



2026

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY



3 Longden Close
Haynes
Bedfordshire
MK45 3PJ

Clerk@Wootton-PC.gov.uk

Tel: 07531 930788

Version History

Version	Reviewed at	Approved at
Version 1.00	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th November 2015	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th November 2015
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2016	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2016
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023
Version 2.00	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th August 2023	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th August 2023
Version 2.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024
Version 2.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025
Version 2.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026

To be reviewed at each Annual Council meeting.

1. Aims and Objectives

Wootton Parish Council's aims and objectives for seeking community engagement and the outcomes it hopes to achieve are:

Aims:

- Work more closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision-making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- Ensure that, by getting closer to the community and being accessible to all groups, local democracy is enhanced;
- Ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, Wootton Parish Council actively encourages the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of any decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have the opportunity to be heard at every stage and the capacity to be effective citizens.

Objectives:

This policy is part of Wootton Parish Council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement;
- More residents understanding the role of the Parish Council, clerk and councillors and getting the best effect;
- Improved engagement with the local community, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in volunteering;
- Improved satisfaction with services provided by the council.

2. Defining the Community

Wootton is a large village, situated in the south-west of Bedford Borough. Its local (unitary authority) is Bedford Borough Council. There are approximately 1,754 houses accommodating 4,156 residents (as at April 2013).

The community may be defined as the electorate of the parish plus:

- Church groups;
- Councillors and public service representatives including council staff;
- Farming community;
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups;
- Interest groups – clubs and societies;

- Retail and other businesses in the community;
- Teachers and Governors of Wootton Lower (including pre-school) and Upper Schools;
- Village Hall Trustees and its users;
- Voluntary organisations;
- Workers of Sweet Peas (Bizzy Bees as was) and St. Mary's pre-schools;
- Young people who live and/or are educated in the parish.

3. Role of Council Members and Officers

Wootton Parish Council is non-political with 15 councillors identified in the community, via the quarterly Wootton Newsletter, Annual Report and website.

It employs one officer, the Clerk to the Council/Responsible Financial Officer who implements decisions made by council and provides independent, objective and professional advice, information and administrative support. The Clerk to the Council has an office at Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, Wootton, MK43 9FZ and members of the public are welcome to make an appointment to discuss face-to-face any issue relevant to the parish. The Clerk to the Council attends meetings and can be contacted via email, telephone or letter also.

4. Provision of Information to the Community

- Messages can be left either by telephone or email. If the clerk is on annual leave or unable to respond a voicemail or out-of-office auto-response will indicate that fact;
- The names, email address and phone numbers of all councillors are published on the website;
- The Parish Council website address is widely published and the site contains all the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Parish Council – including agendas, draft and signed minutes, financial documents, all necessary contact details and electronic copies of the Wootton Newsletter and Annual Report;
- The Parish Council produces the Wootton Newsletter on a quarterly basis and this is delivered to every household and business within the parish;
- Information, including all meeting agendas is published on the five notice boards around the parish as well as on the Parish Council website;
- Police Community Support Officers and ward councillors (Bedford Borough Councillors) are invited to attend every Parish Council meeting.
- An Annual Report is prepared and printed in the Wootton Newsletter and published on the website.

5. Opportunities for Community Involvement

- It is recognised that members of the community may wish to engage with the Parish Council at different levels – ranging from the odd email/letter to regular attendance at meetings;
- A monthly Parish Council surgery, which allows members of the public to come and talk directly with council members is held in conjunction with the ward councillor(s) at the Library, adjacent to Lorraine Road Green on the first Saturday monthly between 11am and 12noon;
- Parish Council meetings are generally open to the public, save for when a resolution is passed

to exclude the public or press to discuss a confidential item and there is an opportunity to speak under Open Forum at each meeting;

- An Annual Parish Meeting (to be held between 1st March and 1st June annually – please refer to the website for further information) gives the public and local organisations an opportunity to participate in the full meeting. This meeting is advertised widely and is used by the Parish Council to report on work carried out during the previous year. It is also an opportunity for the Parish Council to obtain views of residents on any matter which affects the community;
- Wootton Parish Council undertakes consultations by questionnaire (online via its website, in person at the annual Fun Fest or via the Wootton Newsletter) or public meetings as appropriate for specific issues;
- The Parish Council is always considering practical ways of engaging with people and community groups and is mindful that not everyone has access to the internet. When required, the Parish Council will use other communication techniques, including the use of posters in prominent places and suggestion boxes at strategic drop-off points in the village (including but not limited to shops, public houses, doctor's surgery and the library);
- The Parish Council will continue to arrange, support and participate in community events, not least the annual Fun Fest.

6. Involvement with Partnerships

The Parish Council has a representative(s) on the following:

- Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils;
- Robert Edward Lunniss Charity;
- Wootton Church & Poor's Land Charity/Wootton Poor's Land Charity;
- Wootton Community Centre;
- Wootton Memorial Hall;
- Wootton Village Hall.

7. Contact the Parish Council

The clerk to the council may be contacted as follows. Parish Council members may be contacted via the website or Wootton Newsletter, or through the clerk to the council:

Sue Playford

Email: Clerk@Wootton-PC.gov.uk

Telephone: 07531 930788

Website: <https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/>