



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The **Annual Parish Meeting** and this month's **Parish Council Meeting** were held on Wednesday 13th April 2016 in the main hall of the Pavilion. The Annual Parish meeting is required to be held once a year; strategic matters are discussed and wide consultation on parish matters is sought. I presented an annual report, which you can read elsewhere in this edition, followed by very informative updates from Graham Bates on behalf of St James's' lower school, Peter Marks of the Cricket Club, Peter Applewhite regarding the village pond and Chris Jones on footpaths. Key points from these updates were as follows.

The lower school is going to become a primary, i.e. with pupils up to the age of 11. This follows the decision by Bedford Borough in February to move completely to a two-tier system for schooling across the borough. A new classroom block will be built to provide capacity for two more years. As a result, space will be even tighter for playing sport within the grounds of the school, and they have therefore asked us if the pavilion playing fields could be used by the school at certain times. Those present indicated they had no issue with this, and indeed the cricket club, as it happens, have already started some joint activities with the school. Discussions will therefore now move forward to bring this about.

The cricket club is doing well, both as an organisation and in terms of sporting achievement. We are lucky to have such a vibrant and successful club at the heart of our village.

The village pond is, likewise, being well looked after. The only issue here may be the need for some younger people to join the committee so that its good work continues well into the future.

As regards footpaths, the key concern was naturally the recent destruction of the coffin path in the field adjacent to the village pond. Both the Biddenham Society (represented by Tony Wood) and the Parish Council agreed to write to the Wingfield Estate's agent "Bidwells" expressing our dismay at what had happened, and demanding proper reinstatement of the path (not some half-hearted attempt as has happened so far).

Following the Annual Meeting, the normal parish council meeting discussed the usual business of current planning applications, village upkeep and finances. All councillors were present, and in addition we co-opted a new member, Joe Warren, to fill our final vacancy. Joe is already involved at St James's church as Youth Leader, in relation to the Sunday School and on the PCC. He is a most welcome addition.

The application for a large number of dwellings at the back of Bromham Road as it approaches Bromham Bridge has been revised and is due for submission. The earlier application, to which we lodged several objections, was withdrawn; the new one is not significantly different and our objections remain unchanged.

Financial year end finances for both the council and the pavilion showed income greater than expenditure with sensible increases in reserves for both as a result. As regards the pavilion, these reserves will shortly be used to pay for repainting of the exterior and new LED lighting which will reduce electricity costs.

Thank you to all those who attended the Annual Parish meeting, and thank you for continuing to read these updates. Please send any views, concerns, feedback or ideas in relation to our village to Alison Southern at clerk@biddenham-pc.org.uk.

Peter Chase

Chairman