



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Great Denham Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 12th April 2021. The meeting was held remotely.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Donna Parsons (DP) - Chair; Chris Staite (CST); Helen Allen (HA); Chris Slinn (CSL); Lou Evans (LE)

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Parish Clerk: Anna O'Meara (AOM)

Members of the Public: 1 member of the public in attendance (until 8.30pm)

Public Questions

The meeting was adjourned for public questions as follows:

1. Resident asked about the incident that took place on Greenkeepers Road on Sunday 11th April, and reports of shots being fired. They asked what could be done to support the residents of the house in question, and to reassure the community in general.
Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been in contact with the police and a statement supplied by them had been published on the PC FB page/via social media. The police have responded further that the Crime investigation is continuing and support is being provided to the family in question. JW will also speak to the PCC on any further measures that might be taken.
2. Resident asked if the Parish Council could confirm that during the time of the road closure for the incident on Sunday 11th April any residents forced to use the Busgate to enter/exit to their property would not be issued with a Penalty Notice.
Action: Clerk to ask for confirmation from the Police team, and also from Parking Enforcement at the Borough Council. JW will also speak to the appropriate team in the Borough Council.
3. A resident has raised concerns (via email) over the number of vehicles parking on the pavement/grass along Great Portway, and the obstruction and damage to grass that this was causing; the resident has requested that the Council consider extending No Verge/No Pavement parking to Great Portway.
Action: The Clerk to speak to Highways regarding this and to report to future meeting in order for Council to consider for decision as this is not an agenda item for tonight's meeting.

The meeting was reopened.

1. Apologies

DP advised that a request has been received from Cllr Ruskin for a leave of absence for 2 months for health reasons.

Resolved: A leave of absence for 2 months was agreed for Cllr Ruskin.

DP also advised that apologies have been received from Cllr Arthur due to illness.

Resolved: Apologies from Cllr Arthur were accepted.

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 extra ordinary meeting held 18th March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by DP.

4. Parish Council vacancies and co-options

DP reported that a resident interested in joining the Council has been in contact; unfortunately, as they are not in attendance at tonight's meeting no further decision can be made. DP also noted that there are 2 vacancies remaining on the Council and encouraged all residents to consider an application to work in support of the community.

5. Pumptrack

The item was to present and discuss a suggestion from a resident to create a Pumptrack in the Country Park. Unfortunately, due to a change of work commitments the guest speaker for this item was unable to attend.

Resolved: it was agreed to defer to a future meeting so that the proposal can be presented and discussed.

6. Golf Course Update

DP reported that the last meeting with Bidwells had taken place on 5th March 2021, and that there was very little new information to report on.

- It was noted that the signage requested by the Parish Council had still not been provided by Bidwells, and this was now some 6 months since closure of the course.
- The Parish Council had highlighted to Bidwells their concerns regarding dog control on the land, and the need for signage regarding this.
- Bidwells reported that they had now investigated the flooding which had occurred but had not been able to identify an obvious source, and that it seems likely to have been caused by extreme ground saturation.
- Since the last meeting the sheep are no longer grazing the land, and we expect grass cutting to commence in due course.

JW also reported that he had met Richard Fuller MP and raised the concern of Bidwells response that Trustees are waiting for more details of the "Public Money for Public Good" proposals by government before determining their 5-year plans. JW has asked Richard to check the status of these proposals with the appropriate Ministers.

The next meeting with Bidwells is scheduled for 16th April.

7. Neighbourhood Development Plan

LE gave a short update on the progress on the plan and Steering Group meetings. A Newsletter has been distributed to c. 1700 houses in Great Denham; this has an overview of the proposed main areas of the plan and some early thoughts on potential policies. Over 50 people have now responded to the survey, and all residents are encouraged to provide their feedback.

Next steps for the Steering Group are to start drafting policies and to engage a planning consultant to provide support with these and also with any technical support that might benefit the project.

The end of grant report had been submitted for 2020/21; of the £1820 Locality grant received, £1652.66 had been spent on the newsletter and the Ecology Report commissioned on the former golf course land. The balance of £167.34 is to be repaid.

Resolved: repayment of the unspent Locality grant of £167.34 was approved.

8. Annual Accounts

The Annual Accounts for 2020/21 have been prepared and will be published on the PC website.

Resolved: The Annual Accounts were approved and signed by the Chair.

The Reserves Policy for 2021/22 includes the updated amounts for general reserve and earmarked reserves (for projects identified by the Council), and will be published on the PC website.

Resolved: The Reserves Policy for 2021/22 was approved.

9. Bedford and MK Waterways Trust

The Trust had approached the Parish Council regarding a joint/partnership application for Heritage Lottery Funding for work along the Great Ouse at Kempston/Great Denham. Unfortunately, the Chair has now advised that the application deadline has now passed, and so no discussion on this item is required. Further opportunities to work together will be explored at future meetings.

10. CCTV

CST gave a short update on the review of the CCTV provision in Great Denham and the work to identify alternative providers to the current Bedford Borough Council/ACE Security arrangements. It was noted that the costs to move to Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership would increase by some 50% over a 5-year period, due to the requirement to provide a separate link to upload images back to the Control room. Whilst there could be some additional benefits of upgraded broadband provision at the Community Hall as a result, the benefits did not sufficiently outweigh the costs at this time. It was also noted that the Borough Council have been upgrading their own transmission links, and that they will be re-tendering the service and maintenance contracts for the Borough-wide cameras and this could provide an opportunity for the Parish Council to re-contract the service and maintenance provision for its own arrangements. CST proposed that no changes to service were made at this time; the operation of the service will be kept under review.

Resolved: the proposal to retain Bedford Borough Council and ACE Security for the immediate future was agreed.

11. Local Services – Heating and Boiler Maintenance, Great Denham Community Hall

Clerk reported that a quotation for renewal of the current contract had been received and that she was seeking quotes from alternative providers that might be more local to Bedford. The quote received is valid for 60 days. All quotes will be presented at next meeting to select and agree contract for 2021/22.

12. Planning

a) Planning application 21/007961/FUL First floor extension over existing garage with link roof to main house- 52 Carnoustie Drive, Great Denham

Councillors had reviewed the plans and had no comments or objections.

Resolved: no objections to this application.

b) Planning application 21/00851/FUL – Single storey side extension – 11 Lindsey Close, Great Denham.

Councillors had reviewed the plans and made the following comments:

- It was noted that the roof material may not be in keeping with the Design Guide for Great Denham.

- Whilst it was difficult to determine whether the plans would negatively impact the parking space/garaging at the property, it was noted that inconsiderate parking on this Close has been raised by residents on previous occasions.

Resolved: Response to be sent to state no objections but to include the comments recorded.

13. Consultations

It was noted that the following consultations were open for public response and residents were encouraged to register their views.

a) East West Rail proposals – public consultation closes on 9th June

LE reported back on a presentation she had attended from EWR. Whilst the proposed route E has no direct impact on Great Denham, LE noted her concerns over the planned changes that would result to Bedford Train Station, Bromham Bridge and Old Ford End Bridge:

- Parking availability at the station would be reduced, and would be an issue for GD residents who commute by train.
- The plans require work to be done on Bromham Bridge, Ford End road Bridge (subject to survey) and also Cauldwell St bridge; this will cause severe disruption to GD residents travelling into Bedford.
- The relocation of St John's station.
- The proposed closing or moving of stations between Bedford and Bletchley could result in increased traffic into Bedford on the A421, and much of the engineering work for the line is likely to result in bus replacement services.
- The compulsory purchase/demolition of c. 90 houses to accommodate the additional lines into/from the station.

LE also noted that the timings of the events being hosted by EWR were unlikely to be convenient for anyone at work as they are being held during the day, and that she had raised a complaint about this.

Action: Clerk to post the details of the consultation of social media/PC website to encourage residents to respond.

b) Boundary Commission review – revised recommendations

It was noted that the Boundary Commission had advised that they will be publishing revised recommendations on 11 May; this will be followed by an 8-week consultation period with the final recommendations published on 31 August. The proposals will still come into effect for the 2023 Local Elections.

c) Extension of LibraryPlus to Kempston/Putnoe libraries

Responses on the proposed extension of the LibraryPlus service to Kempston and Putnoe libraries will close on 23rd April 2021. Councillors noted that the LibraryPlus service is already working well in other libraries in and around Bedford.

14. Borough Councillors Report

JW has circulated a copy of his report before the meeting, and it will be published on the PC website. JW highlighted a couple of items in the report:

- Estate Management companies (Chamonix etc) – JW reported that he and Cllr James Valentine (Kempston) had met with Chamonix to discuss the levels of service provided. They asked for SLAs with residents to be established and also KPIs which can be reported on the actual service provided. They are waiting for a positive response to these requests. JW also reported that the issue of estate management companies is on the work programme for the Environment Committee, and he is asked the Borough to look into how residents can be protected to get the service they are paying for; analysis done

by JW indicates that currently admin and management fees account for 60% of charges and this is very disproportionate.

- JW noted that there are now 15 such schemes operating in Great Denham and he has asked for details of all 15 – layouts, properties and road affected etc. He is also trying to encourage residents to form Resident Directorships in order to drive down the costs/charges.
- Flood Response Plan – a meeting is scheduled for 16th April for JW and DP (Chair of the PC) with the Portfolio lead for Environment and the Flood Response team for Bedford Borough Council re forming a Flood Response plan for Great Denham.

CST asked why Bedford Borough had selected the most expensive Electric Vehicle charging company outside London for their work. JW is investigating this.

LE noted that the report that the Oasis Pool is not re-opening is very disappointing given the funding given to Fusion, and asked JW to ask whether any investigation into the loss of leisure facilities will be done.

15. 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: The Finance report was noted and all payments approved.

- b) Quarterly Financial Controls – completion of March check

CSL reported that he had completed the check for March and there were no issues of concern to report.

Resolved: Quarterly Financial Check for March was completed satisfactorily.

- c) Renewal of ICO registration fee

Resolved: the renewal fee of £40 was agreed. To be renewed by 16th May 2021.

- d) Update on actions from previous meetings

Clerk gave a brief update on the following:

- Benches in the Country Park – BBC have quoted c.£1500 installation costs per bench; Clerk is looking for alternative suppliers and more competitive quotes. It was noted that any supplier must be able to do the work to the Borough's specification and meet any Risk Assessment requirements as the Country Park is owned by the Borough.
- Pedestrian Crossing Anglia Way – we are waiting to hear from Highways on timings and financial contribution required. This is one of a number of items that are currently with Highways awaiting feedback (including lockable gates in school railings, double yellow lines on corners/junctions, 30mph signage on King Alfred Way).
- Road Resurfacing King Alfred Way/Anglia Way – DWH have notified that resurfacing work will be starting and that these roads will be done in sections. Residents will be notified directly. Work has been ongoing to prepare the road for adoption – replacement of kerbstones etc.

16. Correspondence

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

Resolved: CST asked for further info on a couple of items: this was provided in the meeting.

17. Any Other Business

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

- Clerk advised that she had been notified that the new dates for the Great British Spring Clean were 28th May to 13th June. Organisation of a Litter Pick to be discussed at May meeting.
- Clerk advised that Bedford Borough Council Local Plan review would be published for consultation between 28th June and 3rd September.
- Clerk advised that the legislation necessary to continue holding Council meetings remotely would expire on 6th May, and that Covid-19 guidance may make it difficult to hold the June meeting as a face-to-face meeting given timing on lifting of restrictions. It may be possible to meet outside for June with a return to Covid-safe face to face meetings in July, but this will be kept under review.

18. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th May 2021 – this will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

FINANCE SUMMARY

Bank Balances

Treasurer current account - **£46453.07**

BMM deposit account - **£120,083.94**

Receipts since previous report

Date	From	Detail	£
21/03/2021	HSBC	Interest on deposit account	0.92
Total			0.92

Payments since previous report (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	BRCC	Ecological Survey (NDP) - covered by grant	1200
BACS	Sure2Door	Print/delivery of NDP Newsletter (Covered by grant)	682.66
BACS	Bedford Borough Council	Salary payment for March/Payroll Services Charge	1,585.40
BACS	Bedford Borough Council	Installation of Christmas lights on tree and at Retail Centre	3698.57
Total			7,166.63

Accounts Outstanding (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	ACE Security	Additional works to CCTV system	920.4
Cheque	ICO	ICO registration fee renewal	40
BACS	Ambivent	Annual boiler/heating service maintenance GDCH	1464
Total			2424.4