

OLD WOUGHTON

News

The Newsletter of Old Woughton Parish Council



OWPC



Ye Olde Swan re-opened

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Who's Who in the Parish

OLD WOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Woughton on the Green North



Rob Grindley
Planning, Transport,
Liaison for Dons SET

rgindley@
oldwoughton.org.uk



Ryan Gillies
Canal & River Trust, OWIS/IT,
Allotments, Speedwatch

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Phil Nash
Allotments,
Communications, OWIS/IT,
Speedwatch

pnash@
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Woughton on the Green South



Ray Brown

Allotments, Planning,
Finance

rbrown@oldwoughton.org.uk



Charlotte Hall

CHAIR

Communications, Finance & Budget,
Planning, Transport, Liaison for Parks Trust,
Dons SET, Parish Forum

chall@oldwoughton.org.uk

Woughton Park



**Vanessa
Freeman Gwynn**

VICE CHAIR

Liaison for MKCC and Parks Trust,
Communications, Planning

vgwynn@oldwoughton.org.uk



VACANT

Passmore



Mary Major

Liaison for Parishes Forum,
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 city wards, OWPC
is in the Campbell Park and Old Woughton Ward.

Your ward councillors, who remain until May 2026 elections, are:

Clerk



Vicky Gladstone

clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk

RFO



Katherine Harmsworth

kharmsworth@oldwoughton.org.uk



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

12th January, 9th March & 11th May
at 7.30pm.

VENUE: St. Mary's Church

CONTACT US



<https://oldwoughton.org.uk>



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OWPC, PO Box 6548,
Milton Keynes, MK10 1AB



Friends of
Old Woughton PC

The Chair

Reflections

It is at this time of year we 'take stock' as a parish council, reviewing our activities and planning for the new financial year.

It has been a busy year to say the least, with ensuring that we participate in the 'big' conversations including boundary matters and tracking the fast moving and detailed plans for the City. Despite being a small parish council there is no doubt that we have always had a 'voice' and this clearly seen during the recent consultations. There is still work to be done and we will share our thoughts here as matters unfold.

On page 5. I note some of our activities and achievements. We work closely with partners and many thanks to all those involved helping us to invest in our community and deliver projects and help us to find ways to tackle and respond to the issues that matter to our residents.

We are very lucky to have such a vibrant community and welcomed seeing so many of you at our Residents Meeting in June engaging with our Key Note groups. We enjoyed 'Apple Day' in the orchard with neighbours and friends and paused to pay our respects on Remembrance Sunday. The Defibrillator Awareness course was a great success and many thanks to all those who attended.

We present on page 7. the draft budget for 2026-2027 and many thanks to Katherine our RFO for guiding us here to look to reduce the precept for 2026-2027 in response to funds not used that were allocated for a paid Clerk for a number of years. This is of course a matter that we continue to look at and important as part of our good governance. The final budget will be confirmed at the January 2026 Full Council meeting ready to carry out the Precept processes by the 1st February. Please do share your thoughts on this and any other matters.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New year!

Charlotte



The Peleton of the Tour of Britain 2025 race as it passes Woughton on the Green, shortly after setting off on the Milton Keynes to Ampthill stage.



Tributes were paid on Remembrance Sunday, the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Editorial



Merry governance to you and yours!

Not the traditional greeting for mid-winter festivals, we agree, but as we clear the municipal desk on 2025, there are important matters to sign off.

Firstly, the Annual Residents Meeting, held each June. This year's speakers – the Canal & River Trust and MK Parks Trust - are captured in the centre pages. We welcome your suggestions for presenters in June 2026.

On page 5, our OWPC Chair sets out the record of achievement of your eight serving councillors for the last year. In Woughton Park, we've had a vacancy for over a year – this is either a tribute to Vanessa or a missed opportunity for another neighbour to get stuck in and help sort some local issues.

Page 6 draws a line under the various boundary reviews conducted this year – firstly by the Boundary Commission for England, which has moved our parish to a wholly new MK City Council Ward of Ouzel Valley; and, secondly, the Community Governance Review of all the parishes in Milton Keynes, where OWPC remains unaffected, save for use of the Woughton name. We need to stay vigilant on this matter, because with 'all-out' MKCC elections in May 2026, this may be the defining issue for Old Woughton voters.

Then we come to Mr & Mrs Santa themselves! How about a reduction in the annual Precept for all our girls and boys? Let us know your thoughts and, meanwhile, a prosperous 2026 to all!!

Charlotte, Phil & Vanessa

The OWPC Comms. Team

Annual Parish Meeting – 24th June 2025

These yearly meetings continue to be popular, with 60 or so residents and all parish councillors in attendance to hear local questions and concerns for the guest speakers.



Sian Palmer-Ferry of the Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust (C&RT) – registered charity

Sian Palmer-Ferry C&RT's Community Development Manager opened proceedings by presenting Cllr. Charlotte Hall with our latest Pocket Adoption certificate for that section of the Grand Union Canal in Old Woughton. See also their welcome statement opposite

There are two main aspects of a partnership with C&RT - fundraising and volunteering. Partnership activities can include: hedge replanting; planters; flower and edible gardens. C&RT does not have dedicated funding for boater/towpath user littering, but seeks to influence this behaviour via its campaigns. Its powers to prosecute unlicensed boaters are also limited, but repossessions do eventually occur, which can mean homelessness, as some boaters are on the fringes of welfare. C&RT is responsible for canal bridges, but resources for graffiti removal, damage and repairs are limited. There are Rubbish/Elsan points at Fenny Stratford Lock and Giffard Park. There are rubbish points at: The Three Locks; Bridge 76 on Wolverton Road (the Black Horse Pub) and Cosgrove. C&RT has contractors to manage its vegetation along the towpath and OWPC should notify any areas needing attention between the contractor visits or equipment for basic works can be provided. Ditto litter-picking equipment. C&RT just asks that a record of volunteer hours be kept so that it can keep track of the great work being done. "In summary, there is no formal schedule of works for this area, as all routine tasks are carried out by our contractors and there are no local operational structures to maintain."

Action points:

- Look at Pocket Adoption best practice in other C&RT areas
- Report trouble spots for volunteer attention
- Establish C&RT's support for the MK-Bedford waterway project
- Obtain definitive map of C&RT's local canal facilities and programme of works
- Consider the findings of the independent Commission's review of boat licensing



Julian Kendal and Julie Dawes of the Parks Trust

Milton Keynes Parks Trust (MKPT) – registered charity

MKPT speakers were Julie Dawes (Events & Community Engagement Manager) and Julian Kendal (Lead Community Ranger). Our parish benefits from a large amount of MKPT green space and so it was no surprise that this session overran. This is a summary:

From a Ranger's perspective, we observe a 'sense of entitlement' since the pandemic, with multiple abuses being reported and driving the need now to fund a dedicated team of 3.5 colleagues, although they have no powers of enforcement. However, there are now two Enforcement Officers in post – TV Police-approved. Homophobic, racist and hate speech graffiti is cleaned within 24 hours and the rest when practicable. Homelessness is more visible, but there are sensitive procedures in place working with MKCC. E-bikes and scooters are 'a nightmare', but speed restrictions do operate in the parks. Dog fouling response is operated in conjunction with local councils and is effective in Old Woughton, as are the horse paddocks off Chaffron Way, with no plans to change use.

There was no update on bat boxes on the night, but MKPT was commended by residents for its responsiveness to residents' Reports to BBQs, fly tipping and suspect behaviour in its car parks. In which connection, MKPT now has 3no. mobile CCTV cameras, which it operates in partnership with Crimewave. The policy in respect of drones has been updated – they are permitted within Civil Aviation Authority regulations, but not within 50 feet of park users.

Action Point

The primary response for most issues is prompt reporting to MKPT. One recent example concerned the appearance of a tent and another temporary structure by the canal in the orchard in Woughton. This was resolved by MKPT, with updates provided whilst a resolution was in progress. Direct links to MKPT are on OWPC 's website **Report It** page.

ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNITIES – NEIGHBOURS

A REFLECTION ON 2025

WINTER 2024




Tree Planting: MKCC's Station Square redevelopment provided - free! - a Hornbeam for Woughton Park. Then **good news** from MK Swan Rescue volunteers, who recovered an injured swan from the roof of - Ye Olde Swan! **Neighbourhood Watch** was busy updating signage across the parish and encouraging and reinvigorating local schemes: Woughton Park and now The Green and Woughton on the Green North have set up new schemes. **City Ward Boundaries:** we actively joined in the 'big conversations' to determine the City's new Ward Boundaries triggered by the need for balanced representation from our MKCC Members

SUMMER 2025



June's **Annual Residents Meeting** provided another opportunity to engage with our partners, whilst **Preventative measures** in Passmore saw two bollards installed to restrict vehicle access to the Green. Boundaries Again: MKCC Ward changes moved Old Woughton into a new '**Ouzel Valley**' ward and All-out elections in May 2026 will see City Councillors elected into the new ward arrangements. **Report it Sort it!** New signposting on OWPC's website encourages residents to report and log issues. After a successful trial, **Citizens AdviceMK** was **recommissioned** to deliver free advice sessions across the year for our residents.

SPRING 2025



We welcomed Katherine Harmsworth (Clerk to Simpson and Ashland P.C.) as our part-time Responsible Financial Officer, who hit the ground running preparing for Audit, introducing a new accounting system and ensuring rigour in our governance. In January, the **Precept and Budgets** for 2025/26 were set with no increases to ensure best value for residents, whilst **May** brought in a new 'term' of office for eight volunteer Councillors, but with one vacant seat in Woughton Park. **We marked VE80** with bells, cakes and music! **Patch Allotments:** Further replacement fencing has been installed and tree works carried out at the boundary to Newport Road. New software was implemented to deliver the admin for the site (200 plots). **Speedwatch:** was fully adopted with monitoring locations accepted by TV Police. Monitoring sessions by our trained volunteers are already happening and formal signage erected parish-wide. **Our partnership** with the Canal and River Trust was renewed with our 'Pocket Waterway' adoption, covering all the canal running through the parish. Hedge 'infill' works were started along the tow path in Woughton Park, whereby vegetation is layered and woven between stakes to allow a green infill to help hedges repair. A new **Bin Contractor** was appointed and a review of bins was carried out in response to the volume of use and fly-tipping. OWPC responded to the informal consultation stage of MKCC's **Community Governance Review** (of all parishes).

AUTUMN 2025



Listening to Residents: OWPC tackled matters raised by residents: about parking; antisocial behaviour; graffiti; fly-tipping, rubbish; and potholes, together with representations about planning and development concerns in the parish. **Apple Day** in October brought the welcome opportunity to commission a resident artist from 'Art for Health', producing striking works from enthusiastic youngsters. The **Community Governance Review** concluded with our preferences met save for the on-going issue of the Woughton name. **E-Bikes and Scooters:** OWPC is engaging with this review of where equipment can be safely left or parked locally. On **Remembrance Sunday** our community, and neighbours, paid their respects.



The Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust is pleased to welcome **Old Woughton Parish Council** as a Volunteer Partner Organisation. This new partnership reflects our shared commitment to caring for and enhancing the local environment, protecting the rich heritage of our waterways and creating lasting benefits for the community.

As a valued volunteer partner, Old Woughton Parish Council will play a key role in supporting the Trust's mission to ensure that canal and towpath are accessible, thriving spaces for people and wildlife alike. By working together, we aim to deliver meaningful projects that not only improve the health and biodiversity of our waterways, but also foster local pride, community involvement and wellbeing.

We look forward to collaborating on initiatives ranging from habitat restoration and towpath maintenance to community clean-up days. The energy, local knowledge and commitment that Old Woughton Parish Council brings will be instrumental in helping us protect and celebrate these treasured blue and green spaces.

On behalf of everyone at the Canal & River Trust, we extend a warm welcome and sincere thanks. We are excited to embark on this journey together and look forward to the positive difference our partnership will make.



Bin missing you!

In the last issue, we asked you what you thought about OWPC's bin provision, because dog and litter waste issues frequently arise in our casework with residents. Disappointingly, therefore, even though there was a maximum of only three questions to answer, we had just six responses.

More encouragingly, our new bin contractor – Marcus Young Environmental Services Ltd. – had a lot more to say and, hopefully, you can already see the results with fewer random deposits on the ground. Dog bins located at the Green, the Paddocks, the Playing Fields and Walton Lake are now all being emptied twice a week, though this comes at a cost – an additional £10 a week for the four to be precise. So, whilst this survey is now closed, we still want to hear any feedback about value and efficiency.

Communications@oldwoughton.org.uk

As you were...

So, MK City Council's Community Governance Review (of all its parishes), is now concluded and the result for Old Woughton P.C., at least, is no change and whilst that was the preferred local outcome, OWPC's representation about the confusion around the 'Woughton' name remains unresolved. However, in his sign off report to MKCC's Full Council in October, the Electoral Services Officer recorded the following:

Officers have considered this submission and informally discussed the merits with WCC, who understand the context and background, and have a degree of sympathy with this argument but would prefer more time to explore the matter fully and engage with residents. A name change to WCC has not therefore been reflected in the final recommendations; however, parish council name changes can also be advanced at any time, outside of the CGR process. This would usually be advanced by a WCC resolution and ratified by MKCC full Council at a later date.

OWPC very much appreciates the opportunity for continuing dialogue on this important matter for our residents and will provide a further update in the Spring Newsletter when Woughton Community Council (WCC) has had time for reflection with its own residents.

Apple Day Woughton on the Green Saturday 18th October

This year Old Woughton Parish Council partnered with Arts for Health at the Woughton on the Green Community Orchard Apple Day.

Arts for Health use arts and creativity to improve health and wellbeing in communities and in health care settings. Resident artist, Catherine, joined OWPC in the orchard and provided a table bursting with autumnal colour that really captured the imagination of young visitors. Paint was splodged, apples carved and Mandalas assembled. Arts for health are based in Milton Keynes University Hospital and are responsible for the 400 artworks on the display in the hospital, the largest permanent collection in Milton Keynes.

Alongside the art table we displayed a number of Woughton Heritage boards and Charlotte was on hand to bring the past to life. Mary and a number of other parish councillors were available to talk through local issues and engage with visitors and locals on what was a dry and warm autumn day.

Apple Day is run by the Parks Trust and it continues to grow year on year. It is very well managed with parking marshals and an army of purple clad volunteers. We are always ready to receive feedback from local residents so that we can continue to ensure the event improves when it needs to.

The event is well publicised by the Parks Trust and this year we leafleted local residents to ensure you are aware of these and other events happening on our doorstep.

If you missed this year, don't miss next year as its 50 years since the Orchard was first established.

Celebrate the Community Orchard's Golden Jubilee with all things apple! Sat 17 Oct 2026



Defibrillator Awareness Training Session



A big thank you to Steven Hickman and team (from the South Central Ambulance Charity) for delivering the 'Defibrillator Awareness' session on the 19th November.

Some twenty residents attended the informative training which included how to access (externally available) and use defibrillators, ensuring safe practice and the latest protocols advised when performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

The training cost was kindly supported by a donation from a resident.

Another session will be arranged if there is further demand. If you are interested, then please get in touch! Email Charlotte at: **chall@oldwoughton.org.uk** or telephone: 07885 330 797

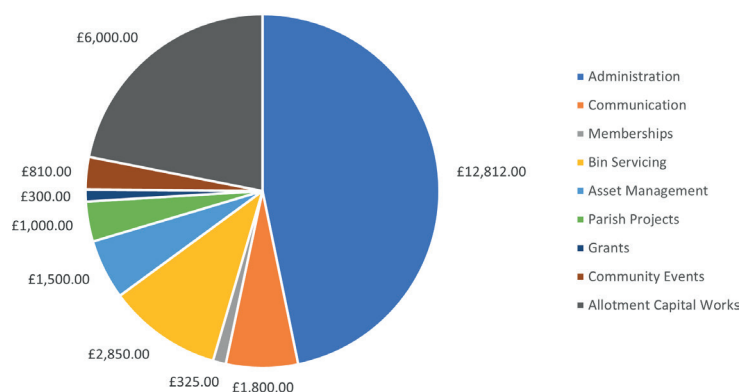
Budget 2026-27, a Lower Precept for Residents

At our Full Council meeting on Monday 10th November 2025, members reviewed and discussed an initial draft budget for 2026/27, carefully prepared by our new Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). The RFO will now refine this draft in light of councillors' and residents feedback and prepare a final version for approval at the next Full Council meeting on 12th January 2026. Once approved, the budget will be submitted to Milton Keynes City Council.

Over the past two years, the parish has operated without a paid Parish Clerk for much of the time. This has led to a significant underspend in the salary budget, which has been added to the parish's reserves. These reserves have now grown substantially, and the Council feels it is time to make good use of these funds for the benefit of the community – while continuing the search for a suitable Parish Clerk and keeping funds aside for this important role.

The Devolved Management Agreement with the Patch Allotment Association (PAA) also continues to work well. Under this arrangement, any tenant rental income not required for day-to-day maintenance is held in reserve by OWPC and ring-fenced for capital improvement projects at the allotments. The replacement of the main gateposts

Draft Budget 2026/27 £27,397



to the allotments and additional new fencing are among the projects getting underway. Currently, OWPC holds £7,000 in reserve, with this year's annual rental payment still to be added.

Thanks to careful financial management and prudent budgeting, OWPC is pleased to report that it will be able to reduce its overall budget for the coming year. **This in turn means a lower Precept bill for residents** – a positive outcome for everyone in the parish.

If you have any comments on OWPC's finances please contact your own councillor (see p.2) or email communications@oldwoughton.org.uk.

Ye Olde Swan Refurbishment

Ye Olde Swan is officially back - brighter, fresher and better than ever. We can't wait to welcome you in to see what's new.

Discover our refreshed décor inspired by the local countryside, perfect for catch-ups with friends and spacious enough for those big family get-togethers. Savour the evening in our cosy bar, where the glow of the fire and a tempting selection of tipples create the perfect place to unwind, or soak up those crisp Autumn days in our wonderfully updated garden space.

Whilst you're here, our Festive Sips and Picky Bits offering is the perfect reason to toast the season! Enjoy any three starters or sides from our festive or main menu and two drinks, all for just £20. Whether it's a quick festive catch-up, a merry after-work drink, or a relaxed get-together full of good cheer and great company, it's the ideal way to make spirits bright.

A warm welcome awaits from Sylwia & everyone at the Ye Olde Swan.



Snowdrop bulb planting at Woughton Park

29th March 2025

On a sunny Saturday morning, a handful of Woughton Park volunteers planted over 500+ snowdrop bulbs, that had been wrapped in 50 news papered bundles into the southern edge of Woughton Park's 'The Green'. Like a 'well oiled' machine the bulbs we planted all within the allocated hour and cheery satisfaction was had by all. Even "let's do this again next year", was said to be heard! Though this year was a 'trial planting', it could become a yearly springtime event; for when the snowdrop flowers have faded and the leaves are still in the green, this happens to be the perfect time to divide the bulb clumps and plant on.

Tim and I are fortunate to enjoy a springtime snowdrop garden which, after 30 years of living on Foxton, now encapsulates the boundary walls and fences. We would be happy to donate bulbs into the park annually as a community event and feel others might like to do the same, with their surplus snowdrop bulbs.

Thank you to Dan, Kate and Carol for your speedy trowel work in getting the bulbs planted into the park.

Linda Mason

UK Last Posting dates - don't be late



Wednesday 17th December	2nd Class, 2nd Class Signed For
Friday 19th December	Royal Mail Tracked 48
Saturday 20th December	1st Class, 1st Class Signed For
Sunday 21st December	Royal Mail Tracked 24
Tuesday 23rd December	Special Delivery Guaranteed

For more info:

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

Revised Waste Collections - Christmas 2025



Normal Date	Revised Date	Bin/sack Collection
Tuesday 30 Dec	Wednesday 31 Dec	Black, blue and red
Tuesday 6 Jan	Wednesday 7 Jan	Black, blue and red

For more info:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/collectiondays

'Trees of Hope' – M.K. Parks Trust and the Sycamore Gap sapling!

During National Tree Week, The National Trust announced Milton Keynes as a recipient of a 'Trees of Hope' Sycamore Gap sapling being gifted across the UK. From almost 500 applicants for the 49 saplings – one to represent each foot in height that the tree was at the time of felling – saplings will all be in publicly accessible spaces and ours will be within MKPT's Stanton Low Park MK14 6FF, bisected by the historic Grand Union Canal and featuring ancient landmarks including the 12th Century remains of St Peter's Church and underground remains of Stantonbury Manor house. The saplings are currently being cared for at The National Trust's Plant Conservation Centre, ready to plant out in winter 2025/26.

For more information visit: nationaltrust.org.uk/TreesOfHope:



From all of us at OWPC, we wish you and yours a very hopeful 2026!

Before The Illegal Felling The Sycamore Gap Tree On Hadrian's Wall In Northumberland
©National Trust Images John Millar



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

Advice Sessions

For residents of
Simpson, Ashland and Old Woughton



Citizens Advice Milton Keynes is working with both Simpson & Ashland and Old Woughton Parish Councils to provide advice surgeries for local residents.

Our advice is free, impartial and **confidential**.

See below for details of when and where we'll be in the area:



11th Jul 2025: Ashland Lakeside
10th Oct 2025: St Mary's Church
23rd Jan 2026: Simpson Village Hall
17th Apr 2026: St Mary's Church

11am - 2pm
10am - 1pm
11am - 2pm
10am - 1pm

We can advise you on a range of problems including:



- Debt and Money Issues
- Benefits and Universal Credit
- Housing and Homelessness
- Work and Employment
- Family Law
- Immigration
- Consumer Problems

citizens
advice

Milton
Keynes

EVENT CALENDAR

December 7
Parks & Run:
Ouzel Valley Park
(The Parks Trust)

December 21
Word and
Worship with
Christingle
10am
St. Mary's Church

December 21
Carol Service
6pm
St. Mary's Church

December 24
Christmas Eve
Communion
Service
11.30pm
St. Mary's Church

December 25
Christmas Day
Communion
Service
10am
St. Mary's Church

December 28
There will be no
Service at
St. Mary's Church

January 10
Litter Pick
10:00-11:30am
WoTGS
(meet at seat opposite pub)

January 23
Citizens Advice
Session (free)
12-3pm
Simpson Village
Hall

January 31
Litter Pick
10:00-11:30am
WoTGN
(meet at car park off
Newport Road)

February 21
Litter Pick
10:00-11:30am
WP
(meet at the car park opp. Castle Rose)

March 13
Litter Pick
2pm- 3:30pm
Passmore
(meet by noticeboard)

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