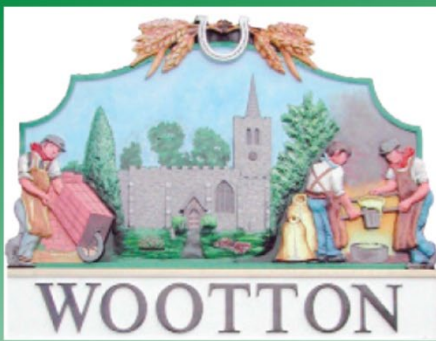


2026



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL
Terms of Reference
Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group



Neighbourhood Plan

Your neighbourhood; your future

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Version History

Version	Reviewed at	Approved at
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 20 th May 2015	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 20 th May 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 2.00	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th June 2017	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th June 2017
Version 2.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018
Version 3.00	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th October 2018	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th October 2018
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024
Version 3.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025
Version 4.00	Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting on 15 th April 2026	Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting on 15 th April 2026
Version 4.00	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.

Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

- a) The main purpose of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is to review Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan (ratified in February 2022) to ensure current policies remain in line with village aspirations and new policies be considered as necessary. Once complete, the reviewed Neighbourhood Development Plan will then progress to Independent Examination and a Community Referendum (if appropriate¹) and ultimately be adopted by Bedford Borough Council to become planning policy.
- b) The Steering Group will engage the local community and key stakeholders to ensure that the review is truly representative of the ambitions of Wootton. The Steering Group will maximise support for the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Development Plan by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-review process.

2. Principles

- a) Under the direction of Wootton Parish Council, the Steering Group will undertake the process in a democratic and fair way, encouraging widespread participation and giving equal consideration to opinions and ideas from all members of the community.
- b) All decisions shall be fully evidenced and supported through consultation with the local community.

3. Roles and responsibilities

In order to achieve this, the Steering Group will:

- Be accountable for steering and providing strategic management of the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Wootton, Bedfordshire.
- Produce, manage and update a project timetable.
- Produce a vision and plan in compliance with Bedford Borough Council's core strategy.
- Keep Bedford Borough Council informed of progress.
- Produce a consultation and community engagement strategy, showing how the public will be involved throughout the process.
- Undertake analysis and evidence gathering to support the plan production process.
- Actively support and promote the review of the Wootton Neighbourhood Development Plan throughout the duration of the project.
- Identify sources of funding.
- Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to make the plan as effective as possible.
- Consult with and use the expertise of Hyas Associates Ltd, professional planners who have been appointed to aid with the review.

¹ Bedford Borough Council and/or an Independent Examiner will determine whether the revisions require a further referendum.

- Gather data from a wide range of sources to ensure that the conclusions reached are fully evidenced and that the aspirations and issues of all residents are understood.
- Consult as widely and thoroughly as possible to ensure that the draft and final review is representative of the views of residents.
- Agree, subject to ratification by Wootton Parish Council, a final submission version of the reviewed Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Seek to continue to implement policies within the completed Neighbourhood Development Plan (following a public referendum held on 17th February 2022).
- Seek to implement any new policies within the reviewed Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Review on a periodic basis (and in line with Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan 2050 and all relevant/subsequent policies) all policies within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, to ensure it continues to accord with the same.

4. Membership

- a) The Steering Group will be made up of a number of Wootton Parish Councillors and a cross-section of volunteers from the community. Minimum member numbers should be no less than 10 and maximum member numbers should be no more than 20.
- b) Efforts will be made to seek representation from under-represented sections of the community.
- c) Representatives of housing developers and/or land management organisations are not permitted to become members of this Steering Group.
- d) The Steering Group shall be subject to a quorum of five.

5. Powers of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

- a) The Steering Group is an advisory steering group of Wootton Parish Council. It cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council or residents. Recommendations will be made via a vote, and each member shall have one vote. The Chairman will have one casting vote.
- b) All recommendations will be made to Wootton Parish Council's Full Council for approval.
- c) The plan-making process remains the responsibility of the Parish Council as the qualifying body. All publications, consultation and community engagement exercises will be undertaken by or on behalf of the Parish Council with appropriate recognition of the Parish Council's position given in all communications associated with this project. The Parish Council will approve the Submission Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan prior to publication for consultation and independent examination.
- d) Meetings will be minuted by the Clerk to the Parish Council, another member of staff or a member of the Committee.

6. Meetings

- a) Steering Group meetings will take place at regular intervals. At least three clear days' notice of meetings will be sent to members via email or an alternative method of communication. Meetings will be held at Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way and the dates of future meetings will be made publicly available via the Parish Council's website, noticeboard on Bedford Road, opposite The Cock Inn PH and quarterly Wootton newsletter.
- b) The Steering Group will elect a Chair from its membership to remain in this position until the review project is completed. If this position should become vacant, the Steering Group will elect an alternative.
- c) A record of meeting will be kept, and notes will be circulated to Steering Group Members and Wootton Parish Council in a timely fashion. Minutes will be made publicly available on the Parish Council's website.

7. Working/Sub Groups

- a) The Steering Group may establish working/sub groups made up of volunteers from the community to aid them in any Neighbourhood Development Plan related work.
- b) Each working group should include a lead person from the Steering Group.

8. Finance

- a) All grants and funding will be applied for and held by the Parish Council who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Development Planning work.
- b) The Steering group will notify the Parish Council of any planned expenditure before it is incurred, this may be in the form of a monthly report.

9. Conduct

- a) All Parish Councillor members of the Steering Group will abide by the principles and practices of the [Parish Council Code of Conduct](#), including declarations of interest.
- b) Whilst Members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organisations, the Steering Group as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that the Neighbourhood Development Plan review reflects their collective expectations.
- c) The Steering Group will achieve this by:
 - Being clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict.
 - Treating everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion and belief.
 - Actively promoting equality of access and opportunity.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

Any changes to the Terms of Reference by this Steering Group will be made via a recommendation to Wootton Parish Council's Full Council.

11. Dissolution

- a) The Steering Group will be dissolved once its objectives have been attained and/or when at least two-thirds of its members make a recommendation to Wootton Parish Council's Full Council.
- b) Wootton Parish Council will then determine whether any remaining funds held in relation to the Neighbourhood Development Plan be ringfenced for a future review or disposed of in accordance with any conditions imposed by the grant funders and in the best interests of Wootton Parish.