



Strategy - 2020-2025

A Vision For Woodford cum Membris

A safe, friendly and welcoming village with a mixed community of young and old, families and singles, local workers and commuters with as many resources for local people as possible within the village. It has a heritage of agriculture, village life and its railway history which we value and seek to maintain.

About Our Strategy

Woodford-cum-Membris Parish Council represents the villages of Woodford Halse, Hinton & West Farndon. This is the Council's five year strategy up to 2025.

The current population is expected to grow to 4,000 by 2021. Over several years, the Council has taken on more responsibility and in the years to 2025, local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire will incorporate the large urban area of Northampton with Daventry and South Northants districts, possibly affecting rural services in villages like ours. This Strategy is based on feedback from and issues raised by parishioners. Reviewed annually, it is used in the budgeting process and to plan activities. It will enable the Parish Council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

The Council welcomes your feedback on the Strategy.



Five Key Objectives

The Council's strategy has 5 key objectives:-

1. To provide cost-effective services and amenities, meeting the needs of residents.
2. To promote & represent the community's views & aspirations
3. To work in partnership with other statutory & voluntary bodies, individuals & businesses.
4. To promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs for residents & visitors.
5. To help create a socially inclusive and caring community.

Services & Priorities

The Council has prioritised eight areas for attention over the next 5 years:-

- managing community assets,
- highways,
- public safety,
- land management,
- public hygiene,
- play and sports,
- planning
- public information.

Managing Community Assets

The Council manages the properties it owns through an Estate Committee. Maintenance is governed by a 10-year, professionally prepared maintenance programme that began in 2019 and sets out priorities for each year.

Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall is partially leased to the NHS for the local General Practitioner's service and the remainder is open to the public to hire. The maintenance requirement in this period is relatively low

Village Centre - Dryden Hall, Library & Farndon Room

These properties are very old and will need significant maintenance in this period. The Council's strategy is to develop the Village Centre as a Community Hub. This has started with the opening, under concession, of a café in the Farndon Room; investment in the Dryden Hall to bring it up to standard; the opening of a Community Library (see below) and investigations into the future of the former air raid shelter behind and attached to the Farndon Room. The Dryden Hall is open to the public to hire as is the Farndon Room in the evenings.

SARA Field Pavilion

This was developed using a Football Association grant and is leased to a Community Group that includes the local football club who make it available to other groups in the village, including the Bowls and Cricket Clubs. The Council, and the Community Group recently invested in bringing the facility up to standard so maintenance requirements are relatively low. Community Group volunteers carry out further improvement and maintenance work



Public Toilets & Bus Shelters

There is a men's, ladies' & disabled toilet at the junction of Church Street & Parson Street. Maintenance requirements are relatively low.

There are several bus shelters attached to bus stops throughout the Parish and these need minimal maintenance.

Allotments & Burial Ground

The Council runs an allotment area adjacent to St. Mary's Churchyard and Burial Ground – the allotments are hired to parishioners and these need minimal maintenance.

The Burial Ground, adjacent to the Churchyard, is maintained with a minimal requirement by the Council.

Great Central Woodland, including the Memorial Glade

The Woodland, which divides the villages of Woodford Halse & Hinton was part of the former railway. It was purchased by the Council using a 25-year loan in 2016, saving it from potential future housing development, at the request of parishioners at a public meeting. The area is managed by a Management Committee of Councillors and local volunteers using a 10-year Management Plan (available at <https://bit.ly/2PlgPBe>) approved by the Forestry Commission. The plan will need a formal review in 2022.

The vision for the Woodland is to provide a sustainable woodland and wildlife habitat in the Parish that is economically viable which the community can use and enjoy in safety.



Highways

Highways strategy covers road safety, street lighting roads and pathways.

Speed Watch

In association with the Police, the Council with the assistance of volunteers, occasionally operates a speed camera within the 30 mph limits. Any driver exceeding the limit is contacted by the Police and warned to their future driving conduct.

Street Lighting

The Council operates all street lighting in the Parish. It is an early priority to replace the old mercury lights that cannot now be repaired. Over the 5-year period of this strategy, it

is intended to replace the older lights with more efficient and cost-effective ones. These will be financed from infrastructure levies so as not to be a burden on the precept. Future energy cost savings will be achieved as a result.

Roads & Pathways

The Parish is not responsible for roads & pathways but liaises with other authorities for the condition of roads, road markings and parking. The Council is seeking to provide a safer “route to school” through the woodland as a priority to avoid the need for children & parents to cross the busy Byfield Road a number of times, especially from the new developments at Woodford Meadows & Hinton Gardens - this will require a significant investment. External funds are being sought to support this project.

Play & Sports

SARA Field Pavilion

The pavilion is leased to Woodford Community Sports Club. The Council works with the Sports Club to see improved facilities at the field.



Children’s Play Areas

The Council provides and maintains play areas at the SARA Field & Ryefields Estate including the equipment. It is a priority within this strategy period to review the play areas and equipment provided for the children.

Public Safety

Police Community Support

Parishioners voted to fully finance the provision of a Police Community Support Officer from the Police Authority following several years when the Council shared the cost with that Authority.



The Council considers that this should remain a priority over the period of the Strategy, in order to help keep crime in the Parish at its currently low level.

Flood Prevention & Liaison

The Council works with the relevant authorities to ensure the chances of flooding are minimised. There is a Flood Alleviation Programme developed for the Parish and several works have been already been undertaken. Currently, the priority is to clear the River Cherwell culvert beneath the Woodland (some grant has been received to assist in the first phase).

In addition, the Council's Flood Prevention Councillor arranges periodic ditch clearance to ensure that water flows effectively, and flooding is prevented.



Insurance – Public Liability

The Council, as a responsible organisation and an employer, purchases Business; Buildings; Public, Employers and Directors liability insurance to cover its assets; councillors; employees; the public and volunteers assisting Council activities.

Land Management

Grass Cutting of Verges & Common Areas

The Council maintains all verges and common areas of land in the Parish. This is a service taken over from the County Council who are still responsible and currently provides a small grant contribution that is only a fraction of the cost of the total service. A contract is let on a periodic basis to ensure the work is performed by professional contractors.

Tree & Hedge Maintenance

The Council is responsible for trees and hedges on public land. The Council arranges inspections of trees on a periodic basis and one will be due in this period as a priority. Public hedges are maintained on an as-needed basis.

Public Hygiene

Litter Collection

The Council provides a number of litter bins throughout the Parish and liaises with the District (future Unitary) Council to ensure that these are effectively emptied.

The Council also organises volunteer litter collections on a periodic basis to help keep the villages as litter-free as possible.

Dog Waste Bins

The Council also provides a number of dog waste bins throughout the Parish and liaises with the District (future Unitary) Council to ensure that these are effectively emptied.

Planning

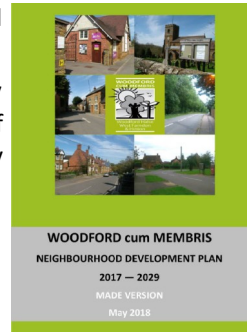
Neighbourhood Plan

The Council is NOT a planning authority but the Localism Act 2011 enabled the creation of plans that influence what can be developed. The Council prepared a Plan in consultation with the village that was adopted by the Local Planning Authority in 2018.

The acceptance of the plan ensures that the Planning Authority takes account of the Parish guidance and gives the Council 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy that is placed on any qualifying developments.

The Plan should be formally reviewed during the Strategy period.

The Plan can be found online here: <https://bit.ly/2C9vYTU>



Comment on Local Planning Applications

While not a planning authority, the Council is invited to comment on all planning applications submitted within the Parish to the District (future Unitary) Council.

Information & Publicity

Library

The County Council gave notice that it will cease to provide a library service in Woodford Halse from the end of 2019. At a public meeting, parishioners voted by a majority to ask the Council to continue with a library in the Parish.



Consequently, the Council has formed a Community Library, staffed with volunteers and supported with County Council training, stock and systems to continue with the provision of a facility effective from the 01 January 2020. The Council will utilise the present building, which it already owns.

The Council will form a Management Committee to oversee the Library provision and to seek funding from other bodies to potentially reduce the burden on the precept. It may be that over this strategy period, a different organisation such as a charitable trust might be required to be formed. The Committee will also attempt to attract different groups to the Library,

particularly young people and potentially work in partnership with the local school.

Village Signpost Web Site & Facebook Page

The Parish Council's website supports the Council's desire to be as open as possible and provide easily accessed information. For example, both the Great Central Woodland Management and Neighbourhood Plans reside here, as do all the minutes from Parish Council meetings.

Associated with the Signpost Website a Facebook page promotes the work of the Council on social media. The Great Central Woodland also has a Facebook page for the same reason.



What's on in Woodford (WOW)

WOW is a monthly information sheet, produced by a volunteer team that is delivered free to all residences in the Parish with announcements, details of events and useful contact information. The Council will continue to fund its production and distribution.

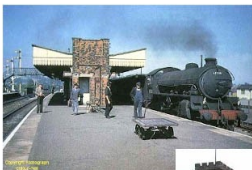
Ad-hoc Notices & Hand-outs

Notices and agendas of all Council meetings are placed on the Parish noticeboard that is affixed to the outside of the Public Toilets at Kings Corner and the Council periodically issues hand-outs such as the "Your Woodland" leaflet that describes progress to date and plans.

Open Council & Committee Meetings

All formal Council and Committee meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are posted on the Signpost as are the Council's budgets, and audit statements.

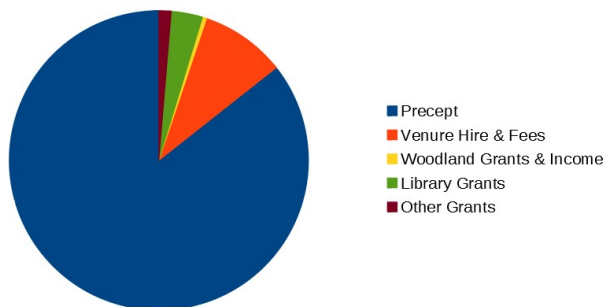
Parishioners are encouraged to attend and participate in meetings as well as volunteering for specific work that is required to support the Parish strategy.



Council Finance

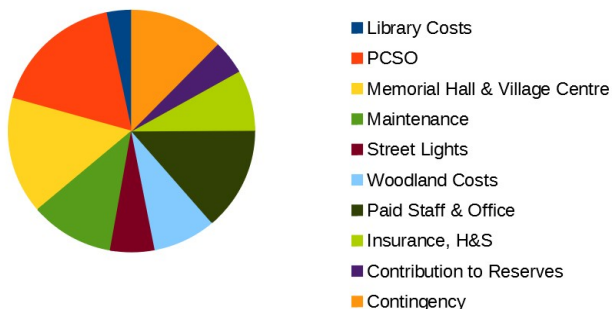
The Council spends over £200,000 each year and is responsible for £4M of assets. Its main source of income is the annual precept, collected as part of your Council Tax. Other sources of income include fees, charges and leases .

Parish Budget Income 2019-20 (£221,240)



The Council spends money on local services and builds up reserves for future investments.

Parish Budget Expenditure 2019-20 (£221,240)



People

All Councillors are volunteers. They give a lot of time to fulfil this Strategy for the benefit of the Parish & its residents.

The Councillors are supported by an Office function that stays ahead of regulations & requirements affecting the Parish.

The Office function consists of a part-time Parish Clerk and a part-time Parish Administrator who is also the Halls Booking Clerk.

Other volunteers that support the Council include the Footpath Warden, Flood Warden, Wildlife Warden, Roads Warden, and the WOW & web site team.

Want To Comment?

Read the strategy on-line at www.woodford-halse-villagesignpost.co.uk/strategy

This strategy is regularly reviewed and updated. You can always comment by contacting your Parish Councillor or by email to the Parish Clerk: parishclerk@woodfordcummembris-pc.org.