

# Northby NorthEast

Great Linford  
Parish Council



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- BLAKELANDS
- BOLBECK PARK
- CONNIBURROW
- DOWNHEAD PARK
- DOWNS BARN
- GIFFARD PARK
- GREAT LINFORD
- NEATH HILL
- PENNYLAND
- REDHOUSE PARK
- TONGWELL
- WILLEN PARK

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## Contacts

GLPC Parish Councillors, the wards they represent and their contact details.

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Vacancy

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Vacancy

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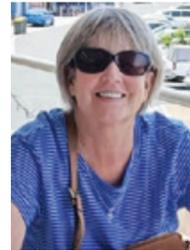
Vacancy



# Summer 2021

## Comment

### Meet new councillor Jane Mackenzie



I joined the Great Linford Parish Council team in January 2021 – one month after returning to the area after living in Australia for seven years and London for 15 years.

I moved to Milton Keynes as a 14-year-old and went to Stantonbury Campus when it was run by the wonderful Geoff Cooksey. I am convinced it was my time there that set me up for a life of exploration, learning and trying new things. It was my careers advisor there who pointed me in the direction of marketing, which I went on to study and work in for many years – the last 10 years as head of marketing for Marks & Spencer.

I have always believed in getting involved in my community and it's always been well worth it – I've made good friends, done some fun things and learnt a lot along the way.

Since joining Great Linford Parish Council I've attended all the full council meetings and joined the Community Services Committee as Vice Chair. It's an area of service I'm passionate about and I hope my background in communications will help me build strong connections with the community. I want to be a voice for the community and make a positive difference in the neighbourhood.

As a new Councillor, I bring a fresh enthusiasm, lots of new ideas and a care and willingness to help my community wherever I can. From my experience to date, I am amongst good company, with all the Councillors and office team being passionate and dedicated to making our area a better place to live.

Once Covid restrictions allow, I hope I will meet many of you at local events and activities.

In the meantime, if there's anything you'd like me to champion on your behalf, email me at [Jane.Mackenzie@great-linford.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Mackenzie@great-linford.gov.uk)

**Jane Mackenzie**

**Parish Councillor, Great Linford Parish Council**

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#### Front Cover:

Photo by Sammy Jones

# SETTING THE BUDGET

## A Five Year Plan

**When setting the budget earlier this year, we needed to take into account the financial impacts for the following 12 months, and we looked further ahead too – to plan for the next five years.**

We were faced with a difficult decision; to pare back services and keep the precept down, or to increase the figure and continue to put the needs of the Parish and our residents at the top of the agenda.

Great Linford Parish Council (GLPC) looked carefully at all options, and made the decision to raise the precept by £29.01 a year. The increase represents an additional £2.41 cost per month to parishioners, which will allow us to ensure the smooth running of the Parish during the pandemic, and beyond.

GLPC Chairman Marc Whelan said: "We acknowledge it is a huge balancing act to supply and build on our service to the Community and it is with a heavy heart we announce this rise, but we must move forward and build for you, the resident.

"It gives the Council opportunities to do more in future years to potentially bridge the gap of lost or devolved services from MKC.

Rest assured all Councillors are volunteers in name and take no wage or expense from the Parish Council, we are all tax payers in our area and value the resource GLPC can supply.

"The Parish Council overwhelmingly believes that this budget will allow us to focus on supporting our Parish and delivering services for you next year and for years to come, without large swings in bills for you. We also feel that as MKC continue to cut back on everyday services, your Parish Council may end up picking up the slack. Preparation is key. The extra £2.41 per month on a band D house will make a huge difference to our finance settings and staff resources. It provides a level of certainty and stability for the Council, so we can work together to deliver what is needed for the community, working with you, the resident, to target the vital aspects and required services.

"We are looking forward to a normalised future and have developed an outline five-year plan to ensure the Council is reaching all areas of the Parish with delivery of wide-ranging services and offering continued opportunities for recreation. The Council voted overwhelmingly to agree to the rise needed to help us achieve this for you, the resident," Marc added.

# The dirty business of dealing with DOGGY DO!



**It's a foul problem that continues to irk residents – the problem of dog poo**

**With families forced to stay home due to the pandemic, many opted to swell their size by introducing a dog to the family unit, which has exacerbated the problems of dog waste on our paths and in our green spaces.**

Keen to tackle the issue, Great Linford Parish Council (GLPC) recently carried out a review of dog waste management.

The survey looked at the number of dog waste bins in our Parish, and their location; are they in areas popular with dog walkers? Are they overused or underused? Where are the fouling 'hot spot' areas?

We wanted to get a better understanding of the routes used by walkers, to see what bins were used, and if there were any that could be relocated where they would be better utilised.

We are lucky to have many canal walking routes and Parks Trust Land in our area, all of which are frequented by residents and

visitors. But The Parks Trust do not provide any bins, and there are currently just three provided by the Canal and River Trust.

The research generated from the survey has enabled us to make some changes; in four areas we are increasing the size of bins available to deal with the volume of waste. We have also moved some of the bins to ensure they are in the optimum usage areas.

Many people will have seen poo bags thrown into hedges or hanging from trees. It is unsightly and unhygienic, it blights the local landscape and can prove hazardous to wildlife.

This is unacceptable behaviour by irresponsible owners. But, ultimately, while GLPC will provide an effective network of bins to receive dog waste, and will ensure they are regularly emptied and serviced, the Parish Council is not responsible for residents' pets.

'Whatever some people may believe, there's no such thing as the dog poo fairy,' says the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign. It's simple; if bins are full, you need to take that waste home with you.

Dog poo should always be bagged and binned – but perhaps you don't know that any black bin will do.

GLPC Enforcement Officer David Barnes said: "We work hard to ensure dog poo bins are emptied regularly, but in the event they are full owners need to remember that it is not ok to leave bags on top of bins or on the floor close by – this is fly tipping. This is littering and can incur a £125 fixed penalty notice.

"If you double bag the waste it is perfectly acceptable to put it into any of the black bins in the Parish."

Failure to deal with your animal's mess in the correct manner could prove a costly lesson – with a fixed penalty notice. Aside

from the enforcement service we make full use of CCTV and resident intelligence to ensure that dog fouling and bag littering is dealt with.

"We offer a service to keep the environment clean, but the responsibility is on the owner," David said, "We would prefer to educate people to bag it and take it home, but if they persist in letting their animals foul and don't clear up the mess, then they will be fined.

"We certainly don't want to create a culture where people are spying on each other, but dog fouling is a costly and time consuming problem, and one that is easily avoidable – by simply doing the right thing."

David works random hours to catch perpetrators and as he doesn't wear a uniform, you won't see him coming – the easiest way to avoid an unwanted encounter with him is to clear up when Rover has done his doggie-do!

If you would like to report a persistent offender email [glpc@great-linford.co.uk](mailto:glpc@great-linford.co.uk) or give us a call on 01908 606613.

## THE DIRTY FACTS:

- 🗑️ Dog poop is toxic and can take more than a year to break down. It is not ok to expect others to clean up after your dog
- 🗑️ GLPC has a google map pinpointing the location of bins for dog walkers – it can be accessed by visiting [great-linford.gov.uk/services-we-provide/dog-poo/](http://great-linford.gov.uk/services-we-provide/dog-poo/)
- 🗑️ As a result of the recent survey, GLPC is going to increase dog waste bins in the parish from 27 to 32. These will be in 31 areas.
- 🗑️ Dog waste bins are not the only place to safely dispose of poo bags – If waste is double bagged they can be placed in any black general waste bin
- 🗑️ The Parish Office sells good quality bags. Pop in and see us if you need some.

Top right: Overflowing bins are unsightly - if bins are full you need to dispose of the waste at home.

Below: GLPC is increasing the number of bins in the Parish to 32.



# The Community Orchard that is a blooming success

**Sixteen years ago, it was a derelict smallholding plot. Today it has been transformed into a green tranquil space, and a favourite place for dog walkers to enjoy the nature on their doorstep.**

**The once neglected site on the corner of Overstreet and Danstead Way in Downs Barn is now a thriving community orchard with more than 50 fruit trees, a herb garden and an insect house, all cared for by the Parish Council.**

When Theresa Litchfield started walking her two toy poodles in the area, accompanied by grandchildren Annabelle and Theresa, they would pick up litter and clear the dog poo left behind by less considerate walkers.

She decided she wanted to do more to maintain the pretty little spot and contacted the Parish Council who helped get the ball rolling by linking Theresa with Wendy Searle, the Parish Ranger with responsibility for the orchard. Theresa worked closely with Wendy on a shared vision for the development of The Community Orchard.

Now it is bustling with those aforementioned trees and blooms - and the resident bug life is making the most of the goods on offer.

"We have a homemade insect house, and people have been contributing to the orchard by donating plants and herbs," Theresa said, "We always welcome donations; we like to attract bees to pollinate, and there has been such a big destruction of bees recently, we are keen to do our bit to help."

The community organisation Nextdoor has been a great help when asking for donations. Flowers, herbs and so-called 'bee bombs' (native wildflower seed balls) have all been offered by Parish residents keen to see the project flourish.

"I also think it would be nice if people who have been bereaved would choose to have a tree planted in the orchard rather than have one of those roadside memorials – it shows life and is a nice way to remember loved ones."

Theresa, who used to work in the criminal justice system, can be found beavering away in the space regularly. And there is always something to grab her attention. "When I was cutting back some rosemary, I discovered the most marvellously coloured snails," she enthused, "We have lots of herbs there that people can help themselves to – it is a community garden and there for use by everyone. We just ask that people respect the space and only take what they need."

Only very occasionally do people need to be reminded about that respect. Theresa remembers one child who was being a little too boisterous with a young tree which came perilously close to snapping. "I had to nicely assist her thinking," she said, choosing her words carefully.

Places like the orchard really can play their part in teaching younger generations about the value of fauna and flora – and they are good for our wellbeing, of course.

Theresa's granddaughters both have an appreciation of nature, and Annabelle volunteered her time in the orchard to help complete her Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award.

It was such a hit that Theresa hopes to inspire other youngsters to follow suit. She said: "I thought it would be a lovely idea to encourage other youngsters doing the DofE to do the same - and it will hopefully generate a pride in the community.

"Traditionally, I think people who took part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme tended to be from quite affluent families. That has now changed, thankfully. We want the orchard to be accessible to all children including those who are disadvantaged, and they are the ones the Duke was trying to reach.

"It's about stopping people from feeling disenfranchised. If you have a sense of belonging, it makes a massive difference. If people don't value their local parks, they will destroy them through vandalism, but it's to do with a lack of understanding, or of having no pride in the community. "Opportunities like this give people a sense of belonging, and make them see that they do have a value."

Theresa added: "The orchard is a shared opportunity to involve others and to protect and enhance wildlife for the benefit of the community. Come down and see how you can enjoy a peaceful environment in a different way."

Whether you want to clock up the volunteer hours for your Duke of Edinburgh Award, or just want to find out more about how you can donate time to the project, make contact by emailing [glpc@great-linford.gov.uk](mailto:glpc@great-linford.gov.uk)



# Read all about it!

Books are the gateway to everything; from tools of learning. to a temporary escape from reality.

**In the Great Linford Parish, our book exchanges prove that people still love nothing more than curling up and escaping with a good read. It's one of life's simple pleasures.**

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The first book exchange opened in the summer of 2018, and there are now five units supplying page-turners on streets in the Parish.

The idea is so simple that some people struggle to understand how it works! You can leave books, and borrow books at your will, and completely free of charge.

Dionne Lakey introduced the concept - part of an international movement - to our parish. "My reasons? Mostly for access and knowledge for all," she said, "I didn't want it to be an elitist thing. I wanted the book exchange to be open 24 hours a day, so that anyone could access a book at any time - it could be someone at midnight, it could be a homeless person, it could be a child walking home from school. It also takes away any embarrassment for anyone who perhaps can't afford to buy books."

In the three years since it launched, thousands and thousands of books have been loaned.

Dionne works in conjunction with Milton Keynes Library which also donates boxes of spare books for the cause. In return, the exchange shares information on the library and the services that can

be accessed there.

Dionne is a book junkie, and her day job is visiting schools as a seller with Usborne Children's Books.

"People say that children have everything on their laptops and their phones now, and that they don't need books, but actually I find the opposite. When I do my book fairs in schools, kids love touching the books. They love the physical side of them."

There has been vandalism in the past, but that was factored into the contingency plan.

"When one of the exchanges got vandalised, it was heartbreaking for the people that were using it all the time," Dionne admits, "But you have to be resilient and realistic about that, and just by putting it back up, the community realises that it's staying and people get bored."

Luckily, CCTV helps to protect the sites, and there will soon be a sixth exchange in the area - the old telephone kiosk on Great Linford High Street is to be transformed into a book loan hub.

"My favourite thing is just to hang around the box and see people using it - people who normally will not talk to one another will stand at a book exchange and chat to one another about the books," Dionne says. "Even though I set it up, the idea is that I am just there to steward it and to make sure that the box is in a good condition and the books aren't overflowing. The community owns it and stocks it, and takes and leaves books - and it's important to let the community know that it belongs to them."

**Find out more on FB:** GreatLinfordsLittleFreeBookExchange



## A new chapter in the book exchange story

**A new book exchange, or 'free library' is being planned in Neath Hill Play Park, thanks to the initiative of nine-year-old Arlo Clifford, who has also designed the new book cupboard.**

"I love reading and read about two books each week," he told NorthbyNorthEast, "I asked my mum if she could email the Parish Council and ask if Neath Hill could have a book exchange. Ruth Panther at GLPC suggested that when the play park was redeveloped they could put an exchange in there."

"We used to go to the Little Bookshop in Great Linford when it first opened, and when the exchange was built, my older sister Ivy and I used it all the time. We walk to the ones in Downs Barn and Downhead Park too."

Arlo, who is a big fan of writers including JK Rowling, Liz Pichon and Jeff Kinney, is thrilled that his design was chosen for the new exchange cupboard. It has a local twist too.

He added: "It's based on the Clock Tower at Neath Hill Local Centre. When the clock chimes we can hear it from our house."

I thought it was a good symbol and people would recognise it...I hope lots of people use it and look after it."

Arlo's mum Laura said: "I'm really proud that Arlo has developed such a love of reading and that he wants to encourage other people in the area to share this," she said, "As a family, we're really glad the local play area has been redeveloped and it's great to see it being so well used."



Left: Arlo gives the little libraries a big thumbs up.

### WHERE TO FIND THE BOOK EXCHANGES:

- Great Linford next to The Little 'Bookshop', Ping Square, GL Local Centre
- Conniburrow Friendship Park on the Boulevard
- Downhead Park Cornbury Crescent Green
- Downs Barn Community Orchard, Loriner Place
- Neath Hill Serjeants Green Play Park

### MOST FREQUENTLY LOANED BOOKS:

- Thrillers
- Crime
- Romance



## The club where the goal is to have fun



**It might be a game of two halves, but for Great Linford Football Club (GLFC) secretary Peter McGuane it's rather more than that.**

Peter, who used to work as a coach for the MK Dons, now oversees all of the day to day running of GLFC in his role as general secretary; arranging the weekly training sessions, making sure players have the right kit and equipment and all of the associated background work - and with nine teams and more than 130 players in all, it's quite an undertaking. And it's a real passion. "I used to play for the club back in the mid 1990s when my dad was a coach, and later I played for the adult team too. I wanted to give something back to the club for all that it has given me," he says, explaining this current position, "The volunteers were there for me, and now I am in the position to give back to everyone else."

There is no rule that players have to live in the area, but even so, 50 percent of them are from Great Linford Parish.

The club dates back to 1993 and is entirely run on goodwill, with everyone involved volunteering their time to support the mixed teams. Girls might be far fewer, but their number is increasing: "All our teams are mixed, and girls are very welcome. More girls are definitely coming through in the younger age groups and I think that's to do with the publicity of the women's game," Peter says, "We have the women's team for the adults too, so the youngsters are able to see a progression."

Peter's son Harlan began playing with the club as a four-year-old. He suffers with fibular hemimelia where one leg is shorter than the other. But the disability was no barrier to joining a team. Peter said: "He has had four operations so far and still has to have one more. Playing football gave Harlan a real drive to get through his treatment, because he knew that at the end of it he was going to be playing football again, and he would still come and watch every week, even though he couldn't play and was on crutches or in a wheelchair." This football stuff is clearly in the McGuane blood; Harlan is now 15-years-old and about to manage his own team of U7s! "We do not discriminate - if you've got a disability, you can play, it doesn't make any difference to us," Peter promised. "We're not out to find the best player, we just want to let everybody play. As long as it is safe for you to play, you are welcome."

The club always welcomes new players, and is always on the lookout for new coaches. Each team trains one night in the week and match day is on Saturday. If you can commit to two and a half hours a week to work with one of the youth teams, a DBS check will be required, but the club covers the cost of that.

Training and matches are carried out on the GLPC managed pitches at Marsh Drive. "The grounds are excellent and we get a lot of positive comments," Peter said. But while the goal here is to have fun with the game, there is more at play: "It shows you how to be part of a team; how to win and how to lose too. It's also to do with personal development and shows kids how to work together. It's a great way to make friends too..."

And that in turn fosters a sense of community spirit among the parents: "It does, although I think some of that is about going down to the pub afterwards!" Peter laughed.

To find out more about the club or to register interest visit [greatlinfordfc.com](http://greatlinfordfc.com)

