

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Great Denham Parish Council Meeting held on 4th November 2024 at 7.30pm at Great Denham Community Hall.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Jon Hannah (Chair), Joanna Szaub-Newton, Anna O'Meara (minute taker), Janice Moran, Joe Quinn, Chris Staite, Helen Allen, Oliver Payne.

- 1 **Apologies for Absence:** Jim Weir (also Borough Councillor), Robbin Brough (Parish Council Clerk).

Resolved: apologies were accepted.

- 2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda – none recorded.**

- 3 **Public Open Session –** One resident in attendance.

A resident raised concerns about the road design of Anglia Way/King Alfred Way, specifically the chicane bend by Croxden Gardens. They have been in correspondence with the Borough Council regarding this, as visibility for approaching drivers is impeded by the presence of parking bays, and drivers are not taking this corner at a safe speed; additionally, traffic exiting from Croxden Gardens is prevented from clear line of sight when turning right due to location of parking bays.

Action: Councillors to write to Highways and Adoptions Officer to further support the concerns raised by resident and request that Adoptions Officer follow up with Developer as part of pre-adoptions process to find a suitable solution to improve road safety in this location.

- 4 **Correspondence received since the last meeting (requiring council attention)**

- A resident contacted the council to ask that the stone area on Greenkeepers is maintained as it is currently overgrown with weeds. The Clerk has contacted DWH to ask they maintain the area.
Action: Councillors believe this is now the responsibility of the Borough Council, as Greenkeepers Road is now adopted. Clerk to contact Grounds Maintenance at the Borough Council.
- A resident emailed the council to request a door to a communal bin store area is repaired and informed the council of a damaged fence next to the fish and chip shop.
Action: Clerk to respond advising the resident to contact their service management company to repair the door to bin store, and to advise Vail Williams (managing agent) of the damaged fence.

- 5 **To confirm the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 7th October 2024**

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record with following amendment – addition of word “Resolved” to minute item 7/annual audit.

- 6 **Clerk's report on actions not covered by agenda items**

- To arrange a meeting with BBC Highways Officer to discuss numerous highways-related issues in Great Denham. **Complete, meeting took place on 30th October (see agenda item 12).**
- To contact BBC and DWH to request quote for structural testing of 8 lamppost columns along King Alfred Way and Queen Elenor Drive for possible Christmas light decorations. **Complete.** Structural testing to take place week commencing 28th October.
- To obtain costs of Christmas decorations to be installed on columns along King Alfred Way and Queen Eleanor Drive. **Complete.** Options and costs have been provided and order for lights has been placed (Agenda item 14).
- To look for additional financial institutions who provide interest accounts for Parish Councils.
Ongoing. Clerk working to identify potential institutions where Council currently has no fund holdings.

- 7 **Finance**

- To approve payments and note income and balances.
Resolved to approve payments as shown in the appendix.

Mrs R Brough, Clerk, Great Denham Parish Council
E-mail: clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Councillors noted the payments and requested updates on:

- on-line authorisation of payments by 2 councillors for Unity Bank is required in line with Standing Orders and is still to be set up.
- confirmation that Insurance cover remains unaffected by late payment of renewal notice.
- Use of HSBC accounts continues and that HSBC Safeguarding Review is to be completed

Action: Clerk to action and provide update on these items at December meeting.

- *To note the Spend versus Budget variance report.*
Report received and noted. See appendix.

8 **Parish Council 2024/25 Budget**

Clerk has circulated an initial draft, allowing for expected increases in costs.

Action: Councillors to provide Clerk with any information on projects they would like to include for budget discussion at December's meeting and that no separate Finance Committee is required.

9 **Planning Applications:**

To consider any planning applications received since the last meeting – includes any received after the agenda is issued up to the date of the meeting.

No planning applications received.

10 **Borough Councillors Report**

Update from Borough Councillor Jim Weir.

See parish council website for full report.

11 **Christmas Carols**

Update from Working Group.

The Working Group has met and agreed the date 23rd December: time to be confirmed. DWH have been asked for their support in hosting refreshments but this will not be possible. The Community Hall will be contacted for use of the kitchen so that the event can be held on the new green space opposite the Hall; backup plan will be the Amphitheatre at the Country Park. Marketing of the event will start shortly, and posters will be produced for the Noticeboards. The Working Group requested approval of a budget of £200 for purchase of refreshments (proposed CS, seconded JQ).

Action: Working Group to liaise with the Hall and confirm arrangements.

Resolved: A Budget of £200 was approved for refreshments, all purchase to be receipted.

12 **BBC Highways Meeting**

Councillors Hannah, Moran and Payne met Highways Officer on 30th October; Clerk was also in attendance.

Chair gave a brief report on the meeting and items discussed:

- 20 mph zoning across Great Denham: this will require signage, costs, and timings to be provided by Highways.
- Speedwatch signage – this is in design, ready for production; the opportunity to include 20mph markings (see above) was requested. Signs will cost £95 each.
- Flashing Lights outside school on Kingswood Way – implementation of 20mph zoning will negate the requirement for these.
- Great Portway parking issues – councillors discussed several suggested changes to address the issue of poor parking and reduced visibility/narrowing of road for traffic, including extension of double yellow lines. Highways Officer advised this is being looked at.
Action: Clerk to ask Highways to confirm what is proposed.
- 30-minute parking bays outside Village Pharmacy – vehicles are often parked here for much longer than permitted time; it was also noted that the position of these bays on approach to junction has reduced visibility and traffic/pedestrian safety. Cllr Moran proposed that the 30-minute bays are reviewed at a future meeting.

Action: Clerk to contact Highways re possible solutions, for discussion at future meeting.

Mrs R Brough, Clerk, Great Denham Parish Council
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- Improving visibility and safety in area of chicane on Anglia Way/King Alfred Way – this was also raised in public qs by a resident. Cllr Payne proposed that road markings along middle of road would encourage drivers to drive appropriately: councillors discussed this and other suggestions.
Resolved: Council to make formal request to Highways and Adoptions Officer that the design and layout of this area of Anglia Way/King Alfred Way is addressed with the developer before the adoption of this road is completed.

13 **Footpath Lighting**

Proposal from Cllr Payne: To installation of lighting along the footpath running from Sainsburys to Pavilion/Country Park (This is PROW Footpath Number 1).

Council discussed this proposal.

Action: Further investigation is required, and councillors are asked to walk this footpath during darkness to inform their views.

14 **Christmas Decorations**

Further to decision at October meeting, decorations have been ordered for King Alfred Way/Queen Eleanor Drive.

Resolved: Purchase authorised at cost of £3996.95 and invoice signed by 2 councillors.

Quotes for provision of lighting on tree on Great Portway have been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Resolved: Costs of £3653 approved, Clerk to make arrangements with Bedford Borough Council. It was noted that in future years the recurring cost would reduce to est.£800.

15 **White Lines**

Proposal from Cllr Payne to consider installation of white line markings down the middle of main roads in Great Denham.

Discussed under agenda item 12 and Public Questions (see above).

16 **CCTV Provisions**

JH Proposed transfer of all cameras and post on Saxon Way to Bedford Borough Council, seconded by CS.

Resolved: transfer of ownership of CCTV cameras to Bedford Borough Council was approved unanimously.

17 **Great Denham Primary School**

Cllrs Moran and Szaub-Newton gave a brief update on the Year 4 presentations they attended. The children hope to improve signage and water safety along the river. The school is already in conversation with the Borough Council. Cllrs expressed an interest in seeing the proposed signage before it is installed.

18 **Business for future agendas (No actions can be taken on items not on the agenda)**

- Replacement trees on Kingswood Way – a breakdown of costs is required for council to then discuss, including transfer of responsibility to the Borough Council.
Action: Clerk to establish costs and bring to next meeting.
- Highways update to remain as an agenda item.

19 **Annual NJC pay scale adjustment.**

Resolved: under Section 1 Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, press and public to be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business due to the confidential nature of staff matters.

Resolved: Implementation of new NALC pay scales for 2024-25 approved in line with Council's contractual obligations, including payment of any back pay due from 1 April 2024.

Action: Staffing Committee noted that they will arrange a suitable time with the Clerk for half-yearly review of agreed objectives and report back to Council.

Date of the next meeting: 2nd December 2024, Great Denham Community Hall.

Great Denham Parish Council - Receipts & Payments - Nov 2024

Bank reconciliation

Account	Date	Category	Payee	Description	Trf	Receipts	Gross	VAT	Cashbook Balance	Bank Balance
HSBC Current	Opening								27,219.83	27,219.83
		No transactions								
	Closing								27,219.83	27,219.83
Unity Trust - Current	Opening								45,483.96	45,483.96
	29 October 2024	Community Events	R Brough	FETE GIFT TAGS/BAG			9.98			
	29 October 2024	Community Events	J Quinn	FETE EXPENSES			21.47			
	29 October 2024	Information Technology	Cloud Next LTD	Annual Hosting			119.98	19.99		
	29 October 2024	Community Events	R Brough	RBL WREATH			19.99			
	29 October 2024	Staff costs	Multiple	October			1,132.57			
	29 October 2024	Insurance	Clear Insurance				4,581.46			
	29 October 2024	Hall hire	GDCH	GDCH - Room hire - 4113			24.00			
	29 October 2024	Community Events	MarqueesWithPryde	Fete Marquee			800.00			
	29 October 2024	GDCH Tea & Talk	GDCH	GDCH - Tea and Talk room hire from grant - 4112			75.00			
	31 October 2024	Banking charges	Unity Trust				5.40			
	31 October 2024	Christmas lights	Mk Illumination	SO001593			4,796.34	799.39		
		Not Yet Paid Youth Club	BBC				6,250.00			33,897.77
	Closing								27,647.77	
HSBC Savings	Opening								0.00	0.00
	21 October 2024	Bank Interest	HSBC	Savings account interest		0.03				
	Closing								0.03	0.03
Unity Trust - Savings	Opening								40,548.67	40,548.67
		No transactions								
	Closing								40,548.67	40,548.67
Redwood Savings	Opening								86,187.30	86,187.30
		No transactions								
	Closing								86,187.30	86,187.30
					0.00	0.03	17,836.19	819.38		

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Year 2024/25

<u>Income</u>		YTD (Actual) Gross	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget 2024/25	Full year (Forecast)	Variance
	Precept	41,415	41,415	41,415	41,415	0
	VAT reclaim	0		1,500	1,500	0
	CIL Income	0	0	0	0	0
	Bank Interest	1,906	1,906	1,000	4,000	3,000
	Other income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income		43,321	43,321	43,915	46,915	3,000
<u>Outgoings</u>						
	Staff costs	9,527	9,527	15,497		
	Staff costs	9,527	9,527	15,497	15,497	0
	Christmas lights	6,382	5,583	2,500		
	GDCH expenditure	1,166	972	3,600		
	Community defib	146	122	200		
	CCTV Monitoring	0	0	0		
	CCTV Maintenance	0	0	0		
	Electrics (Unmetered supply)	118	112	0		
Open spaces & community facilities		7,813	6,789	6,300	13,036	6,736
	Audit	75	75	420		
	ICO Annual Fee	0	0	40		
	Insurance	4,581	4,581	4,000		
	Payroll	135	135	230		
	Travel - mileage	0	0	0		
	Hall hire	152	152	220		
	Banking charges	79	79	96		
	Information Technology	120	100	400		
	Stationery	0	0	150		
	Membership/Affiliations	882	882	1,031		
	Training	0	0	500		
	Admin - other	0	0	100		
	Admin	6,025	6,005	7,187	7,768	581
	Newsletter	833	833	1,931		
	Youth Club	6,250	6,250	6,250		
	Community Events	4,160	3,921	5,000		
	Other	11,242	11,004	13,181	12,181	-1,000
	GDCH Tea & Talk	525	525	750		
	Junior Park Run	1,200	1,200	1,000		
	Grants	1,725	1,725	1,750	1,750	0
Sub total		36,332	35,050	43,915	50,232	6,317
	Gateway sign install	266	266	0		
	Pedestrian barrier	4,502	4,502	0		
	Outside budget	4,768	4,768	0		
Total Outgoings		41,100	39,818	43,915	50,232	6,317

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**CIL Tracker**

Date	Description	Received	Spending	Balance
31/10/2019	Receipt of CIL monies from BBC ref Planning application 17/02446/MAF	£ 79,383		
04/02/2020	DJT Surfacing - INV 55534. Part payment towards pathway.		£ 10,408	
31/03/2020	Balance remaining			£ 68,975
				
31/03/2021	Balance remaining			£ 68,975
05/10/2021	Purchase of 2 noticeboards and installation costs		£ 3,121	
05/10/2021	Installation of noticeboard at Retail Centre		£ 420	
02/11/2021	Xmas lights for Tree		£ 741	
14/11/2021	Purchase of defibrillator, cabinet and post for Carnoustie Drive		£ 2,435	
12/01/2022	Purchase of 2 benches for Country Park		£ 1,209	
14/01/2022	Installation of 2 benches in Country Park (DJT)		£ 866	
	Installation of defibrillator post		£ 113	
25/03/2022	Purchase of defibrillator and cabinet for Sports Pavilion		£ 1,740	
31/03/2022	Balance remaining			£ 58,330
				
31/03/2023	Balance remaining			£ 58,330
07/06/2023	Installation of Pedestrian Crossing, Anglia Way - BBC		£ 40,000	
12/07/2023	2 benches for Country Park - Glasdon UK Ltd		£ 1,631	
16/08/2023	Bench install		£ 867	
15/12/2023	Gateway sign		£ 825	
17/06/2024	Village Hall - Replace heating pumps/thermostats		£ 972	
03/10/2024	Pedestrian barrier		£ 4,502	
22/08/2024	Community defib - pads		£ 58	
27/08/2024	Community defib - pads		£ 64	
31/10/2024	Christmas lights		£ 3,997	
	Current balance			£ 5,415
	Deadline to spend			29/10/2024

GDPC - Balances - November 2024

	£
HSBC Current	27,220
HSBC Savings	0
Redwood Savings	86,187
Unity Trust Current	27,648
Unity Trust Savings	40,549
Total funds held	181,604

Allocation of Balance Sheet

CCTV Extension (Play areas)	9,241	
Christmas lights (inc Retail centre)	0	
Entry Feature King Alfred Way	4,450	
Traffic, road safety and parking		
- No verge/pavement parking		
- Double yellow lines		
- Pedestrian crossing points	30,025	
- 20mph speed limit signs		
- CPZ outside Community Hall		
GD Community Hall landlord responsibilities	10,872	
Defibrillator supplies	1,140	
Election costs	1,960	
Great Denham Youth Club	6,500	
GD History Memorial (School Project)	8,000	
Upgrade to paths in Country Park	30,000	
VAT refund due	1,282	
General reserve	78,134	Balancing figure
Total allocation	181,604	

Monthly Borough Cllr Report November GDPC

- **Property being used as a children's home in Great Denham**

As this report will be available online, I will not refer to the location by address. The issue is that a property in GD has been turned into a C2 care use and therefore requires planning permission to change from an ordinary C3a dwellinghouse. The council has issued a Planning Consent Notice to determine what and how the property has been changed. The owner has challenged that and disagrees and considers it to be a C3b use therefore not requiring planning permission. The council has also made the same determination on another property in the Borough which has now gone to appeal. Planning enforcement is waiting for the outcome of that appeal to inform how they should respond to the GD situation.

- **Devolution Deal (SMA)**

Most will be aware that the 6 local authorities (BBC, CBC, MK, Luton, North Northants, and West Northants) have formed a group – formerly Central Area Growth Board – now styled as South Midlands Authorities (SMA). I attend this Board on behalf of BBC and last week at the Local Government Association conference the Deputy Prime Minister outlined the Government plans to roll out the devolution process under combined authorities and an elected mayoral system. How this takes shape will be known fairly soon as the aspiration is to have something to discuss and consult on by May next year – if not already in place.

- **Budget Implications**

With the budget announcement last week, we are not yet aware of the financial settlement that will be awarded to Local Authorities. There are huge pressures in most authorities on Adult Services and Temporary Accommodation (TA) in most authorities and BBC is no different. When I was last updated, we had approximately 850 families and individuals in TA with an overspend of £3m+ and we are hopeful that the Government will do something to address this rising problem to support us and other councils in the same predicament.

- **Cleat Hill**

There is an ongoing response and recovery proceeding in the area, a 100-meter cordon remains in place for the time being to allow investigations take place.

The Council is currently offering residents affected by the incident access to a quiet working space at Borough Hall, including free parking and Wi-Fi. The Council is working closely with relevant organisations to monitor and manage the situation.

Over recent days the authorities have been escorting residents to their own homes, enabling them to safely collect personal belongings and essential items.

- **East West Rail (EWR) update**

In the autumn budget (30th October 2024) the chancellor confirmed the Governments commitment to the East West Rail (EWR) project signalling there route will include plans for a partial electrification of the route with hybrid battery electric trains. In response to the budget announcement EWR Co has announced that there will be a 10-week non-statutory public consultation that will begin on the 14th November 2024.

Dates and venues in and around Bedford Borough include:

- 30 November (12pm-5pm) – The Grand Hall, The Sixth Form, Bromham Road, Bedford
 - 6 December (2pm-7pm) – Lidlington Village Hall, High Street, Lidlington
 - 9 December (2pm-7pm) – Bedford Swan Hotel and Thermal Spa, The Embankment, Bedford
 - 11 December (2pm-7pm) – Wilden Village Hall, High Street, Wilden
 - 13 December (2pm-7pm) – Stuart Memorial Hall, Church Street, Tempsford
 - 7 January (2pm-7pm) – St Neots Town Football Club, Kester Way, St Neots
 - 17 January (2pm-7pm) – The Summerlin Centre, Woburn Sands Station Road, Woburn Sands
-
- **Emergency Accommodation Units at Charis House**

To address the urgent need for emergency accommodation, the Council put together an £18 million capital programme to expand its emergency housing stock to ensure support is always available for residents who need it.

On the 21st October 2024, the Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services officially opened 8 new emergency housing units at Charis House on Ashburnham Road. The units feature their own Kitchen, lounge area and bedroom space.

- **GP Update**

Many areas in Bedford Borough lacked critical access to a GP.

In order to address this issue, in 2023, the Council created the Strategic Health Estates Borad that would focus on the delivery of key GPs in areas such as Kempston, Great Barford and Wootton.

In 2024, the Council agreed to include £9 million of investment into the budget to help deliver plans that will see these GPs built.

Updates as follows:

Great Barford – The initial feasibility study has been completed which will see the GP practice moved to a new, purpose-built location on Silver Street. The Council is now working with experts to review the designs to ensure maximum efficiency.

Kempston – The Halsey Road Police Station has been identified as a potential site for Kempston’s multi-speciality community care centre (MCCC) that will consolidate the three

existing GP practices under one roof. The Council has put an extra £2 million in the budget to support the potential purchase of the site.

Wixams – The Council is working with the ICB and Central Bedfordshire Council to get this surgery built as soon as possible. There is confidence a solution will soon be found to move this project forward.

Wootton – A high level feasibility study has been created to look at all options for moving this project forward.

- **Town Update**

The Council has made the decision to purchase the former Lloyds building to aid the Mayes Yard regeneration project.

The Mayes Yard project aims to turn this area into a vibrant, mixed-use space that combines residential, retail, hospitality, and cultural elements. Additionally, the purchase of Lloyds specifically facilitates the provision of a public square and can potentially provide other benefits such as increasing seating capacity for the Corn Exchange or potentially redeveloping the nearby library.

Previously the wider area was home to a number of anchor stores (Debenhams, Beals, M&S, Next) which vacated in the last few years, turning what was a prime shopping pitch into an area of large, unused empty shops that negatively impacted shopping and footfall.

The Council conducted an independent valuation of the property before purchase to ensure a fair price was paid – Council officers had negotiated the price down from its original asking price.

- **Council Invests in School Improvement**

To address the previous decade or more of low educational attainment in our schools the Council agreed to bolster the School Improvement Team from 2024/2025 onwards with a significant £200,000 of investment every year.

The boost will aim to increase standards in early years from KS1 to KS5 and SATS.

- **Bedford Borough's SEND provision and Key Stage 2**

A new report has highlighted, despite increasing demand and financial pressures, many positives in the Council's provision for students who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

For example, Bedford Borough Council manages 2,080 EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans), there has been a 46% increase EHCPs over the past 4 years. Yet the Council finalised 90% of EHCP's within the 20-week timescale, significantly outperforming both regional and national averages.

Bedford Borough's Key Stage 2 (KS2) performance has historically been below the national average, with the borough being among the bottom five performing Local Authorities (LAs) for a decade.

To combat this the Education Improvement Governance Group (EIGG) was established in Autumn 2022 to address low attainment, with focus on reading, writing, and maths. The Council also produced a new long-term education strategy aimed at continuing improvements across all key stages over the next decade.

These have led to recent improvements which have moved Bedford out of the bottom five, ranking 135th out of 152.

- **Damp and Mold partnership**

The Council is the lead partner in an innovative Health and Housing Partnership for 2024-2025 – collaborating with housing providers Grand Union, Peabody, and recently joined partner, BPHA Ltd.

This is a 3 year programme that is designed to establish housing as a fundamental component of health, focusing on critical issues like the impact of damp and mould. Key actions would include supporting housing association tenants with respiratory conditions who may be living with a cold or damp home. There is also an action called Project 'ADaM' (Asthma, damp and mould) looking at how we can join up data and insights to support improvements in housing association processes to tackle damp and mould and support vulnerable residents.

- **Christmas Light Switch On**

The light switch on will be taking place on Saturday, 23rd November in Bedford Town Centre. There will be many activities starting from 12pm noon onwards, the Light Switch on is at approximately 5:45pm with live performances, crazy golf, a craft fare and a Christmas photo booth and more running all day.

There are more festive activities happening in the Town Centre though-out the weekends in December, please keep an eye for more information. Lastly, there are 4 hours free parking in Lurke and Allhallows multi-story car parks every day.

We hope to see you there.