

**Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the Pavilion, Deep Spinney, Biddenham**

**Present:** Peter Chase, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Jon Gambold, Krzys Osuch, Terry Platt, Francia Slade, Joe Warren, and the Clerk were in attendance. In addition there were five members of the public.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Graham Bates, Roger Rigby – the apologies were accepted

**2. Declarations of interest**

Cllr Osuch declared an interest in 16/02284/FUL as it is owned by a friend.

**3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

**It was resolved** to approve the minutes.

Clerk

**4. Matters Arising from Minutes**

Biddenham Conservation Area Consultation:

Cllr Chase reported that he had contacted Bedford Borough Council and it would be three months before there was anything further to report. The outcome of the Conservation Area consultation would need to go to the Executive Committee for a decision.

Church End Verges:

Cllr Gambold said that he would chase Andy Prigmore for a site visit.

JG

**5. Public Open Session (15 mins)**

Brian Walters from 1 The Paddock raised the issue of the lack of maintenance of the long strip on the left hand side as you enter the Paddock and before his property. He had been the first occupant when the properties in The Paddock were built and up to two years ago a lady gardener from Bedford Borough Council used to attend it. The area is landscaped largely with shrubs. Since she retired, no one has attended to it and it has become overgrown and has started to encroach on the highway. The Clerk had met with him on site and she had told him that the Borough Council has transferred responsibility for grass cutting over to the parish since the beginning of the new financial year. This meeting took place a couple of weeks ago. He had left her to follow the matter through but had since heard nothing.

*Cllr Chase said that the summer period with staff taking holidays had probably delayed matters. Cllr Gambold said that if the area was grass that would be under the responsibility of the parish but because it involved shrubs the matter was more complicated. Cllr Chase had been copied on an e-mail from Adrian Trott at the Borough Council dated 29<sup>th</sup> July saying that he would inspect the area then do some basic tidying up with the plan to undertake more major pruning later in the year.*

PC

Mr Walters asked that the area of grass be added to the area cut as part of the grass cutting contract. *Cllr Chase said that the parish council would press to get action taken and would keep him informed.*

A resident attended from Biddenham Turn to request action be taken regarding the damaged verges outside No. 1 (the new house) and No. 25. **It was resolved that the Clerk would contact the borough to take action.** Large stretches of verges in Biddenham Turn were in need of repair but this would have to wait for the building works to be completed.

Clerk

In Darlow Drive, two trees had been felled. Will they be replanted? **It was resolved that the Clerk would check.**

Clerk

Clerk

The timber seat near the war memorial was in need of refurbishment. It was recommended to use Hickson décor paint in mahogany.

JG

The plaque marking the planting of the millennium tree was currently lying on the verge and needed reinstating. Cllr Gambold agreed to retrieve it.

What was planned for the land on the left at the top of Gold Lane? *Cllr Chase reported that at the last meeting it had been decided to purchase a bulb mixture which would extend the growing season from January until about June. Two quotes had been obtained and it had been decided to accept the slightly more expensive quote and the area would be planted later this year.*

**6. To receive a report regarding management of Cowslip Meadow**

Chris Jones described the location of the meadow. Residents were concerned that the area could become abandoned. A group has met with the Borough Council to consider its future management. They had removed ragwort and taken it to Harrold Country Park for disposal. The Borough Council are happy for groups to work on the land provided they are notified. What is needed is a long term management plan for the area. There had been a meeting yesterday with the Borough Council to discuss the cutting of the meadow and making the area more accessible to the public. An approach was to be made to the pond group to see if they would extend their remit to include the meadow, as they would be able to tap into funding. There was discussion about an interpretation board and more attractive traveller-proof fencing. With regards to cutting, in the past the local tenant with the cows used to be called up and he would cut it. Now the Borough Council had to go out to tender and need three quotes. There was concern that this will cause problems and delay the cutting. The area is between 5-6 acres in size. Cllr Chase suggested that Chris ask the tenant what he would charge for a one-off interim cut. Chris Jones pointed out that he doubted the Borough would pay for it. With regards the cutting of the paths, Cllr Rigby had offered to pay for a mower out of ward funds. This could be stored in the shed at the back of the church. Someone would need to be trained to use it. Chris Jones had received two quotes which he would forward to the Clerk. The preference was for the one from White's of Oakley. Cllr Gambold said it was important to apply quickly for Ward funding. Two quotes would be acceptable. What was required was for the parish council to formally request the monies to purchase the mower. Cllr Chase said that confirmation that the pond group were willing to take on the meadow was needed before further action was taken.

**7. Parish Website – to receive a report and to consider whether parish councillor profile photographs should be uploaded to the new site**

Councillor profiles and photo discussion. Councillors agreed that this is a good idea. However, two councillors did not wish their pictures to be put on the website. It was agreed that this is not obligatory and it is up to each councillor to decide. All other councillors were happy to have their photos published.

JW

**It was agreed** by all councillors to request the additional domain name Biddenham.gov.uk. This involves an additional cost of £100 per annum.

Official email addresses for all councillors and use of forward facility. Councillors were not in favour of this, however the facility is available as part of the hosting package. In future if councillors wish to have an official email address, they can do so with no additional cost.

Cllr Warren updated the parish council on the website development and status. Netwise Training Ltd have been engaged and they have been paid for the production and maintenance for one year, payable in advance. A domain has been created for Biddenham.org.uk and paid for. 1&1 has been engaged to do this in order to keep the relationship separate from Netwise Training Ltd. TSOHost has been engaged to host our website. Again it has been stated that the relationship must be kept separate from Netwise Training Ltd. The domain name has been linked to the Host Company and Netwise Training Ltd have inserted the new website on this. Netwise Training Ltd are currently working on the first stage development. This will be shortly completed. Netwise Training Ltd envisage completion by end of September 2016. Cllr Warren agreed to liaise with the Clerk to try and get the legacy domain name transferred to our existing hosting company. This relies on the full cooperation of our existing legacy provider. This will incur an additional monthly cost. A sub-committee meeting will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 to

discuss details and review new website. Future plans and operational use will be discussed as well. Cllr Warren will ask all councillors at some point to review the website for feedback and will try to put some posters up during the Biddenham Show to try and engage some subject matter contributors to the website. The website should be in production between October and November 2016. A go live date will be communicated to all councillors and all appropriate media channels. Existing legacy website will show details of new website. The launch has been advertised in the Biddenham blog and The Loop with the notices pending on the village noticeboards. Cllr Warren will send out a document to local companies requesting sponsorship of the website. This will involve their company details being advertised on the website. He envisaged contribution towards the running cost but not full payment. The website must be in a good state for companies to see the potential. Cllr Warren would maintain it for the first year then consideration would need to be given to what happens after that.

**8. Deep Spinney roundabout – to receive a report**

There were two options. Firstly, a 3 metre high by ½ metre wide pillar in Yorkshire Stone. Two pillars would cost a total of £10,000. The alternative were slate signs on a gateway type support, the cost for four would total £5,000. Cllr Chase said that the intention was to survey those attending the Biddenham show and he had produced a survey form on which to collect information which focused views on look and cost. Information regarding gender, age and whether or not the respondent lived in the village would also be collected. Cllr Gambold said that ward funding would be available but again it was important to have a sense of urgency with regards to getting two quotes to him. The intention would be to get two quotations to him by the next meeting. They may not be the most up-to-date so it would be sensible to allow for the potential costs to be either £12,000 or £6,000. Cllr Platt to e-mail Cllrs Gambold and Rigby with the latest quotes.

PC

TP

**9. Bedford Borough Street lighting reduction scheme – to consider**

The parish council had been contacted by a resident from Deep Spinney who was concerned about the hours the street lights were operational. It was noted that the Borough Council were planning to upgrade the street lights in Biddenham to LED lanterns in its 2017 street light programme. **It was resolved** to consider this issue nearer the time when the lights were due to go in.

**10. Planning – to note the report and comment on any new applications**

The report was noted. A new application (16/02474/FUL The Barn, Main Road) had been received since the report went out. The parish council had objected to 16/02141/FUL for 11 Biddenham Turn on the grounds that the proposed development was too large for the plot. Cllrs Gambold and Rigby had called it in to be decided by the Borough Planning Committee. 16/01403/FUL 20 Darlow Drive had been considered by the planning committee of the Borough Council at its August meeting but had been deferred to allow for further negotiations.

**11. Financial Matters**

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

| Ch No | Payee                   | £       | Description                                              |
|-------|-------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| BACS  | Smiths Fire             | 140.00  | Emergency lighting inspection                            |
| BACS  | Gary Creek Ltd          | 360.00  | Installation of Observer Close plaque and pavilion works |
| BACS  | Greenthumb              | 55.00   | Lawn treatment                                           |
| BACS  | PAB & Son Ltd           | 1385.00 | External decoration of Pavilion                          |
| BACS  | Chris Horne Gardens Ltd | 1080.00 | Grass cutting (July)                                     |

|      |              |                |                                                                              |
|------|--------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BACS | A Southern   | 100.93         | Cleaning materials, car parking (banking) and mileage visits from Feb-August |
| BACS | T Horton     | 55.00          | Quarterly descale of showers                                                 |
| BACS | G Lawrence   | 200.00         | Tree works                                                                   |
| BACS | BDO Stoy LLP | 360.00         | External Auditor fee                                                         |
|      | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>3763.93</b> |                                                                              |

- (ii) **To note the spend against budget**  
**It was resolved** to accept the report
- (iii) To note the conclusion of the Annual Return for 2015-16.  
**This was noted**

12. **To note the Clerk’s report including management of the Pavilion**

Pavilion Management: One off bookings remain steady. It should be noted that August income will be less than in previous months because a few of our regular hirers break during this month. All groups resume their normal timetable during the first week of September. The Clerk has also taken a booking for a regular slot on Sunday afternoons 4pm-6pm (table tennis) starting from next week. A 12 week initial booking has been agreed to see if there is sufficient demand. The external decoration of the Pavilion has now been completed. The legal agreement between the cricket club and the parish council expires in May 2017. This was a 7 year agreement and a new agreement must be put in place prior to the cricket season in 2017. Cllr Slade agreed to work with the Clerk to review/amend the agreement and liaise with the cricket club.

Other matters: Bulb planting had been arranged for the Autumn. The Borough were to advise if there were any underground utilities to avoid with the machinery. With regards Dog Control Orders, the Clerk and Cllr Bates had submitted the evidence sheet to the Borough Council. This has been acknowledged and the Parish Council are now awaiting the Borough’s decision. The Bromham notice board near Windmill Hill had been vandalised. This has been repaired. The application for a street trading license for Deep Spinney has been withdrawn.

Clerk  
FS

13. **Matters in Progress**

Flooding on the footpath near to St James’s School: Cllr Gambold said that negotiations were continuing with the Wingfield Estate as what was needed was a soakaway into their ditch to take storm water.

Borough

Traffic calming proposals for Gold Lane remain on hold until after the roadworks on Bromham Road are completed.

Road markings near the school entrances: Cllr Chase had written to Andy Prigmore to say he was disappointed that there was no “Slow” and “beware children” markings on Biddenham Turn.

Borough  
/JG

Coffin path: It seems likely the path will be disturbed and reinstated twice a year. On reinstatement, the path should be 6ft wide. Bidwells have said that when the area is seeded in March the crop will be kept away from the line of the path to ensure it is this width. Councillor Chase said he will continue to liaise with Bidwells and the Wingfield Estate.

PC

14 **Parish Concerns**

The sign as you turn in from the Bromham roundabout which says “Biddenham” should be replaced with one that says “Village centre”.

In Deep Spinney there is a metal pole behind a sign with a triangle on it. Could it be removed? Cllr Gambold said he would have a look because such poles were useful for attaching their speed warning sign to.

Cllr Chase was concerned that once the lights were working on Biddenham Turn, traffic would speed up to make a green light. Cllr Gambold had been surveying the area to find a suitable pole or lamp post to attach their speed warning sign to. It was noted that at one stage, the Borough Council considered making Biddenham Turn one way "in" only.

Cllr Gambold informed the meeting that as of the end of October, Biddenham will move to a fortnightly bin collection.

15 **Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October**

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Approved by Chairman 12 October 2016