

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

WINTER EDITION

DECEMBER 2025



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

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Hall Booking

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Scout Hall - Mark Atkins: 311 386

Village Hall - Leigh Himsworth: 07546 300504

email: woottonvillagehallbookings@gmail.com

Wootton Blue Cross Hall: 767 662

Wootton Community Centre -

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Complex (Multi Use Games Area) bookings Church Road

only - Sue Edgar Playford: 07531 930 788

Schools

Wootton Upper: 767 123

Holywell Middle: 750 381

Marston Vale Middle: 768 224

Wootton Lower: 768 239

Wootton Lower PTFA Contact: 768 239

Police

HQ: 841 212 **Beat Manager:** 842 433

Non Emergency: 101 **Anti-Social Behaviour:** 276 037

Good Neighbour Scheme: 07717 770 247

Playgroups

Sweet Peas: 767 185

St Mary's: 767 158

Wootton Community Nursery - Kayleigh: 07534 308 632

Speed Watch Co-ordinator

Juliet Wright: 07590 449815

St Mary's Church

Canon Peter Ackroyd's replacement has yet to be announced

Church Hall: 767 158

Wootton New Life Methodist Church

Rev Michael Giles: 930 882

Baptist Church

Tom Roberts: 07860 347 534

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: Please be aware that Wootton Library's phone number has recently changed to 01234 718403.

Village Club & Organisations

Alive and Singing Choir - Barbara: 07710 007 572

1st Wootton Rainbows - Naomi: 07722 876 252

1st Wootton Boys Brigade - Allan: 07866 924 934

1st Wootton Girls Brigade - Nicola: 07480 746 101

Acorn Quilters - Dorothy: 409 566

Badminton Monday - Chris: 07740 939 109

Badminton Juniors - Colin: 270 283

Beavers Leader required call Mark: 07772 330 169

Bowls Monday - Viv: 855 383

Bowls Thursday - Rena: 768 012

Brennan School of Dance: 822 831

Brownies Tuesday - Denise: 314 030

Brownies Wednesday - Becky: 07876 766 050

Cubs Leader required call Mark: 07772 330 169

Country Players - Tina Kirkup -

Tina.Kirkup@hotmail.co.uk

Explorers - Jake: 07808 077 027

Group Scout Leader - Mark: 07772 330 169

Guides - Gill: 856 566

Marston Vale Forest School: 07811 087 322

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 Memory Gym: Kath Pearce – 07757 911556

Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group -

Kath Pearce – 07757 911 556

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



You may have noticed that both the September and December newsletters have been printed with larger fonts to make them easier to read. Because of this change, we've moved from an A5 booklet to an A4 format.

We'd love to hear your thoughts — do you like the new size and layout? What would you like to see in future newsletters?

Please send your comments to
Wootton_news@Wootton-pc.gov.uk

The Beacon

Some of you might have spotted the new beacon installed between the basketball court and Fields Road on the Berryfields estate.

Historically, beacons were used for signalling over long distances — often as early warning systems during times of invasion. Fires were lit on hilltops to transmit messages, and one of the most famous examples was during the Spanish Armada in 1588, when the beacons helped alert our navy and troops to prepare for battle.

Beacons like ours have also been lit in more recent years to celebrate national events such as royal jubilees and anniversaries.

Join Your Parish Council

Our parish council is a non-political group of local residents who want to see Wootton

thrive. Over the years, we've added a skate park to the recreation ground, expanded the playground for younger children, and organised events like the **Fun Fest** and **Remembrance Parade**.

We're always looking for more people to join and help shape the future of our village. What facilities or improvements would you like to see in Wootton?

If you're interested or would like to find out more, please contact **Sue Edgar Playford** at **clerk@wootton-pc.gov.uk**.

Changing Rooms Update

Work on the changing rooms has now been completed, and we hope to open them for use in the new year.

The building has been adapted to meet current community needs. At the front, there will be **two toilets** and a **small tuck shop/café**. The remaining space will be used for **storage** by local footballers, the parish council, and country players.

To help reduce our reliance on electricity from the grid, **solar panels** and a **battery unit** are also being installed.

Ongoing Projects

CCTV Upgrades

We're expanding CCTV coverage around the recreation ground, focusing on the changing rooms, village hall, car park, MUGA (multi-use games area), playground, and bins.

CCTV has already helped us successfully tackle vandalism, fly-tipping, and dog walking violations in the past — and this expansion will make the area even safer.

Defibrillator Access

We're also working to ensure there's always a defibrillator nearby in case of emergency.

A new unit will soon be installed next to the **bus stop on Burgoyne Avenue**, between **Honeypot Lane** and **Buckworth Drive**.

A special thank you to **Chris Maher** for regularly checking all our defibrillators to ensure they're in good working order and properly equipped.

Remembrance Day Parade

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to **Sue Edgar Playford**, **Mark Atkins** and **John Wheeler** for their invaluable help in planning this year's event. My thanks also go to **Jim Hignett**, **Steve Rowse**, **Tony Ireland**, the **Boys' and Girls' Brigade Marching Band**, our two Buglers, **Dave Simms** and **Andy Gray**, and everyone who either joined the parade or lined the road to watch.

It is always heartening to see the community come together to pay their respects to those who fought for our freedom—especially the younger members of our community.

A special thank you to **Tom Hamer (Bright Spark Electrics)** and **Karen and Karl**, who came to our rescue when the power for the PA system failed.

If any other groups, clubs, or organisations within Wootton would like to be involved in next year's parade, please email me at **Gareth.Lloyd@Wootton-pc.gov.uk**.

Season's Greetings

As the year draws to a close, the parish council would like to wish everyone in Wootton a **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



As the days grow shorter your dedicated Speedwatch Team - Keith Randell, Les Dick, Graham Ward, Anil Mistry and myself - will be carrying out a session down Wootton Road from Gibraltar Corner towards Irongate during November and January. We shall not carry out a session in December as the days are so short and the weather conditions are not ideal! We have not caught many speeding motorists in our recent sessions but we are there to remind motorists to keep their speed down in an area where the speed limit is 30 m.p.h. The police really appreciate what we are doing in Wootton (Kempston Rural) and the Speedwatch

van does regular sessions along Ridge Road, just before the roundabout with Branston Way. As the weather conditions deteriorate we urge drivers to take extra care when driving through Wootton. If you feel that you could help us out please get in touch with Juliet Wright - juliet.wright@beds.police.uk. We should love to have your help. We are still aware that there are a small number of motorists and motor cyclists who continue to speed through the village - mostly at anti-social hours. We cannot patrol at these hours, so if you see people speeding try to get their registration number and let the police know!

Last month 391 letters were sent out to speeding motorists and 6 new recruits were made

Wishing everyone a great festive season.

Malcolm Chalmers

Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator

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



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

As always, I would like to start December's report by thanking all who attended this year's Remembrance Sunday parade, which took place on Sunday 9th November. Special thanks to all involved in ensuring this event passed smoothly and a special thank you to the little one who attended as Elsa from Frozen to lay a wreath. I saw smiles on everyone's faces, without losing the solemnity of the occasion. The turnout from the community, local organisations, and dignitaries ensured we honoured the memory of the fallen together. We Will Remember Them.

We have a new lectern installation – this time to accompany the beacon which has been installed near Harris Way. The lectern provides more details about the beacon itself and what it represents within our community. We are grateful to Greenbelt Group Ltd for granting the Parish Council permission to install both items on their land.

Our Christmas tree is once again in place at the junction of Bedford and Cause End Roads. It provides some cheer during the dark mornings and evenings, as does the Christmas street lighting. I have had a number of positive comments on both.

Many of you will be aware the Borough Council is rolling out its kerbside glass collection scheme. BBCllr/Cllr Wheeler has requested the bottle banks remain in situ at the Village Hall Car Park, given the full revenue proceeds are passed to the Wootton Poor's Land Charity. This charity continues to do good work in offering financial assistance to residents of Wootton and Stewartby who are struggling. If you can, please continue to make use of this facility – especially during the festive season – as it really does make a difference.

As we head into 2026 – we are looking for local food providers for next year's Fun Fest, which will be taking place on Saturday 27th June. The local scout group will continue to put on the BBQ, however if you have food products you would like to sell (and are licensed to do so and have the relevant documentation) please get in touch. We'd love to showcase your produce.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy, Peaceful New Year.



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Dates for your Diary 2025/26

DECEMBER

10th Dec 2025	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
10th Dec 2025	Full Council inc payments & precept setting	7.15pm
14th Jan 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
14th Jan 2026	Full Council inc precept sign off	7.15pm

JANUARY

14th Jan 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
14th Jan 2026	Full Council inc precept sign off	7.15pm
28th Jan 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
28th Jan 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
28th Jan 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

FEBRUARY

11th Feb 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
11th Feb 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
11th Feb 2026	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	to follow FC
25th Feb 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
25th Feb 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
25th Feb 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

MARCH

11th Mar 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
11th Mar 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
25th Mar 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
25th Mar 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
25th Mar 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

APRIL

8th Apr 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
8th Apr 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
15th Apr 2026	Annual Parish Meeting	7.00pm
29th Apr 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
29th Apr 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
29th Apr 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

MAY

13th May 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7:00pm
13th May 2026	Annual Council Meeting	7:15pm
13th May 2026	Full Council	to follow ACM
13th May 2026	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	to follow FC

Please note that the Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group now meets quarterly, as detailed in the table above. A number of Roads & Pavement issues may be reported directly to Bedford Borough Council.

Please either visit: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/save-time-do-it-online> or call: 01234 267422.

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	Bedford Road
Outside the Manor Road flats	Bedford Road
Outside the Memorial Hall	Bedford Road
Adjacent to the post box	Hall End Road

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

DISCLAIMER: Please check with the Clerk to the Council, noticeboards or the parish council website as meetings may be subject to cancellations or changes to timings and/or venue:

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

Sudoku

3		8	7	4	6	5		9
1		6			8		7	2
							6	8
8	3			6	7	1	9	5
			5			8	2	7
5	7			9	2	6	4	3
							8	6
2		3			1		5	4
9		5	2	8	4	7		1

1	9	4	3	8	2	5	6	7
	7	8	6		9	3	2	
	2						8	
9	3						4	6
		1	7	3	8	9		
2	8		9	6	4		7	3
3		2				6		4
8			2		3			5
7	1			5			3	8



Email: sue.abood@outlook.com

Phone: 07968792862

Well, here we are again, approaching the end of another year! I don't know about you, but 2025 feels like it has shot by. The nights are drawing in again and as I write this at the beginning of November, Autumn is definitely making itself felt. Nature is once again providing a beautiful kaleidoscope of colours on the trees while they battle against the strong winds trying to strip the leaves away. Even on a grey day at the end of October when I went onto the Open University campus, the trees were stunning.



So may I start by wishing you a healthy, peaceful and blessed festive season to come. Whatever and however you celebrate, I wish you joy and all good things for 2026.

The Neighbourhood Chat Group celebrates its second birthday this December – an inspiring group bringing together members of the community once a week for tea, coffee, cake, support and friendship. I am so proud of this amazing community asset that we have and pass on my grateful thanks to Kath Pearce and

her team of bakers and helpers for making the group such a success. If you have some time on your hands on a Wednesday between 11am and 1pm and fancy a chat and an opportunity to make some new friends and connections within the village, please do pop along to the Hub at the Methodist church on Cause End Road. You'll be assured of a warm welcome and for a £1 donation be guaranteed some delicious cakes and a cuppa.

The Memory Gym group that meets on the first Monday of every month between 2.30 and 4pm at the Hub has also been running for over a year now. It so exciting to see and hear about the events they are planning each month which are always a success. If you suffer from memory loss for whatever reason or care for someone who does, please do go along to the session – once again you'll be assured of a warm welcome.

I was really proud to attend the Remembrance parade and service on 9th November and lay a wreath as Borough Councillor as I do each year. I am always heartened to see so many children from local schools involved in the event ensuring that the sacrifices of our injured and fallen are not forgotten. I also attended the Kempston Remembrance event in the afternoon of the same day as I did last year, laying a wreath as Borough Councillor and as a member of Kempston Rural Parish Council. It is always humbling to see so many organisations and communities come together for the act of remembrance. 'At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.'

Huge thanks to Chris Ashpole who as always has had her poppy stall on Field's Road raising money for the Poppy Appeal of the Royal British Legion. Chris and her band of merry volunteers do a wonderful job each year welcoming people from far and wide. My thanks to all involved. Over the years, Chris has raised over half a million pounds for the Royal British Legion – an amazing achievement.

It's been a busy couple of months at the council recently with efforts now underway to try and minimise the financial shortfall at the end of the financial year. In-year 2025/26 savings are being considered as part of the improvement plan which

was recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of its resilience review of the council finances. As it stands at the time of writing, the council does not have enough money in its reserves to balance the budget at the end of this financial year (something a council is required to do), and as such there may be a need for the council to ask the government for Exceptional Financial Support. This will be in the form of a loan to the council which will be added to the total borrowing of the council.

The Health Overview and Scrutiny committee met on the 3rd November and as part of that meeting we had a paper from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) (the NHS). Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) ICB as it currently exists is being joined with Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Hertfordshire, making the second largest ICB in the country, covering approximately 3.5 million people. The paper discussed how the new ICB executive structure is being formed and also the proposed terms of reference for a new Neighbourhood Health Delivery Committee. The ICB is expected to deliver a 50% reduction in its running costs by the end of March 2026 which will mean inevitable redundancies, cuts and saving plans. I questioned in the meeting whether the finances from the new ICB will be filtered down into 'place' i.e. to BLMK rather than siting at the top level of the new ICB and was told that this still hadn't been determined. The rush by the government to get these new larger ICBs created within 6 months is leading to a lot of uncertainty and a lack of clarity on how health provision and projects will be financed locally in the future. BLMK as it currently stands was already required to find over £100 million of savings this year – it's unclear how this 50% saving of running costs affects that.

At the time of writing, there has been no decision on whether the planning application for the Universal theme park has been approved by the government though it has been mooted that a decision isn't too far off. At the last full council meeting I was pleased to be able to speak about concerns that local residents had raised with me about traffic, noise and potential parking issues, and was gratified that a proposal to include unadopted roads in any proposed local parking restrictions in areas around the park was agreed.

I was also pleased to support a Lib Dem proposal, backed by Green, Labour and Independent councillors for the formation of a Universal Project Overview and Scrutiny Group. This committee will oversee all matters relating to the Council's responsibilities and interests in the Universal Project, with a particular focus on maximising economic, cultural, and educational benefits, mitigating construction impacts, addressing infrastructure requirements, and considering the effects on local housing. It will be in this forum that we can ensure that residents' views and concerns continue to be heard. The official request for the committee's formation was heard at the General Purposes Committee on 4th November and was approved. While the official committee is being set up, a shadow group will begin meeting as soon as possible. Please do contact me with any concerns or issues whether in the run up to construction starting, during the construction phase or once the park is operational.

Please do continue to contact me if I can be of any assistance. I'm always happy to hear from residents. My contact details and details of my councillor sessions are below.

Councillor Surgeries and getting in touch

I continue to hold two Wootton Councillor Surgeries and two Kempston Rural Surgeries each month, in all weathers, sometimes under canvas in my bivouac! 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, 10 – 11am opposite the Cross Keys pub in Wood End and 11.15am – 12pm at Gibraltar Corner.

Updates in cases of surgery date change, illness or bad weather 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 or text (07968 792862) or email – sue.abood@outlook.com.

With very best wishes

Sue

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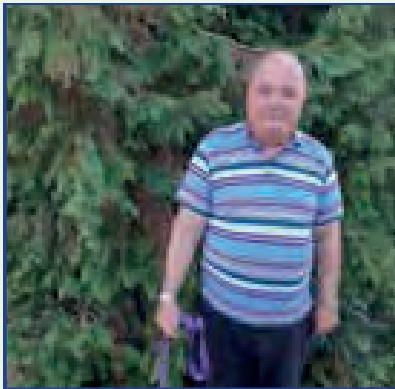
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Christmas is just round the corner, Santa is busy sorting out the letters from the children of Wootton, the reindeer are resting ready for the big day. This year seems to have just flown past.

Once again, a big thank you to all who were involved in this year's Remembrance Sunday event, ensuring all went to plan. A special thank you to Sue Edgar Playford, Gareth Lloyd, Steve Rowse, St. Marys church and the Wootton Boys and Girls brigade for their involvement in the event. A lot of work goes into making this a memorable event and it is lovely to see so many people in attendance. A special thank you also to Chris Ashpole who now has some 60 years' service under her belt on behalf of the Royal British Legion, selling poppies from her gazebo on Fields Road. Thank you, Chris.

I represented Wootton and Kempston Rural at the Armistice Service on the 11th November in Bedford, which was equally well attended by the RBL, ex service men and women, the mayor, deputy lord lieutenant, councillors and dignitaries. Last September I attended the High Sheriff's Justice service at St. Paul's, Bedford – an annual event giving thanks for the Justice Service of Bedfordshire plus volunteers in the county who do so much to help the community.

The annual Bob Lunniss Christmas lunch will have just taken place by the time this newsletter is distributed, and I would like to thank both Donna Lincoln (our new trustee member) and Elaine

Sullivan (trustee member), Wootton Blue Cross and the Cross Keys at Wood End – their generosity has once again ensured this event continues to take place. I would also like to thank both Wootton Upper and Primary schools for their musical contributions and everyone who helped on the day. This was the first event put together without the guidance of the Rev Canon Peter Ackroyd, and I must again thank him in his absence, for his support to this charity over the years.

As always, the Wootton Church and Poor's Land charities will continue to support Wootton and Stewartby families in financial need – we expect to distribute in the region of 80 food vouchers in time for Christmas. A significant amount of funding for this comes from the recycling credits generated using the bottle bank at the car park behind the village hall on Church Road. The Parish Council donates 100% of revenue it receives to this charity, so please continue to use this facility if you are able to.

A thank you as always must go to the Parish Council and Sue Edgar Playford who oversee the installation of the Christmas tree at the junction of Bedford Road/Cause End Road as well as the Christmas lighting on the street light columns. I would also like to thank the Parish Council for its help and support this year and for the work it carries out in and around the village.

On the highways front, myself and the Parish Council continue to chase for remedial works at various areas within the village – not least along Fields Road. This has been a concern for some time now and further cracks are still appearing. A survey has been carried out by Bedford Borough Council, and I am told remedial works are being scheduled. I am still waiting for additional remedial works to prevent flooding on Cranfield Road.

Wootton Primary school has now started its two-tier conversion, and I believe all works at the Bedford Road site are now at an end. Building works have now started at the Upper school ahead of its two-tier conversion in September 2026.

Bedford Borough Council Issues

Cleat Hill

- The tragic explosion occurred on 19 October 2024, in which, two Borough residents lost their lives.

- In the immediate aftermath, the Council worked closely with emergency services to ensure the safety of residents in the area and identify the reason for the explosion, a gas reservoir.
- After working to get the area safe for residents, the incurred around £2 million in recovery and response costs. To help address the financial pressures of these added costs, the Council submitted a formal application on 27 March 2025 for financial support under the Bellwin Scheme (a UK scheme for emergency/disaster relief to local authorities) for its "immediate response costs" arising from the October 2024 explosion.
- No specific figure has been confirmed by the Government as approved for payment. The reply received by the Council was that they will review the information and then decide what, if any, assistance will be given under the Bellwin Scheme.
- The mayor will be writing to the Government to urge them to provide the financial support Bedford Borough needs following this tragic incident.

Public Spaces Protection Order

- Following a two-month consultation by the Borough Council, a new three-year Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) has been introduced to crack down on persistent anti-social behaviour in Bedford town centre, targeting issues such as street drinking, aggressive begging, spitting, littering, public urination, accessing rooftops or stairwells for anti-social behaviour, and dangerous cycling in pedestrian areas.
- The PSPO will be jointly enforced by Council Officers and Bedfordshire police with clear signage being displayed across the town centre.

Green Waste Consultation

- Bedford Borough Council has launched its Budget Consultation for 2026/27. One of the options being considered is introducing a charge for green waste (garden waste) collections.
- This proposal follows advice from central government civil servants, who have asked the Council to explore all options to improve financial resilience, including service charges already adopted by neighbouring authorities. The suggested fee would be around £1 per week for households using the green bin service.

- Many Councillors have previously stated they do not support charging for green waste and opposed its introduction. **Connect to Work programme**
- Bedford Borough Council is taking part in a new Connect to Work scheme to help local residents get back into employment.
- The five-year programme offers 12 months of one-to-one support for people who've been out of work for six months or more - particularly those with health conditions, disabilities, or other barriers to work.
- Participants will receive personal coaching, help finding suitable jobs, and ongoing support once they start work to help them stay in employment. The scheme also works closely with services such as mental health, housing, and homelessness support.

Free Parking

- From 3 November 2025, Bedford Borough Council will temporarily suspend the 4-hour free parking offer at Allhallows and Lurke Street multi-storey car parks to help protect vital services and stabilise Council finances.
- Like many councils across the country, Bedford Borough Council is facing significant financial pressures, with rising costs in Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Temporary Accommodation, alongside reduced Government funding.
- To maintain financial stability, the Council is reviewing all non-essential spending so that essential frontline services can continue to be delivered. While the 4-hour free parking scheme has been popular and successful in supporting town centre businesses, it must be paused temporarily as part of these measures.
- The Council remains fully committed to reintroducing free parking once its financial position improves.
- In the meantime, residents and visitors can still benefit from:
 - 2 hours of free parking at Queen Street Car Park (Monday–Saturday)
 - Free parking every Sunday across all Council-owned town centre car parks
 - Free parking 6pm–8am at Allhallows, Lurke Street, and Queen Street

Domestic Abuse Survivor Group

- Bedford Borough Council is inviting survivors of domestic abuse aged 16 and over to join a new Survivor Voice group, helping to shape how support is provided across the Borough.
- The group will offer a safe and supportive space for people to share their experiences, highlight what helped in their recovery, and suggest ways services could be improved. Members will meet regularly with Council officers and decision-makers, ensuring survivor perspectives directly influence local policy and practice.
- Anyone of any gender, background, or sexual orientation can take part, with around four hours' involvement per month and support from Victim Support throughout.

Glass and Food Recycling

- Kerbside Glass Recycling
 - Following a successful trial in several communities, glass will soon be collected in orange-lidded bins across the whole Borough.
 - The trial increased overall recycling tonnage by around 17% and is expected to

raise the Borough's kerbside recycling rate by about 6% - with estimations suggesting the move could reduce carbon emissions by over 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year.

- Weekly Food Waste Collection (from April 2026)
 - Every household will receive a 7-litre kitchen caddy and a 23-litre outdoor caddy with a lockable lid.
 - Around 5,000 tonnes of food waste are expected to be collected each year, turning unavoidable food scraps into renewable energy or compost.
 - The service is fully funded to start, with over £1.9 million in government grants already received for vehicles, containers, and setup.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year however you may be spending it – with family, friends or by yourself, just putting your feet up by the fire.

John

CLlr. John Wheeler

Ward Councillor for Wootton and Kempston Rural



Wootton Community Centre

GET IN TOUCH

If you would like to make an appointment to come and view the building, contact our Booking Team.

Wootton Community Centre
Harris Way
Wootton
MK 9RJ

CONTACT US:

0783027920
www.wootton.cc
Bookings@wootton.cc
Woottoncommunitycentre@gmail.com



Welcome to Wootton Community Centre



ABOUT OUR CENTRE

We're proud of our purpose built Community Centre. Just over 5 years old, the Centre is a big part of the village and used by many different clubs and classes, community events as well as private hire and special occasion's.

The two rooms for hire are both great spaces in their own right. The Main Hall is a large airy open space, has good access directly into the building from the car park. Fully fitted privacy blinds, and a serving hatch from the kitchen into the hall.

LOCATION

Wootton is a large village southwest of Bedford, in the north of Bedfordshire.

ROAD LINKS

Use postcode MK43 9FZ

10 Mins from M1 Junction 13

4 Mins from A41 Bedford to Cambridge

CHRISTMAS MAGIC - *By Colin Zardin*

The little girl swung her legs out of her bed, tiptoed to her bedroom window, and peeped out.

Then she ran next door to her mother's room and rushed in, shouting excitedly "Mummy, Mummy. It's been snowing! It's all over everything outside! Can I go and play in it?"

Her Mum opened her eyes and peered blearily at the clock on her bedside cabinet.

"Emma. It's only half past six! It's too early to go out yet. Come and cuddle up with me for a while. Then we'll get up, have breakfast, and get dressed warmly. Then we can go out and play".

Emma climbed up into her Mum's bed and snuggled up to her.

This was Elizabeth's favourite time with her daughter, and usually, they lay together like this for half an hour or so. This morning, however, the little girl was wriggling and fidgeting impatiently, and Elizabeth knew there was no delaying things.

Emma was just seven, after all, and it was only ten days until Christmas. She was bound to be excited, so the two of them got up, put on their dressing gowns, and went downstairs to the kitchen. Breakfast consisted of a piece of toast, and orange juice for Emma, coffee for her Mum.

The little girl was so animated that Elizabeth decided to leave the washing-up until later, and they went back upstairs to get washed and to dress warmly. Then, although it was still early, they went outside into the snow.

They had such fun! They threw snowballs at each other, and then Emma decided that she wanted to build a snowman.

"I want a carrot for his nose, and buttons for his eyes, she said. "And he must have a hat, and a scarf, and gloves too".

The two of them spent the best part of two hours in the snow. By the end of that time,

they had created a beautiful snowman ("he must be called Peter", said Emma), with a big ball for his body, and a smaller one for his head. By then, their hands were frozen.

"Let's go back indoors, and warm up with a cup of cocoa", said Elizabeth. "We can come out again later".

She wanted nothing more than to see Emma enjoying herself and having a wonderful time.

The saddest thing ever had happened in their lives just under two years ago. Emma's Dad, Jonathan, had complained of feeling short of breath one day, and their doctor had sent him to the hospital. A previously undetected heart condition had been diagnosed, and Jonathan had been admitted.

Tragically, he had died within a week. He had only been forty-three years old.

Emma hadn't really understood where her Daddy had gone, but then, she had been only five years old at the time. She appeared now to be starting to cope with the situation. Elizabeth definitely wasn't.

She devoted all her time to Emma, but it was difficult financially. They had never expected anything like that to happen and hadn't made provision for such a thing happening.

However, Mother and daughter had a lovely day, and when it was bedtime, both were exhausted.

The following morning, Emma woke first and again peeped out of her window. She couldn't believe her eyes!

Standing next to "Peter" was a second snowman, slightly smaller than the one they had made. They both had chunky legs of snow under their bodies, and arms of snow at the sides. And, they were holding hands!

"Mummy, Mummy, come quickly! Peter's got a girlfriend!"

Elizabeth grudgingly got up and went into

Emma's room. She was gobsmacked! The little girl was right!

"It must have been one of the neighbours", she thought to herself. "They must have seen us yesterday and made a second one to please Emma. How kind!"

Emma was so happy!

But as Christmas day approached, Elizabeth became less happy.

Emma had been saying for ages that she had asked Father Christmas for a My Little Pony set, with stables, and riding clothes, and all the grooming brushes. It was all she really wanted.

When she had looked in Argos, however, that set was way beyond what she could afford. She had only been able to buy two ponies, and a brush. She desperately hoped Emma would be satisfied with that.

The morning of Christmas Day dawned.

Emma was awake even earlier than usual, full of energy and excitement.

"Mummy, Mummy, can I open my presents now?" she said, bursting into her mother's bedroom.

"Wait until after breakfast darling", Elizabeth said, "and then you can."

Breakfast over, the little girl brought her presents into the kitchen. There was one that looked larger than her Mum remembered, but she shrugged, and got the kitchen scissors out.

When she helped her daughter to remove the Christmas paper that wrapped it, she was blown away!

It was a full Little Pony set, with everything that Emma had wanted, and more!

Elizabeth was amazed; all that had happened started to make her wonder.

Who had built the second snowman – "Peter's girlfriend? Did she really have neighbours who were that kind?

And where had Emma's present come from? Did Father Christmas really exist?

Or was it all Christmas Magic?

Christmas Sudoku

	r	t	e	c	a			u
a		f	k	r	t			e
			u					r
	c	a	r	e		u		t
u	t				c		r	f
	k	i	t	u		e		c
			f					k
k		r	a	t	u			i
	i	u	c	k	r			a

f		t	a	e	u	i		k
	e	k				r	u	
i	u	a	k		r	f	e	t
	k		f	u	c		i	
	i	u	t		e	c	a	
	c			i			k	
k	f						t	u
e			u		k			c
u		c	e		t	k		i

It's our Christmas "fruit cake" Sudoku - Fill in the grid with the letters F, R, U, I, T, C, A, K and E, making sure no letter is repeated in every row, every column and within each mini grid.

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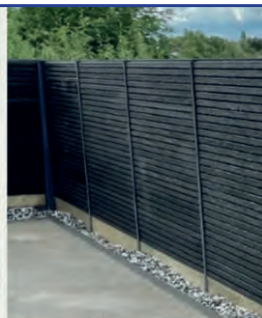
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TV presenter Kate Humble visits the Forest of Marston Vale

The Forest of Marston Vale Trust is on a mission to use trees to transform landscapes and lives. Rooted in the heart of Bedfordshire, our work began as part of a bold vision to regenerate the Marston Vale – an area heavily scarred by industrial clay extraction. Since the early 1990s, we've been turning that vision into reality, creating new woodlands, rich habitats, and green spaces for people, for nature and for the planet. With over 2.75 million trees already planted, we're continuing to grow our Community Forest, supporting nature, improving wellbeing, and helping tackle climate change.

In April, we had the pleasure of welcoming TV presenter and writer **Kate Humble** to the Forest of Marston Vale. Known for her work on Animal Park and Springwatch, Kate visited us to film a video exploring the Forest's incredible 30-year journey - from its industrial past to the thriving green landscape it is today.

We kicked off the day with some tree planting at the **Millennium Country Park**, where Kate learned more about the area's transformation and the positive impact of forest creation on the local environment and communities. Afterward, Kate joined our Senior Ranger Nicola Ceconi for some wildlife watching in

the **Wetlands Nature Reserve**. Right on cue, a pair of marsh harriers soared overhead, and Kate was especially delighted to hear two male bitterns booming - competing for mates.

Later, the team headed over to **Rectory Wood in Cranfield**, one of our more mature woodlands, where discussions continued about the long-term benefits of community woodlands and how they enhance both biodiversity and residents' quality of life.

Kate's enthusiasm and deep knowledge of nature made the day truly special, and although we spent hours talking, the final video only captures a glimpse of her visit.

We're incredibly grateful to **Carbon Neutral Britain**, one of our Corporate Friends of the Forest, who made Kate's visit and the video production possible through **Elastic Pie Productions**.

Scan the QR code to watch the full video of Kate's visit to the Forest of Marston Vale.

If you're passionate about the environment why not join us on our mission and **become a Friend of the Forest**. Your donation helps us to protect and grow the Forest and other vital habitats within the Forest of Marston Vale,





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North Beds Ramblers

Wow what a success!

The Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks 2025 proved to be an unbounded success.

Firstly, we had huge support from the four Bedfordshire Ramblers Groups, Leighton Buzzard, Lea & Icknield, Ivel Valley and North Beds. On top of the 35 walks we put on, we welcomed the following Ramblers Groups from across the county border – Wellingborough Ramblers, Stag Walkers, Hunts Ramblers and North Herts Ramblers who all also contributed walks to the program. We also included in the program walks hosted by other non-Ramblers groups – Wellbeing Walks, Forest of Marston Vale, U3A, Parish Walking and Wildlife, Bedford Tour Guides, Bedford Rambling Club, Social Walking, Higham Ferrars Footpath Group, The Dunstable and District Walking and Hostelling Group – The Bogtrotters, Friends of Bedford Cemetery, Toddington Rambling Club, Mindfulness and Massage and The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. We also had a walk and boat trip with the John Bunyan Community Boat. Sadly, the Bedfordshire Bat Group Walk was rained off – hopefully next year. All this contributed to a massive 74 walks with 1066 walkers over the 9 days. Finally, what would be a walking festival without a training course and the regular Greensand Ridge Challenge (40 miles in 2 days). Thanks to Nick Markham for running Navigation Course and Ivel Valley for the challenge.

This year also saw a number of invited dignitaries getting involved. We were delighted to host the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, 4 of our local



MPs, the Deputy Mayor of Bedford, the Chair as well as the Leader of Central Beds Council and 3 other Councillors join us either for a walk or photo opportunity.

All in all, it was a massive team effort with a number of shared interests – but at the heart of what we do, we all want to share our beautiful unsung county with as many people as possible and help to get people out walking! Thank you to all who contributed. See you in 2026.

Sandra Kelsey – North Beds Ramblers



A photograph of two goldfish in fishbowls. On the left is a small fishbowl with a single goldfish. On the right is a much larger fishbowl with a single goldfish. The background is a clear blue sky.

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A photograph of a small, light-colored house model with a chimney and blue windows, sitting on a laptop keyboard. A hand is visible on the right side of the keyboard.

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Outstanding Parish Council Issues & Projects

Item	Location	Deadline	Any other information
Beacon	Land near Harris Way sports pitches	2025	WPC ¹ is grateful to Harry Gates for helping with the beacon installation. It will remain in situ in perpetuity to be used at significant ceremonial events and occasions. A lectern is also in situ which provides the history behind this beacon and the use of beacons in general. WPC is grateful also, to Greenbelt Group Ltd also for allowing us to use its land.
Changing Rooms renovations	Church Road	2025	Works are almost complete, save for minor snagging issues.
Covanta (now Encyclis) Incinerator	Stewartby parish	Ongoing	Visit the following links for fuller information: BACI ² 's website: https://bedsagainstincinerator.wordpress.com/ ; BACI's Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/residentsagainstcovanta/?ref=bookmarks ; Rookery South Energy Recovery Facility's website: www.rookerysoutherf.co.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). • Harris Way (in the vicinity of the A421 close to the Multi Use Games Area). WPC had hoped to site a lectern in the general vicinity of The Gaol, adjacent to St. Mary's Churchyard on Church Road, but a licence from BBC³ proved too problematical and the hope is now to site (possibly two) lecterns within St. Mary's Churchyard. One will denote where The Gaol once stood and the other will provide information on St. Mary's itself
Local Plan 2040	Throughout the village	Ongoing	BBC's Local Plan 2040 was withdrawn from examination by BBC at its Full Council meeting on 8th October 2025. 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

¹ Wootton Parish Council.

² Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator

³ Bedford Borough Council

Item	Location	Deadline	Any other information
Lorraine Road Cemetery Memorial Wall	Lorraine Road cemetery	2025	Rather than one continuous wall, WPC determined with Terry Ellingham to build three smaller ones, to allow for the sloping grounds within the cemetery. These have been completed and will become available for use once the older memorial walls have been fully utilised. A further wall built using unused materials, is now also in situ.
Neighbourhood Development Plan	The whole civil parish of Wootton	Ongoing	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
Roads and Pavements	Throughout the village	Ongoing	The Roads and Pavements Safety Steering Group meets every quarter after the conclusion of Full Council, in February, May, August and November. Residents are welcome to attend these meetings. Minutes can be viewed via this link: https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/minutes/ (A hard copy can be requested from the Clerk to the Council)

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.

Library

Here are days and times for regular events at Wootton Library from September:

ACTIVITY	DAY	TIME
Rhyme Time	Tuesdays (term-time only)	10.30am-11am
Bounce and Rhyme	Thursdays (term-time only)	10.30am-11am
Building Block Play	Fridays	2pm-4.30pm
Lego Club	Saturdays	11am-12.30pm

POETRY AFTERNOON

Bring along a couple of your favourite poems to read and discuss with the group, or just come and listen. Refreshments will be available. Everyone welcome.

Monday 24 November / Monday 15 December
at 2.15pm-3.45pm



Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group & Memory Gym

We are so proud that both of these community groups are flourishing and so warmly supported by the wonderful people of Wootton.

"Nobody should ever feel lonely or invisible. Walk through the door and you'll be greeted with kindness and friendship."

Neighbourhood Chat Group

Our **weekly Neighbourhood Chat Group** now welcomes up to **50 people** each week!

When we first began, our aim was simple, to reduce **social isolation** among older residents and those living with disabilities. Too often these wonderful people are called "the invisible generation," but we believe that everyone deserves to feel **seen, valued, and connected**.

Each week is filled with laughter, conversation, and companionship. Fresh faces are always welcome, come along and you'll find a warm Wootton welcome waiting for you.

Wootton Memory Gym

Our **monthly Memory Gym** is a joyful social event for anyone facing **memory challenges**, whether caused by dementia, age, stroke, or brain injury.

With the help of our amazing **team of volunteers**, we fill our sessions with **quizzes, singing, dancing**, and plenty of fun.

We meet on the **first Monday of each month (2.30–4.00pm)**, and every time we gather

there's laughter, friendship, and a real sense of community.

Sometimes the sessions can be a little "crazy", but everyone leaves smiling!

Also Thank you to the local businesses and people that have made donations to The Memory Gym this year, you are so special.

Adventures and Outings

Both groups have enjoyed wonderful trips this year, including rides on the **Bedford to Bletchley Line**, complete with refreshments at **Ridgmont Tearooms** and a visit to the Ridgmont Heritage Museum.

We're grateful to the **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity** for providing **Community Buses**, helping make our adventures possible.

We're already planning more trips for 2026!

Events Calendar – December 2025

Wednesday 10th December – Dementia-Friendly Coffee Morning & Carols
Hosted by Wootton NewLife Methodist Church, 11.00am–1.00pm.
Carols, mince pies, and festive cheer!

Wednesday 10th December – Alive and Singing Choir Winter Concert
7.30pm, in aid of Tibbs Foundation Trust, The Memory Gym, and Wootton NewLife Methodist Church.
Tickets: £5 adults / £2 children — contact us for tickets!

Wednesday 17th December – Chat Group Christmas Party
From 11.00am — a dementia-friendly celebration marking **our 2nd anniversary** and the **Memory Gym's 1st anniversary!**
Secret Santa (gifts up to £5), shared food, and Santa will be joining us again!

*****Thank you, Wootton,***



Wootton Country Players Presents

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

🎭 Coming Soon to Wootton village hall – Snow White! 🎭

Mirror, mirror on the wall... who's the fairest of them all? YOU, of course — when you come to see our magical local production of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs! Join us for an enchanting retelling of the classic fairytale, brought to life by the talented cast and crew of Wootton County Players. With laughter, suspense, a touch of magic, and plenty of audience participation, this show is perfect for the whole family.

📅 Sat 7th February 2:00pm & 6:30pm

📅 Sun 8th February 2:00pm

📍 Wootton Village Hall, MK43 9EU

🎫 Tickets: 🎫

Adults.....£10

Concessionary.....£8

Children (over 5).....£5

Family tickets.....£25

For booking information go to www.countryplayers.org.uk/buy-tickets

Children's Art Contest!

We're inviting all young artists to help us create something truly magical! Design the front cover for the official programme of our upcoming production, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'.

Each winner will:

- + Have their artwork printed on the cover of a special edition of our show programme.
- + Receive a Family Ticket for Four to one of the performances!

There will be two lucky winners, one from each age group:

- + Ages 5-8
- + Ages 9-13

We can't wait to see your creativity bring this fairytale to life!

For more information, visit:

[Insert website or social media handle]

How to enter:

1. Create a front cover design for 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'.
2. Use A4 or A5 paper (portrait orientation).
3. Include the title 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' clearly on your design.
4. Write your name, age, and a parent/guardian's contact number or email on the back.
5. Post/deliver your entry to:
**71 Cause End Road, Wootton,
Bedfordshire, MK43 9DE**

Entries close: Wednesday, 31st December 2025
Winners announced: Early January

Terms and conditions apply, check website for more details.

Book by Tim Kelly
Music & Lyrics by Bill Francoueur
Produced by special arrangement with
Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., Denver, Colorado



WOOTTON UPPER SCHOOL

2025 has been a year of progress here at Wootton Upper School. There has been so much good stuff happening it's hard to pick out the highlights... but we'll have a go anyway!

It has been a time of real change for the better. Students and staff alike have worked hard on creating a warm, inclusive and hard-working culture, and we've seen it really start to pay off. Attendance has risen significantly, and the summer saw a big jump in our students' GCSE results. We were chuffed that the improvements were seen across all grades, and particularly strong amongst students who traditionally found school a bit harder.

We're proud that working on the basics of attendance, punctuality, good manners and great teaching have made such a big difference!

It means that we've risen up the school league tables for exam results. And if the quality of learning that we see now every day at WUS is anything to go by, next summer's results are going to see an even bigger improvement and place us amongst the best performers in the area!

Another important consequence of the school being so much more focused and happier is the impact on staff retention and recruitment. We all know that finding and keeping great teachers is so important to ensure that students have a good experience. Nationally, in recent years it's become harder to do this, but we've seen a real turnaround this year at Wootton.

I always say that if something wouldn't be good enough for my own children, it's not good enough for our students, and this is especially true when it comes to employing staff. We spent literally hundreds of hours last year carefully interviewing and assessing people for jobs as teachers, learning mentors, and so on, and even though it was really difficult at times, we stuck to our guns and refused to appoint if we had any doubts. It's made all the difference.

We started September not just with enough teachers for our timetable but actually slightly more than we needed, because so many good-quality people applied for roles in the end. And where other schools have struggled to balance the books, we've been in the fortunate position that we can take on additional staff where we've had multiple good candidates. This means not only a much more enjoyable and high-quality experience for students this year but also puts us in a strong position for next September when we will have hundreds more joining us in Years 7 and 8!

Regarding next year and becoming a secondary school, as you would expect we are now deep into preparation for this. We already know how many extra teachers and other staff we need for the additional students, and will start recruiting these in January.



As a Trust, we have already invested significant amounts of money on improving existing facilities as well as creating new ones. We have a plan for where different subjects will be based in the future and how many classrooms they will each have. Some extra maths classrooms were created during the summer, and various teams have been moved into new areas to free up other spaces for different uses. We have refurbished our outdoor canopies to provide students with more places to socialise when the weather is poor and completely remodelled a bunch of toilet blocks as well. (We have deliberately added lots more cubicles for our girls to use so that long breaktime queues are a thing of the past.)

Also, the Council are building our new block around the back of the site, which will give us seven classrooms and a new dining room. This is on track to be completed in good time, so we should start next September with significantly more spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Alongside the day-to-day stuff and planning for next year, we've also been celebrating the school's 50th birthday. WUS opened in September 1975, but as the buildings weren't quite ready for students it started off on what is now the Marston Vale Middle School site!

We are marking the anniversary across this year in a number of ways, and the first event was an alumni concert at the school on the 27th September. Over 80 former staff and students returned to perform, and we welcomed around 230 people as an audience – it really was standing room only, and a completely joyful experience for everyone there.

For us, the night was not just a celebration of the school's past but also a signal of intent for its future, and the central role that music



and the wider performing arts will play in it. Which links nicely to the final mention for this article: this year's musical!

By the time you read this, students from WUS and Kimberley College will have done three (no doubt sellout) performances of the Dolly Parton-inspired musical "9 to 5"! Rehearsals have been going strong since September, and if the sounds emanating from the theatre hall are anything to go by, it's going to be another cracker!



So there you have it – a summary of 2025 and a taste of what is to come in 2026. As ever, if you would like to visit us for a tour of the school, please just get in touch via HelloWootton@wootton.beds.sch.uk and we'll arrange it for you. And if you have any feedback or ideas for us, please drop us a line and we'll always come back to you!

Wootton Vale and Shortstown Surgeries



Christmas and New Year Closures

Please note the surgery will be closed over the festive period on the following dates:

Thursday 25th December 2025, Friday 26th December 2025 and Thursday 1st January 2026

To ensure your prescriptions are processed in time, we ask that you submit any requests by Wednesday 17th December 2025. This will allow our team sufficient time to review and send them to your nominated pharmacy for timely collection. If you run out of medication during the closure period, you can contact NHS 111 or visit a local pharmacy for further advice.

In addition, please be aware that we have a Staff Training Afternoon on Wednesday 19th November 2025, during which the surgery will be closed from 14:30hrs and will reopen at 08:00hrs on Thursday 20th November 2025.

We understand that an afternoon closure may cause some inconvenience; however, this protected time is essential for all GP surgeries. It enables both clinical and non-clinical staff to complete mandatory training that cannot take place during routine operating hours.

Breast Screening

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women in England, the chance of getting breast cancer increases as you get older. Regular breast screening is one of the best ways to spot a cancer that is too small to feel or see yourself – it saves around 1,300 lives each year in the UK.

Anyone registered with a GP as female aged from 50 up to their 71st birthday will be invited for NHS breast screening every 3 years. You'll automatically get your first invite for breast screening between the ages of 50 and 53. You'll get a letter in the post inviting you.

Finding cancer early can make it more likely that treatment will be successful. Breast screening can detect cancer long before you can even feel it. Or more likely, put your mind at rest. So, when you're invited, save the date, it could save your life.

Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/breast> to find more.

Evening Appointments

As a surgery, we have been offering patients a choice of evening and weekend appointments. However, these appointments were not within our practice and were offered at other surgery locations. From 3rd November 2025, we are now able to offer patients appointments at the Wootton Vale surgery. If you would prefer to see one of our team after 18.30hrs, please ensure you let us know when you submit your online request.

Help and Support from Our Pharmacy Team for patients taking Pain Killers:

Strong opoid painkillers such as morphine, oxycodone and tramadol may help with some types of pain for a couple of months, but over time they can also cause serious issues such as anxiety, despression, sexual dysfunction and increased infections ... the list goes on.

If you have been taking these medication for more than a few months, and you have not noticed much change in your pain, simply taking more will not help and may even make the pain worse.

We would like to help you manage your pain in different ways. Our Team can support you to reduce the medications safely and help managed your pain better. If you would like to speak to the team about this support, please

submit a SystmConnect or alternatively please go to livewellwithpain.co.uk for further information.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Wootton & Shortstown Surgery would like to say a huge thank you to those patients who have offered to join our PPG. We hold bi-monthly meetings and listen to the views of our patients so that we can make improvements wherever possible. If you are interested, please either complete our online form at Patient Reference/ Participation Group Registration - Wootton Vale & Shortstown Surgery or alternatively pop into the surgery.

You Can Do It!

As you are aware we now offer a Total Triage service for all appointments at the Practice. As part of this we have been working with local charities and groups and are pleased to be able to let you know in the New Year, there should be opportunities for you to learn how to access a number of service online – these may include using email, booking GP appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions, using WhatsApp.

We will post the information on our website and also within the surgeries.

DNA Numbers

September: 360 - 3.4% of our available appointments.

October: 490 - 3.5% of our available appointments.

Please help us to maximise appointment availability by contacting us as soon as you know you will be unable to attend your scheduled appointment.

We understand how important it is to have quick and reliable access to the surgery, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve. Your feedback is invaluable to us, and we appreciate your patience as we continue to refine our services.

IT MEANS WHAT?

Are we looking forward to Christmas?

Extending visitors over the festive season?

"Scurryfunge" is an Old English word, believed to date from the 1700s which means to rush around hastily cleaning the house when unexpected guests arrive.

Will we see snow this Christmas?

"Crumping" has several meanings, but can also be attributed to the crisp, crunching sound made when walking over iced-over snow.

Who loves a snowman? You can't make a snowman without first making a "hogamadog". That's the giant ball of snow that comes when you roll it around on the ground for long enough.

Overindulged? You may have been "crawmassing", which means to tidy up the left-over food (and eating scraps of it as you go!)

Contemplation Corner

- Why do we say we 'sleep like a log' when logs are inanimate?
- Why is the word 'dictionary' in the dictionary?
- If the early bird gets the worm, why do the best things happen after midnight?
- If you take a photo of a clock, can you prove that time stopped?
- If the universe is expanding, what is it expanding into?
- Does the light in the refrigerator ever truly go off?
- Does pineapple belong on pizza?
- Is a hot dog a sandwich?



General Property Maintenance & Home Improvements

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Wednesdays 9.30 – 10.30 a.m. Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way

Contact Gen on 07849 158 850 for more info/book a place

Christmas

AT WOOTTON BAPTIST CHURCH



Carols by CANDLELIGHT

SUNDAY 14TH | 4:30-5:30PM

Christmas Eve

FAMILY CAROLS
4:00-5:00PM



Christmas Day

10:30 -
11:15AM

**BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY AND
CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH
CAROLS, MINCE PIES, AND THE
AMAZING STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH.**



**WOOTTON
BAPTIST CHURCH**

WOOTTONBAPTISTCHURCH.ORG.UK



The Old Post Office circa 1922. Alice Slater is standing with her father and daughter.

Memory Stir

Wootton Post Office – a brief history

Villagers may have noticed a lovely 16th century cottage in Church Road with the words 'The Old Post Office' on the facing wall, and perhaps have wondered about any connection with the Wootton Post Office of today. As one of Wootton's former Sub Postmasters, I can give the following brief history.....

In 1964, the Subpostmistress was Mrs Alice Slater. She was the daughter of Philip and Suzannah Hill. She had taken on the role following the death of her father and continued to run the Post Office from the front room of the cottage in Church Road. Indeed, as it was simply a counter in the living room of a family home, some customers felt it necessary to politely knock on the front door before entering!

In late 1965, Mrs Slater - who was in her late 70s - fell and broke her arm. At that time, my father, Joseph O'Dell, was the Sub Postmaster at Marston Moretaine. So, Mrs Slater asked him to help her by providing a member of his staff to keep Post Office going until she had fully recovered. Although I was only in my late teens, my father gave the task to me!

Unfortunately, Mrs Slater soon realised that she would not be able to resume as Sub Postmistress, and asked my father to take on the appointment. However, the village was starting to expand (yes,

even then!), and the Parish Council were anxious to see the Post Office moved into larger and more appropriate premises.

Coincidentally, the post-war prefab homes in Manor Road were about to be demolished in order to build the 2 blocks of flats (which are currently on that site). Bedford Borough Council agreed that one prefab, closest to Bedford Road, should be saved from demolition and be the new premises for Wootton Post Office. Accordingly, in 1965 my father was appointed Sub Postmaster until I was old enough to have the appointment transferred to me.

The Borough Council also gave permission for my wife, Carol, to have a Hair Salon in two other rooms in the prefab. At that time, Royal Mail required me to supervise the 5 delivery staff – meaning that one room in the prefab was a sorting office. However, at Christmas – in the days when folk were still able to afford to post their cards – the mail sorting office process was temporarily moved to an out-building at Manor Farm House in Cause End Road. Such was the volume of mail that the delivery staff were complimented by helpers – many of whom were local students on their Christmas breaks.

In 1976, we acquired premises at 46/48 Bedford Road (the current Post Office premises) . It had previously been a general grocery shop, and



then a Chemist/Opticians – with a large storage warehouse at the rear.

During the 70s and 80s, the village continued to expand. The Post Office work greatly increased. This meant that the main ancillary business was the sale of greetings cards and stationery. Current Wootton residents may be surprised to learn that, at various times, the premises housed an Opticians, a Wool Shop with Dry Cleaning

agency, a Hair Salon/Beauticians, a Butchers shop and even a Building Society!

In 1988, I took early retirement from running the Post Office and other businesses - which is when the Lehal family took over. Finally, in July this year, Dee Lehal deservedly retired as Sub Postmistress after giving sterling service to the village for 34 years.

Parish Councillor Stuart O'Dell

Join us on Sundays

10am Morning Service

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 on our YouTube channel.

youtube.com/StMarysWootton



COME AND HEAR THE BEST STORY EVER TOLD

*Christmas 2025
at St Mary's,
Wootton*



Sunday 7 December
4pm **Christingle**

Sunday 21 December
10am **Nativity**
6pm **Carols by Candlelight**

Christmas Eve
4pm **Family Carols**
9pm **Christmas Communion**

Christmas Day
10am **Family Service**

stmaryswootton.org.uk

stmary's
wootton

It is hard to believe we are heading towards winter, leaving the warmth of the summer behind in exchange for the dark nights since the clocks changed. This year, for the first time, I walked round the village with my grandchildren for Trick or Treat, it was lovely to see the fun and friendship involved. Love it or hate it, people had gone to a lot of effort to decorate their houses and make it an evening of laughter for the children, out and about, and the generosity of what the children were given was incredible. It made me feel what a lovely village we live in. Bring on the Christmas Lights and keep this spirit going.

With that in mind, our WI meetings have been full of laughter and fun too. We heard from Lucy Lewis, the first female Bomb Disposal expert, who was quick to tell us there are no experts in bomb disposal, just luck, and what we see on Trigger Point is really just fiction. Her stories ranged from sliding down the stairs on a tea tray in a ball gown and high heels to go to a regimental dinner, to being awarded a certificate for the best shot, when she shot herself in the ear, courtesy of a rubber bullet rebounding off a door frame when she was aiming for a device attached to the door knocker. She also has a book in print about her life in the services, an interesting read.

Our following meeting was a craft one, where we tried out some different skills this time. We made mosaic coasters, diamond art bookmarks, patchwork bowls and paper flowers. Everyone was very engrossed and produced some beautiful items.

November saw us have a try at flower arranging, again lots of laughs and chatter as we attempted to produce something to be proud of. Thanks to Ronnie for showing us how to achieve this.

We will be having a local magician, The Great Gardini, at our December meeting, then in January there will be an insightful talk about cancer and what advances in treatments have been made in the last few years. February is another games and quiz evening so plenty to get us through the winter.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Memorial Hall, Bedford Rd at 7-30.

We enjoy meeting visitors, who can attend for a fee of £5, tea coffee and biscuits provided. Check out our Facebook page for upcoming events, Wootton WI Bedfordshire.



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Established 1967

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

Tel: 01234 767158 Email: stmaryspreschoolwootton@outlook.com

We are pleased to announce that we now have 2 permanent Managers, Allyson and Caroline, who are very excited to have begun their new roles!

The children have settled well into a new school year. We have welcomed back our existing children and got to know our new children, who are beginning their learning journey with us.

The Autumn term has been very busy so far and is set to get even busier as Christmas approaches!

We have done lots of Autumn related activities – apples, Harvest, scarecrows, pumpkins – and we learnt about the Festival of Diwali. The children made Diya lamps from clay.

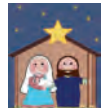


We celebrated Firework Night with hot dogs and hot chocolate around the fire pit and then lit some sparklers for the children to watch.

We will be marking Remembrance Day with a minutes' silence at 11am and there will be a variety of poppy related activities for the children to explore.

Later in the term we'll be wearing our pyjamas as we raise money for Children in Need.

The term will end with our Christmas festivities: our traditional Nativity play; a Christmas service in St. Mary's Church and, of course, our parties with a special visit from the man in red!



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, secure grassed outdoor play area where they regularly take part in Forest School activities. The Preschool is a member of the Preschool 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. If you would like to apply for a place at Preschool or require any further information, please phone us on 01234 767158 or email stmaryspreschoolwootton@outlook.com.

Children not eligible for funding – fees currently £5.50 per hour



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1ST WOOTTON BRIGADES

THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE





The Brigades at Wootton are about to celebrate our 10th Birthday having been reformed in Jan 2016. There was an earlier version of the company also at the Methodist Church running from 1980-1991 so perhaps it could also be a 21st Birthday? Throughout all the years we have been blessed to have great leaders and one in particular, Rosalind Ruffhead has been an ever present through both time periods and was recently presented with a special Long Service Award.

We'd love to hear from anyone who would like to join either of our BB/GB Leader teams, please contact us for more info. Many of our Volunteer Leaders are mums/dads who just gave it a go. Others grew up in the Brigades and just continued. Perhaps you were in the Brigades in the past and are now in a position where you could now assist? We have also supported older teens in the village with their Volunteering section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Our Band is currently gearing up for the Remembrance Parade (which will have taken place by the time this is printed). It's been quite a journey from almost folding and not being able to play last year, to a complete revival with so many new members joining. By the time of this years Remembrance Parade, some will have only had 5 training nights, but I'm confident we'll do a great job. Two of our leaders lent support to another band leading the Littlehampton Bonfire Society event in October, an amazing event. Our training nights during 2026 will focus on being ready for the Oct 2026 Half Term Band Tour to France and Belgium!



We entered a team (Ages 15-18) into the Brigades National Ten Pin Bowling Championships in October where teams from across the UK take part in a Champions League style qualifying rounds. Our team scored enough points to reach the Knockouts (QF & SF) and got through to the Grand Final where they came third overall !

We have age groups up to 18 years of age and currently have spaces in our youngest groups, **School Years 1-3**, 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. (we are currently unable to provide dedicated 1-1 support)

	bbgb1stwootton@gmail.com
We are based at Wootton New Life Methodist Church, Cause End Road Girls meet Thursdays, Boys meet Fridays, Band on Mondays	



Falcon Gymnastics Club



RECREATIONAL GYMNASTICS

Come & learn a variety of apparatus and floor-based gymnastics skills whilst achieving your gymnastics awards!

PRE SCHOOL GYMNASTICS

Running, jumping, climbing & exploring; developing fundamental movement skills for ages 15 months - 4 years.

HOLIDAY CAMPS

Taking place across all school holidays, our camps provide a great opportunity to be active and have fun whilst learning skills and making new friends.

PARTIES

A party at Falcon Gymnastics Club is the perfect way to celebrate your birthday with friends. We have a fully equipped gym and qualified coaches to ensure your party is everything you want it to be.

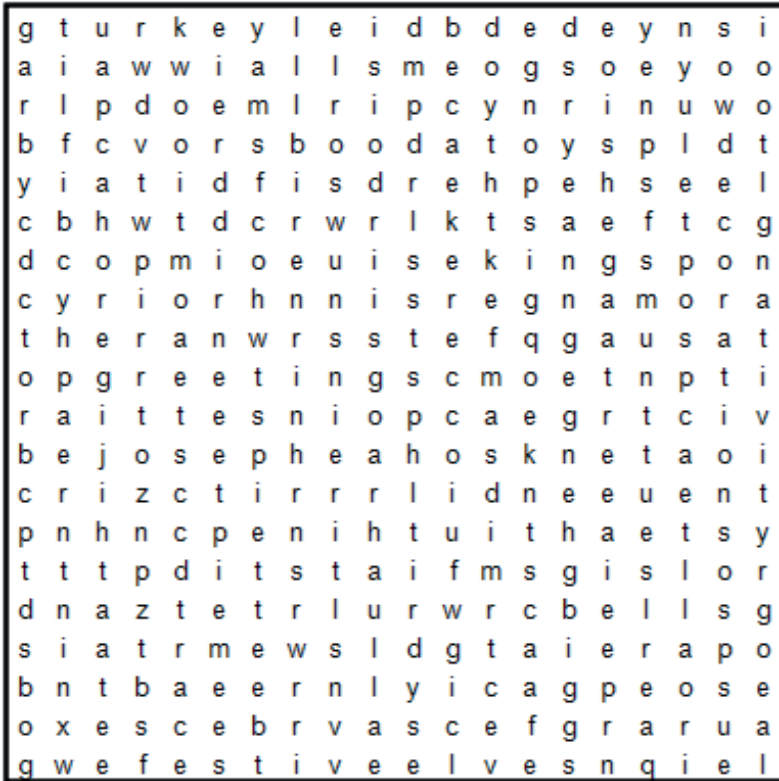


For more details visit: www.falcongym.com
or give Mel a call on 07514 366894

Word Search

Christmas

Christmas is a Christian holiday held on the 25 December each year to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Christmas is a special time for children as they receive gifts from Santa Claus to mark the special occasion.



Word List

See if you can find the Christmas related words in our word search.

Bells
Elves
Fruitcake
Kings
Poinsettia
Toys
Wise men

Christmas
Feast
Greetings
Manger
Reindeer
Tree
Yule

Decorations
Festive
Joseph
Nativity
Shepherds
Turkey

Defibrillators around Wootton



Key to Defibrillators in Wootton

- Public access - 24/7
- Public access - limit hours