

GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Great Denham Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 2nd March 2026 at Great Denham Community Hall.

MINUTES

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

1 **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Vivek Davda

2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None

3 **Public Open Session**

No members of the public were present.

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

A representative of the Community Hall Trustees attended the meeting to discuss potential joint working with the parish council in relation to hosting the Great Denham Summer Fete at the Country Park and the Christmas event at the Community Hall. Room hire for parish council meetings and the process for grant applications from the Trustees were also discussed.

5 **To confirm the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 2nd February 2026**

Resolved to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

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

- To create the necessary policies linked to the Assertion 10 requirements. **Complete.**
- To arrange the toilet and bouncy castle hire for the Summer Fete. **Complete.**
- To take out event insurance for the Summer Fete. **Complete.**
- To purchase agreed no parking signage to donate to the primary school. **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.

No applications were received prior to the publication of the agenda.

9 **Borough Councillors Report**

Update from Borough Councillor Jim Weir.

See parish council website for full report.

10 **Staffing Committee – Membership**

To appoint a councillor to the Staffing Committee following the resignation of Cllr Quinn from Great Denham Parish Council.

Resolved to appoint Cllr Firth to the staffing committee.

11 **Open Space Management Agreement**

To consider the implications for parish residents arising from Bedford Borough Council's decision on the Open Space Management Charge and determine the parish council's response.

Resolved to note the most recent decision of the borough council in respect of the Open Space Management charge, and that no response is required from the parish council.

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

12 **Community Engagement Strategy**

Proposal from Cllr Firth – To consider the proposed Community Engagement Strategy circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting and determine whether to adopt or amend the strategy.

Resolved to adopt the strategy as a working document and place the item on a future agenda once Cllr Firth investigated further the different types of social media avenues and survey tools the council could consider using to communicate with residents.

13 **Great Denham Neighborhood Development Plan**

To agree the approach and next steps for reviewing the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Resolved to adopt the Community Engagement Strategy as a working document and to place the item on a future agenda following further investigation by Cllr Firth into potential social media channels and survey tools to support engagement with residents.

14 **Hanging Baskets**

Proposal from Cllr Moran – To consider proposed lamp post and railing floral display project. Project outline and estimated costs circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting.

Resolved to defer consideration of the proposed lamp post and railing floral display project pending receipt of costs for structural inspections of the lamp columns, and to place the item on a future agenda.

15 **Muirfield**

To consider resident concerns regarding parking at school drop-off and pick-up times on Muirfield.

Resolved: To note the concerns raised regarding parking at school drop-off and pick-up times on Muirfield; to advise residents to contact the police where parking is obstructive or unsafe; and to write to residents of Muirfield, Mentmore Close and Lytham Place to outline potential options and seek their views, noting previous objections to double yellow lines and the associated consultation costs.

16 **Ethelred Lane Play Area**

Proposal by Cllr Payne – To consider the proposed purchase of additional play equipment for the green space located near Ethelred Lane and agree next steps.

Resolved to defer consideration of the proposed purchase of additional play equipment for the green space near Ethelred Lane and to explore alternative locations, including existing playgrounds where equipment is becoming run down.

Action: The Clerk to contact the borough council regarding the potentially adding to or replacing the existing play equipment in the Saxon Way play area.

17 **Annual Risk Assessment Review**

To review the parish councils risk analysis document and agree to any amendments.

Resolved to approve the 2026 Risk Assessment document.

18 **Great Denham Parish Council Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy**

To review and consider the adoption of the proposed BYOD Policy. Policy circulated to councillors in advance of meeting.

Resolved to adopt the Bring Your Own Device Policy.

19 **Great Denham Parish Council Guide to Information & Publication Scheme**

To review and consider the adoption of the proposed Guide to Information & Publication Scheme. Scheme circulated to councillors in advance of meeting.

Resolved to adopt the Guide to Information & Publication Scheme.

20 **Great Denham Parish Council IT and Email Policy**

To review and consider the adoption of the proposed IT and Email Policy. Policy circulated to councillors in advance of meeting.

Resolved to adopt the IT and Email Policy.

21 **Highways Matters**

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

The new pedestrian crossing on Greenkeepers has now been installed. Double yellow lines at the junctions of the adopted roads have also been completed.

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

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

- Update from the Summer Fete Working Group and discussion on whether the council would like a bar at the event.
- Update from Cllr Szaub-Newton on the Skylark nesting signs for the Country Park.

Date of the next meeting: 7th April 2026, Great Denham Community Hall.

Great Denham Parish Council - Receipts & Payments - Mar 2026

Bank reconciliation

Account	Date	Category	Payee	Description	Type	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross	Cashbook Balance	Bank Balance
Unity Trust - Opening									86,318.54	86,318.54
	31 January 2026	Banking charges	Unity Trust	Service Charge				6.00		
	02 February 2026	Staff costs	Multiple					1,280.67		
	03 February 2026	Storage	OnSite SupportLtd	SQ-0129444				3,783.00		
	11 February 2026	Fete	Marquees with Prid	INV-258470				361.44		
	11 February 2026	Fete	Robbin Brough	FETE INSURANCE				271.80		
	11 February 2026	Fete	Local Toilet Hire	72943				468.00		
	12 February 2026	Transfer	The Cambridge Building Society	Cheque		- 35,000.00				
	28 February 2026	Banking charges	Unity Trust	Service Charge				6.00		
	02 March 2026	Insurance	James Hallam					60.00		
	02 March 2026	Hall hire	GDCH	126				24.00		
	02 March 2026	Community defib	CHT	GRE049				157.14		
	02 March 2026	Skylark posters	Metrosigns	MS/22497				235.20		
	02 March 2026	Training	BATPC	ADAM FIRTH				35.00		
	02 March 2026	Staff costs	Multiple					1,280.67		
	02 March 2026	GDCH Tea & Talk	GDCH	135				70.00		
	02 March 2026	Transfer	Redwood			- 28,000.00				
								15,279.62	15,279.62	
Unity Trust - Savings										
	Opening								107,829.01	107,829.01
		No transactions								
	Closing								107,829.01	107,829.01
Redwood Savings										
	Opening								90,398.49	90,398.49
	31 December 2025	Bank Interest	Redwood				262.70			
	31 December 2025	Bank Interest	Redwood				222.73			
	02 March 2026	Transfer	Redwood			28,000.00				
	Closing								118,883.92	118,883.92
Hinckley & Rugby Savings										
	Opening								125,001.00	125,001.00
		No transactions								
	Closing								125,001.00	125,001.00
The Cambridge Building Society										
	Opening								85,998.69	85,998.69
	12 February 2026	Transfer	The Cambridge Building Society	Cheque		35,000.00				
	Closing								120,998.69	120,998.69
						0.00	485.43	8,038.92		

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	8,224	8,224	4,889	8,224	3,335
Other income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	214,193	214,193	46,790	214,193	167,402
Outgoings					
Staff costs	16,063	16,063	16,055		
Staff costs	16,063	16,063	16,541	16,541	0
Christmas lights	6,631	6,631	2,500		
GDCH expenditure	5,766	4,805	3,600		
Community defib	157	131	200		
Open spaces & community facilities	12,554	11,567	6,300	11,567	-5,267
Audit	160	160	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	66	66	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	7,185	7,121	7,768	7,121	647
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 posters	235	196	0		
Fete	5,949	5,595	5,000		
Other	23,356	22,332	13,181	22,332	-9,151
GDCH Tea & Talk	842	842			
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	6,672	6,672	3,000	6,672	-3,672
Outgoings	65,830	63,756	46,790	64,234	-17,444
Kingwood Way Trees	2,000	2,000	0		
Noticeboard	1,519	1,309	0		
Outside budget	3,520	3,309	0	3,309	-3,309
Total Outgoings	69,349	67,065	46,790	67,543	-20,753

GDPC - Balances - Mar 2026

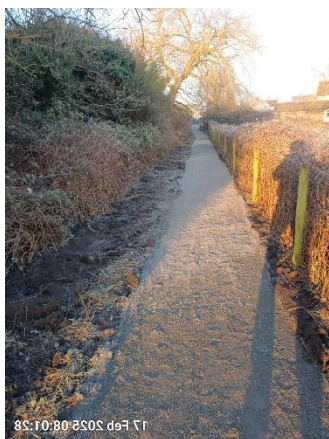
	£
Redwood Savings 3.2% - 35 day notice	118,884
Unity Trust Current 0%	15,280
Unity Trust Savings 2.25%	107,829
Hinckley & Rugby Savings 2.1%	125,001
The Cambridge Building Society 1.55%	120,999
Total funds held	487,992

Allocation of Balance Sheet

Double yellow lines	10,000	
Pedestrian barrier	4,500	
Bus Shelter	4,650	
Give way markings	6,000	
Pedestrian crossing points	90,000	
20mph speed limit signs	20,000	
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	
Bird Nesting signs for Country Park	1,000	
Open Space Maintenance	90,000	
Hanging baskets		
Interpretation boards	3,300	
VAT refund due	2,332	
General reserve	40,570	Balancing figure
Total allocation	487,992	

Monthly Report to GDPC Feb-Mar 2026

Resurfacing of Footpath One



Footpath one, where it crosses the golf course in two areas, is to receive a new surface. This busy pedestrian route provides access for Biddenham and GD children to both GDPS and St James Primary, as well as shopping in the district centre. The surface will be a porous hoggins, providing a more stable surface for push chairs and mobility aids. To surface the 3 sections is £39,915.15. The available funding is £38,470.34 via a government grant. This leaves a shortfall of £1444.81, which the Parish Council has agreed to fund.

The current proposal is that work would start sometime after the 16th of March 2026.

Open Space Management (OSM)

- At the final budget meeting held on the 25th of February, where the Council had to set a legal budget, a majority vote of acceptance was achieved. The vote was 16 for and 11 against, with the remainder of Cllrs abstaining. However, when the OSM item came up on the agenda as part of the budget setting measures, a greater majority was achieved. Whilst I appreciate that the Labour Group supported the continued removal of this charge, I know that they have many differences with the current administration, and I fully respect that. It is clear, though, that this charge on land owned by the Borough Council and paid nowhere else is an unfair charge on residents, and I am grateful that others saw this too.

Council passes 2026/27 Budget

- Bedford Borough Council has approved the Mayor's 2026/27 budget, delivered against a backdrop of surging costs in adult social care, children's services (currently a £14m overspend), and temporary accommodation (889 families and individuals), and a £1.1m cut in Government funding.
- That includes additional funding for Children's Services and Adult Services, continues investment in roads and resurfacing, ASB Officers, and confirms the Council will continue to maintain speed cameras in parish areas.
- Council Tax will rise by 4.99% (2.99% core + 2% Adult Social Care precept) to help meet unavoidable cost pressures, alongside ongoing efficiency work.

Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

- The Government has published its latest list of councils receiving Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) for 2026/27. Bedford Borough Council has been given in-principle support of £58.0 million for 2026/27, with £22.0m (support agreed in principle for 2025-26).
- EFS is a type of Government support that helps a council manage short-term financial pressures while it delivers longer-term savings and improvement plans.
- It means that the Council can use capital receipts (sale of assets) - which would normally only be used for capital spend - for revenue items.

New Finance and Improvement Executive Committee

- The Executive has set up a new Finance and Improvement Executive Committee to strengthen financial oversight and accountability, and to support delivery of the Council's improvement work.
- Meetings will be live-streamed, so residents can follow progress on the Council's improvement work and will include cross-party representation.

Best Value Inspection

- Bedford Borough Council will be undergoing a Best Value Inspection over the next three months. The Mayor and Executive have said they welcome the inspection and see it as a constructive form of scrutiny to help ensure residents get the best value services possible.
- The Council will cooperate fully with inspectors and treat this as an opportunity to strengthen performance, raise standards, and improve the reliability of services.

Garden waste collections restarting



Garden waste collections (green-lidded bins) will restart from Monday, 2nd March.

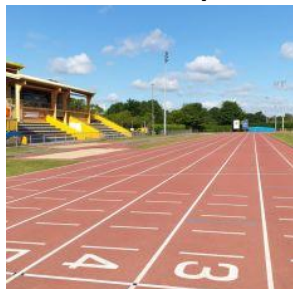
As a reminder, items that can go in the green bin include grass cuttings, leaves, plants, weeds, flowers, hedge clippings, and bark. Please do not put food waste, soil, rubble, or large branches.

More information on bin guidance and collection dates: www.bedford.gov.uk/BinsAndRecycling

Anti-Social Behaviour Officers

- The 2026/27 Budget includes £96,000 to fund two additional Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers in addition to the two ASB officers funded by Bedfordshire Police.
- Unlike the police-funded officers, who are focused on the town centre, the Council-funded officers can be deployed flexibly - to the town centre, Queens Park, Shortstown, or anywhere the need is greatest for patrols and early intervention.
- This builds on work since December, when ASB activity helped contribute to a reduction in violent and public order offences, making the town centre feel safer for residents, visitors, and local businesses.
- The Council will also continue joint work through the Town Centre Task Force, bringing together Council services and Bedfordshire Police to coordinate intelligence-led action and prevention.

International sport is back at Bedford International Athletics Stadium



Bedford International Athletics Stadium (BIAS) has recently undergone a £700,000 refurbishment to improve the quality of the facility.

The completed works include replacement of the running track and athletics surfaces, plus the purchase of maintenance and competition equipment, including repairs to the throwing cage.

- Following the improvements, on the 7th February, the stadium successfully hosted an international-level sporting event, showing that Bedford Borough is more than capable of attracting major competitions.

Universal development - growing local presence

- The Universal development is gathering momentum, with the organisation now taking space on the top floor of the Council building.
- This creates a stronger day-to-day presence in the Borough and should help speed up engagement with local partners and stakeholders.

Potholes and road maintenance (January 2026)

- The Council has delivered around 38,976 m² of carriageway resurfacing/patching and 5,113 m² of footway resurfacing, alongside other repairs and renewals.
- Teams attended 714 streets for carriageway pothole repairs (plus 13 streets for footway potholes) and carried out wider maintenance works on many additional streets.
- Routine gully cleansing continued with around 1,800 gullies cleansed, with extra drainage cleaning also completed as part of resurfacing schemes.

East Park Energy

- Bedford Borough Council is involved as the Host Authority, supporting the national Development Consent Order (DCO) process locally. Officers have advised that they are currently preparing a draft Local Impact Report (this is still in preparation and not yet a formal submission).
- A Preliminary Meeting and public hearings are scheduled for 17–18 March 2026.

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.
- The Council provides support for carers through Mockingbird, a group that gives foster families a stronger network, including respite, advice, and practical support.
- Bedford has now launched its third Mockingbird Constellation, building on the success of the first two, which currently support 19 families who also support one another.
- The programme was developed by The Fostering Network and has been introduced locally with Department for Education funding.
- Foster carers may also be eligible for help such as Council Tax support and subsidised access to leisure facilities, alongside the usual fostering support.
- 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
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