



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Great Denham Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 1st February 2021. The meeting was held remotely.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Donna Parsons (DP) - Chair; Chris Staite (CST); Helen Allen (HA); Vince Arthur (VA); Jo Ruskin (JR); Lou Evans (LE); Chris Slinn (CSL)

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Parish Clerk: Anna O'Meara (AOM)

Members of the Public: 9 members of the public in attendance

Public Questions

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

1. *Planning application for change of use of Golf Clubhouse – what is the position of the Parish Council on this application?*
2. *Can the Parish Council provide help to residents who wish to respond on this application on relevant details to include in their responses?*

The Planning application will be considered as an agenda item in this meeting (agenda item 5)

3. *Has the Parish Council been able to progress the Nomination of a Community Asset?*
An update will be provided in agenda item 6.

4. *Given the recent graffiti on the former Golf Club signs, is this a matter for the Police? Will the PC be making any comment?*

DP advised that all incidents have been reported to Bidwells (the landowners' agent) who will involve the Police if they wish. At our last meeting with Bidwells they indicated the signs would remain in place. The Parish Council will continue to report all incidents and asks the community to refrain from further damage.

5. *What stance has the Parish Council taken with the landowner and the sheep farmer regarding their use of residents' boundary fences to fence in the sheep, and the damage to shrubs etc.*

DP advised that this issue has been raised several times with both Bidwells and the farmer, and we have contacted them each time it has been flagged by a resident. Bidwells have said they will be speaking to the farmer about an alternative approach; this will be followed up.

JW updated that he has also met with officers from the Borough Council regarding this and has done a walkround of the area; the Borough Council will be writing formally to the farmer about the height of the fencing in place, the location regarding residents' boundaries and additional signage. It was noted that it would have been preferable if the landowner/their agent had written to residents directly.

6. *(received via email) The availability of parking at the Village Medical Centre is an issue, as the car park is now nearly always full which is making it difficult for patients.*

HA has raised this question with the Medical Centre who have advised that this is as a result of the current Covid protocols patients are unable to use the waiting room and so are required to wait outside the surgery until their appointment slot. Due to the weather, most people are therefore waiting in their cars. This is also likely to be the case at the Vets, which is adding to the parking congestion. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done at this time.

The meeting was re-opened.

1. Apologies

All Councillors were in attendance.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held 11th January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by DP.

4. Parish Councillor Vacancies

DP advised that she is awaiting a response from a resident who has submitted an application.

5. Planning

Planning application 20/02846/FUL - Proposed change of use of building and land from golf clubhouse and associated facilities, parking and practice area to children's nursery and associated facilities, parking and outdoor play area with erection of boundary fences. The Bedford Golf Clubhouse, 10 Carnoustie Drive, Great Denham, Bedford MK40 4FF

This application was discussed by Council and the following comments noted:

- The planning conditions currently in force on the building would be breached by this application (condition 8 and condition 5). The breach of condition 8 (class of use) will also impact wider policies in the Local Plan re sports and leisure.
- The likely increased volume of traffic and timing of drop off and pick-up times for the nursery will adversely affect traffic in the area, both on Carnoustie Drive and also the exit onto Kingswood Way, the roundabout and exit to Branston Way. This will impact road safety for children walking to school. It will also contribute to the congestion on A428 Branston Way and external roads.
- Linked to this, the potential for parking issues in the area must be recognised, as inconsiderate parking is an existing problem in Great Denham.
- The proposed erection of 1.8-2m fencing will add to any problems of visibility on the roads, and also affect the openness of the current area. It is not clear whether an application for the fencing is required as this would not be covered by change of use. It was also noted that the existing houses currently have restrictions on fencing provision which this breaks.
- The consideration of noise to neighbouring houses.
- Breach of policy 99 of Local Plan – loss of existing sports and leisure facilities; no evidence has been provided of no use or that this is surplus to requirements. The Council are aware that many local golf clubs currently have waiting lists.
- Alternative uses of the building within current use classification – there is no evidence that these have been explored or of local consultation on use.
- NPPF clauses 92(c) 91(c) and 97 apply regarding provision and protection of facilities and services, and of sports and leisure facilities. Additionally, the application would result in loss of opportunity for social interaction, and the proposed business might also impact the existing provision of facilities within Great Denham.
- 02/00787/OUT states employment outside of the district centre is restricted to class B1. This class has since been changed to E(g). Notably a nursery is classed as

E(f). This planning appears to cover the whole of the Great Denham development including the Golf Course which is explicitly depicted.

- It was noted that the assessments of need outlined in the application had taken place during Covid restrictions and may therefore not be representative; the effect of Covid on the workplace, and that on returning to travel to a workplace may impact how parents choose a nursery location for their children closer to the workplace.
- It was noted by Council that a contaminated land assessment was to be done, and this should be completed before determining the application.
- The Council was aware of the views of many residents on this matter and that many had expressed a preference for alternative use of the building than the nursery proposed.
- The Council also noted disappointment that the application had focused on raising fears relating to demolition/boarding up of the building and increased crime and antisocial behaviour if the application was not approved.

Resolved: the council voted unanimously to register its objection to this application.

There was a short break in dealing with agenda items as following this discussion, a member of the public became disruptive and challenging of other attendees. Please note, this behaviour is not appropriate or condoned by Council. Council Standing Orders will be reviewed and any necessary revisions made to deal with any future instances of similar behaviour.

6. Update on Great Denham Golf Course

DP reported that the last meeting with Bidwells had been reported at the January meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 5th February.

- Since the last meeting we have continued to flag to Bidwells resident concerns regarding the use of resident boundary fences as part of the containment approach for the sheep, and of the damage to resident's shrubbery. We will continue to pursue this with both Bidwells and the farmer, and for details of the alternative approach they referenced at the last meeting.
- We have asked Bidwells to put more signage up that the course is closed and advising people to keep to the footpaths; we are chasing this.
- The recent flooding opposite West Hill Close was reported promptly to Bidwells and other agencies (the developer, Anglia Water, Borough Council); following investigation it is believed to come from the water feature on the golf course land; there may be an issue with the drainage and Bidwells have said they will deal.

Asset of Community Value – The Clerk advised that she has now had a response from the Borough Council on a couple of points of enquiry regarding the submission, and will revise the submission document accordingly. This will then be reviewed by Council and, if felt necessary, an extra ordinary meeting will be called to agree submission before the next scheduled meeting on 1 March.

7. Neighbourhood Development Plan

LE gave a short update from the last Steering Group meeting in January:

- A newsletter and questionnaire is being prepared for distribution to all households in Great Denham as part of our NDP consultation process. We have funding to print the newsletter, but due to ongoing Covid restrictions some Parish Council money may be needed to pay for its distribution as we are unable to pay for a further grant in this financial year (ends March 2021). The newsletter will inform residents on: what the NDP is, the areas the NDP covers, information about the Steering Group and its members and

will provide a link to an online questionnaire (which will also be available on paper if this is preferred by a resident). The online questionnaire will gain residents ideas on several areas including green/open spaces, the ecology/environment of the area, infrastructure, community facilities, future development, building design/aesthetics and how they would like to be consulted on their views in the future. Whilst the NDPSG would like to hold face-to-face consultations we realise this is unlikely to be able to occur for some time due to ongoing Covid restrictions and social distancing etc.

- LE proposed the Parish Council fund the delivery costs of £150 for the NDP Newsletter; this was seconded by HA and CSL.

Resolved: Delivery costs of £150 agreed to be paid from Council funds for NDP Newsletter.

- LE advised that, as NDP Chair, she has been approached by a resident about the provision of a professionally built pumptrack on the country park. This could be explored within the NDP under Community Facilities, but would also be appropriate for the Parish Council to consider, given the expected timeframe for completion and adoption of the NDP. It was noted that a number of things would need to be considered, including but not limited to ownership of the land, any planning permission required, the ecology/environmental impact, and consideration of recent flooding of the country park and also concerns from residents of anti-social behaviour. The level of community interest on social media for this idea merits further investigation by the Parish Council; LE proposed that the resident is invited to a future Parish Council meeting to present their idea along with the research they are currently doing on costings and potential funding options.

Action: Clerk to find suitable slot on future meeting agenda.

Anyone interested in supporting this work please email

ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

8. Local Services Update

a) Covid-19 update

DP is attending Borough Council weekly update meeting; all messages from the Borough are then shared with residents via email and social media. The weekly stats are shared. Residents are urged to continue to follow the guidance re Hands, Face, Space to prevent the spread of the virus.

b) Update from Quarterly meeting with David Wilson Homes

VA gave a brief update from the meeting of 22nd January 2021.

- The current phase of build behind Sainsburys is due to completion end April. Once this is completed the developer should move off site.
- Footpath 1 which is currently closed – DWH are hoping to reopen earlier than October where possible.
- Council asked DWH to deal with the fly tipping and fencing on the Mercia Road sites.
- Rowan Close fencing – the gap left for pedestrians is quite narrow. DWH to check.
- Access points/crossovers from roads into the Country Park – these become very muddy during winter and require better surfacing finish on them. DWH will do a walkaround to agree work.
- An audit of Streetlights will be completed by the lighting company, as there have been several reports from residents of lights not working.
- DWH agreed in principle to the installation of a post for a second Speed Indicator Device on King Alfred Way. Location to be agreed.
- DWH to look at the temporary kerb drops on King Alfred Way/Anglia Way; a number of residents report these are too steep/have deteriorated and are now a hazard.

- Adoption of Greenkeepers Road – the drainage certificate is now in place and it is hoped adoption of the top end of GK (from Busgate to Saxon Way entrance) can now accelerate; DWH are currently doing necessary remedial work to pavements and driveways in preparation. It is hoped that once this section is adopted, the remainder of GK can follow quite quickly, and then the other developers will be asked to get the roads of their relevant areas adopted as a priority.
- DWH also advised the Council that the Borough is proposing to divert traffic through Great Denham at night-time for 1 week in April, as they need to do work on Branston Way. Council has asked that a condition of this work is the installation of the 30mph sign at the entrance to King Alfred way; this has been the subject of discussion for some months with no progress.

c) Flood Response Plan for Great Denham

This was discussed at the last meeting and it was agreed to prepare a Flood Defence Plan for Great Denham. DP advised that following the last meeting she has liaised with JW on this matter and invited JW to provide an update. JW reported that he has been making enquiries regarding Bedford Borough Councils Flood Management Strategy, and it is clear that it doesn't reach to Parish Council level will be presenting on this subject at the Borough Council meeting on 3/2. He aims to understand how the triggers and response/alerts work, and has identified a gap in communicating down to Parish level. He has asked to start the process of engagement with Parish Councils.

JW noted that a risk assessment completed in October 2020 by an external agency had not referred to Great Denham at all; the flooding events that took place over Christmas demonstrate that this is not adequate.

LE also noted a recent comment by a resident regarding the impact on house insurance following the Christmas flooding.

Action: a follow up meeting will be set up for JW and the Parish Council to discuss and update on any progress JW has made. A member of the Flood Response team from the Borough Council will be invited to a future Parish Council meeting, JW to make contact.

9. Borough Councillors Report

JW had circulated a written report before the meeting: he gave a short verbal update on the following:

- Golf Course land – JW has spoken to Portfolio Holder for Planning at the Borough re his concern that current issues should be recorded so that planners will have records for reference for the future. He also noted his view that the current application (see item 5 above) is likely to go to Planning Committee.
- Village Medical Centre – the new phone system has now been installed and the practice seems to be more responsive as a result.

The report will be published on the Parish Council website.

10. Finance and Clerk's Report

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

The Finance Report had been circulated and a copy is published on the website. All receipts were available for inspection

Resolved: All payments were approved and all Bacs payments approved by two councillors. Invoices will be initialled outside the meeting as soon as possible.

b) Payroll Services Provider

The Borough Council will no longer provide payroll services from 1 April 2021; alternative approach/supplier must be agreed. Clerk has investigated a number of options as follows:

1. Manage completely in-house, including all aspects of the service currently provide by BBC.
2. Use a Payroll Services provider to manage everything EXCEPT payments to HMRC and employee (i.e., they do all calculations, submit the return to HMRC, produce payslips and payment reports for the Parish Council). Any payments to HMRC and employee must be managed directly by the Parish Council, using BACS Standing Orders/Direct Debits.
3. Use a Payroll Services provider who provides a service equivalent to that provided by BBC.

Following discussion Council agreed to proceed with Option 2. 2 potential suppliers have been identified at a reasonable cost.

Resolved: Agreed to proceed with Option 2. Clerk to confirm what back up arrangements are in place with the 2 suppliers identified to cover availability of service in case of sickness/holiday etc (as these are both small businesses) and confirm final selection at March meeting.

c) 21/22 Budget – detailed breakdown

The budget figure of £58978 had been approved at January meeting. A breakdown of this budget has been circulated.

Resolved: 21/22 budget and budget lines signed by Chair.

d) Update on action from previous meetings

Clerk reported progress on a number of actions from previous meetings not already covered in tonight's agenda.

- Draft lease between GDCP and CIO for the Community Hall – Comments have been sent back to solicitor (including those from CIO), awaiting updated draft which will be then be circulated.
- Benches – Clerk has a quote from the Borough Council for installation of 2 benches in the Country Park but has queried the installation element of the cost and is sourcing alternative suppliers for comparison/competitive quote.
- CCTV – Clerk confirmed that the order for the leased line has been submitted on a no sale/no fee basis in order for a survey to be completed so that installation can be costed and considered.
- Pedestrian Crossing – Feasibility study has been chased; Highways have advised the report would be available in February. It was noted that a 20mph zone is required to install a crossing on the blocked surface. JW advised that he has also spoken with Highways about this.
- Recycling – the potential to receive a credit payment for recycling from Bedford Borough has been looked into, but may not be suitable as the facility is an underground facility; to receive payments a Parish Council must also accept responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the facility and the potential costs of this could outweigh the benefit of payments.
- Open Space Management – still awaiting response on the follow up questions submitted to the Borough. The Amenities team have written regarding the surfacing of the large Play Hub at a cost of some £32k to be taken out of the OSM reserves. The Parish Council are not being asked for funding, but for their views/support. Concerns were expressed over the impact on reserves and potential for OSM charges to be increased as a result, and also whether £32k was competitive for work of this nature. It was also noted that the plans for the Play Area included a shelter which had not been provided.
Action: Clerk to ask Borough to confirm impact on OSM reserves, impact on future charge and details of other quotes received for this work.
Action: to follow up on missing Shelter from the plans.
- Clerks Hours – timesheet has been circulated. Hours to be reviewed on a monthly basis.

11. Correspondence

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

Resolved: No correspondence required discussion.

12. Any Other Business

For Exchange of information only – no decisions may be made here.

- Review of internal financial controls – Clerk asked for a Councillor to lead on this, prior to review at March meeting. CSL agreed to do this.
- JW advised that he is arranging a meeting with Chamonix after receipt of a number of resident issues and will report at future meeting.
- Meaningful Meeting place – now this is installed it seems much smaller than the original application.

Action: application to be checked.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 1st March 2021