



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

This month's **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 12th July 2017 in the upstairs room of the Pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase (Chairman), Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Francia Slade, Terry Platt and Joe Warren. Clerk Alison Southern and five members of the public were also present. Councillor Jon Gambold was late, and Krzys Osuch sent his apologies.

A member of the public asked where Alan has been for the past three months; I'd omitted him from the top of all my reports since March. My apologies to all, and especially Alan – he has been at all the meetings since April!

ROADSIDE CARE

A member of the public has raised the state of the wall opposite St James's school on Nodder's Way with us, both last month and this. It is very overgrown with climbing plants, but the problem is that if we remove these they are likely to prove to be the only reason the wall is standing up! We therefore resolved to trim them back (but no more).

Also in the centre of the village, we are getting concerned about puddles forming along the footpath from the school to Gold Lane, passing the War Memorial. The surface is also worn or damaged in places. The trouble is relaying it is going to be expensive – one quote obtained so far puts the cost at about £22,000. More quotes are going to be obtained and considered at our next meeting.

The wooden posts down Biddenham Turn, which are there to discourage drivers from parking on the verges, are looking rather a state. Recently, suggestions have been put forward to install even more of them, to protect the verges both between the two schools, and down to the traffic lights. However, in view of how well (or not) the existing ones are faring, we discussed alternatives for protecting the verges. The use of "grasscrete" – a lattice of concrete or, more often, plastic, was suggested to renovate and protect verges in need of attention. This is going to be looked into further. If you have any views on this, or experience using such devices, please let us know via our clerk.

Another topic on this point was the recent planning application to remove the hedgerow on Bromham Road (opposite the "service road", between the new houses near town and the old golf club). The Borough have to build a roundabout at some point along this stretch, to give access to the housing estate which will eventually be built there. This will remove about a fifth of it. However, the recent application, which is from Anglian Water, was to remove the rest of it – some 125 metres – so that they could lay a new water main to link the new houses to the site of the development yet to be started. We felt this was completely unnecessary, and resolved to object to the application. *Since our meeting, Borough have considered this and placed a "Hedgerow Retention Order" on the lengths under threat. Anglian Water have a month to appeal, but we hope this will make them change their plans.*

Finally, yet another proposal to demolish an existing house and replace it with something much larger has come along. This time it is closer to the village centre, at 8 Main Road. We are pretty powerless to prevent these monster constructions, but resolved to object nevertheless. In particular, we object to the building of a wall and gates along the frontage rather than retaining the existing hedge. In general, our views are sought on what applications do to the "street scene" and, in this respect, the application is far from what we would like.

ST JAMES

I should note that under our planning agenda item, we also decided not to object to the new classrooms to be built at St James's school. These are to allow for the school's expansion to become a primary. Whilst the new rooms will eat into their green space at the back somewhat, there is little alternative than to do so.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

There is no Parish Council meeting in August and thus there won't be one of these reports in the next Loop either. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 13th September 2017. Do please come along if you have anything you'd like to raise.

Peter Chase
Chairman