February 2025

WIXAMS NEWSLETTER

An Independent Newsletter covering all parishes across Wixams • newsletter@wixams.org

BLAKE STEPHENSON MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Bedfordshire

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Karin Smyth MP
Minister of State for Health
Department for Health & Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Tuesday 14th January 2025

Dear Karin,

I trust this letter finds you well.

On Tuesday 15th October, during Topical Health Questions in the House of Commons, you promised at the Dispatch Box to meet with me to discuss the problems of capital funding that has left the new town of Wixams in my constituency without a GP surgery for nearly two decades.

As well as the obvious and urgent need to deliver this for my constituents, if the Government is serious about delivering sufficient health infrastructure as part of your plans to build 1.5 million homes, then I believe the example provided by Wixams should be a case study on the need to reform the delivery of capital funding for that infrastructure.

I am disappointed that, due to a series of cancellations, this meeting has not yet taken place.

This is a matter of great importance for my constituents – and with significant projected growth in Wixams, one which is not going away. Please could your office urgently organise for us to meet to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Blake Stephenson MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Bedfordshire



WIXAMS GP SURGERY

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Blake Stephenson MP recently posted an update on his fight to get the GP Surgery Wixams desperately needs.

In a recent post Blake said that it is unacceptable that there is no surgery nearly two decades after construction on the town started.

The Health Minister had promised Blake a meeting to discuss how they can work together to unblock the issues but the meeting still hasn't taken place.

Blake wrote to the Health Minister stressing the importance of this issue and requesting an urgent meeting and has since received a response confirming a new date for a meeting.

Wixams Parish Council News

Clerk to Wixams Parish Council

The Parish Council welcomed the new Clerk – Sarah Gallagher at their meeting on Tuesday 21 January 20225 she can be contacted via email: clerk@wixams-pc.gov.uk Monday - Friday

Co-option of new Councillor

The Parish Council also welcomed Michael Owens who was co-opted onto the Wixams Parish Council meeting.

Planning Application – 24/02463/MAO

Major outline planning application land at Bedford Road, Wixams, Bedford for 375 homes, children's nursery. Clerk will liaise with Wilstead Parish Council on matters raised by them.

Grant Application

The Parish Council considered and agreed to grant an application for Insurance for Wixams Community Group.

Working Group Membership

Following the suspension of the delegated committees the Parish Council have formed the following working groups. These groups will meet to discuss issues arising and report back to the Full Council with their proposals for agreement. The Working Groups and Members are:

Finance and IT

Cllrs Frost, Ali, Bowman, Taylor, Mardel, Gammie, Owens and Clerk

HR/Staffing

Cllrs Frost, Bowman and Mardel and Clerk

Planning/Highways

Cllrs Matthews, Whiteley, Ali, Musgrove, Menzies, Casey and Clerk

Community/Grants

Cllrs Gammie, Menzies, Rollins, Musgrove, Matthews, Whitely and Clerk

Other Groups which will be Ad-hoc:
Traffic Group (for Green Lane, Brooklands and Southern Cross)
Cllrs Matthews, Menzies, Gammie, Whiteley and Clerk

CCTV

Cllrs Frost, Bowman, Mardel, Whitely and Clerk

LAA Cllr Bowman and Clerk

Green Lane Consultation Follow up meeting

Cllr Matthews advised that there was a follow up meeting to discuss proposals for the traffic problems outside Wixams Tree and Academy. A proposal had been put forward but unfortunately the map and supporting information had not been sent to the Clerk prior to the meeting. The Clerk will follow this up with Planning and Highways.

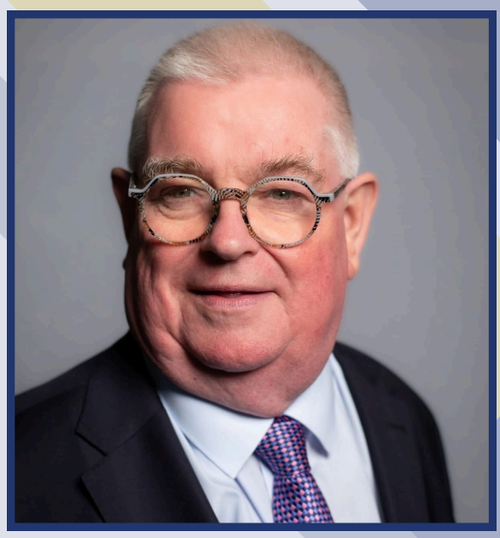
Youth Engagement Event

Cllr Mardel advised that the Youth Engagement Event was very successful and had been well attended. The survey is due to close shortly and further information will be presented once this has been analysed.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 18 February at 7.45 in the Munson Room, Lakeview Village Hall, Brooklands Avenue, Bedford where there will be a presentation from Urban and Civic.

John Tizard

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner



Last time I wrote to you, I talked about my commitment to reinvigorating local policing. Since then, I welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement on the Government's plan for change for policing.

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee that is being introduced very much reflects my mission for local policing.

I am glad that there is a renewed focus on local policing including community policing and the promise of money to fund an expansion of police numbers is positive.
However, my aim is to change the culture of local policing as much increasing the numbers of police officers and PCSOs.

LI wish to deepen the connection between local policing and the communities they serve.
This means having named officers for every area of the county and advisory panels to support and advise the local police on what is required in the local communities, towns, and villages.

It is about police who know their communities and the communities knowing them. In Wixams, I would like community policing teams to be problem solving, working in partnership with community groups, businesses, and local councils.

I have recently kicked off my 'mission board' meetings which are designed to apply a whole-system approach to improve policing and safety for residents and victims of crime.
One of the mission boards is focussed on 'local policing' with the idea to collaborate with partners, to improve data sharing, community engagement and scrutiny of police processes.

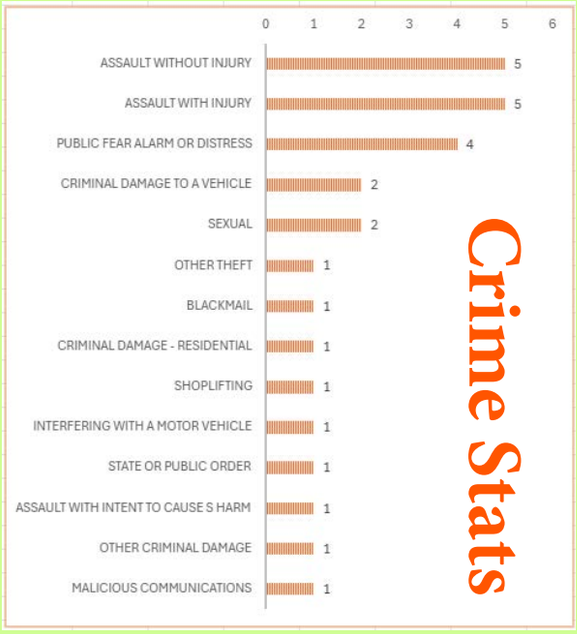
I am committed to investing in local policing over the next three years. Therefore, I am pleased that the government has allocated Bedfordshire £930,000 for 2025/26 as the first instalment of our share the Neighbourhood Police Guarantee funding

USEFUL NUMBERS

999 - Emergency
Where there is a risk of:
- Personal injury
- Loss of life
- Crime in action

101 - Non emergency
• Reporting a crime that is no longer in progress
• Giving information about a crime
• Contacting local police officer
• Getting update reported crime
• Suspicious incidents

Wixams Parish Council 07386904950
Lakeview Village Hall 07544853633
Lakeview School.....01234741653
Wixams Tree 01234608960
Wixams Academy 01234608950
Houghton Conquest
Lower School.....01234740202
Welcome (Wixams Co-Op) 01234740404
Lakeside Fish & Chips 01234743942
Wilstead Tandoori 01234740904
Wilstead 9th Kitchen 01234740413
The Red Lion 01234402446
The Woolpack 01234742318
NHS Direct 111
Wilstead Pharmacy 01234740609
Bedford Hospital 01234355122
Doctors - London Road 01234266866
Doctors - Houghton Close 01525300898
Doctors - Greensand 01525631390
Doctors - Oliver St 01525631395
Doctors - Wootton 01234762500
Dentist - Cranfield 01234752515
Scotts Vets 01234742423
BPHA Customer Service 03301000272
Bedford Borough Council 01234267422
L&Q Estates 01926339339
Wilstead & Wixams
Good Neighbours Scheme 07807408928
Wilstead Post Office 01234740210
Seasons Garden Centre 01234741909
Houghton Conquest
Parish Council 01234270016
Houghton Conquest
Post Office 01234740208
Stewartby Parish Council.....01908397959



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Update from your Local Bedford Borough Councillors



andrea.spice@bedford.gov.uk



wilshamstead.ward@yahoo.co.uk



Marc.frost@bedford.gov.uk



Follow us on @wixamsandwilstead

In late 2024, along with the Mayor, Tom Wootton, council officers and representatives of the construction company, we visited the site where the new Wixams Station is currently being built. It was an exciting opportunity to get up close and see for real the work that is being done to make Wixams Station a reality, rather than something which is just endlessly talked about.

At the moment, there is a lot of earth moving to prepare the site, and not much evidence of any station building, but the site was busy (and muddy!) and it was clear that building a station is a complex project involving numerous very skilled people and organisations.

In order to progress things further, a full closure of the line is currently scheduled for 22 and 23 February, with more partial closures scheduled for the weeks after that. (Check the Thameslink website for details)
Whilst all this station work is going on, we await news of the Universal project formally getting the go ahead, to understand what impact this will have on the station.

If Universal is approved, it will, as has previously been stated, result in a much bigger 4 platform Wixams Station with wider platforms to deal with the larger crowds expected and trains running at later hours, to accommodate theme park staff arriving to and leaving from work.

Wixams Station is currently scheduled to open in late 2026, though an expanded 4-platform version would obviously result in a slightly later opening date, due to the need to accommodate a slightly different design and build. However, after 13 years of dither and delay on the station, with much talk and little action, a slightly later opening date that promises a better station with more trains and longer opening hours is probably something that we can live with.

After having campaigned for the station over many years, alongside residents, the Parish Council and local interest groups, it's nice to see at long last everyone's efforts paying off. We look forward to the day when we are standing on the platform, tickets in hand!

What's on - Lakeview Village Hall

Day	Time	Group	Room	Contact	Website /Facebook pages
Monday	09:30 – 11.00	Playgroup	Lakeview		1st & 3rd Monday of the month (Term time only)
	16.00 – 16.30	Shine Theatre School	Lakeview	Louisa Hodges - 07749091885	Facebook: www.facebook.com/Shine-Theatre-School
		Ballet (aged 5 – 11 yrs)			Website: www.shinetheatreschool.co.uk
	17.15 – 18.15	Rainbows	Munson	TBC	
	18.15 – 19.30	Brownies	Munson	TBC	
	18.30 – 20.00	Wixams Tang So Do	Lakeview	Nick	Facebook: www.facebook.com/WixamsTSD
	20.00 – 21.00	Go box fitness	Lakeview	07727113285	Facebook: www.facebook.com/goboxfit
Tuesday	10.30 – 12.00	Wixams Community Cafe	Swan		
	16.15 – 16.45	Entertainia Dance (Aged 2-4)	Lakeview	Nina	Email: entertainiatheatreschool@gmail.com
	16.45 – 17.15	Entertainia Dance (Aged 4 - 6)			
	17.15 – 18.00	Entertainia Dance (Aged 5 - 7			
	18.30 – 19.30	Yoga	Munson	07825561569	Website: www.bookwhen.com/livyogauk
	18.30 – 19.30	Christ the Word Ignite Club	Lakeview	07879716958	Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChristTheWordWixams/
		(for years 6,7,8 & 9)			
Wednesday	17.30-19.30	Wixams Youth Group	**Swan**	07780 448599	Email: wendy.millgate@4ypuk.com
					Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/4YPUK
	17.30 – 20.00	Irish Dancing	Lakeview	Katie	Facebook:www.facebook.com/stuartirishdancebedford
	17.00 – 18.00	Rainbows	Munson	TBC	
	18.15 – 19.30	Brownies	Munson	TBC	
	19.45 – 21.00	Guides	Munson	TBC	
Thursday	09.45 – 14.00	Toddler Sensory / baby sensory	Lakeview	Samantha - 07538 502587	Facebook: www.facebook.com/toddlersensebeds
		Different groups running			Website: https://www.toddlersense.com/bedfordshire
	16.30 – 17.15	Entertainia Dance Class	Lakeview	Nina	Email: entertainiatheatreschool@gmail.com
		Class 1 (4 – 7 years)			
	17.15 -18.00	Entertainia Dance Class	Lakeview	Nina	Email: entertainiatheatreschool@gmail.com
		Class 2 (7 –11 years)			
	18.30 – 19.15	Go box fitness for kids	Lakeview	07727113285	Facebook: www.facebook.com/goboxfit
	19.30 – 20.30	Go box fitness for Adults	Lakeview	07727113285	Facebook: www.facebook.com/goboxfit
	18.50 - 20.30	The Man Cave	Munson		https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Man-Cave-UK
Friday	10.00 – 11.00	Little Stars	Swan		
	18.00 – 20.00	Scouts	Lakeview		Facebook: www.facebook.com/1stwixamscouting
					Website: http://Www.1stwixamsscouts.org.uk
	19.00 – 20.45	AA	Munson		
Saturday	8.45 – 9.15	Shine Theatre School	Swan	Louisa Hodges - 07749091885	Facebook: www.facebook.com/Shine-Theatre-School
		Ballet (aged 3 – 5 yrs)			Website: www.shinetheatreschool.co.uk
	09.00 – 10.00	Lego Club (3 – 7 years)	Munson		Email: legoatwixams@gmail.com
	10.45 – 11.45	Lego Club (7 – 16 years)	Munson		
	0-9.15 – 10.00	Shine Theatre School	Swan	Louisa Hodges - 07749091885	Facebook: www.facebook.com/Shine-Theatre-School
		Musical Theatre (aged 4 – 7 yrs)			Website: www.shinetheatreschool.co.uk
	09.30 – 11.30	Irish Dancing	Lakeview	Katie	Facebook:www.facebook.com/stuartirishdancebedford
		Beginners classes for all ages			
Sunday	10.30 – 11.30	Christ the Word Church Services	Lakeview	Alan - 07879716958	Facebook: facebook.com/christthewordwixams
					Website: www.christthewordwixams.org.uk
	09.45 – 11.15	AA	Munson		
	15.00 – 16.00	Christ the Word Sunday Club	Munson	Alan - 07879716958	Facebook: facebook.com/christthewordwixams
		For children aged 4- 10 years			Website: www.christthewordwixams.org.uk
	18.30 - 19.30	Christ the Word Evening Group	Swan	Alan - 07879716958	Facebook: facebook.com/christthewordwixams
					Website: www.christthewordwixams.org.uk
	18.00- 19.00	Taekwondo	Lakeview		



Valentine's Day Word Search



love candy caring hugs
cupid cards February pink
valentine flowers red gifts
heart kindness kiss roses

WE NEED YOU!

DO YOU HAVE SOME FREE TIME?

ONCE A MONTH?

COULD YOU HELP DELIVER THIS NEWSLETTER?

In October 2020 we launched the Wixams Newsletter that followed on from the Wixams Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter.

At that time the area we covered for delivering Newsletters was manageable.

Over the last few years the village has grown and is still growing and whilst we have a lot of lovely deliverers across Wixams we need more and more.

If you can help, even if it is only your own Street, please get in touch.

You don't have to do anything as the Newsletters are delivered to your door, all you have to do is deliver them to your allocated streets.

If you can help please email:
barbiematt30@icloud.com.

Currently we are looking for help to cover:

Village	Streets
Village Two Willow Grove	Jackdaw Drive (Off Harlequin Crescent)
	Hedgehog Mead
	Tawny Avenue (Leading to Hedgehog Mead)
	Minnow Way
	Lakeside Drive (Off Southern Cross)
	Lavender Lane (Off Southern Cross)
Village Three	Taylor Wimpey Homes
	Orchard Way
	Sepia Way
	Violet Road
	Verde Avenue
	Copper Close
	Fisherswood Road
	Abbey Homes
	Emmer Drive
	Grassmere Place
	Four Acre Road (Access from the roundabout near Willow Grove School)
	Rowan Road
	Mapleleaf Drive
Village Four Harrowden Green	Homestead Way
	Horseshoe Crescent
	Plough Lane
	Woodcutt Meadows
	Stableford Road
	Meadow Road (Even Numbers to the roundabout before Four Acre Road)
	Roads Leading Off Oatlands Drive
	Pond Gardens
	Waterway Place
	Barleycorn Close
	Meadow Road - Odd Numbers

Planning application for up to 375 homes south of Wixams



There is an open application to build up to 375 homes south of Wixams, alongside the A6.

The development is known as Wixams End.

You can find details of this application on the Bedford Borough Council planning portal:

https://publicaccess.bedford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SPBF7CCU03600

QR: Bedford.gov Application

The developers have also published a dedicated website with their proposals:

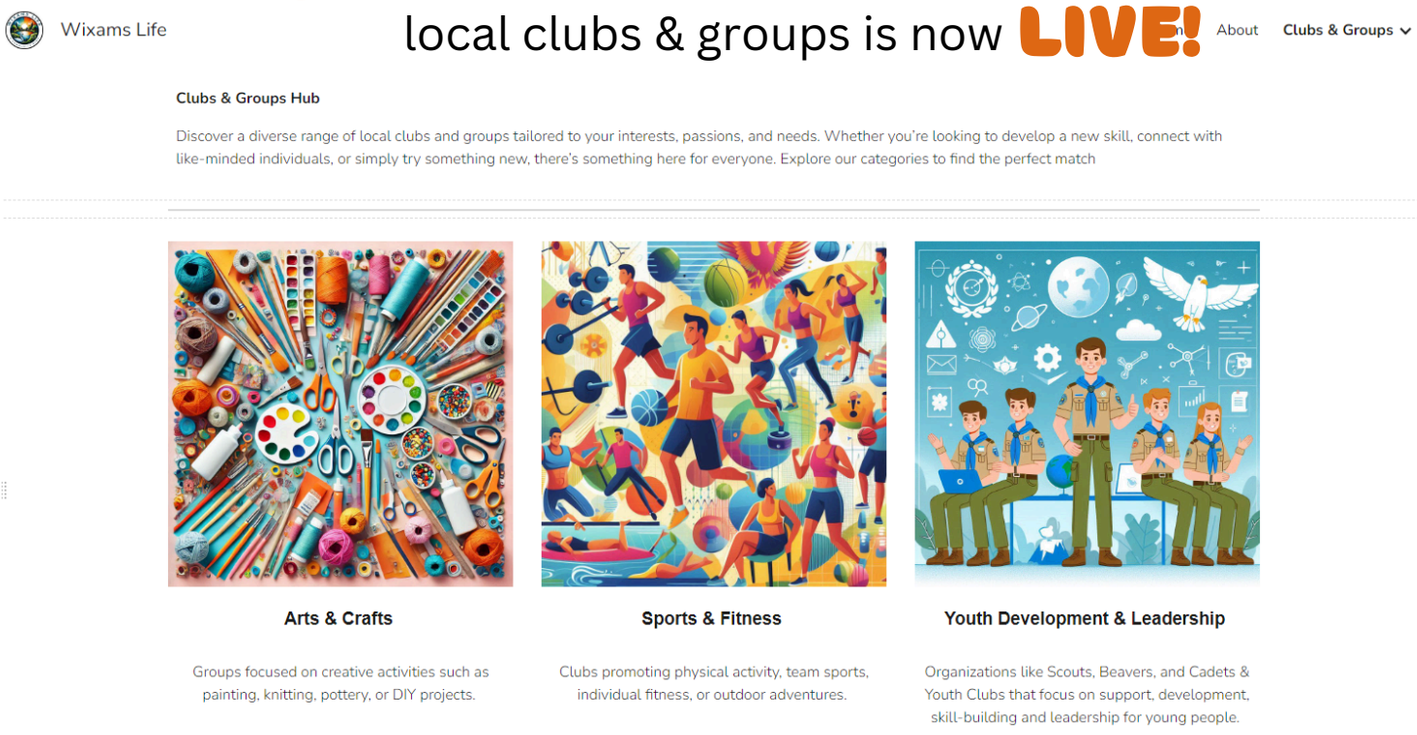
https://wixamsendconsultation.co.uk/proposals

QR: Wates Consultation

The developers are proposing:

- Approximately 375 high-quality, sustainable new homes including a policy compliant provision of affordable housing;
- A children's nursery to meet local needs
- New community facilities including a flexible community space/shop that will generate local employment; a mobility hub and meeting places
- Sympathetic design to respect and enhance the local character with a development that blends into the landscape
- An on-site Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%
- 30% tree and hedgerow coverage, enhancing the Forest of Marston Vale
- A network of new cycleways and footpaths, offering connections into Wixams and Wilstead, encouraging healthy active travel and promoting wellbeing
- New public open spaces including 2 outdoor sports pitches, associated sports pavilion, an array of play areas, a total of 21 hectares of accessible green space and parkland, new community allotments and a community orchard
- Financial contributions towards off-site education provision, medical facilities and transport infrastructure.

A NEW online directory showcasing information on local clubs & groups is now LIVE!



Just visit: www.wixamslife.co.uk/clubs-groups

Scan the QR Code:

Wixams Life Clubs & Groups Directory

Club & Group Categories

- Arts & Craft
- Sports & Fitness
- Music & Performance
- Literature & Writing
- Science & Technology
- Games & Hobbies
- Photography & Film
- Gardening & Nature
- Youth Development & Leadership
- Charity & Volunteering
- Professional Development
- Cultural & Heritage
- Education & Learning
- Faith & Spirituality
- Social & Networking
- Seniors & Retirees
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Neighbourhood

If your club or group is not listed & you would like it to be please email Nick Edwards at: wixamslife@gmail.com

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Contact us: Tel: Lee: 07925597605 / Chris: 07474714557





Fieldfare CAKES



Wixams based cake maker



Contact: 07791 282769
email: fieldfarecakes@hotmail.co.uk
www.fieldfarecake.co.uk
www.facebook.com/fieldfarecake

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info@je-group.co.uk www.je-group.co.uk

SWING BANDS & DANCE CLASSES
EVERY WEEK IN WIXAMS



SWING DANCE CLASS
7:15PM - 8PM
£8 per week
£25 monthly

BAND NIGHT
£12.99

WHEN
Thursdays
8-10:30pm

WHERE
Wixams Retirement Village Theatre
Bedford Rd, Bedford MK42 6EA

GREAT LIVE BANDS EVERY WEEK
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KGH

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Contact Elizabeth for a **FREE** 15-minute consultation

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www.positivelyempowered.co.uk

Activity schedule on reverse

Ofsted Registered

For content from our last camp

FOLLOW US

ELITE SF

eliteskillsandfitness.com
/bedfordholidaycamps

Book Now

Scan Me

CHILDREN'S MULTI-SPORT

HOLIDAY CAMPS





On top of our busy activity schedule we have some more relaxing activities on offer during our snack breaks and 30min free play slot. These are:

- Connect four
- Colouring
- Tic-tac-toe
- Chess + Draughts
- Interactive Lego
- Our own Library of reading books
- BIG Jenga
- Uno
- Dominos
- Massive Snakes and Ladders
- Tic-tac-toe

WHEN?

Every school holiday

Open to children from all schools!

Also includes break up days (half days)

WHERE?

Lakeview School, School Ln, Wixams, Bedford, MK42 6BH

PRICING

£20 - Half Day (8am - 12pm / 10am - 2pm)
£30 - Standard Day (9am - 4pm)
£35 - Extended Day (8am - 6pm)

Optional Extras
£4 Lunch & Snacks
£4 Breakfast & Hot Dinner

Childcare Vouchers and Tax-Free Childcare now accepted

Age range: 4 - 13

Discounts

15% Early Bird Discount
15% Sibling Discount
20% Refer a Friend
(both parties)

GET IN TOUCH

jack@eliteskillsandfitness.com
07530 062 988
eliteskillsandfitness.com

Activity Schedule

KEY
- Camp Start Times
- Food Breaks / Hot Dinner
- Camp Finish Times

4 - 7 Years Old — Ducks

	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:15	10:30	11:15	12:00	12:30	13:00	14:15	14:30	16:30	17:00	18:00
Monday		Indoor Activities		Dance/Zumba		Football	DnB Dodgeball		Freeplay	Basketball		Glow Badminton	Multi sport		
Tuesday		Indoor Activities		Team Games		NERF	Rounders		Freeplay	Golf		Tennis	Multi sport		
Wednesday		Indoor Activities		Football		Archery/Crossbow	DnB Dodgeball		Freeplay	Tag Rugby		Golf	Multi sport		
Thursday		Indoor Activities		Glow Badminton		Team Games	Archery/Crossbow		Freeplay	Basketball		Cricket	Multi sport		
Friday		Indoor Activities		Volleyball		Rounders	DnB Dodgeball		Freeplay	NERF		Tennis	Multi sport		

8 - 10 Years Old — Meerkats

	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:15	10:30	11:15	12:00	12:30	13:00	14:15	14:30	16:30	17:00	18:00
Monday		Indoor Activities		Football		Dance/Zumba	Rounders		Freeplay	DnB Dodgeball		Golf	Multi sport		
Tuesday		Indoor Activities		NERF		Team Games	Glow Badminton		Freeplay	Basketball		Tennis	Multi sport		
Wednesday		Indoor Activities		Archery/Crossbow		Team Games	Golf		Freeplay	Glow Badminton		Tag Rugby	Multi sport		
Thursday		Indoor Activities		DnB Dodgeball		NERF	Rounders		Freeplay	Tennis		Basketball	Multi sport		
Friday		Indoor Activities		Volleyball		DnB Dodgeball	Archery/Crossbow		Freeplay	Cricket		Football	Multi sport		

11 - 13 Years Old — Tigers

	08:00	08:30	09:00	09:30	10:15	10:30	11:15	12:00	12:30	13:00	14:15	14:30	16:30	17:00	18:00
Monday		Indoor Activities		Golf		Rounders	Dance/Zumba		Freeplay	Glow Badminton		Tennis	Multi sport		
Tuesday		Indoor Activities		Glow Badminton		Team Games	NERF		Freeplay	Basketball		Tennis	Multi sport		
Wednesday		Indoor Activities		Team Games		DnB Dodgeball	Archery/Crossbow		Freeplay	Football		Tag Rugby	Multi sport		
Thursday		Indoor Activities		Basketball		Golf	NERF		Freeplay	Rounders		DnB Dodgeball	Multi sport		
Friday		Indoor Activities		DnB Dodgeball		Archery/Crossbow	Volleyball		Freeplay	Football		Cricket	Multi sport		

Why Elite SF?

Focused Progress is our slogan and we live and breathe it.

We are here to make a positive difference in bursting out that comfort zone, social skills, self belief, helping sculpt that top 1% in all areas of life and having fun doing it!

Whether that is tailored sessions to your younger one or following the different coaching sessions at holiday camp. We develop character whilst improving their skills in the sport of their choice.

We focus on people first.

The best 'Children's Sports Coaching' out there, let us prove it to you!

Football Coaching



1-2-1 + Semi - Private

FOCUSED PROGRESS

BUILDING FOOTBALLERS AND PEOPLE

High Quality coaching which is tailored to your younger one. Whether it is building self belief to then transpire into other aspects of your younger one's life or pushing to become the best player in the academy and really stand out amongst the rest!

Semi - Private (max 8 children)

£15
Bedford, Wixams Village Hall, MUGA

6:30pm - 7:30pm Age 4 - 7
7:30pm - 8:30pm Age 8 - 12
Tuesday Term time

eliteskillsandfitness.com/football



1-2-1

£35 - £45
Bedford, Kempston, Hillgrounds field
Milton Keynes, Broughton sports pavillion
7 days a week availability options
Flexible booking, buy 10 sessions and use them across 9 months

Elite SF | 07530 062988 | Jack@eliteskillsandfitness.com

MULTI-SPORT EARLY BIRD AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

SCHEDULE

Ofsted Registered

MONDAY		
	3:30pm	Football
	4:30pm	First Pick up
	5 pm	Hot Dinner
	5:20 pm	Dodgeball / Benchball
	6pm	Last Pick up

TUESDAY		
	3:30pm	Tennis
	4:30pm	First Pick up
	5 pm	Hot Dinner
	5:20 pm	Kick Rounders/Cricket
	6pm	Last Pick up

WEDNESDAY		
	3:30pm	NERF / Volleyball
	4:30pm	First Pick up
	5 pm	Hot Dinner
	5:20 pm	Tag Rugby
	6pm	Last Pick up

THURSDAY		
	3:30pm	Glow Badminton
	4:30pm	First Pick up
	5 pm	Hot Dinner
	5:20 pm	Archery / Crossbows
	6pm	Last Pick up

FRIDAY		
	3:30pm	Basketball
	4:30pm	First Pick up
	5 pm	Hot Dinner
	5:20 pm	Golf / Dodgeball
	6pm	Last Pick up

EARLY BIRD From 7:30am		
	Monday	Football
	Tuesday	Tennis
	Wednesday	Glow Badminton
	Thursday	Dodgeball / Benchball
	Friday	Team Games

Breakfast Included

Important Information

Schedules will be followed with the relaxed activities but also we shall try to squeeze in as many extra sports as possible!

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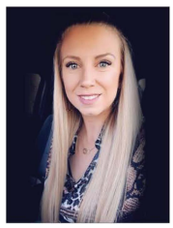
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Note: November will be after the Remembrance Service in town

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February Garden Update

February is a good time to prepare your garden for Spring.

This month's garden tasks

- Make an early sowing of sweet peas.
- Sow hardy perennials, such as echinaceas, dianthus and verbena.
- Chit potatoes in a cool, light room.
- Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished blooming.
- Cut back perennials and grasses.
- Remove dead material from evergreen grasses.
- Prune wisteria

What are the best things to plant in February?

Vegetable Seeds to Start in February

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Lettuces
- Eggplant
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage

February Lawn Care – Dos and Don'ts

- Plan tasks according to the weather
- Keep a close eye on the health of your lawn
- Cut the grass if it's growing and apply autumn/winter fertiliser (including lawn edges)
- Aerate and try to reduce any sitting water
- Continue to remove debris and leave

Plant summer flowering bulbs

February is also a good time to plant summer flowering bulbs in pots, most of which do best in free-draining soils.

You can plant hardy perennials such as Japanese anemones and hardy geraniums too. Most are dormant in February, with little or no foliage growing above the ground.

However, by planning them in February you can get them off to a good start, as they will start growing as soon as temperatures increase.



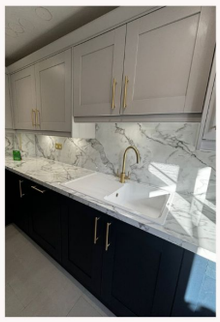




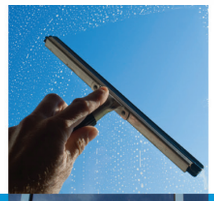
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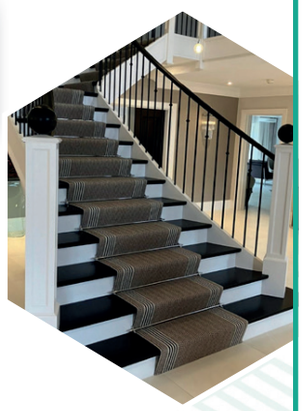
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Valentine's Biscuits

Prep:30 mins
Cook:20 mins
+ 5 hrs freezing and chilling
Makes: 16-20



Ingredients

- **300g** plain flour - plus a little extra for dusting
- **200g** salted butter - diced
- **120g** golden caster sugar
- **2** large egg yolks
- **2** tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp rosewater
- **or 25g/1oz** freeze-dried raspberries, whizzed to a powder (optional)
- Red or pink food colouring

These picture-perfect sweet treats make a gorgeous gift for someone special. Create dough cylinders then simply slice and bake the number of biscuits you want.
Freezable

Method

Step 1
Tip the flour and butter into a food processor and whizz to fine crumbs. Add the sugar and yolks then whizz to a smooth dough. Remove one-third of the dough, add vanilla to what's left and pulse to whizz in. Wrap this dough in cling film and leave at room temperature.

Step 2
Put the reserved dough back in the processor with the rosewater or dried raspberries, if using, and a drop of food colouring. Pulse and add more colouring to achieve an intense colour. If the dough has become too soft, pulse in a few spoonful's more flour until a similar consistency to the vanilla dough. Put the dough in the fridge, remembering to remove it 30 mins before you need to roll it out.

Step 3
Thickly roll out the coloured dough between baking parchment. Use a small 3-4cm heart cutter to stamp out hearts. Keep re-rolling and stamping until all the dough is used. Line up hearts on top of each other and press to form a cylinder, taking care to retain the heart shape. Wrap in cling film and freeze for 3 hrs until solid.

Step 4
When the heart dough is hard, roll the vanilla dough, using your hands, into 3 cylinders the length of the heart stack. Stick one to each 'side' of the hearts, pat together to form a fat cylinder, then gently roll on your work surface until it completely encircles the coloured dough, with the frozen heart dough hidden in the centre. Chill for 2 hrs.

Step 5
Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Use a sharp knife to slice the log into 1cm-thick discs. Place on trays lined with baking parchment, allowing space for spreading, and bake for 20 mins. Cool on wire racks. Will keep for up to 4 days in an airtight container.

Valentine's Cocktail



Prep: 5 mins
Serves: 2

Ingredients

- **150ml** cranberry juice
- **1 tsp** grenadine
- **50ml** vodka
- handful of ice
- **1** lime wedge
- **4** raspberries
- chilled prosecco
- or sparkling wine, to top up the air, it's the perfect tipple for Valentine's Day

Method

Combine cranberry juice, vodka, raspberries and prosecco to make this ruby-red cocktail. If romance is in the air, it's the perfect tipple for Valentine's Day.

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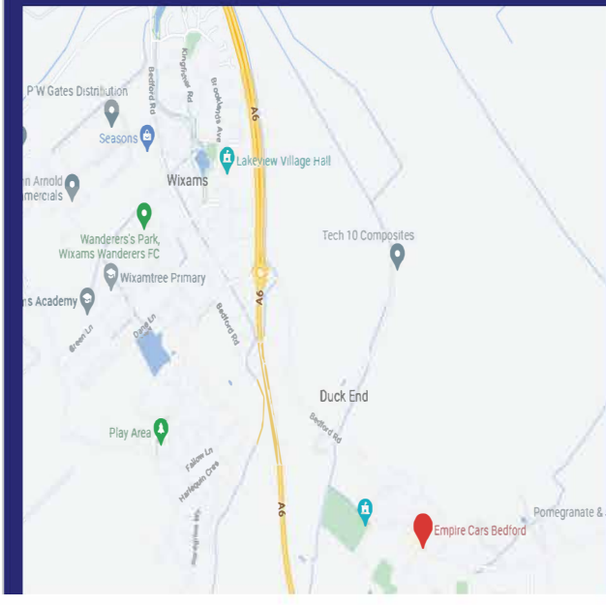
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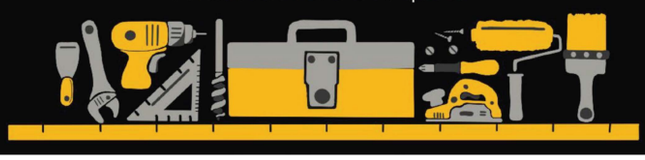
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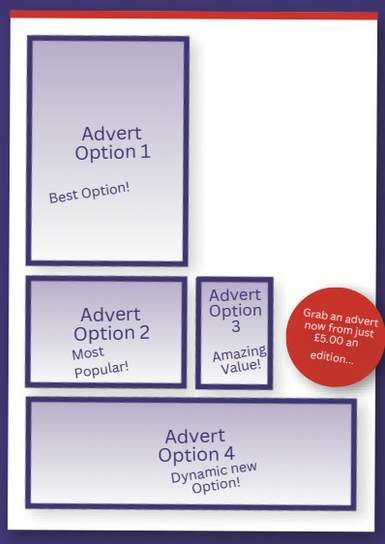
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The Newsletter Team

Editor & Advertising
Sheila Menzies

Distribution/Delivery
Barbara Matthews

Design and Production
Nick Edwards

Treasurer
Barbara Matthews -barbiematt30@icloud.com

Contributors
Saqhib Ali, Emma Egan and Ellie Egan

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