

O L D W O U G H T O N

Spring 2024

News

The Newsletter of Old Woughton Parish Council



Early Spring sun on the paddocks

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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, Green Spaces,
Transport

rgrindley@oldwoughton.org.uk

Roy Kenyon
Allotments, Finance
& Budget,
Liaison for Transport

rkenyon@oldwoughton.org.uk

Phil Nash
Allotments,
Communications,
OWIS/IT

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Woughton on the Green South



Ray Brown
Allotments, Planning,

rbrown@oldwoughton.org.uk

Charlotte Hall
CHAIR

Finance & Budget,
Planning, Liaison for Parks Trust,
Communications

chall@oldwoughton.org.uk

Woughton Park



**Vanessa
Freeman Gwynn**
VICE CHAIR

Liaison for MKCC and Parks Trust,
Communications, Planning

vgwynn@oldwoughton.org.uk

Geoff Long

Dog & Litter Bins, Green Spaces,
Liaison for Canal & River Trust,
OWPC Representative – Welfare Trust

glong@oldwoughton.org.uk

Passmore



Mary Major

Liaison for Parishes Forum,
Noticeboards, Finance & Budget

mmajor@oldwoughton.org.uk

**Roshini
Wickramasinghe**

Liaison for Canal & River Trust

rwickramasinghe@oldwoughton.org.uk

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

Clerk



VACANT

clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk



Charlotte Hall

charlotte.hall@milton-keynes.gov.uk
T. 07885 330797



Nana Oguntola

nana.oguntola@milton-keynes.gov.uk
T. 07478 115668



Paul Trendall

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Annual Parish Meeting 18th June, 6.30pm

Our Next Parish Council
Meetings Are On Monday:

13th May (AGM), 8th July & 9th September
at 7.30pm.

VENUE: St. Mary's Church

CONTACT US

<https://oldwoughton.org.uk>

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Friends of
Old Woughton PC



The Chair

There is no doubt that the colours of spring are a real delight – We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful parish where we are able to see nature at its best.

Editorial

SPRING FORWARD!

Is there ever a more hopeful time of year than when the clocks go forward - 31st March you are sooo welcome!

There are other seasonal enjoyments too: first snowdrops, then daffodils followed by tulips - all welcome. The spring also brings a new tax year, not necessarily uplifting, but OWPC's Band D Precept for 2024/25 has increased, but will still likely be lower than our neighbours. For further details, see the article on Page 8.

And talking of the neighbours, OWPC is pleased to announce its collaboration with Simpson & Ashland PC in hosting the return of the local Citizens Advice surgery. Hosted, on this occasion, at the Ashland Lakeside Community Centre, the same trained advisers will be on hand either to deal with your enquiries directly or to find the right bodies to help. Please make a note of where and when.

Speaking of diary dates, we are also pleased to publish details of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting: 18th June at 6.30pm at St. Mary's. Last year's meeting was full, so do please hurry along to hear about the range of community partners on hand locally to respond to your concerns: Citizens Advice; MK Dons Sport & Education Trust; and Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association, accompanied by a Police & Community Support Officer.

Yet before that we have the local changing of the guard, which is the all-out election of the Parish Council itself. Elections will be held on May 2nd for all nine seats on OWPC (see p.8). The newly-elected councillors will serve for four years and examples of the activities involved are available to view at <https://oldwoughton.org.uk/parish-council/>.

That's pretty much it for now, except to wish you all happy holidays and that the bunnies bring you all the eggs etc etc that you hope/deserve.

Charlotte, Phil & Vanessa

communications@oldwoughton.org.uk

OWPC Clerk position...

...so good it keeps leading to promotion!

Here we are again then, wishing farewell to an out-going Clerk (very best wishes Vicky and well done Fairfield P.C.!), whilst actively seeking a new one. Should you need reminding, OWPC pays for 7 hours a week to fulfil the role and this is very flexible as to specific times to be 'at work'.

If you'd just like to chat this over informally or if you know a friend or family member who might be interested, then ring **Charlotte Hall (OWPC Chair) on 07885 330797** or e-mail **Vanessa Freeman Gwynn (OWPC Vice Chair): vgwynn.oldwoughton.org.uk**. we'd love to hear from you.

As we plan our budgets and activities for 2024/2025 we are mindful of the uncertain environment and pressures on our residents but that as a PC we need to ensure that we can maintain and enhance our assets and invest in activities and projects to support our residents and communities. We have taken the success of last year's Annual Parish Meeting format as a template for this year on the 18th June and continue here to engage with our partners and neighbours to hear the latest news, opportunities for support and sharing of concerns or issues. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you feel that you have time to give and want to get involved as a Parish Councillor then please do get in touch. This May's election process will formally commence on the 25th March and you will be able to find out more information on our boards and website in due course.

We have some sad news as we are reluctantly saying farewell to our brilliant Clerk – Vicky Mote. She goes on to a fuller post and other career opportunities and we all sincerely wish her our thanks and best. Vicky, with her extensive experience and professionalism has brought rigour and a wealth of guidance and not least a huge amount of patience and humour as she has had to keep me on the straight and narrow as Chair! We are currently exploring ways in which we might be able to be creative with this post which whilst large in importance in Local Government having to be squeezed into just a few small hours per week!

Collaboration is a key word for me and I must take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their commitment and hard work in this last term of three years and which has seen wholly unprecedented and challenging times. Thank you

We look forward to creating further collaboration opportunities with neighbours and agencies and continuing to work with you all (See the Big Help Out on Page 6 and the news from the hotel, below.)

Charlotte

Woughton House Hotel

We would like to introduce the new General Manager Jamie Rossiter, local to Milton Keynes, Jamie will oversee the reopening of Woughton House Hotel to the public after a number of years:

"All of us here at Woughton House Hotel are so proud to have the opportunity to return to familiar operations again, we would love nothing more than to welcome our neighbours and communities back to our beautiful hotel, restaurant and bar.

Our plan is to gradually open mid-April 2024 and by summer be the hotel, restaurant and bar we all love and remember. We will be catering for weddings, functions and local events and of course will be bringing back the very popular and delicious afternoon teas!

We hope you will support us in this great endeavour, as this is as much yours as it is for the visitors to whom we wish to serve.

Thank you from all of our team and we look forward to meeting you soon at Woughton House Hotel.

Warm Regards
Jamie – General Manager"





The Patch Allotments

The Patch allotments are an important and valued part of our parish. It is not widely known that if residents request an allotment parish councils must provide them, one of the very few obligations imposed on a parish council. In the case of this parish's allotments, the site was first provided by Milton Keynes Council in 1973 on a field called The Patch where the previous owner Tony King grazed sheep. A group of tenants formed the Patch Allotment Association (PAA) in the foundation year.

In 2008 all MKC's allotment sites were handed over to parish councils, The Patch passing to Woughton Community Council and subsequently to Old Woughton Parish Council after our devolvement from WCC in 2012. The site has grown considerably since 1973 and now covers just over three and a half hectares or nine acres. There are 220 allotment plots, sometimes referred to as gardens, and the site has toilet and water facilities which means it is designated as an "A" class site.



In the years of WCC's incumbency there was a paid allotment manager. It was during this four year period, 2008 to 2012, that the PAA first introduced the idea of a form of devolved management from the parish council. The principle being that the PAA would take on day to day management of the site which would thus release money for site improvements.



In 2012 when responsibility for the allotments moved to OWPC, the council initially ran the site themselves through a small team of delegated councillors, but devolved management continued to be discussed. The PAA began to undertake tasks such as showing prospective tenants round the site. A poll in 2017, conducted by MK Council on behalf of OWPC, resulted in a comfortable majority of tenants voting in favour of devolved management. A Devolved Management agreement was drawn up and signed between OWPC and the PAA in April 2018 and the handover was completed on October 1st of that year.

The existing hut (RAF surplus acquired in the 1970s!) was somewhat cramped serving as shop, tea room and meeting room, so OWPC purchased two used shipping containers, one for a shop and one for machinery, leaving the hut for tea, socialisation and meetings. The toilet facility was of the rented chemical variety under WCC, but in 2013 a grant was applied for and secured from The Community Foundation for a compostable toilet, OWPC providing the materials to construct the enclosure.

More recently improvements have been made to the site from the rental income. The size of the site means boundary security has always been a problem, and following a failed attempt to reinforce the boundary using several hundred pyracantha plants it was decided to invest in palisade fencing to reinforce the more vulnerable parts of the boundary. It was also found necessary to increase the height of the easily climbable gates! As funds permit, the fencing continues to be expanded to cover the whole site boundary. Only 40 metres remain to be erected but completion has been delayed owing to the fencing contractor being otherwise engaged on the HS2 project.



Railway sleepers arriving

The Patch community is at virtually full capacity, the few arising vacancies are soon filled from the waiting list. Two non-horticultural co-operatives are hosted on the site, a chicken run and also an apiary where bee keeping training sessions are run from time to time.

During the year several social events are arranged by the PAA. The main event is an Open Day when residents of the parish are invited to view the site and enjoy refreshments including a barbeque. Best vegetable competitions are held as are fish 'n chips night suppers and best kept plots competitions.

The Chairman of the PAA and the person behind many of these PAA initiatives, Les Burgess is to retire from this position at this year's PAA A.G.M. having first taken the chair eighteen years ago. (See article on right.) During his leadership of the PAA, he has made invaluable contributions to life at The Patch. He leads the chicken co-operative and as a qualified bee-keeper also leads the bee keeping co-operative. Over the years he has been tireless in negotiating grants from external sources including the one for the compostable toilet. More recently he procured a shipment of ex-railway sleepers which were offered to tenants and their donations used to purchase a mower and strimmer for the Redway School. (See photo below). He will be sorely missed as chair, and we wish him many future years of more relaxed Patch gardening to add to his over forty years as a tenant.



Redway School Mower

Diamond Geezer



If anything needs fixing just ask Les

You may never have heard of him, but like many people who are comfortable in their role, the Chairman of the PAA has been a quiet force in the land for over 20 years. That is all about to change, however, as Les Burgess is to retire as Chair of our Patch Allotment Association (PAA). So, what is the story behind this charismatic, local presence - OWPC investigated.

The allotments opened on their current site in 1973, and by 1982 Les was already renting his first ever plots - 222, 230 and 238 - before settling on plot 1. It was a very different picture back then with only four sheds, one greenhouse, standpipes for the water (no troughs) and a chemical toilet! A lot has changed since:

- New main gate.
- Fencing on east and south sides
- Acquiring the polytunnel
- Working with OWPC to get a new composting toilet; shipping containers (one for a shop and another for storage in 2014); and then more fencing to complete the west and north sides of the Patch
- At least 100 plots were not taken, then had the idea for an Open Day to introduce the allotments to members of the public and been having that ever since except for one year when Les was not Chairman
- Also organised regular fish and chip supper social evenings
- Hosted visits by Falconhurst school and also from a local Pain Relief group
- Organised best plot and best vegetables competitions

These are all things Les helped bring to the Patch, whilst also starting an apiary and a chicken co-operative - always a favourite with visiting schoolchildren - and becoming a qualified bee-keeper, of course!

So how did Mr. Burgess become such a Mr. Fix it? Les was trained as a mechanic at London Transport's Chiswick Works, so always had a practical bent. Over the years he has developed excellent fund-raising skills which have secured grants for nearly all of the developments listed above. The good relationship with MK Community Foundation, which started with help just to get the forms filled in with all the key words meant not only that subsequent requests were also successful, but also that the PAA was organised and run to the standards required by partners. Schools started to visit, which was a highlight for Les conducting lessons in the hut and getting the children to tell him what they would do if they had a plot and trying to develop their interest in growing things generally.

What then is the thing that Les will look back on with most pleasure from his years as Chairman? Simple - seeing people start on an allotment with nothing there and successfully develop their plot, sometimes almost to the point of obsession.

Save the date – Tuesday, 18th June @ 18.30, St. Mary's

Last year's Annual Parish Meeting (APM) may be but a distant memory for many readers, but here at OWPC, we got so much from the guest speakers and your questions to them that we have already been planning this year's version.

Your feedback on the new format was overwhelmingly positive and so we have arranged for another three local organisations to come and explain their contribution to our area and to take your queries on the spot.

The theme is very broadly community support and the CEO of Citizens Advice Milton Keynes, MK Dons SET's Facilities Manager and Neighbourhood Watch's local Co-ordinator will all be making brief presentations to set up the conversations. We will then break for refreshments and you will be able to mingle around the related exhibition stands with your neighbours. All done by 8pm latest!

Meanwhile, here's a flavour of the areas to be covered – enjoy.

Update from MK Dons Sports and Education Trust

MK Dons Sports and Education Trust (MK Dons SET), continues to redevelop and improve the Woughton on the Green playing fields site, aiming to make sustainable change particularly related to reducing our carbon footprint.

Key changes to the site since the last newsletter include:

- replacing barriers to prevent illegal overnight parking and access to the car park out of hours to reduce litter and instances of anti-social behaviour in the area
- Pot holes and repairs to the car park has been completed
- A new contract arrangement has been established to empty bins and remove rubbish to reduce litter
- Pathways outside the pavilion damaged by tree roots have been removed or re-configured to make safe for the public.

Over the next few months MK Dons SET will be working on the following site developments:

- Undertaking the removal of large unused items and damaged containers that have been found on site - most of this is old sporting equipment left by past users which makes the site look messy.
- Progressing actions recommended by the MKCC's Principal Arboriculture Officer for tree and path management on site
- Repairing all floodlights and replacing with new LED lighting that is less damaging to the environment through a grant from the National Hockey Foundation.
- Investigating the re-introduction of a café on site for users during opening hours with new launch for the Spring.

Since the last update there has been growth in the variety of sports on site, as well as growth in participation for existing users, which combined continues to increase usage of the site:

- New sports on site: Softball and Lacrosse
- MK Dons SET is now hosting new primary school events and supporting delivery of new school PE programmes on the site
- Expansion of social/community football sessions including specific ones to increase inclusion in sport/healthy activity (eg Refugee and Muslim specific activities; Mini-kickers training for a community football team)
- Boys football pathway centre now trains twice a week on site
- A rebranded holiday camp offer is in place and will grow over the next six months to provide over 800 free sessions for young people in the community in the summer.



The Big Help Out returns on 7 to 9 June 2024

More than seven million took part in last year's Big Help Out - getting together to volunteer and make a difference in their local area – plans are in place for the 2024 edition with support from His Majesty the King.

Here in Old Woughton, we played our own small part last year. To tie in with the Coronation event we were able to raise the profile of many of the local volunteer groups active in our area and provide hands on opportunities such as ringing the church bells.

This year, the **Big Help Out** will take place over three days from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 June 2024, at the climax of **Volunteers' Week**.

If there is enough support from our residents there may be an opportunity to build a community wide event around this date.

As part of this we are exploring a project to assist those locally who may struggle to dispose of bulky waste and unwanted items. One of many ideas.

If you are interested in volunteering or being part of the event organising committee please let us know at communications@oldwoughton.org.uk.

It would great to be able to build in cream teas and some live music into our plans. We can't do it with out you!



**citizens
advice**

**Milton
Keynes**

CAMK has been providing advice, support and assistance to people across the city since 1972. It is part of the national Citizens Advice movement but remains an independent, local charity in its own right and is responsible for recruiting its own staff and local volunteers as well as raising funds to support its work.

The bureau advised over 8000 people in MK last year, on important matters affecting their daily lives such as:

- Debt
- Welfare Benefits
- Housing

They can also help you if you're having problems at work or you're going through a relationship breakdown and can refer you to a range of other organisations even if your problem is something they can't deal with. For many people they are the first 'port of call' in resolving a wide range of issues that may be worrying them.

CAMK has a large network of community-based outreach points across the city, so that people can access advice closer to where they live. Since 2017, this network has expanded to include parish and town council premises, libraires, GP surgeries and community centres. Thanks to the support of OWPC, the bureau was able to provide a couple of 'pop up' advice sessions in Old Woughton last year for local residents to meet with an adviser. **Further local sessions are under discussion.**

Meanwhile, CAMK also runs a service every fortnight at Ashfield Medical Centre, so if you're registered as a patient at that surgery, you can arrange to see an adviser there.

The charity relies heavily on local volunteers to run many of its services, and due to high demand for its advice, is undertaking a volunteer recruitment drive to train more advisers.

If you can spare 6 – 8 hours per week and you fancy a new challenge, take a look at some current opportunities: www.miltonkeynescab.org.uk/get-involved/volunteers/

More Citizens Advice Sessions coming to you!

OWPC has now received further funds from MK City Council to help parishioners tackle winter fuel hardship. So, following on from the successful trial of three sessions in St. Mary's and Woughton Pavilion, we have been exploring a collaboration with our neighbours at Simpson & Ashland PC.

By funding another two sessions each, the two parish councils can plan ahead for quarterly surgeries throughout the 2024/25 municipal year and it is proposed to start at the end of July at Ashland in the lovely new Lakeside Community Centre. There is some parking immediately outside (and EV charging points) or, hopefully, if it's a nice day it's a pleasant walk due west off the canal towpath to: Penshurst Crescent, MK6 4AN.

No appointments needed, just turn up between 10.30-13.30.



Passmore, Woughton Park and Woughton on the Green

For over 40 years, Neighbourhood Watch has been encouraging safer and stronger communities. For many of us, this is reflected in our own instincts to be good neighbours and look out for each other.



As individuals or families we value living in a safe and secure home and this is greatly helped by living in safe and secure environments and communities. To this aim, Neighbourhood Watch links with the Police and other authorities, helping bring a strong emphasis on crime awareness and crime prevention, as well as encouraging reporting to the Police our suspicions or concerns.

Come and meet members of the Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association at the next Old Woughton Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting. We hope to be joined by local Police; operationally dependent. Email the Comms Team at Old Woughton Parish Council with crime issues prior to the event at communications@oldwoughton.org.uk

Neighbourhood Watch is a grassroots national charitable movement with upwards of 2.3 million members across England and Wales and it is free!

1. Join Neighbourhood Watch at ourwatch.org.uk By doing this you will receive the all-important local Police Alert messages.
2. Once signed-up please also join your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme using the postcode search.
3. If that scheme is not near you, please apply to start your own scheme. We can help you, email enquiries@mknhwa.org.uk

Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association support Neighbourhood Watch schemes and their Coordinators and promote the charity across the district of Milton Keynes.

JOIN
ourwatch.org.uk



“You’re joking - not another one!”

Part 2

May be Brenda from Bristol was right in 2017 when she felt that elections came around too often, but here at Old Woughton Parish Council our latest 3-year term (shortened by the pandemic roll-over), are nearly up and all 9no. of your current councillors will retire in May. All are eligible to contest the elections on Thursday, 2nd May, but have you ever thought of standing yourself? The process is straightforward and you are supported through it by our Clerk (see fact box below). In the 4 wards, vacancies for the four-year period 2024-2028 will arise as follows:

Parish Ward

Passmore – 2 seats	Woughton-on-the-Green (North) – 3 seats
Woughton Park – 2 seats	Woughton-on-the-Green (South) – 2 seats

There are only seven fixed meetings in the year, and then it's down to you to get involved in the things that interest you locally. So, if you would like to explore this opportunity further please contact (clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk) or any of the serving councillors listed on Page 2.

They also served

The current Old Woughton Parish Council was elected in May 2021 for a post-pandemic term of 3 years. Your serving councillors – listed on page 2 – are all free to stand again, and new Nominations are always welcome. Meanwhile, we also acknowledge the contribution of those who retired mid-term:

Jeremy Morrison – Passmore Ward
Emma Wilson – Passmore Ward

Key Dates for applying

Publication of Notice of Election – **25/03/24**

Delivery of Nomination Papers – between 10.00-16.00 on any working day from **25/03/24 - 05/04/24**

Deadline for withdrawal of Nominations - 16.00 on **05/04/24**

There has never been a long-standing vacancy on OWPC – let’s keep it up

The Electoral Commission

No ID? You can apply for free voter ID now
Find out more at electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

You need photo ID to vote at a polling station

There have been changes to the requirements to register for a Postal Vote. For further details visit <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post>.



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

2024/25 Approved Budget

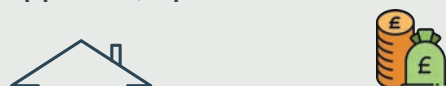


In today's tough financial climate, we do appreciate that families are feeling the squeeze from rising costs and unexpected expenses, compounded by a volatile economy and the uncertainty of potential political changes.

It is important that we take proactive steps to manage the public purse wisely and plan for future spend on maintaining our public assets, which includes trees, bins, noticeboards, war memorial, defibrillator and any other projects that are put forward by councillors.

We also want to make sure that our residents get out to meet, mingle and enjoy an annual social event, something we are looking to plan for the summer!

We have increased the budget by a small margin (between 25p and 89p per week, dependent on which tax band you fall under.



Precept	2023/24	2024/25	Increase Variance	
	Annual	Annual	Annual	Weekly
Tax Band AR	£24.64	£37.67	£13.03	£0.25
Band A	£29.48	£45.06	£15.58	£0.30
Band B	£34.32	£52.46	£18.14	£0.35
Band C	£39.16	£59.86	£20.70	£0.40
Band D	£33.45	£67.26	£33.81	£0.65
Band E	£53.68	£82.06	£28.38	£0.55
Band F	£63.36	£96.85	£33.49	£0.64
Band G	£73.48	£112.32	£38.84	£0.75
Band H	£88.00	£134.52	£46.52	£0.89

Any increase for a working age person on Council Tax Reduction (CTR) results in them paying 20% of that increase. Any increase for a person who is pension age on CTR has no impact.

EVENTS

Wednesday 3rd April - The Parks Trust Easter Eggstravaganza

10am – 12pm, Oakgrove,
(details here <https://www.theparkstrust.com/events/easter-eggstravaganza>)

Saturday 20th April - Litter Pick

10:30 – 11:30am, Woughton-on-the-Green South
(meet opposite pub)

Friday 26th April - Litter Pick

2pm – 3pm, Passmore (meet at the noticeboard)

Sunday 5th May - Monday 6th May - MK Marathon Weekend

Saturday 18th May - Litter Pick

10:30 – 11:30am, Woughton-on-the-Green North
(meet in the Paddocks car park)

Tuesday 18th June - Annual Parish Meeting

6:30pm, St. Mary's Church

Friday 19th July - Litter Pick

2pm – 3pm, Passmore (meet at the noticeboard)

Old Woughton News is produced by



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