

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Annual Meeting of Great Denham Parish Council Meeting held on **Tuesday, 5th May 2026** commencing at 7:30pm at the Great Denham Community Hall.

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Jon Hannah (Chair), Chris Staite, Oliver Payne, Adam Firth, Joanna Szaub-Newton, Vivek Davda, Jim Weir (also Borough councillor), Robbin Brough (Parish Council Clerk).

1 Election of Chairman

To elect the Chairman for the coming year. Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Resolved to elect Jon Hannah as Chair for the coming year and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed. (Proposer: Cllr Payne. Seconder: Cllr Szaub-Newton).

2 Election of Vice Chairman

To elect the Vice Chairman for the coming year. Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved to elect Oliver Payne as Vice Chair for the coming year. (Proposer: Cllr Payne. Seconder: Cllr Firth).

3 Public Open Session

No members of the public were in attendance.

4 Apologies for Absence: Cllr Janice Moran (unwell), Anna O'Meara (away).

5 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda: None

6 Correspondence received since the last meeting (requiring council attention)

A resident emailed to inform the council that a wildflower area near the park and ride had been mowed. BBC have been informed of the error. *BBC have responded with an apology and will endeavor to ensure the error does not happen again. They are looking at putting up signage to remind contractors to leave the wildflower area uncut.*

7 To confirm the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 6th April 2026

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning meeting held on 25th March 2026

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

9 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning meeting held on 20th April 2026

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

10 Clerk's report on actions not covered by agenda items

- To chase On Site Support for reimbursement of payment incurred for crane delivery. **Ongoing.**
- To complete community newsletter. **Nearly Complete.**
- To update notices on noticeboards. **Complete.**
- To arrange an extraordinary planning meeting. **Complete.**

11 Finance

- *To approve payments and note income and balances.*
Resolved to approve payments as shown in the appendix.
- *To note the Spend versus Budget variance report.*
Report received and noted. See appendix.

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

- *To note the fourth quarter financial checks.*

There were no issues highlighted, and the check was signed off by Cllr O'Meara.

12 Meeting dates for 2026/27

To agree meeting dates and locations for the coming year.

Resolved to hold full council meetings on the first Monday of each month except in April and May when they will be held on the first Tuesday of the month. There will be no council meeting in the month of August.

13 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.

APPLICATION NO: 26/00596/OUT Outline Application

PROPOSAL: Outline application for the demolition of an existing building and erection of up to five residential dwellings with all matters reserved except Access.

LOCATION: The Bedford Golf Clubhouse 10 Carnoustie Drive Great Denham Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 4FF

The parish council considered planning application 26/00596/OUT and **resolved to object** to the proposal. Councillors raised concerns regarding the loss of infrastructure associated with the former golf course, the impact on the long-term potential for sport and recreation use of the wider site, and the piecemeal erosion of land forming part of the Urban Gap between Great Denham and Biddenham.

14 Borough Councillors Report

Update from Borough Councillor Jim Weir.

See parish council website for full report.

15 Great Denham Summer Fete

To receive an update from the working group for the Great Denham Summer Fete.

The working group provided an update on arrangements for the Great Denham Summer Fete. A number of the key elements of the event have now been booked, with enquiries continuing regarding possible live musical entertainment. Councillors were advised that the reduced budget allocated for this year's event has nearly been fully committed and that a request for additional funding would likely be brought forward to the June meeting.

16 Renewal of Asset of Community Value

To review the draft application to renew the former Bedford Golf Course land as an Asset of Community Value.

Councillors reviewed the draft application to renew the former Bedford Golf Course land as an Asset of Community Value and felt the application was ready for submission, subject to a small number of minor additions.

Resolved that the Clerk make the agreed amendments and submit the application to Bedford Borough Council for consideration.

17 Great Denham Youth Group

To consider entering a new three-year contract for weekly youth club provision and continuing an annual financial contribution.

Councillors received an update regarding the procurement process for the new three-year youth provision contract and were advised that the process was likely to take some time, with the service only recently having gone out to tender. The parish council noted the strong attendance levels at the weekly youth sessions and considered a request from 4YP for financial assistance towards an additional youth worker to help safely facilitate the number of young people attending.

Resolved to provide a grant to fund the additional youth worker for the remaining sessions prior to the summer holiday break.

18 Broadband Coverage in Great Denham

To consider a request from a resident for the parish council to engage with broadband providers regarding improvements to local coverage.

Councillors considered a request from a resident regarding broadband coverage within the village. The parish council noted that broadband provision had improved significantly following the installation of fibre infrastructure by BT Group.

Action - Clerk to contact the resident for further information regarding the specific location affected and suggest that they also raise the matter with their network provider to establish whether the issue may be isolated to that area.

19 Highways Matters

The clerk will provide an update to the council on any progress made relating to ongoing highways requests and projects.

No Highway Updates to report.

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

- To consider increasing the budget allowance for the Summer Fete.

Date of the next meeting: 1st June 2026, Great Denham Community Hall.

Great Denham Parish Council - Receipts & Payments - May 2026

						Bank reconciliation				
Account	Date	Category	Payee	Description	Type	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross	Cashbook Balance	Bank Balance
Unity Trust - Opening									7,871.67	7,871.67
	13 April 2026	Precept	BBC				22,587.50			
	27 April 2026	GDCH Repayment	GDCH				1,594.32			
	30 April 2026	Banking charges	Unity Trust	Service Charge				7.00		
	01 May 2026	Staff costs	Multiple					1,364.27		
	01 May 2026	Fete	Concept Event	INV-206924				2,082.00		
	01 May 2026	Admin - other	R Brough	Expenses: MS Subscription				84.99		
	01 May 2026	Christmas lights	BBC	Christmas Tree Decorating				1,430.40		
	01 May 2026	Right of Way resurfacing	BBC	Right of Way surfacing				1,444.81		
									25,639.82	25,639.82
Unity Trust - Savings										
	Opening								11,353.19	11,353.19
	No transactions									
	Closing								11,353.19	11,353.19
Redwood Savings										
	Opening								119,200.87	119,200.87
	30 April 2026	Bank Interest	Redwood				289.95			
	Closing								119,490.82	119,490.82
Hinckley & Rugby Savings										
	Opening								125,001.00	125,001.00
	No transactions									
	Closing								125,001.00	125,001.00
The Cambridge Building Society										
	Opening								120,998.69	120,998.69
	No transactions									
	Closing								120,998.69	120,998.69
							0.00	24,471.77	6,413.47	

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

May 2026

Income		YTD (Actual) Gross	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget 2026/27	Full year Estimate	Variance
	Precept	22,588	22,588	45,175	45,175	0
	VAT reclaim	0	0	0	0	0
	CIL Income	0	0	0	0	0
	Bank Interest	290	290	7,320	7,320	0
	GDCH Repayment	1,594	1,594			
	Other income	1,594	1,594	0	1,594	1,594
Total Income		24,472	24,472	52,495	54,089	1,594
Outgoings						
	Staff costs	1,364	1,364	17,038		
	Staff costs	1,364	1,364	17,038	17,038	0
	Christmas lights	1,430	1,430	4,000		
	GDCH expenditure	0	0	3,600		
	Community defib	0	0	200		
Open spaces & community facilities		1,430	1,430	7,800	7,800	0
	Audit	0	0	790		
	ICO Annual Fee	0	0	40		
	Insurance	0	0	5,000		
	Payroll	0	0	230		
	Hall hire	0	0	220		
	Banking charges	7	7	96		
	Information Technology	0	0	400		
	Stationery	0	0	150		
	Membership/Affiliations	0	0	1,150		
	Training	0	0	1,000		
	Admin - other	85	85	100		
Admin		92	92	9,176	9,176	0
	Newsletter	0	0	1,931		
	Youth Club	0	0	6,250		
	Carol Concert	0	0	300		
	Fete	2,082	1,735	6,000		
	Right of Way resurfacing	1,445	1,445	0		
Other		2,082	1,735	14,481	15,926	-1,445
	GDCH Tea & Talk	0	0			
	TBD	0	0			
Grants		0	0	4,000	4,000	0
Outgoings		4,969	4,622	52,495	53,940	-1,445

GDPC - Balances - May 2026

	£
Redwood Savings 2.96% - 35 day notice	119,491
Unity Trust Current 0%	25,640
Unity Trust Savings 2.25%	11,353
Hinckley & Rugby Savings 2.1%	125,001
The Cambridge Building Society 1.55%	120,999
Total funds held	402,484

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Double yellow lines	10,000	
Pedestrian barrier	4,500	
Give way markings	6,000	
GD Community Hall landlord responsibilities	11,000	
GD Community Hall - Upgrades	7,000	
Defibrillator supplies	1,140	
Election costs	2,000	
New Playground Equipment	30,000	
Great Denham Youth Club	6,500	
GD History Memorial (School Project)	8,000	
Upgrade to paths in Country Park	150,000	
Open Space Maintenance	90,000	
Hanging baskets		
Interpretation boards	3,300	
VAT refund due	3,591	
General reserve	69,452	Balancing figure
Total allocation	402,484	

Borough Cllr Report 5th May 2026

Potential Destruction of our Local Green Space

- Everyone will be aware of the planning applications that have been lodged with the planning department at Borough Hall. If these somehow get past Planning and are allowed to proceed, we can all say goodbye to the 176 acres of green space, which will eventually be fully developed for housing. The protection of the land currently is because it only has a sporting designation, and should either of the two applications 26/00428/COU and 26/00596/OUT be approved, the change of use will open the land up for massive housing development. Despite the Great Denham and Biddenham PCs' past engagement with the agents for the landowner, we have not been able to get them to discuss options for the land.
- An important change to the planning system is coming into effect from 11th May 2026 under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2026 that affects planning applications for 150 or more homes.
- Under the Government's new direction, where a local planning authority is **minded to refuse** an application of this size, it must first refer the application to the Secretary of State before a decision can be issued.
- In short, this means:
 - Applications for 150+ homes would require Government sign-off before refusal, giving Whitehall greater ability to overturn refusals.
 - Councils cannot issue a refusal until at least 21 days after notifying the Government, introducing delays and an additional layer of national oversight.
- This will restrict councillors' ability to scrutinise planning applications and create a system where decisions are increasingly controlled nationally.
- While the Council will continue to assess applications against planning policy and local considerations, this change means that some decisions, particularly refusals, will now be subject to further review beyond the local authority.
- The original design and planning that was consented was based on the provision of the land for a golf course. Without that, Great Denham's 2000 households would not have received permission. Whilst the closure of the course broke a number of local and national policy rules, the landowner went ahead anyway. I would urge all member of the community and the Biddenham community to make their concerns known at every level and to every outlet available and emphasise that we cannot lose our green space.

East West Rail (EWR) Update

- EWR has launched its final route-wide public consultation, running from 14th April to 9th June 2026. This is an important opportunity for communities to review the latest plans and provide feedback before final proposals are submitted to the Government in 2027.
- They are holding a series of public events, webinars, and an online consultation portal where residents can view plans and provide feedback. A local event will take place in Bedford on 23 May at King's House, Ampthill Road.
- What is being proposed:
 - A rebuilt Bedford station, including new platforms, improved access, a western entrance, and a public plaza
 - A new station at Bedford St. John's, relocated closer to Bedford Hospital

- Changes to infrastructure to reduce disruption, including potential avoidance of major bridge works
- A relocated multi-storey car park to the west of Bedford station (Ford End Road)
- Upgrades to the Marston Vale Line, including fewer, larger stations and improved services
- A new station at Tempsford, planned earlier than previously expected
- Up to four trains per hour, with a potential fifth service at peak times
- Longer trains to meet future demand
- Use of hybrid electric/battery trains to support environmental goals
- While EWR is presenting updated designs and revised construction plans, the core issues remain unchanged, and the local Conservative Group collectively remains opposed to the northern route in its current form due to a lack of a credible business case and scale of construction disruption over many years.
- Further information can be found here: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/east-west-rail-announces-details-of-final-consultation>.

Highways Funding and Performance Update

- Bedford Borough Council has formally contacted the Department for Transport to request a correction to its current highway maintenance rating.
- The unverified data in the Department's Local Highway Maintenance self-assessment did not fully reflect the Council's level of investment. Updated and verified figures were provided promptly in early January 2026.
- The corrected data shows that a total of £9.528 million has been invested in highway maintenance. Based on the Department for Transport's own methodology, this level of investment would be expected to result in a significantly higher score than is currently recorded.
- The Council is therefore seeking an update to ensure the published rating accurately reflects the level of investment being made locally to avoid the spread of misinformation.

Food waste collections

- Bedford Borough's new weekly food waste collection service began at the end of March, supported by seven new purpose-built vehicles.
- Council teams have also been out in Bedford and Kempston speaking directly with residents, answering questions, and helping people understand how the new collections work.
- As with any new service, there were a few minor teething issues at the start, where missed collections have been reported, crews have been working to get back out and collect them as quickly as possible.
- Collected food waste can also be put to good use, helping to generate renewable energy and fertiliser.

Oasis Site (David Lloyd) – Public Consultation Update

- Positive progress is being made on plans for a new David Lloyd leisure facility at the former Oasis site in Bedford.
- The proposals would help keep the site in leisure use and support the delivery of modern health, fitness, and racquets facilities for residents.
- A public consultation is now open, giving residents the chance to view the plans and share their feedback.

- Online consultation:
 - Open until Friday 15 May 2026
 - <https://consultwithyou.co.uk/davidlloyd/bedford>
- Public drop-in exhibitions:
 - King's House, 245 Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ
 - Friday 8 May, 3 pm–7 pm
 - Saturday 9 May, 10 am–1 pm

Bedford Athletics Stadium

- This month, the Council has celebrated the official opening of the new track at Bedford Athletics Stadium - an exciting milestone for sport, health, and community life across the borough.
- The new track is already being put to good use with young athletes; however, this investment represents more than an improvement for local clubs, schools, residents, and future sporting stars.
- It is also about encouraging participation, supporting wellbeing, and giving people the facilities they need to train, compete, and achieve their ambitions.

Housing Update

- Bedford Borough Council has secured £5.9 million of government funding to help provide more council-owned temporary accommodation over the next four years.
- This funding will support the purchase and development of homes for residents and families who need housing assistance.
- Demand for temporary accommodation remains high, with 912 households currently in temporary accommodation across the borough. By increasing the number of council-owned homes available, the Council can reduce reliance on more expensive nightly-paid accommodation and provide more stable, suitable housing.
- Overall, this is a positive step that will help improve temporary accommodation for residents while also reducing longer-term pressure on housing budgets.

Town Centre Update

- Part of the former Beales unit, which has been vacant, is set to come back in use as it becomes the home of a new dance and performing arts facility, helping to bring fresh energy and activity into the town centre.
- This will make better use of an empty unit, improve the look and feel of the area, and support wider use of nearby spaces such as the Corn Exchange during quieter times.

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Update

- Bedford Borough Council has secured £65,000 of external funding to support additional work tackling anti-social behaviour during 2026/27.
- This funding will provide extra uniformed ASB Officers to patrol areas where there is the greatest need, helping to increase visibility and provide reassurance for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- The officers will work alongside Bedfordshire Police and existing Council teams to help address persistent issues, offer advice and signposting, identify environmental concerns, and support vulnerable people who may need help from other services.

- The Town Centre Task Force has also now been formally launched following a successful trial, delivered in partnership with Bedfordshire Police. This will provide a stronger visible presence in the town centre and support efforts to make public spaces safer and more welcoming.

Support for Unpaid Carers

- Bedford Borough Council is working with two new partners, Mobilise and Blue-Sky Carers Support, to improve support for unpaid carers across the borough.
- Mobilise offers free digital support, including practical online resources, wellbeing information, benefits guidance, online group sessions, and one-to-one support calls with a carers coach.
- Blue Sky Carers Support provides face-to-face advice and guidance for adult carers, including support for those who may not be confident using digital services. It will also continue the Bedford Hospital Carers' Hub, offering help in a safe and confidential setting when loved ones are admitted to the hospital.
- Carers will also be able to access the Blue-Sky Social Care Card, which can help them identify themselves as a carer and access practical benefits from participating businesses.

Mockingbird Fostering Programme

- Bedford Borough Council has launched a new webpage highlighting its Mockingbird programme, which supports fostering families across the borough.
- Mockingbird brings foster carers together in small support networks, known as "constellations". Each group is supported by a specially trained hub home carer, who provides guidance, practical help, and peer support.
- This creates an extended family-style network, helping foster carers feel more connected and giving children and young people greater stability, consistency, and a stronger sense of belonging.
- Bedford Borough now has three Mockingbird constellations, supporting dozens of families.
- Anyone interested can visit: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/mockingbird>