



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

If it's not too late to say so, Happy New Year! This month's **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 13th January 2016 in the upstairs meeting room of the Pavilion. Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase (Chairman), Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch, Terry Platt and Francia Slade were present. Ten or so members of the public attended, together with Borough Councillor Roger Rigby and the Clerk to the Parish Council, Alison Southern. Councillors Jon Gambold and Anna Crowther were unable to attend.

My pleas for a volunteer to fill the last remaining vacancy on the council have been answered by Mr Chris Gee, who was duly co-opted at the meeting. Chris lives in Elger Close with his wife and two young daughters, and brings representation of younger families to us – something I'm sure we'll very much benefit from going forward.

Public open session

This month's hot topic was (understandably) the outline planning application for 88 new dwellings off the part of Bromham Road that leads down to the Bromham bridge. In case you were not aware, this would be built behind the house that's much further back than all the others, which has a long straight drive. Members of the public attending told us they were very concerned about the possible development given its position, density, impact on traffic movements, flood risk and pressure on local schools.

As the council, we discussed this as part of our agenda item on planning, and decided to formally object to the application. Our strongest reason is that it's just an inappropriate place to position such a dense housing development. It notably contravenes an official policy of Bedford Borough Council, called AD42. This categorically states that, amongst other places, the land separating Biddenham and Bromham is not to be built on (paragraph 15.20 of the "Allocations and Designations" plan, if you care to look it up on the Internet).

Deep Spinney Roundabout

As previously mentioned, we are keen to hear ideas for some sort of structure to go on the enlarged Deep Spinney roundabout. We are agreed that we would like to commemorate the long-lost dovecote that stood next to the village pond, and that people should come to know the roundabout as "Dovecote Roundabout". We are especially firm in this view given that the Borough Council turned down our suggestion of calling the new bypass road "Dovecote Way" and have instead opted for the unimaginative and unattractive moniker of "The Great Ouse Way".

I had contacted a local sculptor about the idea of a small version of the old dovecote on a pole, with four doves flying out/away from it. But in truth, the structure would have been easily vandalised or blown about. We are now going to consider low stone/brick structure(s) instead, perhaps along the lines of what Great Denham have done. In the meantime, do please let us know your thoughts on this subject.

The Pavilion

Given the new financial year starts in April, we reviewed our budgets for both the parish as a whole and the Pavilion (which, if you were not aware, is managed by the parish council). I'm pleased to report that 2014/15 will end with modest surpluses on both accounts. This allows us to add a little to our reserves, which time and again have been shown to be needed when unexpected costs arise. It also means we will not be asking for any more money next year from council tax (the "precept").

The Pavilion was running at a thumping loss a few years ago, and was being bailed out by all of us tax-paying villagers. The situation is now completely reversed, and we intend to continue to invest in the building with LED lighting, better washroom facilities and repainting of the exterior (not a cheap job). Although there is now no subsidy from the precept required, we do of course rely on the continued support of the community in terms of bookings. Please bear the Pavilion in mind!

Annual Parish Meeting

Please note the **Annual Parish Meeting** will take place on Wednesday April 13th at 7pm in the Pavilion. 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.

Peter Chase

Chairman

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