



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Great Denham Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 4th July 2022. The meeting was held in the Great Denham Community Hall, Great Denham.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Donna Parsons (DP) (Chair); Chris Staite (CST); Vince Arthur (VA); Helen Allen (HA); Lou Evans (LE); Peter Tarrant (PT) (until agenda item 10); Eric Lomax (EL); Ryan Craze (RC)

Parish Clerk: Helen Glanville (HG)(Locum Clerk)

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Members of the Public: 1 member of the public, a representative from Bedfordshire Police, and a representative from Bedford Borough Council were in attendance.

1. Public Session

A 30-minute session had been allowed for residents to hear from Bedford Borough Council officers and the Police regarding the recent traveller encampments. Although one member of the public was present, they were attending regarding a different matter, and therefore did not wish to speak during the public session.

DP welcomed Inspector Ed Finn (Community Policing Team (Bedford Rural) & Mental Health Hub), and Mr Lee Phanco (Chief Officer for Assessment, Application & Business Support (Middle Office Services), Bedford Borough Council), and expressed thanks that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Festus Akinbusoye, had met with residents on Sunday and diffused the situation by listening to their complaints and accepting responsibility for the poor way the issue had been dealt with.

Inspector Finn gave his own apologies for the way the recent incident with the traveller encampments had been handled. An alert had been received at police HQ that a number of traveller funerals were to take place. A combination of lack of communication to Parish Councils about the possibility of an incursion and the way that the initial encampments had been handled had left few options open to the police in terms of moving the encampments on. In addition, the encampment on the golf course was further hindered by the landowner/agent giving tacit permission to the travellers, which then gave them legal status. All options were explored, including liaison with Bedford Borough Council's Gypsy and Traveller Unit, and eventually the travellers were moved on, but not before causing considerable upset and distress to residents. The fact that a number of calls regarding nuisance and antisocial behaviour were made to the police and not immediately acted on was an additional strain. Several calls made about a single incident were not actioned, even though they should have been. Inspector Finn agreed that more could have been done, and the logs would be examined so that lessons could be learned for the future.

Whilst it was generally accepted that Bedfordshire Police were poorly resourced, the general feeling was that there is no consistency in terms of actions taken across the county, and that rural or semi-rural areas receive less attention in general.

Mr Phanco explained that Local Authorities have greater powers than the police in terms of moving on travellers, but that the sites had been visited early on and no issues were found. This did not continue to be the case, as more reports of antisocial behaviour were received. Action was taken as soon as possible, but the legal processes do vary

The disruption to the community was agreed to be unacceptable, but the quick clean-up of the country park by Borough Council staff was appreciated. Thanks were made to the staff involved. Rubbish on the Golf Course has yet to be cleared; the owner/agent was offered the opportunity for Borough Council staff to undertake this, but declined and is obtaining quotations for the removal of the rubbish left behind.

Consideration will need to be given as to how to prevent these issues in the future, such as retracting bollards or more permanent obstructions, and this is something for Council to consider going forward.

Inspector Finn will be leaving the area shortly and his replacement, Richard Cunningham, will attend a future Parish Council Meeting to introduce himself and familiarise himself with the Parish.

DP thanked them both for attending the meeting and for explaining the situation to Council. They then both left the meeting.

2. Apologies

All members were present.

3. Declarations of Interest

DP declared an interest as a Trustee of the Community Hall CIO.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th June 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair.

With agreement from members, the Chair moved that Item 8 – Community Events – Volunteer Group – was brought forward for discussion at this point for the benefit of the resident present. (see item 8 below for details of discussion/action/decisions)

5. Traveller Encampment

Council discussed the recent encampments on both the former golf course land and Great Denham Country Park. Travellers have now left the area, and the area of the Country Park has been cleaned up.

Bidwells have been contacted regarding clean-up of the golf course land, and have advised they are reviewing options and costs.

JW will push for progress with Paul Pace at BBC.

The communications from the Parish Council during this incident was discussed, and it was noted that all residents had expressed their frustration and anger at the delay in removing the encampments. Following feedback from a resident the Council had blocked commenting on its posts, pending a commitment to review its Social Media Policy; this has been circulated to Council in advance of the meeting.

Action: Consider further security measures. DP to email Bidwells re landowner regarding remaining rubbish. Social Media Policy to be postponed to next meeting due to overrunning.

Resolved: To consider Social Media Policy at August Extra/ordinary Meeting.

6. Neighbourhood Development Plan

LE gave a short update on the last Steering Group meeting and next steps. The Draft Plan is now ready for approval by Council to take to the Regulation 14 consultation

which it is planned will be for an 8-week period starting in August and going into October to take account of the summer holiday period (minimum must be 6 weeks). It was important for residents to meet and interact with members to discuss the draft Plan so some face-to-face events are being planned as detailed in the draft Communication Plan also shown to members. Members were reminded that the NDP could not include policies already in the Local Plan such as Policy 99 and AD43.

LE asked that the members to:

- approve the draft NDP to go forward to Regulation 14
- approve the draft Green Infrastructure Plan to go forward to Regulation 14
- approve the draft communication plan
- delegate authority for the final sign off of the NDP and Green Infrastructure Plan to the NDP Chair and NDP Vice Chair to go forward to Regulation 14

DP asked members to vote on these courses of action, and all agreed. LE gave thanks to all those who had taken part in the plan.

Action: To approve the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and Draft Green Infrastructure Plan to go forward to Regulation 14.

Resolved: Agreed to approve the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and Green Infrastructure Plan and proceed to the Regulation 14 consultation. Authority for final sign-off pending further small changes delegated to Chair and Vice Chair of NDP Steering Group.

7. Parking Restrictions

CST proposed that No Verge/No Pavement parking restrictions should be implemented on Anglia Way near the shops, once the Pedestrian Crossing had been installed. This would deter drivers who would continue to park across pavements in this area, outside the Zig Zag lines. JW said that he has asked for a barrier to be placed at the edge of the footway which will prevent this, but CST asked members to vote to ask for No Verge/No pavement parking IF the barriers were not installed. Members were happy to vote in favour of this.

Resolved: Request will be made to Bedford Borough Council to implement No Verge/No pavement parking in this area if barriers are not installed.

8. Community Events – Volunteer Group

A resident had emailed to offer to form a volunteer group to organise future community activities. The resident was keen to organise events, but it was explained that events on the Country Park could not be ticketed as the land was owned by the Borough Council. However, the Parish Council might be able to sponsor events there, if a proposal was brought forward. Council noted its disappointment, and that of residents, that the Picnic in the Park for the Jubilee weekend had been rained off; a number of councillors and the Clerk had gone to the Country Park but residents had stayed away due to the rain. Residents had been, and would be asked what they wished to see in terms of events but a core group would be needed to ensure they took place. The resident and members agreed that her skills could be best used by joining the Community Hall Group.

Great Denham's 25th anniversary takes place in 2023, so it was agreed that some form of celebrations would take place.

Resolved: It was agreed that no new group would be formed at this time.

9. Planning and licensing

a) Consultation on Local Plan 2040

Consultation is currently open, closing on 29th July. Residents and members (as residents) are encouraged to submit their views. Members discussed aspects of the plan that they were unhappy with, including the high housing number for the area and the recent census showing the unusually high growth in the area. The development around Gibraltar Corner bypass was discussed, along with the lack of primary and secondary school places to go with the additional housing proposed. The protected urban gap should be mentioned in responses, along with maintaining the flood plain where necessary.

Resolved: Clerk to submit response to Local Plan Consultation based on recorded discussion.

b) Planning application 22/00989/OUT – demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 3 new dwellings, 16 Vicars Close, Biddenham MK40 4BG

It was noted that this application is in an adjacent parish. It was agreed that the same comment should be made on this property as that made for 12 Vicars Close, Biddenham, including that of maintaining footpath access.

Resolved: To comment as per previous application for 12 Vicars Close.

10. Borough Councillors Report

JW has provided a report which has been circulated to councillors and will be made available on the Parish Council website. It is also attached at the end of these minutes as **Appendix B**.

11. 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 approved.

b) Clerk's Report/Update on actions from previous meetings

A copy of this was provided to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

12. Correspondence

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

Resolved: No correspondence required follow up.

13. Any Other Business

Councillors asked for the following items to be agenda items for next/future meetings: CST advised that he was no longer Streetwatch co-ordinator, but anyone interested should speak to Julie.

14. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that, if necessary, an extraordinary meeting would be held on 2nd or 3rd August once the Clerk had returned from vacation.

The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 5th September 2022

APPENDIX A - Finance Summary to 27th June 2022**Bank Balances**

Treasurer current account - £92,437.87 BMM deposit account - £120,120.70

Receipts since June report

Date	From	Detail	£
21/06/2022	HSBC	Interest on deposit account	7.14
Total			7.14

Payments since June report (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	GDCH	Room Hire- Tea and Talk (from grant)	180
BACS	GDCH	Room Hire PC meetings Apr/May/Jun	60
BACS	BATPC	New Councillor training – 2 places	60
BACS	HSBC	Monthly account charge	9
BACS	Beds Borough Council	Annual Charges – CCTV Monitoring centre	1983.50
BACS	Clerk/HMRC	Salary/NI and PAYE payments	1178.36
		TOTAL	3,470.96

Accounts Outstanding (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	Christy Plumbing	Annual Boiler service – GDCH	654
TOTAL			654

Committed funds not yet invoiced (work to be completed) figures excl VAT

		£
Pedestrian crossing	Anglia Way	40,000
Defibrillator	Pavilion (installation costs)	200
TOTAL		40,200

Appendix B

Unauthorised Traveller Encampment in GD

We are all acutely aware of the disruption, concern, and fear for community safety we all felt following the arrival and development of this situation. The first 9 caravans arrived on the late afternoon of Thursday 16th June. The parish council Clerk and I reported to the Borough Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer and police that we had this encampment. Our local community Police Officer and Liaison Officer spoke to the encampment on Friday morning the 17th. Through this conversation they were informed that they had come to attend a funeral and would be gone by the 23rd. I believe this information was then given to the agents for the landowner (Bidwells) who then informed the landowner of the situation. The information back from the landowner was to give the encampment permission to stay until the 23rd!

The following day and on subsequent days more caravans turned up and estimates vary between 22-30. At this point the Parish Clerk informed the landowner of the growing numbers and advised acting immediately to get an order for removal. At the same time many residents were ringing and emailing about the developing situation and calling for the landowner to act. During all this, members of the travelling community were creating concern because of the Anti-Social Behaviour practice of racing motorbikes and quad bikes around the land close to houses and crossing public footpaths at high speeds. This was reported to the police using all 101, online and 999 functions but sadly the practice continued without disruption. When the growing encampment moved on, they only went as far as Great Denham Country Park. Both the Parish Clerk and I were in constant touch with Borough Liaison Officers Police and landowner's agent. Whilst neither of us could take direct action because the Parish didn't own the land in question, we did constantly bring pressure to bear on the parties involved.

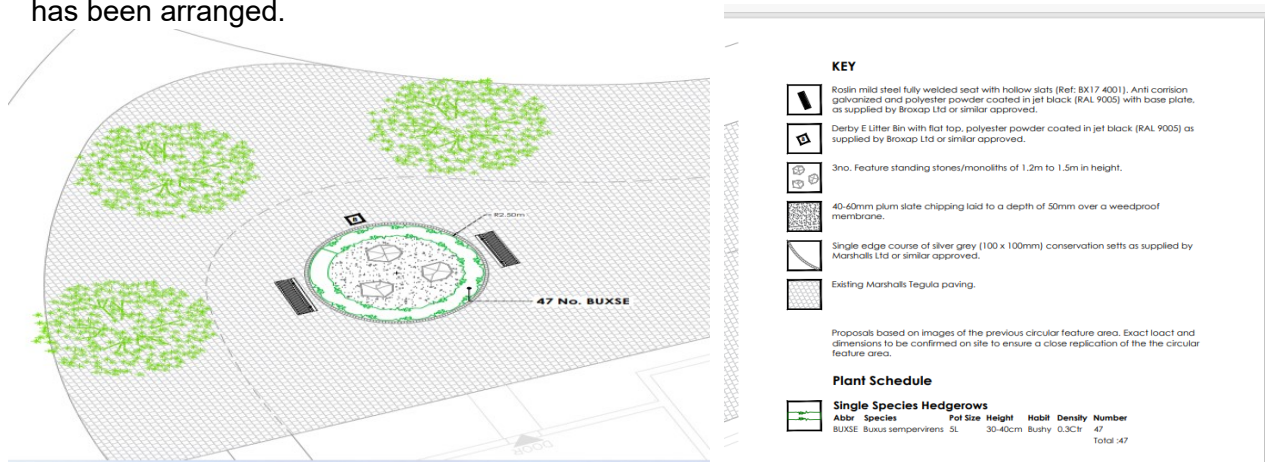
During the encampment on the Country Park many residents were again disturbed by motorbikes and quadbikes in close vicinity to both homes and residents trying to use the Country Park and football pitches. Residents were also confronted with threatening behaviour and intimidation. Again, many residents contacted the police through various formats but again the disturbances continued to take place.

During all the social media responses from residents trying to establish what was being done to curb the behaviour and remove this second unauthorised encampment some unfair criticism of individuals and bodies was levelled. Most of this was fuelled – understandably – by concern for safety and wellbeing of residents. I did take to social media to explain the situation regarding land ownership and who could and could not act to remove the encampments. We also had a well-attended meeting with the Police Commissioner, which was attended by 50 residents, The Commissioner wanted to understand first hand the impact that this has had on residents, and he has already spoken to the Chief Constable regarding Force response to the encampments and will be following up with me.

The Parish Clerk and I held a meeting with a senior Officer from the force to establish the chain of events. I believe the Police felt they could have done more and are looking at how improvements can be made in their responses. The big question to the landowners is how you intend to prevent a reoccurrence and when are you going to clear the land of all the rubbish left behind. I'm pleased to report that the Borough removed all the rubbish from the Country Park on Monday 27th, I have written to the landowner's agent and asked that they take immediate action to get the land cleaned up.

Returned Features

The drawings for the refitment of the “mini-Stonehenge” on the corner of Greenkeeper and Mercia have been submitted to the Borough for approval. The memorial area will be de-weeded and grass seed sown shortly and the developer will forward a date as soon as this has been arranged.



Following my request at the recent Environment Committee to create a pre-adoption survey which identified those areas created after development but before adoption' minute from meeting held on 9th June 2022

"A joint report of the COTHE and COE in relation to the possible implementation of a 'Pre-adoption Programme' to ensure that if a development became adopted some years after the original planning consent had been granted, assets, infrastructure and amenities which had been added in the meantime were fully accounted for in the adoption process and not lost to the community"

Current situation



E-Scooters

Many residents have expressed concern about the use of these scooters in and around Great Denham. In the UK, you are legally entitled to buy, sell, and own an electric scooter. However, it is currently illegal in the UK to use an electric scooter on public roads, pavements, or cycle lanes. Electric scooters can only be legally used in the UK on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps told MPs: *E-scooters are widely sold and seen in towns and cities but are currently only legal for use on private land "I want to crack down on the private market and make it illegal to sell e-scooters which don't meet the regulatory standards which we will bring in,"* E-scooters are currently only legal for use on the roads if they are hired as part of government trials, which have safety features such as speed limits of 15.5mph and automatic lights. **More than 30 areas** - including London, Newcastle, Bristol, and Bournemouth - are already operating rental trial schemes.

Government figures show that there were 931 casualties involving e-scooters in the year to June 2021, and three fatalities. None of the fatalities involved official trials. Bedfordshire Police have already confiscated approximately 100 machines. New laws governing their use are due to be announced later this year.

Safety Railings Anglia Way/Saxon Gate

Everyone will be aware of the safety issues caused by illegal parking on double yellow lines on Anglia Way in front of the shops. The Parish Council is funding a pedestrian crossing and I am funding a 20-mph zone around the centre. What will make the area safe is to ensure that the crossing is the only viable option to cross the road and that railings are installed which will stop the illegal parking. One of the reasons Highways have said we can't install railings is the BT ducting sitting below the surface. I can't help but think that we sent men to the moon 53 years ago but can't find a solution to this problem to ensure residents safety. I got hold of the plans of the BT ducting and sent it to Highways in the hope that they could suggest a solution, this was the response

"We are aware of these plans, but unfortunately the scale is such that it does not show where the ducting is positioned. Often when the ducting is installed, it is placed in the easiest position for the contractor i.e., directly behind the kerb line and not in the best position for installing guard railing.

In addition, the depth of the ducting is not guaranteed to be 450mmm below finished level. We have often found that BT cables and ducts are less than 300mm below the surface, which again precludes guard railing being installed.

Finally, it is not easy getting BT to agree to encase their ducting in concrete as the encasement can impact on their ability to maintain the ducting going forward. Lowering or moving the cable is dependent on the "slack" in the cabling and so may not be possible. BT prefer to have the ducting moved rather than encased, but either way, BT will be expecting someone to pick up the costs of making alterations to their apparatus. Given previous experiences, the costs of "altering" the underground services can be considerable and can often make a scheme unviable.

That said, I have passed this information on to my colleagues in the Engineering Services for them to investigate further. If DWH would like to help with a contribution towards the works (either financially, with labour or with discussions with BT), this would be appreciated."

My next step will be to see if DWH can offer any help as suggested.

2021 Census

In Bedford, the population size has increased by 17.7%, from around 157,500 in 2011 to 185,300 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800. The stats for Bedford are attributable to location growth in no small part, to Great Denham and Kempston Rural. The 2011 census showed that there were 1,110 people living in Great Denham with more younger people than the average in the Borough and less old people than the average of the Borough. The detail by parish from the census has not yet been released but I have tracked growth using the 2011 data and added as the development has grown.

<u>2011 Census (and Parish Profile)</u>				<u>At completion - estimated figures based on 1750 dwellings – a population of 4.200</u>	
	Great Denham Parish		Borough	Great Denham Parish	
Age	Number	%	%	Number	%
0-4	110	10.0	6.4	420	10.0
5-15	160	15.0	13.7	630	15.0
16-17	30	3.0	2.7	126	3.0
18-29	180	16.0	15.1	672	16.0
30-39	180	16.0	13.3	672	16.0

40-49	170	15.0	14.9	630	15.0
50-64	170	15.0	18.1	630	15.0
65-74	70	6.0	8.1	252	6.0
75-84	30	3.0	5.5	126	3.0
85+	10	1.0	2.2	42	1.0
Total	1,110			4200	

Whilst the population of the Borough has grown by 17.7% our parish is estimated to have grown by 378% between 2011-2021.

Bedford Corn Exchange given special status by Historic England

The mid-19th century Bedford Corn Exchange has been listed at Grade II by Historic England. Additionally, Historic England has updated the listing of the Grade II* listed Harpur Suite to better describe its history.

The Victorian building which hosted concerts throughout World War Two has been given special status. During the Second World War the building located on St Paul's Square was used by the BBC Symphony Orchestra to host the BBC Proms. It was also the venue for concerts by the American big band leader Glenn Miller.

In becoming Grade II listed, Bedford Corn Exchange has joined several other buildings in the St Paul's Square area with special historic status.

The Church of St Paul is Grade I listed, as is a statue of John Howard. Bedford's Town Hall and Shire Hall are both listed at Grade II.

Henry Vann, portfolio holder for town centres and planning at Bedford Borough Council, said: "The Corn Exchange is a significant and important building that played a central role during wartime history both globally and locally. It is only right that these buildings are recognised through this listing. These buildings have an incredibly rich history and deserve to have this recognised."

Bedford Borough Council Issues Nearly 500 Tickets for Illegal Parking Outside Schools

Bedford Borough Council Parking Patrol has already issued 483 parking fines to people parked illegally outside local schools since they started visiting schools during drop off and pick up.

Introduced in November 2021 the Parking Patrol vehicle visits schools around the Borough during drop off and pick up times. Fines are issued to parents parked illegally at locations where danger is caused to school children, parents, and other pedestrians either on double yellow lines or on the zigzag keep clear lines.

The Council has also installed 63 Parking Buddies across 15 schools so far. These buddies remind drivers to park considerately and thank those who walk and cycle to school.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "Parking restrictions are in place to keep school children, staff, pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users safe. Dangerous and illegal parking outside schools is not acceptable and we are acting against it. Our council enforcement officers are committed to keeping people safe and I congratulate them on their dedication, often despite aggressive behaviour from parents. Our parking buddies are there to remind parents of their

responsibility to keep children safe and consider their driving habits when parking near schools. Please, do remember park safely and lawfully and help keep our roads safe.”

Great Denham Parish Council fought hard to get the parking provision in the park & ride site prior to the school opening. The original plan was to scrap the park & ride, but the PC insisted and lobbied planners and developers to at least build half the parking that was shelved for school drop off and pick up to be safe. In the main most parents and carers use the facility but there are still those that park either illegally or anti socially. The parking buddies will be visiting GDPS so a warning to all please use the car park provided.

Improvement Works on the Embankment

Bedford Borough Council has completed the first stage of a £1.5million investment in the Embankment, which saw the buff-coloured walkway resurfaced between Newnham Avenue and Bushmead Road.

During these works, fifteen benches down the Embankment have also been replaced. These new benches will refresh and enhance the look of the Embankment and provide better places for people to sit and relax in the beautiful location. The new benches are metal with recycled plastic slats. These new benches were funded by the Welcome Back Fund, developed by the government as part of the Covid-19 response, comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and aims to support the high street and tourist attractions in welcoming back shoppers and visitors.

Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission consultation

Consultation is now taking place on the Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission. The plan was approved for consultation purposes by the Council’s Executive on 27 April 2022. The consultation will run for 6 weeks until 5pm on Friday 29 July 2022.

The Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission, a short summary leaflet and the supporting documents can be found below:

- [Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission](#)
- [Summary leaflet](#)
- [Supporting documents](#)
- [Statement of Representations Procedure](#)

Can I urge all residents to respond to this very important plan? Our protected Urban Gap and open green space (former golf course) needs to be accepted as a continuing green space in the 2040 plan.