



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Great Denham Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 5th September 2022. The meeting was held in the Great Denham Community Hall, Great Denham.

Present:

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

Parish Clerk: Anna O'Meara

Borough Councillor: Jim Weir (JW)

Members of the Public: 2 members of the public in attendance; 3 representatives of David Wilson Homes (DWH) also in attendance (agenda item 5).

1. Public Session

- A resident asked for an update on the parking plans for Great Portway – agenda item 9 (c) refers.
- A resident also asked that an area of Archer Road is still to be resurfaced and asked that this is escalated to DWH.

Action: Clerk to raise with DWH.

- A resident asked that attention is paid to the state of Footpath Number 1 landscaping. JW confirmed that he has noted this together with the Chief Environment Officer, Bedford Borough Council, and that the area will not be accepted for adoption until it has been addressed.
- A representative of the landowners of 12/12A Vicars Close, Biddenham spoke regarding the owners plans to submit further planning applications for the site, and also future plans re the adjoining field to their land. The Parish Council has previously reviewed these plans and has commented on their concerns regarding future development of this field and the continued provision of access from the 12/12A Vicars close site to this field as a precursor for such development. The landowners will be submitting a further planning application for the 12/12A Vicars Close site to build a 3rd property; this will be available for consultation in due course. They also took the opportunity to confirm that they have no plans for development of the adjoining field, and that the Local Plan policies relating to the Urban Gap (AD43) remain in force for this area. The Council thanked the landowners for this update and noted that a future planning application will be made for the 12/12A site and they will be considered at the appropriate time; the Council also noted that information provided re the adjoining field, and that the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan which is currently out for consultation will support the Urban Gap policies of the Local Plan to prevent development on this land.

2. Apologies

Apologies have been received from Councillors Peter Tarrant and Eric Lomax (work commitments) and Ryan Craze (childcare).

Resolved: Apologies were accepted.

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 Wednesday 3rd August 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. Planning application 21/01582/MAF – 95 houses, Mercia Road, Great Denham

3 representatives of David Wilson Homes Planning department were in attendance to provide more information on behalf of the developer regarding the comments made by the Parish Council in their letters of objections:

- Parking Courts
- Provision of Parking Spaces/Visitor spaces
- Maintenance of green space
- Use of Management Companies

DWH representatives advised that the latest set of plans and layout for the site had been done following guidance from Bedford Borough Planners, and in line with the current Design codes. The Council noted that, whilst this might be the case, the issues of parking courts, parking and impact on street congestion have not been resolved, and that no recognition of the learning from previous developments had been made in the latest plans; they also noted that provision for charging of electric vehicles following the government's stated plans to move away from fossil fuels by 2030 was, in their view, inadequate and not likely to be practical for householders under the current design. They thanked the DWH representatives for attending and advised that they would await updated plans before providing any further formal response.

Action: Clerk to escalated the Council's concerns to Director of Planning over the advice reported to be given to DWH by the Planning Officer regarding provision of parking courts and parking spaces in particular; the Council noted that 7 parking courts have been included in the latest plans in spite of feedback on this issue being consistently given on behalf of residents.

6. Annual Audit

- a) External Auditors report for 2021/22 AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Resolved: The External Auditors Report and recommendations were accepted by Council with no issues identified.

- b) External Audit arrangements for 2022/23

Resolved: The Council resolved to remain in the SAA central appointments scheme for provision of external auditors.

7. Annual Insurance

Resolved: The Council resolved to renew the annual insurance with BHIB as the second year of a 3-year long term agreement. Clerk to arrange.

8. Toybox Land

Resolved: The Council noted and recorded its agreement to the Deed of Covenant with Toybox. It was noted that the Council had taken legal advice on this matter before indicating its agreement.

9. Parking and Security

- a) Request for Parking Enforcement and further parking restrictions in Great Denham

The Council noted its continued frustration with regard to poor and unsafe parking by residents and visitors in Great Denham; the issues of parking on double yellow lines on

Anglia Way, and parking on pavements and parking obstructions have been raised many times and escalated to the Borough Council for enforcement action to be taken. The Council recorded its disappointment at the lack of enforcement action and reiterated its previous requests for additional restrictions.

Resolved: the request for double yellow lines on all junctions to be escalated to Highways for action (original request made June 2020).

Action: Clerk to investigate how the Council might obtain a statutory power to provide its own enforcement, including the possible funding of a dedicated enforcement officer for Great Denham.

The Council also noted the ongoing issues of parking on King Alfred Way entrance to Great Denham, and that, with the installation of the traffic calming island, there was now a need to implement parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines. CST proposed that double yellow lines are installed from the Traffic Calming Island back towards the corner in direction of Branston Way (to where the road widens) and on opposite side from where the road widens down to Terrington Place entrance.

Resolved: Council approved the proposed restrictions; Clerk to request Highways for the scheme to be drawn up.

b) Pavilion Car Parks – issues with parking and car park security

Clerk gave a brief update on use of the overflow car parks following indiscriminate and dangerous parking during the weekend of 3/4 September, due to double booking of the football pitches and the locking of the overflow car parks. Clerk has spoken to the Borough Council regarding this, and has been in correspondence with the Chief Environment Officer re the resurfacing of the overflow car parks in time for the bad weather; the Borough are awaiting confirmation for a contractor regarding this work. The Clerk also advised that residents had raised concerns over the locking of the Pavilion car park barriers and the potential access to the Country Park for travellers.

Action: Clerk to write formally on behalf of the Council regarding the provision and locking/unlocking of the overflow car parks.

Action: Clerk to also write formally regarding concerns over Pavilion Car park security, the risk of traveller access to the Country Park, and the need to ensure the car park barriers are secured.

Action: Clerk to request meeting with Highways, JW, DWH and Chief Environment Officer to tackle issues of parking around the Pavilion area.

c) Renewal of road markings and proposed scheme of double yellow lines for Great Portway

Council has received the schematics for these from Highways, in response to requests made from previous meetings.

Resolved: Both schemes were approved by Council, with additional comment that a Give Way sign on Saxon Way/Kingswood Way junction would also be welcomed.

10. CCTV

The renewal notice and invoice for annual maintenance and servicing of the CCTV system has been received. CST proposed to defer the decision on this until October meeting: he has sourced an alternative supplier and is awaiting a quote.

Resolved: item deferred to October meeting.

11. Council Policies

a) Social Media Policy

Council reviewed this policy and noted some small amendments.

Resolved: Policy was approved with amendments agreed.

b) Community Events Policy

Council reviewed the proposed policy wording.

Resolved: Policy was approved.

12. Community

a) Good Neighbour Scheme

DP advised that she had met with the BRCC re their Good Neighbour Scheme, whereby a group of volunteers support people in the community with support as needed, e.g., fetching prescriptions, shopping etc; the BRCC were interested in introducing the scheme to Great Denham. The initial step would be to assess the interest and need for such a scheme through a survey run by the BRCC, who would welcome financial support from the Parish Council. Any request for financial support must be in the form of a grant application. The Council discussed the idea in principle, and noted that whilst a good idea, similar groups may already exist, for example through St James Church; concern was also expressed about the viability of identifying sufficient volunteers to form such a group.

Action: Clerk to find out more about the scheme which has been launched in Bromham.

Action: DP to feed back Council comments to BRCC, with suggestion of grant application to be made.

b) Great Denham Youth Club

Clerk reported that the tender for this contract had now been awarded and mobilisation meetings were taking place. The first step will be for 4YP to promote the scheme to recruit participants in Great Denham; a site visit to the Community Hall will be taking place in next couple of weeks. Further updates will be provided once available, but the hope is the Club start later in the Autumn Term.

13. Grants

2 grant applications have been received for Council consideration

a) Grant application from GDCH for Storage cupboards for the Hall

The Council discussed the application and noted that the application contained a supplier quote for the work.

Resolved: following discussion the Council resolved that no grant support would be made for this work as the benefit to residents was not clear, and suggested that the Hall reach out to hirers who require storage in the first instance, in line with the practice of other Halls.

b) Grant application from GDCH for the Winter Festival

Council noted that the application is to fund the provision of an Ice Rink as entertainment at the event, and that tickets would be charged for the use of the Ice Rink.

Resolved: following discussion, whilst Council acknowledged the opportunity for residents to enjoy the event, further information was needed before a decision on financial support could be taken. Specifically, the Council asked how Great Denham residents would be prioritised and what concessions to Great Denham residents would be available through ticketing. Clerk to feed this back to the Hall.

14. Civility and Respect

Due to the late running of the meeting DP proposed to defer this item to the October meeting.

Resolved: it was agreed to defer this to October.

15. Neighbourhood Plan

LE gave a brief update on the progress on the plan, which has been out for pre-submission consultation since 15th August, until 3rd October. A flyer promoting the consultation has been delivered to all 1800 homes in Great Denham by volunteers, over 60 statutory and business consultees have been written to and a survey is available

(<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GDNDPReg14>) for residents to give their feedback.

Consultation events are planned to take place at the community hall and all details are available from the Parish Council's website: www.greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk/great-denham-neighbourhood-plan/

16. Planning and Licensing

A further notification of changes to planning application 22/00989/OUT for 16 Vicars Close, Biddenham has been received.

Resolved: Council agreed that no further comments were required on this application and that all previous comments were appropriate.

17. Borough Councillor Report

The report from JW was circulated to Council in advance of the meeting; a copy of the report is attached as Appendix to these minutes and will be available on the Parish Council website. JW highlighted the following items:

- The Mini Stonehenge and Meeting Place areas have now been restored by DWH
- The Borough Council have advised that the number 24 bus service has been removed by Grant Palmer from beginning of September
- The Borough Council is facing a number of resourcing challenges in delivering service, especially in the Planning Department, and this is beginning to affect a number of items.

18. 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. All invoices were approved for payment by 2 Councillors.

- b) Quarterly Financial Controls

CSL reported that the quarterly checks had been completed and no issues identified

Resolved: the Quarterly Financial Control was approved.

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

Clerk updated on the following items:

- Pedestrian Crossing on Anglia Way – it is very disappointing to report that work on this is unlikely to be completed before March 2023, in spite of repeated requests to Highways.
- A proposal with costings for the Gateway feature on King Alfred Way entrance to Great Denham will be brought to a future meeting.
- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points – a response on this is still waiting from the Borough Council.
- Planting of the circle in the Community Garden – the resident who volunteered their services has made no further contact. Alternative arrangements will be investigated.

19. Correspondence

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

Resolved: No correspondence required follow up.

20. Any Other Business

Councillors asked for the following items to be agenda items for next/future meetings:

- The next meeting of the Town and Parish Council Network meeting will take place on 29th September 2022 at Borough Hall – all councillors were invited to attend.

21. Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting will be held on Monday 3rd October 2022

APPENDIX A - Finance Summary to 31st August 2022**Bank Balances**

Treasurer current account - £89,389.15 BMM deposit account - £120,145.61

Receipts since August report

Date	From	Detail	£
21/08/2022	HSBC	Interest on deposit account	17.34
Total			17.34

Payments since July report (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	HSBC	Monthly account fee	8
BACS	Clerk/HMRC	Salary Payment and HMRC PAYE/Ni for June - Clerk	1178.36
BACS	Christy Plumbing	Annual Boiler Maintenance	396
BACS	Pam Anthony	Payroll Services	45
BACS	GDCH	Room Hire - PC meetings July and August	40
BACS	GDCH	Tea and Talk room hire (from grant)	195
TOTAL			1,862.36

Accounts Outstanding (figures include VAT)

Payment type	Payee	Detail	£
BACS	Mazars	External Audit fee	360
BACS	Christy Plumbing	Replace Air Filters (work to be scheduled)	368.42
BACS	Ace Security	Annual Maintenance/Service contract CCTV	567
BACS	KallKwik	Flyers and Banners for NDP (from Locality grant)	462
TOTAL			1,757.42

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

		£
Pedestrian crossing	Anglia Way	40,000
Defibrillator	Pavilion (installation costs) – work completed	200
Insurance	Annual Policy renewal	3534.14
TOTAL		43,734.14

APPENDIX B – Borough Councillors Report – August/September 2022

Reinstatement of Mini Stonehenge and Memorial area.



Its pleasing to see that both the above areas have been reinstated and all that now remains is to fit the planned benches which I am told are now on order.

Bus Services

Grant Palmer Limited made changes to its timetable. Service 24 will be withdrawn apart from school journeys to Lincroft Academy. According to Grant Palmer, a review of passenger numbers showed very few customers were travelling on service 24 from Great Denham and most customers were travelling from Kempston Road.

Planning

The Borough council has now recruited additional staff with the aim of successful dealing with the backlog of planning applications that have built up over the years. Unfortunately, there are still planners leaving BBC and many planning applicants are writing to me to complain about the amount of time they must wait.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) consultation begins

Following the hard work done by the steering group putting the GD NDP together consultation surveys, and leaflets posted to every home showing how to view the plans are now in play. Consultation events throughout September and October will be held at the community hall where residents can talk to members of the steering group about the plans and what they mean to the community. I would urge all residents to look at the plans and add your views through the various consultation options. The Parish Clerk and the Chair of the Steering Group have done a tremendous amount of work over the last two years to get to this stage and I would like to thank them for the commitment they've shown to the community.

The Irony of parking in GD



Many communities find it difficult to park when visiting local shops because of limited parking spaces. We are fortunate in Great Denham that our district centre has plenty of parking right in the middle of the shops. I know it is sometimes difficult to think of others and try to be selfless, but I would ask all those that think they have a special pass that gives them the right to park wherever they like to please consider safety of your fellow residents. Please stop doing this.

Wider Borough News

Executive Decisions

2nd August – Decision to award the following grant - £1,000.00 to support Smart CJS to deliver their Prebend Day Care Centre which provides essential care and support to those facing homelessness in our local community.

4th August – Decision to approve funding from the Mayor’s Climate Change Fund for an application from Bedford Pentecostal Church to fund the installation of a more energy efficient gas heating system, in the sum of £8,468 for the reasons set out in this report.

5th August – Decision to accept Grant funding from the DfE to carry out work on their behalf to raise standards in the Early Years. The grant has been signed and accepted for funding up to £27,600 from 1/4/23 to 31/8/23.

12th August – Decision to award the following grant - £1,000.00 to support PBIC to support the Ukrainian Independence Day celebrations.

23rd August - Description to enter into the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) on behalf of Bedford Borough Council and as a “Participating Authority” in the Sustainable Warmth scheme. £1,881,000 of funding has been allocated to Bedford Borough Council

Elstow Solar Farm goes live

Bedford Borough Council’s brand-new solar farm has been fully energised and is now exporting low-carbon electricity to the grid.

The project has cost £4.15m with Bedford Borough Council investing over £2.2million. The project was awarded more than £1.8million from the Southeast Midlands Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) with additional support from HM Government via the Getting Building Fund.

The Elstow Solar Farm is going to play an instrumental role in the council meeting its ambition of becoming net-zero by 2030.

Solar Together Bedfordshire offer

Bedford Borough Council announced Solar Together Bedfordshire, a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage in May 2022.

Residents who signed up to join Solar Together Bedfordshire recently received an offer letter, which advises them how much installation will cost should they like to proceed with the scheme.

The deadline for residents to reply to their offers is Friday 12 August 2022. If residents have any queries about their quote, they can ask for advice by contacting the Solar Together helpdesk by email: bedfordshire@solartogether.co.uk or by phone: 0800 098 8994 (Monday - Friday, 8am - 5pm).

‘Make sure you can vote’ urges Bedford Borough Council

The Annual Canvass of households, to update the Electoral Register, is now live. Communications via email and/or letters have been sent to residents of Bedford Borough from the 21st July 2022 to remind them about the electoral register.

The Borough will be sending out further communications to residents that do not respond.

Application for Tesco Express, Harpur Centre

The executive and committee members met regarding the Tesco moving from its current premise in town to a smaller premise inside the Harpur Centre.

Application is to be Determined.

Two New Play areas

The Council officially opened two newly refurbished play areas. One Bedford Park and the other at Jubilee Park.

The play areas have recently opened following extensive refurbishment and upgrades as part of the Council's £500,000 investment in play areas across the Borough this year.

Traffic Management Act and new Borough powers

As part of the Traffic Management Act (2022) the Government will be giving councils the option to apply for powers to enforce against moving traffic offences. Bedford Borough Council applied for these powers by the deadline of 20th May 2022 and the powers were granted unofficially in June 2022. The Borough is still awaiting the official letter, which will confirm these new powers.

Assistance with energy bills and cost of living

£150 Council Tax energy payment

Borough Council are currently running a £150 Council Tax energy payment that is available to all eligible households in Council Tax Bands A to D, and Band E where there is a disabled Band reduction.

The assistance is paid via direct debit however, any household that are not able to pay via direct debit, have or have not completed the online form have been sent reminder letters, with the access code. If residents are eligible, please do remember to complete and forms.

The Governments Energy Bills Support Scheme

The Energy Bills Support Scheme discount, equating to £400, will be administered by energy suppliers and paid to consumers over a 6-month period. Payments will start from October 2022, there is no need for residents to contact energy suppliers concerning this.

This forms part of the £37 billion cost of living assistance package for consumers over winter 2022 to 2023. A further 8 million of the most vulnerable households will be receiving £1,200 of direct support to help with the cost of living.

Household Support Grant for winter 2022-2023

Bedford Borough Council is giving more than 50% of the Household Support Grant funding to families with children that qualify for free school meals. This will help vulnerable families on very low income to meet the cost of food and utilities during school holidays.

There is also a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme which provides a Council Tax Support discount of 100% to households on a low income.

Further help

Any households on a low income or that have experienced an unexpected crisis or emergency that means you cannot afford food, can receive assistance from the Council. If any difficulties have