

GDPC REPORT – JUNE 2026

Great Denham Update

- Over the past month, a number of important matters have taken place in Great Denham that are directly relevant to residents. The Rural Bulky Waste Collection for Great Denham has now been confirmed for Sunday 7 June 2026, with the collection point located by the Park & Ride and operating from 12:00 to 14:00. This provides a much-needed opportunity for residents to dispose of large household items that cannot be taken through normal waste services.

Highways teams have been active across the parish, responding to reports of potholes, worn road markings, and overgrown vegetation. Several minor repairs have already been completed, and further works are scheduled as part of the Borough's summer maintenance programme. Concerns raised by residents about speeding on key routes, particularly around the school and along Kingswood Way, have been passed to the relevant Borough officers for assessment, including the potential deployment of mobile enforcement or additional signage.

Planning activity has also continued, with residents raising questions about recent applications that affect the parish's green space. I believe the decisions for the two applications on the former golf course land are due in the next week (week commencing 1st June). These have been monitored closely to ensure that any proposals align with the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan and do not place additional pressure on local infrastructure. The Parish Council has been engaged in early discussions about future development pressures, especially in light of the emerging Local Plan 2050, and continues to represent the community's interests in all planning-related matters.

Placing the children's school signs to stop people parking opposite the school on Greenkeepers Road has been supported by Borough Highways Officers, and a licence is being provided.

Local Plan

- Work has now begun on preparing the new Bedford Borough Local Plan 2050, which will help guide how the borough grows and develops over the coming decades. It will help shape the delivery of new homes, jobs, services, transport links, and infrastructure, while also supporting environmental improvements, protecting local character, and planning for the needs of communities across the borough.

The previous Local Plan was withdrawn after the Planning Inspector identified fundamental issues with its soundness, particularly around infrastructure, housing delivery, and the evidence base supporting the plan.

A timetable setting out the key stages of the plan-making process has now been published and can be viewed online at:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-place-making/new-bedford-borough-local-plan-2050> ([bedford.gov.uk in Bing](#))

The first public consultation on the new plan is expected to take place from September to October 2026.

A call for sites will also run from the summer to October 2026. This will allow landowners, developers, and other interested parties to put forward potential sites for consideration as part of the evidence-gathering process.

Queens Bridge Update

- Demolition of the old Queens Bridge has now been completed, and work is progressing on plans for a replacement bridge linking Bedford and Kempston.

Bedford Borough Council's Engineering Services team is currently finalising design proposals for the new bridge. These are expected to be submitted for approval over the summer, with installation works currently aimed to begin in spring 2027.

The previous bridge was built in 1984, and for many years, investment in the bridge was very limited and largely focused on inspections rather than significant structural maintenance or proactive repair work. This lack of sustained investment is likely to have contributed to the deterioration of the bridge over time.

Following detailed inspections after 2023, significant decay and rot were found in the timber arches, which meant replacement was required on safety grounds.

As part of the demolition work, some of the salvaged wood will be reused locally, including for future arts projects, new public benches, and marker posts for footpaths and bridleways. The ironwork and sculpture at the Ford End Road entrance, which had been removed and stored during the works, have now been reinstated.

The replacement bridge will be built in the same location, helping to restore this important link between Bedford and Kempston once complete.

Black Cat Update

- There will be overnight road closures as part of the ongoing Black Cat improvement works.

From Monday, 18th May to Wednesday, 10th June, overnight closures will take place between 9 pm and 5 am on the following routes:

A1 northbound between Tempsford and Wyboston – diverted via Tempsford Interchange, St Neots Road and the A428, before rejoining the A1 at Wyboston Interchange.

A421 eastbound between Renhold and the Black Cat roundabout – diverted via Cardington Interchange, the A603 towards Sandy, and the A1 northbound from Sandy roundabout.

Diversion routes will be clearly signposted during the works. Residents and commuters who use these routes are encouraged to allow extra time for their journeys and plan ahead where possible.

Bus Service Update

- Bedford Borough Council has been working closely with local bus operators to help address recent changes to bus services, including the withdrawal of the Stagecoach 53 service.

Following this engagement, Grant Palmer has agreed to register a new commercial bus route linking Wootton, Kempston Saxon Centre, and Bedford.

The new service is expected to start on 1 June 2026, subject to final approvals, and will mainly run hourly. The route will be different from the previous Stagecoach 53, as it will travel more directly through Kempston into Bedford, helping to provide a quicker journey time.

While the new route will not replace every part of the previous service, it is a welcome and practical step to help reduce the impact of recent bus service changes.

Free Tennis Sessions at Bedford Park

- A summer programme of free tennis sessions is taking place at the refurbished courts in Bedford Park.

Sessions are open to all ages and abilities, with equipment provided. Upcoming opportunities include:

Saturday 23 May, 12pm–1pm – Free Parks Tennis session

Saturday 6 June, 2pm–3pm – junior taster session as part of Big Tennis Weekend

Saturday 6 June, 3pm–4pm – free adult open day session

Places can be booked through the LTA website, with further coaching information available at:

<https://nationaltennis.org.uk/locations/bedford-parks-tennis/> (nationaltennis.org.uk in Bing)

Town Centre Regeneration Update

- A key milestone has been reached for the future of Mayes Yard and the former Debenhams building in Bedford town centre as Bedford Borough Council has chosen City Heart as its preferred development partner.

The next stage will involve working up more detailed plans and finalising the formal agreement.

The aim is to bring this important town centre site back into better use, supporting new activity, jobs, homes, businesses and leisure opportunities.

Big Green Week at The Higgins Bedford

- There will be a range of free events at The Higgins Bedford on Saturday 13th June as part of Great Big Green Week, including wood carving, forest bathing, mindful doodling, a smartphone nature walk, children's crafts, sensory play, seed planting, community stalls and a nature table from Bedfordshire Natural History Society.

Further events are taking place across the borough at John Bunyan Museum, Bedfordshire Libraries and Panacea Museum.

More information is available at:

www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk (thehigginsbedford.org.uk in Bing)
www.greatbiggreenweek.com

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.

More information is available at:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster>
([bedford.gov.uk](https://www.bedford.gov.uk) in Bing) or by contacting: fostering@bedford.gov.uk