

Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan



Welcome to our first Neighbourhood Plan newsletter!

Writing a Neighbourhood Plan for our community is a real opportunity for everyone who lives and works in Great Denham to put into planning policy how they would like to see the area develop, including influencing:

- the services and facilities there are, and to suggest any improvements needed;
- how any future development is done and how it integrates into the existing community;
- how future requirements of energy, technology and sustainability are embraced; and
- how we protect the environment, green spaces and the ecology and biodiversity of the area.

Getting a Neighbourhood Development Plan ready can take some time – we have set ourselves the target of submitting the Great Denham Plan for referendum and adoption within 2 years. Once supported by referendum and adopted it will become a legally binding document for planning purposes. This first newsletter sets out the initial vision and principles for our Plan, and the areas that we currently think we should be focusing on, along with some initial ideas on how those elements could become policies within the Plan.

We need your views

Our first survey in Summer 2020 gave us an initial view from residents. It is important that we continue to ask and get your feedback so that the policies and ideas in our plan represent Great Denham residents. That way we can all be confident that, once legally adopted, the Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan will help shape the community and environment we all want to live in for years to come.

With each area of the plan outlined in this newsletter we have included some survey questions, so you can tell us what you think of the ideas to date and share your thoughts. We would like as many residents as possible to complete the survey **by the end of April**:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NDPSurveyMarch2021>

Please encourage everyone in your household to complete the survey – the more views the better informed the Plan can be.

Don't worry if you can't complete the survey online – just pop a note in the Community Hall letterbox, addressed to NDP, with your name and address and we'll get a copy to you.

Want to get involved?

We know that in our community we have a rich variety of experience, expertise, interests, hobbies or useful contacts. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is open to anyone who wants to help us shape this plan. If you are interested in helping please contact us on ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk.

If, however you're not able to commit to being a member of the Steering Group, but are happy for us to pick your brains, check our thoughts or run some ideas past you it would be great to hear from you as well.

Give us your views by completing the survey using this link:
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Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Meet the Steering Group

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group currently meets monthly and is a group of volunteers. So far, they have been busy reading up on guidance on how to write the best plan we can. This has included reading other Neighbourhood Development Plans as well as policy information and looking for specialist consultant support. This has helped us get some great ideas and has allowed us to work out what ideas might be suitable for Great Denham.

Who are we?



Lou Evans – Chair *I have lived in Great Denham for nearly 3 years with my husband and two children. I am the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and oversee the project management elements of the plan. I have a keen interest in ensuring residents views are embedded throughout it and am also a member of the Parish Council.*

Will Sinclair – Vice Chair *I have been resident in Great Denham for 6 years with my wife, and 2 children. I am from a construction engineering background and worked on many of the phases of Great Denham. I am leading the Infrastructure part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. I am also Chair of the Great Denham Community Hall Trustees*



Helen Allen *I have lived in Great Denham for 5 years. Having previously lived on new developments, I am delighted to have the opportunity to get involved in shaping the Neighbourhood Plan and help influence the future development of Great Denham.*

Glynda Easterbrook *Brought up in Bromham, I have been a resident of Great Denham for 9 years. I have a keen interest in all things local, particularly the natural environment, ecology and geology. I have joined the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to help with these issues and to ensure that they are addressed and included in any plans for future development of Great Denham*

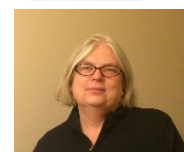


Craig Lymm - Great Denham Country Park *I run the Great Denham Country Park Nature Group and my interests are wildlife photography, wildlife, and ecology*

Vince Arthur *I have lived in Great Denham for nearly 3 Years and joined the parish council last summer. I am particularly interested in making the most of our Environment, Ecology, Geology and Biodiversity.*



Anna O'Meara – Secretary *I have lived in Great Denham for over 20 years and have seen it grow from open fields to a vibrant community. I am also Clerk to the Parish Council*



The other members of the Steering Group are:
Chris Staite, Donna Parsons, Jo Ruskin and Kevin Cawood

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Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Results of our first survey

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our first survey last summer. It has been extremely useful to find out more about what's working well, what needs improving, and your thoughts on future growth. Here is a summary of the feedback you gave us:

What do you like about living in Great Denham?	What are the issues faced by residents that should be included/addressed through the Neighbourhood Planning process?
• Good green areas and open spaces • Good road connections • Quiet village living and village feeling • Sense of community • Country park, community hall and the events that take place there • Closeness to the river • Play areas for the children • The facilities and services we have, e.g., shops at Retail centre • Footpaths for walking and cycling • All the qualities of living in the countryside without being in the middle of nowhere	• Tackling littering, parking and speeding around Great Denham • Better public transport to Milton Keynes and stations • Improved facilities, e.g., pub, better medical centre • Threat of further development and loss of green space • Insufficient parking and narrow roads • Lack of facilities for teenagers/young adults • Protection of habitats from more building • Tackling crime • Adoption of remaining development
Facilities that people would like to see	Things that might be included as policies in the Neighbourhood Plan
• Better public transport into Bedford and Milton Keynes, including to the rail station • Food and drink facilities such as a pub • Better car parking facilities • Sports facilities, including pitches for football, tennis, golf, and the Sports Pavilion, a gym • Improved access to GPs and health facilities • More recreational facilities, including in the green spaces • Facilities for young people • Current facilities, e.g., school, surgeries shops, to keep step with any growth in housing • Litter and Dog Bins • Improved recycling facilities • Variety of food outlets, e.g., takeaways • More traffic calming/speed restrictions • Community-based events and activities	• Protection of green spaces from further development • Parking provision • Traffic and speed management and speed limits • Restrictions on height of buildings and overall housing aspect • Provision of open spaces amongst housing • Restrictions on numbers of Houses of Multiple Occupancy • Provision of facilities linked to development that addresses any gaps, e.g., school expansion, other buildings • Better signage and policies to encourage use of Country Park and community activities • Walkways and Cycleways

The feedback you gave us has been used to shape our initial thoughts on the Plan and also to allow us to consider what additional information we might need from residents in order to progress the Plan to the next stage. Even if you did fill in our initial survey, please do complete our second survey so we can ensure your views continue to be captured. Complete our second survey now by going online to: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NDPSurveyMarch2021>

Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Vision and Aims for our Neighbourhood Development Plan

Every Neighbourhood Development Plan must set out its Visions and Aims of what the plan is about. These are our initial thoughts, please help us shape it further by filling in the survey.

Our vision is that Great Denham will retain its modern yet rural identity, whilst developing as a sustainable community which promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents.

The aims of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan are:

- *To develop existing and create further facilities and services to support the residents and businesses of Great Denham;*
- *To ensure any future developments within Great Denham are sustainable, have suitable infrastructure and are in keeping with existing development;*
- *To manage both existing and future traffic and transport provision and encourage safe and sustainable movement; and*
- *To protect and enhance existing and future open spaces.*

Q1 – Do the Vision and Aims reflect your own views? Please provide your comments. Are there any changes or additions you would like to make?

Shaping Future Development

The Neighbourhood Development Plan will cover local policies for future development, including modification to existing buildings or facilities and the building of new ones.

Government policy mandates that Bedford Borough Council develop a local plan to detail how they will provide new housing within their area in the future and that this local plan utilises a call for sites to find land for new development. Within the Bedford Local Plan 2030, Great Denham currently has a number of sites submitted for the current five-year development plan. There are also other areas that may be developed in the future. The policies we identify as part of our Neighbourhood Development Plan may apply to these sites and any future planning applications once it has been adopted and come into force.



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Policies within the Neighbourhood Development Plan relating to future development can help modify any planning permission given in several ways to ensure they best serve the community. Current policies that we are considering involve:

- Parking provision, including as part of each residents' property and also where parking is located more widely across the parish. Electric car charging facilities.
- Required amenities for future development such as shops, schools and leisure facilities
- The types of housing, e.g., flats, terrace, etc and the size of this housing.
- The mix of private, shared ownership and social housing
- Green energy provision within new developments
- Mandated open space for housing – ensuring all houses and flats are provided with some form of green space
- Maintenance of the village identity, including building on what is already in place, e.g., style, layout etc.
- Management companies, including how these operate, how residents can exercise control and making them more accountable for the services they provide; and
- Development of non-residential property.

Q2. Please tell us which of the policy ideas are your priorities, please rank them in order

Q3. Please tell us why you have selected your top 3.

Q4. Please tell us any policy areas you would like to see included that are not in the above list.

Design of any future development

The 2008 Great Denham Design Guide outlines the original design guide for the development (Phase 2); the Phase 1 design guide (Carnoustie Drive, St Mellion, Great Portway, Muirfield etc) cannot be found unfortunately. There are many principles outlined in the Design Guide that are very relevant to our Neighbourhood Development Plan, including:

- To be sustainable for now and the future, e.g., use of materials, heating systems etc;
- Acceptable to the community, e.g., layout, use of space, etc;
- Encourages people to live and work here, e.g., housing mix, affordability, facilities, etc;
- Promotes health and wellbeing, e.g., access to green space;
- Considering the impact on Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, e.g., layout, lighting etc; and
- Must support economic growth of the area

As well as the areas outlined in Shaping Future Development (above), other things to include are:

- Building height, e.g., maximum number of storeys
- External appearance, e.g., use of building materials, style, etc
- Management of frontages, e.g., fencing/railings; and
- Landscaping, e.g., around housing areas

Q5. What is important to you in terms of design of future housing areas?

Q6. Please suggest any additions you would like included

Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Infrastructure

This section will cover the “hard” infrastructure items which can help residents move around the area, including access to some of the services above and those further afield.

Currently the areas we hope to cover in this section of the plan will include:

- Public Transport: How do you currently use it and how would you like to use it? For example, access to public transport services such as buses, their number and frequency etc. Links to other transport hubs (e.g. Bedford Railway Station), nearby communities, and employment centres. This could include allowing taxis to use the bus gate to Queens Park.
- Provision of Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Paths. How do you currently use them? How would you like to use them? What improvements would you like to pedestrian and bicycle links within the village and to neighbouring villages and towns? There is potential to upgrade footpath links to Biddenham to allow bicycle use as well as removing obstacles such as fences and walls to provide shorter, cleaner and traffic free journeys within Great Denham. There are also options for all weather walking and cycle links within Great Denham and to neighbouring communities (e.g., Kempston) as well as safe school walking routes and safer road crossings.
- Encouraging increased use of the River Great Ouse for Transport. The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterways Trust is raising funds to build a canal from the Great Ouse at Kempston to the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes. The route is already safeguarded from future development. There are options to have provision of towpaths for the section of the Great Ouse within Great Denham, provision of overnight berths for leisure boats and access to the lock that will be required near Kempston Weir.
- Road links to nearby communities and employment centres
- Management of roads and speed limits within Great Denham
- Provision of technology, including fibre broadband to the premises. 4G and 5G mobile signal improvements and siting of 5G transmitters.
- Future proofing all of the above infrastructure to allow for upgrades where and when required.



Q7. Please tell us what is most important to you.

Q8. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to see added to these focus areas.

Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Community Facilities

This section of the plan will cover the provision of facilities and services within Great Denham.

At the junction of Anglia Way and Saxon Way there is a retail centre comprising of 5 retail units with flats above (Roman Gate), and 4 further retail units with adjacent car parking in front of them. These retail units are managed through a management company.

- The Roman Gate units have an Estate Agents, Daily Needs Convenience Store (in two units), Keech Hospice Charity Shop, The Back and Body Clinic and The Eatery Café. The units with adjacent car parking have a Sainsbury's Local, Barnardo's Charity Shop, Saramanda Hair & Beauty Salon and MO's Fish & Grill.
- Great Denham Community Hall, which opened at the end of 2016, is the venue for a number of clubs and groups. Rooms are available for hire, and it also hosts a range of Community activities, including Easter craft workshops, Halloween children's' disco, Summer and Winter Festivals. It is also the venue for the monthly Parish Council meetings.
- At the Village Medical Centre on Kingswood Way, there is a GP Practice, as well as other therapy services including Chiropractor Clinic. Next to the Medical Centre is The Village Pharmacy, Medivet and Harley Street Consulting Clinics.
- Places of worship include St James Church in Biddenham and Woodside Church which meets at the Community Hall
- There is a range of school & childcare provision in Great Denham including a primary school, Busy Bees Nursery and a number of private childminders. Great Denham is also in the catchment area for Biddenham International School and Sports College.
- Sport, leisure and play facilities within Great Denham include the Pavilion, a proposed café, MUGA, football pitches, the country park, a large playground and other smaller play areas e.g. Little Portway
- Currently there are no residential care facilities in Great Denham.



Bedford Borough Council provides the main services such as waste removal, recycling facilities etc, and also the maintenance of Highways and Streetlighting for the older parts of Great Denham that are adopted. The unadopted roads (Greenkeepers Rd, Anglia Way, King Alfred Way and roads off) remain the responsibility of several developers, including road surfaces and streetlighting. The Borough Council also provides a maintenance service under contract to the developers for the newer play areas and some green spaces via an annual charge to residents.

Going forward we need to consider what future facilities both residents and businesses might need to be attracted to Great Denham, what these might look like and how we might facilitate these operating. Commercial property with potential for new business within the area is limited unless a new build is proposed somewhere (which could bring its own problems). Currently the only areas that fall into this category are the Retail Centre, the former golf clubhouse and the former golf course compound building. Provision for potential new business could be included as planning conditions of any future development in Great Denham.

Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Known Issues:

- We are aware that some facilities have not grown with Great Denham and are currently oversubscribed or not sufficient for our community's needs. These include the performance of the Village Medical Centre, access to Secondary School places and adequate school transport.
- A section 106 agreement is an agreement between a developer and a local planning authority about measures that the developer must take to reduce their impact on the community. The original S106 agreement was modified by the developers and Bedford Borough Council, and a number of items de-scoped from it, including a place of worship and a library.
- Some of the existing buildings are subject to planning conditions, which will limit their future use whilst these conditions remain in place. For example, the former golf clubhouse is subject to conditions relating to its class of use, noise volumes and boundary fencing. This again can mean they cannot always be utilised for other purposes despite being empty.
- Provision of community waste and recycling facilities are insufficient for current demand, in particular as these are used by both residents and non-residents.

Opportunities to address through policies

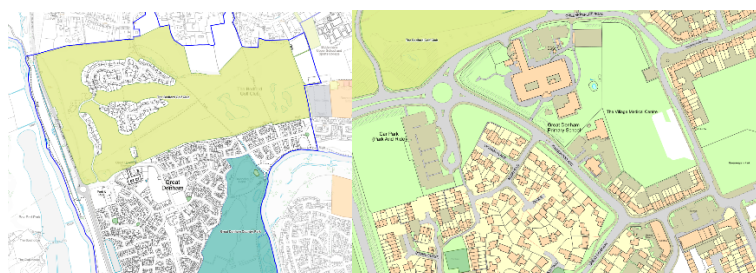
We can use Neighbourhood Development Plan policies to highlight any infrastructure deficiencies that we would like addressed as a condition of any further development. For example, Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies may prevent change to other uses (e.g., from a sports field to residential or commercial space), or identify specific services that are needed in line with any development. A Neighbourhood Development Plan, once adopted, would also increase the Neighbourhood Portion of Community Infrastructure Levy monies to 25% of the levy collected, which can then be used locally to provide or improve other facilities. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fee which replaces S106 monies for new planning applications; liability for CIL payments is determined by the Borough Council, but we would expect any future planning applications in Great Denham to be liable for CIL payments by the developers.

Q9. What community facilities do you use in Great Denham? If you do not use the facilities then please state why.

Q10. Which of the current facilities are most important to you and should be protected for the future?

Q11. What facilities are missing that you would like to see provided for residents of Great Denham? These might be conditions of future development.

Green Spaces

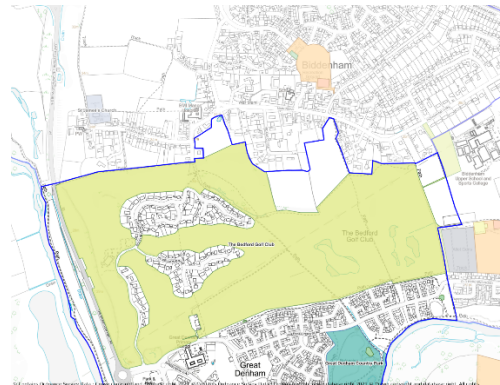


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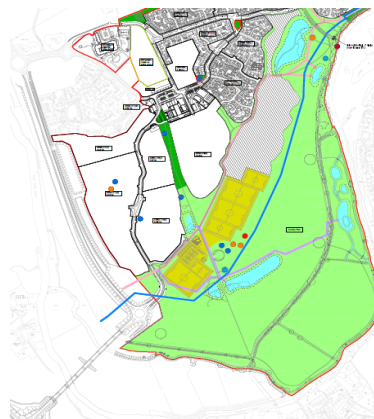
Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

We are lucky to have a wealth of green space within Great Denham parish, including the country park and the former golf course land. The layout of the housing areas has also incorporated green spaces and play areas as part of the overall design. The green spaces that will be noted in the Neighbourhood Development Plan include:

Former golf course land – Although this exceeds the maximum size @ 70 hectares to be formally identified as a Local Green Space, it is noted that this forms part of the Urban Gap between Great Denham and Biddenham (Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030). It is an important area for exercise, used by residents of Great Denham and Biddenham alike, and helps maintain our separate identities



Great Denham Country Park – this is owned and managed by Bedford Borough Council. It includes paths and cycle ways, sports pitches, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), car parking, a children's play area, an amphitheatre and a Sports Pavilion and café will also be opening here.



Area of land behind the Park and Ride – This land is owned by Bedford Borough Council and managed by Highways. Permission in principle has been given for the Parish Council to use this land for community purposes. One idea could be a community orchard

The Village Green/Community Garden is This is an area of land owned by Bedford Borough Council but which has permission to provide a space for residents. A pathway has been installed to enable parents and children to cross to school from the Park and Ride more easily, and the Parish Council has organised bulb planting on the grassed areas. It is also the home of Tommy, our World War 1 veteran statue.



Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Meeting Place (Anglia Way)

This was recently completed as part of the development of housing behind Sainsburys. It will eventually have benches installed



There are also some smaller areas of green space throughout the development – and some of these are managed by Bedford Borough Council through the Open Space Management charge.

The following green spaces are currently included in the Local Plan Call for Sites as areas for development (see map above – Shaping Future Development):

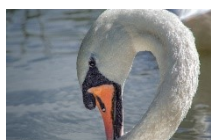
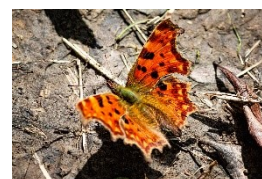
- Kickabout on Mercia Road/Saxon Way and land behind it – This has been made available to the community by the developer but is identified for future building.
- Land behind the Medical Centre to Mercia Road – this land includes an area behind the school which should be made available for use by the school as sports field but is subject of ongoing negotiations with the developer and landowner.
- Land on the Country Park – There are two sites at the top of the Country Park marked for future housing development. We are aware that during the recent flooding the lower of these sites was covered by flood water.

Use of the green spaces for residents could include walking/cycling/Public Rights of Way (see above), but other suggestions for leisure and sports provision are sought so they can be investigated for feasibility. Some suggestions already received include: BMX track, jump track, skate park, tree memorial, nature trail etc

Q12. What uses would you like to see for the Green Spaces in Great Denham and why?

Environment, Ecology, Geology and Biodiversity

The 2020 residents survey showed that the green spaces in Great Denham are highly valued (see page 3 for results), and provides many opportunities for education, environmental protection and biodiversity of flora and fauna.



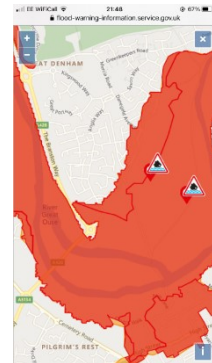
We have already commissioned the first stage of an ecological survey, and will be researching other survey work already completed on environment, ecology and biodiversity as part of the plan.

As part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, we hope to include policies such as the following:

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Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

- Protection of species and habitat impact in the event of future development;
- Water management of the river, floodplain and Great Ouse, linking with the Bedford and MK Waterways Trust;
- Protection of trees and hedges;
- Flood response management – especially following the flooding at Christmas 2020
- Strategy for use of the country park areas, to protect flora and fauna and to provide facilities for residents. We will explore this in more details once restrictions are lifted and we can organise engagement events. Some initial suggestions to be included are:
 - Provision of good access to the park, for example, making the water meadows more accessible;
 - Provision of information about the ecology and geology of the Country Park and its wildlife, for example, Nature Trail and signage;
 - Involvement of residents in the maintenance and development of the Country Park
 - Making longer term plans for the area as trees mature and flora and fauna become established.



Q13. What are your priorities for the Environment, Ecology, Geology and Biodiversity of the Great Denham area?



Engaging with our Community

We need your views and ideas to help us continue to develop the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Indeed, without you telling us your ideas and what you would like included we cannot progress the Plan any further. So please take some time and complete the survey in this newsletter.

Once Covid restrictions are fully lifted we hope to hold some face-to-face community events, to share the maps and plans, hold discussions and focus groups to encourage everyone to participate. Until then, we will provide updates via the monthly Parish Council meetings and website, social media and through newsletters such as these.

If you would like to get more involved, then please feel free to come along to a Steering Group meeting which are currently being held remotely. For further details please contact us on ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk and we will send you the meeting details and joining instructions.

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Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Before you go.....

We hope this newsletter gives you a good idea about the shape of our Neighbourhood Development Plan.

It's really important that we get your thoughts and feedback on this, and any suggestions or comments to add into the mix.

Here are the survey questions – please take the time to complete them online **by the end of April** using this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NDPsurveyMarch2021>

Vision and Aims	Q1. Do the Vision and Aims reflect your own views? Please provide your comments. Are there any changes or additions you would like to make?
Shaping Future Development	Q2. Please tell us which of the policy ideas are your priorities, please rank them in order Q3. Please tell us why you have selected your top 3. Q4. Please tell us any policy areas you would like to see included that are not in the above list.
Design of Future Development	Q5. What is important to you in terms of design of future housing areas? Q6. Please suggest any additions you would like included
Infrastructure	Q7. Please tell us what is most important to you. Q8. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to see added to these focus areas
Community Facilities	Q9. What community facilities do you use in Great Denham? If you do not use the facilities then please state why. Q10. Which of the current facilities are most important to you and should be protected for the future? Q11. What facilities are missing that you would like to see provided for residents of Great Denham? These might be conditions of future development.
Green Spaces	Q12. What uses would you like to see for the Green Spaces in Great Denham and why?
Environment, Ecology, Geology and Biodiversity	Q13. What are your priorities for the Environment, Ecology, Geology and Biodiversity of the Great Denham area?

Please encourage everyone in your household to complete the survey as the more views the better informed our Neighbourhood Development Plan can be.

Don't worry if you can't complete the survey online – just pop a note in the Community Hall letterbox, addressed to NDP, with your name and address and we'll get a copy to you.