

Keeping You in the Loop

August 2020



Contents include
updates on:

Golf Course closure

Great Denham
Neighbourhood Plan

Developer Liaison

Community Garden

Streetwatch

CCTV

Village Medical Centre

Borough Councillor
Report

Got a great pic of
Great Denham?

Send us your pics and
each newsletter we'll
use one or more for
our front cover. Send
them to the Clerk:
clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Great Denham Parish Council News

The Bedford Golf Club set to close in October



The golf course is a well-loved green space in our community.

Most residents will by now be aware that the landowners (the Old Ford End Trust) have decided not to renew the lease with the current operators of the Club. As a result, it will be closing on 16th October 2020.

A small team of Borough Councillors Jim Weir (Kempston and Rural), Roger Rigby and Jon Gambold (Bromham and Biddenham), the chairs of Great Denham and Biddenham Parish Council, Great Denham's Clerk, and a local resident planning advisor, have researched planning policies, meeting regularly and working to see what can be done to save it. Jim has presented a petition to the Borough Council on behalf of residents to seek its support. In spite of numerous letters to the Trustees via their agent Bidwells from the group, residents, and our MP Richard Fuller, nothing has changed their minds.

So what happens now?

The loss of an operating Golf Club is undoubtedly a blow for anyone that use the Club and its facilities, whether for golf or social meetings. The fear is that this closure is the first step in a longer-term plan to develop the land. Although this has been denied by the landowners at this time, Great Denham and the Kingsfield development on the Bromham Road are both real examples of this landowner selling their land for significant development. Once fallow and used just for grazing there is a real possibility this could happen again.

It is imperative that we do what we can to protect this green space. Read more about the Parish Council plans for this and get involved – page 3.

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

Donna Parsons (Chair)

Vince Arthur

Chris Slinn

Highways/Parking

Chris Staite

CCTV/Safety and Security

Jo Ruskin

Community Events and Engagement

Lou Evans

Local Services

Helen Allen

Clerk: Anna O'Meara

Council Meetings

Are held on 1st Monday of the month at 7.30pm.
Currently held remotely
(until able to meet in person at Community Hall)

Keep up to date with our new website! Contact us on new email addresses!

The new Parish Council website: www.greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

You can subscribe to receive website updates as they happen.



Take part

The Great British Spring Clean was scheduled to take place in March/April this year but like so many things was postponed due to Covid-19. There is a new date: The Great British September Clean will be held between 11th and 27th September. We'll be holding a Covid-safe event starting from the Community Hall on **Sunday 27th September at 10am**. We'll provide pickers (suitably cleaned) and bags to collect the rubbish but please bring your own gloves.

Make a Difference



Join the Parish Council - Great Denham Parish Council has 2 councillor vacancies and is looking for people who want to be part of building and supporting a growing community. You will need to be over 18 and a resident of Great Denham, a UK/EU or Commonwealth citizen and on the electoral roll. Interested? Please contact the Parish Council Clerk:

clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Become a Trustee of the Hall - Great Denham Community Hall CIO is looking for people to become trustees of the hall, responsible for its management and oversight of the activities and events it runs. To find out more email gdclerk@hotmail.co.uk

The Golf Course and protecting the green space

The Landowners – The Old Ford End Trust – and their agents/advisors Bidwells took the decision to close the Great Denham Golf Course in 2018. They used the break clause in the existing 20-year lease with the current management team of the Club to offer a 2-year extension, the sole purpose of which was to wind up the club and close the membership. The Trustees, via their agents and PR company, have described the club as a “business that has failed”. They have stated that they can get a better return from the land by renting it for grazing and repurposing the buildings for commercial or nursery school/educational use, in spite of planning conditions attached to the buildings which make their change of use less likely. It therefore seems peculiar to expect a better income than can be raised from an existing business and going concern. Although this has been denied by Bidwells, it does seem that the most likely interpretation is that the long-term plan will be to build on the land after a suitable period of agricultural use.

The loss of the golf club will not just affect the 500 members and visiting golfers who play there, but also the community groups and residents who use the clubhouse for regular meetings. Last year’s Fireworks Event, hosted jointly by the Club and the Parish Council, will be another example of community activity whose future is now in doubt.

The Parish Councils of Great Denham and Biddenham have written jointly to the Trustees, via their agents, emphasising resident concerns over the closure and asking that dialogue and engagement take place with the local community; we await a response.

All details of the planning applications, correspondence with the landowners/agents and template letters are on our website:

<https://greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk/save-great-denham-golf-course-information-for-residents/>

This will be the second golf course closed by The Biddenham Estate and its trusts in the last 8 years!

What can we as a community do?

- Continue to lobby the landowners, Councillors and MPs for a review on the decision to close and ask them to keep the Golf Club operational.
- Fight all applications for change of use on the buildings – instructions have been issued to planning lawyers for advice on this.
- Consider longer-term strategies to strengthen protection of the land from future development – a **Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan**
- Get involved with the **Community Action Group** activities (see below)

Save the Golf Course Land Community Action Group

Following a recent call to arms, an action group of residents has been formed to campaign against the closure of the course and the protection of the green space and Urban Gap.

The group which held its first meeting on Thursday 20th August 2020, has formed a small committee and is writing up its constitution.

What will the group do?

- Support the work being done by the Borough Councillors and Parish Councils
- Organise any fundraising required and manage any funds raised to pay for activities undertaken
- Be the voice of residents and represent the depth and strength of feeling to the landowners and their agents

- Campaign to raise the profile of the issue in local media.
- Explore and commission planning and legal advice where necessary
- Anything else that can help and needs to be done

More than £4000 has already been raised via GoFundMe set up by residents to pay for planning legal advice on the planning conditions attached to the golf club buildings.

If you would like to get involved with the group email your details to the Clerk

(clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk) who will put you in touch with the committee.

Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) describes the area it serves and details the developments, improvements and changes that local residents, community and voluntary groups, and service providers, residents would like to see. Although primarily designed to provide housing provision, they can also document local policies about the design and future development of a community and its facilities, including how green space is used.

Although the size of the golf course land (c. 70 hectares) makes it too big to be identified as a green space, our NDP could reinforce the Borough's Local Plan policies for the Urban Space and Gap, to identify and document other green spaces and their importance to the community, and to specify how remaining housing development should look.

How do we do this?

Community involvement is critical, as is use of appropriate experts, such as ecologists and planning consultants. This means:

- Forming a Steering Group of residents

- Using consultations and surveys to identify the most important local issues and reach those whose voice is not normally heard
- Working out the practical steps to improve the issues identified.
- Getting professional help to make sure the local policies are written in the best way.

Great Denham was designated a Neighbourhood Area in 2015, the first step towards an NDP.

Next steps

- **Be part of the Steering Group – email clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk**
- **Fill in and return the survey included with this newsletter – you can complete online: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/98KF2HS>**
- **The Parish Council will apply for grant funding and source expert help.**

Survey included with this Newsletter

- What do you like about living here?
- What are the issues faced by residents that might be included in a NDP
- What facilities or services would you like to see in Great Denham?
- Are there any green areas to identify for policies to protect them, and why?

Either complete online via:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/98KF2HS>

or drop your completed survey off at the Community Hall.

Update on planning and developer meetings

The latest meeting was a virtual one (thanks Covid!) on 24th June. The Covid lockdown has affected DWH operations – construction site work was temporarily suspended and many of their staff were furloughed. This has resulted in timeframes moving back from what was previously communicated.

What's been done since February meeting

- The missing road signs on Anglia Way and King Alfred Way have been installed.
- The missing streetlights on Anglia Way have been installed – still waiting for power but have been told this is imminent.
- The 3 missing parking bays on King Alfred Way have been put in.
- The hoarding at the end of Danegeld Avenue was a major concern for road safety as it reduced the visibility for drivers exiting the Retail Centre and Danegeld – it was raised at the February meeting and started coming down the next day!

Progress on the development

The impact of the lockdown and suspension of work has pushed the expected completion of the housing behind Sainsburys back by about 3 months.

- The houses immediately behind Sainsburys should be completed by the end of August, and the green meeting space in front of these houses available from then as well.
- The houses that front the closed Footpath 1 are targeted for completion by December. It is hoped that the Footpath will be able to open

again once this has happened (after a closure of some 2 years).

- Road resurfacing, including the remedial work to the block paving outside The Eatery, will be done by December. Once the final surface has been laid on Anglia Way and King Alfred Way this area of development will be complete and can move into the pre-adoption phase.

Progress on adoption

Until the roads have been adopted all issues, including problems with streetlights, have to be dealt with by the developer. With the number of developers involved this often means delay in getting things fixed.

We are still waiting for the oldest part of “the new bit” – Greenkeepers Road – to be adopted. We chase this at every meeting, and we know how frustrating it is for those of you who have lived here for the last few years! Adoption of Greenkeepers Road is currently held up awaiting the Deed of Grant for drainage with Anglia Water – this is being chased and once sorted should mean the rest of the adoption can progress.

The other developers – Barratt, Linden Homes etc – can then get the adoption of their own parts of the development moving, e.g. Wayland Road/Cantley Road are Barratt's developments.

We are hopeful that the adoption of King Alfred Way/Anglia Way side of Great Denham will progress a bit quicker once the final road surface has been laid (see above).

Sadly there is nothing more to report on future development of the Kickabout land or the Pedestrian/Cycle bridge – these are standing agenda items for our meetings.

How to report stuff that needs fixing

Knowing who to report stuff to – the Council or Developer – is not always easy. Here are some of the contact numbers and emails you should use:

Bedford Borough Council (on-line forms):
<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/website-information/Pay-Report-Request/>

David Wilson Homes:
customer-service-southmidlands@dwh.co.uk

Barratt Homes:
northampton@newhomecare.co.uk

Bovis Homes:
customer-care.northernhomecounties@bovishomes.co.uk

Lagan Homes:
Customer.care@Laganhomes.com

Linden Homes
cs.eastmidlands@vistry.co.uk

Police

Crimes in progress should be reported to 999. Anything else - please report to either 101 or online at bedfordshire.police.uk/report (very quick and easy to do).

Tackling Parking and Road Safety

Inconsiderate and poor parking continues to be an issue in Great Denham, in particular outside the shops on Anglia Way. Double yellow lines were implemented following a traffic accident a couple of years ago, when a child was hit by a vehicle – but it seems many drivers suffer from selective colour blindness and just ignore them!



Double yellows are there for a reason – if you are one of those drivers who often pulls up outside the shops because you're "just popping in or only going to be a minute" then DON'T. Please use the parking spaces provided in the car park opposite.

Taking action

- Working with Highways and the School, railings have recently been installed outside the Kingswood Way school gate; these will help keep children safe from traffic as they wait outside the school, and encourage parents to park responsibly when dropping/collecting their children. The Park and Ride is the recommended parking area, and we now have a path from the Park and Ride to the traffic lights on Kingswood Way.
- The Parish Council has commissioned 2 feasibility studies from the Borough Council for possible pedestrian crossings on both Anglia Way (by the Retail Centre) and Greenkeepers Road (the school end). These will be done after September and help us identify if crossings are appropriate and any other measures that might be implemented to improve road safety.
- We are working with the Borough Council (Highways) to extend the provision of double

yellow lines on all junctions across the development. Parking on junctions reduces visibility and makes it more dangerous for pedestrians and drivers alike. Details will be published once the scheme goes out to public consultation.

- A **summer Poster Competition** for the children of Great Denham to create posters on the issue of road safety and parking. These will be put up across the development. For details of the competition, how to enter and send in your poster please see **page 11**.

Speeding around Great Denham



The Parish Council has worked hard to get the Borough Speed Watch van to visit the village as previously

reported. Drivers were captured doing speeds up to 59 mph on a 30mph road – too fast! Slow down!

The Council has agreed to purchase and install Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) - these signs tell drivers entering the village what speed they are doing when it exceeds the limit. These speeds will be logged and we will use this to determine when the majority of excess speeding takes place and target future campaigns.



The first SID will be installed by the School, with another to be installed on King Alfred Way once the location has been agreed with the developer.

The Parish Council has been working with the developer to have a speed limit sign installed after the roundabout on King Alfred Way. Although it should be obvious that the village

is a 30 limit, we hope that signage will help remind drivers of this fact.

Jim Weir, the Ward Councillor has been petitioning the Borough to make the village centre a 20-mph zone. This has been agreed in principle and he hopes the works will be completed soon.

There is the possibility of a Speed Watch group starting in the village which would allow volunteers to operate a speed gun at times suiting them. If a car is detected going at excess speed, they will receive a written warning from the Police. For more information please

see bedfordshire.police.uk/information-and-services/Get-involved/Watch-Schemes/Speed-watch. If regular speeding is detected, then Police will join the volunteers to provide enforcement including fines and points.

Community Garden

It was lovely to see the flowers come through in the Community Garden over the spring. The Bee-friendly mix planted was a gift that kept on giving, as different flowers bloomed at different times.



The Council has agreed to purchase a “Tommy” statue to be situated in the Community Garden – we hope to have it in place in time for this year’s

Remembrance Sunday. And we'll be doing more bulb planting in the autumn, ready for next Spring.

We are still accepting tenders for an art piece to act as the focal point of the community garden – please contact the Parish Clerk for more details if interested.

Streetwatch – a word from our co-ordinator



The Great Denham Street Watch group, after a short hiatus from patrolling due to COVID-19 has returned to patrols. We now

have an additional three members and another going through the application process. Expect to see us patrolling more than before due to our increased numbers. However, if you could give up a couple of hours per month, we'd love to have you join in.

An array of new signage has been installed to let people know that Street Watch patrols the village, hopefully you have seen these. Reporting of crimes and suspicious behaviour is up in the village and this only goes to increase the Police patrols when necessary and allows the Street Watch patrols to target the areas and times necessary.

Bike theft is still our largest issue in the village. During patrols we have noted many communal bike stores unlocked and/or broken. In addition, bikes in those stores are not secured well. Please ensure you use a Sold Secure Gold standard bike lock. Together with the Parish Council we are asking developers to do a better job of securing the communal stores.

SPECIAL OFFER: Street Watch has managed to secure a discount code for the Bedfordshire Police recommended property marking kits from SelectaDNA, a saving of over 60%. For more

information

visit <https://www.selectadna.co.uk/nhw> and use the discount code NHWGDENHAM.

If you have any questions or wish to volunteer you can either contact me at

chris.staite@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk or the Streetwatch co-ordinator for Bedfordshire at Juliet.Wright@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk.

CCTV

The Parish Council is currently undergoing a review of the CCTV within the village. A large investment was made to install many cameras around the village. However, given the large amount of development and the huge increase in personal CCTV the location and function of the cameras needs to be adjusted.

Two new cameras have been installed at the Pavilion, covering the play area and the car park. These have advanced features allowing the 24/7 control centre to monitor large areas of the park by moving and zooming the cameras, similarly to those in the village centre.

If you have any suggestions or ideas about areas that could be covered or how they might best be covered please do not hesitate to file them with the Parish Councillor for safety and security,

chris.staite@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Village Medical Centre

Residents will be aware that the GP practice was rated INADEQUATE in a recent Care Quality Commission Inspection Report. The full report can be read here: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-6642712946>

The Beds Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are working with the Medical Centre on its action plan,

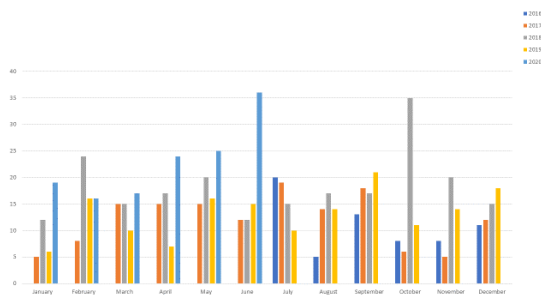
and there will be a follow-up inspection at some point.

The Parish Council has written to both the CQC and the CCG raising our concerns. Our Borough Councillor, Jim Weir, has already held meetings with the CCG and the Village Medical Centre – please see his update below.

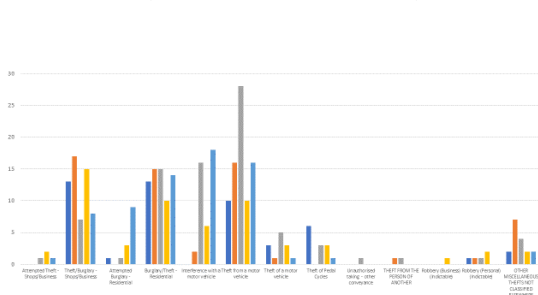
Crime in Great Denham

The lockdown and subsequent weeks have seen more instances of attempted burglaries and thefts, in particular of bicycles.

All recorded offences – Great Denham July 2020



Burglaries/Thefts– Great Denham July 2020



It's important that incidents are reported to the Police – getting a true picture of criminal activity in our area does make a difference to the number of police patrols and attention. If you have any CCTV

footage relating to an incident then please do not

share via social media but send on to the Police. Recently the police successfully arrested 2 criminals for bike thefts as a direct result of information received from residents.

Great Denham Community Hall reopening.

The Hall has been shut due to Covid-19 but it is planned to reopen at the beginning of September. All Classes will be run along Covid-safe guidelines. For more information visit the Hall website: www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Future Plans

In addition to those outlined in each individual article, the council is also working on the following projects and plans:

- Christmas lights for the Retail Centre
- “Lest We Forget” statues for the Community Garden and King Alfred Way entrance
- Bulb planting on Queen Eleanor Drive, Kingswood Way and the Community Garden

Come along to a Parish Council Meeting

We meet on the first Monday of each month (except August), at 7.30pm.

Usually held at the Community Hall we are currently meeting remotely via Zoom – all joining details are published with the agenda.

There is always 15 minutes for public questions at the start of each meeting.

Update from Our Ward Councillor Jim Weir



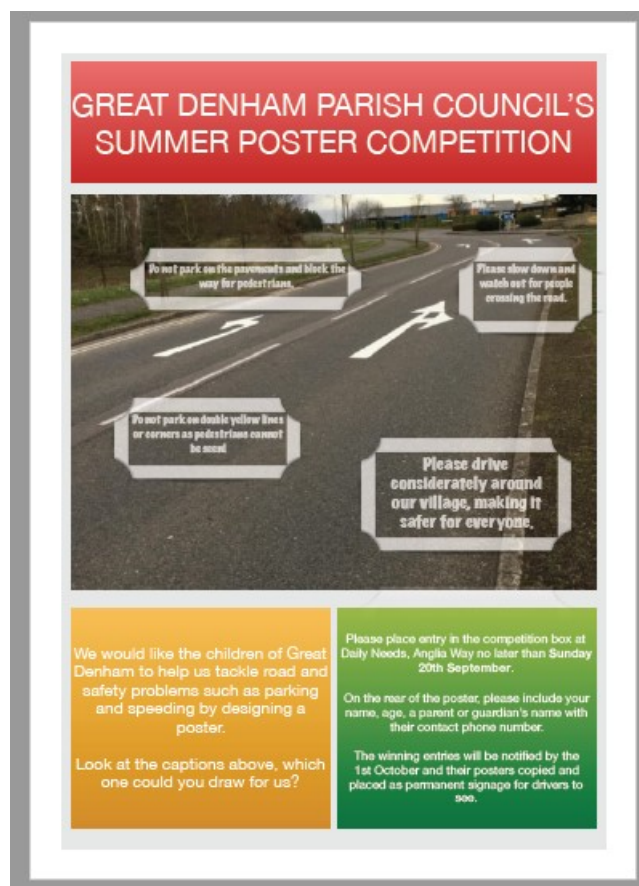
*Jim Weir - Kempston Rural Ward Councillor (Great Denham; Stagsden; Turvey; Kempston Rural)
Committees: Planning; Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny; Rural Affairs; Contacts: 07528803981
jim.weir@bedford.gov.uk*

There are two major issues affecting residents at the moment on which I am receiving a lot of mail. These concern the potential loss of the golf course and thus the green open space, and the service provided by the Village Medical Centre.

Village Medical Centre I, Cllr Rigby from Bromham & Biddenham Ward met with the Operations Director Sachin Parab, Dr Prasannan, Louise, from the practice and David Picking and Samantha of the BCCG. Most will be aware of the CQC report on the practice and the concerns that this has raised. The discussion focused on what actions have been put in place to get away from the past and current perceived poor response to residents/patients? We were told that the new phone system installed last October had some glitches that have only just been corrected, when asked about the difficulty in getting calls answered. The call response rate was now in the high 90% range but admittedly some calls still do go unanswered for too long. Sachin also went on to say that they are carrying out a review to see if there is a more workable way to deploy staff to fit the peak call times. He went on to state that most of the issues they have been working to resolve from the action plan agreed with the BCCG will be in place by mid-September. We also discussed setting up a Patient Panel which could be used to meet regularly to discuss issues from both the practice and patient point of view and aid better communications. Something similar does exist but only meets once per quarter. We have agreed to work together to improve communication to residents/patients and have further detailed discussions on these issues and the improvement plan.

Golf Course Regarding the golf course closure, again I'm sure most will know of the intention of the landowner and the many misleading points they have made to make it look as though they have no choice other than to close the course. Of course, we all know this is a precursor to eventually building on the land. The landowner's agent Bidwells have still to respond to any letters sent to them but a virtual meeting has been set up for 4th September (which may be before you have this newsletter). The meeting has been arranged by our MP Richard Fuller and will involve the three Ward Cllrs and the two Parish Chairs. In a meeting on Monday 10th Aug with the operators of the golf club they again stated their intention to close it. They also apologised for the letter that came out which made statements about the golf club business that were inflammatory and incorrect. We will reiterate again when we meet that the conditions and policies that are in place will block their future plans. I have also asked for support from the CEO of Bedford Borough to ask that before the closure date they write and point out again the intention of the Borough to rigorously enforce these policies and conditions.

Calling all Great Denham Children - Summer Poster Competition – Road Safety



Get drawing – design some colourful posters that we can place around the village to let drivers know that speeding and inconsiderate parking is dangerous to pedestrians and other drivers. Already drawn your poster? Just put your name and age on the back, and the name and contact number/email address for a grown up and leave your poster in the box at Daily Needs, Anglia Way, or email it to the Clerk on clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Competition closes on 20th September.

Career Skills Hub for 14-19-year olds to launch at Community Hall

The Parish Council and the Community Hall are launching a series of fortnightly sessions for 14-19-year olds in Great Denham. The sessions will be focused on developing career skills in the following areas:

- ITC Skills: to include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, PowerPoint slides, PC hardware and software maintenance, graphic design and programming.
- Job Seeking – to include CV writing, cover letters, interview preparation and techniques
- Leadership – to include conflict management, communications and foundations of leadership.

The course is being led by one of the Hall Trustees, an accredited Duke of Edinburgh scheme assessor and Army Cadet leader.

This has been made possible through a grant from the PCC.

Sessions will be starting in November – to register your interest please drop us an email to

clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Don't forget to complete the survey and share your thoughts on Great Denham for our Neighbourhood Plan.

Drop off the completed survey at the Community Hall or complete on-line:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/98KF2HS>

Great Denham Celebrates VE Day

Lockdown didn't stop residents celebrating VE day – the bunting was out, the (socially distanced) tea parties were held and the sun shone! Here's a selection of just some of the photos from the day – thanks to everyone that took part.

