

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Great Denham Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 7th April 2026 at Great Denham Community Hall.

MINUTES

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

- 1 **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Janis Moran (away), Cllr Davda (family commitment).
- 2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None
- 3 **Public Open Session** – Three residents were in attendance
A representative from Community Hall Trustees attended the meeting to discuss the possibility of the Community Hall Trustees working with the parish council to host the annual Great Denham Summer Fete at the Country Park and the Christmas Event at the Community Hall. Room hire for parish council meetings and grant applications from the hall trustees was also discussed.
- 4 **Correspondence received since the last meeting (requiring council attention)**
No correspondence received which is not covered in agenda items.
- 5 **To confirm the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2nd March 2026**
Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record.
- 6 **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 book bouncy castle and first aid for the Summer Fete. **Complete.**
 - To arrange an extraordinary planning meeting. **Complete.**
- 7 **Finance**
 - To approve payments and note income and balances.
Resolved to approve payments and note the balances – see appendix.
 - To note the Spend versus Budget variance report.
Report received and noted. See appendix.
- 8 **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: 26/00428/COU Change of Use Application
PROPOSAL: The change of use of the former greenkeepers maintenance building and storage compound (Use Class F2(c)) to Use Class E(g)
LOCATION: Greenkeepers Lodge Greenkeepers Road Great Denham Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 4GJ
Resolved to object to the application for the change of use of the Greenkeepers Lodge. The parish council's objection letter is attached as an appendix.
- 9 **Borough Councillors Report**
Update from Borough Councillor Jim Weir.
See parish council website for full report.
- 10 **Grant Request Friends of Great Denham**
To consider a grant request from Friends of Great Denham for funding to support the Denfest summer event.
Resolved not to provide funding at this time, noting that the Friends of Great Denham can meet the event costs and that the parish council has recently funded a separate school-related project

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

11 **Grant request from 4YP.**

To consider a grant request from 4YP whom facilitate the weekly youth club at the Community Hall. They are requesting funding to employ a further group leader for the weekly session in Great Denham.

Resolved not to provide funding at this time and to advise that any changes to provision should be pursued through Bedford Borough Council as the contract manager.

12 **Great Denham Summer Fete**

Update from Summer Fete Working Group. Council to discuss whether a bar will be onsite for the event.

Resolved that a bar be provided at the Summer Fete, following consideration of the Working Group's update.

13 **Hanging Baskets**

To consider proposed lamp post and railing floral display project including the structural testing required for each lamp column.

The item was not considered as the quotation for the structural testing of the lamp columns had not been received in time. The matter will be brought forward to a future meeting.

14 **Mercia Road Junctions**

To consider the impact on these junctions once Mercia Road fully reopens.

The impact on the junctions once Mercia Road fully reopens was considered.

Action: Cllr Weir to request that Highways assess the junctions at Mercia Road and present options to the council.

15 **Pavillion Carpark Storage Unit**

To consider whether the new storage unit should be wrapped in a material in order to make it blend in more with the environment.

Resolved to leave the unit unwrapped, as the council considered that wrapping would draw more attention and detract from its appearance.

16 **Community Litter Pick**

To consider whether the Parish Council would like to organise a Community Litter Pick Event.

Resolved to organise a community litter pick event at 9:30am on Sunday 17 April.

17 **Highways Matters**

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

- Highways advised that double yellow lines were not installed in the Lavender Lane turning head as the road remains unadopted.

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

- Human Resources Committee to complete the Clerk's annual appraisal.

Date of the next meeting: 5th May 2026, Great Denham Community Hall.

Great Denham Parish Council - Receipts & Payments - Apr 2026

Bank reconciliation

Account	Date	Category	Payee	Description	Type	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross	Cashbook Balance	Bank Balance
Unity Trust - Opening									15,279.62	15,279.62
	09 March 2026	School Signs	Cestrian Signs	131105				623.19		
	16 March 2026	Transfer	Transfer from 20508951			97,000.00				
	18 March 2026	Highways improvements	BBC	Highways: Crossing, 20mph, Double Yellows				96,478.33		
	18 March 2026	Fete	BBC	Expenses Clerk - TENS licence				21.00		
	18 March 2026	Skylark Signs	Joanna Szaub-Newton	Skylark Poster Pole				46.99		
	31 March 2026	GDCH Tea & Talk	GDCH	235				84.00		
	31 March 2026	Staff costs	Multiple					1,447.87		
	31 March 2026	Skylark Signs	Metrosigns	MS/22493				217.20		
	31 March 2026	GDCH expenditure	Gartec	GDCH Lift				3,826.37		
	31 March 2026	Fete	Bradley Gumble					900.00		
	31 March 2026	Audit	Mazars					756.00		
	31 March 2026	Banking charges	Unity Trust	Service Charge				7.00		
									7,871.67	7,871.67
Unity Trust - Savings										
	Opening								107,829.01	107,829.01
	16 March 2026	Transfer	GDPC (Unity Current)	Transfer to 20508948		- 97,000.00				
	31 March 2026	Bank Interest	Unity Trust	Credit Interest			524.18			
	Closing								11,353.19	11,353.19
Redwood Savings										
	Opening								118,883.92	118,883.92
	31 March 2026	Bank Interest	Redwood				316.95			
	Closing								119,200.87	119,200.87
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	841.13	104,407.95		

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Mar 2026

Income	YTD (Actual) Gross	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget 2025/26	Full year Estimate	Variance
Precept	41,901	41,901	41,901	41,901	-0
VAT reclaim	0	0	0	0	0
CIL Income	164,068	164,068	0	164,068	164,068
Bank Interest	9,065	9,065	4,889	9,065	4,176
Other income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	215,034	215,034	46,790	215,034	168,243
Outgoings					
Staff costs	17,511	17,511	16,055		
Staff costs	17,511	17,511	16,541	17,511	-970
Christmas lights	6,631	6,631	2,500		
GDCH expenditure	9,592	7,994	3,600		
Community defib	157	131	200		
Open spaces & community facilities	16,381	14,756	6,300	14,756	-8,456
Audit	916	790	420		
ICO Annual Fee	47	47	40		
Insurance	4,884	4,884	4,581		
Payroll	270	270	230		
Hall hire	192	192	220		
Banking charges	73	73	96		
Information Technology	360	300	400		
Stationery	0	0	150		
Membership/Affiliations	1,116	1,116	1,031		
Training	35	35	500		
Admin - other	55	52	100		
Admin	7,948	7,758	7,768	7,758	10
Newsletter	743	743	1,931		
Carol Concert	147	147	0		
Youth Club	12,500	12,500	6,250		
Storage	3,783	3,153	0		
Skylark Signs	499	416	0		
Fete	6,870	6,516	5,000		
Other	24,541	23,474	13,181	23,474	-10,293
GDCH Tea & Talk	926	926			
Grant: Community Hall Trustees	1,640	1,640			
Grant Rainbows	500	500			
Grant Brownies	500	500			
Grant: Hope Across Ages	660	660			
GDCH XMAS Event Grant	2,530	2,530			
Junior Park Run	0	0			
Grants	6,756	6,756	3,000	6,756	-3,756
Outgoings	73,136	70,255	46,790	70,255	-23,464
Kingwood Way Trees	2,000	2,000	0		
Highways improvements	96,478	96,478	0		
School Signs	623	519	0		
Noticeboard	1,519	1,309	0		
Outside budget	100,621	100,307	0	100,307	-100,307
Total Outgoings	173,757	170,562	46,790	170,562	-123,771

GDPC - Balances - Apr 2026

	£
Redwood Savings 3.2% - 35 day notice	119,201
Unity Trust Current 0%	7,872
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	384,425

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	3,244	
General reserve	51,741	Balancing figure
Total allocation	384,425	

Monthly Report For GDPC March/April 2026

Planning Application 26/00428/COU Greenkeepers Compound

- The above application for a change of use for the greenkeepers' compound, which served the Great Denham Golf Course. The designation of this building, when planning permission was granted, included a condition that stated, ***“condition 7.” “The development hereby permitted shall only be used in connection with the use of the adjoining golf course.”*** The reason given for this condition was *“is to enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over future use of the building”*.
- Landowner continues to neglect the buildings and land and encourages anti-social behaviour. Gates to the compound wide open – again!



The Golf Needs Assessment (GNA), which the applicant commissioned, states that this golf course is surplus to requirements. With other local golf clubs having full memberships and waiting lists, this is clearly not surplus to requirements. Having 504 members and 30,000 rounds of golf played annually when closed, these are not the indicators of a surplus golf course. Of course, he who pays the piper calls the tune. You can read my response to the GNA in this link.

[OpenDocument.aspx](#)

At the time of writing this report, there were over 500 signatures on the online petition and over 100 signatures on a paper petition. Here is the link for the petition <https://c.org/krQDGfQRQn>. To date, over 46

written objections citing numerous policy reasons why this application should be refused have been submitted to Bedford Borough Planners. Closing date for submissions is 10th April, and any objections should be emailed to planning@bedford.gov.uk. The golf course was mandated in a Section 106 agreement to allow the building of all the houses now in Great Denham, and its closure was not part of that agreement.

Footpath 1



After many years of trying to improve the surface of Footpath 1, grant funding for “rights of way” has been utilised to cover all sections that cross the former golf course land. This will end the winter turmoil of muddy, slippery paths and aid those with mobility challenges. It will also aid easier passage for prams and children going to both GDPS and St James in Biddenham.

Highway Issues

- Quite rightly, a lot of residents have expressed their concerns about the junctions of Saxon Way, Danegeld Ave, the exit from the district centre, and Mercia Road when Mercia opens up again once the developer has determined it is safe to do so. I have asked our Highways team to work out a safe and sensible give-way process to ensure safety for traffic and pedestrians.

Funding for GP Surgeries Secured

- In a major step forward for residents across Bedford Borough, the Council has secured significant additional NHS funding for new, modern GP surgeries in Great Barford and Wixams.
 - For Wixams, up to £6.9 million has been approved, while Great Barford is set to receive £750,000. The funding assigned in the capital programme for Wixams has been reassigned to Bromham.
- This is a significant step forward, bringing both schemes closer to delivery while easing pressure on other local funding sources.
- The business cases will now be updated to reflect the new funding, creating real momentum behind these important GP projects, which will be vital to these growing communities.

Unsafe bridge demolished to make way for a new bridge

- Work to remove the unsafe Queens Footbridge is now underway, marking an important step towards providing a safe replacement crossing for residents.
- The bridge was urgently closed in August 2025 after inspections found significant structural defects, meaning it could no longer remain in use on public safety grounds.
 - Only £17,000 was spent on inspections, maintenance, repairs, and assessments between 2010/11 and 2023, contributing to the bridge deteriorating to this unsafe point.
- Demolition started on 16th March 2026 and is expected to take around eight weeks, with signed diversion routes and advance notice in place to help minimise disruption

Anti-social behaviour officers update

- The Council has secured a £65,000 grant from Bedfordshire Police to fund additional anti-social behaviour officers in 2026/27.
- These officers will be out on foot in the town centre, helping to deter anti-social behaviour, support targeted action with partners, and provide reassurance to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- The grant fully covers these roles, so this extra support comes at no additional cost to the Council's budget.
- This builds on the £96,000 in the Council's budget to fund two additional Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers who can go anywhere in the Borough where the need for patrols and early intervention is greatest.
- Greatest need is based on Police and Council data showing where problems are happening most frequently, so please keep reporting issues to the police and community safety team.

Flood Risk Management Update

- Flood resilience has continued to improve across Bedford Borough, with only one property affected by internal flooding during Storm Claudia, and with fewer road and bridge closures this past year.
- The Council has improved flood warning signs, made road closure updates quicker and clearer, and strengthened how teams work together during bad weather so communities can get information faster.

- Local community Flood Groups have increased to 11 groups across the Borough. They are supported by the Council with training, equipment, and an extra £10,000 of grant funding for additional flood kits.
- The Council has also continued to check planning applications carefully to help make sure new development manages water properly and does not increase flood risk.

New Domestic Abuse Strategy

- The Council has introduced a new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2026–2031 that sets out a clear five-year plan to strengthen the local response to domestic abuse.
- It aims to prevent abuse earlier, ensure victims and survivors can access the right help more quickly, improve partnership working across services, hold perpetrators to account, and support long-term recovery.
- The strategy is informed by local need, with survivor feedback at its heart, and places particular emphasis on recognising children and young people as victims in their own right.
- Overall, it provides a stronger and more joined-up framework to improve safety, support and outcomes for residents across the Borough.

Support for residents facing higher heating oil costs

- There will be an additional £121,109 boost to the Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund to help households struggling with rising heating oil costs.
- This extra funding is especially good news for rural communities, where many households rely on heating oil and can be hit hard by sudden price rises.
- The Council has identified 549 Bedford Borough residents who rely on oil for heating and hot water, and targeted letters will be issued to help make sure support reaches those most in need. Eligible households will receive a fixed payment of around £220.

Weekly food waste collections to begin on 30 March

- Bedford Borough Council is finishing delivery of more than 85,000 kitchen caddies and outdoor food waste bins ahead of the launch of weekly food waste collections on Monday, 30th March.
- Every household is expected to receive the bins they need by Friday, 27th March. Most flats will be given a kitchen caddy and will use a shared communal food waste bin or collection point.
- The new collection service will let residents recycle food waste, including cooked food, meat, fish, dairy, bones, and leftovers. This waste will then be turned into renewable energy and fertiliser.
- More information is available at bedford.gov.uk/foodwaste.

East Park Energy

- Local councillors have continued to raise local concerns during consultation hearings on the proposed East Park Energy Solar Farm (17th March 2026).
- Key issues include the impact of construction traffic on rural roads, day-to-day disruption for residents, and the combined effect of this scheme alongside other major projects such as Black Cat and East West Rail.
- Concerns have also been raised about the scale of the development and the amount of agricultural land affected.

- At the consultation hearing, councillors stressed the importance of ensuring local views are fully heard and that infrastructure impacts are properly addressed.

Household Support Fund changes

- Support for families during the school holidays is changing, as the previous Government-funded (Household Support Grant) food voucher scheme has now ended. Despite this, the Council still provides robust support for eligible children and families in Bedford Borough.
- Children who qualify can access the Council's Easter Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides free holiday activities and a free hot meal at every session.
- Families facing genuine hardship can also apply to the Council for support through Local Welfare Provision and Crisis Grants, which can help with essentials such as food, heating and items for children.

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

- Bedford Borough Council is looking for more local families to foster, helping some of our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, supportive home environment.
- If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@bedford.gov.uk

Highways Update

- During March, a range of work continued across Bedford Borough highways with the team carrying out a significant amount of maintenance work during March.
- Highways officers attended 514 streets for carriageway pothole repairs and 7 streets for footway pothole repairs, with a further 236 streets attended for other maintenance works. The team also completed 1,203 highway safety inspections, cleansed 57 gullies, and carried out 49 street lighting works.
- Engineering works during the month included 8,526 square metres of carriageway resurfacing and patching, 182 square metres of footway resurfacing, 54 gully replacements, 60 metres of drainage pipe replacement, and 215 metres of kerb, channel, and sett replacement.
- These are the kinds of routine but important works that help keep roads and pavements in a safe and usable condition.
- Alongside day-to-day maintenance, work also continued on longer-standing highways and development matters, including adoption-related work linked to sites such as Wixams, Stewartby, Freemans Common, Brickhill, and Land North of Bromham Road.