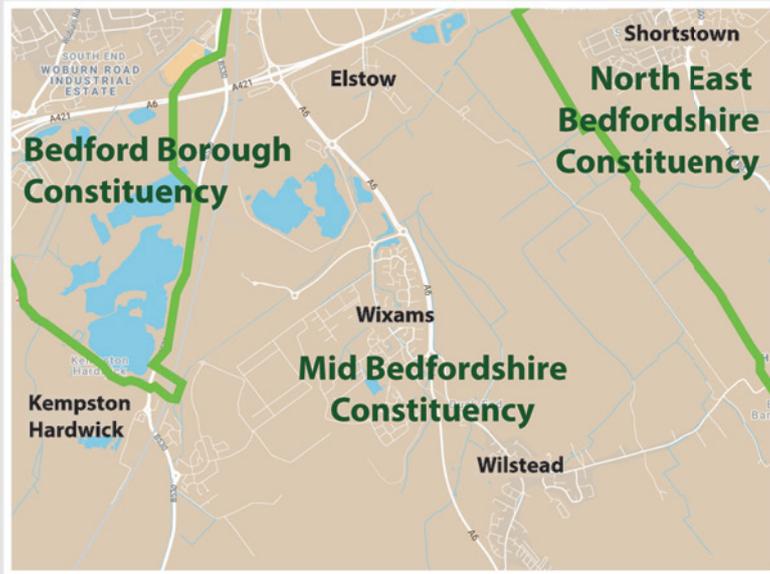


Mapping out Wixams

Wixams has a multitude of electoral boundaries crossing over its 4 villages which can make it a little confusing being a resident here. Who is the councillor for your area? Which local authority is responsible for your bin collection? Which parish council can you turn to with questions? This can be even more confusing for people who have moved from elsewhere in the UK where the local political structure may differ. To make things easier we've put together a set of maps which show the different levels of governance, from the Parliamentary level down to Civil Parish. They show the boundaries for each, with information about what they are and some contact details.

Parliamentary Constituencies



The UK Parliament is currently split into 650 constituencies, each with an average electorate (people able to vote) in England of around 72,000. Every constituency is represented by a single Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons. MPs have three main responsibilities: primarily to act in the national interest, secondly they must act in the interests of their constituents, and thirdly they may act in the interests of their political party if this does not conflict with their other two responsibilities.

For us in Wixams things are very simple at the parliamentary level, as the entire Wixams estate is contained within the Mid Bedfordshire constituency. To the immediate north is the Bedford Borough constituency (often referred to as Bedford and Kempston) and further north and to the east of Wixams is the North East Bedfordshire constituency.

The next general election is scheduled to be held in May 2024.



Mid Bedfordshire Constituency
Nadine Dorries MP
Conservative



Bedford Borough Constituency
Mohammad Yasin MP
Labour



North East Bedfordshire Constituency
Richard Fuller MP
Conservative

Local Authorities

There are two local authorities for Wixams: Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.

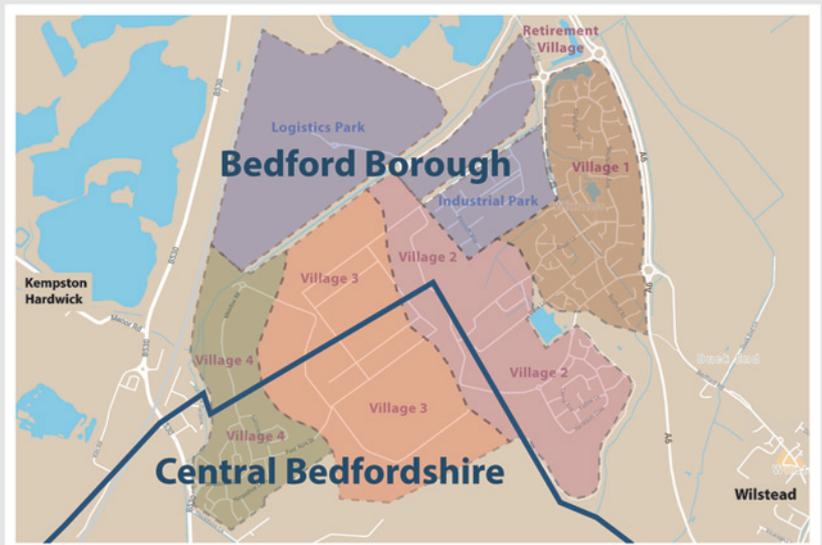
In 2009 Bedfordshire moved to a single-tier structure and both councils became 'Unitary Authorities', meaning they took on extra responsibilities from the former Bedfordshire County Council such as education, social services and transport.

Unitary authorities are responsible for: education, highways, transport planning, passenger transport, social care, housing, libraries, leisure and recreation, environmental health, waste collection, waste disposal, planning applications, strategic planning and local taxation collection.

The Mayor of Bedford Borough is Dave Hodgson who has been in the role since 2009. He is a 'directly elected' mayor which means he has an executive position on the council as well as ceremonial duties. The first recorded reference to a Mayor of Bedford was in 1264!

Similar to most unitary authorities, Central Beds does not have an elected mayor position and the council leader is selected from the councillors.

As well as using the map to the right, you can find out which local authority your home is in from your council tax bill.



Bedford Borough Council
01234 267422
www.bedford.gov.uk
customerservices@bedford.gov.uk



Central Bedfordshire Council
0300 300 8301
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



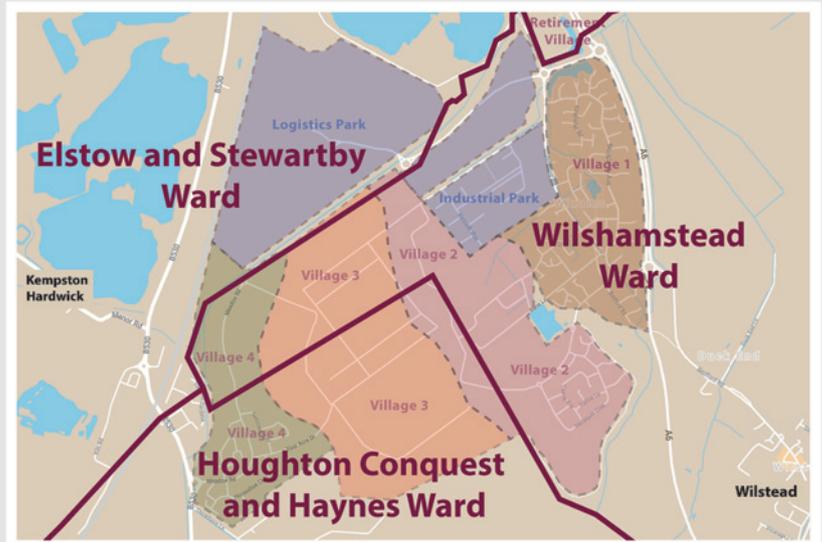
Mayor of Bedford Borough
Dave Hodgson
Liberal Democrats

Wards

Both Bedford Borough and Central Beds are split down into electoral divisions called 'Wards'. Each ward is represented by an elected councillor who sits on the council and can also be a member of various council committees and sub-committees.

Wards are typically sized so that each contains a similar number of residents meaning they can be geographically very different in size in rural and urban areas. However, sometimes a larger ward is created which can have two or more ward councillors. Each ward has an average electorate of about 5,500 people.

Wixams is currently split between three different wards, two in Bedford Borough and one in Central Beds, each ward has a single councillor on their respective council. The next elections for the councillors in both local authorities are due to take place in 2023.



Wilshamstead Ward
Cllr. Graeme Coombes
Conservative

Elstow and Stewartby Ward
Cllr. Tim Hill
Liberal Democrats

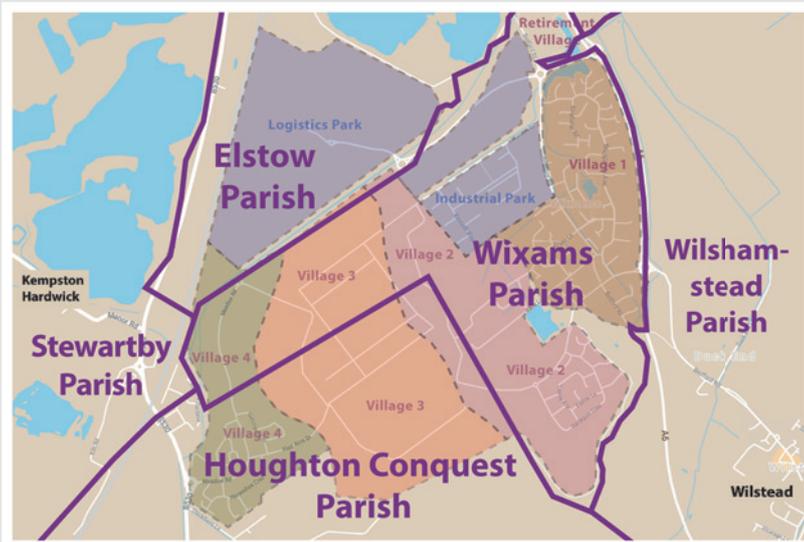
Houghton Conquest and Haynes Ward
Cllr. Rebecca Hares
Independent

An electoral review of Bedford Borough is currently open with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) which will likely result in a significant change to Wixams. One proposal could split Wixams from the Wilshamstead ward and join it with Stewartby to form a new ward with two councillors.

The LGBCE final recommendations will be published on 30th March 2021:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/bedfordshire/bedford

Civil Parishes



Wixams Parish Council
wixams-pc.gov.uk

Elstow Parish Council
elstow.bedsparishes.gov.uk

Stewartby Parish Council
(for part of the Juniper Drive estate)
stewartbykhparishcouncil.gov.uk

Houghton Conquest Parish Council
houghtonconquest-pc.gov.uk

The lowest tier of local government is known as a 'Civil Parish'. The size of a parish can vary depending on its location which can range from a sparsely populated rural area with fewer than a hundred inhabitants, to a large town with a population in the tens of thousands. Not all areas are split into parishes, some urban districts are wholly or partly unparished.

Parish councillors are not necessarily elected but can be 'co-opted' by other members of the council and it is led by the chairman who is elected by the council. Parish council meetings are open to the public and are normally held monthly.

The roles of parish councils can vary significantly but can include: the provision and maintenance of facilities such as allotments, bins, public seats, public toilets and recreation facilities. They can also spend money on crime prevention measures, community transport schemes, traffic calming measures, giving grants to local voluntary organisations and sponsoring public events. Parish councils also act as a channel of local opinion to larger government bodies on issues such as planning.

Wixams is spread across four civil parishes, three in Bedford Borough and one in Central Beds, each administered by its own parish council.



The boundaries on the maps above are approximate and for illustration purposes only. For more detailed maps please visit: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/