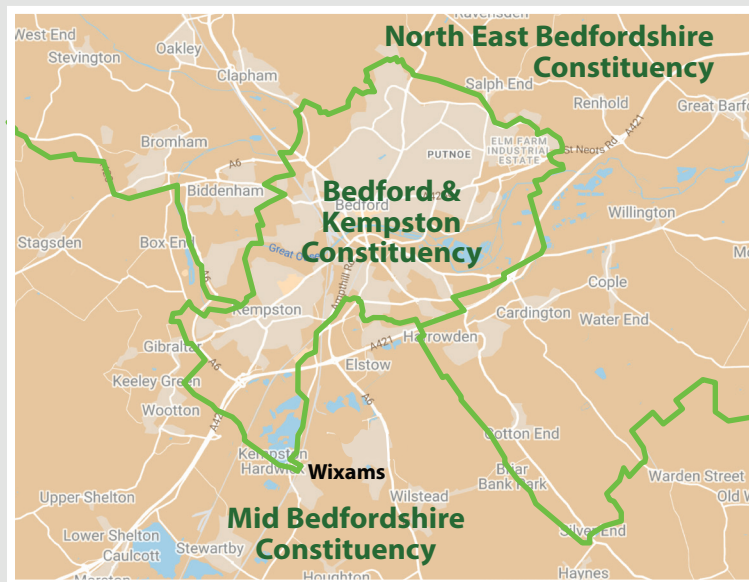


Mapping Out Wixams - 2023 Election Edition

Wixams is a town of 4 villages which is split across various electoral boundaries and straddles the border between Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire councils. This can make it a challenge for residents to understand who to turn to when they need help or get issues resolved. In April 2021 we put together the *Mapping Out Wixams* article highlighting the different levels of governance, from the Parliamentary level down to Civil Parish, to make things clearer for all, particularly those who have moved here from elsewhere in the UK. In time for the upcoming elections in May, and for people who have moved here in the last 2 years, we've updated the maps for the new ward boundaries and highlighted all the electoral candidates we know about at the time of going to print.

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 and Kempston constituency and further north and to the east of Wixams is the North East Bedfordshire constituency.

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



Mid Bedfordshire Constituency
Nadine Dorries MP
Conservative



Bedford & Kempston 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.

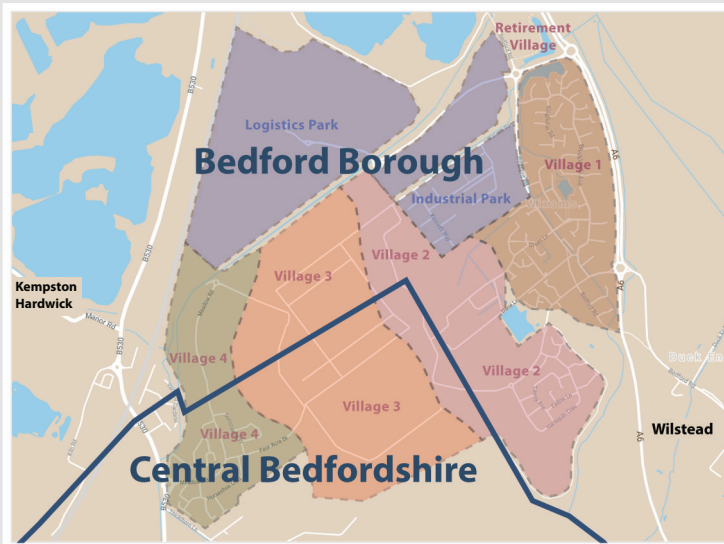
In 2009 Bedfordshire moved to a single-tier structure and both councils became 'Unitary Authorities', meaning they took on extra responsibilities from the former Bedfordshire County Council such as education, social services and transport.

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

The current 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.



Mayor of Bedford Borough Election Candidates



Dave Hodgson
Liberal Democrats



Saqhib Ali
Labour Party



Adrian Spurrell
Green Party



Tom Wootton
Conservative Party



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

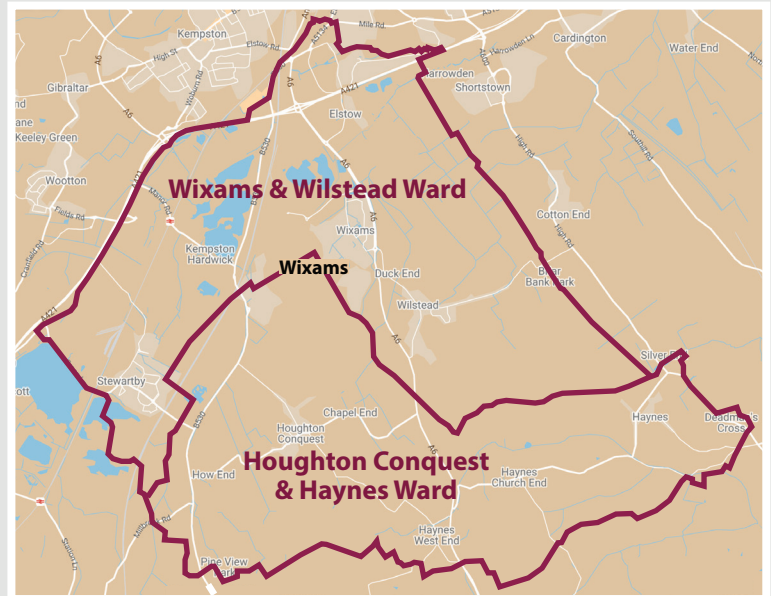
Wards

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.

In 2021 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published the new ward boundaries for Bedford Borough and there was a significant change for us. Wixams is now part of a larger ward which includes Wilstead, Elstow, Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick. At the elections in May you'll be asked to vote for three councillors to represent you at Bedford Borough Council.

If you live in Central Beds there's no change to the Houghton Conquest & Haynes ward and at the election you'll be voting for one councillor.



Wixams & Wilstead Ward Election Candidates*

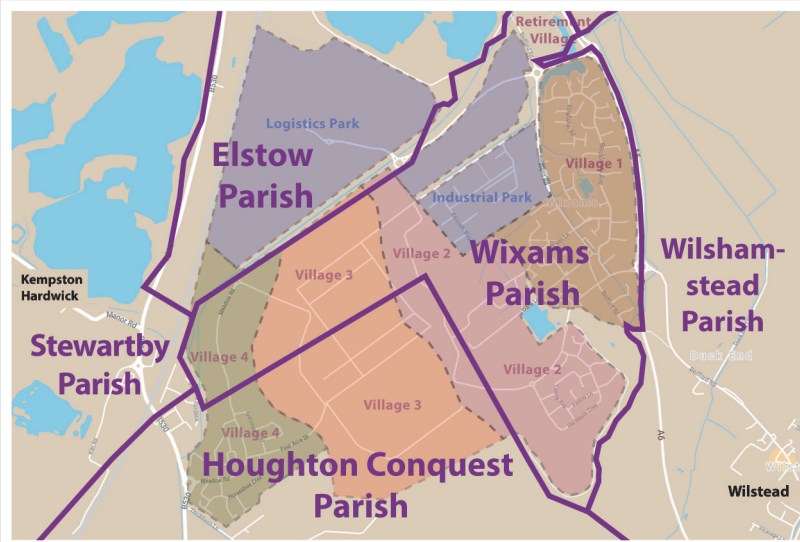
Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Independent
Fiona Cardinale	Steve Conway	Sachdev Goldi	Lee Melville
Graeme Coombes	Terri Conway	Linda Jack	
Marc Frost	Amir Khan	John Symonds	

Houghton Conquest & Haynes Ward Election Candidates*

Conservative	Labour	Independent
Mark Smith	Keith Brown	Rebecca Hares

*Candidates known at date of going to print. Definitive list will not be known until 5th April.

Civil Parishes



Wixams Parish Council
wixams-pc.gov.uk

Elstow Parish Council
elstowparishcouncil.gov.uk

Stewartby Parish Council
(for part of the Juniper Drive estate)
stewartbykparishcouncil.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/