

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Biddenham held on Wednesday 10 May 2017

Apologies were received from Cllr Krzys Osuch

Present: Peter Chase (Chairman, Biddenham PC), Cllrs Jon Gambold, Francia Slade, Terence Platt, Joe Warren, Alan Jacobs, Chris Gee, Borough Cllr Roger Rigby, Alison Southern, Parish Clerk and 18 members of the public

Welcome

Cllr Chase welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of APM held on the 13th April 2016

It was resolved to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

To receive reports from Local Organisations in Biddenham

Tom Perry, Chairman of St James School

Bedford schools are moving from 3 tier to 2 tier which is more in keeping with the rest of the country. This will assist schools looking for teachers as teaching staff train either as Primary or Secondary professionals. St James will have 2 additional classes and our age range will be from year R to Year 6 – the school will now have two year groups formally assessed at the end of year 2 and year 6. We expect up to 50/60 additional children attending St James. Our current year 4 children will remain with us and become Year 5 this September 2017 and then Year 6 in September 2018. *What effect do you think there will be with the new Great Ouse Primary school being built and will there be any co-operation between the two schools?* This new school will be a 2-form entry school however it won't be large enough to meet the demand from the new housing development off Bromham Road. Our school is expanding and will have spaces for additional pupils from the new housing development.

What plans have the school in place to cope with the additional extra traffic? The school has a responsibility to be a good neighbour and we remind our parents to be responsible and courteous where they park. The Head Teacher is on the gate every evening and morning and we are fortunate that parents can use the village hall and pub car park for parking. The school also has before and after school clubs and this will reduce the number of parents dropping off and collecting at the beginning and end of the school day.

Please can you remind parents that they should not park on the grass verges. This is an issue that is regularly featured in the school newsletters and we shall continue to do so.

Can parents and children not be encouraged to walk to school? The school does have a walk and cycle to school week and encourage pupils to do this. Some parents have no choice but to drive as they are continuing on to their place of work.

The school had a good Ofsted in January 2017 and we are very proud of this achievement. *Where do the children go after St James?* We are a feeder school for Lincroft which is becoming a Secondary school and we are also a feeder school for St Thomas More.

Can Biddenham do anything for the school? The local authority only provide enough money for the building costs. A new building is being supplied but we will need to pay for internal fixtures and fittings, blinds, carpets and furniture. The school will be fundraising shortly and have been selected

as the chosen recipient for the Biddenham Show this year. Please come along to any of our events and support us.

Cllr Chase thanked Mr Perry for his report.

Peter Applewhite – village pond

Last year was our 30th year – we had numerous events throughout the year and our final event was a joint concert in November held with St James Church. At the end of November 2016 we were delighted to hear that Biddenham Pond was included within the extension of the conservation area. So far this year we have had a spring work morning and the Frogs Chorus. The pond does rely on run-off from neighbouring fields and precipitation, and unfortunately we have had a very dry winter. The western jetty needs some repairs and this will be done this year.

We are concerned that one of the preferred areas for development in Biddenham included in the local plan to 2035 is the land off Gold Lane and the field that abuts the pond and Duck End Lane. The impact of a new housing development on run-off is very worrying. Wildlife is also currently able to migrate to and from the pond and we are concerned that development on this field will cause problems. We will be making representations to the Borough regarding the Local plan and hopefully this will be supported by local residents.

Looking to the future of the Friends of the Pond Committee it is clear that we need more committee members. We have considered maybe forming a new committee to manage both Cowslip Meadow and the Pond but this would need more people to take on key management roles. If anyone is interested please contact us.

Chris Jones – Cowslip Meadow

Cowslip meadow is tucked away behind the church on the left-hand side. The land was given to the Borough Council by the Wingfield Estate and a group of residents is concerned that the wildflowers and wildlife need to be protected. The field has been blocked off to prevent further illegal unauthorised encampments. We have a new mower and strimmer paid for by the parish council and we have been keeping the paths open. Shortly the rubble will be taken away and replaced with large concrete blocks that can be moved by machinery to allow grass cutting. Volunteers have spent a couple of mornings clearing ragwort as we need to manage the field to maintain the biodiversity. The grass-cutting arrangements need managing so we can get the grass cut earlier in the year in either July or August and then baled. More information will go onto the blog and a note will also be included in *The Loop*. *The Bedfordshire Wildlife trust uses cattle and sheep to graze their meadows – would this be a possibility?* This is something that could be looked into.

The parish of Biddenham only has a few footpaths around Duck End Lane and these are in good order and walkable – the rest of the paths are either in Great Denham or Queens Park.

Chris Spurgeon – Biddenham Cricket Club

Last season our Saturday team had an excellent season. We also had two teams on Sunday and both were promoted out of their league and we were the league winners for the under 10s. This year we currently have four adult and five junior teams. On a typical Monday night we can have up to 80 junior members which is up from 55 last year. The club has about 30 volunteers and there will be approximately 60 matches played this season (weather permitting). We have new covers paid for via a grant from the English Cricket Board and we have invested heavily in equipment for the junior teams. The old covers were recycled and donated to another club. We are very pleased with how the club runs as part of the community. We would like to increase the number of girls playing in the junior team (12 at present). At the moment we are struggling for space for our equipment and this will need

to be discussed fully in the near future. Our grounds and pitch are something we are very proud of. We have recently secured a new 7-year deal with the PC again in May 2017 and we are very pleased and grateful for this. Please do come along on a Monday evening and see what is happening. *Are you linking in with St James School?* Yes, we are part of the Chance to Shine programme and 2 coaches go into school and provide coaching at the school every week.

Jason Thompson – football club

The club has been running for 3 years now and this last year, due to increased demand, I ran two teams: one on a Saturday and one on a Sunday afternoon. There are 45 children currently playing for the team. In our first year we won the league, the second year we were runners up and this year we have won the league again. We shall be continuing to play football at Biddenham next season and are very grateful to the parish council for allowing us to play here. Although I run the team through Wootton football club I have changed our home name to Biddenham United and the colour of the home strip for Biddenham colours. This year's team will for under 16s and I am also hoping to run an under 12s girls team. I am currently looking for funding for some free-standing goals. *Cllr Chase suggested contacting the PC for funding. Can you put something in The Loop about the football club?* Yes, of course and please come along and watch us on a Saturday morning. *What about younger children?* We could do a football school –but you can't run competitive football for children under 12 years old. I will need more help running these sessions and in the future I would want to run a club with several teams for all age categories.

Are you aware there are new pitches on the Land North of the Bromham Road? No, when would they be ready to use and who will run them? *It will take about 2 years before the pitches can be played on as the grass needs time to establish and the housing developers will be running the facilities.*

Chair's report

The full report is available on the parish website www.biddenham.org.uk

Highways – the Borough are reviewing the junction at Biddenham Turn. The recent traffic survey doesn't provide any evidence to suggest that more motorists are rat-running through the village to avoid the Bromham Road. The Borough have agreed to put white lining along the edge of the highway on Gold Lane, this creates the illusion that the road is narrow and is supposed to slow motorists down. The recent traffic survey on Bromham Road showed that 73% of all traffic is speeding and 15% are travelling over 40mph. The Borough are considering altering the speed limit from Days Lane to Gold Lane roundabout to 40mph and if this is approved additional signage and repeater road markings can be installed.

I have continued to liaise with Bidwell's regarding the Coffin Path and the parish council have a verbal commitment that Bidwell's will keep the coffin path clear if the field is planted again.

We were delighted that the extended conservation area application was successful and we succeeded in getting the coffin path and the village pond included. Our thanks to Roger Rigby for organising a site visit which I think was the deciding factor in this decision.

My thanks to Joe Warren for sorting out the new parish website – it is available to any club or society who might want a page on the site. Please do get in touch if you would like to be included on the website.

Management of the Pavilion is going well with a steady amount of bookings and healthy income against expenditure. This last year the parish council paid for the redecoration of the exterior of the building and internal decorating including the main hallway, stairs, landing, and upstairs meeting

room. We have also replaced the hall lights with LED lighting and we hope to have LED lighting in the car park this year.

Local Plan 2035

There were quite a few sites put forward for Biddenham but only 2 have got through to the next stage. But the only two the Borough are allowing to progress are the largest two: land behind the houses on Bromham Road leading down to Bromham Bridge, and most of the land to the west of Gold Lane (but not the field around the cemetery nor the coffin path field). As a parish council we will be making our representations regarding this and shall discuss this at the parish council meeting.

We will continue to hear your concerns, be proactive, and act as best we can with the limited influence granted to us. I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors, our two Borough Councillors, Jon and Roger, and our clerk, Alison Southern for their great commitment and effort.

To note the parish council end of year accounts for 2016/17

The accounts were noted. Cllr Osuch carries out an independent audit of the accounts as part of the parish council's system of internal controls. Last year the parish council took the decision to include Deep Spinney in its grass cutting schedule which is why the grass cutting budget accounts for such a large proportion of the precept but the village looks very good. This financial year we will be taking on the remainder of the parish which includes Bromham Road up to the Gold Lane roundabout.

Open Session

In recent months there has been an increase in the amount of crime in the village, 4 burglaries in Biddenham and 11 thefts from motor vehicles. Is there anything the parish council can do to help raise awareness. *We will provide information on the parish website and if anyone has details on their local Neighbourhood Watch scheme we can help to promote these.* Could we consult regarding installing CCTV at the entry and exit points in the village? Maybe CCTV cameras could be placed at the entrance to Deep Spinney and the end of Biddenham Turn. *The PC will take this forward for consideration.*

Can we have more wooden Posts on Biddenham Turn? *The Borough are not against this idea so this is something the PC need to discuss further. St Gregory's school have confirmed that parents should drop their children off at Biddenham Upper and they were very supportive of the Parish Council's request to speak to the parents and have done so.*

Has the parish council considered alternative solutions to wooden posts - planting trees might be an alternative solution? *Members considered this but decided that additional planting of either trees or hedges would require maintenance and not be as effective as installing wooden posts which work well and are low maintenance.*

SignedChairman, 11th April 2018