



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council, held Monday 1st June 2020. Meeting held by videoconferencing.

Present:

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

Apologies: Louise Evans (LE)

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Parish Clerk: Anna O'Meara (AOM)

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

The meeting was adjourned for public questions:

Public Questions

The following questions were raised:

Does the Council have any update on the installation of the gate in the railings outside the school?

Clerk reported that, whilst the railings were installed some weeks ago, the lockable gates are awaiting delivery from the manufacturer, but are delayed due to the Covid Crisis; the gates are coming from Ireland. Highways have advised that they will be installed as soon as available, in the meantime temporary barriers have been put in place for safety.

Is there any update on the installation of CCTV/parking enforcement cameras outside the school main gates, as promised by the Mayor in May 2019 elections?

DP advised that the last update received was that these should have been done early in this Financial Year, however the Parish Council is aware that Covid 19 arrangements are causing further delays.

Action: Clerk to check latest position.

Have the CCTV cameras been installed at the Pavilion?

DP confirmed that these were installed at the end of last year.

(Received via email) Resident raised concerns about the quality of Service being delivered and scale of charges raised by Chamonix as the management company. Handover of their area of the development has still not taken place after 8 years, and Chamonix are dragging their feet. Can the PC raise this issue with them and gather information on the number of companies in operation in Great Denham and the scale of charging?

DP noted that residents have been commenting on these issues on a number of occasions, and most recently via Social Media; MC had attended a meeting organised by residents on this some months ago. Unfortunately, the Parish Council has no powers with regard to management companies, but has on a number of occasions lobbied Chamonix on the matter.

JW reported that these issues affect both Great Denham and the development around Wilkinson Road Kempston. He is pulling as much information together on the companies and has raised with the Borough Council, who have no further information and who have expressed no interest in this matter. He was due to meet with an officer of BBC in March on this, but the meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19; unfortunately, these arrangements with private management companies is a nationally agreed system.

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DP confirmed that process for residents – once their area of the development has been fully handed over to Chamonix by the developer then an EGM can be called to enable residents to elect Resident Directors; a vote of 75% in favour would be required to remove the management company and seek an alternative.

Action: Clerk to ask residents (via social media) for any information on which management company they have for their properties so that a full list and map can be established. JW will co-ordinate and compile responses.

DP reopened the meeting.

1. Apologies

LE has sent apologies.

Resolved: apologies were accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 4th May 2020 were signed by DP.

4. Annual Accounts 2019/20/Internal Audit

a) Internal Auditors Report

The Internal audit had been completed and the report sent and circulated. The Internal Auditors comments were noted and will be actioned.

Resolved: The Internal Audit Report was agreed and recommendations accepted.

b) Review and agree Section 1 of the 2019/20 AGAR – Annual Governance Statement

DP read out the statements from Section 1 of the AGAR for agreement.

Resolved: All statements in Annual Governance Statement were agreed unanimously. DP signed Section 1 of the AGAR.

c) Review and agree Section 2 of the 2019/20 AGAR – Accounting Statements 2019/20

The AGAR had been circulated to Council ahead of the meeting.

Resolved: Section 2 of the AGAR was agreed unanimously and signed by DP and Clerk.

Clerk noted that the 30-day period for Public Inspection of the Accounts would commence by 4th June and be completed by 15th July 2020.

5. To establish a Committee to review Council HR policies

DP proposed to establish a small committee of 3 councillors to complete a review of the Council's HR policies, to ensure that they were appropriate for the Council's role as an employer.

Resolved: JR, CSL and DP agreed to sit on this Committee and to report back at September meeting. Clerk to provide support as required.

6. Traffic and Parking – review and purchase of Speed Indicator Device.

It was agreed at May meeting to progress with purchase for adopted roads at this time (Kingswood Way). CST was actioned to circulate the product information and costs as a

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refresher and this has been done. It was agreed at May meeting to proceed with installation on posts (not streetlights).

Resolved: Council agreed to purchase the Speed Indicator Device from Messagemaker, at a cost (discounted) of £2677.50. The second device will be purchased as soon as the developer has agreed on installation and location for King Alfred Way.

Resolved: Council agreed to purchase any posts necessary for installation if these cannot be provided by Highways

7. Local Services

a) To consider lease arrangements for Great Denham Community Hall and next steps

A draft proposal for a lease between the Parish Council and the GDCH CIO has been circulated and comments received. DP has sent this to CIO for them to review and comment. Next steps are to appoint a solicitor; Clerk has made some initial investigations and has estimated costs from 2 firms, a 3rd firm will be identified in line with Standing Orders.

Resolved: Clerk to obtain quotes from 3 solicitors and share with Council and CIO before July meeting so that appointment can be made.

b) To consider application for grant with VERU for provision of youth services in Great Denham

The PCC has invited applications for funding for activities associated with improving youth services; the Council noted that this is something they would be keen to support. It is proposed to apply in partnership with the GDCH CIO, and one of the trustees has completed the application form - Application for funding of up to £5000 must be made by 10th June 2020.

JW as a Trustee of GDCH summarised the proposal – to provide training workshops offering IT skills, graphic design, CV writing etc and also soft skills such as leadership. The content will be delivered as modules, and will be led by one of the Trustees who is a qualified Duke of Edinburgh award scheme assessor. Budget will be required for the purchase of 5 laptops and software, the CIO will provide room hire at no charge.

Resolved: It was agreed to proceed with application for funding in partnership with GDCH CIO. Clerk to check position re VAT reclaim if Council purchase laptops and retain as their asset.

8. Community Events – to agree purchase of “there but not there” statues and agree location(s)

This was proposed at the May meeting. DP advised that due to Covid-19 closures she had not been able to obtain further information on availability, delivery and costs at the moment. Decision deferred to future meeting once information is available.

Costs had previously also been obtained for purchase of poppies for lampposts to mark Remembrance Sunday.

Action: Clerk to send cost information for poppies to Council to enable decision on purchase to be taken at July meeting, in time for November remembrance.

9. Planning

a) To consider any planning applications received.

No applications have been received since last meeting.

b) Neighbourhood Plan – potential for Great Denham

The BATPC have shared info on a free webinar on Neighbourhood Plans – all are invited to attend. Clerk has spoken to BBC Planning and shared notes from that call – they have advised speaking to other parishes who have recently completed their NPs, where Local Green Space has been identified, to get more information on the level of work involved and

whether a NP would be of any benefit to Great Denham. It was noted that BBC call for sites is due out in Summer 2020, which may provide more information on developer plans for housing.

Action: JW will ask the NP Steering Group Chair for Turvey to come to next meeting to share their experiences.

10. Borough Councillors Report

JW gave a brief update on activity during the Covid-19 crisis.

- Twice-weekly briefings are continuing with the Mayor.
- JW has also attended a Zoom meeting with Nadine Dorries (MP for other parishes in his Ward) – a BioSecurity Council is being established to co-ordinate with local Councils re local breakouts and lockdowns.
- BBC has established a number of committees – Health Protection Board, Gold Command, Local Outbreak Board
- East London NHS Foundation Trust is providing an infection control team for the area.
- A £1.66M Care Home Resilience Plan has been established.
- Bedford Hospital – ICU availability is good and PPE is ok; Level 2 state of readiness.
- Testing – Beds CCG has failed to organise this effectively and so it will now be co-ordinated centrally.
- JW has spent 5 weeks supporting a GD resident to obtain a business grant – this has now been finally approved.
- £160k discretionary funds are available to be awarded – this will be done during July.

11. 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.

12. Correspondence

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

Resolved: No correspondence required discussion.

13. Any Other Business

14. Date of Next Meeting

6th July 2020 - this will be held remotely unless otherwise indicated.