



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

This month's **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 in the upstairs room of the Pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Peter Chase (Chairman), Jon Gambold, Alan Jacobs, Krzys Osuch, Francia Slade, Terry Platt and Joe Warren. Clerk Alison Southern and three members of the public were also present. Councillor Chris Gee and Borough Councillor Roger Rigby sent their apologies.

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Little was raised this month. We are continuing to chase BT for compensation as a result of having to make good their trashing of the village green a few weeks ago. Matters are also in hand for the Remembrance day memorial service.

BURGLARIES

The number of burglaries from houses in Biddenham seems to be on the increase. Councillor Warren, who was one such victim recently, along with others in Darlow Drive, had noticed that the police statistics we receive did not seem to correctly reflect what he knew had happened. He discovered that some of the apparent inaccuracy was due to one crime number covering a number of properties. Nevertheless, some of it was purely inaccurate reporting.

Councillor Warren offered to put more information on the village website about crime statistics, and also information about how to protect one's property. We decided that whatever we do must work in line with the police's information and processes, and not be arrived at independently. If the police are not reporting things accurately, then we will take them to task, hoping they improve.

Councillor Warren is going to compile some helpful information on burglar alarm systems, domestic security cameras and the like. He and I will then put something together to be published.

PAVILION FLOORING

The Pavilion has had quite a bit of attention over the last two years, with LED lighting inside and out (in the car park), and renewed interior and exterior paintwork. An obvious problem, however, was the flooring in the main hall. It does get a lot of use, and the wear and tear was becoming obvious and concerning. Alison, our clerk, sought quotes for sanding the floor and resealing it – a complete replacement isn't needed for many years if it's looked after well. We reviewed these quotes and selected one which looks good value. The work will take four days. The hope is this will be done during the Christmas period, when bookings are suspended for the holiday season.

LAND WEST OF GOLD LANE

If you attended the excellent Biddenham Society AGM on November 5th, you will already know that an agent working on behalf of the owner of the fields west of Gold Lane recently held a meeting with a number of us. They advised us that they want to submit a planning application to build around 300 houses on this land. We were shocked at this, as the Borough Council's Local Plan for 2021-35 has said only 160 houses should be built there – presumably some time after 2021! It appears the developers and the Borough have been talking themselves into doing something much sooner, and that land immediately north of the village pond and Coffin Path field may be built on. We are dead against this happening. Houses north of Duck End Lane may be, but not to the south.

I have written a long and detailed letter to both the Mayor and the Borough Council's Chief Executive to express our views about this threat to one of our few remaining open spaces in the village. I hope some of you attend the public consultation meeting happening on 21st November, and put forward your own concerns. Rampant housing development all around our village is altering its character, burdening our public services and clogging our roads. More is yet to happen. This last rural bastion that separates us from Bromham, with its precious views, archaeology,

and delicate eco-system so close to our treasured pond, must be left alone. We will defend it with every means at our disposal.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10th January 2017. Do please come along if you have anything you'd like to raise.

Please note: Forget what I said last time about meetings moving to Mondays; we decided against it. All meetings in 2018 will still be on Wednesdays. Sorry!

Peter Chase
Chairman