	B	E
S	R	X	K	D	Y	U	G	Y	E
T	I	P	P	E	S	P	L	Y	T
I	S	W	E	E	T	T	I	N	W
C	P	S	S	Y	Y	C	T	Z	R
B	P	A	P	E	R	A	T	R	A
O	A	T	F	U	E	R	E	W	P
T	C	H	S	I	N	D	R	H	P
T	K	A	O	O	E	S	S	C	E
L	E	M	E	R	R	Y	U	S	R
E	T	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	S
C	A	R	D	B	O	A	R	D	C

Milton Keynes recycles

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/recycling



Revised Waste Collections Christmas 2021



Normal Date

Wednesday 29th December
Wednesday 5th January 2022
Wednesday 12th January 2022
Wednesday 19th January 2022

Revised Date

Friday 31st December
Saturday 8th January 2022
Friday 14th January 2022
Thursday 20th January 2022

Normal Collections resume Wednesday 26th January

For more info:

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

Old Woughton
Parish Newsletter
is produced by
Bespoke Media

01234 720105

07879 403538

bespoke media
design - print - distribution

Date	Event	Time	Location
11th Dec	Christmas Joy!	10-4pm	St. Mary's Church
11th Dec	MK Winter Half Marathon	10am-noon approx.	The Green and canal towpath
19th Dec	Christmas Carol Service	6pm	St. Mary's Church
24th Dec	Midnight Communion Service	11.30pm	St. Mary's Church
25th Dec	Christmas Day Communion Service	10am	St. Mary's Church
26th Dec		NO Service	St. Mary's Church