



Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board held on Thursday 21 October 2021 in via MS Teams, commencing at 6.30 pm and concluding at 8.08 pm.

Councillors present

S Chhokar, P Bass, M Bracken, D Brackin (Fulmer Parish Councillor), T Broom, T Butcher, J Chamberlain (Chalfont St Giles Parish Councillor), P Dale (Chalfont St Peter Parish Council), I Darby, J Hatton (Chalfont St Peter Parish Councillor) G Hollis, C Jackson, S Kumar Jha (Chalfont St Peter Parish Councillor), J Rush, R Ryan (Chalfont St Peter Parish Councillor), T Shinner (Chalfont St Peter Parish Councillor), K Southworth (Chalfont St Peter Parish Councillor) and L Smith BEM, S Williams (Denham Parish Councillor)

Others in attendance

D Evans (Chalfont St Peter Parish Clerk), S Moffat (Gerrards Cross Town Clerk), H Griffiths (Chalfont St Giles Parish Clerk), Kathleen Martin, D Holden, A Sultan, C Gray, S Weston, D Wilkinson, S Pomeroy, J Shaw, M Stevens and Oktober Stevens

Apologies

A Wood and Anne Marie Vldar

Agenda Item

1 Welcome

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

2 Apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Ann Vldar and Cllr Andrew Wood.

3 Declarations of interest

The following declarations of interest were declared:-

Cllrs Darby, Rush and Smith declared an personal interest as members of the Chalfont St Peter Parish Council (Item 8- Cross Priority Application - Chalfont St Peter Big Biodiversity Battle).

4 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 8 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

5 Groundwork South Colne Valley Regional Park

Stewart Pomeroy, Colne Valley Team Manager gave a presentation on the Colne Valley key projects and vision for the future. During the presentation the following information was provided: -

- The Colne Valley Regional Park was formed in the 1960s and scoped 5 local authority areas.
- Key statistics to show the scale of the park included, 50,000 people live in the valley, 3 million people lived within 10 miles, the Valley covered 43 square metres, 70 lakes, 200km river, 100s green spaces, 5 county parks, 20 nature reserves and 13 scientific sites of interest.
- The benefits of green belt land included 6 objectives: vibrant and sustainable landscape, safeguarding the countryside, biodiversity, countryside recreation, rural economy and community participation.
- Over 75 organisations have pledged support for the Colne Valley.
- The Green Infrastructure Strategy had been created for organisations to adopt as the basis for the vision for the future of the area. The Strategy highlighted the project aspirations for fundraising and opening up discussions with land developers. Hopefully, the local authorities would reflect the Strategy in their local plans. The Denham Neighbourhood Plan had already adopted part of the strategy and there were ongoing discussions with Buckinghamshire councillors to link the Strategy to the Buckinghamshire local plan.
- The team have produced good work in tackling a number of issues facing the Colne Valley including, rural urban fringe, landscape decline, dereliction, HS2 and Heathrow expansion.
- A map of the Colne Valley regional park from 2018 was presented showing villages, small industrial estates and motorways. Recent growth areas were highlighted and there was concern for the future of the park regarding major developments and lack of clarity and vision for the greenbelt. Furthermore, whilst there had been proactive support from the local MP regarding Colne Valley Regional Park it was important to engage with the government on the encroachment of the green belt as a wider issue with major infrastructure projects such as HS2 and Heathrow.

The key projects the team had participated in were highlighted including the government green recovery challenge fund which gave young people not in work or education a six month placement to get them job ready. The Colne Valley was featured on Countryfile with the team advising on how they were tackling evasive species. Members were advised the organisation had small core funding, despite this for every £1 invested by local authorities and corporate supporters the team delivered £14 worth of projects. Another upcoming project was focused conservation training for local young people. Finally, it was advised that ARUP had been given ring fenced budgets to make transformational improvements on and

around the road network including improving biodiversity and a multi-million pound application had been made to Highways England to support biodiversity in the Colne Valley corridor.

The Chairman advised that the Community Board would support the Colne Valley Regional Park. It was requested that Stewart Pomeroy should follow up with the Community Board Co-ordinator as to how the Board could support the organisation and also check membership status.

A Member highlighted the importance of defending the greenbelt and asked if it was possible to extend the Chiltern AONB area to Colne Valley Regional Park. It was confirmed that discussions were in progress with Natural England but it would be helpful to gain the support of everyone in the region for this to happen. Another Member highlighted that the Colne Valley Regional Park was a vital asset for all community board areas and encouraged public engagement. The Team Manager was addressing this point and the best way to engage with residents and politicians to obtain designation for an AONB (see link below). A number of positive meetings had already been held with Joy Morrissey local MP.

https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SupportCVRP_BriefingNote_Sept2021.pdf

A Member reported the Colne Valley Regional Park had been impacted by HS2 and major developments and infrastructure projects . It would be helpful to organise an away day at the Colne Valley Regional Park to raise awareness of its strategic and ecological importance.

6 Welcome Back Fund

Donna Wilkinson, Principal Economic Development Officer provided a presentation on the welcome back fund and current campaigns. She had attended the last meeting on 8 July to provide information on the Welcome Back Fund which focused on making local towns more vibrant. The following points were raised in the presentation: -

- An update was given on the European Union funding which funded activities to improve high streets and encouraged people back to them post covid-19. The types of activities the funding covered included; events, animation entertainment, cleaning of grot spots, trails and place promotion and new seating, bins and lighting.
- The Economic Development Team have attended community boards and met with parish and town councils to improve local engagement and awareness. The Community Board Co-ordinators requested more ideas and suggestions for activities to improve local towns and high streets as funding was still available.
- There was an update on the welcome back to the high street campaign. The Team have put up banners and posters encouraging people back to the high street. In Wycombe there had been bespoke artwork commissioned on empty units and lamppost banners. There was a Hats off Festival in Chesham last month. In Amersham there was a Halloween trail upcoming and in

Wycombe Friday night entertainment was being considered.

- An update on forthcoming events was provided including; Christmas campaign, beautification of the high street and a high street business survey due for a final report in January which sought to identify business challenges and learn from different practices used during covid-19. The Visit Bucks team were working on place promotion and using photography and drone imaging to encourage visitors.
- There was a plea for any further ideas or suggestions to be emailed to Donna Wilkinson (donna.wilkinson@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).

A Member raised the idea that villages could put on events with live music and food vans similar to events on the continent. The Principal Economic Development Officer advised the Member that it would depend on the area and the businesses in the locality however the Member should email her directly to liaise further.

A Member highlighted Gerrards Cross was in need of new street lighting and street furniture. Furthermore, there was a request for banners to be erected and new signage at the entrance to Gerrards Cross town. The Principal Economic Development Officer advised the Member that the fund covered temporary measures so it was unlikely the funding would cover permanent fixtures such as lighting. Although banners, repairing of street furniture and signage could be in scope of funding.

There was also a point raised by a Member regarding a deep clean of the frontage of Denham Green parade of shops. The Member should formally contact the Principal Economic Development Officer to liaise further. She also mentioned that enhancing the area with greenery such as hanging baskets was in scope.

In response to a query the Principal Economic Development Officer confirmed the Welcome Back Fund was separate to the community board funding.

7 Shop Local

Steve Weston, Chairman of the Economic Regeneration action group presented an update on the shop local project. The verbal update included the following points: -

- The action group had met previously in September and October. There was 15% of the fund available with the Group wishing to explore ideas that required further funding.
- There was a Community Board event planned for March 2022 and input was needed from other parties beside the action group. He also asked whether community board screens could be made available at this event.
- An update from Bucks Business First was provided highlighting their Net Zero Bucks project and they were visiting schools to advise.
- There would be a focus on a shop local campaign particularly geared towards Christmas time : there were ongoing discussions with the Economic Development Team surrounding a Buckinghamshire wide initiative.
- There was an update on a funding application from Chalfont St Giles with a

request for ideas and proposals from parishes and town councils. One current project was supporting local businesses with a local delivery service.

- The awareness of shop local on social media was highlighted in the next door app. Gerrards Cross Town Council had also asked for assistance. A discussion was needed on the status of closed businesses and what help businesses required. The Economic Development Team were undertaking a Buckinghamshire wide business survey which would provide good information at a general and local level which would be very useful once collated.

8 Cross Priority Application - Chalfont St Peter Big Biodiversity Battle

John Shaw from Chiltern Rangers provided a verbal update on their work and upcoming projects in liaison with Chalfont St Peter Parish Council. The key aspects of their work included health and wellbeing, biodiversity projects, working with other organisations to enhance the environment and improve local communities.

There were 12 projects ongoing which were discussed including: -

- The aim to make Chalfont St Peter's local landscapes connected
- Enacting the Government's Biodiversity Strategy and Bucks Biodiversity action plan which at a local level included connecting people and places.
- Addressing the biodiversity, ecological and climate change crisis at a local level.
- Ongoing discussions with DEFRA on the Chalk Stream Strategy with the River Misbourne featuring in the plan.
- Linking the Buckinghamshire Council Climate Change Solution Strategy to the local strategy.
- The Bucks and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership would be publishing a document soon on biodiversity.
- 7 habitats have been targeted including both urban and country areas. The local community would be involved in nature on their doorstep including the creating and positioning of bat boxes and bird boxes. In addition trees would be cut back to allow light onto the streams, footbridge and paths would be repaired to increase accessibility, and there would be planting of trees and hazel plants next to allotments.
- The Team were hoping to secure funding for new machinery as part of the sustainable road verge management project. This would be essential for Buckinghamshire Council to manage verge wildflowers and work with other local councils in the area.
- It was reported Roberts Wood School would be planting more trees and positioning oak benches.
- The upcoming Feast Day would be utilised as an opportunity to educate the local community on the environment and the work of the Chiltern Rangers.

During discussion the following points were made: -

- A Member from the Chalfont St Peter Parish Open Spaces Committee noted the team had a good record of environmental activities with over 100 trees planted in 7 years. The complexities of planting new trees was

highlighted to the Board and there was a request for help to plant more trees.

- A Member queried where to find the details of the biodiversity strategy and the Chairman advised the formal presentation would be circulated to Board Members.
- It was highlighted that it was essential to plant indigenous wildflower otherwise there could be harmful effects on the environment. Furthermore, it was noted Fulmer Common must be protected. It was reiterated that all trees planted should be native (and not invasive) and there was an aspiration to create a local nursery for local trees. The wildflowers to be planted would be British. Trees should be also planted in the right area to stimulate growth.
- The Chairman highlighted it was encouraging other parishes were taking a similar approach and strategies by sharing best practice.

It was noted that a bid would be submitted for funding on the Big Biodiversity Battle.

9 Parish and Town Council Update (written)

Aniqah Sultan, Community Board Co-ordinator advised the parish and town minutes would be circulated by email after the meeting once all of them had been received. The Chairman reiterated it would be beneficial if parishes could submit their minutes in a timely fashion to ensure they can be circulated before the meeting.

10 Action Group Minutes

Aniqah Sultan, Community Board co-ordinator advised they were waiting for an update from some of the parishes. Once all have responded the minutes would be circulated to Board Members.

11 Budget Update

Aniqah Sultan, Community Board Co-ordinator advised there was currently 6 applications recently approved for funding. These included, a pedestrian island on Oxford Road and Denham Road, Fulmer common verges, A413 speed tube, bike racks in Chalfont St Peter, and a community fridge.

The current budget spend was £105k and £240k of the budget remained.

The Board were advised there would be more applications circulated for approval soon.

It was agreed that a budget update after each application was approved was useful for Members of the Board.

12 Public Health Profile

It was reported there was a Wellbeing and Safety action group. This public health profile provided an extremely useful document for the action group which included statistics for the Community Board area in the report and public health

recommendations which were advised and noted.

13 Service Director Update

Aniqah Sultan, Community Board Co-ordinator reported there were no corporate updates. The consultations ending soon would be emailed to Members as soon as they were available.

14 Topics for Future Meetings

The Chairman requested for Parish Councils to get involved in action groups as much as they can and to attend any meetings. There was a Community Board menu of ideas and initiative which the Community Board Co-ordinator would circulate to help provide inspiration for any future projects .

A Member queried why the Council website did not detail all of the action groups. The Community Board Co-ordinator advised that the website team have been contacted about increasing the level of information on the public website. However, there was more information on the Board and its action groups on Facebook.

There was a discussion regarding how local groups apply for joint Board funding particularly for the same cause. The Chairman advised that the previous document just referred to would provide guidance on this and the Community Board Co-ordinator could provide guidance on joint delivery partners. In terms of extending projects across the Board area a Member proposed cctv cameras and another Member proposed the biodiversity project and also bike racks. It was noted there could be a more holistic approach to Community Board funding and the parish councils could come forward with more ideas.

The Chairman advised there will be a Pride of Bucks award launched soon. It was noted this Community Board was already working on this and there was a working party discussing community awards.

A Member enquired when the police would next attend the Community Board . The Community Board Co-ordinator advised the police would be attending the next meeting particularly as the topic of the meeting would be community safety and if there were any contributions to email her.

A Member queried if there was going to be an event to raise the profile of the Community Board. It was advised if any ideas could be submitted then this could be discussed by the working party who would be bringing ideas together and would liaise with Buckinghamshire Council for a suitable date.

A Member suggested an idea for a topic relating to cycle paths linking Gerrards Cross, Tatling End and Denham. Work was being undertaken in some areas on walking and cycling strategies and it would be helpful for further information to be provided on this.

The Community Board Co-ordinator would liaise with the Service area to arrange

this.

- 15** **Date of Next Meeting**
27 January 2022 at 6:30pm