

OLD WUGHTON

Spring 2026

News

The Newsletter of Old Woughton Parish Council



Golden Wassail in the Community Orchard - January 2026

PO Box 6548
Milton Keynes
MK10 1AB

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 parish wards.
Details of your local Councillors are listed below.

Woughton on the Green North



Rob Grindley
Planning, Transport,
Liaison for MK Dons
Community Trust
rgrindley@
oldwoughton.org.uk



Ryan Gillies
Canal & River Trust, OWIS/IT,
Allotments, Speedwatch
rgillies@oldwoughton.org.uk



Phil Nash
Allotments,
Communications, OWIS/IT,
Speedwatch
pnash@
oldwoughton.org.uk

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,
MK Dons Community Trust, 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



VACANT

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 and RFO



Katherine Harmsworth
kharmsworth@oldwoughton.org.uk



Graham Eaton
graham.eaton
@milton-keynes.gov.uk
T. 07941 394783



**Nana Ama
Ofori-Atta**
nana.oguntola@
milton-keynes.gov.uk
T. 07478 115668



Paul Trendall
paul.trendall@
milton-keynes.gov.uk
T. 07793 080425



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

Provisional Dates
11th May, 14th September
at 7.30pm

VENUE: St. Mary's Church

CONTACT US

<https://oldwoughton.org.uk>

01908 465811

clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk

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



Friends of
Old Woughton PC

Editorial

It can sometimes feel as though all of the old certainties are breaking down and that is certainly being put to the test currently - globally, nationally and locally!

Even at Old Woughton PC these effects ripple down to us and we seem to spend an increasing amount of time responding to consultation exercises on almost every front: budgets; planning policies; transport policies; community safety concerns; electoral and NHS boundary reviews and even the re-dedicating of the Grand Union Canal for drinking water shipment to the wider south-east. All are important, but as an essentially volunteer body, like our parishioners, the PC also feels as though it's being pulled from pillar to post.

Nevertheless, there is good news to report. After two years of 'getting by', OWPC has a new Clerk – having started with us as our Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) a year ago, Katherine Harmsworth clearly likes us well enough to have become our latest clerk and we're delighted to announce that appointment and thank Vicky Gladstone for her interim support (p4). Moreover, one of Katherine's first achievements is to report a reduction in the local Precept – the mechanism for funding OWPC (p8). Well done, everyone!

Our Annual Residents Meetings continue to draw local partners as willing speakers, because local resident turn-out is impressive, so let's keep that up - make a diary note for 16/6/26 when MK University Hospital will talk about its development plans; The Mid-Shires Orchard Group will talk about enjoying our local apple trees (see cover shot for fun to be had); and the Grand Union Canal Transfer Team will be updating us on its current activities (p7).

On balance then lots of activity, yes, and some very good progress. Thank you all for your continuing support and a special mention for those hardy neighbours who turn out to support the regular litter-picking events – it's amazing what can be achieved in just an hour - forward dates on the back page – thank you!

Charlotte, Phil & Vanessa

The Comms. Team



We have been carrying out repairs and maintenance to our notice boards across the parish



Congratulations to all those who took part in the Festival of Running 2026

OLD WOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Chair

Light and colour

I have to admit that I am possibly the most 'grumpy bear' over the Winter months and so welcome the colour and light that comes with Spring. There is always that feeling of a 'new page' over this period and optimism in many forms.

However – around us, our 'world' is far from settled or feeling secure and pressures arrive for each and every one of us in so many different ways. It seems to me that 'Community' is never more needed at this time.

We have had many months and indeed years with administrative boundary reviews and 'shuffling' of landscapes in terms of local Government and in May we see the local all-out elections which will determine MK Council leadership and Your City Cllrs who will represent you. Do ensure you have all the information you need to participate (postal voting, ID and so forth) and we provide a helpful overview on page 4. on all things Governance.

For us a Parish Council we continue to invest in our community and find ways to tackle the issues that most matter to you (pages 6&7). We indeed thank all of our 'Community Champions' who have volunteered to support us. We thank Vicky Gladstone for taking up the mantle as a volunteer Clerk to 'fill the gap' for a number of months. We also thank Roshini for her commitment and hard work as a Parish Cllr in Passmore Ward and wish her very well in her new endeavours.

In the same breath we welcome Katherine as now our full-time Clerk and also the continued opportunity to work closely with all of our neighbours and partners.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Residents Meeting in June and our 'Health and Wellbeing' theme seems wholly fitting at this time. We also have the opportunity to celebrate '50 years of our very special Orchard' and other events – bringing us together as a community.

Charlotte

The Baton passes...

We're having quite a few changed relationships at OWPC HQ and here are some of the headlines:

Saying farewell

In our Summer 2024 issue, we introduced Vicky Gladstone, a well-known local resident, as OWPC's interim clerk following the promotion of our previous post-holder.

Vicky had herself been a clerk in another authority, but had retired. She stepped forward on an entirely voluntary basis to ensure that OWPC had access to the necessary advice to continue operating within all the relevant regulations.

We were extremely lucky to be able to call upon such a skilled neighbour and we are very grateful. Thanks so much and go well!

Saying hello – again!

Stepping further forward is neighbour Katherine Harmsworth (also at Simpson & Ashland Parish Council).

We introduced you to Katherine in last Spring's Newsletter as OWPC's new Responsible Finance Officer and now Katherine picks up from Vicky (above), by taking on the full clerking role at Old Woughton Parish - hear more from her on page 8 and keep her contact details very much to hand.

E: Clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk

T: (01908) 465811

A very warm welcome from all of us!

From RFO to Parish Clerk

Last year, I joined Old Woughton Parish Council as the RFO (Responsible Finance Officer). My main responsibility was to look after the council's finances—keeping the accounts in good order, supporting budget planning, and making sure everything ran smoothly behind the scenes.

At that time, OWPC had been operating without a paid Parish Clerk for quite a while. Instead, the council relied on the dedication of volunteers to take minutes, and on Parish Councillors themselves to handle many of the day to day tasks that keep a parish functioning. It was a real testament to their commitment, but it also meant that everyone had to work that little bit harder to keep things moving.

After a year of being just the RFO, I'm pleased to share that I've now stepped into a new combined role: **Parish Clerk and RFO**.

For smaller councils like ours, this set up is quite common. Traditionally, one person carries both responsibilities—acting not only as the council's financial lead but also as its main administrator, advisor on governance, and first point of contact for residents. Larger councils often have the capacity for two separate roles, but in a parish our size, combining them helps create a more streamlined and efficient way of working.

I'm looking forward to supporting the council and the community more fully in this expanded role, helping ensure that Old Woughton continues to run smoothly and stays connected with the residents it serves.



Saying see you around

Roshini Wickramasinghe joined the parish as a councillor for Passmore Ward in July 2022 and her immediate warmth made her an instant team member – you may have experienced that yourself as you encountered her on towpath patrol as one of our Canal & River Trust links.

As she leaves us to grow her own business, we say thank you to Roshini for your contributions and every success in the future.

Saying I mustn't forget to vote

Regular readers will know that following the latest review by the Boundary Commission, our parish will be moving to the completely new MK City Council ward of Ouse Valley.

So, whichever candidate you choose to vote for on Thursday 7 May, it will be none of our current city councillors.

Do not forget that to vote at St. Mary's polling station you will need acceptable identification (photo ID). To see what is acceptable go to:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/elections-2026



Milton Keynes Chosen to Pilot UK's First Voting Hub

Government has announced that Milton Keynes voters will be able to use the UK's first central voting hub as part of a pilot scheme to make voting simpler, more convenient and efficient.

On 7 May, voters from any ward will be able to cast their vote in the hub, which will be in Midsummer Place shopping centre and managed by our elections team. A rigorous digital system will be in place to ensure that no one is able to vote more than once. Further details about how the central voting hub will operate will be announced closer to 7 May.



Roshini's enthusiasm and efforts will be a hard act to follow.

In her early days as a parish councillor, Roshini went door to door introducing herself to residents and even now she is continuing in her role on the Passmore Association Committee having helped to plant the jubilee tree and organising cooking for BBQs and celebration cakes – we all remember those for the Jubilee and the Coronation! One year Roshini single-handedly put on a curry takeaway menu to raise funds for the Association. Roshini brought a lot of enthusiasm and knowledge to the parish councillor role organising litter picks on Passmore, as well as walking the towpath through the parish on a monthly basis and reporting littering and fly tipping to the Canal and River Trust in her role as the OWPC link.

CHANGES TO CONTACTING MKCC CUSTOMER SERVICES

MK City Council has changed how Customer Services can be contacted. The following email address is no longer in use: customerservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk

This email address has been replaced by a new online form as part of the 'Report It' form options ('Customer Services Contact Form').

Visit: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pay-report-and-apply/report-it> and follow the links appropriate for your query.

If you prefer to speak to someone, the phone line is still available:

- 01908 691 691 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-5pm and Wednesday 10-5pm)
- And for out of hours emergencies 01908 226 699

When reporting matters that are location specific, you may be asked when using the forms to provide a location using 'What3words'. This allows for a very accurate location point to be identified.

What3words is a system that divides the world into 3-meter squares, giving each unique square a permanent address of three random words (e.g ///slurs.this.shark for 10 Downing Street), making it easy to share precise locations, especially where traditional addresses fail. You can find any location's 3-word address using the free app or website ([what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com)) by searching for a place and tapping the map.

If you have any observations on the new Customer Services Contact Form/arrangements then please do share your thoughts with Katherine our Clerk (clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk). We have been asked as a Parish Council to feedback to MKCC on this matter.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Air Quality Index & Pollen Forecast	http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/daq https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/pollen-forecast
Anglian Water Outages	https://www.anglianwater.co.uk
Flooding Service	https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding
Power cuts	https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk

The Golden Wassail

To celebrate the 50th year of the Community Orchard, the local community and people from across Milton Keynes and beyond came together on Saturday 24th January for a Wassail, the first of four golden anniversary events this year.

Planted in 1976 by Milton Keynes Development Corporation, the creators of Milton Keynes, our Community Orchard is the largest of its kind in the city and is home to 19 native varieties of apple trees! It is cared for and maintained by The Parks Trust and dedicated volunteers from the Mid Shires Orchard Group.

It was The Parks Trust and these volunteers who helped make the Wassail happen; beginning with the anointment of a King and Queen tree who were dressed in robes and sparkles, recited to and libations; the pouring of cider around the roots to bless them and the orchard for the year ahead. A noisy din followed in which wassail-ers - the banging pots and pans, knocking together of sticks and even a noisy harmonica or two - paraded up and down the orchard to ward off evil spirits before the King and Queen were sang to and celebrated.

It was a well attended event and the first of four events this year; two picnics in the Spring and Summer are still to come, as well as the annual Apple Day this Autumn. Check the events calendar for dates.



News and Information from around the parish!

Mandatory Parking Zones for E-Bike and E-Scooter Hire

"From the 29 January, the rollout of Mandatory Parking Zones (MPZs) for e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes began across Milton Keynes. MPZs are locations where users can go to pick up or leave their e-bikes and e-scooters. Users will know where these locations are from the Lime or Dott app they are using.

Previously the e-scooter and e-bikes could be picked up and left after journeys using a 'free-floating' system which means they could be left at any place within the operational area, causing some complaints about obstructions, especially if the e-bike or e-scooter had accidentally fallen over.

The new practice will be monitored by the two operators and users will continue to be required to leave the vehicles upright and take a photo before they can 'End Ride'. Users who park obstructively will be warned and may be fined. Patrollers will also visit locations to tidy vehicles. These new locations will be monitored over the next two-three months to make sure that they are the right spots for both users and residents. After this initial phase, we'll look at putting some permanent markings to show the MPZ locations such as racks or painted markings, depending on usage, budget and available space."

Source: MKCC Councillors News 30/01/26

If you have any observations or comments about the current arrangements in the parish, then please let Katherine our Clerk know: clerk@oldwoughton.org.uk



You may have noticed a blue marking point on the base of the Jubilee Oak (Planted in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee) MKCC are monitoring the oak as it is showing signs of deterioration. The crown has been reduced to take the weight out of the canopy. We will work closely with the council on this matter.



We have been working with Anglian Water to determine the source of this long-term leak under the H9 Flyover between Woughton Park and Simpson. It has been determined that it is not a mains water leak and repairs have been carried out to canal banking / shuttering which it is hoped will resolve the issue.

On the Wild Side - or a winter passes

...As luck would have it, our cosy community is the established area of Old Woughton, with a river channelling through, canal pathways to stroll along, green spaces to explore, parklands to enjoy and, once wrapped in several warm layers in January there is much to see for the intrepid wanderer. A walk into nature is known to brighten us up as we look for the signs of early yellow-brown catkins of hazel, silver birch trees, and the reawakening of the soft pussy willow buds amongst the tree and shrubs plantings. Look out for the yellow wagtail as he bobs and flits amongst the brown poker sticks of bullrushes and dried thistle heads along the edge of Walton Lake.

One winter challenge is looking for something green, away from winter's dull pallet and this is often the evergreen ivy, with its juicy black berries, winding its way up to the topmost branches of trees. We do not want to think of ivy as suffocating living trees (which it can be) so instead we might see ivy as a protecting umbrella for insects, birds, small mammals such as mice and voles, who seeks shelter and food during the colder months. A rare patch of bright yellow aconites is blooming on Woughton Park's Green.

This winter has brought, to our stretch of the Grand Union canal a mandarin duck with its distinct chestnut, black and white plumage. It seems happy feeding with the local mallard ducks, and from a passerby, this is the second winter the mandarin has found its way here. Along with sightings of a goosander and a cormorant diving for fish on the River Ouzel, this makes one appreciate that nature can succeed within our city's boundaries.

Linda Mason

Grand Union Canal Water Transfer proposals: Phase Two Public Consultation now sent

The latest round of consultation about the transfer of additional water from Birmingham to Luton via the Grand Union Canal closed on 2nd April 2026.

OWPC is currently minded to support the proposals, because of the additional investment into the existing infrastructure that will be required. However, there are specific issues which we would need addressing as the canal runs through this parish.

Specifically, potential adjustments to 'Peartree Bridge' (no. 88) may be required due to the change in headroom (air draft) that will occur due to the proposed increase in water level. This bridge has a lower clearance due to the reinforcement works introduced in the 1970s, when a layer of concrete was added to the underside of the bridge arch to allow construction movements during the city's early development.

Secondly, the related construction compound is proposed on the Woughton Scheduled Monument (List Entry Number: 1007938) and any works would require a License and would likely give rise to an Objection from Old Woughton Parish Council and Historic England. Therefore, OWPC has suggested that the compound is located on public land to the west of the canal, where grid road access is available.

Thirdly, there is no mention of the potential impact on The Old Rectory Farm, Waterside, a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number. 1125198) and Scheduled Monument site (Moated and Fish Ponds) Entry 1007930 which lie within the grounds.

Finally, OWPC has flagged the long-standing leak emanating from the east side of the canal bank under the H9 Groveway. We will report the responses upon receipt.

Building safer communities

Worried about crime in your parish? If so, join your local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme at ourwatch.org.uk - it's free. The signing-up process will suggest your nearest scheme. Be part of your local community, receive crime prevention information and important Police Alerts, be connected, be part of a local NHW Scheme.

Your local NHW Schemes and their Coordinators are:

Passmore MK6: Steve Lazell

Woughton on the Green North MK6: Peter McDonald

The Green, Woughton on the Green MK6: Geoffrey Miller

Foxton & Braunston, Woughton Park MK6: David Court

Castle Rose and adjoining Medland, Elton & Northwich MK6: Tricia Humphries



We are aware and are seeking a replacement of the missing yellow bollard and lock, which act as an illegal encampment deterrent, to the entrance of Woughton Park Village Green

Mid Shires Orchard Group

The Mid Shires Orchard Group are dedicated to the care, conservation and enjoyment of traditional orchards and heritage fruit. They bring together people of all ages and experience levels who share an interest in orchards, biodiversity and local landscapes, offering opportunities to learn practical skills while contributing to the long-term health of orchard sites.

They lead a monthly "Afternoon at the Orchard" working party, with sessions involving seasonal tasks such as winter and summer pruning, bramble removal, vegetation management and fruit harvesting; regular volunteers can share in the harvest. No prior experience is needed, as guidance is provided on the day, but volunteers should bring their own work gloves and ideally, their own pruning shears/saws.

Sessions are usually held on the third Saturday of each month; the next session being 1-5pm, Saturday 21 March 2026. From April to October the sessions will run from 2-6pm, before reverting to back to 1-5pm from November to March. Volunteers meet at the Newport Road parking area opposite the orchard entrance. The work is varied and sociable, with refreshments midway and often a drink at Ye Olde Swan afterwards. New volunteers are welcome and can email Claire at msogchairman@yahoo.com for more information.



OLD WOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Residents Meeting

Tue 16 June 2026

6:30pm start - 8:00pm

St Mary's Church

Woughton on the Green
MK6 3BE



Light refreshments and chat, plus guest speakers...

NHS
MKUH

MILTON KEYNES
UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL

Our city hospital, providing acute, emergency and specialist healthcare services locally.



MIDSHIRES
ORCHARD
GROUP

Volunteers supporting, maintaining and enhancing our Community Orchard year-round.



GRAND UNION
CANAL
TRANSFER

A vital new infrastructure scheme to bring water from the Midlands to the Southeast through our Parish.

www.oldwoughton.org.uk

OWPC

@friendsowpc



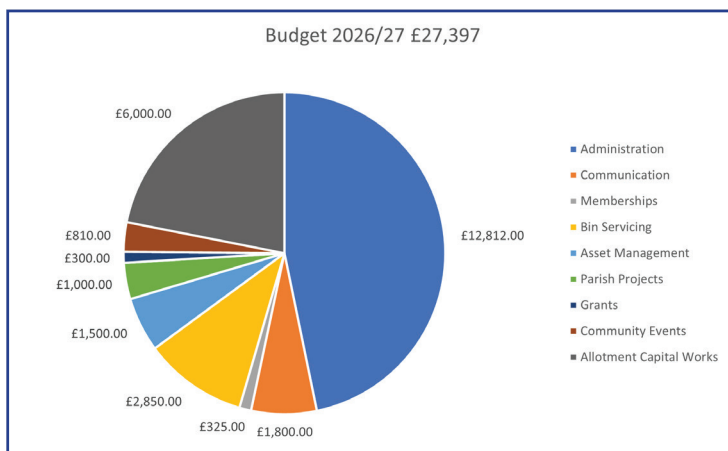
2026/27 Budget – Precept Reduced!

At the January Full Council meeting, the Parish Council approved the draft budget for 2026/27 and submitted its Precept requirement to Milton Keynes City Council.

Over the past two years, the Parish Council has operated for long periods without a paid Parish Clerk. This has resulted in a significant underspend and, consequently, a healthy increase in parish reserves. With recruitment for a new paid Clerk now complete, the Parish Council believes this is the right time to make use of some of these accumulated reserves.

By using a portion of the reserves alongside the annual precept to balance the budget, the Parish Council is able to reduce the precept for 2026/27 by almost 40% compared with last year.

Precept	25/26	26/27	Decrease Variance	
Tax Band	Annual	Annual	Annual	Weekly
AR	£36.62	£22.07	-£14.55	-£0.28
A	£43.94	£26.48	-£17.46	-£0.34
B	£51.26	£30.89	-£20.37	-£0.39
C	£58.59	£35.31	-£23.28	-£0.45
D	£65.91	£39.72	-£26.19	-£0.50
E	£80.56	£48.55	-£32.01	-£0.62
F	£95.20	£57.37	-£37.83	-£0.73
G	£109.85	£66.20	-£43.65	-£0.84
H	£131.82	£79.44	-£52.38	-£1.01



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:



17th Apr 2026: St Mary's Church

10th Jul 2026: Ashland Lakeside

10am - 1pm

11am - 2pm

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

April 2
MKPT Women's Walking Network
10am
Simpson Drive car park

April 17
Citizens Advice Session (free)
10-1pm
St. Mary's Church

April 25
Litter Pick
10.30-11.30am
WoTGN
(meet at paddocks car park off Newport Road)

May 2
Litter Pick
10.30-11.30am
WP
(meet at the car park opposite Castle Rose)

May 4
MK Marathon

May 9
Spring Apple Amble
11am
Orchard

May 9
Golden Spring Picnic
1.30-4pm
Orchard

June 6
BIG HELP OUT!
(details to follow)

June 16
RESIDENTS MEETING
6.30pm
St Mary's Church

July 10
Citizens Advice Session (free)
11-2pm
Ashland Lakeside

July 25
Golden Summer Picnic
1.30-4pm
Orchard

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