

Report to Nash Mills Parish Council

All reports to be circulated in advance of NMPC Meeting.

Working Group Name	The Denes
Meeting Held (Date)	n/a
Present at Meeting	n/a
Apologies	n/a
Agenda Items for Resolution/Decisions Needed in March <i>Please list each point requiring a decision separately for inclusion on the agenda.</i> <i>Please note items not included on the agenda cannot be approved.</i>	To determine the following: Whether council wish to agree to proposals offered by Dacorum Parks & Open Spaces Officer, based on the information contained within this report and the clerk report on this topic.

There has not been a working group meeting since the last report. However, the working group lead and parish clerk met with Dacorum's Parks & Open Spaces Officer to discuss options and recommendations based on his experience and previous projects. This report summarises the progress so far and the potential solutions for a way forward. The clerk has also written a report with some recommendations to be read alongside the working group report. The clerk report also shows the proposals received as a result of our meeting.

COMPLETED ITEMS

- **Post box** – picked up by our borough councillor – Jan has discussed this with the appropriate party at Royal Mail who will look into options. It is now left with them to determine whether a post box can be added to the Denes. No further action for the parish council.
- **Jubilee bench** – Jubilee bench installed prior to Jubilee weekend. The bench is being well used.
- **Queen's Green Canopy Tree** – Planted prior to the Jubilee weekend. Initial watering kindly arranged by clerk and warden.

IN PROGRESS ITEMS

- **Cycle racks and noticeboard** - Nikki working with Highways Officer to arrange installation.
- **QGC tree plaque** – plaque itself received, awaiting stand and stake in order to display.
- **Design illustrations** – See section below for recommendations.
- **Old Jubilee bench** – will be removed as part of the new design.
- **Street signs** – Clerk will request new street signs to replace old broken ones.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

- **Bin** – selection to include general litter, recycling and cigarette disposal
- **Red telephone box** – defer and bring back with options for use
- **Bug hotel or similar** – potential to incorporate into Dacorum officer's design
- **Drug link** – are there volunteering opportunities for drug link programme?
- **School art projects** – ideas / locations for school art work to be publicly displayed

DESIGN PROPOSAL FROM PARKS & OPEN SPACES OFFICER

The Denes working group lead and parish council clerk met with Dacorum Parks & Open Spaces Officer to discuss options and his recommendations for the area around The Denes. He suggested some changes to our original plans to include the green space at the corner of Georgewood Road and Barnacres Road. Below are some notes taken during that meeting, together with proposals from the Dacorum officer.

General comments

The officer's recommendation is not to concentrate on the area between the car park and the road as a 'social' space but to simply tidy that area and, instead, make better use of the green space on the corner of Georgewood / Barnacres.

This means the parish council do not need to be concerned with:

- safety concerns of the space being too near the road
- which way the benches should face and how to ensure they're still accessible
- the amount of concrete slabs required to create an area into the green space (and, as a result, losing green space)
- how to manage the design on a slope

Other advantages

- Improvements can be made much quicker
- Officer and team already manage the green spaces and know what's possible so we don't need to wait for HCC permissions
- The two existing benches (including the new Platinum Jubilee one) will continue to provide accessible seating from the highway

Officer's proposal for the original Denes green space area - the more formal neat and tidy space

- Keep to one additional bench (in addition to Jubilee bench). Replace old Golden Jubilee bench with new - parish can choose the style - officer will share options.
- Keep the bench in the same place so that it's easy to install and remains easily accessible from the path.
- Install section of wildflower turf
- Install planter(s) on the mowed area to add seasonal planting, bulbs, etc.
- Consider whether a contractor (need to investigate options) could mow the remaining grass to keep it neat and tidy during the spring / summer

Barnacres / Georgewood corner - a space for taking lunch / coffee and for biodiversity

Make better use of this space as the 'social' area by:

- Replacing existing benches with new / replacing with picnic benches / combination
- Making sure there is an area mowed to access seating
- Installing information board(s) relating to the biodiversity elements and, potentially, parish history

Make better use of this space for biodiversity by:

- Using the area as a study area, to let it grow and keep an eye on it to see what grows / lives there
- Install insect houses / bee houses
- Information board to explain details
- Possibly one or two fruit trees (officer did mention that these take a lot of work to be successful)

Note, the edges of the space would be mowed and access to the seating, etc.

Other things noted

- Although officer is keen to work together with us, he has the influence and authority to do the biodiversity side of things without our inclusion
- Officer knows well what has been done in other areas and what HCC will generally not be concerned about
- Bins - we can ask for recycling bins to be included but it won't actually be recycled due to the high volume of cross contamination (people not putting things in the right bins) so not sure if it's worth it
- Telephone box - Officer will work on the initial design without a telephone box. This can be brought to council as its own item for discussion.
- Street sign - the Barnacres Road street sign is not readable and needs replacing. Nikki has reported but officer pointed out that it's important for emergencies so Nikki will follow up.

Funding

- Funding would be a combination of DBC and parish as a collaborative approach
- Officer's approach is likely to be less expensive for the parish as DBC can fund certain items as part of their overall project