



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

This month's **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 9th September 2015 in the upstairs meeting room of the Pavilion. Councillors Peter Chase (Chairman), Jon Gambold, Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch, Terry Platt and Francia Slade were present; a number of members of the public attended together with the Clerk to the Parish Council, Alison Southern. Councillors Anna Crowther, Graham Bates and Borough Councillor Roger Rigby sent their apologies.

As previously mentioned, we have a vacancy on the council. If you'd like to get involved in this, the lowest tier of government in the land – ensuring the interests of Biddenham and its residents are represented and protected – then please get in touch.

Housing developments north of Bromham Road

First up this month was a presentation given by Bovis Homes, Linden Homes and their appointed consultants, Bedford-based Optimis Consulting. They had pro-actively requested the opportunity to present on the two new housing developments planned to be built north of Bromham Road, and answer questions about these. The first to be built, including a new primary school, will be on the land nearest Bedford. This land is owned by the Harpur Trust, will consist of circa 200 houses, and will involve a new turning off Bromham Road just east of Biddenham Turn. Both junctions will get traffic lights, and work is due to start on these on 21st September. Concerns were raised about the impact that these works will have on the very busy main road; the developers were asked to consider delaying the most intrusive part of the works until the new bypass opens, which could be as early as March.

The other housing development, off Deep Spinney roundabout, consists of 500-odd houses and a sports complex. Concerns have been raised by local residents that the densest housing had been placed nearest the existing homes on Windmill Hill. A more sensible approach would be to put the largest houses here and make it increasingly dense further in to the development. The developers confirmed they are revising their plans to take on board this feedback. Another consultation day is to be held at the golf club in Great Denham on Tuesday, 22nd September between 1pm and 9pm – please go along if you want to know more or to make your views known.

The Parish Council has suggested, with the support of the Church council, the name of “St James” for the new developments. The developers let us know they were happy with this name, although would need to differentiate their two companies' offerings with subsidiary titles such as “the Oaks at St James”. St James would definitely be part of Biddenham, akin to Deep Spinney. Debate ensued, however, about whether this new name should apply to the development nearest town, as this isn't part of Biddenham but actually in the ward of Queens Park and All Saints church parish. As we don't want the new primary school to end up, confusingly, being called St James (like that which already exists in the heart of the village) it would be perhaps be sensible to call this area something else.

The Village Sign

We're pleased to report that the new village sign is finished. Not before time, you may say – and we are sorry that the sign maker couldn't deliver it sooner. It is currently being stored at one of the councillor's homes pending the building of a stone base. The views of those present was that this base should match the Millennium sundial, since the two are almost directly opposite each other. Within the village scene they need to complement, rather than clash. Mrs Jones, of Biddenham House, had very kindly offered some stone for the purpose of the new base, but on reflection we decided to appoint Corinthian Stonemasons to source a closer match, and to build the base. I know Mrs Jones is fine with this, but I would nevertheless like to thank her again for her kind offer.

Since the previous sign was originally the brainchild of the Biddenham Society, and following on from their success with the Heritage Trail's inauguration, it was proposed and agreed that we get them to organise an installation / unveiling ceremony. Our clerk has since been in touch with Tony Wood of the society; happily he has accepted the challenge, and has told us it's likely to happen on a Saturday morning in the first half of November.

Other Local Matters

There was not much to say about the “acoustic” fencing on the revised Deep Spinney roundabout. The Borough Council seem serious about considering other options, notably acquiring extra land so the noise barrier can be made from a bund of earth with a smaller fence on top. We await further updates from them.

The summer has made it difficult to maintain momentum with Borough Council officers over traffic calming measures. We re-affirmed that Jon Gambold should continue to press for consideration of a traffic island and additional white lines in Gold Lane, and school warning signs painted on the road surface in Biddenham Turn.

Following Chris Hayden Jones's appearance at our July meeting, we were delighted to note that footpath vegetation has been cut back on the paths between the village and Queens Park, and matters are well in hand for those on the west side near Church End and the pond.

That's it for this month. Do please contact any of us if you think we can help with any local matters. As I mentioned at the start, we're still one short on the council – so please get in touch if you'd like to get involved by becoming a councillor.



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Peter Chase

Chairman