



# Wilstead NEWSLETTER

including Parish Council News

January 2026

PUBLISHED BY WILSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH, PART OF BEDFORD & DISTRICT NW ASSOCIATION



## SPRING LAMB DAY

**Sunday 8th March  
11.00am to 3.00pm**

**Manor Farm, Elms Lane  
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*Supporting Cotton End Forest School*



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Tickets £5 each, available from Eventbrite or cash on the day!!

**BBQ, refreshments and lots more to see and do!**

*Contents this month include:*

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**Sad news about our friend and colleague**

### **GERALD GALE**

The Editorial Team are sorry to report that Gerald, one of the first supporters of the Newsletter and the Neighbourhood Watch Group in Wilstead, passed away peacefully on Friday 2nd January.

His wife Gwynneth was with him which was a comfort. All the team at Wilstead Newsletter send her their deepest condolences and kind wishes.



**Coming soon to  
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**SATURDAY  
7th FEBRUARY  
2:00pm**  
(doors open 1:00pm)

**SATURDAY  
7th FEBRUARY  
6:30pm**  
(doors open 5:30pm)

**SUNDAY  
8th FEBRUARY  
2:00pm**  
(doors open 1:00pm)

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**WOOTTON COUNTY PLAYERS**  
[www.countryplayers.org.uk](http://www.countryplayers.org.uk)

*Your Co-ordinator is:*

## Wow what a success!

The Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks 2025 proved to be an unbounded success. On top of the 35 walks we put on, we welcomed the several Ramblers Groups from across the county border who all also contributed walks to the program. 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**  
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# Wilshamstead Parish Council

## Planning Application For Up To 149 Houses At Duck End Lane Recommended For Refusal

Reported previously was that the Borough Council Planning Committee made up of elected Borough Ward Councillors members, had considered this planning application at the November meeting, making a recommendation for this application to be refused. The members had heard strong objections being raised by a number of representatives from the Wilstead community.

The Parish Council response had been robust with an experienced planning consultant being commission to provide a detailed technical challenge to the local authority to this planning application at Duck End Lane.

In the previous update, the next steps were the application was due to return to a future Planning Committee, with this allowing the Planning Officer to have prepared a range of supporting planning policy reasons for a refusal. The committee members would then vote on the application outcome.

The Parish Council are aware that this application has not returned to the Planning Committee to date. The Parish Council are also mindful that this delay, could potentially bring future challenge from the applicant. Therefore, the Parish Council are monitoring this matter very closely.

## Major Gas Main Replacement Works Latest

Regrettably, it remains at the time of writing, the Parish Council has still heard nothing further regarding these works which had previously been due to start on 10th November. This is disappointing and please be assured that if any further information whatsoever is received regarding the start date of the gas main replacement works taking place on Bedford Road towards the roundabout and down along Cotton End Road as far as Ivy Lane, this will be communicated across various local platforms by the Parish Council.

Continued on page 4 >>>

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## Highways Safety In Littleworth

Following the installation of the average speed cameras on Cotton End Road, the Parish Council had wished to look at redeployment of two of the vehicle activated signs along Cotton End Road to increase the coverage in other parts of the parish, as improving highways safety is important to the Parish Council.

Parish Council representatives recently attended a site meeting with a local authority Highways Officer to look at Littleworth. The locations of some highway's poles have been agreed, these will be installed shortly, to enable this part of the village to have signage in situ in due course.

## Footway Maintenance In Bedford Road

Bedford Borough Council have advised that there will be footway maintenance works at Bedford Road, Service Road Wilstead as part of this year's annual programme. The intended scope of the scheme is to resurface the footway from, the farm entrance approximately 50m from the Eastern service road entrance to outside House no. 57.

The works have now been programmed by the local authority contractor DJT Surfacing and are planned to take place between 05th January and 26th January with detailed information being sent in a letter to the local residents that the works will have a bearing upon.

## Village Improvements Update

There will be two new bins installed to upgrade existing bins, the red dog bin located at the junction between Whitworth Way and Wooding Way has rotted away and will be replaced with a Plaza Style bin that will be able to take dog and general waste. There will also be a new bin to replace the one sadly destroyed by fire, at the entrance to the village car park on Whitworth Way.

The order has been placed with the local authority for these installations, though Bedford Borough Council have advised they do currently have a backlog with installations so there is no known timescale at present for the installation.

## Jubilee Way Playing Field

The Parish Council are looking at options to enhance the facilities at the Jubilee Way Playing Field. Some of these are ambitious plans to improve the kitchen and storage space (by extending) the building itself. Others include the replacement of the dilapidated knee rail fence and the installation of new equipment adjacent to the MUGA. One the current suggestions is to move the knee rail further into the grassed area and construct a new barrier thus allowing more parking space. We are also considering the idea of placing some outdoor Gym equipment into this area adjacent to the MUGA, we have also looked at the idea of outdoor table tennis tables. This equipment would be essentially free to use for all residents.

The parish Council would welcome feedback on these proposals or any suggestions relating to the equipment we may be able to supply. Please send feedback/suggestions to: [office@wilsteadparishcouncil.org](mailto:office@wilsteadparishcouncil.org).

The intention is to keep the two football pitches and support the Wilstead teams but ideally we would like to see greater recreational use of the area by more parish residents.

Just a quick reminder that the Jubilee Centre and MUGA are available for hire. The MUGA has (PAYG) floodlights so evening sessions over the darker nights are easily accommodated. Please contact the Jubilee Centre directly for details.

## Change In Parish Office Opening Hours

Please kindly note that with immediate effect the Parish Office will be open on a Wednesday from 9am to 12 midday. The Parish Office is at the rear of the Village Hall, it is worth ringing in advance to ensure it is open.

## Contacting The Parish Council

The best way to contact the Parish Council is to email Lizzie (the Parish Clerk) at: [office@wilsteadparishcouncil.org](mailto:office@wilsteadparishcouncil.org).

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Alternatively, you can call 01234 743152 or write to PO Box 1548, Bedford, MK44 5AX

It is always more interesting to attend a Parish Council meeting in person to see what goes on and understand the range of items covered in trying to move improvements for the Wilstead community forwards. Dates and the agenda are advertised on the village noticeboards, with meetings usually on a Monday starting at 7pm in the small hall at Wilstead Village Hall. (Head to the left-hand side of the main hall building and you will see the door open which is where the Parish Council will be). Everyone is most welcome to join us, with the next meeting scheduled for, 5th January.

Also please remember to view regular updates published on local matters through the Wilstead Parish Council website, do visit [www.wilsteadparishcouncil.org](http://www.wilsteadparishcouncil.org) to see the latest news and helpful information.

## Wilstead Primary School Update

The last few weeks of 2025 at Wilstead Primary School were so busy for our students and staff. We had a great time though, decorating Christmas Trees and singing carols at All Saints' church, rehearsing Nativity performances and visiting care homes in Wixams to spread Christmas cheer! We have been lucky, as well, to welcome new members to our governing board, and we extend our thanks to them for all of their support.

In the new year, we look forward to a change to our little school as we join the HEART Academies Trust, which will offer our staff additional resources for their development and for the enhancement of our curriculum. We are excited to join a family of schools which share our ethos and passion for supporting children from all backgrounds to thrive.

Please keep using the clothing bank at the front of the school, it provides a little financial boost for us every time it is emptied.

We wish everyone in the Wilstead community a great start to 2026!

**Mrs Webb**

Deputy Headteacher

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**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. Andrea can help you apply.

**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 £110.40 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](mailto:andream@bedsrcc.org.uk)

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- Community Support Workers who will work long term with clients who have more complex needs.

- In depth advice and support for vulnerable older people who otherwise would suffer from living in cold homes.
- Telephone Befriending Network supported by the Harpur Trust in Bedford Borough.
- Our services are delivered in a caring, friendly and professional manner, through our team of fully trained, dedicated staff and volunteers.

If you or anyone you know would like more information, please contact us on the number below or visit our website [www.ageukbedfordshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukbedfordshire.org.uk)

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## SEARCH & RESCUE

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## New Year, New Ideas

Twenty five members of the Garden Club enjoyed a pre Christmas meal in December but they had to work for the treat. Prior to being served there was a tricky seasonal themed quiz. Questions ranged from the purely horticultural to the Christmas cracker variety. Examples are: how are hellebore seeds distributed? How old is the average Christmas tree when it is cut? What do M16 operative look out for at Christmas? Why does Father Christmas have not one, not two but three gardens? Answers at the end of this article.

After the food there was more activity in the shape of a questionnaire to ask members for their views on Garden Club activities and to explore changes and ideas for the future. The committee work hard to provide an interesting and varied programme and suggestions are always appreciated. As a reward, the grand raffle, when everyone who bought a ticket wins a prize, completed the event.

We start the new year with a meeting on **Tuesday 20th January** at 2.30pm when we will be sitting on the new village hall chairs and reviewing the highs and lows of 2025 in our gardens and looking at plans and ideas for 2026. There are no quizzes or questionnaires at this meeting, just a sociable time sharing ideas over some delicious refreshments. Please come and join us. Entry is £3 with an optional raffle at £1 per ticket. Looking forward to seeing you.

Answers: snails distribute hellebore seeds, the average Christmas tree is 15 years old, M16 is looking for mincespies, and Father Christmas needs 3 gardens to hoe, hoe, hoe.

### Wilstead Garden Club Committee

Maralyn, Lynda, Viv, Julie, Annette, Chris & Mary  
[wilsteadgardenclub@hotmail.com](mailto:wilsteadgardenclub@hotmail.com)

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WILSTEAD & WIXAMS

## Welcome to a New Year!

We trust you had a safe and enjoyable Christmas and Santa brought you all you desired! Also that you enjoyed any New Year celebrations.

I have to confirm that the Wilstead Community Cafe has had to be closed, as predicted last year. While there were some options given to keeping it open they have not proven to be sustainable as it still needed a Volunteer to manage it for the long term.

The project has not been 'written off' as there could be options that come up later in the year

I would like to repeat an item published in October last year about the suggest donations that could be considered for your volunteer driver who undertakes a trip to take a client to the Doctors or Hospital etc. A trip to Ampthill and to Bedford doctors equates to £7, which is considered to be a reasonable cost to use a vehicle over these distances, a trip to Great Denham would be £9 and Luton & Dunstable Hospital £20. Please remember that any parking charges should be reimbursed as well!

Please consider these values for your driver when you next need to use them.

Regards to all.

**Rick Baxter | Chairman WGNS**

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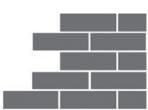
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## Wilstead Women's Institute

December brought a lovely lady Liz Dive helping the members make Christmas cards and labels; this certainly gave us some work to do. We had some lovely goodies to have with our drinks and a fabulous raffle put together by Lola and Judy, thank you ladies.

We had a stall in the village hall at the Playschool Christmas Fayre, what a lovely afternoon as Father Christmas and his elves turned up; a great event.

In December we had our final trip of the year going to London for fish and chips then a ride round London lights. More trips to look forward to next year.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 8th January where we will have held a beetle drive and shared some Christmas goodies, this is the first of our afternoon meetings. The next will be on Thursday 5th February at 2pm in the village hall. Come along and meet some friends and have a chat and a cuppa. Happy New Year to all of the village and of course our WI members and friends.

**Karen Cook | President**

01234 403936 | [karencook3@btinternet.com](mailto:karencook3@btinternet.com)

## All Saints Church

### United in Faith. Welcoming All

The services have been planned as follows for **JANUARY 2026**:

**Sunday 4th January 11.00am**  
Holy Communion

**Sunday 11th January 11.00am**  
Morning Praise

**Sunday 18th January 11.00am**  
Holy Communion

**Sunday 25th January 11.00am**  
Holy Communion

So we begin a New Year as we move into the season of Epiphany.

Life is very encouraging at All Saints and our congregations are growing.

We wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

**Robert Heley**

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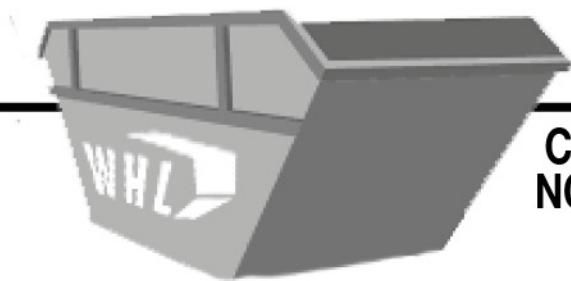
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## Wilstead Bowls Club

### Happy New Year to all.

2025 was Wilstead Bowls Club 40th Anniversary Year and we hosted a number of extra games. The main event was the club's own 40th celebration hog roast held in July, attended by more than a hundred members, their families, and friends.

The 2026 committee is now in place; the vast majority of officers were voted back onto the committee at the AGM. For 2026 we welcome Dermot Brennan as Site Agent and Liz Potter as Assistant Secretary.

There will be much to do over the next few months to ready the green for playing outdoors and with the continued maintenance and updating of the club building,

If you are looking for a new hobby in 2026 come and join us for indoor short mat bowling. This takes place on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons from 2pm - 4pm, and Friday evening 7pm - 9pm. No experience necessary. You just need flat soled shoes; we have bowls you can borrow. There are always members around to give you hints and tips.

### Planning a celebration?

We have a large hall, plus, if needed, a licensed bar and kitchen available for hire. Details at [wilsteadbowlsclub.co.uk/community/wilstead-bowls-club-10138/hall-bookings](http://wilsteadbowlsclub.co.uk/community/wilstead-bowls-club-10138/hall-bookings)

### 2026 Dates for your diary

#### QUIZ NIGHT

**Saturday 31st January**

6.45pm start £8 per head including supper.

Maximum 8 per team

#### COFFEE MORNING

**Wednesday 11th February**

10.30 - 12 noon £3 All welcome

If you need any club information you can contact:

**Sue Merchant**

Club Secretary 07716 676383

[sue@marchantonline.com](mailto:sue@marchantonline.com)

[www.wilsteadbowlsclub.co.uk](http://www.wilsteadbowlsclub.co.uk)



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Happy New Year to you all. If you're interested in art and would love to try out your talent, why not join us? Your first session is free and, if you decide to continue and become a member, it will be £3 a session when you're able to come. We meet in the Village Hall on Mondays from 2pm-4pm. We don't meet on Bank Holidays.

We commenced again on Monday, 5th January 2026. Our group has members of all abilities, using a variety of mediums. You might like sketching in pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, or painting by numbers. You can also paint in watercolour, acrylic or even oil. Meeting in the large hall makes it a safe space to work in and we are well spaced out. May I remind members and new people that we do have a small variety of art resources for your use so, if there is anything you haven't got or would like to experiment with, we may be able to help. If you need it, several of our members will help and encourage you in whatever your artistic endeavours happen to be.



Winter snow by Andrew

Enquiries: Michael Bradley

Mobile: 07526 939164

Email: [revmichael14@outlook.com](mailto:revmichael14@outlook.com)

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## Pre School News

Happy new year to you all. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and a fantastic start to 2026!

Thank you to all who came and supported us. It's a busy time so I thank you all for continuing to support this tradition that's been going at least 40 years! We have had the same Father Christmas visit us each year. We all know who he is (and I can't name him in case children are reading!)

He really is wonderful with the children and is constantly on the go for three hours! A simple thank you card made by the children and a gift really doesn't seem enough. He truly is the spirit of the bazaar! Thank you Father Christmas!

With Father Christmas comes his mischievous Elf! He also can't be named but we all know who he is and he has given his time over many years, to get Father Christmas safely to our bazaar. Thank you Elf!

We are going to shake it up for next year. Lots of new games/stalls and a fantastic grotto experience! I have to say our grotto really is a spectacular one!

We had many fantastic raffle donations this year.

9th kitchen, Wilstead Tandoori, Post office, The Red Lion, The Greyhound pub, Elevate Golf, Judy Summerfield and the WI, The Beauty Project, LHancement Beauty, AKG Aesthetics, Laser Tag, MK Dons, Refresher Pilates, Herrings Green, Vivi and Noo, Bronze Me Beautiful, Tropic Beauty, Helen Benton for all her Christmas knitting that she donated. They made lovely raffle prizes.

And the person who donated the oat milk!

A HUGE thank you for all who donated. Our raffle prizes are always absolutely brilliant! If I have missed anyone I apologise.

Thanks to the fundraising committee for their help on the day and beforehand gathering a lot of these prizes. We couldn't do it without this much needed support from our parents who give their time on the day. Obviously I need to thank the staff who give their time every year to this event. I THANK them!

Mandy and Cath who always volunteer their time every year to run the kitchen. Thank you ladies as ever! And finally to Laura Chalmers and girls for running the chocolate tombola! Thank you!

Our next fundraising event is our quiz night. Saturday 7th March at the Village Hall. Please put the date in your new diaries! I want to see the hall full to the brim for this fun quiz. You know the drill, bring your own snacks, buy some drink from our bar and have a fun night with a group of friends. Teams of up to 8. £5 per person to enter. To book call/text 07948565992. Phone pre school 01234 742546

Thank you all again for your continued support.

Julia

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This newsletter is published by Wilstead Neighbourhood Watch, part of Bedford & District NW Association, in close co-operation with Bedfordshire Police.

The Wilstead Village Website can be found at

**[www.wilsteadvillage.org.uk](http://www.wilsteadvillage.org.uk)**



Wildlife Trust for  
**Beds, Cambs & Northants**

**Flit Vale Local Group**

## January and February 2026

**MONDAY 12th JANUARY**

Maulden Church Hall, 7.30pm

**Talk by Kate Dimmock of the Harlington Hedgehog Hogspital**

Harlington Hogspital is a small rescue centre which takes in the sick, injured, abandoned, orphaned or otherwise distressed hedgehogs with the aim of rehabilitation and re-release to the wild. Hedgehogs - the only native spiny mammal, and one which is an indicator species - currently red listed as vulnerable to extinction, so how can we help these inoffensive creatures?

**Charge: £5.00 per person**

Booking for Flit Vale indoor events is optional. Please contact Ann by email [flitvale.info@gmail.com](mailto:flitvale.info@gmail.com) or Phone (leave a message or text if you prefer) 07580 178 889 to reserve your place.

**FRIDAY 13th FEBRUARY**

Maulden Village Hall.

7:00pm for 7.30pm start

**Fundraising quiz for the Wildlife Trust**

Come along to our popular quiz and pit your wits against our fiendish quiz master! There are prizes for the winning team as well as spot prizes. Please note this is a cash only event for entry fee, drinks purchases and raffle. Ticket price includes a light fish and chip supper or vegetarian alternative. Due to licensing restrictions, no drink can be brought into the venue.

Please email details of your team, maximum of six per team, including team name and meal choices to Ann at [flitvale.info@gmail.com](mailto:flitvale.info@gmail.com)

**Charge: £15 per person**

Booking for the Quiz is essential. Please contact Ann by email [flitvale.info@gmail.com](mailto:flitvale.info@gmail.com) or Phone (leave a message or text if you prefer) 07580 178 889 to reserve your place.



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# Wilstead Village Hall

Since the last Newsletter, the new chairs were delivered and are in full use. We have received many compliments about them and don't forget to ask for a chair with arms if you are less mobile. Now all we ask is that you respect them and keep them clean for all to enjoy.

From 1st April 2026, we are having to put up the rates of hire by approx. 2% (give or take) but we will contact all treasurers/hirers who need to know. There has not been an increase for over 3 years but prices to keep the hall running are creeping up!

May I take this opportunity to remind hirers and hall users about the Terms and Conditions of the hall that all have to adhere. It sometimes gets updated and so to refresh yourself, please go to the website and read everything - Terms and Conditions, Information, Rates of hire, Equipment for hirers etc. The conditions that are not always followed are: - not checking the floor for spills and bits that need sweeping up and only leaving 3 bags (bags provided) of rubbish. Any more bags of rubbish have to be taken away. A good idea is to recycle as much as possible as there is a bin for general recycling and a bin for recycling soft plastics at supermarkets, both in the kitchen.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept glass in the orange bin because that would become too heavy and bulky, especially after a party!

Don't forget that you are very welcome to join the Committee to support the running of the Village Hall.

To find out any information about the hall, please visit our website [wilsteadvillagehall.co.uk](http://wilsteadvillagehall.co.uk)

**Barbara Seamount** | Chairperson  
[seamountbarbara@gmail.com](mailto:seamountbarbara@gmail.com) | 07709 573475

**Angela Fosbrook** | Secretary  
[fosbrookangela@gmail.com](mailto:fosbrookangela@gmail.com) | 01234 294692



## Newsletter **DEADLINE**

For any copy, new advertisements or changes to existing advertisements

**Friday 23rd January**

The next newsletter will be published on Friday 6th February.

Please send items and articles for inclusion in the Wilstead Newsletter to our dedicated email address:

**wilstead.newsletter@gmail.com**

Please note that requests for NEW ADVERTS and Advert Changes should now be sent to **Maxine Hendry**, as should Payments.

## Telephone Number List:

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| Borough Councillor, Marc Frost     | 07825 304080 |
| Neighbourhood Watch Central Office | 01234 842043 |
| Wilstead Good Neighbours           | 07807 408928 |

## Who's Who:

Neighbourhood Watch, Wilstead.

### Advertisements & Accounts

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Local Village News & Information

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# Invitation

## Wilstead over 60's

### Annual Tea Party

Wednesday 14th  
January 2026



If you would like to come along please fill in the details below and either take the cut off strip to Wilstead Post Office (*marking the envelope 'New Year Tea Party'*) or deliver/send to 125A Cotton End Road Wilstead MK45 3DD or email [ericbenton@wilsteadparishcouncil.org](mailto:ericbenton@wilsteadparishcouncil.org).

Alternatively you can telephone me on mobile 07749869742 or 01234 740980, or email me at [anne-lowe1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anne-lowe1@hotmail.co.uk) Please state if you require a lift to and from the party.

**Anne Lowe | For the Trustees**



I/we would like to come to the New Year's Tea Party on Wednesday 14th January 2026 3.00pm Wilstead Village Hall.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

If you would like a lift to the Tea Party please tick this box



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**The Wilstead Newsletter  
Volunteer Team would like  
to wish all residents a happy,  
healthy and prosperous  
New Year.**

