

Monthly Report For GDPC March/April 2026

Planning Application 26/00428/COU Greenkeepers Compound

- The above application for a change of use for the greenkeepers' compound, which served the Great Denham Golf Course. The designation of this building, when planning permission was granted, included a condition that stated, ***“condition 7.” “The development hereby permitted shall only be used in connection with the use of the adjoining golf course.”*** The reason given for this condition was *“is to enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over future use of the building”*.
- Landowner continues to neglect the buildings and land and encourages anti-social behaviour. Gates to the compound wide open – again!



The Golf Needs Assessment (GNA), which the applicant commissioned, states that this golf course is surplus to requirements. With other local golf clubs having full memberships and waiting lists, this is clearly not surplus to requirements. Having 504 members and 30,000 rounds of golf played annually when closed, these are not the indicators of a surplus golf course. Of course, he who pays the piper calls the tune. You can read my response to the GNA in this link.

[OpenDocument.aspx](#)

At the time of writing this report, there were over 500 signatures on the online petition and over 100 signatures on a paper petition. Here is the link for the petition <https://c.org/krQDGfQRQn>. To date, over 46

written objections citing numerous policy reasons why this application should be refused have been submitted to Bedford Borough Planners. Closing date for submissions is 10th April, and any objections should be emailed to planning@bedford.gov.uk. The golf course was mandated in a Section 106 agreement to allow the building of all the houses now in Great Denham, and its closure was not part of that agreement.

Footpath 1



After many years of trying to improve the surface of Footpath 1, grant funding for “rights of way” has been utilised to cover all sections that cross the former golf course land. This will end the winter turmoil of muddy, slippery paths and aid those with mobility challenges. It will also aid easier passage for prams and children going to both GDPS and St James in Biddenham.

Highway Issues

- Quite rightly, a lot of residents have expressed their concerns about the junctions of Saxon Way, Danegeld Ave, the exit from the district centre, and Mercia Road when Mercia opens up again once the developer has determined it is safe to do so. I have asked our Highways team to work out a safe and sensible give-way process to ensure safety for traffic and pedestrians.

Funding for GP Surgeries Secured

- In a major step forward for residents across Bedford Borough, the Council has secured significant additional NHS funding for new, modern GP surgeries in Great Barford and Wixams.
 - For Wixams, up to £6.9 million has been approved, while Great Barford is set to receive £750,000. The funding assigned in the capital programme for Wixams has been reassigned to Bromham.
- This is a significant step forward, bringing both schemes closer to delivery while easing pressure on other local funding sources.
- The business cases will now be updated to reflect the new funding, creating real momentum behind these important GP projects, which will be vital to these growing communities.

Unsafe bridge demolished to make way for a new bridge

- Work to remove the unsafe Queens Footbridge is now underway, marking an important step towards providing a safe replacement crossing for residents.
- The bridge was urgently closed in August 2025 after inspections found significant structural defects, meaning it could no longer remain in use on public safety grounds.
 - Only £17,000 was spent on inspections, maintenance, repairs, and assessments between 2010/11 and 2023, contributing to the bridge deteriorating to this unsafe point.
- Demolition started on 16th March 2026 and is expected to take around eight weeks, with signed diversion routes and advance notice in place to help minimise disruption

Anti-social behaviour officers update

- The Council has secured a £65,000 grant from Bedfordshire Police to fund additional anti-social behaviour officers in 2026/27.
- These officers will be out on foot in the town centre, helping to deter anti-social behaviour, support targeted action with partners, and provide reassurance to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- The grant fully covers these roles, so this extra support comes at no additional cost to the Council's budget.
- This builds on the £96,000 in the Council's budget to fund two additional Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers who can go anywhere in the Borough where the need for patrols and early intervention is greatest.
- Greatest need is based on Police and Council data showing where problems are happening most frequently, so please keep reporting issues to the police and community safety team.

Flood Risk Management Update

- Flood resilience has continued to improve across Bedford Borough, with only one property affected by internal flooding during Storm Claudia, and with fewer road and bridge closures this past year.
- The Council has improved flood warning signs, made road closure updates quicker and clearer, and strengthened how teams work together during bad weather so communities can get information faster.

- Local community Flood Groups have increased to 11 groups across the Borough. They are supported by the Council with training, equipment, and an extra £10,000 of grant funding for additional flood kits.
- The Council has also continued to check planning applications carefully to help make sure new development manages water properly and does not increase flood risk.

New Domestic Abuse Strategy

- The Council has introduced a new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026–2031 that sets out a clear five-year plan to strengthen the local response to domestic abuse.
- It aims to prevent abuse earlier, ensure victims and survivors can access the right help more quickly, improve partnership working across services, hold perpetrators to account, and support long-term recovery.
- The strategy is informed by local need, with survivor feedback at its heart, and places particular emphasis on recognising children and young people as victims in their own right.
- Overall, it provides a stronger and more joined-up framework to improve safety, support and outcomes for residents across the Borough.

Support for residents facing higher heating oil costs

- There will be an additional £121,109 boost to the Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund to help households struggling with rising heating oil costs.
- This extra funding is especially good news for rural communities, where many households rely on heating oil and can be hit hard by sudden price rises.
- The Council has identified 549 Bedford Borough residents who rely on oil for heating and hot water, and targeted letters will be issued to help make sure support reaches those most in need. Eligible households will receive a fixed payment of around £220.

Weekly food waste collections to begin on 30 March

- Bedford Borough Council is finishing delivery of more than 85,000 kitchen caddies and outdoor food waste bins ahead of the launch of weekly food waste collections on Monday, 30th March.
- Every household is expected to receive the bins they need by Friday, 27th March. Most flats will be given a kitchen caddy and will use a shared communal food waste bin or collection point.
- The new collection service will let residents recycle food waste, including cooked food, meat, fish, dairy, bones, and leftovers. This waste will then be turned into renewable energy and fertiliser.
- More information is available at bedford.gov.uk/foodwaste.

East Park Energy

- Local councillors have continued to raise local concerns during consultation hearings on the proposed East Park Energy Solar Farm (17th March 2026).
- Key issues include the impact of construction traffic on rural roads, day-to-day disruption for residents, and the combined effect of this scheme alongside other major projects such as Black Cat and East West Rail.
- Concerns have also been raised about the scale of the development and the amount of agricultural land affected.

- At the consultation hearing, councillors stressed the importance of ensuring local views are fully heard and that infrastructure impacts are properly addressed.

Household Support Fund changes

- Support for families during the school holidays is changing, as the previous Government-funded (Household Support Grant) food voucher scheme has now ended. Despite this, the Council still provides robust support for eligible children and families in Bedford Borough.
- Children who qualify can access the Council's Easter Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides free holiday activities and a free hot meal at every session.
- Families facing genuine hardship can also apply to the Council for support through Local Welfare Provision and Crisis Grants, which can help with essentials such as food, heating and items for children.

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

- Bedford Borough Council is looking for more local families to foster, helping some of our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, supportive home environment.
- If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@bedford.gov.uk

Highways Update

- During March, a range of work continued across Bedford Borough highways with the team carrying out a significant amount of maintenance work during March.
- Highways officers attended 514 streets for carriageway pothole repairs and 7 streets for footway pothole repairs, with a further 236 streets attended for other maintenance works. The team also completed 1,203 highway safety inspections, cleansed 57 gullies, and carried out 49 street lighting works.
- Engineering works during the month included 8,526 square metres of carriageway resurfacing and patching, 182 square metres of footway resurfacing, 54 gully replacements, 60 metres of drainage pipe replacement, and 215 metres of kerb, channel, and sett replacement.
- These are the kinds of routine but important works that help keep roads and pavements in a safe and usable condition.
- Alongside day-to-day maintenance, work also continued on longer-standing highways and development matters, including adoption-related work linked to sites such as Wixams, Stewartby, Freemans Common, Brickhill, and Land North of Bromham Road.