



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Biddenham Parish Council met on Wednesday 9th February 2017 in the upstairs room of the Pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase (chairman), Jon Gambold (also a Borough Councillor), Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch, Terry Platt and Joe Warren. Councillor Francia Slade sent her apologies. Clerk Alison Southern, Borough Councillor Roger Rigby and several members of the public were also present.

THE STATE OF OUR ROADS

At this month's meeting we spent quite a bit of time discussing various issues relating to roads in the village. The first topic, raised by a member of the public, was the mud left on the road outside the new housing development east of Biddenham Turn junction. Our borough councillors are going to ask the Borough to remind the contractor that all site traffic is supposed to wash their wheels before leaving in order not to cake local roads in mud.

How the new Biddenham Turn junction is working was then debated, and I was actioned to write to the Borough highways department about the phasing of the lights, which is still erratic at times, and the narrowness of the road immediately opposite the junction with Biddenham Turn. The latter means cyclists hold up traffic as it exits from Biddenham Turn, and also that cars turning right into Biddenham Turn block the main road.

Since the new bypass opened and the lights became operational, Biddenham Turn is a quieter road with less queuing traffic. An unfortunate side-effect of this is that people dropping children off for St Gregory's school now do so in the road immediately outside the school. This is causing hazardous conditions for both the children and normal traffic, and I am talking to the Headteacher at the school about this.

Attention then turned to Bromham Road and Gold Lane, both of which have a lot of potholes at present. This seems a perennial issue, and we are pressing the highways people to make good the road surface urgently.

Gold Lane has been a subject of considerable discussion at previous meetings. People tend to drive their cars, vans and buses in the middle of the road at points along its length, simply due to the way the road curves left and right. This causes frequent heart-stopping moments for on-coming traffic, and there is a general feeling that there is an accident waiting to happen here. We promised to return to this subject once a survey of traffic volumes and speeds had been carried out, and I'm pleased to say we now have the data from a survey carried out a few weeks before Christmas.

ROUNDAABOUT FEATURE

Following feedback from previous notes written here about a feature to be erected on the Deep Spinney roundabout, we decided we would post notices on all village noticeboards and the council website seeking views by early March. Several alternative designs have been considered over the last year, and we now need to make up our minds once and for all.

The proposal, for two 3.5M tall pillars, has met with broad support. This has come not only from your elected representatives on the parish council, but also the Biddenham Society and many of 60 or so families surveyed at the Biddenham Show. Several people have written to me personally, and I do understand the degree of controversy about both the design and its cost – any design will always have its detractors. But we feel the design is bold, distinctive and unusual, and will raise Biddenham's profile as a community in its own right distinct from Bedford. As for cost, we are committed to finding funding which will not impact the council tax you pay, nor leave us short of reserves to meet other needs should they arise.



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DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - CHANGED

The next meeting will NOT now be on 8th March, but on Wednesday 15th March 2017 instead. Do please come along if you have anything you'd like to raise.

Peter Chase