

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2016 at the Pavilion, Deep Spinney, Biddenham

Present: Peter Chase, Graham Bates, Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch, Terry Platt, Francia Slade, Borough Cllr Roger Rigby and the Clerk were in attendance. In addition there were eight members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Crowther and Gambold - **it was resolved** to accept the apologies.

2. Co-option of Parish Councillor

Mr Chris Gee of Elger Close had submitted a personal statement. Members voted to co-opt Mr Gee with immediate effect.

3. Declaration of acceptance of office by new parish councillor

Cllr Chris Gee signed his acceptance of office and was invited to join the parish council for the remainder of the meeting.

4. Declarations of interest

Cllr Osuch declared a local interest in item 9 Planning.

5. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2015

It was resolved to approve the minutes.

6. Matters Arising from Minutes

There were no other matters not covered elsewhere within the agenda.

7. Public Open Session

Members of the public wished to inform the parish council of their concerns regarding the proposal for outline planning permission for the paddock to the rear of 118 Bromham Road. Residents raised the following areas of concern:

The land is a floodplain which has flooded in recent years.

Access to the development is poor and will exacerbate the problem of increased traffic movement onto the A428.

Bromham Bridge is a narrow bridge and not suitable for increased volumes of traffic which would be inevitable should the proposed development go ahead.

The countryside view from Bromham Park and also from the new bypass would be irrevocably compromised.

There would be no identifiable gap between Bromham and Biddenham.

There is inadequate parking and landscaping on the development.

School places – St James’s Lower is already oversubscribed – where will these pupils go to school?

Cllr Rigby joined the meeting.

Members of the public hoped that the parish council would take into consideration these concerns when responding to the application on behalf of the parish.

The new roundabout at Deep Spinney has advertisements – can the parish council ask for them to be removed? The Borough own the roundabout and these signs generate revenue for the Borough so unfortunately will have to remain.

Grass verges on Main Road where the new build is taking place are in a terrible condition. Can the parish council speak with the planning department/owners to ensure the verges are repaired? The verges are owned by Mr Wingfield and the parish council have already been in touch with Bidwells who are the land agent. They have contacted the owner and been assured the verges will be repaired once the build

Clerk

is complete later this year.

A resident had written to the council to ask whether wooden posts could be installed along Main Road to protect the verges as these have been effective in Gold Lane. Members felt that the open aspect and street scene of Main Road was very different to Gold Lane and these would not be appropriate. The verges also belong to Mr Wingfield and not the Borough.

It was resolved to revise the running order of the agenda to take the planning item next.

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8. Planning

(i) The report was noted.

Members considered the application for the land at the rear of 118 Bromham Road. **It was resolved** to object to the application on the following grounds:

Clerk

- Inappropriate development for Biddenham on the edge of the most rural parts of the parish.
- Contrary to local policy AD42 which seeks to ensure a “gap” remains between Bromham and Biddenham to ensure Biddenham retains its own distinctive character.
- Access/Highways – concern regarding volume of traffic movement and impact on Bromham Bridge which is an historic monument.
- Flooding of the paddock – the land is on the floodplain and in recent years has partially flooded.

9. To consider proposals for a Dovecote feature on the Deep Spinney roundabout

Sketch drawings had been provided of a metal sculpture depicting the dovecote and doves in flight. However, members were concerned that the sculpture could easily be vandalised or blown over in high winds. Another suggestion was for a scaled model of the old dovecote. However, the majority of members were not in favour of either proposal. Members then considered a raised stone/brick roundabout feature which would be carved with different words/scenes depending on which direction you were travelling. The themes/words depicted could reference Biddenham, the Dovecote, the village sign and the village pond. The clerk would ask Great Denham who had undertaken the stone work for their roundabout (off the Frank Branston Way at the junction with Greenkeepers Road) for their advice and would report back at the next meeting.

Clerk

10 Clerk’s Report

Pavilion management

The Pavilion financial forecast shows sufficient income to cover running costs with a small surplus to be added to reserves. **It was resolved** to approve the following improvement works this financial year:

Replacement of uplighter bulbs to energy efficient bulbs (providing they could be dimmed). Replacement of large ceiling lights for LED (warm white) lights.

Clerk

Decorate downstairs hall, entrance lobby and changing rooms.

Install replacement heater in large hall – 1 unit has failed and is beyond repair.

Install soap dispensers and toilet roll dispensers – refills would be more cost efficient in the long term and would give the building a much smarter appearance.

The clerk left the room at this part of the meeting.

Members considered a request from the Clerk to purchase a laptop for parish council work. Prior to her proposal she had contacted her colleagues via the Bedfordshire Branch of Council Clerks and so far 8 Clerk's had replied all of whom are supplied with a laptop or PC, printer and a working from home allowance.

It was resolved to approve the purchase of a laptop and software (to the value of £500).

The clerk re-joined the meeting and thanked members for approving the purchase. The equipment would be insured by the parish council and added to the asset register.

Clerk

11 Financial Matters

(i) Accounts for approval – **it was resolved** to approve the accounts for payment listed below:

Ch No BACS	Payee	£	Description
1634	F C Horner	216.00	Haulage of Christmas Tree
BACS	Bedford Cleaners Ltd	100.00	Pavilion window cleaning
	TOTAL	316.00	

(ii) To consider and agree the budget for 2016-17

A budget drafted by the Clerk and the Chairman had been circulated to all members for consideration prior to the meeting. This included additional spend for grass cutting to incorporate Deep Spinney. The parish council would be requesting a contribution towards the grass cutting costs from the Borough. In other parishes who undertake grass cutting the Borough makes a contribution. The parish council were not seeking reimbursement for previous years but hoped for a reasonable contribution going forward to reflect the additional cost of grass cutting.

Cllrs Gambold and Rigby would discuss with Beds BC regarding the parish opting out of using the Borough for grass cutting services and also to ascertain if any funding towards the cost of the grass cutting was available. This would be reported back at the February meeting. The Clerk would contact Chris Horne to inform him of the current situation.

RR/JG
Clerk

It was resolved to approve the budget at £42,193.

To consider and agree the precept for 2016-17

It was resolved to set the Precept at £40,000.

12 Matters in Progress

The report was noted.

JG

Flooding near St James's School – the problem is due to both sides of the footpath being grassed over with no drainage. The Borough is investigating what options/solutions are feasible. Cllr Gambold will keep the council informed of any progress in this matter.

RR/JG

Speed Humps Deep Spinney – these were due for repainting in the summer and then the autumn and the work is still outstanding. There was concern this poses a safety problem for motorists who are not familiar with the area and this needs resolving as soon as possible. Cllr Rigby offered to speak with the Borough as a matter of urgency.

GB

<p>Observer Close Plaque – Cllr Bates needs a photo of the original plaque to proceed but the recent weather has prevented him from getting one.</p>	<p>PC/JG</p>
<p>Traffic Calming – Gold Lane – Cllr Chase and Gambold will chase Highways department for quotes for the traffic island scheme. Cllr Slade reported she had witnessed a near miss on Gold Lane and hoped we could get a response/solution from Highways asap.</p>	<p>RR/JG</p>
<p>Cllr Rigby offered the use of the mobile speed cameras purchased from ward funds. It was resolved to use the mobile speed cameras on Deep Spinney near to the stone bus shelter.</p>	<p>RR/JG/ Borough Council</p>
<p>Pedestrian entrances to Deep Spinney from Bromham Road – Money from ward funds had been used to contribute to this project to clear rubbish, overgrown vegetation and overhanging trees. However, additional rubbish clearance had been necessary due to fly tipping and all the funding had now been spent. The remaining work to level and grass over the site will be carried out in the next financial year.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>SSSI interpretation board – when can we expect this to be installed? The clerk reported that the design had been finalised and commissioned. She would chase the Bedfordshire Wildlife Trust for an installation date.</p>	
<p>Elger Close footpaths – this is in the highways schedule for 2016/17.</p>	
<p>13 Parish Concerns</p>	
<p>Flooding outside Buttercups on Main Road – what action had been taken? Cllr Rigby reported that the Borough were working with Anglian Water and Amey to resolve the problem which can be traced back to the Biddenham Drain on Kings Corner. Should anyone witness flooding they can contact the Borough Helpdesk who have an incident log and this will trigger a response. Until the problem is resolved it is important to report any flooding to ensure the excess water can be tankered away and not allowed to freeze and then cause a danger due to black ice.</p>	<p>RR/Borough and ALL Members</p>
<p>Cllr Jacobs asked if the members contact list could be amended to reflect his correct home address of 109 Deep Spinney.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>14 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 7:30pm in the upstairs meeting room of the Pavilion.</p>	

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Approved by Chairman 10 February 2016