



MINUTES OF THE WIXAMS ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 7.45pm at Lakeview Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Marc Frost (chair) Cllr Michael Owens Cllr Sam Mardel
Cllr Anthony Musgrove Cllr Debbie Bowman Cllr Zoe Gammie
Cllr Charlotte Colclough Cllr Barbara Matthews Cllr David Whiteley
Ward and Parish Cllr Graeme Coombes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Sarah Gallagher (Clerk), Ward Cllr Andrea Spice and five members of public.

01:06/25: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES:

Cllr Frost welcomed everyone present and informed everyone that he had received an email resignation from Jody Casey and that he had written to him thanking him on behalf of the parish council for his contribution to Wixams Parish Council over the years. Apologies were received from Cllr Taylor.

Cllr Whiteley interrupted the proceedings of the meeting to raise a point of order

1. That the appointment of the chair at the meeting on 27th May 2025 meeting that took place was unlawful
2. That his suspension of email remains in force unlawfully
3. Social Media policy is void due to it contradicting the Local Government Act, Human Rights Act, and the standards process.

Cllr Whiteley then said that he would be willing to walk the councillors through the legal framework that underpins all the points mentioned.

Cllr Frost thanked Cllr Whiteley and stated that his points are noted.

02:06/25: DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTEREST ON MATTERS CONTAINED ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Bowman declared an interest under item **11:06/25** Human Resources

03:06/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

All members of the public were there to observe.

04:06/25 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27TH MAY 2025

Cllr Coombes mentioned that the attendance notes Cllr Whiteley being present but at the meeting on the 27th May he had stated that he did not recognise the validity of the meeting and therefore would not be taking part so should not be listed. This was agreed by all councillors that were present at that meeting, with Cllr Whiteley abstaining.

Cllr Taylor had informed the Clerk that he had voted for the Social Media Policy and not abstained. The amendment was agreed by all present with Cllr Whiteley abstaining.

05:06/25 CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION RECEIVED TO INCLUDE SUMMARY OF ITEMS NOT COVERED ON AGENDA (for information only)

The Clerk read out the correspondence received since the last meeting this is at **Appendix A** and has received four interests in becoming a parish councillor and an FOI request.

Action outstanding from the last meeting was a site visit which is arranged for the 19th June 2025.

06:06/25: WIXAMS PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Frost introduced this item full details are at **Appendix B** he then proposed the following motion.

This Council recognises the rapid growth and maturing identity of Wixams as a distinct and significant community within Bedford Borough. In light of ongoing expansion, strategic infrastructure investment, and increasing population, this Council resolves to:

- 1. Support the change of name to establish a Wixams Town Council.**
- 2. Request that the clerk (together with myself) deals with the legal, financial, and administrative steps required to implement this change.**
- 3. Agree a modest budget of £500 to cover expenses such as a website amendment, logo update, etc.**

It was resolved that providing that there is no objection from BATPC that Wixams Parish Council will be known as **Wixams Town Council** going forward

07:06/25: TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE VEXATIOUS POLICY

Cllr Frost stated that when this put forward as an agenda item he had spoken to the Monitoring Officer at Bedford Borough about this and asked if the parish council could do it, is it a good thing to have and to check the wording. The response was yes, we do have the power to do it, lots of other parish councils have already done it Bedfordshire Police, Bedford Borough Standards and other departments are doing one. The wording put forward was felt sufficient that a big piece of it will be put into the Bedford Borough Council Vexatious Policy.

Cllr Bowman stated that this type of policy helps manage situations where individuals repeatedly contact the council with complaints that are deemed excessive, disruptive, or lacking in merit and that is why she has put forward this Vexatious Policy.

Cllr Frost stated that this is a policy in the terms of good governance and believes that there are a few policies missing that should come forward overtime.

Cllr Whiteley stated that he didn't disagree with having a Vexatious Policy and that the idea in principle is good, but the points within it, that are trying to censor and stop councillors from communicating between two individuals, the officer, and the chair, that they can stop councillors from communicating with the council that is not appropriate.

If a councillor has done something wrong, it is not down to the council to discipline or take action, that would have to be referred to the monitoring officer.

Cllr Frost responded by stating that in the first instance the monitoring officer would throw it back to the council to manage itself. The monitoring officer and standards committee would only get involved if the council as a corporate entity itself is unable to resolve those differences. Having this policy is the first step and as a council we should have this policy if anyone internally or externally disagrees with it they can go through the appeals process and that point it can be raised with the monitoring officer would.

Cllr Coombes stated that this council has to police itself in the first instance you cannot go straight to the monitoring officer without following our own procedures first.

Cllr Frost stated that one of the other things we have done is looked at award winning councils to see what policies and procedures they have in place.

It was resolved to adopt this policy by all present with one abstention.

08:06/25 TO CONSIDER ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The clerk informed the council that there had been no planning applications submitted since the last meeting. Although there had been notification of double yellow lines which would be raised at the site meeting on Thursday 19th June.

09:06/25 TO RECEIVE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Spice mentioned the events that were coming up Kite and Motoring Festival and Stewartby Eat feast and Armed Forces Day.

Cllr Coombes mentioned that The Wixams Joint Development committee meeting will be taking place on 10th July this is where the renegotiation of S106 agreements will be decided and agreed. That meeting takes place at CBC in Chicksands.

Cllr Frost mentioned that he has had a meeting with the chair of the ICB to discuss the GP surgery discussions are still taking place.

10:06/25 FINANCE

(a) To receive the Internal Auditors report and sign the AGAR

The Internal Auditors report had been previously circulated by email and accepted the report.

The statements on the AGAR were read out, were agreed and signed at the meeting.

(b) To receive an update from the Finance Committee and agree the recommendation.

Cllr Mardel had circulated the report. The previous chair had done a bit of a handover and in the process of changing the mandates and addresses to acknowledge the fact that the previous chair has left, and Cllr Frost and Cllr Bowman will be added to mandate.

A discussion took place over how much money can be left in a bank account further information about this is required and will be given at the next meeting.

It was resolved that up to £90k could be left in the HTB account and Nationwide account and to leave interest payments in the accounts. Cllr Mardel informed councillors that the finance committee recommended that the clerk should have a debit card where she can make purchases for the council as it is considered not good practice to expect people to pay out of their own pocket for items needed for the parish council for example bin bags for the litter pickers and clerk for ink and paper the limit would be £700. It was resolved that the clerk should have a debit card.

(c) To approve payments made since the last meeting

These were approved and are at **Appendix C**

11:06/25 HUMAN RESOURCES (update from HR committee)

Cllr Frost stated that councillors had been sent a copy of a private and confidential letter and asked if everyone were happy for it to be sent. everyone that had received the copy was happy for it to be sent.

Cllr Bowman wished to refer to an email from a councillor that was sent to Laura Church Chief Executive of BBC of which had several points in it one of them was accusing the clerk of being under police investigation, which she would like removed because all clerks are provided with a copy of the electoral register it's a civil matter and she is not under investigation and would like it noted. The second point she wanted to raise was that in an email she had been accused of being a self-appointed line manager of the clerk, she wanted it noted that neither Cllr Mardel or herself line manage the Clerk.

12:06/25 YOUTH UPDATE (proposed summer events)
Cllr Mardel informed the councillors that the last youth event was a success and thanked Cllr Spice for her help again.
It is envisaged that there will be events held on Saturdays all throughout the school summer holidays.
There will be an open-air cinema taking place on August 30th and she will need help and support in organising this event. Cllr Frost thanked everyone involved in making these events so successful.

13:06/25 HIGHWAYS (update if any)
Cllr Matthews informed the council that she had emailed Andrew Prigmore but had not received a response from him regarding Green Lane outside the school and asked him if he would attend a meeting with residents from Brooklands and Southern Cross but she had not had any response from him. Cllr Frost said that he would raise it with him when he next meets with him and asks him to contact Cllr Matthews.

14:06/25 DONATED BINS (to agree locations)
Cllr Mardel informed the council that she had been emailing Jack from Urban and Civic because they are supplying some of the new bins they have to work out the collection frequency as they will not install the bins until they guaranteed to be emptied because over the summer last year there were issues with overflowing bins they started with two weekly, then weekly collections.
Borough will not take over any collections at all, Cllr Frost said that the ward councillors will take this up with the Borough.

15:06/25 SCARECROW FESTIVAL
(a) To agree that the parish council lead and take ownership of this project.
Cllr Gammie proposed that the council take ownership of a Scarecrow Festival following feedback from the community group and residents there appears to be an appetite for a scarecrow festival which would bring a bit of community spirit to Wixams in the Autumn months this was seconded by Cllr Bowman all councillors agreed with one abstention

(b) To agree to have a budget of up to £500
This was proposed by Cllr Gammie seconded by Cllr Bowman all councillors present agreed with one abstention

16:06/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Tuesday 15th July 2025 7.45pm

Signed..... Date.....

APPENDIX A

Correspondence received since the last meeting

28th May 2025

Press release about UK Prosperity Fund application closing date is midday 30th June

Enquiry about V4 Allotments and when will a waiting list be starting forwarded to Michelle Harrison

Press release about Armed Forces Day taking place on 29th June 2025

29th May 2025

Email from Cllr Whiteley a Formal Objection and Procedural Misconduct- Annual Council meeting of 27th May 2025 which was copied to the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer of Bedford Borough Council

30th May 2025

What's On in Bedford Borough in June

2nd June 2025

Press Release regarding the reopening of Midland Road

2nd June 2025

Monthly update of Electoral Register

3rd June 2025

Vapes and how to dispose of them correctly form Bedford Borough Council

4th June 2025

Be Active June Update from Bedford Borough Council

6th June 2025

Press release regarding Summer Holiday family Activities at The Higgins Bedford

CLlr Whiteley sent an email to the Team Leader of Parking Services Parking Enforcement at Dropped Kerb Adjacent to marked Bays outside Lakeview Village Hall

Response received from Team Leader

9th June 2025

Wilstead Road Proposed Parking restrictions

Press release about Bedford Kite and Motoring Festival

CLlr Bowman Email regarding Complaints of Loud noise from Fisherwood Road warehouse on Facebook

CLlr Whiteley response to Team Leader

Email to CLlr Whiteley from Andrew Prigmore regarding dropped kerb adjacent to marked bays outside village hall

CLlr Whiteley response to Andrew Prigmore

10th June 2025

Email from Andrew Prigmore in response to CLlr Whiteley

CLlr Whiteley's response to Andrew Prigmore

CLlr Gammie email regarding Scarecrow festival

13th June 2025

Email to Clerk and Chief Executive of Bedford Borough entitled Formal Objection ahead of Agenda Item 6 " Vexatious and Habitual Requests Policy " from CLlr Whiteley

Email to Clerk entitled Procedural Concerns regarding Agenda Items 4 and 11 WPC meeting 17th June 2025

14th June 2025

Email to Clerk and Councillors entitled Statement to Full Council – Re Complaints and Allegations from CLlr Whiteley

16th June 2025

2nd Wixams Brownies requesting to leave an area for the brownies to be able to litter pick

APPENDIX B

Councillors,

Wixams began its life not as a town, nor even a village in its own right, but as land within the parish of Wilstead and Elstow Storage Depot.

In its early years, it was deparished, a planning blank slate, engineered to support a new settlement from the ground up. That slate, once empty, is now filled with thousands of residents, thriving communities, and growing infrastructure.

We have seen the emergence of Village 1, then 2, then 3, and now Village 4. Each phase has brought with it new homes, schools, and social life. Each has added to the identity of Wixams as more than a housing development, it is, undeniably, a place. A community. A centre of gravity in its own right.

But now, Councillors, we are entering a new phase, an era of strategic significance.

Universal Studios is on its way. (Did you know their basic site is over 50% of the size of Wixams), Bedford Station will soon be dwarfed by a major new transport hub within Wixams. Thousands more homes are coming. Commercial, cultural, and economic activity is set to intensify. The population is rising sharply; the current forecast is 15,000. Services, representation, and local decision-making must evolve to meet that scale.

Wixams is no longer a construction site, well mostly. It is not a satellite or a suburb. It is, in everything but formal recognition, a town.

And the time has come for our structure to catch up with reality. What Wixams and this Parish Council lacks is not community spirit, economic ambition, or engagement. What it lacks is status, and the framework that goes with it.

A Town Council would provide Wixams with the platform it needs for proper local leadership and civic identity. It would enhance residents' voices on planning, public spaces, culture, and local services. This is not just about a name on a sign. It is about ensuring Wixams gets the recognition it deserves. Although the legal powers are similar, there is no denying that a Town Council carries more gravitas.

Tonight, I am calling on this Council to support the progression of Wixams Parish Council. The first step is a name change to Wixams Town Council, there will be further modifications in the future, one step at a time.

I would like to propose a motion:

Motion to Council:

"This Council recognises the rapid growth and maturing identity of Wixams as a distinct and significant community within Bedford Borough. In light of ongoing expansion, strategic infrastructure investment, and increasing population, this Council resolves to:

1. Support the change of name to establish a Wixams Town Council.
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3. Agree a modest budget of £500 to cover expenses such as a website amendment, logo update, etc. I do not expect any significant expenses, in time we may wish to update any village signs, so at this stage I am just seeking a small sum so that there is no delay getting things moving.”

APENDIX C

Opening Balance:		£	45,726.49			
Closing Balance:			£5,627.16			
Date:	Payment Type	Description	Debit	Credit	Account Balance	
30/05/2025	BP	Staff Salary	£900.22		£5,627.16	
30/05/2025	BP	Staff Salary	£1,045.33		£6,527.38	
30/05/2025	BP	HMRC	£1,102.96		£7,572.71	
30/05/2025	BP	Staff Salary	£1,024.33		£8,675.67	
27/05/2025	FPO	Spiral Free Running	£300.00		£9,700.00	
23/05/2025	TFR	Transfer to savings Account		£2,086.81	£10,000.00	
23/05/2025	FPO	Lakeview Hall	£179.25		£7,913.19	
22/05/2025	FPO	Bedford Borough Council	£1,119.46		£8,092.44	
19/05/2025	PAY	Bank Charges	£ 4.25		£ 9,211.90	
06/05/2025	FPO	Willow Grove Primary PTA	£ 630.00		£ 9,216.15	
06/05/2025	DD	NEST Pension	£ 153.85		£ 9,846.15	
06/05/2025	TFR	Transfer to savings Account	£ 34,655.39		£ 10,000.00	
01/05/2025	FPO	Wixams Newsletter	£ 540.00		£ 44,655.39	
01/05/2025	FPO	Mijan Limited PC Accounts	£ 132.00		£ 45,195.39	
01/05/2025	FPO	Andy Muskett Invoice Xmas	£ 480.00		£ 45,327.39	
01/05/2025	TFR	Nationwide Interest transfer		£ 265.13	£ 45,807.39	
01/05/2025	DD	360 Monthly Subs	£ 184.03		£ 45,542.26	
01/05/2025	DD	Anglian Water Accoun	£ 20.00		£ 45,726.29	
		Total Payments in Month	£36,799.52	£265.13		