

The Wootton

P A R I S H N E W S

SUMMER EDITION

JUNE 2026

Wootton Parish Council Presents

WOOTTON FUN FEST & MOTOR SHOW

SATURDAY 27th JUNE 2026
1PM - 9PM
RECREATION GROUND

FREE ENTRY

CLASSICS
TRACTORS
SPORT CARS
MOTORBIKES

LIVE MUSIC
ALL DAY

					
COMMUNITY HOUR 1:00pm	EVIE 2:00pm	MAT ROBERTS BAND 3:00PM	ALEX EARLY 4:30PM	TOM KORNI 5:45PM	JOYRIDER 7:15PM

FREE FAIRGROUND

FOOD STALLS

FREE MAGIC SHOW



BAR

FREE FACE PAINTING



**SOMETHING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
WHILE SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITY**

Sound provided by


Entertainment provided by


Stage provided by


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

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Councillor John Wheeler: 07913 409 433

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 -

email: bookings@wootton.cc

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 Joseph Adewale

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 - Paul: 07982 353 627

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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Next Issue: September 2026

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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



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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.

Chairman's Report *Gareth Lloyd*



Gareth Lloyd

I am sad to report that Cllrs Lincoln, Stainthorpe and Swain have left the Council. I would like to thank Cllrs Lincoln and Swain for their hard work over the last two years. However, I am pleased to announce that David Whittington has now joined the Parish Council. If anyone reading this is interested in learning more about becoming a Parish Council member, please do let me know.

We hope you will join us on **Saturday 27th June** for our annual Fun Fest on the recreation ground behind the Village Hall on Church Road. Our aim is to offer a day of fun and music without hitting everyone's wallet. We will have **free face painting**, a **free magic show**, **free rides***, and **free live music** throughout the day.

We are beginning the review of our **Neighbourhood Development Plan** and are looking for residents to join a Steering Group. The plan has already helped prevent several unwanted large scale developments from being approved, and your input will help shape the future of our parish. If you are interested, please contact either the Clerk or Cllr Stuart O'Dell, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.



The Parish Council will also be progressing several key projects over the coming months. These include:

- Completing the **Memorial Hall kitchen refurbishment** and **disabled toilet improvements**, which we hope to finish by September.
- Continuing our review of the **Neighbourhood Development Plan**.
- Exploring options for the **greenspace south of Keeley Lane**, including how it might be enhanced for wildlife.
- Improving **accessibility and safety** around parish facilities, including ongoing work to address website accessibility requirements.
- Supporting the development of the **Skylark Field (W10a) management plan**, ensuring we protect and enhance habitat for local wildlife.

We will keep residents updated as these projects progress.

* Some rides will have a donation bucket to raise money for local groups.

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



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

As we head into the summer months, I hope the weather will be kind to us and everyone can make the most of the sunny, longer days. It's always so lovely to see the skate park, children's play areas and the Multi Use Games Areas in use at both the Bedford Road and Church Road areas. Our play equipment is inspected on a weekly and monthly basis by our litter picker Lorna (Bedford Road) and caretaker Katie (Church Road) and a more detailed, annual RoSPA-led inspection is undertaken in May. Both Katie and Lorna (and I) recently undertook



play equipment inspection training to ensure we know what to look out for. If you spot something you are unsure of, do please let us know – contact me in the first instance.

I'm delighted to welcome David Whittington as a newly co-opted member of the Parish Council. I look forward to working with him. I'm sad to report Cllrs Lincoln, Stainthorpe and Swain have recently resigned and would like to thank them for their contributions. If anyone reading this is interested in learning more about becoming a Parish Council member, do please let me know.

A final reminder that our Fun Fest is slightly earlier this year – Saturday 27th June. If you would like a stall, do please let me know.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is once again meeting – do please let myself or Cllr Stuart O'Dell know if you are interested in becoming a member. Hyas Associates Ltd have been appointed to help the Parish Council review the plan, ensuring it remains robust and in alignment with Bedford Borough Council's policies and Local Plan(s).

Sudoku

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

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

Dates for your Diary 2026/27

JUNE

10th Jun 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
10th Jun 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
24th Jun 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
24th Jun 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
24th Jun 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

JULY

8th Jul 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
8th Jul 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
29th Jul 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
29th Jul 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
29th Jul 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

AUGUST

12th Aug 2026	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	7.00pm
12th Aug 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.15pm
12th Aug 2026	Full Council	7.30pm
26th Aug 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
26th Aug 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
26th Aug 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

SEPTEMBER

9th Sep 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
9th Sep 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
30th Sep 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
30th Sep 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
30th Sep 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

OCTOBER

14th Oct 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
14th Oct 2026	Full Council	7.15pm
28th Oct 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
28th Oct 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
28th Oct 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

NOVEMBER

11th Nov 2026	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	7.00pm
11th Nov 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.15pm
11th Nov 2026	Full Council inc precept setting	7.30pm
25th Nov 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
25th Nov 2026	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
25th Nov 2026	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

DECEMBER

9th Dec 2026	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
9th Dec 2026	Full Council inc payments & precept setting	7.15pm

JANUARY

13th Jan 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
13th Jan 2027	Full Council inc precept sign off	7.15pm
27th Jan 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
27th Jan 2027	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
27th Jan 2027	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

FEBRUARY

10th Feb 2027	Roads & Pavements Safety Steering Group	7.00pm
10th Feb 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.15pm
10th Feb 2027	Full Council	7.30pm
24th Feb 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
24th Feb 2027	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
24th Feb 2027	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

MARCH

10th Mar 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
10th Mar 2027	Full Council	7.15pm
31st Mar 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
31st Mar 2027	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
31st Mar 2027	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

APRIL

14th Apr 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
14th Apr 2027	Full Council	7.15pm
21st April 2027	Annual Parish Meeting	7.00pm
28th Apr 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	7.00pm
28th Apr 2027	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.15pm
28th Apr 2027	Leisure & Amenities Committee	7.30pm

MAY

12th May 2027	Annual Council Meeting	7.00pm
12th May 2027	Full Council	7.15pm
12th May 2027	Planning & Environment Committee	to follow ACM

All meetings are held at Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, Wootton.
Please check noticeboards and the parish council website for
any cancellations or changes to timings and/or venue.
<https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/wp-admin/admin.php?page=ee-simple-file-list-pro&eeFolder=Meetings>.

Please contact the Clerk to the Council if you would like to attend any meeting as the
Community Centre meeting room can only accommodate limited numbers.



Email: sue.abood@outlook.com
Phone: 07968 792862

As I write this at the very end of April and look back on what was happening this time last year, we were experiencing a bit of a heatwave in 2025. It's been really nice during April 2026, after what has felt like months of rain, to have seen the sun and experienced some warmer weather. The trees and hedgerows have burst into life with the countryside becoming green again. This time of year is a particular favourite of mine. That said, I'm none too keen on the hayfever that the blossom and flowers bring! The sight of the first ladybirds of the season in my front garden brought a smile to my face.



Firstly, I'd like to wish anyone taking exams this summer the very best of luck. It can be an extremely stressful time for a lot of people so I hope you manage to stay focused and calm throughout the coming weeks.

The new municipal year at the council starts in May and we start the year off with the annual meeting where places on the various overview and scrutiny committees are confirmed for the year to come. I'm pleased to say that I'll be continuing on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the two licensing committees, as well as taking on the role of the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for the Universal Overview and Scrutiny Committee – a new committee for the council to oversee all things Universal. The new committee meets for the first time on 29th June.

In terms of the region's health, you may have heard that our Integrated Care Board, the board that managed NHS services across Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) joined with the ICBs of Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on 1st April 2026. This new, much larger ICB is called the Central East Integrated Care Board and is now the 2nd largest ICB in the country serving 3.5 million residents. The change to the ICB was announced by the government in September 2025 leaving around 6 months for the new ICB to organise itself ready for launch. Back in March 2025 the government also announced that ICBs were required to cut their running costs by 50% with the idea of the much larger ICBs being to increase efficiency. What it has meant across the BLMK footprint is a large number of redundancies or staff members taking voluntary severance, numbering in the high hundreds, with experienced knowledgeable staff leaving the organisation.

One thing which I am pushing for with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to find out how the new ICB works in terms of finance. My question is whether the money from the central NHS will stop at the layer of the new Central East ICB or will money filter down into individual areas. Will the priorities for care that BLMK ICB had now have to compete with the priorities of Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough within the Central East ICB and will a re-prioritisation exercise now have to take place? This reprioritisation and distribution of funding could affect care in the local area so I am keen to hear from the senior team at the new ICB just how the new set up will work and the effect that may be felt locally. We are hoping that they

will attend an overview and scrutiny committee meeting soon.

In terms of the council's finances, there are concerns about the current savings plan as the amount of savings due to be found this financial year is already just under £2 million off target by the end of the first month. A total of around £18 million needs to be found in savings this year – a difficult task given rising costs. The application for Exceptional Financial Support made earlier in the year was successful with the council borrowing £20 million to balance the books for the 2025/26 year that has just ended and £25 million to use to try and balance the books for this financial year when it ends in April 2027. At the time of writing the council has three Best Value Inspectors looking into the council's performance. Back in February, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Alison McGovern MP, announced that ministers had appointed inspectors to undertake a Best Value Inspection of Bedford Borough Council's compliance with the Best Value Duty. This is so the government can have a "direct, independent assessment of whether the Authority is making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness." The report the inspectors produce will be submitted to the Secretary of State in June at the earliest.

This inspection comes on the back of Ofsted's inspection of Children's services whose rating dropped from Good to Requires Improvement and the Care Quality Commission's inspection of Adult Services resulting in an overall rating of Requires Improvement, with the council receiving the lowest possible score (a one) in three critical areas: Assessing Needs, Safeguarding, and Governance and Leadership. An improvement plan within Adult Services is being formulated and a named person from the Department for Health and Social Care and a Care and Health Improvement Advisor (CHIA) will provide expert assistance to the council during the improvement journey.

On a lighter note, I have heard about the ward funding that I can access to donate to projects or donate to organisations and charities where the money will be used for the good of the community. Due to the financial issues at the council, the amount of ward fund I have available

to allocate has been cut by just over 70%. In this last year (2025/26) the ward fund was pulled not even halfway through the year and before all the money could be allocated. I did however manage to allocate money to a new larger bin on the green on Lorraine Road, a new water heater for the Methodist Hub, 2 sets of dropped (pram) kerbs and a new road sign. At the time of writing the work for the dropped kerbs and the road sign has not been completed but should be in the next couple of months. The ward funding window opens again at the end of May, so if there are any organisations that would be interested in receiving some funding, albeit there is far less to go around, please do let me know, even if you've received donations before.

And just to finish off, a reminder that the Bedford River Festival this year will be taking place on the 18th and 19th July.

May I wish you a very happy summer!

Best wishes

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 primary 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 by email – sue.abood@outlook.com.



Need careers advice?

Whether you're an adult looking for a new direction or a young person in your final year of school preparing to step into the world of work, the right support can make all the difference.

I'm a locally based, fully qualified careers adviser in Oakley, providing help with CVs, applications, interviews, career choices, and flexible apprenticeship pathways. With experience working in schools and with adults, I offer practical guidance to help you move forward with confidence.

Sessions are bespoke and can be held locally or at your home.
References available.

walkwithyoucareers@gmail.com

07715 822824

COMPANIONSHIP, CONNECTION & SUPPORT

Do you have a family member who lives alone and would benefit from a friendly visit during the day?

I offer companionship and support, whether it's a chat over a cup of tea, a game of Scrabble, or a helping hand with light cleaning or gardening—bringing connection and reassurance to each day.

Based in Oakley, I visit locally and in surrounding villages.

I hold a fully enhanced DBS for adults and children.

If you or a loved one could benefit from a little extra support, please get in touch—I'd love to have a chat about how I can help.

Becky Southern

Get in touch to find out more!



Email: beckysouthern2905@gmail.com

07715 822824



Wootton - W9

We held our yearly Sausage and Mash Bash at the March meeting. It was well attended and you can see from the photos not much was left! 2 full slow cookers of mash, 76 sausages, 2 bags of frozen peas, several tins of baked beans and a lot of gravy, followed by lots of cake, practically all polished off!



Our April meeting is always our Annual Meeting. One of our committee members decided to stand down and we would like to thank her for all her hard work (She knows who she is) We were able to get a full committee but as with a

lot of organisations, these days, we would love to have more volunteers stand.

In May we held a Murder Mystery Evening which proved to be an amusing night. The committee certainly had fun acting out their roles while the audience tried to work out who did the dastardly deed.

Come and see us at the FunFest and have a go at our Tombola.

Future Meetings are:

June 17th - My Lavender Journey

July 15th - I'm a Shakespeare Groupie

August 20th - Becoming Queen Victoria
A re-enactment (Please note this meeting is a change of venue to be held at the Community Centre and on a Thursday, just for the month of August).

We welcome visitors at a cost of £5 that includes tea, coffee and biscuits. Meetings are normally held at The Memorial Hall at 7-30pm

IT MEANS WHAT?

In the summer months, Anglo-Saxons would have seen "beow" growing in the fields. We now refer to it as "barley".

The same can be said for "brēmel" – we know it as "bramble".

It's always nice to see a sunbeam or "sonne-bēam".

Many of us watch the setting of the sun at the end of the day, known to the Anglo-Saxons as "sunsidle".

In Old English, "autumn" did not exist. There was only "hærfest" – which didn't just cover the act of gathering crops. It was the name for the entire season from August until November.

Contemplation Corner

Why is the word "indefinable" defined in the dictionary?

Why are "apartments" so called, when they're all stuck together?

Shouldn't "monosyllabic" be one syllable?

Should "hyphenated" be written as "hy-phen-ated"?

If "racecar" is a palindrome, why doesn't the same follow for the word "palindrome"?

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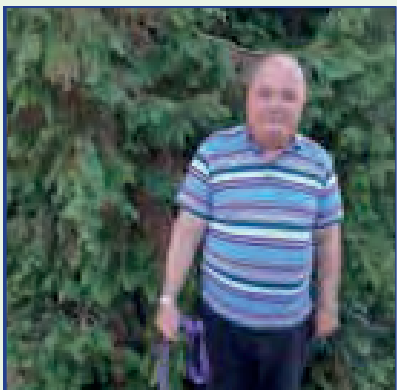
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- Builders before and after clean
- Tenancy beginning & end clean

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Email: john.wheeler@bedford.gov.uk
Phone: 07913 409 433
Facebook: search Cllr John Wheeler

Hallo – I hope everyone is over the winter blues and colds and looking forward to a summer of warm weather and getting out and about. By the time you read this, Wootton Primary School's May Fayre and the Community Fundraising Day (both on 16th May) will have taken place. I hope all went well at both events as they are fantastic for the community of Wootton.

Coming up soon is the Wootton Funfest and Motor Show, which is open from 1pm to 9pm on Saturday 27th June. The venue remains the same as always – Recreation Ground, Church Road. There will be live music, food stalls, licensed bar and stalls, plus a free funfair, facepainting and magic shows.

On 19th July Bedford will once again host the Bedford River Festival and August will see the Wootton Food Fest on 22nd August, at Harris Way – another great village event. Please look out for other events in and around the village over the summer months.

Students will now be well into their exams – I do wish them all the very best and wish them well for the future.

The Rev Canon Joseph Adewale will be joining St. Mary's in July and there will be a service for him at St. Mary's on Monday 6th July at 7.30pm. Please refer to their website for more details.

I welcome him and his family to Wootton and wish him well in his new post.

The new bin recycling is now in full flow, however if you are having any issues, please visit this link for further help: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/household-bins-and-recycling/food-waste-collections>.

Parking on the verges at Harris Way remains an issue despite calls from Blake Stephenson MP and pressure from Bedford Borough Council to remedy the issue. We had a very disappointing reply from Persimmon Homes which some of you have seen and we are now investigating what can be done in the interim, until the estate is adopted by Bedford Borough Council.

I have been working in partnership to see what can be done in relation to the proposed new bus routes through the village. There have been meetings with the School Transport team at Borough Hall and bus providers. At the time of writing this report, there is a very good chance the new W2 will come into Wootton, past Lomax Gardens and along Burgoyne Avenue before turning right into Cranfield Road. The route may then follow Cause End Road before journeying back down Fields Road before arriving at the bus loop on Folkes Road. There will be two buses an hour from Wootton to Bedford from 5.20am to 9.05pm Monday to Saturday. The C1 will continue to run seven days a week doing its normal route however Bedford transport is looking to see if the times can be tweaked to suit school times. On the school front, talks are ongoing with the school to see what can be done in relation to the Kempston route. I must reiterate however, at the time of writing this report the information above was not set in stone!

As mentioned on my Facebook page, Thorpe Way has been programmed by Bedford Borough Council for resurfacing works during this financial year. I don't, as yet, have a start date. The Parish Council and I are still pushing for other resurfacing works to roads and pavements, as there are still quite a few outstanding!

Once again thank you to everyone who does so much for the village. I'll see you on my

walkabouts, quite often with Harvey (labrador) who will be joining me in July and August. He'll be pleased to see you also!

Borough Council News

Planning Update: New Government Direction on Major Housing Applications

- An important change to the planning system is coming into effect from 11th May 2026 under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2026 that affects planning applications for 150 or more homes.
- Under the Government's new direction, where a local planning authority is minded to refuse an application of this size, it must first refer the application to the Secretary of State before a decision can be issued.
- In short, this means:
 - Applications for 150+ homes would require Government sign-off before refusal, giving Whitehall greater ability to overturn refusals.
 - Councils cannot issue a refusal until at least 21 days after notifying Government, introducing delays and an additional layer of national oversight.
- This will restrict councillors' ability to scrutinise planning applications and create a system where decisions are increasingly controlled nationally.
- While the Council will continue to assess applications against planning policy and local considerations, this change means that some decisions, particularly refusals, will now be subject to further review beyond the local authority.

East West Rail (EWR) Update

- EWR has launched its final route-wide public consultation, running from 14th April to 9th June 2026. This is an important opportunity for communities to review the latest plans and provide feedback before final proposals are submitted to Government in 2027.
- They are holding a series of public events, webinars and an online consultation portal where residents can view plans and provide feedback. A local event will take place in Bedford on 23 May at King's House, Ampthill Road.

- What is being proposed:

- A rebuilt Bedford station, including new platforms, improved access, a western entrance, and a public plaza.
 - A new station at Bedford St Johns, relocated closer to Bedford Hospital.
 - Changes to infrastructure to reduce disruption, including potential avoidance of major bridge works.
 - A relocated multi-storey car park to the west of Bedford station (Ford End Road)
 - Upgrades to the Marston Vale Line, including fewer, larger stations and improved services.
 - A new station at Tempsford, planned earlier than previously expected.
 - Up to four trains per hour, with a potential fifth service at peak times.
 - Longer trains to meet future demand.
 - Use of hybrid electric/battery trains to support environmental goals.
- While EWR is presenting updated designs and revised construction plans, the core issues remain unchanged, and the local Conservative Group remains collectively opposed to the northern route in its current form due to a lack of a credible business case and the scale of disruption over many years.
 - Further information can be found here: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/east-west-rail-announces-details-of-final-consultation>.

Highways Funding and Performance Update

- Bedford Borough Council has formally contacted the Department for Transport to request a correction to its current highways maintenance rating.
- The unverified data in the Department's Local Highway Maintenance self-assessment did not fully reflect the Council's level of investment. Updated and verified figures were provided promptly in early January 2026.
- The corrected data shows that a total of £9.528 million has been invested in highway maintenance. Based on the Department for Transport's own methodology, this level of

investment would be expected to result in a significantly higher score than is currently recorded.

- The Council is therefore seeking an update to ensure the published rating accurately reflects the level of investment being made locally to avoid the spread of misinformation.

Highways Maintenance Data

- During the month, the Council delivered 31,394m² of carriageway resurfacing and patching, alongside 1,047m² of footway resurfacing – this is a significant amount of practical work to improve road and pavement conditions for residents and motorists.
- The Council also carried out a range of supporting works, including 65 manhole or service valve covers replaced, 87 gullies replaced, 228 gullies cleansed, and 43 gullies cleared or jetted as part of resurfacing projects.
- In addition, two new pedestrian crossings were delivered, helping to improve safety and accessibility for people walking around the borough.
- The Highways teams also remained active in responding to day-to-day maintenance issues. In April, they attended 130 streets for carriageway pothole repairs, 2 footways for footway pothole repairs, and 266 streets for other maintenance repairs. Alongside this, 518 individual highway safety inspections were carried out to help identify and address issues across the network.
- Overall, the April was a busy month of delivery across Bedford Borough's highways and engineering services, with teams carrying out both planned improvement works and responsive maintenance to help keep the Borough safe.

Oasis Site (David Lloyd) – Public Consultation Update

- Positive progress is being made on plans for a new David Lloyd leisure facility at the former Oasis site in Bedford.
- The proposals would help keep the site in leisure use and support the delivery of modern health, fitness and racquets facilities for residents.

Bedford Athletics Stadium

- This month the Council has celebrated the official opening of the new track at Bedford Athletics Stadium – an exciting milestone for sport, health and community life across the borough.
- The new track is already being put to good use by young athletes however, this investment represents more than an improvement for local clubs, schools, residents and future sporting stars.
- It is also about encouraging participation, supporting wellbeing, and giving people the facilities they need to train, compete and achieve their ambitions.

Bedford Park Bandstand

- After being out of use for more than 10 years, Bedford Park's historic bandstand has now been beautifully restored.
- This is a welcome investment in one of Bedford's most treasured public assets, and residents can once again enjoy the bandstand for music and community events for years to come.

Housing Update

- Bedford Borough Council has secured £5.9 million of Government funding to help provide more council-owned temporary accommodation over the next four years.
- This funding will support the purchase and development of homes for residents and families who need housing assistance.
- Demand for temporary accommodation remains high, with 912 households currently in temporary accommodation across the borough. By increasing the number of council-owned homes available, the Council can reduce reliance on more expensive nightly-paid accommodation and provide more stable, suitable housing.
- Overall, this is a positive step that will help improve temporary accommodation for residents while also reducing longer-term pressure on housing budgets.

Town Centre Update

- Part of the former Beales unit, which has been vacant, is set to come back into use as it becomes the home of a new dance and

performing arts facility, helping to bring fresh energy and activity into the town centre.

- This will make better use of an empty unit, improve the look and feel of the area, and support wider use of nearby spaces such as the Corn Exchange during quieter times.

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Update

- Bedford Borough Council has secured £65,000 of external funding to support additional work tackling anti-social behaviour during 2026/27.
- This funding will provide extra uniformed ASB officers to patrol areas where there is the greatest need, helping to increase visibility and provide reassurance for residents, businesses and visitors.
- The officers will work alongside Bedfordshire Police and existing Council teams to help address persistent issues, offer advice and signposting, identify environmental concerns, and support vulnerable people who may need help from other services.
- The Town Centre Task Force has also now been formally launched following a successful trial, delivered in partnership with Bedfordshire Police. This will provide a stronger visible presence in the town centre and support efforts to make public spaces safer and more welcoming.

Support for Unpaid Carers

- Bedford Borough Council is working with two new partners, Mobilise and Blue Sky Carers Support, to improve support for unpaid carers across the borough.
- Mobilise offers free digital support, including practical online resources, wellbeing information, benefits guidance, online group sessions, and one-to-one support calls with a carers coach.
- Blue Sky Carers Support provides face-to-face advice and guidance for adult carers, including support for those who may not be confident using digital services. It will also continue the Bedford Hospital Carers' Hub, offering help in a safe and confidential setting when loved ones are admitted to hospital.
- Carers will also be able to access the Blue Sky

Social Care Card, which can help them identify themselves as a carer and access practical benefits from participating businesses.

Mockingbird Fostering Programme

- Bedford Borough Council has launched a new webpage highlighting its Mockingbird programme, which supports fostering families across the borough.
- Mockingbird brings foster carers together in small support networks, known as "constellations". Each group is supported by a specially trained hub home carer, who provides guidance, practical help and peer support.
- This creates an extended family-style network, helping foster carers feel more connected and giving children and young people greater stability, consistency and a stronger sense of belonging.
- Bedford Borough now has three Mockingbird constellations, supporting dozens of families.
- Anyone interested can visit: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/mockingbird>

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

- Bedford Borough Council is looking for more local families to foster, helping some of our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, supportive home environment.
- If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@bedford.gov.uk

John

BBCllr. John Wheeler

Ward Councillor for Wootton and Kempston Rural



Barry had never felt so depressed in his life. Sure, things had been bad on occasion before, surely no-one of his age could say anything different - you could not reach forty without hassle from time to time, it was impossible. But always before, it had only been one thing going wrong at any one time, or perhaps two. He had always managed to cope, to turn things round eventually.

But this time, it was different. He felt that everything in his life had gone wrong all at the same time, and he didn't know what to do now, which way to turn. His marriage had been on shaky ground for a long time. That part he could understand. When his wife had found out about his affair with that new girl, Lorraine, from the accounts department, she had gone ballistic, and thrown him out. But after a week or so, when he had gone grovelling, pleading with her, promising that he had never done anything like that before and never would he again, she had let him back into their marital home. She would neither forget nor forgive him, but at least they had progressed to a civilised truce now.

But now, in addition to that, there was the problem with the kids, both of them. He could hardly take it in! Last Thursday evening, when the police had knocked on their door, had been the start of it.

Ian, fifteen and taller than his Dad, had been caught with two of his mates, mugging an old lady as she came out of the Post Office with her pension book

in her hand. It was all on CCTV, there had been no denying it. The case came up next week.

Then, just this week, thirteen year old Alice had been sent home from school, accused of bullying another girl in her class. She had tearfully denied it, said it was her who was being bullied. The headmistress was looking into it, but in the meantime she had suspended Alice pending the outcome of the investigation.

His credit cards were both up to their limit, and the cheque he had sent for the minimum payment on his VISA card had just been declined by the bank.

And, as if all this wasn't enough, there were rumours about redundancies flying about at work to-day, after the recent take-over by their main competitor. The majority of the guys reckoned that it was his department that was the most likely to go, and Barry had been the latest to be employed, only seven months ago.

So now, here he was, not usually much of a drinker, finishing his fourth pint and trying to drown his sorrows at The Nag's Head, before going home to tell his wife of this latest disaster.

He had always been an outgoing chap, but he would never normally have shared his problems with a total stranger, as he did now to the tall man sitting on the stool next to him at the bar. It must have been the beer talking, or the fact that the

man seemed to be such a good listener, but Barry poured out his litany of problems to him. As he spoke, he became more and more morose.

If only someone could wave a magic wand, and everything could be right again", he said. "I think I'd sell my soul for that to happen!"

His companion gave him a sad smile.

"You'd better get home to your wife before you get too drunk to tell her", said the man, as he got up and turned to go. "Be seeing you".

Barry slowly trudged his way home. He felt so heavy hearted, although he did notice that the rain, which had been pouring down all day, and had soaked him on his way to the pub, had stopped now.

When he told his wife the sorry tale, she was more acceptant than expected.

"Don't worry about what may not happen, Barry," Diane said. Maybe it won't be your department that they decide to close. Wait and see what happens later this week. Come on now, I've cooked your favourite supper, lamb chops".

When he finally went to bed, he fell almost instantly into a deep, dreamless sleep, and woke up the next morning feeling more rested than he had for weeks.

At work, there was an internal email to all staff, advising them that they were all required to attend a meeting at 11:00 in the canteen. There, he found out that although some staff were being made redundant, his department was not affected. Barry was sad for those of his colleagues who had lost their jobs, but was mightily relieved that he personally was still employed.

His mood slightly lifted, he managed to reach the end of the day with no major problems. He left on time and hurried straight home to tell Diane the good news.

She was of course delighted to hear about Barry's job, but her face dropped again when she handed him the brown envelope that had come in the post that morning.

"It's addressed to you. I think it's from the Tax office."

"Oh no! Not more bad news!" he exclaimed, as he tore open the envelope.

Diane watched as the expression on his face slowly changed from trepidation to delight.

"It's a tax rebate!" he exclaimed. "They deducted too much tax last year. It's a cheque for £1,763 pounds! It couldn't have come at a better time. I'll pay it in tomorrow. Let's open a bottle of wine to celebrate!"

The next morning, Diane phoned Barry at work.

"I've just had a phone call from the school," she said. "The headmistress has found that it was Alice who was being bullied by the other girl. She's been completely cleared and can go back to school straight away!"

"Thank goodness for that!" he said. "Perhaps we're over the worst now. Let's try and have

a good weekend for once".

But they didn't really enjoy it, because over them, they had the spectre of Ian's court case the following Thursday.

The hearing at the Magistrates Court was even worse than they had feared. They felt

utterly ashamed and humiliated. However, the evidence showed that, although Ian had been with the other lads, he had not played an active part and had been hardly more than a bystander. In view of his previous good record, he received the lightest sentence. He was given a fine, was advised that he would now have a police record, but was free to leave the Court.

It was over! All those terrible things seemed sorted. Barry and Diane could finally have some peace of mind, and try to enjoy life together again. They decided to go to the Nags Head for a celebratory drink.

Barry was surprised to find that he was sitting next to the same man to whom he had poured out his troubles a couple of weeks previously. He happily told him about his change of fortune, and offered to buy him a drink.

"No thanks" the man said, but I would like to tell you something. Would you mind stepping outside for a moment?"

As Barry left the bar with him, he felt a strange sensation. It was as if he was going down on an escalator, but he was just going out onto the pavement. He was also starting to feel hotter and hotter. He looked at the man in bewilderment.

It was only then that he noticed the two small, red horns on his forehead.



SMALL FOREST, BIG IMPACT: 10 MILLION TREES PLANTED

Forest of Marston Vale Trust contributes to 10 million trees planted across England by England's Community Forests

A major environmental milestone has been reached across England, as the country's Community Forests network celebrates the planting of 10 million trees. The achievement comes through the Trees for Climate programme, funded by UK Government via the Nature for Climate Fund, and delivered by England's 15 Community Forests. As the smallest Forest in the network, the Forest of Marston Vale has made a significant contribution to the achievement. The Forest of Marston Vale Trust, the charity creating the Forest, has combined decades of woodland creation experience and expertise with renewed momentum from the Trees for Climate programme.

For more than 30 years, the Trust has been transforming the Bedfordshire landscape, turning former industrial land into thriving green spaces and in recent years through Trees for Climate, has been able to expand its reach offering landowners, farmers and community groups free advice and support, combined with an attractive funding package, to transform their land through hedge and tree planting and woodland creation.

"This milestone reflects the passion and dedication of Community Forests across England. We're proud to play our part and we'll continue delivering an ambitious tree planting programme, tackling climate change by capturing carbon and reducing flood risks as well as enhancing the well-being of local communities; creating greener, healthier spaces, strengthening local communities' connection with nature, supporting mental and physical health, and fostering a sense of community pride."

James Russell,
Forest Director, Forest of Marston Vale Trust

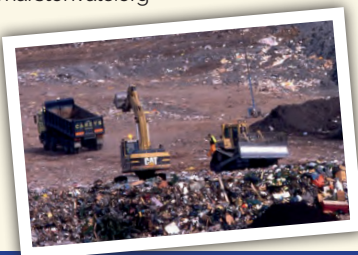
To commemorate the occasion, each Community Forest planted a ceremonial "10 millionth tree." In the Forest of Marston Vale, that honour went to long-time volunteer David Pryor, who planted the tree at College Wood in Silsoe. Having supported the Charity for many years, helping with fundraising, events and planting countless trees, David was the natural choice. The planting site, owned by Cranfield University, is more than just a woodland, with species being planted, such as Italian alder and Turkish oak, to research their resilience to our warming climate and accompanying pest threats.

"Planting our 10 millionth tree is a remarkable milestone and proof that government investment is delivering results. Trees are good for nature, people and climate, and I congratulate everyone whose commitment got us here."

Mary Creagh, Nature Minister

For the Forest of Marston Vale Trust this milestone is just another step on the journey to deliver 30% tree cover across the Forest area – one tree at a time!

If you're a landowner or farmer interested in planting trees on your land, get in touch with our Trees for Climate team and let's start planting. Email: treesforclimate@marstonvale.org or visit www.marstonvale.org



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Outstanding Parish Council Issues & Projects

Item	Location	Deadline	Any other information
Changing Rooms renovations	Church Road	2025 (now into 2026 due to snagging issues)	Works are almost complete, save for minor snagging issues.
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 BBC 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. WPC hopes to move forward on this once Revd Canon Joseph Adewale has arrived and settled at St. Mary's
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
Memorial Hall renovations	Bedford Road	2026	Works were recently completed to improve disabled toilet access. Further works are planned to refurbish the kitchen area
Neighbourhood Development Plan	The whole civil parish of Wootton	Ongoing	The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is meeting once again to review the plan and Hyas Associates Ltd have been appointed to aid in that respect. Residents are welcome to join the steering group – fuller information can be requested from the Clerk to the Council or Chairman of the Steering Group, Cllr Stuart O'Dell

¹ Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator

Item	Location	Deadline	Any other information
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.



Your dedicated Speedwatch Team - Keith Randell, Les Dick, Graham Ward, Anil Mistry and myself were delighted to welcome a new member – Jean-Michel Rodrigues – who joined us last month and took part in our session. We were unable to carry out our sessions in January, February and March as the new charger had failed to get the SID working and a new one had to be brought out to us. The police sent out over 600 letters to offending motorists in April and anew group was set up in Brickhill. We have not caught many speeding motorists in our recent sessions

– one in April - 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. If you feel that you could help us out please get in touch with Juliet Wright - juliet.wright@beds.police.uk. 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 come out at these hours, so if you see people speeding try to get their registration number and let the police know! Please still take care when driving through Wootton as the number of potholes in the surrounding area seems to have grown! Let's keep safe as the weather gets warmer.

Malcolm Chalmers

Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator

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.



Welcome to Joseph!

We are looking forward to welcoming our new vicar, Revd Canon Joseph Adewale and his family to Wootton in July.

His Licensing service will be at **St. Mary's on Monday 6 July** at 7.30pm. Everyone very welcome to join us for this special service.

Our Summer Holiday Club is back!!

Tuesday 25 to Friday 28 August

For current School Years: Reception to Yr 8

Bookings open from 31 May

Spaces are limited so early booking recommended!



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 8 June, 13 July. To book your place contact Peter Stephens on 01234 765403.



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Wootton Academy

As we move into the heart of the summer term, the plans for Wootton Academy as a full secondary school are rapidly becoming a reality. Recent months have been particularly busy on our site as we prepare for a landmark September.

While the recent Easter break provided a moment of reflection, our site teams and staff have remained in top gear to ensure every detail - from the bricks of our new buildings to teaching and pastoral staff - is ready for our students.

Developing our site - the new block and beyond



The most prominent sign of our growth is the **new classroom block**, which is progressing apace. We are thrilled to confirm that the building is on track for handover at the start of the summer holidays. This gives plenty of time for our staff to move in and meticulously prepare

the new classrooms and dining facilities before the autumn term begins.

However, our focus isn't just on new buildings; it's about how people move through the school. We've paid significant attention to detail regarding the flow of the site. Over the Easter break, we completed several key projects:

The front courtyard: We have remodelled the flower beds to create a significantly larger paved area. This provides more room for students to relax during breaks and ensures our morning line-ups have plenty of space.



New access paths: A new path has been installed at the front of the school to make it easier for students and visitors to navigate the site, particularly during the busy bus and car drop-off windows.



We are also finalising plans for wider steps near the art department, a new exit route for the tennis courts, and improvements to the bike shed.

Putting people first: "the Sophie Test"

A school is nothing without its people, and our recruitment process has been rigorous. We have applied what we call the "**Sophie Test**" to every new appointment: if someone isn't good enough to teach our own children, they're not good enough for our students. This is a high bar for quality that we refuse to compromise on. We have worked really hard to recruit the additional teachers needed for a bigger school, and appointed nearly all of these by Easter!

Our pastoral team is also expanding to support our growing student body. Existing Heads of Year Miss Thompson, Mr Hillard, and Mr Oyemade will be joined by two new appointments, Mr Kendrick and Mr Binczyk. Furthermore, we are introducing a **House system** to provide more opportunities for student leadership and community participation. We've still to decide on House names. Sadly, my suggestions of "Hufflepuff", "Gryffindor" etc were firmly vetoed by Mrs McMorn, but we'll have finalised these and others aspects very shortly.

Admissions and student numbers

The interest in joining the Wootton family has been really heartening. We made a large number of offers on National Offers Day back in March, and have seen a healthy number of later applications across Years 7, 8, and 9 since then. We are working closely with the admissions team at the Council to ensure a smooth transition for all families.

Our staff are already liaising with feeder schools to get to know our new students before they even set foot on site. If you are still considering a place for your child, spaces remain available and you can apply through your Local Authority.

Enriching the student experience

Of course, an excellent education goes far beyond the classroom. We've been thinking hard about how we can give students and staff a more civilised school day and also give clubs and other extra-curricular opportunities the chance to flourish.

With this in mind, from September we are extending our lunch break from 40 minutes to **one full hour**. This will give everyone more time to eat and relax, and also engage in extra-curricular activities. As a result, the school day will now finish at 3:20pm.

Alongside this, we want to enhance Wootton's long-standing reputation for excellence in dance, drama, and music. With this in mind, we've recruited professional trumpeter and Wootton alumnus **Tom Syson** to help develop an ambitious new Performing Arts Plan. Our goal is to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn an instrument or perform. We'll have lots more to say on this as things develop!

As you can see, it's been, and continues to be, a busy time. Wootton these days really is a school transformed. And whilst we would never claim that everything is perfect, we are proud with the improvements made as a result of everyone's hard work in recent years.

If you would like to see these changes for yourself, we would love to show you around - just email hellowootton@wootton.beds.sch.uk to book a tour.

Mark Lehain

*Executive Headteacher,
Wootton Academy Trust*



Local GP Practice Announces Major Update and Rebrand

We're pleased to share a series of important updates to our GP practice, aimed at keeping patients and local communities informed about significant changes now underway.

Following approval from our Integrated Care Board (ICB), our practice will now be known as **The Vale Medical Practice**. This update reflects a number of developments, including a new name, refreshed logo, and an updated staff structure, all designed to better support our patients now and into the future.

Why the changes?

The primary aim of this update is to inform patients about the significant changes taking place across the practice. Our new name better reflects the wider area we serve—including the villages of **Marston Vale and surrounding communities**, alongside Wootton and Shortstown—while continuing to deliver high quality, personal GP care close to home.

Our refreshed logo includes a subtle nod to our former name, acknowledging our history while looking ahead to the future.

Strengthening our services and teams

We are strengthening our **management, administrative, and clinical team structures** to help us become even more responsive, approachable, and personalised in how we care for patients. Alongside this, we are working to improve the overall feel and patient experience at our current sites.

Over time, we also plan to **increase the number of clinical services available from our existing locations**, alongside greater engagement with our Patient Participation Group and wider community.

Digital improvements

For now, our **current website** remains our **digital front door**, and we are actively adapting it to reflect these changes. In time, we are working towards a **full website overhaul**, which we believe will further improve access, provide more patient resources, and strengthen the connection between patients and the practice.

Our mission and values

At the heart of **The Vale Medical Practice** is a simple mission:

compassionate, patient centred care, supported by modern innovation.

While our name and boundaries may be changing, our core values remain the same. We are proud to combine traditional family doctor care with new ways of working that improve safety, access, and efficiency.

We remain committed to:

- Supporting and developing our locally rooted staff
- Acting as a GP and clinician training and research active practice
- Improving health outcomes for our communities
- Working responsibly and sustainably
- Using innovation to enhance access, safety, and efficiency

Working together and welcoming feedback

These changes have been developed in collaboration with our **ICB commissioners, Patient Participation Group (PPG), and staff team**. We warmly welcome patient feedback, which helps shape how we grow and improve.

Patients can share feedback via our website: <https://www.woottonvale.co.uk/compliments-and-complaints/>

We take pride in listening to our patients and working hard to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

We're grateful for the continued trust and support of our patients, our PPG, and local partners, and we look forward to caring for individuals and families across the Vale for many years to come.

Wootton - Fun Fest - 2026

Saturday 27th June 2026

Recreation Ground, Church Road, Wootton

Free Entry

Stalls 1pm - 5pm

Free Fun Fair 1pm - 5pm

Free Face Painting 1pm - 5pm

Free Magic show and balloon modelling 2:30pm - 5:30pm

Free Music 1pm - 9pm

Fun Fair - All free*

- ⇒ **70ft Assault Course**
- ⇒ **Bungee Trampolines**
- ⇒ **Total Wipe Out**
- ⇒ **Children's Bumper Cars**
- ⇒ **Hook-a-duck**
- ⇒ **Hoopla**
- ⇒ **Coconut Shy**



*** Yes all the fair rides and fair stalls are free. We will have donation buckets to collect money for Wootton Charities.**



WOOTTON BLUE CROSS

WE NEED UNDER-7 COACHES & PLAYERS!



JOIN OUR TEAM!

- ⊕ NEW UNDER-7 TEAMS FOR NEXT SEASON
- ⊕ OPEN TO BOYS & GIRLS FROM YR 2
- ⊕ COMMITMENT DEADLINE FOR COACHES IS MAY 31ST

HELP SHAPE THE NEXT GENERATION! VOLUNTEER AND COACH YOUR CHILD

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME • ALL SKILL LEVELS WELCOME

INTERESTED? CONTACT US TODAY!
 Email: wbcrossyouth@gmail.com
 Facebook page: Wootton Blue Cross Youth




Welcome to our Summer 2026 Newsletter!

We are very pleased to announce, we are accepting children from **12 months old** as of September 2026. We have **places available** for children aged 12 months to 4 years in September 2026. If you would like to come and visit our wonderful, nurturing, setting, please get in touch.

We accept all funding types including 30 hours, 15 hours and 2 year low income 15 hours. Payment can be made via childcare tax free accounts.

We have lots to look forward to in our Summer term. We are **celebrating** our school leavers with a graduation ceremony and a leaver's party. We have our amazing sports sessions provided by Socatots and our emotional wellbeing movement sessions provided by Movement with Mel.

Please give the Sweet Peas children a wave if you see us out in the village. We are enjoying a weekly visit to Tesco, where the children purchase items for the setting such as fruit and vegetables.

In our popular weekly **cookery club** we have been making some delicious food. The children made a Victoria sponge cake for St George's Day. In honour of National Frog Day we made a swamp cake with jelly. We have also made healthy pizza wraps and rice salad.

We are welcoming all Dad's, Carers, Uncles, Grandad's etc to our Father's Day stay and play in June (Danishes are provided!). The children have also been practising for our Sports Day in July including a parents/carers race at the end!

We operate term time only Monday to Friday 8:15am - 3:45pm.

Sessions are:

Breakfast Club: 8:15-9am

AM session: 9-12pm

Lunch Club: 12-12:45pm

PM session: 12:45-3:45pm

We accept all funded hours:

15 hours, 2 year funding— low income

15 hours funding—term after child turns 3 years old

30 hours funding—working families from 9 months

We also accept cross funding if your child attends/would like to attend more than one childcare setting.

We are always looking for volunteers to be part of our amazing committee, if you would like to be involved with your local community, we would love to hear from you. This involves a 30 minute teams call in the evening, once a month.

T: 01234 767785 E: hello@sweetpeascio.org W: www.sweetpeaspreschool.org

Wootton Memorial Hall, Bedford Road, Wootton, MK43 9JB



Established 1967

St. Mary's Church Hall, St. Mary's Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9HB
Tel: 01234 767158 Email: stmaryspreschoolwootton@outlook.com

With Christmas now a fading memory, we have made a good start to 2026!
All of the children have returned happy and settled and are enjoying our new topics and activities.

We started the Term taking our inspiration from the cold, frosty mornings and learnt about animals that live in cold places. We pretended to feed fish to penguins, made penguins from dough and collaged shiny igloos. We have also been learning about the different birds that visit our garden.

We have enjoyed getting muddy as we explore our extensive outdoor area!
Later in the term, we are going to be thinking about keeping healthy and looking after ourselves.
Chinese New Year gives us a wonderful opportunity to learn about another culture and try new foods.

We will be celebrating World Book Day in March with a journey through several
Traditional Tales and dressing up as our favourite storybook characters.



We will also be raising money for Comic Relief and dressing up in funny clothes.



In March, we will welcome our mums, grandmas and others who are mother figures to us to our annual Mothers' Day Afternoon Tea.



The term will end with our Easter festivities, including an egg hunt and an Easter service at St. Mary's Church.

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. We currently have limited availability for September 2026 and are taking applications for September 2027. 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 £6.50 per hour

Term time opening hours Mon 9.00-12.00 Tues, Weds, Fri 9.00-16.00 Thurs 9.00-15.00

Wootton - Village Agent



Update from Wootton Village Agent

Village Agents provide a free, confidential service and are here to help people over 60 with a variety of issues – large or small. We are funded by Bedford Borough Council. We are all DBS checked and operate in the strictest confidence. Andrea is the Village Agent for Wootton.

Support with Blue Badges - if you have a permanent disability or illness that limits your walking ability then you may be entitled to apply for a Blue Badge. This enables you to park in disabled bays closer to your destination. You don't have to be a driver to apply, you can use the badge in any vehicle as long as you are a passenger. If you already have a badge, remember to check your badge's expiry date and allow 6 weeks to re-apply. Andrea can help with both new and renewal applications.

Attendance Allowance – is a non-means tested benefit for people over state retirement age to help with extra costs incurred because of a severe illness or disability. You could get as much as £114.60 per week. Andrea can help you to claim if you think you might qualify.

Disabled toilet access key - Some disabled toilets can only be used by people who have a special RADAR key. If you have a disability that means you need to use a disabled toilet, call Andrea for a free RADAR key

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 Attendance Allowance forms, Carer's Allowance, Council Tax Support and Blue Badges.

Please contact Andrea, your **Village Agent** on

Freephone 0800 039 1234 email: andream@bedsrcc.org.uk

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



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

What is Cold Calling?

'Cold calling' refers to the unsolicited attempt of making a sale for goods or services. Cold calling can take place in person, at your home. In some cases, cold calling can be used as a tactic for rogue traders, bogus selling and even distraction burglary.

Cold calling, although at times a nuisance, is not illegal. However, the law does state it is a criminal offence if a cold caller ignores a homeowner's request to leave and not come back. Your first line of defence is to **politely ask a cold caller to leave, not come back and close the door.**

Types of cold calling

- **Door-to-door sales:** Often involving the sale a poor-quality items, these can seem like a bargain but the reality is you may be purchasing inferior or unsafe products, door step deals that are too good to be true usually are.
- **Rogue traders:** Can make calls for numerous reasons but mainly to deceive you out of money. For example, they might say they have spare materials from another job so can do the work cheaply. Another example we see frequently is traders approaching residents to point out fault in their home (e.g. a loose roof tile) and will offer to fix it. This usually leads to them finding other (made up) faults, leading to a lengthy invoice for work which is not needed. Tactics are used to deliberately trick people and limit the time for you to make decisions you might not normally make.
- **Charity fundraisers:** Depending on the local authority charities, they might need a licence to make door-to-door collections and must abide by 'no cold-calling' stickers. Fundraisers should confirm with their local authority about what conditions may apply. Charity collectors should confirm their identity, if they don't – ask them to.
- **Religious cold callers:** Are not restricted under Trading Standards Regulations but can be politely turned away if you do not want to speak with them.
- **Distraction Burglary:** This is when someone calls at your home pretending to be a bogus official to get into your home in order to steal cash or goods.

Advice for dealing with cold callers

- **Never agree** to work or buy goods on the spot, even if it seems like a good deal
- **Get 3 different quotes** from reputable, recommended local traders rather than accepting one on your doorstep.

<https://www.trustmark.org.uk/homeowner> - Government approved

<https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/> - traders are all vetted by Trading Standards practitioners

- **Ask for ID** Always ask for identification and keep your doors locked. Ensure your back door is locked even when you are home. Do not let anyone pressure you into entering your home if you are unsure of their identity.
- **Display** a "No Cold Calling" **sticker** on or near your front door; it is a criminal offence to ignore it
- **Personal safety** – if you feel concerned for your safety, call 999

Home or away? Keep all doors locked



Is anyone expected
Back door locked

STOP



Put chain on before
opening door

CHAIN



Ask for caller's I.D.
Check it by phone

CHECK

Contact us **0808 223 1133**
Police non emergency number **101**
Or in the case of emergency **999**



How to report a cold calling incident

If you suspect you have been called upon by a rogue trader or a cold caller who has not left when requested or experienced other issues with a no cold calling, please send an enquiry to Citizens Advice Consumer Advice Service website at <https://tinyurl.com/mt7e3cnn> or clicking [here](#) or by calling 0808 223 1133.

If you can take note of a description of who has knocked on your door, the company name (any fliers or leaflets given to you) and vehicle descriptions, this can help progress our enquiries.

To request a no cold calling sticker, contact ehadmin@bedford.gov.uk. As pictured above, these can be displayed at your front door to deter cold callers and remind you what to do if they call.

For further information around your consumer rights and protections visit

<https://tinyurl.com/mt7e3cnn>

Friends Against Scams - Doorstep Crime

01/05/2026

By India Greene, Trading Standards Apprentice



Sunday Mornings



Service starts at 10:30am
Rev Sydney Sichilima



Join us for Breakfast
from 10:00am



Treasure Seekers
10:30am - 11:45am
FREE ~ For Kids aged 4-12
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



Memory Gym
First Monday of the Month



Worship Group
Practice once a week
Seeking musicians to join

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

Library

Here are days and times for regular events at Wootton Library.

ACTIVITY	DAY	TIME
Rhyme Time	Tuesdays (term-time only)	10.30am-11am
Bridge Club	Tuesdays (term-time only)	2.30pm - 4.30pm
Bounce and Rhyme	Thursdays (term-time only)	10.30am-11am
Building Block Play	Fridays	2pm-4.30pm
Lego Club	Saturdays	11am-12.30pm

Plus Regular Poetry group - Verse and Voices Poetry - 2.15pm-3.45pm

Bring along a couple of favourite poems to read and discuss with the group, or just come and listen to others - **Monday 29 June**

Wishful Thinking: inspiration: Explore dreams or things that inspire us. Quick syllables poem. - **Monday 13 July**

Summertime: holidays and escapes. Interpret freely.



There's lots happening this year with the Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group (WNCG) and our ever-popular Memory Gym—and we would love you to be part of it.

If you haven't joined us before, the Chat Group is a really friendly and welcoming space for all Wootton residents. Pop in for a cup of tea or coffee, enjoy some delicious homemade cake, and have a good old chat. It's all very relaxed, and just a £1 donation helps keep things going. Whether you come along with a friend or on your own, you'll always find a warm welcome waiting.



We've also been trying out some new ideas. In May, we held two special events: a community fundraising day on 16th May, joining with The Cock Inn to raise money for four local charities, and a bus trip for WNCG members to see the Dreams n' Wishes production of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang—a great time was had by all! We have also been building some lovely new connections in the community. Recently, members of the group visited Wootton Academy, where we have started to forge a link with the students. We're delighted that some of them

have chosen to volunteer at Memory Gym, bringing fresh energy, smiles, and a real sense of connection between generations. It's been a joy to see.

Memory Gym continues to be a highlight of the month, using music and shared memories to bring people together in a fun and supportive way. Do remember that Memory Gym takes place on the first Monday of every month—including Bank Holidays.

Dates for Your Diary – Memory Gym

Monday 1st June
Wootton Academy Music Group

Monday 6th July
Steve, his saxophone, and friends
(The Roxtonettes)

Monday 3rd August
To be confirmed

Monday 7th September
To be confirmed

Monday 5th October
Laurie and Memory Gym tries
Musical Bingo again

Monday 2nd November
Steve Knibbs entertains

Monday 7th December
Memory Gym Christmas Party

Monday 4th January
Steve Knibbs and Memory Gym celebrate
the New Year

Fundraising Events

Monday 21st September (2.30–4.00pm)
Karl E.A. Presley Returns – Tickets £5.00

Monday 7th December
Memory Gym Christmas Party with
The Abba Queens – £5 per person

Wednesday 9th December (from 7.30pm)
Alive and Singing Winter Concert – Tickets
£5.00

We hope you'll come along and enjoy what we have to offer—there's always a friendly face waiting.

For more information check our
Wootton Neighbourhood Chat Group
Facebook page.

Keeley End Pond *Preserving a Natural Habitat*

Keeley End Pond stands as a cherished feature of our parish, and the parish council is committed to maintaining it in as natural a state as possible. This approach is designed to protect ground nesting birds, pollinators, and a variety of other wildlife that rely on the pond and its surroundings for their wellbeing.

We have observed a heron visiting the pond and are delighted to see goldfish flourishing amidst the waters (despite the heron – but that's nature!) Ducks and moorhens are frequent visitors, adding to the vibrant diversity of the site. The overgrowth around the pond provides

essential shelter, supporting the needs of many species and ensuring they have safe spaces to nest and feed.

It is for these reasons that the council has chosen not to intervene with extensive management or landscaping. Allowing the pond's vegetation to thrive naturally is a conscious decision to safeguard the delicate balance of its ecosystem.

We know many of you enjoy spotting wildlife as you walk past this village asset and hope you continue to do so for many years to come. If you have yet to see it, it is located on the footpath linking Bedford Road to Hollies Walk.



Crystal Care Pet Grooming



by Louise Hughes

Tel: 01234 768303 lou@crystalcarepetgrooming.co.uk
23 Fields Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9JJ
www.crystalcarepetgrooming.co.uk

All breeds of dog, cats and small pets catered and well cared for.



**General Property
Maintenance &
Home Improvements**

*Painting & Decorating - UPVC windows/doors/fascias & soffits
Kitchen/Bathrooms – Tiling- Carpentry/flat pack
Fencing/Decking and more*

Call Paula or Paul
01234 757 454 / 07887 852 489
Email thelook@tiscali.co.uk

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downsize your property?

www.cranesproperty.co.uk
or call
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info@limestonemk.co.uk property management



January 2026 saw the Brigades at Wootton celebrate our 10 Year Anniversaries with numerous parties and it's been great to welcome new members along to start their Adventures with us. A lot has happened in those years, but we're not slowing down, instead we have our most ambitious year ahead with 3 camps in the planning and a few special '10' Challenges along the way.

First camp up is a 5 day Narrowboat cruise in May with an opportunity to see a different side of life and they'll be lots of locks to negotiate along the way. We follow that up with our ever popular Summer Camp (in tents), this time to Devon and hope to have around 70 attending that.

Our final camp of 2026 will be in October when around 10 of our band are to join a Massed Marching Band (90 strong) Tour of Belgium and France, performing at numerous Towns and locations en-route such as at the Menin Gate. They'll also be visiting some of the Battlefields where Brigade members fell in WW1 & WW2 and include visits to places such as Passchendaele, The Somme, Vimy Ridge to pay our respects.



To take part in this incredible opportunity, all our band members require a special band jacket costing £50 each x10 = £500 (Plus a further 10 Band Jackets for the other band members & a few spare sizes) + £500. These will then be usable at other future events such as our Village Remembrance Parades.

It's also costing a lot for a week long tour, especially on top of 2 other camps and we'd like to help our members by offsetting £100 each if we can (£100 x10 = £1000)

We shall be holding a fundraiser on 28th February and we'd love your support.



If anyone would like to make a donation direct to our appeal fund, please contact us via our email BBGB1stWootton@gmail.com

YOGA



A flow based class with attention to alignment to enhance flexibility, strength and well being. Very friendly and welcoming groups. £8 or £7 concession a class on a drop in basis.

Mondays 6.15 – 7.15 p.m. Wootton Village Hall, Church Road.

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

Gen also teaches small group asana, meditation and philosophy courses on a Thursday morning for those interested in the full spectrum of yoga.

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



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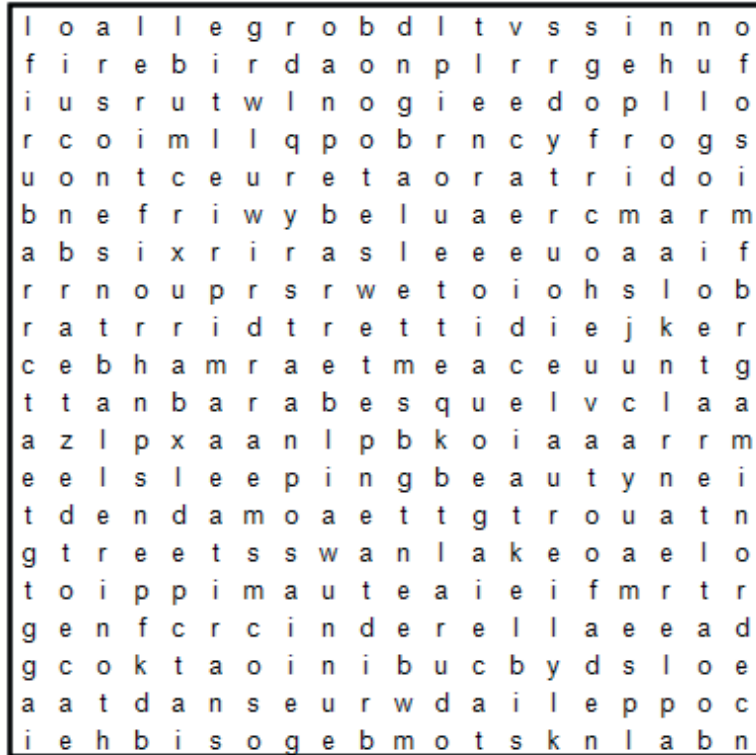
Louiseward10@yahoo.co.uk
07753 811910

10+ year experience, Wootton based.
For Sole Traders, Ltd companies, Payroll
services. Certified Xero partner

Word Search

Ballet

Ballet dance originated in the 15th century in the Italian Renaissance Courts. It is now a highly technical form of dance. Ballet dancers wear special point shoes to help them stand on their toes. In one week alone a ballerina can wear out 2-3 pairs of point shoes.

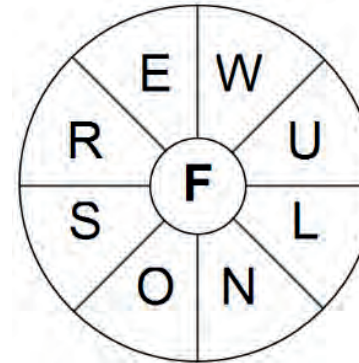


Word List

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

Allegro	Arabesque	Ballerina
Ballerino	Ballet	Barre
Bolshoi	Cinderella	Coppelia
Danseur	Devant	Don Quixote
Firebird	Juliet	Pirouette
Prima	Romeo	Sleeping Beauty
Swan Lake	Tombe	

Word Wheel



FLOWERS

Flowers are often called blossoms. A flower gets its food from the sunlight, water and from minerals within the soil. The flower is the reproductive part of the plant. Did you know that broccoli is actually a flower?

This Flowers themed word wheel is made from a 9 letter Flowers themed word. Try and find that word, then make as many words of any length as you can from these letters. You can only use each letter once, and each word must include the letter F.

Write your answers here:

Sudoku

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

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

Defibrillators around Wootton

