

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 6.00pm at the Denham Village Hall, Denham UB9 5BN

Councillors:	Cllr S Williams (SW) – Chairman	Cllr A Head (AWH)
	# Cllr J Walsh (JW)	Cllr S Sproul (SS)
	Cllr A Hans (AH)	Cllr B Keen (BK)
	Cllr M Heath (MH)	Cllr E Austin (EA)
	Cllr W Davey (WD)	# Cllr G Hollis (GH) (Unitary & DPC)
	# Cllr S Jefferys (SJ)	Cllr J Chokkar
	# Cllr M Goonesekera (MG)	# = Apologies received
Clerk:	Derek Wilson MBE	## = Apologies not given

Agenda No	Minutes
20240508/01	Welcome and Introductions Cllr SW welcomed residents to this annual parish meeting. Introductions were made to the Chairs of individual standing committees, also to the Clerk and Co Clerk.
20240508/02	Minutes from previous year's annual meeting held 25 May 2023 Agreed by the members present at the meeting.
20240508/03	Chairman's Report - Cllr SW informed the meeting that this was her third year as Chair and has been eventful as the previous two. We had continued to hold our full council meetings at Denham Bowls Club and then took the decision to move back to our office behind the village memorial hall. - We have three members of staffing team, Derek our Clerk, Jay our Deputy Clerk and our Finance and Communications Clerk Susan, who is part-time. - We are still pushing Bucks to clear the flytipping on Old Rectory Lane and anything can now be reported on Fix My Street whether it be a streetlight out, pothole, flytipping, hedge needs cutting and this will then be forwarded onto the relevant department to deal with. - I have regular meetings with SBALC and BMKALC, the local Community Board, Chairs of other Parish Councils and Align who are working on the HS2 project. I have visited the New Denham Quarry, which residents in time will be allowed to wander around the allocated footpaths and it is a truly lovely space. Had meetings with Bosch and Springbridge and regular drive arounds with our LAT. - One of my proudest moments of this year was to read the Proclamation of King Charles on the village green. It was a bit nerve wracking, having all those people there listening, whilst I read out the words, but my face now appears on quite a lot of people's phones! - We have been trying to get the old Scout Hut in Denham Green to use as a Community Hub for groups and a Men in Sheds. Unfortunately, Bucks Council took so long in handing over that it was subject to arson last year and completely burnt down. At this stage we are unsure what will happen to this piece of land. - Another area we had tried to get as a Community Asset was the old Tilehouse Centre in Denham Green, which we wanted again for the community. This is where we could expand our Memory Café, let carers have much needed time on their own once they had dropped their partners off and also have other community groups use the building. We put a business plan together helped by a similar run association in Princes Risborough. Despite evidence of increasing numbers of people getting Dementia and people needing day care, Bucks Council decided to sell the land, which is currently being marketed for housing development. In my opinion, a very short-sighted decision. - We have liaised with various residents in all parts of Denham, who have had issues with parking and HGV's and with Bucks Council to try and alleviate their problems. Some with success. - We also had an Electoral review of the boundaries of Denham, which wanted New Denham to join with Iwer, which your parish council fought quite hard to keep with the rest of the parish, alongside residents from New Denham and Willowbank.

	• Our Community events go from strength to strength and my fellow Councillor will update you more shortly. You will also find on your chairs our latest Newsletter, which we are hoping to make at least quarterly to keep you up to date with our news and from Bucks. Most parish councillors have attended a First-Aid course. • Denham Parish Council is made up of 12 councillors, we currently have three vacancies. People start off as Associates, so they can see whether the council is something for them. We like people to attend two committee meetings and one full council meeting and then decide. They are then co-opted onto the council. If more people want to become a councillor than there are vacancies for then an election is called. If you feel that this is something you might be interested in please speak to anyone of us here tonight or email the office or a councillor stating your interest. • The other area that we need help with is volunteers, without volunteers we couldn't run the events that we already do, so a huge thank you to those that volunteer already, it is much appreciated. Again, if you would like to volunteer on a regular basis or an ad hoc basis, please speak to a councillor or the office.
20230508/ 04	Communities Report • Cllr AH provided the members present the report of Communities and Events, as Chair of this committee. We provide a full range of events for all sections of the community. • We have had great pleasure in supporting residents, diagnosed with dementia and their carers through provision of a monthly Memory Café held at St Mark's Hall in Denham Green. This is a happy event with entertainment and lunch. The volunteers, Councillors and guests all look forward to sharing time together. We continue to increase the range of activities that we can offer for our guests. • The Social Afternoons held at the New Denham Community Hall continue to provide an afternoon of companionship and a chance to win at Bingo, enjoy refreshments, possibly even a dance or two. These are always well attended, and the live music provides an opportunity for dance and entertainment. • Music on the Green events are held throughout the summer and is a popular way for residents of all ages to have a leisurely afternoon with live music. These events are always well attended with picnics or a glass of alcohol providing a relaxed way to spend a Sunday afternoon. • Our usual Christmas events of dressing the tree on the village green and then having a carol singing event with the local schools, along with Rainbows/Brownies is now very popular start to Christmas in Denham. • The Christmas lights around the whole of Denham bring a festive feel for all residents as they move through the five areas of Denham. Each year we add to the lights, and we have really established a fantastic show of festive cheer for all residents to enjoy. • For Remembrance Sunday we place poppies on our lampposts and silhouettes in the five settlements throughout Denham and laid a wreath at the memorial service held at St. Mary's Church. • As always, it has been a very busy year and Denham Parish Council are proud of their involvement with the local community. Councillors work hard and we appreciate the volunteers who work alongside us in making our events happen. We will continue to work hard for the community throughout the coming year. We are continuing to look for more volunteers to help with our activities, if you would like to add your name to our list of volunteers that will be appreciated.
20240508/ 05	Planning Report • Cllr AWH as Chair of Planning presented his report to the members present at the meeting. • The committee meets once a month, and its primary function is to act as a consultee on any planning applications that have been made. He emphasized that we are not the Local planning Authority, so do not have the power to directly approve or refuse an application. • Ordinarily planning applications are examined by Officers of Buckinghamshire Council and approved or refused under their delegated authority. This means that most matters are not scrutinized by Bucks Councillors unless they ask to take a particular interest in that matter. • In order to improve the democratic scrutiny process, the parish council can do what is known as a 'Call-In' process, where if it thinks there is sufficient planning reason, it can

	request that the application is put to the formal Bucks planning committee, which is in public can be judged on its merits by them, rather than an officer. • The standard agenda for all the parish's planning meetings allow for a public session at the beginning, whereby members of the community can raise real planning issues with the committee. • A regular parish planning committee can typically review 8-10 applications at a meeting, and these can be standard, permitted development or certificate of lawfulness applications. It is normal that some of those applications can be proposed works to trees that have a TPO on them, or buildings that require particular listed building consent or have conservation status. • Whilst the majority of applications are approved subject to normal conditions it is true to say that Denham, like other areas, has many threats of inappropriate development within its boundaries. These are often 'over development' where the density or dimensions of the proposals are considered too great for the site and the surrounding neighbourhood. • One of the unique features of Denham is its location within the Green Belt and the Colne Valley, but the protection from these controls is tested on a regular basis and calls for robust responses. Our position is weakened by the lack of a Local Plan and that looks to be exacerbated by the delay at Bucks Council. • Accordingly, the Parish Council is considering the possibility of having to make early updating of the Denham Neighbourhood Plan, a process that will call for significant input from the local community. • Unauthorised development that should have planning consent, but those responsible have by-passed such controls is an increasing problem for us and often involves action by Bucks Planning Enforcement team and sometimes reference to the Planning Inspectorate. It is clear that this part of Bucks Council's responsibilities is very under resourced leading to significant delays. However, despite these difficulties you can be assured that DPC remains vigilant on such matters.
20240508/ 06	Finance Report • Cllr AH read out his report on behalf of the Finance Committee which he Chairs on behalf of the Council, giving a short rundown of the major decisions proposed/ achieved by the Finance Committee. • We continue to carry out detailed reviews of our budget requirements for the next three years with particular attention paid to 'ear marking reserves' for items that regularly need funding. As an example, equipment in our play areas will probably need renewing after they've been in situ 20 to 25 years, so in order that we don't have a large cost in one year we save a little each year towards the renewal bill by 'ear marking' that money in our reserves. This practice can make our reserves look high, but it is monies accounted for. We also need to be prudent and to have enough resources in hand for the regular maintenance and improvement of the facilities we have established. • We maintain stringent controls in place and our internal auditors will be in next month, followed by external auditors some weeks later. • A continued reduction in funds and level of services from Bucks Council, has put pressure on the Parish Council to address more queries, complaints and requests coming in from residents. We have also been continually under pressure to respond to a large number of consultations (e.g. Neighbourhood Plans) and the increased workloads being handled by our committees has put extra pressure on our office staff. We have managed this with excellent support of all Councillors and indeed extra effort of our staff. • Denham parish Council continues to ensure that it provides the best possible service to its residents at an affordable price. We have many initiatives in place such as introducing a Litter Picking Service along residential roads at the same time as the grass verges are cut. We also continue to update our play areas and recreational facilities to encourage residents across the parish to become more active. We are prioritizing more support, activities and social events for those residents less able to socialize and those who are living on their own without an established family network such as Afternoon Social with Bingo events, Memory Café, and Music on the Green. • As you can see there is an awful lot to achieve, and we have set ourselves some high targets to meet. We are determined to do our utmost on behalf of the community and look forward to pushing ahead with our projects.

	It was also pointed out to members that were present that Denham Parish continues to have one of the lowest precepts in South Bucks, despite the small increase this year, you will agree that the relative amounts involved are very small compared to the wide range of work that is carried out by the parish.
20240508/07	Services Report - Cllr MH reported as Chair of the Services committee to members present on past achievements throughout the year since the last annual parish meeting. - The Services committee are responsible for keeping clear a wide range of open spaces, footpaths, and recreational areas throughout the parish estate. - We lease, install, refurbish, and maintain items such as swings, slides, outdoor gyms, playing fields, benches, bus stops, street signs and streetlights, and grass cutting abutting 30mph roads. - Given the excessive rainfall, we have all experienced how difficult it is to get the timing right to cut the grass, but by and large this has been carefully managed by our clerk Jay and our contractors on verges abutting 30mph roads. We also manage clearance on some Rights of Way and would love some regular walkers to volunteer to be our eyes when they are out and about, so they could us informed of overgrown hedges, low hanging branches, excessive litter, obstructions, etc., please let us know if you are interested in supporting us. - Financial demands can be high with maintaining recreation grounds for Denham, as we try to cater and maintain equipment for all 5 distinct areas: Denham Green, Denham Village, New Denham, Higher Denham and Tatling End. Whereas most parishes are only funding one children's play area. - All five communities have been provided with a children's play area containing suitable equipment and the last one refurbished was in Denham Green. Currently we are starting to refurbish the Alderbourne play area and have just updated the pathway to it. - We lease an area to the Denham Ladies Football Club in New Denham, and Denham United Football Club play in Martinsfield, an area we lease and have great support from Martin Baker. - We are exploring further opportunities for more sports and activities for all ages to engage in, so if you have any sports knowledge or free time and would assist our research into sport ideas, suitability, cost, please let us know. - Lots more gets actioned in Services, and we will outline as much as possible in the next DPC newsletter coming out around November. - Good news! One important update is about the A412 footpath between Denham shops by the railway station and the A40 traffic lights. If you are, or were, a frequent user of this path, you will know how it gets impassable after rainfall on the last stretch before Village Road. We did manage to secure some funding towards correcting this flooding, and have been researching a solution, and consulting with Bucks officers and TfB, who are drawing up a plan, that we will review and trust we can act upon before next winter. - We would also respectfully make you aware that the position of Parish Councillors is unpaid, and our time is given freely to ensure Denham is kept in good order, but we do need more volunteers to assist us. In between Services and Community Events we would ask for you to give us a helping hand. If you, or your group are at all interested, please speak to me or the clerk.
20240508/08	Policy and Procedures Report - Cllr EA as Chair of the Policy and Procedures Committee gave her report. - This committee keeps the Council policies and procedures up to date, to ensure that we have good governance, including compliance with the current law. These documents and updates are then recommended for adoption by Full Council. - This committee also gets involved with HR activities with staff recruitment, staff appraisals etc. - During the past year our work has included recommending signing-up to the Local Government Association Civility and Respect Project, updating our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, along with a new Training and Development policy. - What we do is essential, not just to keep the way we work up to date, but to provide visibility of what we do and that we are a well-run council to enable continuity when people take up new roles.

20240508/ 09	Unitary Authority Councillors Report • Cllr JC explained about the financial position of Bucks Council that they are in a better financial position than other councils, but this has still placed pressure on budgets, particularly within the social care sector for Adults and Children Services. • £5M has been released by Government to focus on the road network in Buckinghamshire. Balfour Beattie has replaced Ringway as their Highway contractor. • He advised members that he speaks out at planning meetings of the Local Planning Authority on planning applications that can affect the Denham community. • Fly tipping and littering is still a major annoyance within the Denham area. There have been tougher penalties imposed on those that have been caught, but this issue is still ongoing. • Local Plan for Buckinghamshire has been further delayed, which is causing issues as we are under severe threat from London.
20240508/ 10	External Speakers • Chris Bambery from the Co-Op Denham Green is owned independently by their members and operates on an ethically and morally on behalf of the community that they serve, as a result they are able to provide some of their income towards local community projects. • They have been able to provide local community funds or food and refreshments towards the parish Memory Café that is run for the benefit of Dementia sufferers and their carers. • Local funds are due to open shortly for local causes, as these benefit the community and the applications are assessed by managers based at local branches within the area to ensure fairness in distribution of funds to those causes that apply. • Station Commander Andrew Holtzhausen from Bucks Fire and Rescue Service attended to give an overview to the members present about Wildfires, due to the number of fields that surround Denham. • The reason for these Wildfires spreading is due to the high temperatures when the ground is particularly parched at the height of summer. They have three off-road vehicles that can handle rough terrain to access the land, but sometimes it can take time to access certain types of land due to obstructions placed by the landowner, which means that they must find an alternative route to gain access. Details are available on the Bucks Fire Service website, about Wildfire prevention. • A risk assessment is carried out when attending these fires, as they can get out of control quite quickly, as the fire could be in a field that backs onto woods or residential property. Also, fly tipping of rubbish onto this land can add as an accelerator for the fire spreading. He advised that 50,000 acres of land has previously been destroyed in the Buckinghamshire area. Last year fire actually jumped the A404 towards Marlow due to change of wind direction, which led to the closure of this road whilst it was contained. • When the Scout Hut burnt down 6 appliances attended the site to control the fire that was in progress. • They have a good relationship with RAF Northolt to assist when required, so working together a number of these fires can be prevented. • Gavin Bates from Bosch attended from their Headquarter Operation in Denham to give members present about their future plans for Broadwater Park. They have now purchased the building next door to their site, which was the former headquarters for the International Hotel Group, so that the site will be wholly owned by Bosch. They are planning to provide a service training centre for their technicians. • Bosch not only do power tool components, domestic appliances, including Worcester boilers, and other new technologies. • The intention is to provide 3 outdoor meetings rooms that can be used by local schools and other community groups. The re-instatement of the Grade II listed gardens that were designed by Pearman Jackson, that could be used for other events in summer. • A couple of questions were posed by the members present to the speakers who responded accordingly.

20240508/11	Open Forum Discussion The following items were discussed by members present at the meeting. Fix My Street requests are dealt with Bucks Council, who designate them to the individual Directorates within the council, depending on the issue reported. There was concern that items are reported but don't appear to be actioned quickly or not all. Litter rubbish left where walkers walk not being picked up and one resident felt it should not be their responsibility to collect this rubbish by the highway. Potholes are only given a temporary repair and only last a short duration before they pop out and why, they cannot be repaired properly in the first instance. There have been a couple of break-ins recently within the Denham area and concerned about the lack of a response from the Police. These were accessed from a footpath. The Police may not be in the area at a given time, as they are based at Taplow. A resident mentioned about the number of HGV's still doing a 'U' turn manoeuvre at the top of Cheapside Lane. According to our Highways LAT there is nothing that can be done about this issue. Matter was raised about Bucks Golf Club and concern was the new boundary fencing that has been erected. This is to protect their site as vandals have been getting onto the golf course with scooters and damaging the greens etc. Cllr AWH referred to a recent planning application that has been submitted by Bucks Golf Club to utilise the West Gate entrance by the side of St. Mary's Church, this has the potential to lead to increased traffic in the village. Denham Parish Council has objected to this application and requested Call-In for open transparent debate.
	Meeting concluded at 7.36pm

Signed: Derek Wilson – Executive Clerk & RFO

Date: 23 May 2024