

Keeping You in the Loop

August/Sept 2021



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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

What a year the last 12 months have been!



From the golf club closing to a new lido in the Playhub (courtesy of the Christmas floods!) the last 12 months have certainly been eventful.

It's been nearly 12 months since we sent out our last Parish Council newsletter. Concerned about the challenges of asking volunteers to deliver during the pandemic, we have sought to keep residents informed via our Facebook page and website. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, as we try to get back to more normal activities, this newsletter gives a brief update on some of the work of the Parish Council over the last 12 months, and some of the projects planned for the future.

Parish Council Meetings

During all lockdowns (and the bits in-between) the Parish Council has continued to meet virtually using Zoom. It has been great to see residents joining us to hear the topics of discussion and to raise questions during the public part of the meeting. From 7th May, the legislation that permitted remote meetings came to an end, and our meetings are now being held in person.

- In June we met in the Community Garden to decide on the response to the Change of Use planning application for the Greenkeepers compound.
- In July we met at the Community Hall, in one of the larger rooms, and also provided connection via Zoom for any residents who wished to join us.
- From September we will be back in our usual room at the Community Hall, but will continue to provide access via Zoom for residents.

The Parish Council meets on first Monday of every month, starting at 7.30pm. Please do come along – the agendas are posted on our noticeboards. Can't make it in person? We hope to still make it possible for the public to join virtually via Zoom – details will be published on each agenda.

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

Donna Parsons (Chair)

Community Hall

Vince Arthur

Golf Course/Green Spaces

Chris Slinn

Highways/Parking

Chris Staite

CCTV/Safety and Security

Jo Ruskin

Community Events and
Engagement

Lou Evans

Local
Services/Neighbourhood
Development Plan

Helen Allen

Clerk: Anna O'Meara

Council Meetings

Are held on 1st Monday of
the month at 7.30pm at the
Community Hall.

Make a Difference



Join the Parish Council - Great Denham Parish Council has two councillor vacancies and is looking for people who want to be part of building and supporting a growing community. In order to join you will need to be: over 18; 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

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Help shape Great Denham's Neighbourhood Plan by joining the Steering Group. This is one of the best ways to influence how our community develops going forward and help protect our green, open spaces. For more information please email: ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Get involved - join a Local Group



Great Denham FC 'The Swans' – Great Denham Football club for the community.



The Great Denham Valkyries – The first netball team to represent Great Denham in the Bedfordshire League. Contact them on: greatdenhamvalkyries@gmail.com
FB: @GreatDenhamValkyries



Great Denham Country Park Nature Group - Great Denham Country Park has a vast array of habitats from grassland to ponds and woodland to floodplain meadows. This group is for those who have an interest in the wildlife that the park provides a home for.

Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan

Firstly, a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who took the time back in September to complete the survey by sharing their thoughts on the benefits and concerns of living in Great Denham, what facilities and services you would like to see, and how you value the green spaces in the village.

We used the feedback from the responses to start pulling the outline of our neighbourhood plan together. All residents should have received a copy of the first Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan Newsletter in March this year – which showed the progress made so far by the Steering Group, and also gave an overview of the main areas to be covered in the plan.

Survey responses have really helped us to understand what policies we should be including, and how the Vision and Aims of the Plan should direct this work.

What's been happening since March?

- A Planning Consultant has been brought on board to help shape and write the plan.
- We have successfully applied for a grant of over £8000 to meet the costs of the Consultant and further newsletters and consultations.
- We have successfully applied for technical support to produce a Design Code to be used for any future development: work will start on this shortly.
- We will also be producing a Green Infrastructure Plan: Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of multi-functional green spaces required to meet a community's needs. It consists of both public

and private land, with and without public access, in urban and rural locations.

Vision and Aims of the Great Denham Plan

Our Vision

Our vision is that Great Denham will retain its modern identity set within a rural environment, with an appropriate balance between housing and open space. Developing as a sustainable, diverse and inclusive community, the health and wellbeing of its residents will be enhanced through easy access to great amenities and open green space.

Our Aims

The aims of the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan are:

- *To ensure any future development within Great Denham is safe and sustainable, has suitable infrastructure, is appropriately designed and is in keeping with existing development*
- *To develop existing and create further facilities, services and amenities to support the residents and businesses of Great Denham*
- *To protect and enhance existing and future open spaces including encouraging local wildlife*
- *To manage both existing and future traffic and transport provision and encourage safe and sustainable movement*

First thoughts on the policies to be developed

As its name suggests a Neighbourhood Development Plan is an element of the overall planning process. Developing and including policies in our plan will mean that once adopted they have to be considered as part of any future planning applications.

Policy areas identified as possibilities:

Environment (built and natural)

- High quality design of development (appearance/setting/amenity)
- Design Code
- Settlement gap definition, (more detailed than Local Plan arrows)

Community Facilities and Services

- Retain existing community facilities (explore extent of restriction of change of use of buildings)
- Encourage development of new community facilities

Recreation and Green Spaces

- Local Green Space (if appropriate)
- Protection of biodiversity, biodiversity net gain
- 'Blue' infrastructure to be protected and enhanced
- Rights of way to be protected and enhanced

Traffic and Transport

- Traffic flow and requirements for new development
- Traffic calming/pedestrian crossing points/pavements
- Electric parking points, appropriate on-plot parking provision, parking for facilities

Sustainable development

- Broadband, renewable energy & rainwater harvesting& recycling (household)

Housing

- House types and mix
- HMO's (Houses of Multiple Occupancy)

- Housing for ageing population

Local Business

- Retain commercial buildings
- Encouragement of business that will involve community use (e.g., gyms, nurseries etc.)

Creating a Green Infrastructure Plan

The protection and improvement of the green spaces in and around Great Denham is such an important part of the feedback received from residents that our Planning Consultant has advised us to write a Green Infrastructure Plan.

In this we can capture not just the areas of green space, but also the other elements which make it so valuable to residents, including the footpaths and cycleways, waterways, flora and fauna etc. If you would like to help with this please get in touch.

A little reminder

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.

Next steps

- **Come along on 11th September to take a look at the maps and posters we will be showing at the Great Denham Big Comeback event at the Community Hall.**
- **Be part of the Steering Group – email ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Former Golf Course – what has happened since it closed

In spite of the efforts of the Borough and Parish Councilors, the Save the Golf Course Land Community Action Group, and numerous residents who wrote directly to both Bidwells and the Old Ford End Trust, The Bedford Golf Club closed its doors on October 16th 2020.



Since October 2020 the Parish Councils of Great Denham and Biddenham have met monthly with Bidwells to cover off not only the operational

concerns of residents since the closure, but also the upkeep and maintenance of the land and premises. We have also pressed for the sharing of plans for the future of the land and buildings including:

- The impact of having sheep grazing within a residential area.
- Dealing with the flooding on the golf course land/West Hill Close area.
- Improving the signage of the public footpaths.
- The Health and Safety concerns of people continuing to play golf on the course, in spite of its closure.

Planning Applications

2 planning applications have also been submitted since the course closed. The Parish Council has submitted objections to both on the basis of: existing planning conditions: planning policies; and the impact of the proposed business on traffic, parking etc.

- An application to convert the former Clubhouse into a children's nursery. This application was withdrawn before it was considered by the Borough Council.

- An application to change the Class of Use of the Greenkeepers Compound, to enable the landowners to find new tenants. This application has yet to be determined.

Bidwells have consistently declared that there are no future plans for house building at this time, and that the trustees are awaiting more information on the "Public Money for Public Good" scheme before making any long-term plans. Sheep will return to the land for grazing in September following grass cutting over the summer periods.

Monthly Meetings

Sadly, the regular monthly meetings with Bidwells have now been suspended on the instruction of the Old Ford End Trustees. The Parish Council continues to pursue issues and concerns via phone and email wherever possible, but has made it clear we would be happy to recommence regular meetings in the future if the Trustees allow.

Protecting the Land from future development

The former golf course land provides a much-valued green space between Great Denham and Biddenham. Local Plan policy AD43 defines this as a protected urban gap, designed to prevent the coalescence of development between the two settlements. The Borough Council is however facing significant challenges in terms of its future housing supply, and the requirements of National Government – so the threat of housing development on the golf course land cannot be ignored.

Asset of Community Value

The Parish Council, with the help of the Save the Golf Course Action Group, has submitted an application to nominate the land and buildings of

the former golf course as an Asset of Community Value (Localism Act 2011). Although this does not guarantee success, if accepted, this nomination will give the Parish Council 6 months to consider purchasing the asset once put up for sale by the landowner. At the time of writing, we are awaiting a decision from the Borough Council.

Draft Local Plan 2040 – make your views known

Bedford Borough Council is consulting on its draft Local Plan 2040 strategy options and policies document. Please have your say.

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/local-plan-review/>

Saving the Kickabout land



The green “Kickabout” space opposite the Community Hall has been a central point for community

events and gatherings since 2011. The first Summer Festival was held there in 2012, and the Community Hall have held Summer and Winter Festivals using the space for games, activities and displays. On an informal basis it is used by fitness trainers, children and other resident groups for exercise and play.

A planning application (21/01582/MAF) has now been submitted by David Wilson Homes. Not only will this see 101 houses built on this area of land (and the adjacent site on the opposite side of Mercia Road) but will also mean the loss of the Kickabout.

What is particularly concerning is that the developer appears to be holding the provision of the much-needed expansion land behind the school as a hostage to this application being successful.

The Parish Council has:

- Written to David Wilson Homes asking them to consider continued provision of the green “Kickabout” space.
- Submitted its objection to planning application 21/01582/MAF on the grounds of loss/inadequate provision of green space in the proposed layout; impact on traffic, parking, road safety; and impact on overall aspect of this part of Great Denham. You can read the Council’s objection letter on the planning portal here: <http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx?appNumber=21/01582/MAF>
- Written to the Portfolio leaders for Planning, Environment and Education at the Borough Council to champion both the provision of the school land and the retention of the Kickabout space.

What Can You Do to Help?

Make your views known by writing to the Borough Council on this including to:

Portfolio leader for Planning – Cllr Henry Vann

Portfolio leader for Environment – Cllr Charles Royden

Portfolio leader for Education – Cllr James Valentine

Planning – planning@bedford.gov.uk

Kempston Rural Ward Cllr – Jim Weir – jim.weir@bedford.gov.uk

Update on Developer meetings

We have continued to have regular quarterly meetings with the Contracts Manager and Adoptions Manager for David Wilson Homes. As they now prepare to complete the final build (for now, depending on the outcome of the kickabout), here is a short summary of what has been done or is still to be completed.

- Footpath 1 has been re-laid, and is now open.
- The play area equipment for that area will hopefully now be installed soon.
- The road resurfacing (including the block paving areas) along King Alfred Way and Anglia Way is nearing completion.
- The fencing on Mercia Road and at the back of the school has been repaired and the fly-tipping removed.
- Following concerns raised by residents on Denby Rise and Ethelred Lane, DWH have confirmed that they will be installing some form of barrier to prevent the end of these cul-de-sacs being used as a “rat run” by drivers.
- We have asked DWH to improve the surfacing in the access points areas to the Country Park.
- Not DWH, but Barratts have finally (!!!) cleared the drains on Wayland Road.

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.

DWH have told us that the top part of Greenkeepers Road (near the busgate) down to the Saxon Way junction will soon be adopted. Once this is done, the

other part of Greenkeepers Road will follow. We’re also hopeful that the adoption of King Alfred Way/Anglia Way will not take as long as they have been getting things ready with the resurfacing etc.

Once this has occurred, 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 which are Barratt’s developments.

Sadly, there is nothing more to report on the Pedestrian/Cycle bridge which was part of the S106 agreement.

Footpaths and Bridges

This brings us neatly onto the subject of footpaths and bridges.

Footpaths

Bedford Borough Council have now published the definitive statement of Public Rights of Way; you can view the rights of way on a map here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/public-rights-of-way/>

Bridge to Kempston Mill



The bridge was declared structurally unsound some months ago but the owners of the bridge would not

take action. As Cllr James Valentine has been reporting, the bridge has now come into the ownership of the Borough Council, tenders for the work have been issued and agreed and repairs will start shortly

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 few 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 are "only going to be a minute" then DON'T. Please use the parking spaces provided in the car park opposite.

Taking Action

- A pedestrian crossing, with zig-zag approaches, will be installed on Anglia Way (between entrance to Sainsburys car park and the junction with Saxon Way). This is currently in design phase with Bedford Borough Council Highways engineers, following a feasibility study that was completed earlier this year.
- Making the area around the Retail Centre a 20mph zone. This will shortly go out to consultation and we encourage all residents to support this road safety measure in such a busy area of the village.
- Railings are in outside the Kingwood Way school gate. We continue to chase the lockable gate that was delayed due to Covid.
- Double yellow lines will be extended at all junctions across Great Denham in due course to prevent the poor parking which reduces visibility.

- Installation of the Speed Indicator Device on Kingswood Way gives an instant reminder to drivers to watch their speed (see below)

Speeding around Great Denham



Meet 'SID' – our Speed Indicator Device that was purchased and installed on Kingswood Way at the end of October 2020. We have been downloading the data each month and here are some of the “highlights”:

- Average traffic flow along Kingswood Way is 37,875 vehicles per month (in one direction)
- 58% of drivers drive within the speed limit (30mph)
- 34 % of drivers drive between 30mph and 35mph
- 8 % of drivers drive over 35mph
- The highest recorded speed each month is 60mph!!!



The Parish Council, together with Borough Councillor Jim Weir, has asked Highways to make Great Denham a 20mph zone overall. The first area to be completed would be the Retail Centre, then this would be rolled out across Great Denham.

Are you interested in forming a Speed Watch group in Great Denham? The group would have the use of a speed gun at times to suit them. As part of this any car detected as going at excess speed would receive a written warning from the Police. If regular speeding is detected, then Police will join the volunteers to provide enforcement including fines and points. For more information, please see bedfordshire.police.uk/information-and-

services/Get-involved/Watch-Schemes/Speed-watch.

Streetwatch – A word from our co-ordinator



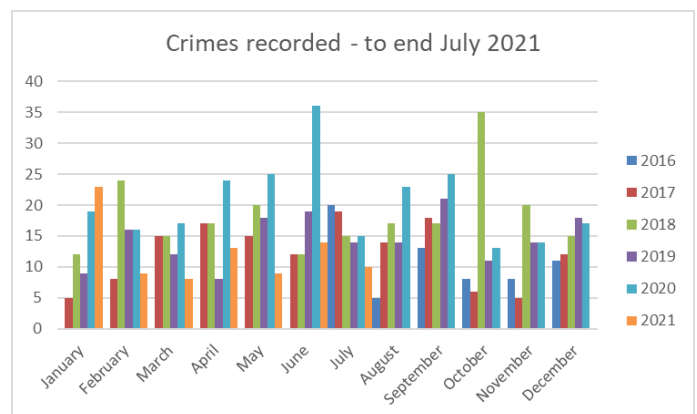
The Great Denham Street Watch group are still patrolling and monitoring the areas of concern

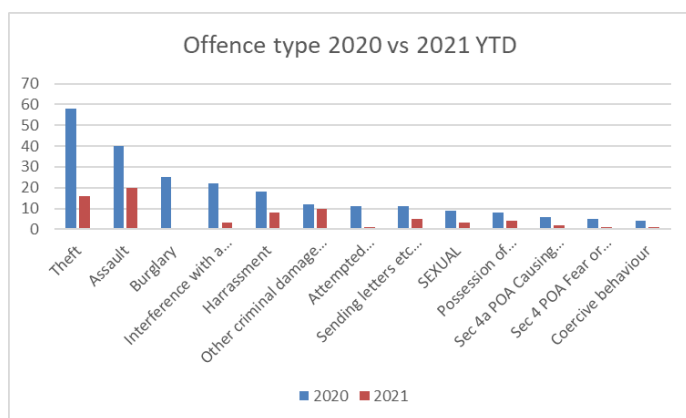
highlighted by reports of anti-social behaviour to 101 and online. Working with the Police we have recently been targeting the anti-social behaviour reported on Greenkeepers Road and the Pavilion.

The vetting process has recently been streamlined and put online to make it fast and simple to join. If you could give up a couple of hours per month, we'd love have you wander around and chat with us. There's also the option to join us for a trial patrol, simply email me at chris.staite@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk or the Streetwatch co-ordinator for Bedfordshire police at watcheschemes@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

Crime in Great Denham

Whilst there was an increase in attempted burglaries and thefts during 2020, since the end of January the first few months of 2021 have seen things settle down a little.





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.

Village Medical Centre

Patients of the Village Medical Centre should now be aware that the contract with the current providers will finish at the end of September. The Beds Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have advised that they are looking to appoint a replacement contract to start at the beginning of October, and are working with other local providers to finalise this. We hope that for the benefit of its patients and Great Denham residents that this is resolved quickly and that a good service and support for the community can be established once again.

Celebrate safely with Fireworks

Just a quick ask – if you are using fireworks in your garden, please make sure you do so safely and with control. Thank you.

Great Denham Community Hall Open as Usual.

After the frustrations of lockdown and then the phased easing of restrictions it's great to see the Hall open again with many of the regular groups so busy. The **Great Denham Big Comeback Festival 2021** is happening on Saturday 11th September – so get down to the Kickabout in the afternoon for some games, eats and a good time. For more information visit the Hall website:

www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Parish Council - Future Plans

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

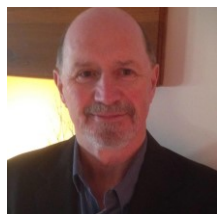
- The pedestrian crossing on Anglia Way – the feasibility study has been completed and Parish Council funds have been allocated for this work.
- Installing two new noticeboards at the Retail Centre and the Sports Pavilion respectively.
- Installing two benches in the Country Park following resident feedback.
- Transforming the area behind the Park and Ride, perhaps as a Community Orchard, with permission from the Borough Council.

Come along to a Parish Council Meeting

We meet on the first Monday of each month (except August), at 7.30pm at the Community Hall. There is always 15 minutes for public questions at the start of each meeting.

Can't make it in person? We hope to make it possible for the public to join virtually via Zoom – details will be published on each agenda, see our website or noticeboards.

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

The Former Bedford Golf Course

All or most will know of the issues regarding the former Bedford Golf Course. The landowner closed the course in October 2020, eventually stating that they wanted more than one income stream from the land. The land in question 172 acres, is designated as an Urban Gap and was so designated to ensure separation of different and distinct settlements. The landowner chose to disregard the Planning Policy protecting sports facilities which states they should remain in use if they are not surplus to requirements.

After closing the golf course, the landowner has introduced “strip grazing” under licence and harvesting of silage. Both of these actions allow the owners after 7 years to claim 100% inheritance tax allowance. I think that all are aware that the golf course and the clubhouse were very popular venues and provided a much-needed facility where the community could come together to play golf, attend functions and celebrations or just drop in for a drink or a meal. The golf club had become an integral part of our community. All the land that is now the parish of Great Denham was sold for development by the landowner. Different developers have built the houses that now have grown into a much-cherished community. So, both landowner and developer have made their millions, not satisfied with that they want to destroy the current composition of the community by removing this important community facility. The methods employed by the landowner pay no heed or regard to the community’s needs or to the Planning Policies in place.

Sign the Petition

Policy 99 of Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 has been ignored by the landowners of the Bedford Golf Club. [#isntsurplustorequirement](#) is a key principle for the communities around this land. We petition the Borough Council to ensure that Policy 99 is not abandoned due to the passage of time and that it is carried through to the Local Plan 2040. Add your voice to the request to protect the land by signing the petition here:

<http://chnng.it/sbgTpxnp>

Management Companies in Great Denham

The Bedford Independent and I are looking at the National picture on estate management charges and how we might best influence central government. These ridiculous charges for poor, or sometimes non-existent services have to be addressed and the management organisations held to account.

In It Together

In spite of lockdowns the Great Denham Community has still managed to have some fun and get stuff done for the benefit of everyone.

Great Denham Pumpkin Parade

Some fabulous displays of pumpkin carving and creativity for our first (virtual) Pumpkin Parade in October 2020. 100 pumpkins were delivered to doorsteps ready for Halloween – and here are just a few of the brilliant results!



Police Community Engagement Day – July 21st 2021

After the vagaries of Euro 2020, football really did come home to Great Denham, with a 1-0 victory from the mighty, mighty Swans (see page 2) over a local police team. Well done to all the lads and dads that turned out to play, and thanks to everyone that came along to support them.



Spruce up Squad Brightens up Great Portway Playground



The playground on Great Portway was starting to show its age – so after a spot of pressure-washing to clean up the surfaces, a small group of volunteers brightened things up with a fresh coat of paint. A big thank you to Eloise, Kevin and Vince for giving up their Sunday morning to do this.

Community Hall Events



Those lovely people at the Community Hall have a great event planned on **Saturday 11th September**. Wristbands are available for Great Denham residents which give unlimited rides to Great Denham children.

Please check out the Community Hall Facebook page for details of how to get the wristbands, and look out for the voucher in your letterbox (as you'll need to bring this with you to collect the wristbands).

More Events coming up

- **Halloween Fun** – Children's' craft workshops and cinema/disco
- **Winter Wonderland** – Just in time for Christmas!

Dates and details will be published on Facebook. Alternatively, look out for the posters on our village noticeboards.