



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

This month's **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 11th November 2015 in the upstairs meeting room of the Pavilion. Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase (Chairman), Jon Gambold, Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch and Francia Slade were present; six or so members of the public attended, together with Borough Councillor Roger Rigby and the Clerk to the Parish Council, Alison Southern. Councillors Anna Crowther and Terry Platt sent their apologies.

Public open session

We are grateful to Martin Hosegood from the Village Hall committee for attending, and I thank him for reminding us that they would welcome a parish councillor to attend their meetings.

Many of you know that travellers recently camped on the meadow between the church and the Bromham bypass. We were thanked for our prompt action in getting these people moved on. In fact, it was our Borough Councillors Roger and Jon, along with Alison our clerk, who pressed the Borough Council into action – and the Borough themselves who did a sterling job of dealing with the issue. Not only were they promptly evicted, but the entrances they'd used were quickly secured and ditches and humps are being put in place to make it impossible to get a normal vehicle into the field in future. The amount of rubbish left behind was truly awful, and the Borough have also cleaned this away. Finally, there is a legal instrument (an injunction) in place covering various fields around Bedford, and this field is going to be added to it. This will take a little while, but allow eviction, should it be needed in future, to be carried out almost immediately.

Housing developments north of Bromham Road

We have now received about half a ton of paperwork showing the plans for the west end development north of Bromham Road. You can't fault the developers for their detail (no doubt required of them) showing everything from electricity substation plans to how buses should be able to get round sharper corners. For the most-part the houses are as you'd expect, and the overall layout – whilst cramped by the standards of the rest of the village – is apparently less dense (it being classed as "rural") than the east end development (which is classed as "urban", it actually being part of Queen's Park).

Reports reach us that the developers intend to name the main road through the estate as "St. James Way", which follows us lobbying for this name. We have also been consulted about the wider theme for road names in the estate, and it was our view that they should go for a countryside/river/mill theme.

As I mentioned last month, we are keen to hear ideas for some sort of structure to go in the middle of the enlarged Deep Spinney roundabout. This was talked about at our table during the Biddenham Society AGM on 1st November, and the idea of celebrating the long-lost dovecote was voiced. This, for anyone who doesn't know, was a large and historic structure which stood for over 250 years in the field next to the village pond behind the Manor hospital. Someone (I'm not sure anyone found out who) came along one morning in 1966 and demolished it without any consultation or warning. A very special treasure was lost forever (see Wikipedia and the Village Pond websites for more details). To have something evoking its memory as a structure on the roundabout somehow seems very relevant, and rather individual to our village. Do please let us know your thoughts on this idea.

As it happens, the Borough Council asked, on the day of our meeting, what to call the new bypass road, and had proposed "The Great Ouse Valley Way". We felt this was rather a mouthful, and in light of the dovecote suggestion I asked whether we should perhaps put forward "Dovecote Way" instead. This received broad support from other councillors. We don't know yet whether this suggestion will be taken up, but I will keep you posted.

Finally, while on the subject of new housing developments affecting us, we decided not to respond, at this stage, to the **Local Development Plan for 2021 to 2032** as it does not cover Biddenham. This is because we are officially classed as part of Bedford, and not an outlying village. A separate consultation for us will happen a bit later.

2016 Annual Parish Meeting

We formally approved our diary of meetings for next year. One I would ask you, dear reader, to note is the **Annual Parish Meeting**, which will take place on Wednesday April 13th at 7pm. It's intended that this meeting is a more "strategic" focus on our affairs, with as much input as possible from residents. In the past it has also been an opportunity to hear from a speaker on something of interest to us all. If you have a good idea for this, please let us know; we are keen to make this meeting go well – a good speaker would attract a crowd.

Other Local Matters

In earlier months I have mentioned many detailed matters, from the fencing at the Deep Spinney roundabout to traffic calming measures. There is little progress to report on these this month, but please rest assured that they remain on our radar screen.

Thanks for reading; since becoming your chairman in April I've realised the importance of these write-ups in connecting our business with everyone in the village. Thank you for your interest in our local affairs, and please keep your feedback and ideas coming.



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We don't have a meeting in December, so my next write-up will be with you in late January. On behalf of all of your parish councillors, may I therefore wish you a very happy, peaceful and fun-filled Christmas and new year.

Peter Chase

Chairman

Please send any views, concerns, feedback or ideas to Alison Southern at clerk@biddenham-pc.org.uk.