

Keeping You in the Loop

December 2022



Contents include
updates on:

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months

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Great Denham Parish Council News



As we approach another Christmas and the end of another year, it's time to reflect back on the last few months and also to look forward to 2023.

In this issue we have updates on:

- Work done on behalf of residents to improve community facilities
- Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan – what happens next
- Projects already in plan for next year, and some ideas for other stuff
- Local elections 2023 – what's changing and what does this mean for Great Denham (and your vote!)

The Parish Council continues to meet every month on the first Monday of each month – come along to a meeting, all are welcome. 7.30pm at Great Denham Community Hall

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

Donna Parsons (Chair)

Community Hall

Vince Arthur

Golf Course/Green Spaces

Chris Slinn

Highways/Parking

Chris Staite

CCTV/Safety and Security

Lou Evans

Local
Services/Neighbourhood
Development Plan

Helen Allen

Ryan Craze

Great Denham Youth Club

Peter Tarrant

Rev Eric Lomax

Clerk: Anna O'Meara

Council Meetings

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

Since we last spoke....

Looking back through the files it's been a few months since our last Parish Council newsletter. A lot of effort has gone into the Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan, and the steering group has been keeping residents informed on the progress of the plan (more on that on page 4) through newsletters and events. Whilst this has been going on the Parish Council has continued to be busy on behalf of residents. Here's a quick update.

Railings outside the school - Highways installed the railings on Kingswood Way back in the first lockdown, but the lockable gates were missing in action! After constant badgering (and a little bit of Miss Marple-style investigation) we finally got to the bottom of it and the lockable gates are now in place – helping to ensure the safety of our children going in and out of school.

Community Defibrillators- There are now 3 defibrillators in Great Denham – our original cabinet at the Community Hall has now been joined by a further 2 situated at Carnoustie Drive and at the Pavilion on Queen Eleanor Drive, making it easier for residents to find one closest to them. If you have an emergency and need to use a defib then please dial 999 and the Ambulance Service will direct you to the nearest machine and tell you how to open the cabinet. And a big thank you to those residents who do the monthly service checks on the defibs!



More noticeboards- We've now added 2 more noticeboards to share information from the Parish Council and any local charities. These can be found at the Retail Centre (outside Sainsburys) and at the Pavilion (the car park off Queen Eleanor Drive). Meeting agendas, meeting dates and contact details can all be found here, as well as on our website.

New Tommy Memorial - It was extremely upsetting to find not one, but both, of our Tommy statues had been vandalised and beheaded before last year's Remembrance event. Why someone would do this is beyond comprehension. But it was so heartwarming to see the response of Years 5 and 6 children at Great Denham Primary School, and with the support of the Parish Council, the Ward Councillor and a kind donation from David Wilson Homes, a new Tommy memorial statue has been installed in its new home on Anglia Way. The school also kindly organised a Remembrance Service with the support of the Royal British Legion, and laid their own (handmade) poppies as part of what will be an annual event going forward. Look out for the details each November.



Benches in the Country Park- Whilst the Country Park is owned and managed by the Borough Council, the Parish Council has responded to resident requests and purchased (and installed) 2 new benches so people using the Park can sit, rest up and watch the world go by.

Grants to local groups - Every year in our annual budget the Council makes some provision to give grants to community groups to support their work – the groups must be properly constituted with their own bank account and be of benefit to Great Denham people. In the last 12 months we have given grants to:

- Tea and Talk group at the Community Hall – to cover the cost of their room hire
- Great Denham Valkyries – towards the purchase of bibs and balls.

If you would like to be considered for a grant then please download the application form from the Parish Council website and send it in.

Car Parks at Great Denham Pavilion



The original planning application for the Pavilion included provision of 129 parking spaces (including 8 disabled spaces). But unfortunately only 47 of these were in the main car park – the rest were part of an “overflow” scheme. It was clear from the off that these overflow spaces were not fit for purpose and became unusable during the wet winters (just when they were needed for the football teams!). At the Council we have been lobbying the Borough for the last 5 years or so to sort out the surfacing – finally, with the help and support of Jim, our Ward Councillor, the overflow car parks will be upgraded so that they can be used.

We appreciate the patience of all residents whilst the work is being done, but hopefully this will go some way to tackling the issues of on-road parking during football matches.

Parking Restrictions

Double yellow lines have been requested on a further 2 areas of Great Denham:

- On the King Alfred Way entrance into GD, to alleviate the parking issues at the Pavilion (see also car parks above)
- On Great Portway, where inconsiderate parking was blocking resident access to their properties and reducing visibility for cars entering and exiting Great Portway and the junction with Saxon Way.

We’re waiting for the Borough to confirm when the work will be done, but hopefully soon.

We’ve also asked them to repaint the road markings on the Kingswood Way/Saxon Way junction as these are faded and cars exiting Saxon Way often fail to stop or give way – a number of small accidents have already taken place as a result.

Great Denham Youth Club launches



We’re really pleased to announce that Great Denham now has a weekly Youth Club for all young people in school Years 7 and above (secondary school children).

The Parish Council and the Community Hall Charity are working in partnership and jointly funding the club. The Youth Club is being delivered by a partner, 4YP, who have many years’ experience of running

Contact us: clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

website:: www.greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

activities and services for young people in Central Bedfordshire and who won the tender for services in Bedford Borough earlier in the year.

The club will run every Thursday from **4.30pm to 6.30pm**. (note revised timings)

We really hope that this is something that the young people of Great Denham will enjoy; we would love to get feedback from the young people themselves, but also from parents – if you can please take 5 minutes to complete the following surveys:

For Parents to complete

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/forparentsGD>

[YouthClub](#)



For Young People to complete

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YoungPeople>

[GDYouthClub](#)

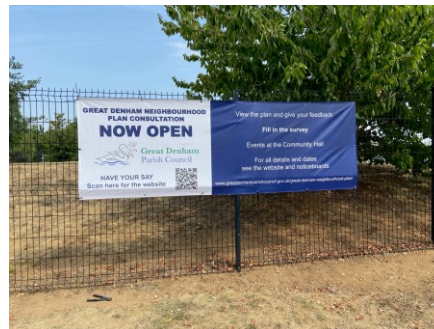


Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan – the finishing line is in sight!

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group began its work in October 2020, and a lot of work has been done to get Great Denham's Neighbourhood Plan over the line.

A big **THANK YOU** to all the Steering Group members but also to every resident who has taken the time to complete surveys and come along to consultation events, and who has read the plan and given us their feedback.

All work on the plan has been funded through grants from Locality (not the Precept).



The draft plan and supporting documents (the Green Infrastructure Plan and Design Guide) completed the Regulation 14 consultation in October; all the feedback received has been reviewed and the plan has been amended accordingly.

What happens next?

The Parish Council will approve the plan to be submitted to the Borough Council as Local Planning Authority. The Borough will then hold a further consultation with residents – called a Regulation 16 Consultation – and appoint an examiner. The plan and supporting documents will be examined and a report produced; this may require some further re-drafting (depending on comments). A referendum will then be held (residents only) and once this has been completed satisfactorily Great Denham's Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted for final adoption by Bedford Borough Council as an Executive Decision.

Once approved, all future planning applications must comply with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, Bedford Borough Council Local Plan – and our own **Great Denham Neighbourhood Plan**

Dealing with Developer issues

With so much of Great Denham still not adopted by the Borough Council, there is a constant stream of issues that have to be reported and chased up, particularly as getting the problem fixed seems to take a very long time. And different roads are the responsibility of different developers – so knowing who to contact in the first place can be a nightmare! The usual suspects tend to be:

- Streetlights not working
- Getting the roads resurfaced
- Getting the weeds and overgrowth sorted

But in the last few months there have also been problems with tree planting on the roads off Danegeld Avenue, adherence to the plans submitted in planning applications and fencing (among others).

Particularly noteworthy is the removal of the “Mini-Stonehenge” on Greenkeepers Road and the changes being made to the meaningful meeting place on Anglia Way: in a bizarre example of sticking to planning applications submitted years ago, and with no recognition of residents’ wishes, both these features were in danger of being ripped out and completely removed.

Huge thanks must go to our Ward Councillor, Jim Weir, who rallied the various departments at the Borough Council, and the developer, and has successfully got both features reinstated.

Which leads us neatly onto the subject of

Road Adoptions

For residents who have lived on Greenkeepers Road since it was first built, the fact that the road has been unadopted for so many years has been beyond frustrating! Unfortunately, responsibility to request

adoption sits with the developer, and David Wilson Homes have, until recently, been dragging their heels; we have been chasing this now for years, and at last we are starting to see progress:

- Greenkeepers Road from the Busgate down to Saxon Way junction is now adopted!
- The remaining section of Greenkeepers Road is being prepared for adoption (which led to Mini-Stonehenge-gate above!).

Once the spine roads are adopted all other developers can move to get their own areas of responsibility adopted – we are already aware that Lagan Homes have submitted a request to the Borough Council for Downham Close – so we will now start chasing them to get on with it.

Mercia Road – planning application for 95 houses



David Wilson Homes submitted an application to build on the sites either side of Mercia Road back in 2021 – initially

for 101 houses. The Parish Council, and a large number of residents, have objected to this, and the plans were revised down to 95 houses.

Included in this has been increased provision for a small area of green space fronting to Saxon Way (opposite the Community Hall). We all know how valuable the use of the “Kickabout” has been to community groups, individual residents, and for the Community Events hosted by the Hall - the first Summer Festival was held there in 2012.

The Parish Council has raised its objections on 3 separate occasions, focusing on:

- The impact providing parking courts will have on on-street parking.
- The impact this will have on road safety, and in particular that of pedestrians given the proximity of the school.
- The impact on the overall amenities for residents with the removal of a significant portion of green space.
- That the junction of Saxon Way/Danegeld Avenue/Mercia Road is already unsafe and that this will make it worse.
- The overall provision of parking, in particular the impact on the Community Hall parking for events.
- The overall aspect of this area.

DWH Planning Managers did attend the Parish Council September meeting to provide response to our objections, but, in the view of the Council, these did not resolve the issues we had raised.

We have now received a response from the Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth at the Borough which states that further discussion and amendments have been made and that the **Planning Officer will be recommending approval of this application!!!**

There are still no updated plans on the Borough Planning Portal, so it is impossible to say what these amends look like – this is not transparent!

<http://edrms.bedford.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx?appNumber=21/01582/MAF>

We have been advised that this application will go to Planning Committee on Monday 12th December at 6.30pm – the meeting is held at Borough Hall. Residents can attend and make representation – you should be given 5 minutes to do this and may be questioned by a member of the Committee. Anyone wishing to speak must have registered in advance to do so – by 4.45pm of the Friday before the committee meeting (9th December in this case). To register to speak please email using this address: RighttoSpeak@bedford.gov.uk

This information has already been published on the Parish Council website and in Parish Council minutes in case of delayed delivery of the newsletter

Additional School Land

This application has been linked (by the developers) to the provision of the additional land for the school.

The Parish Council has highlighted to the Borough that using the school land as a “hostage” for approval of the Mercia Road application is immoral and inappropriate. We have also documented to the Borough that it has been their failure to exercise options provided to it in the original planning obligations for this land that have created this situation.

We encourage all residents to make their voices heard on this matter by writing to the Borough Council – the Mayor and the Director for Children’s Services.

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/save-time-do-it-online>

David Wilson Homes:

postcompletionengs@dwh.co.uk

Barratt Homes:

northampton@newhomecare.co.uk

Bovis Homes:

cs.northernhomecounties@vistry.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 Estate Management Companies



Jim Weir, our Ward Councillor, has been on a mission to tackle the poor service and overcharging by Service Management companies across Great Denham.

He has already had meetings with both Alexander Faulkner Partnership and First Port to challenge them on both the service they provide and the charges they raise. As an example of this, through Jim's work to date, it is clear that over 75% of each bill comprises management overhead and not actual work!!

Jim needs more ammunition in his fight and is asking Great Denham residents for information.

Please take the time to complete a short survey and help Jim keep up the fight.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/EstateManagementCompanies>



Tackling Parking and Road Safety



It seems that there are many drivers in Great Denham who are not concerned about the safety of others, and who continue park outside the shops in Anglia Way. Social media posts from residents

Contact us: clerk@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

website: www.greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

continue to highlight this, as do the emails that come to both the Parish Council and Ward Councillor Jim Weir.

There is no simple or easy solution to this, but we have asked the Borough Council's parking enforcement team to get out to Great Denham more frequently to deal with this.

They have also asked residents who witness this to report it to the team when it happens – if an enforcement officer is nearby they will attend to issue Fixed Penalty notices.

To report poor parking please contact:

Control Desk 01234 718359

Enforcement Text 07553895403



The roads around the Retail centre are now a 20mph zone and signage will be put up to that effect, so please drive with consideration.

There will be a pedestrian crossing on Anglia Way – the design has been approved and we are waiting for confirmation of the works by Highways, but hope that this will be done by end March 2023. We've also asked that railings are provided to ensure pedestrian safety and prevent parking on the approach to the crossing. Any parking on white zig zag road markings is an offence and will be reported to the Police.

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.

Streetwatch – new Scheme coordinator needed for Great Denham



The Great Denham Streetwatch team is currently in need of a new Co-Ordinator. If you are interested and able to take on this volunteer role then please contact the Streetwatch co-ordinator for Bedfordshire police at watcheschemes@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

Parish Council plans and budget for 2023-24

The Parish Council is working on its budget for 2023-24 in order to submit its Precept request to the Borough Council by the end of January 2023.

What is a Precept?

This is the funding mechanism for Parish Councils – it is a sum of money intended to cover Parish Council annual outgoings, and is part of the balanced budget that all Councils must work to. The Borough Council includes a % for each Council in its Council Tax demands of residents – if you check your council tax statement you should see how much of your charge relates to the Parish Council and also to other bodies such as Beds Fire and Rescue and Beds Police. For the current financial year 2022-23 the Parish Council reduced its Precept request by 17%.

Balancing the Budget

Once the Parish Council has determined its expenditure plans for 2023-24, it must ensure that it has the funds to meet these outgoings by using:

- Precept

- Other sources of income, e.g., bank interest, VAT refunds
- Any general reserves

Future plans and budget requirements

The Council has a number of projects for the future; some of these are already budgeted for as earmarked reserves or CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) projects:

- Anglia Way Pedestrian Crossing
- Gateway feature on King Alfred Way entrance

We also have a number of ideas for other projects which we believe would benefit residents, but which budget has not yet been allocated:

- Transforming the area behind the Park and Ride, perhaps as a Community Orchard, with permission from the Borough Council.
- A further pedestrian crossing on Greenkeepers Road (school end)
- Upgrading the paths in the Country Park to remove the yellow “porridge” that clogs up wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs every winter (we hope to do this in partnership with the Borough Council who own the Country Park).

These are all in addition to the budget we need to cover the costs of:

- Insurance (includes the insurance of the Community Hall building)
- Auditor obligations
- Any membership or subscription fees due to council bodies
- Employment of the Clerk
- Providing Christmas lighting (tree and lamp posts)

- Providing and maintaining the CCTV cameras and the monitoring service.
- The heating, boiler and air con system maintenance at the Community Hall
- Grants to local organisations (as per grants policy)

What might this all mean for 2023-24 precept and my Council Tax?

Whilst we can’t speak for any of the other organisations that are funded via Council Tax, Great Denham Parish Council hope to once again reduce their precept request by using accumulated general reserves to meet budget needs. This will be confirmed at the January meeting (9th January 2023).

All minutes and financial reports for the Parish Council can be found on its website should you require more information.

www.greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Celebrate safely with Fireworks for New Year

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

Please also remember that it is an offence to let any firework (including sparklers) off in any street, road or public place. This would include the Kickabout land, the Park and Ride, the Golf Course land and the Country Park.

Thank you.

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*

Well as we head towards the end of the year and 2023 beckons 2022 has not been a brilliant year for many. The New Year will bring many more challenges to face.

The national political turmoil has added to the soaring cost of living exaggerated by war and climate change. Adding to that, the other cost issues facing most residents are the two additional “taxes” levied through the Open Space Management (OSM) charge and the eye watering estate management charges. This is mentioned earlier in the newsletter.

Using the information from the Estate Management survey

Once I have collected the data from the SurveyMonkey I will be consulting with Trading Standards, the Managing Directors of the development companies, (DWH, Barrett’s, Vistry (which comprises Bovis and Linden Homes) and I will try to get the Borough Council and our local MP to join with my voice to get this iniquitous system overhauled. I am working on a number of fronts with the parish council to tackle other issues of parking, speeding and anti-social behaviour.

Great Denham becomes a Ward – Local Council Elections May 2023

In 2023, the parish will take on a new persona. The current Kempston Rural Ward, which Great Denham (GD) sits in, will be gone and Great Denham will be a stand-alone Ward with effect from the local mayoral and Cllr elections in May 2023.

GD has grown in size and it is estimated that there are approx. 4,200 people now living here. The growth of GD led to the Boundary Commissions recommending boundary changes that has altered the face of most Wards in the Borough. Therefore, after serving for four years with the parishes of Kempston Rural, Stagsden, Turvey and of course GD, I had to make a choice on where to stand in the next elections. It was an easy choice to make. I have lived in what is now GD for 24 years. I served on the parish council for 11 years, chair of governors at the school for 8 years and still serving as a governor. Treasurer and trustee of the community hall for the first 5 years after setting up the charity to run it from my time on the PC. I have supported many residents with problems and championed their causes with the Borough. I have used my Ward fund for the school, the hall, and the PC for a myriad number of projects. Therefore, it may come as no surprise that I will be offering myself as a candidate for the new Ward of GD.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy and kinder New Year.

Jim

Great Denham Community Hall - Community Hall Events



• Craft & Gift Stalls • Refreshments
• Indoor Ice Rink • Santa's Grotto

Saturday 3rd December 2022
2pm - 6pm

Family Skate for £ only £6.50 for Great Denham Residents

Come and see Santa for only £5 per child

Places re limited so early booking is essential via

<https://greatdenhamcommunityhall.surreptone.com>

Contact events@greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk for more

information or our Instagram & Facebook pages for updates

Great Denham Community Hall 61-63 Simon Way, ME11 9GF

By the time this newsletter reaches you the Winter Wonderland will already have taken place – we hope that everyone enjoyed themselves.

A big thank you to all the staff and Trustees of the Hall for putting this event on for residents, and for all the other fabulous events that take place each year.

Become a Trustee

None of this would be possible without the work of the Hall staff and the Trustees of the Community Hall Charity.

The Charity is always looking for new Trustees and would love to hear from any resident able to offer some time. There is usually a Trustee meeting each month and we ask all Trustees to support at least one event or activity each year.

Drop-in Session – interested and want to meet some of the other Trustees and find out what its all about? The team will be holding a drop-in session on January - date and time to be confirmed – so do come along and have a chat – tea and biscuits are on us (might even stretch to cake!). For details check out the Hall's website and Facebook page.

More Events coming up – get these dates in your diary

Pop Up Children's Cinema – these take place on the first Friday of each month at 3.30pm

Easter Events – Easter Craft workshops on 4th April 2023 and an Easter Event on 8th April 2023

Summer Festival event – 1st July 2023

Halloween Events – Craft workshops on 24th October 2023, Halloween Disco on 27th October 2023 and Halloween Cinema on 3rd November 2023.

Winter Wonderland and Festival – 2nd December 2023

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

Coronation of King Charles III – Saturday 6th May 2023 – Celebrating as a Community

The coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6th May 2023, and Monday 8th May will be a Bank Holiday.

The Parish Council know that many residents will want to mark the occasion, and that this is an opportunity to do something as a community. We'd love to know what people would like to do, probably on either Sunday 7th or Monday 8th May – please use the link and QR code below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Charles3Coronation>



Make a Difference in your Community



Great Denham Community Hall

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

Great Denham Primary School

The Governing Board has a vacancy for a Partnership Governor – to be eligible you can't be a parent of a child at the school unfortunately, but should have an interest in the school and community and either business or education/learning experience that you can offer the Board. To find out more please email the Clerk to the Governors: anna.omeara@gdps.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.

Lastly, Local Council Elections – 4th May 2023

The next Local Council elections will be held on Thursday 4th May 2023 – and Great Denham will become a Ward in its own right. This means that we will be voting for our own Ward Councillor to represent all residents at the Borough, champion our issues and make sure our voices are heard. **Please make sure you cast your vote!**