



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Great Denham Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 5th July 2021. The meeting was held in the Great Denham Community Hall, Great Denham. It was also available via Zoom for members of the public

Present:

Parish Councillors: Chris Staite (CST) (Chair); Helen Allen (HA); Vince Arthur (VA); 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 Zoom.

Public Questions

The following questions had been received via email:

- Parking has increased on Great Portway on both sides of the road making it difficult for cars to pass; this may be as a result of the issues with parking at the Medical Centre. Could users of the business at the Medical Centre be encouraged to use the Park and Ride.

Councillors noted that they had also observed this increase in parking at the entrance to Great Portway. The junction of Great Portway/Kingswood Way and Saxon Way is a concern as drivers do not observe the appropriate rights of way. It was also noted that previous issues with full car park at the Medical Centre had been raised by residents; the availability of Covid-19 vaccination at the Pharmacy may have also increased numbers using the car park/looking for parking space.

Action: The Council will write to all businesses at the Medical Centre to highlight the issue and to ask if staff could be encouraged to use the Park and Ride; the Pharmacy will also be asked if patients attending for Covid-19 vaccination could also be encouraged to use the Park and Ride.

- There was previously mention of possible installation of charging points for electric cars. is there any progress on this?
- Council noted that there are no immediate plans for installation of these. The Council responded to the Borough Council with suggested locations for public access to charging points at a previous meeting, however we had very few places that would meet the criteria for the grant scheme that had been running (park and ride, village medical centre, school car park, retail centre - all owned by BBC except retail centre which is privately owned). The need for electric charging points will be included in a Neighbourhood Plan policy in due course.
- **Action: Clerk to chase Highways for a response to suggested locations previously submitted.**
- Land behind the Primary School - it has been noted an area of land has not been included that is adjacent to the school. Can it be clarified who owns this land? Is there any formal written agreement on transfer of this land to the school or is it still upon the good will of the owners?

The current planning application submitted (21/01582/MAF – see below) does not include any housing on the area of land behind the school. This is as a result of discussions between David Wilson Homes and the Borough Council on arrangements to ensure that the land is available and transferred to the school. The land is part of the Biddenham Estate (the owners) and is part of the outline planning permission given to DWH for the overall development.

1. Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cllrs Parsons, Ruskin and Evans.

Resolved: Apologies from all Councillors were accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of June meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the extra ordinary meeting held 15th June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by CST.

4. Golf Course Update

The last meeting with Bidwells had taken place on 11th June 2021 and a report on that meeting had been provided at the Parish Council meeting on 15th June 2021.

Clerk advised that since that meeting correspondence had been received from Bidwells that they had been instructed by the Trustees to deal via email or telephone only. As a result of this no further meetings have been scheduled. Both Great Denham and Biddenham Parish Councils are disappointed with this development; as the meetings were an agreement made at the September meeting with both Richard Fuller MP and Dave Hodgson Mayor, they have been updated on this change.

It was noted that grass cutting has started.

5. Neighbourhood Development Plan

Clerk advised that the grant application for funding had been successful and £8347 had been received from Locality to fund the planning consultant, use of online meeting and survey tools, and production and printing for further newsletters. The Steering Group have selected a Planning Consultant to support the work of the Group, and enable the plan to meet all legal and statutory requirements in terms of documentation and policy wording.

Resolved: The appointment of Sally Chapman Planning was approved.

Resolved: The renewal of Zoom annual subscription for Steering Group meetings was approved (costs covered by Locality grant).

CST gave a brief update on the last Steering Group meeting, which had been a facilitated discussion with the Planning Consultant. An outline draft plan and draft policies has now been created and will be developed over the next few months. A Design Code will be produced (supported by Locality at no cost to the Parish) and a Green Infrastructure Plan will also be produced as part of the overall Neighbourhood Plan document.

6. Traffic and Road Safety

The feasibility study for a Pedestrian Crossing was discussed and agreed by Council at its March meeting. Estimated costs for this work are £40,000. JW has agreed to fund the additional costs of £2,500 to implement a 20mph zone around the Retail Centre, which is required in order to install the Crossing. The location identified in the study is the north end

of Anglia Way (between the Eatery and Keech Hospice shop). Highways have written to confirm that they have no funds for this work, and that the Parish Council will need to meet the costs. Council reviewed available budgets and noted that CIL monies and earmarked reserves are available to meet the cost of this work. JW will also ask the Environment Committee for a contribution to the costs.

Action: JW to request contribution to cost of providing crossing at next Environment Committee meeting.

Resolved: Budget of £40,000 from Council funds agreed in order for the work to proceed.

Action: Clerk to also ask Highways re provision of CCTV on crossing and/or railings as parking on double yellow lines in this area remains a concern.

7. Community Assets

a) Provision of noticeboards at Retail Centre and Sports Pavilion.

It was noted that the purchase of noticeboards had been approved by Council some 18 months ago, but due to Covid installation was not possible and so they have not been purchased; costs of purchase have increased over the last 18 months. Clerk confirmed that costs had been obtained for installation at the Retail Centre by the property maintenance company employed by Vail Williams. Support with installation at the Pavilion would be obtained.

Resolved: Purchase of 2 noticeboards approved (£3121.36), and costs for installation at Retail Centre (£420) also approved. Earmarked reserves and General reserves to be used.

b) Provision of further defibrillators at the Sports Pavilion and Carnoustie/St Mellion area of Great Denham.

A request has been received from a resident of Carnoustie to provide a defibrillator in the Carnoustie/St Mellion area; Council have also previously discussed providing a defibrillator at the Sports Pavilion. The defibrillator installed at the Community Hall was purchased via a programme run by Beds Fire and Rescue Service: Clerk confirmed that she has contacted BFRS to check if there any current programmes of supported purchase and is awaiting a response.

- Sports Pavilion – the Borough Council have confirmed that they will permit installation on the external wall and that they will provide the power supply connection to the Cabinet and ongoing power costs.
- Carnoustie/St Mellion – this is more complicated as there is no suitable building to host an external cabinet. Advice and costs of providing a free-standing cabinet that does not require power have been obtained from the Community Heartbeat Trust – a suitable location needs to be identified that is public land and which does not obstruct resident property.

Council agreed that providing defibrillators in these 2 additional locations would result in a good coverage of the Great Denham area. Priority to be given to installation at the Sports Pavilion given the number of people using the football pitches, MUGA and Country Park, and as it is likely to take longer to get necessary permissions etc for Carnoustie/St Mellion.

Resolved: A budget ceiling of £4,000 was approved for purchase and installation of both defibrillators, money to come from CIL funds and general reserves. Support with purchase from grants etc to be explored. Any costs exceeding £4,000 to be brought back to future Council meeting.

c) Funding of pressure washing of Great Denham Portway Play area

Council requested this work some time ago from Bedford Borough Council. A quote of £112.50 has now been provided. It was noted that Bedford Borough Council have previously

offered to provide paint to spruce up the play area; as restrictions on community events if this will be progressed.

Resolved: Quote for work approved £112.50.

8. Community Event – Police Team Community Engagement event, 21st July 2021

The Rural Police team is arranging a Community Engagement Day on 21st July. Members of the team will be in Great Denham and available to speak with residents and offer help and advice. Additionally, a football match (friendly) will take place between the newly-formed Great Denham team and a police team: it is expected that this will take place around 6pm at the Sports Pavilion. The following areas of concern were discussed by Council and will be shared with the police team in advance of the day:

- Anti-social behaviour – in the Country Park and at the Park and Ride
- Security of Property, including home security.
- Speeding around Great Denham

Bike-marking will be requested and a visit to the school will be suggested, including the opportunity for children to watch and support the football match on Wednesday evening.

9. Community Hall Lease

Resolved: As the final printed copy for signature was not available this item is deferred to the next meeting.

10. Local Services

a) Update from last quarterly meeting with David Wilson Homes

Clerk reported that the meeting had taken place on 27th May, and gave the following update:

- DWH plan to be completely off site in 3-4 weeks' time; the work on the footpath (FP1) is being completed and the play equipment will be installed in the area leading from Sainsburys down to the Pavilion.
- Benches are still to be installed in the meeting place (Archer Street)
- Following requests from residents of Ethelred Road/Denby rise, DWH have confirmed that they will installing some form of boundary/bollards to prevent vehicles using the frontage driveways as a rat-run, and improve safety for residents. They have obtained all necessary permissions required as this is a change to the original plans.
- Road resurfacing of King Alfred Way/Anglia Way has started, and work on the block paving areas is now being done: details have been shared via social media to keep residents informed.
- The fly tipping and broken fences and bollards on Mercia Road, behind the school and corner of Greenkeepers Road/Mercia Road were reported and repairs requested.
- Details of traffic calming measures to be installed on King Alfred Way/Anglia Way were provided by DWH.
- Adoption of the top end of Greenkeepers Road is progressing well.
- DWH have kindly donated the Tommy statue outside the flats on Danegeld Avenue to the Parish Council; it will be moved when the new location has been identified.

b) Update from meeting with Bedford Borough Council 11th June 2021

The meeting was held to get a progress report on a number of items requested in the preceding months:

- Netball court in MUGA – a quote for this work has been requested. This is in response to a request from the newly formed netball group in Great Denham.

- Large Play Hub – replacement surface: the order has been raised and the work is due to start 12th July.
- Pavilion – open days for the café tender were well attended, the tender closes 5th July. The flat above the Café will be occupied in next few weeks. The overflow car park – work will be done on the surface (area nearest to the Pavilion), this should increase the number of spaces available.
- Country Park – an overview of the planting and country park areas will be prepared, following a site visit; a Biodiversity survey will be commissioned next Spring. This will enable the Parish Council to include information in its Neighbourhood Plan.
- Litter in Park and Ride – the Borough Council confirmed that the bins are emptied twice each week and any litter there is picked at the same time. The Parish Council will continue to monitor and report if this is not being done.

11. Planning Applications

a) Planning Application 21/01652/M73 – Variation of condition, flood relief culvert.
Council have reviewed this application.

Resolved: no comments or objections.

b) Planning application 21/01582/MAF – 101 dwellings, land to E and W of Mercia Road, Great Denham

The 2 sites off Mercia Road have previously been submitted on the Local Plan call for sites, and so development was expected at some point. The site to E of Mercia Rd was originally planned to be the school building, but the change to 2-tier education system in Bedford, and the siting of the Primary School, meant the Borough Council had made this area of land available to the developers.

The plans submitted will provide 101 dwellings, including 12 apartments, a range of housing with 2,3 and 4 bedrooms and provision of affordable housing. The proposed layout will remove the green “Kickabout” space; the expansion land for the school has been excluded from development in the plans submitted. The green “Kickabout” space has been a much-valued area for residents; the application submitted will remove this space and replace with housing. In anticipation of this application the Parish Council held a meeting with the Director Planning, Bedford Borough Council, and have written to MD, David Wilson Homes to request retention/provision of green space in this location for residents; we are awaiting a response.

The Council discussed a number of concerns regarding the proposed development of 101 houses, and noted the following:

- Impact on parking – The addition of 101 houses and associated cars is likely to create further parking issues. The lessons of the existing development have not been considered, namely that residents prefer to park close to the front of their properties and not in courtyards behind the buildings. This is resulting in congested on-street parking and narrowed passing access for emergency vehicles. It is therefore expected that pressure will be placed on Mercia Road (where there are limited on-street parking bays provided), the Retail Centre in general, and the parking area outside the Community Hall, reducing/removing the parking available to users of the Hall.
- The likely increase in on-road parking (see above) will impact traffic flow and also the safety of pedestrians/cyclists, given the narrowing of the roads as a result. Both sides of the development will exit onto Mercia Road. The junction of Saxon Way/Mercia Road/Danegeld Avenue/Car Park exit (Retail Centre) is already a cause for concern; the traffic created by an additional 101 houses exiting into this junction will make this worse. If the development is permitted then the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities must be included as a planning condition, together with double yellow lines at junctions and exits onto Mercia Road to improve parking and traffic safety.

- Removal of green space: the “Kickabout” green space will be covered by housing, and no other green space has been provided for in the plans submitted. It’s location in the centre of the development and in proximity to the Hall has resulted in it being a much-used space, and the site of a number of organised and informal gatherings for residents since 2011. This facility will be lost as a result of this development.
- Impact on infrastructure and community facilities: The addition of 101 properties and their occupants to the Great Denham community will put additional burden on the existing facilities, in particular Great Denham Primary School and the Village Medical Centre: the school is already at capacity, with no room to expand further (the provision of 6 additional classrooms has already taken up a large percentage of the school land), and the ability of the doctors’ surgery to accommodate additional patient registrations is a concern.
- The original plan for the land to E of Mercia Road was for a school building; given the increased classroom provision, current capacity limits and limited land on the current School site, it would be more appropriate to consider use of this site to provide expansion for the primary school as a second site (as exists in Bromham), in particular as there are still sites remaining for development in Great Denham. The Borough Council should be asked to consider this.
- Impact on the overall aspect of this area – the planned housing mix will create high 3-storey buildings at all the junctions/roads in this area. Additionally, the build will remove the remaining open aspects that currently exist in this part of Great Denham, creating an urbanised landscape.
- Impact of construction traffic on residents and road infrastructure – the location of both sites will result in construction traffic either entering via Greenkeepers Road and Mercia Road, or via Kingswood Way/Saxon Way. Either route will cause disruption: HGVs will be passing the school on a regular and frequent basis, and the turn to Mercia Road from Greenkeepers will inevitably result in further damage to the bollards and pavements there; entrance via Kingswood Way/Saxon Way will damage the recently-laid block paving. This will then result in further disruption to residents as remedial work is done.
- The land is currently mostly scrub and grassland, and has been the habitat for Swifts for a number of years. This will be impacted by the development.

Resolved: The Council object to the planning application as submitted due to the impact of parking, traffic and road safety, the loss of green space and the subsequent change of aspect for this part of Great Denham. The Borough will be asked to consider the land E of Mercia Road for an additional school site instead of housing, to implement planning conditions to enhance pedestrian and traffic safety, and to support retention of some or all of the green “Kickabout” space.

c) Draft Local Plan 2040 Consultation

The consultation on the draft 2040 Local Plan is now open, closing on 3rd September. All members of the public are invited to respond.

Resolved: Councillors will take time to read the plan and an extra ordinary meeting will be arranged to consider response.

d) Other Planning applications received since last meeting

No other applications have been submitted for discussion.

12. Borough Councillors Report

JW has provided a copy of his report which will be made available on the Parish Council website. He reported briefly on the following at the meeting:

- The Borough Council has secured £22.6m from the High St fund.

- East West Rail – Richard Fuller has raised this in Parliament and following debate has been promised a meeting to review costings.
- Boundary Commission – draft recommendations consultation closed 5th July.
- JW has attended a meeting with Planning regarding the 2040 Draft Local Plan; planning confirm that the new plan will contain protection of the urban gap and open green space.

13. 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. No payments were presented for approval.

b) Quarterly check of financial controls

This has been completed for the April-June period by Councillor Ruskin. No issues were identified.

Resolved: Quarterly check of financial controls completed with no issues identified.

c) Update on actions from previous meetings

Clerk gave a brief update on the following:

- There has been a delay in supply of the benches agreed for the Country Park due to supply issues.
- All other outstanding actions have been covered in agenda items.

14. Correspondence

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

Resolved: No correspondence required follow up.

15. Any Other Business

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

Clerk gave notice of a number of future agenda items and other items as update:

- A visit with Grounds Maintenance has been arranged by JW to discuss how to ensure grass/verge cutting can support the bees/butterfly's initiative. Vince Arthur to attend.
- Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations June 2022 - Council to consider organising a community event at future meeting.

16. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 6th September – the meeting is scheduled to be held face to face, and will be held in line with Covid precautions re social distancing, numbers attending etc.

APPENDIX - Finance Summary to 30/06/2021**Bank Balances**

Treasurer current account - **£80,468.01** BMM deposit account - **£120,086.97**

Receipts since previous report

Date	From	Detail	£
18/06/2021	Locality/Groundworks	Neighbourhood Plan Grant	8347
21/06/2021	HSBC	Interest on deposit account	1.02
Total			8,348.02

Payments since previous report (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	Community Heartbeat Trust	Replacement pads for Defibrillator	51.6
BACS	Clerk/HMRC	Payroll for June	1155.25
Total			1,206.85

Payments approved (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£