

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 8 May 2025 at 6.00pm at the Denham Village Hall, Denham UB9 5BN

Councillors:	Cllr S Williams (SW) – Chairman	Cllr N Abajian (NA)
	Cllr J Walsh (JW)	## Cllr J Griffiths-Heath
	Cllr A Hans (AH)	Cllr B Keen (BK)
	Cllr M Heath (MH)	Cllr E Austin (EA)
	Cllr A Head (AWH)	Cllr G Hollis (GH)
	## Cllr M Goonesekera (MG)	
		# = Apologies received
Clerk:	Derek Wilson	## = Apologies not given

Meeting was voice-recorded

Agenda No	Minutes
20260507/01	Welcome and Introductions Cllr SW welcomed residents to this annual parish meeting. Introductions were made to the Chairs of individual standing committees, and to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Welcome was also extended to Cllr Thomas Broom, Cllr Michael Bracken and Joy Morrissey MP. Cllr Jaspal Chhokar has given his apologies.
20260507/02	Minutes from previous year's annual meeting held 8 May 2025 Agreed by the members present at the meeting.
20260507/03	Chairman's Report Cllr SW gave her presentation; Community Board – this has yet again been changed by Bucks Council and is more of a networking opportunity than a funding one, though there is a pot of money that is to be allocated over a wider area. This financial year two of the projects the CB helped to fund was the information board on the Village Green and a drop kerb by Denham Green E-Act Academy for a disabled child to get to school more safely. One of the issues that is still outstanding, and we have been told will be done this year are the double yellow lines at the top of Old Mill Road. No date has yet been set. As you know the police have been given new powers to help with the pony and trap racing on the A413. Whilst it is not illegal to drive a pony and trap on the road it is illegal to race. This is now classed as an emergency, and residents can call 999 to report if police aren't already there. I have continued to have regular drive rounds the parish our local LAT pointing out any highways issues and asking for advice. We have a MVAS which is currently located on Tilehouse Lane South and has been installed previously in Cheapside Lane and Nightingale Way. If there is anywhere you think would be a good site please contact our clerk via email. The MVAS we have collects different types of data and TVP are happy for us to pass on and they will use the data for future speed areas. I have also attended the following meetings Colne Valley Friends AGM, South Bucks Association of Local Councils where we talk about issues that affect the parishes of South Bucks and have found this very useful where we bounce ideas of each other and see if what works in one area will work in another., Parish Liaison Meetings where local parishes have a meeting with representatives of Bucks Council and receive updates from them and the Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils, where I am Vice Chair of their Executive Board.

	Myself and 2 other councillors still meet with HS2/Align to discuss ongoing works at the site, though now they are currently waiting for the review to report Allotment committee meetings, meetings with the PCSOs for Denham, attended the Highways Conference in Aylesbury with another councillor which we listened to Bucks members detailing their projects. A sad occasion happened just before Christmas when we lost one of our councillors Bill Davey, a longstanding member of the council and have install a memorial bench to him.
20260507/ 04	Communities Report Cllr BK became Chair last year and the first event was the Memory Café for dementia sufferers and their carers. This event happens once a month and encourages residents who suffer from dementia to come over and have a nice afternoon. This event happens on the first Friday of each month. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please let us know. On the second Sunday of each month, we have an Afternoon Social and Bingo event. This is with Tea and Bingo and win a couple of prizes. We have bands/singers at this event and Music on the Green events that happen between May and September. It is a lovely event where you can bring a picnic and sit down and enjoy the music. A Summer Festival was organised last year. This was a well-received event, and residents have indicated that they would like to see more. There was a mixture of entertainment, fairground, food stalls and animals. This event is going to be held later this year in September, as last year it was held in June and was too hot. Ongoing projects include Litter Picking and recently the South Bucks Wombles attended clearing along the A40 from the BP garage to Denham roundabout. Flowerpots and daffodils have been planted, depending on the season. We have been refreshing our website with new pictures, if you want to send in any photographs for the website. The Christmas Fayre was held in this room with Santa on stage, this was our first time event and a few businesses in the locality sponsored this event from happening and would like to thank Martin Baker for their contribution. Christmas Trees were lit up with different designs and further lights will be purchased. Beating of the Bounds is happening on Sunday 10 May between 2pm and 4pm meeting at the Colne Valley Regional Park. Always looking for volunteers to assist us with events.
20260507/ 05	Finance Report Cllr AH gave his presentation; I'd like to give you a short summary on the major decisions proposed/achieved by the Finance Committee this past year: Denham Parish Council continues to ensure that it provides the best possible service to its residents at an affordable price. We continue with many initiatives such as Lighting up Denham (festive lights all over Denham – you will have certainly noticed the difference this year!) and Blooming Denham, with flower beds appearing all over Denham and hanging baskets from lampposts too. We also continue to update our Play areas and recreational facilities to encourage residents across the Parish to become more active. We are prioritising more support, activities and social events for those residents less able to socialise and those who are living on their own without an established family network such Tea/Bingo events, Memory Cafe and Music on the Green. This year we also started the Festival in the Field, a summer fayre for the residents to enjoy and plan to have a much-revamped version in 2026.

	We undertake detailed reviews of our budget requirements over a three-year period, with particular focus on earmarking reserves for items that require regular or long-term funding. For example, equipment in our play areas will likely need replacing after 20 to 25 years of use. To avoid a large one-off cost in any single year, we set aside a small amount annually and earmark it within our reserves for future renewal. This approach can make our reserves appear high, but these funds are already allocated for specific purposes. We must also remain prudent by ensuring we have sufficient resources for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the facilities we provide. We have stringent financial controls in place, and our internal auditors will be in next month, followed by external auditors some weeks later. A continued reduction in funding and in the level of services provided by Unitary has placed increasing pressure on the Parish Council, resulting in more queries, complaints, and requests from residents. We have also faced significant demands from responding to numerous consultations, such as Neighbourhood Plans, and the growing workload across our committees has added further strain on our office staff. Despite this, we have managed effectively thanks to the outstanding support of all Councillors and the exceptional commitment of our staff. We have set ourselves some high targets to achieve and embark on 1-2 new projects to further serve the community we live in. We are determined to do our utmost on behalf of the community and look forward to pushing ahead with our projects so please do keep a look out. As a result of excellent financial management, we maintain one of the lowest precepts in South Bucks and indeed we even managed to reduce this from previous years. We continue to work hard and provide a wide range of services to the Denham Community.
20260507/06	Policy and Procedures Report This committee keeps the Council policies and procedures up to date, to ensure that we have good governance, including compliance with current law. These documents and updates are then recommended for adoption by Full Council. Recent updates range from the Lone Worker policy (our employees working on their own in the office and outside maintaining play areas etc need to be kept safe), and our Biodiversity Policy. We are also involved in recruitment, staff appraisals, etc and have helped the Council recruit 2 new part time staff members. 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, and to enable continuity when people take up new roles.
20260507/07	Services Report Cllr MH gave her presentation on the tasks completed in 2025/26 A412 – Flooded footpath – Completed works in Oct 2025 - Adding 2 x soak aways to collect excess water – Pathway sided out to support BC waste team to clean/clear pathway – Hedges cleared back to accessible footpath. We inspected another area along this path which had a muddy patch and are now trying to address that. Added – drop kerb outside the Denham E-ACT school – to support disabled residents and school children in need of support. 2025 Pollard trees in W&T In March 2025. Tree survey/maintenance completed in all play areas and open spaces. Aldbourn, W&T, Village Green, Tatling End, James Martin Close, KWL & Skylark Copse. Skylark Copse major clearance of dead wood and vegetation – can be used as a biodiversity area. 2025.

	Grass cuts every 6 weeks. ROW maintenance work is completed twice a year, starting in March & completed in September. Weed spraying – twice a year. All the brick bus shelters were deep-cleaned and some graffiti removed in 2025. New garage doors fitted to the Denham village garage. Streetlight survey completed, issues with streetlights all fixed, ready for the darker nights 2025 Denham Village: New white wooden fence on the bridge – completed 2025 W&T – refresh of seating shelter.2025 Martinsfield improvements – Added 2 new 5 a side pitched – 2025 Maintenance – cut back all the heavy vegetation growth all on the site, including the perimeters and car park. 2025 Verti-drain / reseed all the football pitches. May 2026 We are considering adding a MUGA (multi-use games area) and Padel courts to further sports opportunities in Denham and are currently in discussions with MB about extending our lease.
20260507/08	Planning Report The Committee meets once a month, and its primary function is to act as a Consultee on any planning application that has been made in Denham. I should emphasise 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 scrutinised by Bucks Councillors unless they ask to take a particular interest in that application. In order to improve the scrutiny process, the Parish Council can do what is known as a “Call-In”, where if it thinks there is sufficient planning reason, it can request the application is put to the formal Bucks Planning Committee, which is heard in public, and be judged on its merits by them, rather than an officer. The standard agenda for all the Parish’s planning meetings allows 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 6-10 applications each meeting, so that’s possibly 100 in a year. Whilst most applications are approved, subject to normal planning conditions, it is true to say that Denham, like other local areas, currently has many threats of inappropriate development within its boundaries. These are often “over development” where the density or scale of the proposals are considered too great for the site. We also find that proposals are often out of character with the surrounding neighbourhood and the proposed usage is not in keeping with the locality. One of the unique features of Denham is its location within the Green Belt and the Colne Valley region. The protection provided by those controls is tested on a regular basis and often calls for a robust response. Our position is regrettably weakened by the lack of an up-to-date Buckinghamshire Local Plan and that looks to be prolonged by further delay at the Council.

	At the commencement of the Buckinghamshire Unitary Council, it was said that a new Local Plan would be in place by 2025, however it is now apparent that the publication of the plan is delayed to sometime in 2027. As you may be aware there have been significant Government policy changes regarding planning regulations, and particularly the need for building many more new homes across the country. Buckinghamshire is now expected by Government to provide sites for approximately 90,000 new homes for the period until 2045. That is an increase of some 30,000 homes as compared to previous projections. We don't yet know what numbers our Ward will be expected to contribute. Accordingly, the Parish Council has decided that it must instigate an early review and updating of the Denham Neighbourhood Plan, in the light of these national changes and has appointed Consultants to assist with the process. Others here can update the meeting on progress being made. I want to now go back to the Local Plan. As you may recall there was a "call for sites" process earlier this year and the results are shown on the two maps of Denham on display. There are more than 30 sites indicated, some of which are difficult to identify, but I want to mention 3 of the most significant in scale. We have 2 possible gravel extraction sites, The Lea South and potentially another site. Lastly, we have early day proposals for a Data Centre to be located just off the Denham Roundabout and either side of Denham Court Drive. As I say it is early days on this matter, and no formal application has been made, although the applicants have clearly been in discussion with Bucks. Some facts we know about it at present, the buildings will be of the order of 650,000 sq ft in area, that's more than 8 times the size of the pitch at Wembley Stadium. To the top of extract flues, it is 87 ft high, that makes it approaching the equivalent of 9 residential storeys high. The western boundary of the 23-acre site adjoins the houses of Priory Close and is not far distant from Lindsey Road. As always with such buildings of this usage there will be major demands on electrical supply to run the massive computing power in the building and the environmental impact of the discharge of water used in the cooling processes. The 24hr operation of these buildings has been known to emit constant noise from within and its operation must lead to constant and significant traffic and noise pollution. I think it's more than time that we gave our guests an opportunity to comment on the threats identified here and answer questions from those present.
20260507/09	Unitary Authority Councillors update Cllr Michael Bracken – introduced himself as one of three Buckinghamshire Unitary Councillors & Deputy Cabinet member for Planning. He set out the challenges Bucks are facing regarding number of houses 95,000 in Bucks, 40-50% higher than the number previously set. Bucks is passionate in not having development in the Green Belt. Majority of new development to take place in High Wycombe and Aylesbury. Local Plan more advanced than previously indicated with next stage of the consultation being held on 23 July, relating to Regulation 19. Consultation period will be for 6 weeks. Data centres we are within the Strategic Triangle based in Slough with the infrastructure coming in from under the Channel to Slough and then running along the M4 corridor. Applicants

	can request that their application is considered by Government as a National Strategic Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and this could be potentially taken out of the hands of Buckinghamshire Council's Local Planning Authority determination. Cllr Thomas Broom is the second Unitary Authority Councillor and Cabinet member for Transport/Highways, referred to the number of gritting lorries out over winter due to the cold weather. Teams have been mobilised to make repairs to potholes, 2000 defects were reported every month on Fix My Street. This was three times the number reported last year. The long-term fix is to resurface the road to get fewer potholes. The previous financial year £120m has been spent on the roads, which surfaced 220 roads and this financial year that number will increase to 270 roads. The strategic roads programme included the A412 and a large stretch of the A40. The entire stretch of the A40 to be resurfaced from Denham roundabout to Beaconsfield. This will take several years, as it will be done in stretches. Joy Morrissey MP spoke very passionately about saving the Green Belt and asked everyone to write in separately objecting to the data centre application. The Government has increased the housing targets disproportionately and the London boroughs have had their numbers reduced. The whole process needs to be slowed down and there are two strategies that need to be adopted. The big projects coming in we need to all object to, such as the quarry sites and the data centre. If you place restrictions on the planning applications, it slows the process down. A recent application in Bourne End still has not yet been determined by Bucks Council, due to the number of restrictions placed on the application. Regarding the potential of the Denham Data Centre application, it could be deemed as a National Strategic Infrastructure Project with potentially the Secretary of State overruling local objections. There should be collective joint working together to oppose this proposal and protect our green spaces.
20260507/ 10	Open Forum Discussion Cllr J Walsh highlighted the purpose of the monthly Memory Café advising the benefits of Dementia sufferers attending with their carers/partners. The first Friday of the month allows the users to have a lunch and have a sing-a-long amongst friendly company with the next meeting happening tomorrow 8 May at 11am St Marks Hall at Denham Green. A resident raised the issue of planning and took issue with the fact that the London housing numbers had gone down and Bucks Council had an increase. He advised that the policies that will be developed in the new Neighbourhood Plan should be sound. Cllr G Hollis replied that is why the Neighbourhood Plan needs to wait until the revised NPPF is published and the Bucks Local Plan Regulation 19 is out for consultation. Another resident was concerned about the new substation and data centre on the road to Iver. There are several Data Centre applications being proposed locally, from Beaconsfield, Denham and to Iver. Why the necessity of having all these proposals within a small area. The impact on local ecology, as they consume a large amount of water and electricity. Most residents who attended this meeting were against this proposal for a data centre and to the extraction of sand & gravel from The Lea South. On another quarry extraction a conveyor belt system was in place to allow shipments to be made using the canal. However, this system was removed, and shipments were made by HGV's.

	Meeting concluded at 8pm
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Signed: Derek Wilson – Executive Clerk

15 May 2026

Chair _____

Date _____

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