



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, held Monday 4th May 2020. Meeting held by videoconferencing.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Donna Parsons (DP) Chair; Michael Cuthbertson (MC); Helen Allen (HA); Louise Evans (LE); Jo Ruskin (JR); Chris Staite (CST); Chris Slinn (CSL)

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Parish Clerk: Anna O'Meara (AOM)

Members of the Public: 1 member of the public attended via videoconference

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

This is the first item of business at an Annual Meeting of the Council.

Chair – DP was proposed by CSL and seconded by LE.

Resolved: DP was elected by unanimous vote. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed and dated (witnessed via videoconference).

Vice Chair – no one was proposed as Vice Chair, and therefore no Vice Chair was elected.

The meeting was adjourned for public questions as follows:

Public Questions

The following questions were raised:

It was noted that there had been a recent spate of thefts from cars and sheds; what action could be taken?

Clerk reported that, having seen the reports of the break ins on social media, the Rural Policing team for Great Denham were contacted and their advice published on Facebook. Anyone affected by recent crime is asked to report to the police via 101 or on-line reporting, and to send any CCTV footage they may have to them. A similar situation in 2018 had resulted in arrests being made as a result of the intelligence supplied by residents. It was noted by CST that the increased reporting seen in the crime stats has resulted in additional police presence in those areas during lockdown while Streetwatch are unavailable.

Can a supply of orange recycling sacks be provided from a location in Great Denham, especially during the lockdown?

Supplies are normally available from the libraries (nearest to GD are Kempston and Bromham), but there have recently been problems with supplies. It will not be possible to provide an alternative location during lockdown, but JW offered that the Community Hall may be willing to act as a collection point in the future – he will offer this at the next Hall trustee meeting. DP confirmed she will also look into this.

Is there any update on the Pavilion?

Unfortunately, there is nothing to report at this time due to lockdown. DP noted that the most recent update she had was that repairs were almost completed but there was still snagging outstanding.

Action: Clerk to ask Borough for latest position.

DP reopened the meeting.

2. Apologies

All Councillors were in attendance

3. Declarations of Interest

DP declared a non-pecuniary interest as trustees of Great Denham Community Hall (GDCH).

4. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the extra ordinary meeting held on 26th March 2020 were agreed as an accurate record. DP also signed the minutes from the meeting held on 2nd March 2020 – these had been agreed at the 26th March meeting but awaiting signature.

5. Annual Accounts 2019/20/Internal Audit

a) Annual Accounts 2019/20

Resolved: the accounts for 2019/20 were approved and signed by DP.

b) Confirm Internal Auditor appointment

Resolved: it was agreed that Barnicoat Ltd will continue to act as Internal Auditor for this year's internal audit. Clerk to make necessary arrangements.

6. Renewal of CCTV Monitoring Services contract with Bedford Borough Council

The invoice for the annual charge for this service had been received for 2020/21. It was noted that the costs were being held at £1600 in line with the 5-year contract signed between the Borough and the Parish Council in Feb 2017, although the Borough had proposed a new charging scheme of £500 per camera for 20/21, before the contract costs and terms were highlighted to them. It is therefore expected that the costs for this service may increase in the future.

Following discussion, it was agreed that we should determine what are reasonable costs in order to manage both any potential increases, and also to accommodate any future extension of the current CCTV system.

Resolved: 2020/21 renewal costs of £1600 +VAT agreed; Clerk to reconfirm with the Borough that the current contract is valid until 2022, and that costs will be based on this contract.

Action: CST/Clerk to investigate what other options may be available for monitoring services, and what level of charging would be reasonable, based on benchmarking other Councils and suppliers.

7. Traffic and Parking – report on requests made to Highways

The Council was updated on the following requests:

- Installation of railings on Kingswood Way (outside the school gate).
The railings were installed at the end of March. Delivery of the lockable gates is coming from Ireland and has been delayed due to the Coronavirus crisis; they will be fitted by the Council contractor once available. The Parish Council has agreed to fund additional budget for the lockable gates up to £3000. IN PROGRESS

- Road markings on entrance to Kingswood Way roundabout – the addition of an arrow indicating the correct lane for cars exiting onto Kingswood Way (2nd exit/straight on). This work has been completed. COMPLETED
- Community Speedwatch vehicle – The vehicle attended Great Denham on 24th February and the report from King Alfred Way has been circulated to Council. 2 vehicles were identified as above the speed limit during the 1-hour observation period. MC noted that of the vehicles captured in the 1 hour, 59 were doing over 21mph. Further visits from the vehicle have not yet been advised but will be delayed in current situation. VISIT COMPLETED

Action: Clerk to request that another visit is arranged when possible.

- Road crossing on Anglia Way – we have previously discussed the installation of a pedestrian crossing on this road (near the Retail Centre, junction with Saxon Way). The Council agreed to proceed with a feasibility study at cost of £3500 at the March 2020 meeting. Highways have advised that the feasibility study is in progress; initial work will focus on desk-based review of information, it is recognised that the current changed traffic/pedestrian circumstances due to the Coronavirus lockdown will need to be taken into consideration when any live-survey is done. IN PROGRESS
- Road crossing on Mercia Road/Greenkeepers road junction: this is used by a large number of families as a route to school and would benefit from clearer crossing control for vehicles and pedestrians. Council has asked for more information on a second feasibility study for this area. Highways have recommended a site visit is done with the Highways Officer in order to determine best approach and use of budget re feasibility. Meeting to be arranged subject to social distancing. RECOMMENDATION: SITE VISIT TO BE ARRANGED

Resolved: Site visit to be arranged. Clerk to action.

- Installation of 30mph signs on King Alfred Way entrance to Great Denham – there is currently no signage at this entrance to Great Denham from The Branstons Way, and drivers speeding down this road is a real problem. It has now been established that this remains the responsibility of the developer, and they have been in liaison with Adoptions Manager, Bedford Borough Council re this work. DWH are now closed for work due to the Coronavirus lockdown, and the PC contacts are on furlough, so no further information is available at this time. IN PROGRESS
- Installation of Speed Indicator Devices – Highways have indicated that they are happy to support the installation of standalone posts on adopted roads, and that no planning permission is required for these. Battery/solar powered is preferred as this will be quicker and easier to install. RECOMMENDATION: COUNCIL TO AGREE SUPPLIER/PRODUCT AND LOCATION ON ADOPTED ROADS. PROGRESS WITH DEVELOPER FOR UNADOPTED ROADS ON HOLD IN CURRENT LOCKDOWN.

Resolved: CST to resend info on all available options/suppliers to Council in order to confirm purchase (Product/Supplier) at June meeting for adopted roads initially.

The Borough Councillor was asked if there was any update on the discussions re making the GD development a 20mph zone completely.

Action: JW to follow up and report back.

8. Community Events

Friday 8th May is the 75th anniversary of VE day. Both the Parish and Borough Councils have promoted a “Stay at Home” party for residents during the current lockdown. A poster has been placed on the PC website, and it is intended to send further updates in the days leading up to Friday.

The Council are also considering the purchase of “There but not there” statues (as per the 2018 commemoration of the 100 years since end of WW1). DP has investigated some options and pricing, and is in contact with the Borough regarding any necessary permissions re installation. Whilst it is not possible to obtain or install anything in time for 8th May, the

Council discussed installation of up to 2 statues, probably at the entrances on Kingswood Way and King Alfred Way, at a future date.

Resolved: the purchase of 2 statues was agreed in principle, based on costs and options already researched. DP will get all information and share with Council once available.

9. Renewal of Maintenance contracts for Heating/Boiler/Air Conditioning at Great Denham Community Hall.

The Parish Council currently holds the contracts for maintenance and servicing of the Heating Management System, Boiler and Airconditioning units installed in the Office and Wessex Hall. The implementation of lockdown and Hall closure has made it difficult to source alternative providers, it is therefore proposed to renew for 2020/21 and investigate alternative providers for 2021/22 renewal.

Resolved: it was agreed to renew contracts for 2020/21 with Ambivent (Heating/Boiler) at cost of £1220 +VAT and Spheretech (Air Con) at cost of £438.00

10. Planning

Planning application 20/00833/FUL for single storey rear extension, 5 Muirfield, Great Denham.

Resolved: no objections or comments on this application.

11. Borough Councillors Report

JW gave a brief update on a number of items.

Borough Council operations

- Some Council meetings have been suspended. Council will now be using Webex videoconferencing for future meetings.
- Planning meetings – a scheme of delegation of decisions to planners has been agreed. Next planning meeting will be 24/6
- Staff – 90% of Borough staff are now working from home where possible. Operations teams – some have been furloughed, some are still working.
- Green Waste collection – this will start again for Great Denham on 20th May – collections will be monthly.
- Tidy Tip – re-opening is currently under review, system of re-opening still to be determined.

Coronavirus support/Community Hub

- Community Hub – up to 2/5 2865 food parcels have been delivered, 401 hygiene packs, 613 prescriptions, by 300-400 volunteers. Resident feedback has been very grateful for all these efforts and support. JW is in regular contact with c. 100 shielded residents across the Kempston Rural Ward (Great Denham, Turvey, Stagsden, Kempston Rural PCs).
- PPE – hospital/social care in Bedford reports satisfactory supplies.
- Business help - £22.755M has been paid out to business and qualifying charities, with a further £10.245M still available.
- Homelessness – 68 people have been accommodated in a central Bedford hotel.
- Council Tax/Finance – c. 30% of people have applied for reduced rates.

Bedford Borough Council is currently spending c. £13.3M more than normal.

The Boundary Review – comments are still being accepted but it is expected that this will now be delayed.

12. Finance and Clerk's Report

a) Finance Report & payments – initial invoices/approve & initial Bacs payments

The Finance Report had been circulated and a copy is attached to these minutes. All receipts are available for inspection

Resolved: All payments were approved as listed in the Finance report and may be paid. All Bacs payments will be signed by 2 councillors at next opportunity for meeting in person.

b) Quarterly Financial Check – March 2020

Resolved: JR confirmed that the check had been completed satisfactorily and no issues identified.

c) Renewal of ICO Registration and payment of fee (£40)

Resolved: it was agreed to renew. Clerk to pay and reclaim via expenses in order to meet renewal deadline of 16/5/2020.

d) Renewal of Beds Association of Town and Parish Councils affiliation for 2020/21

Resolved: it was agreed to renew affiliation and payment of fee £826.

e) Delegation of authority to Clerk during Coronavirus

Authority to extend delegation of Council decisions to the Clerk during the current period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus, in order to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities where a decision cannot be reasonably deferred or is needed to meet statutory and commercial deadlines, was agreed at extra ordinary meeting on 26th March 2020.

Resolved: as Council is now able to meet normally via videoconference, the delegation of authority as agreed on 26th March 2020 will now cease. Council will continue to operate in accordance with its Standing Orders.

f) Update of any other outstanding actions from previous meetings.

All actions were reviewed and updates have been provided on all actions via the agenda items above.

13. Correspondence

All correspondence was available at the meeting and a list is attached to these minutes.

Resolved: No correspondence required discussion.

14. Any Other Business

15. Date of Next Meeting

1st June 2020 - this will be held remotely unless otherwise indicated.