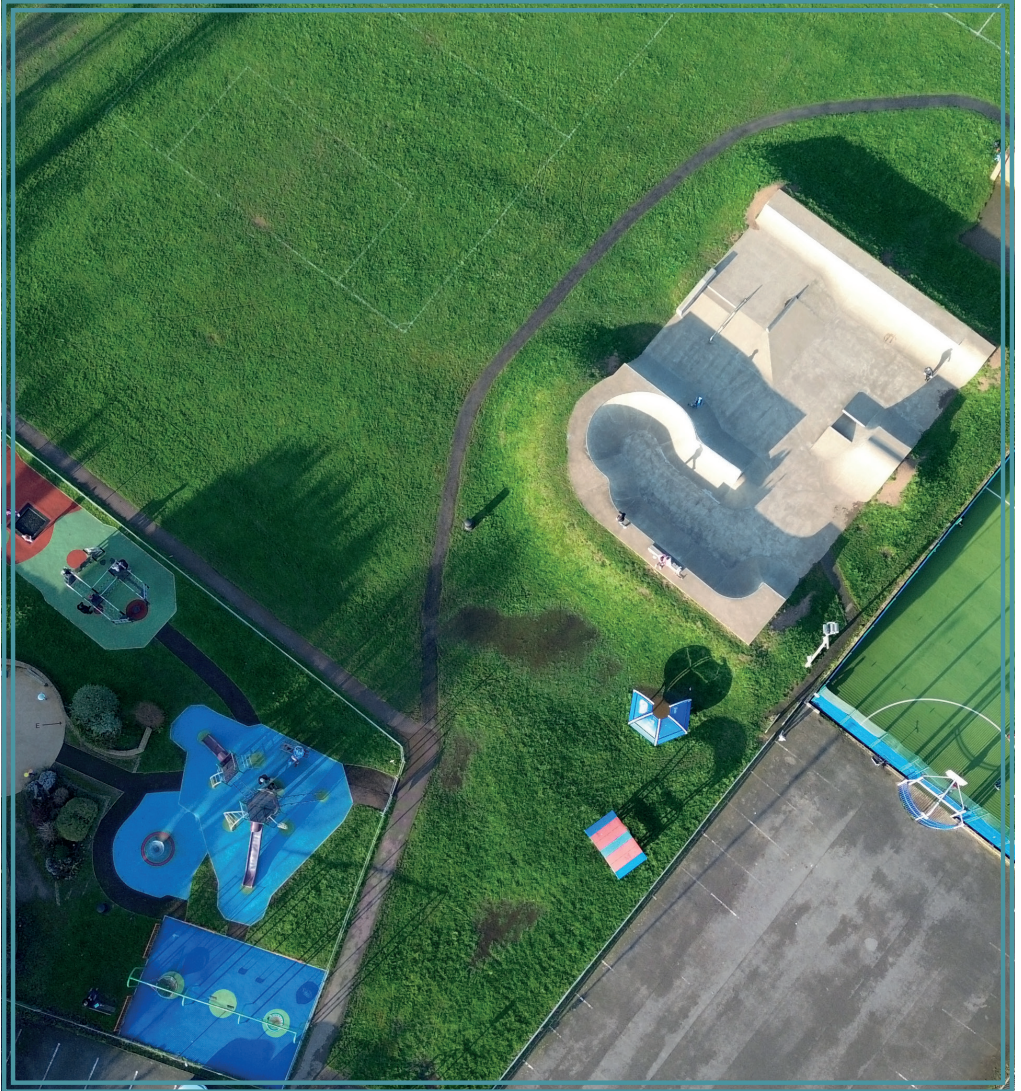


The **Wootton** P A R I S H N E W S

SPRING EDITION

March 2024



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Complex (Multi Use Games Area) bookings Church Road only - Sue Edgar Playford: 07531 930 788

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Holywell Middle: 750 381

Marston Vale Middle: 768 224

Wootton Lower: 768 239

Wootton Lower PTFA Contact: 768 239

Police

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Non Emergency: 101 Anti-Social Behaviour: 276 037

Good Neighbour Scheme: 07717 770 247

Playgroups

Bizzy Bees: 767 185

St Mary's - Tracey Kerins: 767 158

Wootton Community Nursery- Kayleigh: 07534 308 632

Speed Watch Co-ordinator

Juliet Wright: 07590 449815

St Mary's Church

Canon Peter Ackroyd: 768 391

Church Hall: 767 158

Wootton New Life Methodist Church

Rev Michael Giles: 930 882

Baptist Church

Mr Rob Stanton: 766 293

Roman Catholic Church

Father Seamus Keenan: 352 569

Doctor's Surgeries

Wootton Vale: 762 500

Cranfield, High St: 750 234

Kempston, Cater St: 849 090

Kempston, King St: 852 222

Kempston, St John St: 851 323

NHS111: Online www.111.nhs.uk or Freephone 111

Wootton Facilities

Pharmacy: 765 166 Post Office: 768 368

Library: 766 061

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Alive and Singing Choir' - Barbara: 07710 007 572

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1st Wootton Boys Brigade - Allan: 319 269

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Acorn Quilters - Dorothy: 409 566

Badminton Monday - Chris: 07740 939 109

Badminton Thursday - Freda: 270 638

Badminton Juniors - Colin: 270 283

Beavers Leader required call Mark: 07772 330 169

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Bowls Thursday - Rena: 768 012

Brennan School of Dance: 822 831

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Guides - Gill: 856 566

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Royal British Legion Wootton Poppy Appeal

Organiser - Chris: 07865 051 453

Scouts - Jake: 07808 077 027

Stewartby Operatic Society - 01908 616213

Tang Soo Do - Pat: 07917 805 863

Wootton Golf Society - Pete: 07975 596 164

Women's Institute - Kath: 765 333

Wootton Rangers FC - Jeremy: 07446 770193

Wootton Blue Cross: 767 662



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Editorial Notes:

Wootton News is overseen by an editorial sub group of the parish council. While every effort has been made to ensure that information in this newsletter is accurate, the parish council accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. It should be noted that articles written by individuals do not necessarily represent the views of the council. Please send all articles to the Wootton News editor Gareth Lloyd at wootton_news@wootton-pc.gov.uk (please also send a copy to clerk@wootton-pc.gov.uk) by the copydate. Advertisements are usually half page (£30 for black and white, or colour). If you wish to advertise then please send your details to the editor. The advertisements are taken in good faith and we cannot accept any responsibility for bad service or workmanship received.

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The Wootton News can be read online at:
www.wootton-pc.gov.uk

If you have any comments or opinions on how to improve the Wootton News, please send them to Sue Edgar Playford (Clerk to the Council):

clerk@wootton-pc.gov.uk
or call on **07531 930 788**

Chairman's Report *Gareth Lloyd*



Gareth Lloyd



I would like to thank Charlotte Mihailiuc who resigned in December after many years as the caretaker for the recreation ground. I would like to wish her all the best in her new role and thank her and her family for looking after the recreation ground, inspecting the play equipment, opening and closing the car park gates and keeping the area litter free.

Many of you by now will have heard rumours about the possible Universal Theme Park in the adjoining parish of Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick. I recently met with Universal Studios and had a lengthy discussion about their ambitions and how they would manage concerns over traffic and noise. One of the reasons for choosing Bedford is the great road and rail links to the rest of the country. If visiting by road, Universal will be directing their visitors to leave the M1/A1 and take as direct a route as possible to the park entrance. They hope to achieve this by creating a new (direct route) junction from the A421. Universal is also looking to create a new train station at Wixams for visitors travelling North/

South and a new station for those travelling East/West will replace the existing one at Kempston Hardwick. Manor Road which links the old A421 (C94) Woburn Road and the B530 Ampthill Road will remain open to all. There are plans to site a large hotel for visitors outside the theme park (but still within the overall site) as well as a number of restaurants. The restaurants will be open to local residents without the need to purchase a theme park ticket. If this project goes ahead, it will provide great employment opportunities for a vast range of jobs, salaries and apprenticeships.

Average Speed Cameras. Our aim was never to catch people speeding and generate money for Central Government, but more for drivers to recognise the need to stick to the limit within the village and make our roads safer for all. Unfortunately not all drivers seem capable of doing this and over 1,200 speeding tickets have been issued in the last four years. The parish council placed an order in 2019 for the remaining cameras and the job order is now finally being actioned. The delays have cost the parish council an extra £10,000 which could have been better utilised for the good of the community.

The parish council has begun partnership working with both The Crown Estate and Forest of Marston Vale on how to shape the nearly 16ha of open green space, south of Keeley Lane and east of Hall End

Road. This will be a long process as we need to ensure we get the best results from the land in terms of protecting the local ecosystem and biodiversity – hence the desire to harness skills within these two organisations. As well as green space infrastructure, we are looking at blue space infrastructure to see how we can improve the streams and ponds within this area.

The changing rooms remodelling works will be going out to tender imminently and we hope that by the end of this year, we will have a much improved facility at the recreation ground. Still on the sports theme – the floodlit synthetic full sized sports pitch at Wootton Upper School should be completed after the summer holidays. Works are ongoing and the parish council is currently liaising with the school to ensure a robust Community Use Agreement is in place to open up the facility to clubs and organisations, wishing to use the facility outside school core hours.

As of January 2024, Wootton is the only parish council in Bedfordshire to hold a Local Council Award Scheme (delivered by the National Association of Local Councils). For the last eight years we have held the Quality Award and are working towards obtaining the highest level, Gold Quality. These award shows that we are working at the highest standard and provides assurance that the council is up-to-date and meeting the standards set by the sector. The Quality Gold Award

demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seek new innovations and opportunities to improve. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.

If you want to be part of the team that will look to meet those aspirations and deliver on our ongoing projects (and help shape the future), then do please get in touch. We currently have three vacancies.



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www.ageukbedfordshire.org.uk



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CRANES

Clerk to the Council's Report *Sue Edgar Playford*



clerk@wootton-pc.gov.uk
07531 930 788

As we start our journey into 2024, I do hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and the best of starts to this year. Our Christmas street lights were again well received and enjoyed by many, but the Christmas tree chose once more to misbehave and decided to leave the party early. I was alerted by a number of residents that it had fallen over and Bedford Borough Council's crew were very quick to attend, remove the lights and take it away. Thank you to those who took the time to let me know.

It's never too early to put a reminder out about our annual Fun Fest event which this year, takes place on Saturday 13th July. For anyone new to the village – the venue is the Recreation Ground on Church Road. If anyone would like a stall (or has any ideas for this year or beyond) – do please let me know. Ideas will be taken to the Fun Fest Committee for consideration.

It's pleasing that, as always, our glass recycling facility at Church Road continues to be well-used. A polite reminder though

– if it's full, please don't leave your empties on the car park as they often end up being smashed. There is a number on the side to call should they be full, but you can always let me know also. We have two banks each festive season – reducing to one for the rest of the year.

2024 sees the parish council with three vacancies still to fill, so if you would like to learn more about what being a Parish Councillor involves, please contact either myself or the Chairman, Gareth Lloyd.

After nearly 20 years in post, I was sorry to receive our caretaker's resignation before Christmas. Charlotte Mihailiuc carried out sterling work to keep the recreation ground at Church Road clear of litter. The role also included weekly and monthly checks of the play equipment to ensure users were kept safe, as well as gate duties to help prevent the car park becoming an area blighted by anti-social behaviour. Thank you Charlotte – and I wish you well for the future.

Dates for your Diary 2024

MARCH

13th	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
13th	Full Council	7.30pm
20th	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	7.00pm
27th	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
27th	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm
27th	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.40pm

APRIL

10th	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
10th	Full Council	7.30pm
17th	Annual Parish Meeting	7.00pm
24th	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
24th	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm
24th	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.40pm

MAY

8th	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
8th	Annual Council Meeting	7.30pm
8th	Full Council	7.40pm

Please check noticeboards and the parish council website for any cancellations or changes to timings and/or venue:

<https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/meeting-dates/>

Please contact the Clerk to the Council if you would like to attend any meeting, to ensure the meeting room is configured to accommodate the numbers required.

Noticeboards are located at the following locations:

Outside Wootton Lower School
Outside the Manor Road flats
Outside the Memorial Hall
Adjacent to the post box

Bedford Road
Bedford Road
Bedford Road
Hall End Road

(The noticeboard opposite the Cock Inn PH carries a list of upcoming meetings but not agendas as its size is restrictive).



Welcome to our Spring 2024 Newsletter!

Hello from the Bizzy Bees Team! We are enjoying the Spring term where we have been learning about 'people that help us'. The children have made some wonderful police badges and developed some lovely role play games. We will be celebrating **Mother's Day** with a coffee morning stay and play (yes, there will be cake!). We have also been focusing on the importance of **recycling** with some fantastic tuff tray activities. During **science week** the children enjoyed our ice experiment, rescuing animals from the frozen ice. Later in the week we created our own rockets using different materials.

We have continued our weekly **cookery** sessions giving the children an opportunity to learn about different foods, promote **healthy eating** and develop their maths skills. We have tasted some wonderful creations including honey sandwiches to celebrate 'Winnie the Pooh' day in January. During story week the children made fruit kebabs using all the fruit from the hungry caterpillar. We have also made **homemade pizza** and decorated gingerbread people to name a few.

Bizzy Bees have started to offer **hot lunches** on a daily basis which have been a huge success. They are a healthy, **nutritious** balanced meal which is extremely beneficial to a child's development.

We operate term time only Monday to Friday 8:15am - 3:45pm. We accept 2-year-old funding and 3-4 year old 15 and 30 hour funding for all of our sessions. We also accept cross funding if your child attends/would like to attend more than one Pre-School.



Sessions are:

Breakfast Club: 8:15-9am (Breakfast provided)

AM session: 9-12pm (Snack provided)

Lunch Club: 12-12:45pm (Packed lunch or order a hot meal)

PM session: 12:45-3:45pm (Snack provided)



September 2024 waiting list

We have limited spaces available for September 2024, if you would like a Pre-School place please get in touch for an application form.

Tel: 01234 767785

E: hello@bizzybeespreschool.org W: www.bizzybeespreschool.org

Bizzy Bees Pre-School CIO, Memorial Hall, Bedford Road,
Wootton, MK43 9JB



Memorial Hall Poppies



The poppies outside the Memorial Hall are looking a bit tired, so we are in the process of renewing them. It is **110 years since the start of WWI, 85 years since the start of WW2, and 80 years since D Day this year, so it seems a fitting time to remember those who have died in these wars and other wars before and since.**

If you are able to make a poppy to put on the outside of the hall, we would be very grateful, there will be a red letter box outside the hall to post the poppies into, and we will regularly empty it and add them to the display.

They can be knitted, crocheted, made of felt, plastic or another medium that will not be damaged by rain.

Thank you, from the members of the memorial hall committee. We are in the early stages of planning an event to commemorate Wootton in the wars, we will let you more details nearer the time.

Should you wish to join the Bridge group please leave your name and telephone number with a member of staff, and the organiser, Elaine Jay, will contact you. Once signed up, come along on the Tuesday afternoon.

1ST WOOTTON BRIGADES

JOIN THE ADVENTURE

PLACES AVAILABLE NOW
FOR SCHOOL YRS R-6

Time: 6:00 - 7:30pm

Girls: Thursdays

Boys: Fridays

For more info please contact us on
bbgb1stWootton@gmail.com

Wootton New Life Methodist Church
Cause End Road - Wootton





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Outstanding Parish Council Issues & Projects

Item	Location	Deadline	Any other information
Average Speed Cameras	All major routes within the village	Ongoing	A pair of cameras has now been installed along Cranfield Road. WPC has met with BBC to determine final locations for the remaining phases (please see website for fuller information), and final drawings/ costings are awaited. https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/average-speed-cameras/
Berryfields Roundabout Re-Design	Fields Road/Folkes Road	Ongoing	A public vote determined the roundabout should be re-designed using a 'Beacon with Flowers' design. WPC is still seeking permission from BBC (as Highways Authority) to undertake the project and is still seeking clarification regarding utility provisions beneath the roundabout which could impact the project
Changing Rooms renovations	Church Road	2024	WPC intends to demolish the old toilet block and renovate the changing rooms, providing toilets and a small kitchen. A dedicated storage area will provide space for the football teams, WPC and Wootton Country Players. Coloini & Lane Architecture Ltd have been appointed to assist with project management. Planning permission has been granted by BBC and WPC is working with Coloini & Lane Architecture Ltd to finalise specifications before beginning the tender process
Community Centre	Berryfields	Ongoing	Please address all booking enquiries to: bookings@wootton.cc or general enquiries to woottoncommunitycentre@gmail.com Alternatively, visit their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/Wootton-Community-Centre-373702299872573/
Covanta (now Encyclis) Incinerator	Stewartby parish	Ongoing	Visit the following links for fuller information: BACI's website: https://bedsagainstincinerator.wordpress.com/ ; BACI's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/residentsagainstcovanta/?ref=bookmarks ; WPC's website: https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/

Lecterns	Various sites within the village	Ongoing	To date, lecterns detailing historic information have been sited at: • Keeley End Pond (Bedford Road/Hollies Walk); • Lorraine Road Cemetery (in recognition of The Queen's Green Canopy Tree Planting Event which took place in January 2022); • Memorial Hall (Bedford Road); • The Pound (Bedford Road – opposite The Cock Inn PH). WPC still hopes to site a lectern in the general vicinity of The Gaol, adjacent to St. Mary's Churchyard on Church Road, but may need to revisit the exact location as a licence from BBC to proceed is proving problematical
Local Plan 2040	Throughout the village	Ongoing	Public Hearings in relation to the examination of BBC's Local Plan 2040 have recently concluded and the Planning Inspectorate has raised concerns that it cannot be currently found to be sound. Fuller information can be found here: Local Plan 2040 Examination Bedford Borough Council
Lorraine Road Cemetery extension	Lorraine Road cemetery	Ongoing	WPC is ringfencing money annually and will approach the Crown Estate (adjoining landowners) to request it be permitted to purchase an area of land adjacent to the existing cemetery in order to extend it
Neighbourhood Development Plan	The whole civil parish of Wootton	2024	The referendum saw a majority vote in favour of Bedford Borough Council using the Neighbourhood Plan for Wootton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. The plan will next be reviewed after the adoption of BBC's Local Plan 2040 – to ensure policies are up to date
Real Time Passenger Information (bus stops)	Four bus stop sites within the village	2024	Four electronic real time passenger information units were installed in 2021, but have since been vandalised. In 2023, WPC replaced the four bus shelters under its ownership – at the following locations: • Bedford Road (opposite and adjacent to the Manor Road flats – Bedford and Milton Keynes bound); • Bedford Road (adjacent to the Keeley Lane junction – Bedford bound); • Cause End Road (opposite the junction with St. Mary's Road). The new eco-friendly shelters contain 'living roofs' to help negate the effects of carbon emissions and is now waiting to learn whether BBC will fund new roof-mounted RTPI units

Roads and Pavements	Throughout the village	Ongoing	The Roads and Pavements Safety Steering Group has now separated from the Leisure and Amenities Committee and continues to meet every other month. It raises issues for BBC to consider. Residents are welcome to attend these meetings. Historic minutes can be viewed via this link: https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/minutes/?eeFolder=Meetings/Minutes/Roads-and-Pavements&eeFront=1 and minutes for the newly-formed committee will be available to view via this link: https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/wp-admin/admin.php?page=ee-simple-file-list-pro&eeFolder=Meetings%2FMinutes%2FLeisure-and-Amenities-Committee-including-Roads-Pavements-Safety-Steering-Group (A hard copy can be requested from the Clerk to the Council)
Synthetic Pitch	Grounds within Wootton Upper School	2024	Works at the Upper School have commenced to deliver the synthetic pitch. WPC is awaiting sight of a Community Use Agreement which will detail how the facility will operate outside core school hours
Village Entrance Sign	Keeley Lane	2024	WPC intends to install a brick-built sign at the entrance to Wootton along Keeley Lane – to mirror the sign at the entrance to Wootton along Wootton/Bedford Road and has employed an architect to aid with the design. A second planning application was successful and WPC is currently sourcing potential contractors.

Please note this is a brief overview of ongoing/proposed projects and the list is not exhaustive as changes can occur before the next newsletter edition goes to print. For fuller information on these or other projects, please contact the Clerk to the Council.

Sundays

10am Morning Service

Join us on Sunday mornings!

You'll be sure of a warm welcome.

In person Children's groups available for ages 0-14. Tea and coffee served afterwards.

Online Services are live-streamed and available on our YouTube channel.



Lunch Club

1:15pm Second Monday of the month

Come to the Church Hall and meet new friends over a home-cooked meal. For everyone aged 50 and over. **Upcoming dates** 12 Feb, 11 Mar. Also join us for our annual Take-a-Break Mon 8 Apr 10am to 3pm for activities, chat & a meal.



Wild Church

3pm Sunday afternoons, termly

Join in the outdoor fun (and campfire) and discover more about Jesus.

Great for families... and curious people!

Upcoming dates 18 Feb, 24 Mar, 26 May.



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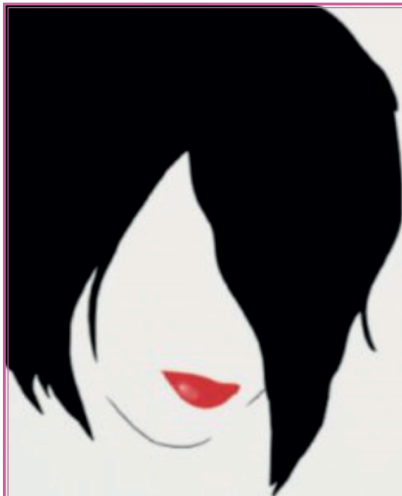


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A belated welcome to 2024 – I hope you all enjoyed Christmas. It seems a long way behind us now, however 2024 looks exciting. A lot is scheduled this year for the village and I, plus Wootton Parish Council will do our very best to keep you all informed.

I have written a separate article in this newsletter regarding the installation of the remaining Average Speed Cameras. The synthetic pitch is currently under construction at the upper school and I am told the contractors are currently ahead of schedule! It's possible the facility could be completed by the end of April this year. The school and parish council are working to secure a robust Community Use Agreement and once that is in place, user enquiries will be addressed.

You will no doubt have seen a lot of Highways work being carried out around the village. The dropped kerbs are in place along Lorraine Road, however significant snagging remains. The pavement along Lorraine Road has been patched and the hope is Bedford Borough Council will consider this for full resurfacing in its 2024-25 programme of works. By the time you read this report, Cause End Road should be resurfaced from Tithe Barn Road to Bedford Road. Damage caused to the verges along Cause End Road by Cadent are also being remedied and the famous water leak by the Memorial Hall on Bedford Road should also be fixed.

White lining works have been carried out along Mephram Road and a number of other areas within the village. Gullies at Hall End have been cleared as have a number of pot holes – however there is an ongoing Bedford Borough Council project to improve that area of road from the upper school towards The Chequers Inn PH. The parish council's Roads and Pavements Safety Steering Group and myself are also seeking to resolve a number of other village Highways issues.

The school two tier programme in Wootton is moving forward and works to the Bedford Road Lower School site should start this summer, with completion before September 2025. I understand both schools have now sent out the respective consultation to parents and carers.

There has been a lot of talk about the proposed Universal Theme Park in the parish of Stewartby. I have been to several meetings with the Universal team and can confirm that currently, no firm decision has been made. That is likely to be later this summer or Autumn. A number of other sites are being assessed elsewhere in the UK and Europe. Once a firm decision has been made I will let you know.

Since my last report, I have attended various events around the village – both schools and Borough Council-related. In January I was honoured to attend the annual Holocaust Memorial Service at the Ann Frank tree in Russell Park. In attendance were Bedfordshire's Lord-Lieutenant Susan Lousada, Mayor Tom Wootton, Borough Councillors from all parties and representatives of all faiths. It

was a very moving and poignant service.

Dates for your Diary:

18th May – Wootton Lower School May Fair;

13th July – Wootton Funfest;

20th/21st July – Bedford River festival.

I hope you all have an enjoyable and relaxing Easter.

Borough Council Report

Council Tax increase

Councils up and down the country of all political persuasions are facing significant financial pressures for 2024/25.

Bedford Borough Council will be seeking to increase Council Tax by 2.00% and the Adult Social care precept by 1.99% in order to continue to deliver services to residents, whilst ensuring that budgets balances.

The 4-hour free parking in Bedford Town Centre

Introduced by the current Mayor following his election, 4 hours of free parking at Allhallows had been introduced during 2023.

The current trends and statistics points to the trial having a positive impact on the Town Centre with footfall continuing to trend up and new shops opening. Further information will be provided after the trial period has concluded and the data has undergone an in depth analysis.

Share your thoughts on bus services in Bedford Borough

A consultation has gone out to the public to collect the views from public transport users, residents, businesses, and visitors within the Borough regarding local bus services and other public transport

alternatives that will be used to help shape the Council's Public Transport Policy.

The consultation period concludes at 23:59 on 31st January 2024. To learn more and participate in the survey, please visit: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/consultations/bus-usage-survey-2024>

Gritting

Following the recent period of cold weather, frost and ice the Council's winter maintenance programme for its roads is underway.

Gritting crews actively spreading salt on roads to maintain safe and accessible travel conditions. The latest updates can be found at <https://apps.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates/> or with a live map of the gritters at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/winter-roads/keeping-winter-roads-safe>.

Greenwich Leisure Ltd Contract

Greenwich Leisure Ltd will start operating Bedford Borough's leisure centres in the coming days. To facilitate a smooth transition and prepare staff and services, Bedford's leisure centres will be temporarily closed from 1st to 2nd February.

Local Plan 2040

The Borough Council is in the process of evaluating its options in light of the Inspector's feedback on the Local Plan

More information on the Council direction will be available in due course.

Q. Will we get average speed cameras in Wootton?

A. The quick answer is yes!

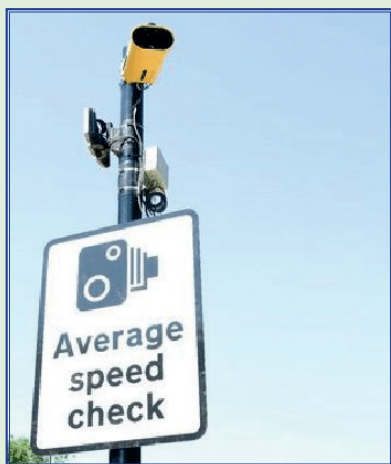
Reply to the chairs question: will we get average speed cameras in Wootton in the winter edition of the wootton news 2023.

The quick answer is yes! However, I as I know Wootton Parish Council and residents have been very concerned in the length of time this has taken. I believe the order was placed by Wootton Parish Council back in 2019, after a big push by us last year we have been told at long last the units will now be installed and monitored.

The latest update is Bedford Borough have placed the order with the contractor and work was scheduled to start in February 2024, however owing to Cadent and Anglian water booking the road space for their works the start date has now been moved to June of this year.

Beter late than never comes to mind.

Cllr. John Wheeler



A Happy New Year to all you careful motorists! Your dedicated team of Keith Randell, Les Dick, Anil Mistry, Graham Ward and myself are back in action looking to keep cars in check along Bedford Road in Wootton. In January we only registered 1 speedster out of 291 cars which passed during our hour's patrol. This is encouraging and we hope that people will respect the 30mph limit all the time!

Throughout the course of 2023 nearly 4500 motorists in Bedfordshire were sent letters by the police and over 60 had visits from the police for persistent offences. The police appreciate what we do as do most of the people who speak to us during our patrols. There are of course a small number of speedsters who race around the village at anti-social hours but there is little we can do to stop them. Please be vigilant and if you do get a car registration number of an offender you can pass it to the police.

Anyone who would like to join our patrols can get in touch with Juliet Wright : juliet.wright@beds.police.uk who will get you enrolled.

Happy safe motoring!

Malcolm Chalmers

Speedwatch Co-ordinator



Wootton New Life Methodist Church

MNDA Fundraiser Saturday 27th April 2024 from 2pm

2pm onwards - Tombola, Craft stalls, Nearly New stall,
Cakes, Refreshments
Hot food served from 5pm
6pm-9pm Board Game Evening

Come and help us to raise money for the Motor Neurone
Disease Association.

Wootton New Life Methodist Church
Cause End Road, Wootton. MK43 9DE

Contact Carey for further information:
CareyWNLChurch@outlook.com

www.mndassociation.org

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I'm writing this article at the very end of January, a month which always feels like it lasts forever, with the number of grey cloudy days this year having outweighed the number of crisp, sunny winter days which I much prefer. The evenings are starting to lighten though and the coming of spring is becoming more visible as bulbs and blossom are starting to appear bringing a sense of nature's reawakening.

The month following the festive season can be a time when people can feel low, lonely or isolated, but one local resident has taken great strides to tackle this. Kath Pearce started her Neighbourhood Chat sessions back in December. These sessions are held in The Hub at the Methodist Church on Cause End Road every Wednesday between 11am and 1pm. People of all ages are welcome to come along and meet new people, have a chat and potentially make new friends. Even dogs are welcome! It is £1 for tea or coffee and delicious cakes and biscuits with good company thrown in for free. The Good Neighbour Scheme is available to help anyone who can't get to the session themselves. The sessions should be running during the school holidays too, so please do come along. A warm welcome is assured!

Whilst on a theme of bringing people together and improving mental health, I wanted to see what the appetite in the



village was for a crafting group, both for those who craft, those who would like to, and those who would just like some company. I know we have a vibrant knit and natter group in the village, but those of us who work aren't able to attend as it's held during the working day. Those who know me will know that I crochet (and make jewellery and needlefelt), having taught myself to crochet with online videos about 10 years ago. I crochet anything from hats, toys and blankets to decorative mandalas like the ones pictured, though the amount of time I have available these days has almost completely vanished. It's therefore been a real bonus for me to have been able to join the 'Bedfordshire Happy Hookers' Facebook group, some members of which meet in the village hall in Wootton one Sunday afternoon a month between 2 and 5pm to crochet together and

chat, with tea and cake. They have also started some introductory sessions in the mornings too so people can learn. I'm happy to provide further details if anyone is interested and not on social media. **I'm keen to expand the idea further and include more people and other crafts.**

There must be a wealth of crafty people in the village, so I'd like to see if there is appetite for holding some crafting sessions or some craft sharing sessions where people can share their knowledge with others, possibly help inspire others to take up a craft, and make some friends. My aim would be to either hold the sessions on a weekday evening, or a morning or afternoon over the weekend, not necessarily every week, but I'll be guided by suggestions from residents. I would be really grateful for your input into this project and would love it if you could drop me an email with any suggestions or ideas – my contact details are at the end of this article.



On the subject of health, I have received a report from the Beds and Herts Breast Screening Service which delivers the national breast cancer screening programme in our area through both fixed screening centres and mobile provision. I was concerned to read in the report that the percentage of people screened in Bedford Borough was only 58% which falls below the England average of 64% and is the lowest in our area with Milton Keynes at 68%, Luton at 69% and Central Bedfordshire at 76%. My plea to anyone invited for a mammogram is to keep your appointment. If you can't make the appointment suggested, please reschedule it. I understand that the whole appointment should take around 6 minutes which is a small inconvenience when compared to the diagnostic benefits. The mobile units are accessible by anyone in a wheelchair or small mobility scooter as they all have lifts. Each mobile unit also has its own wheelchair to assist patients using larger mobility scooters.

You will no doubt have heard the news that Universal Studios is considering building their latest theme park and resort on land in Kempston Harwick. Universal are still looking at the feasibility of the project and conducting due diligence, but the potential investment in the area is a great opportunity. Universal have created a website for local residents which they will update as there is any more information to share – <https://universalukproject.co.uk/>

At the full council meeting in January, I spoke about the four mobile phone networks turning off their 3G signal – something which came as a surprise to almost all those in the council chamber. These four mobile networks – Vodafone, EE, O2 and Three, provide the network for Virgin, Sky Mobile, Tesco Mobile, GiffGaff, ID mobile and Smarty Mobile. Vodafone will have completed their 3G turn off across the UK by the end of January 2024 with Three and EE turning their signal off by the end of 2024, and O2 completing their turn off in 2025.

I asked the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the mobile networks to express our concerns that while 3G is being turned off, in areas of Bedford Borough there is no 4G signal to take its place for digital services on mobile phones. And in fact, in some areas, there is no 2G signal either. So far, EE have confirmed in a response to the Chief Executive that many of the masts providing the 3G signal in the Bedford area have already been turned off, and Vodafone have suggested any customers experiencing issues should contact them. We are still awaiting a response from the other two networks.

Bedford River Festival - I'm pleased to say that the dates for the festival have been confirmed as 20th and 21st July 2024.

Councillor Surgeries and getting in touch

I hold two Wootton Councillor Surgeries and two Kempston Rural Surgeries each month. All residents are welcome to any session.

- The sessions in Wootton are on the 1st Saturday of the month, 9.30 – 10.30am by the library, and 10.45 – 11.45am on the seating area between Ashpole Avenue and Folkes Road, opposite the lower school.
- Kempston Rural surgeries are on the 3rd Saturday of the month being 10 – 11am opposite the Cross Keys pub in Wood End and 11.15am – 12pm at Gibraltar Corner.

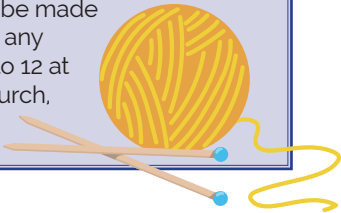
Updates will be shown on my Facebook page www.facebook.com/WoottonLibDems.

As always, if you can't attend a surgery, please feel free to get in touch by phone (07968 792862) or email – sue.abood@bedford.gov.uk

**Wootton New life Methodist Church
Knit 'n' Natter group.**

The group would like to thank everyone that supported our MacMillan coffee morning in September. Thanks to you all a total of £1,382.31 was raised for MacMillan!

If anyone has an interest in joining the group you would be made very welcome on any Monday from 10 to 12 at the Methodist Church, Cause End Road.



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Stewartby Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING INVOLVED?

SAODS is a lively local amateur theatre organisation which puts on two productions each year; a Spring Show in May and a popular Operetta in November. If you would like to participate as performer or behind the scenes, please visit our web site at the bottom of the page, or just along to rehearsals at Stewartby United Church on Thursday evenings 7.45 till 10pm.

Our next production is the Spring Concert '**A Feast of Music**', to be performed at Stewartby Village Hall on 10th and 11th May 2024. The programme is packed with captivating music traditional and modern

to suit all tastes, so do come along. Our previous production performed in November 23 was the ever popular operetta, 'The Gondoliers' by Gilbert and Sullivan. The piece was directed



by Susan Hoath, with Alana Thackray as MD. Susan took a refreshing original slant, situating the show in 1950's. As usual, Alana organised and conducted a small ensemble which added to the richness of the live performance. Happily the production attracted newcomers including several young people, some taking leading roles. We are keen to retain

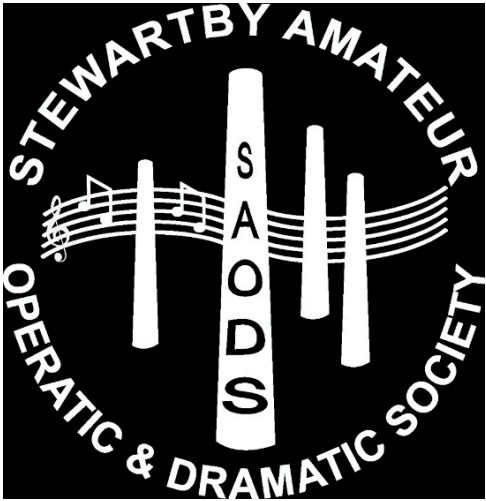


a youthful element and attract more local enthusiasts. The photos below demonstrate the excitement and enjoyment of the rehearsal process as well a more polished version of the actual show.

Please follow our website for future developments:

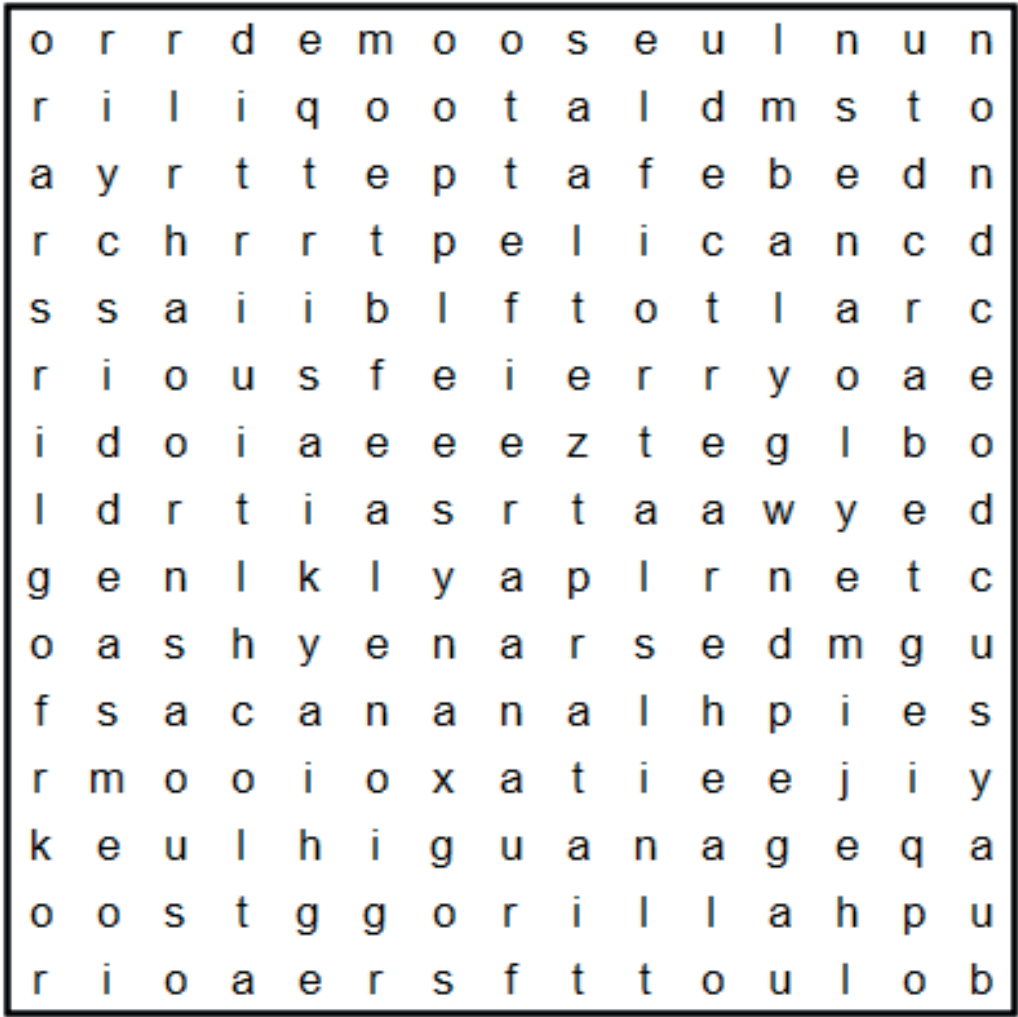
Wwww.saods.org.uk or visit Stewartby Operatic Society on Facebook

Carol Wallman



Mazes & puzzles

Word Search



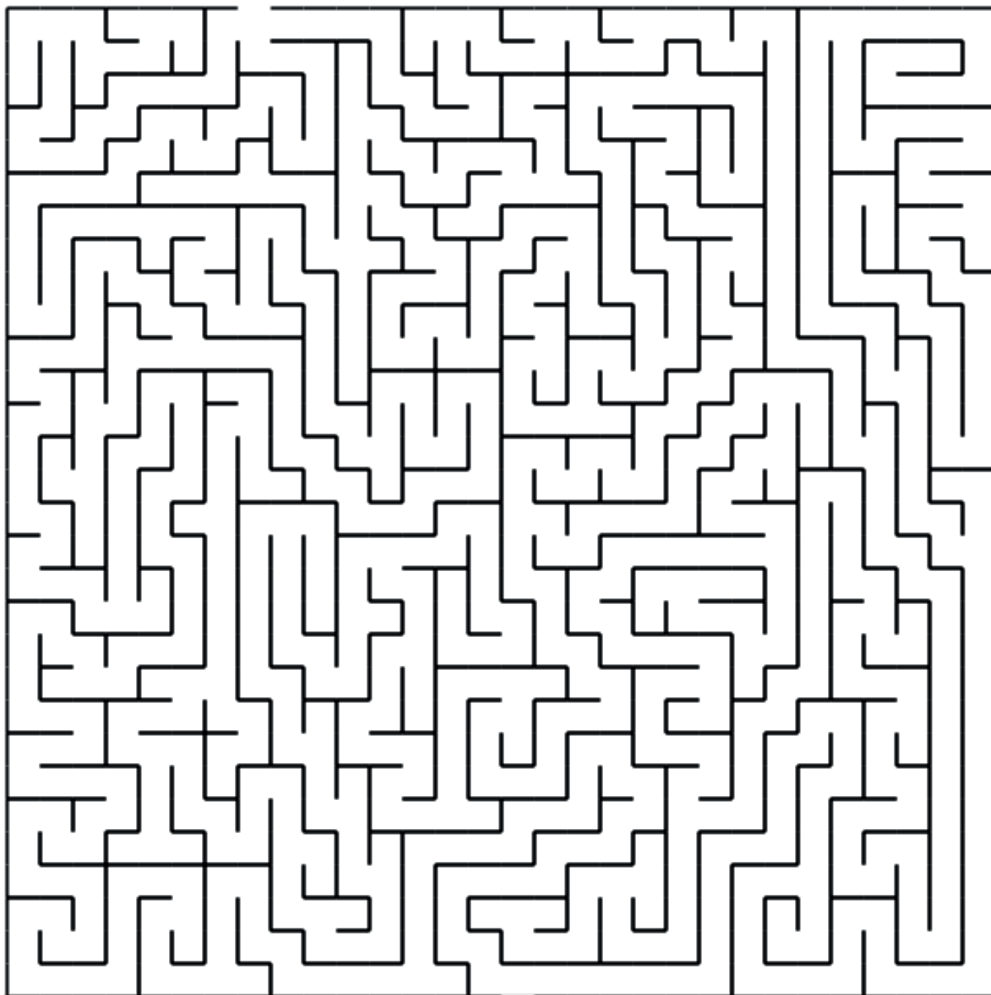
See if you can find the animals in our word search.

Beetle
Hyena
Lynx
Sheep

Crab
Iguana
Moose

Gorilla
Lizard
Pelican

Maze



Sudoku

		9	7	3	1	5		
6		8	4		5	9		7
	5	7		8		1	2	
7				5				1
		5	2	7	3	4		
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Village Agents provide a free, confidential service and are here to help people over 65 with a variety of issues – large or small. We are funded by Bedford Borough Council. Bedford Borough Council. We are all DBS checked and operate in the strictest confidence. Andrea is the Village Agent for Wootton.

Door to Door Transport in Bedford Borough -

- Do you struggle to get on a bus? Did you know that the Door2Door minibus service will collect you from home, and has facilities to take wheelchairs and mobility scooters using a tail lift?
- A subscription costs £30 for the first year and £20 annually thereafter
- The minibuses operate between 9:15am to 4:15pm, weekdays only. You need to book your journey two days ahead – or earlier for health-related appointments.
- Call the Door2Door admin number (01234) 834933 for more details.
- **Are you worried about dementia?**
- There is a big difference between normal forgetfulness and dementia. Signs of dementia include problems with language and understanding, forgetting how to do everyday tasks, repeating questions, and changes in regular behaviour.
- Getting a diagnosis can take some time, you need to start by making an appointment with your GP. There are

several different types of dementia, and some respond to medication more than others, so it is worth getting tested. We are very lucky to have an excellent local charity called Tibbs Dementia Foundation who offer a full programme of activities and support.

- You can contact them by phone or email, or look at their website: **01234 210993 or 07483 951737. Email: contact@tibbsdementia.co.uk. Website: www.tibbsdementia.co.uk**

Help with form filling – many older people aren't claiming the benefits they are entitled to. Andrea can help identify which benefits you can claim by doing a confidential benefits check. We can also help you fill in those complicated forms such as Blue Badge and Attendance Allowance forms.

Please call Andrea, your Village Agent on

Freephone 0800 039 1234

This is an answerphone service, so please leave your name address & telephone number, & we aim to call you back within 48 hours.



ST MARY'S PRESCHOOL

Established 1967

St. Mary's Church Hall, St. Mary's Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9HB

Tel: 01234 767158 Email: stmarys5@hotmail.co.uk

The children at St Mary's Preschool have had another busy term experiencing lots of fun and new activities.

Yoga with Jess and Shelly – The children have enjoyed taking part in yoga sessions. Yoga has so many benefits for the children, physical development, body awareness, concentration skills, spiritual beliefs and fun. To make the sessions enjoyable the children have been learning yoga poses that are based around various animals such as the cat, dog, bee, lion, snake and butterfly. Each session, along with repeating familiar poses the children are introduced to a new pose. The children are becoming animal pose experts and the benefits to yoga are already clear to see.



Forest School

We now have a Ninja Warrior slack line obstacle course in our Forest School area, which will be available during preschool sessions. Slack lining is a great activity for developing balance, core strength, coordination, flexibility and focus.

Kung Hei Fat Choi/Xin Nian Kuai Le! 新年快乐

The Year of the Dragon - We have also been celebrating Chinese New Year. We have been learning about the origins of the traditional story. The children have been very creative, making lanterns and fire breathing dragons. We have learned some Chinese words and songs; and looked at Chinese characters and numbers. We discussed traditional Chinese food and the children used chopsticks to pick up noodles. The children learned that tangerines are a symbol of prosperity; and they all took a tangerine wrapped in red tissue home for good luck and fortune and a fortune cookie. For snack the children tried boiled rice and pancake rolls.



The children celebrated St. Valentine's Day. Our Valentine curriculum explored theme colours and heart shapes. The children made valentine cards, valentine bubble pictures and heart shaped pizzas. Our reading focus book was 'Guess How Much I Love You'.

Mother's Day

On Monday 4th March, preschool mothers and grandmothers were invited to a special afternoon of tea and cakes to celebrate Mother's Day. The children loved having their mums and grandmothers with them in preschool.

General Information

St Mary's Preschool opened in 1967 and operates from the main room within the Church Hall. Children have access to a fully enclosed, grassed outdoor play area. St Mary's Preschool supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language. The Preschool is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and is registered by Ofsted. St Mary's Preschool receives funding for early years education. It is open each weekday during term-time only; and offers all day care. If you would like to put your child's name down for a preschool place or require any further information please phone Tracey on 01234 767158, however please be advised that we have no availability until September 2025.

Children not eligible for funding – Fees are £5.00 per hour (£15.00 for a 3-hour session).

Term time opening hours: Mon 9.00 - 12.00 Tues, Wed and Fri 9.00 - 16.00 Thurs 9.00 - 15.00

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Wootton Baptist Church - Bedford Road

We often complain about the situation in which we live today, with all the problems there are like wars causing suffering, hunger and malnutrition in many places of the world, and violence and murder. Yet in our country and this village of Wootton, we live in peace and plenty, compared with some parts of the world.

Have you ever thought why this might be the case? Why for many centuries now we have not been invaded by foreign enemies and live in relative peace? We all may have many theories about why this is, but as a local church, we believe that God says to us in the Bible, 'I honour those who honour me'. 1 Samuel 2:v 30 This means God values and respects people who love Him and give honour to Him. Although our Nation was built on the teachings of God's Word and the Ten Commandments, they are not regarded as important now by many people including our Government. This loss of focus on God has resulted in a decline in this country and in our own lives.

So what is the message of the Bible to us today? It's the same as it always has been – 'God will honour those who honour Him' God's Grace, His freely given love for us, is always there even though we do not deserve it. Salvation from sin and unbelief is the same as it always has been. Jesus, God's Son, came to make it possible for everyone to get right with God and live a life honouring to God. The Bible says, 'God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him won't perish but will have eternal life.'

John 3v 16.

Easter will soon be here; the most important celebration of the Christian calendar, when we remember the sacrificial death of Jesus and his resurrection after three days. He died in our place that we might be forgiven and rose again to defeat our worse enemy, death. That's wonderful news, which has been neglected by our Nation and something to give us hope for the future in these difficult days.

Come and hear more about it and how it can change your life;

March 19th - Good Friday service at 6.30pm.

March 31st – Easter Sunday services at 10.30am and 6pm.

Rob Stanton

On behalf of the Deacons and fellowship at Wootton Baptist Church.

Coffee Morning

at

Wootton Baptist Church Hall
Bedford Road

Every Tuesday 10-12

~

Coffee, tea, cakes and
warm friendship

All are welcome!



Hello to all our patients and residents of Wootton and the surrounding villages. We currently find ourselves facing exciting, but challenging, times.

Exciting because of the announcement in the House of Commons, late last year, that Mayor Tom Wootton, the Mayor of Bedford, has secured £10 million funding to develop new GP surgery premises in Bedford. This will provide capital funding for four projects including a new permanent surgery building on our existing site on Fields Road.

The practice would like to recognise the hard work, negotiations, and the significant role that John Wheeler and the Parish Council have played in highlighting our plight to the mayor, dating back to when we opened in 2006. He and the council are continuing to negotiate, with the local ICB, to ensure that we get ongoing funding for the new building.

You will probably be aware that GP Surgeries face challenging times as we attempt to meet the needs of increasing patient numbers, and low uplift in our finances. Here at Wootton Vale Healthy Living Centre, we have always prided ourselves on our ability to meet these challenges through innovation and the use of the latest technology solutions. For example, you may be aware of the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence,

(A.I.). We have started implementing A.I. systems to automate routine practice tasks, and thereby reduce the workload of our staff, meaning they have more time to spend with you, our patients. Please see below some recent systems and changes, we have implemented, to make it easier for you to communicate with us and access our services and enable us to process your requests quicker and more efficiently.

Automated telephone system – over the past few years we have introduced many new ways to allow you to communicate with us using our website, SMS text messaging and apps on smartphones and tablets etc. However, we have become aware that there is a group of our patients who do not have access to these technologies and therefore did not have access to these services. Therefore, to address this imbalance, we recently introduced our Automated Telephone System. This is an option for all patients to contact the practice, to make requests, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Using this system, you can:

- Request an appointment. N.B. This service should NOT be used in emergency situations and, messages left, when we are closed, will not be dealt with until we open on the next working day. Appointment requests will be managed by our Care Navigation Team. An appointment will be made with a clinician who is best qualified to deal with your symptoms.

Please note, Appointments will be prioritised and therefore, you might NOT get a same day appointment.

- Check / Cancel an appointment
- Request a test result.
- Request a FIT (sick) note.
- Book an appointment based on an invitation from the practice. The invitation will include a link to our website, and a PIN code, which you will need to book an appointment on the correct clinic.
- Request a prescription. **PLEASE NOTE** to request prescriptions. N.B. to protect your security, you will need to request a PIN number, from the practice, **BEFORE** you can use this service.
- We have recently been using a system called eConsult on our website. This allows you to give a detailed description of your medical condition which means we are better informed and therefore, able to manage your condition in the most appropriate way. When you submit your details, using this system, you are asked to provide feedback. Based on this feedback we have decided to replace it with a new online consultation system, called SystmConnect. Please see details of this below.
- **SystmConnect** is our new online consultation system. It has many advantages over our previous system:
- You can use it with the NHS App (see below) and/or your NHS login. This will retrieve your patient details, saving you having to enter these whenever you use the system.
- SystmConnect was developed by TPP who also provide our clinical computer

system, SystmOne, that we use, in the practice, to store your medical records. Therefore, the two systems integrate seamlessly meaning that, when we receive a request that you have submitted, using SystmConnect, it is quickly and efficiently matched with your medical record.

- SystmConnect has a greater number of medical templates, and we can add to, and amend, these templates. One of the principal areas of feedback on the previous system concerned the quality of the templates.
- **The NHS App** is the NHS application of choice for communicating with the practice, (and the practice to communicate with you), see your medical record and test results, and request repeat prescriptions etc. The NHS App is the NHS system of choice and is therefore constantly being upgraded with new features. The latest updates allow you to see hospital waiting list information, view all your prescription details, order repeat prescriptions and generate a barcode that can be shown to a pharmacy, for collection, without a paper prescription from your GP. Please find further information here <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/about-the-nhs-app/>
- **Email** – from 1st April, we will be closing our **Woottonvale.info@nhs.net** email address. After this date patients should use our other communication systems, such as SystmConnect, the automated phone system and the NHS App, as described above, and the main surgery phone system and SMS text messages,

to contact the practice. Email does not provide a secure platform for patient messages and, given the emergence of additional, superior, communications platforms, such as SystmConnect, we have decided that we need to consolidate the number of communication systems into the practice.

Hint: One of our greatest challenges is the number of phone calls we receive every day. It is difficult to balance answering the calls and processing all the requests that we receive. We therefore ask that you use our automated systems. This will reduce the number of calls and will free up staff to process the requests coming into the practice. As described above, we can deal with these requests more efficiently. In the current climate, we are finding staff recruitment difficult. Therefore, if you, or anyone you know has is interested in working in a GP surgery, has NHS experience or a desire to work in an environment where they can serve their local community, please contact the practice.

Briefly, in other news, we have now launched a Facebook page, where you can keep up to date with all the latest surgery news and announcements. Furthermore, we are looking to update our website by the end of March. This will be a more modern design that will make it much easier to find the information you need.

Wishing you good health

**Dr Lindsay Mackenzie and the team at
Wootton Vale Healthy Living Centre**



Last December, with the support of the Methodist Church at Cause End Road a group of Wootton residents opened The Hub on a Wednesday from 11-1pm. It is open to all ages, our youngest so far is 9 months and the oldest, 94 years.

We recognised that following COVID a lot of people in Wootton felt isolated and there was a need for people to be able to come together, have a chat, coffee/tea plus homemade cake or biscuits. Since opening we are averaging about 35 people each week and now have a toy corner for the children. We will be open at half term. It is a great place to either come with friends or on your own and meet your neighbours.

We have been joined by both Borough Councillors, John Wheeler and Sue Abood and the Good Neighbour Scheme Co-ordinator and Michael Giles, the Minister for the Methodist Church.

We charge just a £1 for a drink.

Two hours to catch up and make new friends. If you need help with transport to getting there.

**Call Julie, The Good Neighbour
Scheme 07717 770247, Mon-Fridays
9.30-5.00pm**

For more information contact:
Kath Pearce 07757 911556

Looking back through the reports from last year, I see we were re-vamping our Facebook page after Christmas. This has proved a great help in getting ourselves advertised and we have had a number of ladies join our group through it.

Recently, we had a talk about wildlife in our area, by Alan Goodger, accompanied by stunning photos he has taken on his walks near his home. Did you know we had otters on our riverbank in Bedford? His advice was "Look down, and all around when you are out, that way you will see things you never expected" He had passed a lady on her phone, down by the river, who was completely oblivious of the otters playing so very close to her and this is why his advice is so important because we miss so much in our day to day life.



We were able to provide refreshments at the Christmas Craft fair again and would like to thank our members who baked cakes for us and the members of the

public who supported us. We sold out so suffice to say WI are still capable of making a mean cake!



We held a wreath workshop at the beginning of December, which proved popular, as all our places were filled. There were some amazing wreaths produced, many lasting well past Twelfth Night. December had us kicking off the Christmas Celebrations with a musical evening with Freddie's Barnett, a shanty group, and puddings and punch to feed us up, then to burn off the Christmas calories, in January, we had an Indoor Curling competition, always a fun evening.

Forthcoming Meetings:

- March 20th Fashion show on from Rock Those Frocks with Jackie Allen
- April 17th is our Annual Meeting
- May 15th Is a Crafting Evening – These are proving popular when you can have a go at different crafts
- All visitors very welcome at a cost of £5pp including tea or coffee and biscuits. Meetings start at 7-30pm in the Memorial Hall on the third Wednesday of each month.

LENT and EASTER 2024

Dear friend,

This morning as I write this article is sunny in Wootton. It's enough to life your spirit plus some milder weather. I know it's a tough time for many globally, nationally and individually. We need to develop resources that are resilient and sustain us through the storms of life, there have been 10 so far, the most since 2015/16 year. There will be at least 64 elections globally, the most ever, so there is a lot going on.

LENT: Theme 'What is mine to do' www.allwecan.org.uk/resources/len2024/?

LENT is about reflection and digging down deeper for spiritual resources. We focus on how faith in a loving God through Jesus and the Holy spirit continues to transform communities and lives. It's that time of the year when the Church has an M.O.T on its faith. We have six weeks in which to dig a bit deeper, reflect, slow down, maybe for some to speed up in terms of our faith. But it's not a navel gazing exercise whereby we are self-absorbed about ourselves the whole time. The M.O.T on our faith hopefully will lead us to fine tune our lives, replace those bits which are tired and worn out. Like a car we need to ensure that our faith is safe to navigate the difficult journey of life.

The same applies as we go through our spiritual M.O.T and faith workout. Resources we shall use at Church are from All We Can (AWC), a Methodist Development charity works across the world in partnership with local communities enabling others to

**1. Pray. 2. Commit. 3. Fundraise.
4. Champion. 5. Pledge. 6. No-thing**

develop their lives by providing resources and training. Each week there is a different theme. Free resources are available to collect from church.

Holy week and Easter

During Holy Week leading up to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day is an opportunity to reflect on stories of friendship, betrayal, judgement, forgiveness, death and resurrection. I find this image helpful, an artist's interpretation featuring of the 15th century masterpiece, the Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci.

**It's never too late to start your LENT M.O.T.
Blessings, Rev Michael Giles**



**www.facebook.com/woottonnewlife
www.woottonnewlife.org.uk**



**'A Last Supper' 2010 by Lorna Wadsworth (permission granted for use)
On display at St Albans Cathedral.**

A Warm Welcome
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Methodist Church



Sunday Mornings



Service starts at 10:30am

Rev Michael Giles



**Join us for Breakfast
from 10:00am**

**Treasure Seekers
Sunday Mornings
10:30am - 11:45am
FREE ~ For Kids aged 4-11**

**Come &
'Seek the Treasure'**

**We have a number of groups that
meet during the week
& you'd be most welcome to come along**

**Mondays: Knit n Natter
Tuesdays: Bible Study & Prayer Group
Wednesday: Neighbourhood Chat
Thursday / Fridays: Girls' & Boys' Brigades**



**Special Event: Save the Date: Sat 27th April
Fundraiser for MNDa In Memory of Thea**



With lots going on at our church, We'd love to see you

Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road, Wootton, MK43 9DE

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/woottonnewlife>

Website: <https://www.woottonnewlife.com/>

'For baptisms, weddings and funerals please contact the Minister

What We Did Over Christmas - *By Colin Jardin*

It's so unfair!

All some people say is "What long holidays you get when you're not at work!"

It's just a different work pattern to the majority of other jobs, that's all. Most other people have no idea of what real work is. Hard work, under enormous time pressure.

Our activities are compressed into just a few months. We get more done in that time than most people do in two years, let alone just one.

This year, like every year previously since I left school and started working, my job activities started building up in the autumn. Admittedly, In September it's not too frantic, but it builds up rapidly, and by the beginning of November, it becomes manic. There never seem to be enough hours in the day to get everything done. It's the same for all of us who work there.

And we have to get everything scheduled to be done by the end of each day. However tired we are, however much we all want to just go home, have a nice cup of cocoa, and then go to bed, we can't leave anything until the following day.

We know there will be so much to do then, we could never catch up if we brought any unfinished jobs forward. Every day, we all think it can't get any worse tomorrow!

But the nearer we get to Christmas, it does get worse. Sometimes, it feels like you just can't get out of bed in the morning for another shift under all that pressure. But you have to. Not turning up for work just isn't an option, and there's no illness that could be serious enough to stop you.

What makes it even worse, though, is our boss!

What a hard taskmaster he is!

It's really strange. He comes across as such a nice guy – everyone outside the factory thinks he's lovely. But it's all a big act. He makes out he's a happy go lucky man, always with a smile on his face for strangers, always joking and having a laugh.

But he's horrible to his staff!

He walks around, wearing his outlandish outfits, pretending to be master of everything he sees, the life and soul of the party.

But the truth is, he's a lazy bloke, who keeps cracking the whip for all of us, but doing virtually no work himself. And the harder he pushes us, the less he does himself.

Until it comes to sending out the finished goods, that is.

Then, he's right there out front, taking all the glory for himself for all our toils, as if he had done it all himself. What a con!

And he keeps getting away with it. Year after year!

So when people say we get such long holidays until it all starts again, they don't realise that we have to do voluntary, unpaid work the rest of the time.

We all have to work for the NES.

How else would the National Elf Service be able to function?

Who would want to be one of Santa's little helpers?

That's what we do over Christmas.

1ST WOOTTON BRIGADES

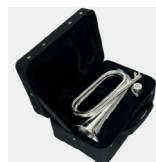
THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE



January saw us celebrate our 8th birthday since we restarted the Brigades in Wootton. We've launched a fun quiz to help raise funds to support the work of our groups, especially for attending Summer Camp which is a fantastic experience for youngsters to be part of. Sadly not everyone can afford to attend. We are also very grateful for one off donations and anyone wishing to support us this way, please contact the BB/GB Captains. Summer Camp this year is in Cornwall.

Our Marching Band saw two of its members join a 50 strong massed band to perform at the Lord Mayors Show. It was an amazing event to be at full of colour, noise and razzmatazz.

Our band continues to rebuild with 5 new members learning the ropes. We are currently short of a drum instructor which is making the task more difficult. Perhaps you know someone who could help us ? We practice on Monday evenings. We were delighted that funds were raised by our members to upgrade a 50+ year dented copper bugle, to a new Silver Bugle, which has a richer warmer tone. Thank you to everyone who helped with this.



In the National Competitions we narrowly missed getting through in the Chess, losing to a very strong 7th Northampton side 4-5 in the 1st Round. Our DofE Award Scheme members are now undertaking Expedition training in readiness for their upcoming Treks.



As well as the weekly meetings, which we've welcomed many new members in recent weeks; we've taken a group of almost 70 to Panto, Our Girls Groups enjoyed a Sleepover at the church in December, We've been 10 Pin Bowling in St. Neots, Visited Climb Quest in Milton Keynes and fitted in Christmas Parties as well.

Some of our age groups are almost full, so if you wish to beat the Waiting List, do please contact us for a place ASAP if you'd like your son/daughter to be part of 'The Adventure' too.

Email Us



bbgb1stwootton@gmail.com

We are based at Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road
Girls meet Thursdays, Boys meet Fridays, Band on Mondays

28
YEARS +

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Defibrillators around Wootton

