

The Loop

April 2020

£1.00

The Loop in exceptional times

Normally this edition would be full of Easter joy and celebrations, with lots going on to tell you about. This year is very different. Mostly we are hearing about cancellations but there are also plenty of initiatives to help

us all through these difficult times.

Biddenham Parish Council is paying for this magazine to be distributed to every house in Biddenham. I hope you find it useful.

Please do keep in touch with news.

I wish you a healthy and peaceful Easter.

Jean Gambold
Editor

LOCAL CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT NETWORK

Some villagers need help and support; others are willing to give it. Whether for practical things or emotional support, we need to come together. St. James's church and the Parish Councils of Biddenham and Great Denham are working out how.

People need to help each other street by street. We need lead volunteers for each street who can organise things at that level, with help from other neighbours. A central team will coordinate who these people are, and give them consistent advice, guidance and tools to help them.

If you need help and don't know anyone in your street who can assist you, call 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email help@biddenham.org.uk

Ways to get information and coordinate help

Check your local website for key info

biddenham.org.uk

Biddenham Residents

Share ideas on Facebook by searching for

St Andrews Residents Association, Biddenham

St Mary's, Biddenham Residents

Great Denham Community Volunteers

Make things happen using WhatsApp

There will be a group for every street

Volunteers are needed for your street, to coordinate help for your neighbours especially *St Mary's and St Andrew's areas*.

Call 01234 815393 or email help@biddenham.org.uk to register.

Some volunteers will be happy to provide friendly chat over the phone to anyone self-isolating who needs a bit of company. If you would like to be rung for a chat, do please call 01234 815393 or, if you can, email help@biddenham.org.uk.

Need help or want to help?

- St James's church is developing a community support scheme which Biddenham and Great Denham Parish Councils are supporting. See this page and page 3 if you need help or can volunteer.
- For pastoral and spiritual support at any time contact Rev Eric Lomax on 07805 879537 or rev.ejlomax@gmail.com.
- The First Friday team are offering help via their phone line, see page 15.
- Your Village Agent can also help, see page 9.
- Bedford Borough Council are writing to all known over 70s with specific advice and this will include an emergency telephone number.
- Bedford Borough Council has a 24 hour emergency telephone number and email address, see page 5.
- UK Power Networks, the people who maintain electricity supplies and deal with power cuts, etc. have special measures in place and a priority registration scheme. See page 6.

'The Loop' is published by the Parish Church of St James as a service to the communities of Biddenham and Great Denham
The editor welcomes contributions from residents and friends via email to loopeditor@gmail.com

St James's church

It is with sadness that I have to announce that the government have asked us to suspend our Church services for the time being. For the first time, we will not be celebrating Easter in our local Churches. This will be heart-breaking for many, but I feel this is the right thing for us to do to protect not only our congregations in Kempston and Biddenham, but also to serve the people of our communities, by limiting the spread of this virus.

What this does not change, however, is our identity as an Easter people, a people of prayer and hope. Please continue to pray over the coming weeks and months. I will do all I can to provide continued teaching, ministry and service, through the limitations of social distancing. Please contact me at any time if you need to on 07805 879537 and rev.ejlomax@gmail.com. In due course this time will pass, and we can again meet to share in Christ's communion.

Please watch this space, as we explore ways of continuing this ministry during this time of spiritual exile. As much as possible, we will keep you posted; 'Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.' (Psalm 23:4).

God bless.

Eric

Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends

I am sure you all know the story of the Exodus. The hand of God guided Moses to rescue a ragtag army of Hebrew slaves, from their captors in Egypt, to freedom in the promised land.

The most terrible part of this for the Hebrews was a forty-year journey in the wilderness in which they experienced fear, isolation and hunger. Many lost their way on this journey, but still their God did not abandon them. He gave them a law to live by and fed them with bread from heaven. Not only this, but God gave them purpose and hope, that one day God would give them a land which was their own in which to settle. The wilderness would end.

More than a thousand years later we have the story of Jesus, who himself spent forty days in the wilderness. The Hebrew readers would have instantly understood this story and would have related it to the slaves wandering in the wilderness. They would have seen this as an explicit story of hope. Even then, the story takes us deeper into darkness. Jesus never seems to genuinely emerge from the wilderness, but, instead suffers an agonising death on the cross. At least in the wilderness there is the possibility of hope, but here, on the cross, all hope is lost. For Moses, and the Hebrew slaves, God never abandoned His people, but in the New Testament, Jesus cries out; 'My God, why have you abandoned me?'

There is an end to the story, the empty tomb on Easter Sunday Morning, and the Church of the happy ending makes the proclamation; 'The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed, Hallelujah!' This happens every year, only not this year. This year, for the first time in centuries, the Church and, indeed the rest of our civilisation, is finding itself in the wilderness, and there seems to be no immediate prospect of moving out of this wilderness. This year, the Church cannot meet to celebrate Easter. We cannot celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

As a minister, I find this heart-breaking, but not actually hopeless. The hopeless cross of Christ presents us with the most powerfully hopeful words ever recorded. A suffering man speaks to the God who appears to have abandoned him, and says; Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing. This is absolute love spoken from the heart of suffering. It is a reminder that even in the very depths of despair, God has not abandoned us.

We are all witnessing what this present crisis is doing to our society. There are devastating structural changes around us that are impacting on every area of our lives. This includes real threats to people's jobs, to their financial wellbeing, to their security, and to their sense of being connected to others. The illness will not be the greatest killer. Seeing the media spread fear like a plague is heart-breaking to watch, and the consequences of mental illness arising from that fear could last for decades. The virus, it seems, is not the real enemy. What we really need is an antidote to fear. This antidote is not something that comes from pharmaceutical companies. It comes, rather from that pure act of self-giving love from the cross of Christ.

Covid 19 will pass, and of course there will be victims, but only love will rid us of the crippling fear that so many people feel at this present time. Remember 'perfect love casts out fear.' (1 John 4:18). In these desperate times when so many people are emotionally broken, the love that Christ gives us from the hopeless cross really is the solution that reminds that we are not alone or abandoned in this present wilderness. The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed, Hallelujah.

God bless.

Eric



Don't forget the Foodbank IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES THE NEED IS URGENT



Please continue to bring in-date non-perishable food. The container is at the back of the church.

You can find the latest list of items needed by Bedford food bank and details of how to make a financial donation at <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



The Parish Church of St James, serving Biddenham & Great Denham

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www.stjamesbiddenham.com

Coronavirus Community Support Network

St James's Church has launched a village support group to help as we all work our way through the next few months. This is going to be easier together.

Core principle: No direct physical contact so NO risk of infection to either the vulnerable or the volunteer.

Aim 1: Provide companionship (via phone) to the elderly/vulnerable/those self-isolating who may be lonely, concerned or simply bored stiff by being confined at home. We would aim to make regular calls just to check people are alright and, if wanted, have a chat about trivia and normal life.

Aim 2: Ensure food supplies for those, usually elderly, people who have to self-isolate but don't have access to a computer. Volunteers would ring, get a shopping list and then organise an online shopping delivery/do shopping & leave on doorstep.

Aim 3: Regular phone contact would also pick up any unexpected issues which the group might be able to resolve safely or would simply refer on to the appropriate organisations.

This system could also be used to support our local frontline staff – if you work in the NHS, police, social services, food distribution, prison or other frontline service and think there is some back up we can offer you such as shopping, while you are working flat out, email help@biddenham.org.uk.

So what are the mechanics? And would you like to be involved?

We are compiling two lists.

The first is of those in our community who are elderly, vulnerable in other ways and/or self-isolating. If this is you and you would like some back-up or phone company, ring 01234 815393 with your name, phone number, address and whether you would like a regular check call, a chat and/or shopping.

Our second list is for volunteers who are ready to spare some time checking on people and possibly doing some shopping.

The two lists may overlap. For example, I may have to self-isolate but I can still pick up the phone to check on someone else or do an online shop for them. Indeed, the process of helping others may make the isolation easier!

If you would like to be a volunteer, please email help@biddenham.org.uk with your name, preferred phone number and whether you can offer telephone company and/or online shopping. Please also say if you have a DBS check for any organisation. It doesn't matter if you don't, we still need your help – but safeguarding is important.

One final note: this will be entirely staffed by volunteers, some of whom are elderly and vulnerable themselves, others of whom are still juggling full-time work and evolving family commitments. So, this may not be perfect – but we are going to give this our best shot. Do join us!

Kate Smith
St James's Church



THANKS

Putting together the Coronavirus Support Network and creating and distributing this magazine has required a massive team effort from people all over the parish.

They are too numerous to mention individually but we owe them all a huge THANK YOU.

Biddenham Village Hall - thanks for help with insulation

Biddenham Village Hall management committee received a generous grant of £1,785 from Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby to enable the insulation of the hall to be brought up to the current recommended specification. The work was completed on 2nd January 2020.

The committee are very grateful to our ward councillors for their support and assistance and remain committed to maintaining this very well-used facility to a high standard whilst reducing our environmental impact in any way we reasonably can.

Martin Hosegood



Biddenham History Society

The meeting of the Biddenham History Society scheduled for Monday 20th April is cancelled. Peter Applewhite will now give his talk '2 things you may have wondered about and the search for answers, Part 1' on Monday 6th July.

Peter and I will arrange another date for Part 2 of his talk, which should have been on 6th July for later in the summer or early autumn. I hope that you will all stay well and I will see you at the July meeting.

Kathy Fricker

barn@2 Magpas Air Ambulance

A very competent Paul Firman, attired in orange (like the helicopters), a retired Telecom engineer manager, came as a MAGPAS representative to the barn@2 group in March and showed us a film and talked about the work of the charity.

This air ambulance service brings lifesaving care, by both land and air, to patients in life-threatening emergencies in our community. We heard how this enhanced emergency medical care saved the lives of some specific and critically injured patients.

The service was founded in 1971 when two doctors, Dr Derek Cracknell and Dr Neville Silverstone, wanted to set up a rapid response to road traffic accidents. MAGPAS has two specially equipped cars, as well as two helicopters and has treated 60,000 or more patients. A 24/7 service has operated since 2015.

Each helicopter costs £2,507 per call-out and carries a pilot, a doctor, a senior paramedic and a trainee so that skills may be transferred. We were also shown a picture of all the equipment available on board, such as a ventilator which cost £16,000, the anaesthetics, analgesics, sedatives (controlled drugs which only the doctors could administer) and dressings etc. Our donation of £350 would purchase one of the packages! Space is also available in the helicopter for a bed and a seat for a family member, should it be required.

MAGPAS stands for Mid Anglia General Practitioner Accident Service and serves the regions of Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire – an area of 7,500 square miles. The airfield is currently based at Wyton in Huntingdon but is due to move. MAGPAS is a purely voluntary funded organisation and needs to raise £5 million per year.

During question time we learned that the helipad at Luton and Dunstable Hospital is progressing well and should become operational next year. There are 21 air ambulance charities running a total of 39 helicopters in the UK. The service deals with a variety of call-outs including cardiac arrests, road traffic accidents, falls, stab and gunshot wounds.

There are lots of ways to raise funds and you can find these on the website, magpas.org.uk, along with other information. We raised our small contribution from raffles at two social functions and a Fashion Show.

Due to the developing situation with the coronavirus our meetings will sadly be cancelled until further notice.

Val Fitzhugh



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From your Borough Councillors

The Coronavirus is creating a unique and unprecedented situation around the globe. Here in Bedford Borough there have been a number of meetings, briefings and phone conversations recently and we wanted to share some information with you which we hope will be helpful.

Your General Health:

There are five important steps you can take to reduce the spread of coronavirus:

- 1) Be alert for the most common symptoms, which are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature. If you live alone and have symptoms of coronavirus, however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- 2) If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days from when the symptoms started.
- 3) Take steps to reduce non-essential contact with others.
- 4) It is particularly important that those who are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant follow these measures as much as possible, to significantly limit face-to-face interaction with friends and family.
- 5) Be vigilant in your respiratory and hand hygiene.

Bedford Borough Council Services

The Council's website has been updated with the latest information about Coronavirus. Clearly, information will continue to be updated as the situation develops.

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>

Refuse collection: It seems likely that people self-isolating at home might generate a lot more household refuse. Officers have advised that Refuse Collection is a priority service and will be continued. If things get really, really tough, green bins will be the first to go. Black bin collections will be maintained as not to collect them would create another major public health problem. See the separate notice below for an update.

Supermarkets: Resilience staff have contacted supermarkets who are implementing nationwide policies to deal with their supply chain use. Restrictions are being put in place on key items such as hand gels, pharmaceuticals, and certain grocery products with some supermarkets choosing to implement an offer of early opening for over 70s.

Over 70s: The Borough Council will be writing to all known individuals aged 70 and over advising them that we are establishing a community hub where residents can ask for help and be matched with a volunteer from an appropriate voluntary organisation. This letter has started to be issued and does contain a telephone contact number: 01234 718101 which will be staffed 24/7 and an email address for those seeking help: covid19help@bedford.gov.uk.

Volunteers: The Borough Council is keen to coordinate volunteer efforts across the Borough. Volunteer groups and anyone able to offer help should e-mail: covid19@bedford.gov.uk. This might not just be for help with shopping, but could also be dog walking or collecting prescriptions.

Malicious offers of help: There have been reports of people knocking doors, offering help and then asking for credit cards to do the shopping. As always during a crisis, there are some who seek to take advantage of the vulnerable. Please do not part with credit cards and if necessary call the police.

Borough Health Services

Borough Health Services have issued the following advice:

- Handwashing with soap is better than gels, as the virus contains fatty parts which don't like soap.
- Hospitals are being made ready to admit people in

large numbers and as a result all non-urgent surgery will cease fairly soon.

- The current pandemic will end eventually, either with a cure or when everyone builds up immunity.

One other important point. Only take information from reliable sources, such as Public Health England. There are a lot of armchair experts putting misleading information into the public domain. Follow guidance from the national health authorities.

With everything, the situation is fluid, so watch out for updates.

Please look out for each other and we are sure we can come through this.

Best wishes

Jon Gambold, Roger Rigby, Jim Weir

Green bin collection suspended

Bedford Borough Council issued this update on Friday, 20th March.

With the Government guidance in place especially for those classed in the "increased risk" category of severe illness from Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Council has lost a number of its waste collection staff.

To ensure we can continue to prioritise our teams on essential duties, we have unfortunately had to suspend Green Garden Waste collections from Monday 23rd March.

Bulky Waste Collections also have to be suspended, but any which have already been booked up to and including Friday 27th March will be fulfilled.

The Council has also had to suspend the rural skip for bulky waste service (known as 'Rural Bulky Waste Collections') until further notice. We would ask that residents do not place any items at the previously advertised locations, as they will not be collected. We will keep residents informed about future rural bulky waste collection dates as soon as we can.

Further information on waste services at this time can be found at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>



Great Denham Events

Parish Council Meetings

At the time of writing, the next meeting is on Monday 6th April. The meeting starts at 7.30pm at Great Denham Community Hall; there is 15 minutes for public questions at the start of the meeting.

The planned Easter Events at the Community Hall are cancelled.

To keep up to date with developments at Great Denham log on to <http://www.greatdenham.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>



A message from UK Power Networks

Councillor Jon Gambold has passed on this message to help people who may be more than usually reliant on their electricity supplies

Many are concerned about the ongoing Coronavirus public health issue and the way it has affected nearly every industry across the world.

We want to reassure you that, as the company responsible for distributing power to over 8.3 million properties across London, the South East and East of England, we know how important it is to keep electricity flowing to your home or business, especially during these uncertain times.

Our engineers are out as normal continuing their core role in maintaining your electricity network, and fixing any electrical faults that occur.

We have put into place a number of well-rehearsed contingency plans and precautions to ensure we maintain a good level of service, with high numbers of engineers and call centre staff available to support the ongoing situation.

With many of our customers now working from home and to support the wider UK economy through this very challenging period, from Friday 20th March we will be cancelling most of our lower priority planned maintenance work. This is in order to avoid prolonged planned power cuts for people who are currently working from home.

If you need information on a power cut, you can, as always, visit our online Power Cut Map for live updates, tweet us at @UKPowerNetworks or telephone our customer service team, 24 hours a day, on 105 or 0800 3163 105. Calls are free from a landline or mobile phone.

Here are some of the practical steps we are taking:

- To ensure continued resilience in months to come, we have split key teams across different locations, and hundreds of call agents are equipped to answer customer queries while working from home.
- All essential work will continue as normal, including fixing power cuts on the rare occasions they happen.
- We're postponing lower priority work on electricity cables and substations, as we recognise many people are working from home and we want to minimise disruption to their lives.
- We are working with other network operators and trade associations to ensure we share best practice and focus on activities that safeguard power supplies.
- We have engaged with our supply chain to ensure access to the equipment and supplies we need to keep the electricity flowing.

What it means for you:

- If our engineers might need to enter your home to restore your power, we'll ask you on the phone first if you are self-isolating so we can make the relevant arrangements.
- National guidance has been given to our engineers, who will wear protective equipment, stay in a different room from people who are infected or self-isolating, and avoid touching surfaces.
- If you live in London, the East or South East of England, then being on our Priority Services Register will ensure you will receive extra support if you experience a power cut.
- We understand that the coronavirus outbreak is a worrying time for many, and we want to make sure you have access to local services, should you need assistance during this unprecedented time.
- We are here for you 24/7 and there are over 20 ways to get in touch including our website, on Twitter @ukpowernetworks, or ring 105 (this is a real number! Ed.)

We will continue to support those who need help the most during a power cut

We continue to offer free additional tailored support and guidance to customers on our Priority Services Register if they experience a power cut, are reliant on electronic medical equipment or have young children.

For more information on our Priority Services Register, please visit www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority to register, or call us on 0800 169 9970.

This is a fast-changing situation, and we will continue to adapt so that the way we work ensures you, our customers, continue to receive the highest level of service.

We will keep you updated and will review the information on our website continuously to ensure you have the most up to date information.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this very uncertain period.

Michael Horwood
Public Affairs Manager
UK Power Networks

Andrew Charles
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Local home delivery services

Nancy Barkas has compiled this list of local shops that will deliver groceries/prescriptions and takeaways with phone or website ordering and payment.

- **Budgens**, groceries in Bromham. You can ring with a credit or debit card and a list and they'll deliver any order over £24.00 free. Obviously availability of everything you would like cannot be assured. We hope more local shops will be added to this list. Hours at present: 7.00am-9.00pm Monday to Saturday, 10.00am-4.00pm Sunday. 01234 824040.
- **The Village Medical Centre Pharmacy**, The Meiklejohn Centre, Kingswood Way, Great Denham will take orders and payment over the phone and offers free delivery on certain days. Open Monday to Friday 9.00am-1.00pm, 2.00pm-6.00pm. Saturday 9.00am-1.00pm. Closed Sunday. 01234 351455
- **The Post Office and shop** in Great Denham, likely to take payment over the phone and considering deliveries. 01234 910390
- **Mo's Fish and Grill** in Great Denham does deliveries from 5.35pm but you must order and pay online. Contactless delivery is now available: Want your order dropped off with no contact? Make sure you write it in your order notes when you check out and the courier will ring the bell or knock and leave it by your door. www.just-eat.co.uk/restaurants-mos-fish-and-grill-bedford/menu

Feeling cocooned - not isolated?

Biddenham resident Professor Colin Talbot has set up a support group on Facebook for people with underlying health issues who are already self-isolating.

He says: Lots of people have been sharing concerns and advice on here (Twitter) about vulnerable and 'at risk' groups and people on here. I thought it might be worth doing it a bit more systematically. So I have set up a Facebook Group named "The Cocooned". It's open, come and join me.

Search for The Cocooned on Facebook.

Nick Sleap
Proprietor

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Announcement from W&H Peacock

Due to the increasing risk of the Covid-19 virus spreading, W&H Peacock have taken the decision to suspend all current sales and viewing at Bedford and St Neots.

Please check the website for regular updates.

Thank you for your support during these uncertain times.

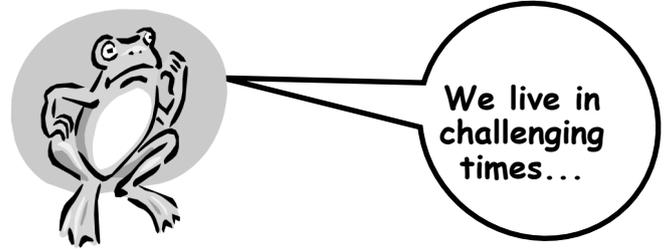
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In light of the most recent government advice (at the time of writing), the Committee has decided that the most responsible action it can take is to cancel the following events;

Friday 3rd April Frog Foray

Saturday 4th April Work Morning

Notices informing people will also be placed around the village.

In addition, the grass mowing and bin emptying rota will be suspended until 1st May at the earliest. We will wait and see what happens before deciding whether the summer AGM can go ahead as planned in June.

There has been some sterling work put in to remove the reeds from the edge of the pond to help prevent the pond silting up and leave some clear water for the ducks and us to enjoy. The winds and rain associated with storm Ciara and storm Dennis have prevented further work taking place, with the water level becoming too high for safe working. In accordance with the advice to socially isolate, work parties are now being suspended for obvious reasons for the foreseeable future, so please enjoy the pond as it is, but be tolerant if it starts to look untidy.

Water levels in the pond remain high, so please be very careful around the pond and look after children and dogs.

Thank you

The Pond Team

Contact Details

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Paul Godden

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www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond



New Bombay Covid-19 update

Dear Friends,

Please see below our approach during this time.

While we respect the gravity of the situation, we are not taking this lightly, we are taking each day as it comes, trying to operate as safely and responsibly for as long as we can or are allowed.

The health and safety of our customers and colleagues is of the upmost importance to us. We have a strict cleaning process in place to ensure our Restaurant remains clean and sanitised at all times. We sanitise all tables and chairs after use, regularly wipe door handles and conduct a thorough deep clean of the entire Restaurant on a daily basis.

With our delivery service customers can request whether or not they'd prefer a no-contact delivery by specifying any special request upon delivery.

We are continuing to closely follow the advice from Public Health England and remain open for business. We are also encouraging contactless payment as much as possible, where available and applicable.

We hope you are all safe and well, and we thank you for your support.

See you soon,

The New Bombay.







The pond is full of water and sparkling in the Spring sunshine



So, how will you pass the time? Please share....

Lots of people are already changing the way they live. I, for one, am not used to having my husband at home so much! That might become a challenge as time goes on.

At present there are significantly more people walking around the parish, keeping up their exercise, but we may not be able to go out and about for much longer.

Do you have a plan? Are there hobbies you have always wanted to take up? Or things you used to do that have gone by the wayside? Have you a musical instrument languishing in a cupboard? Have you tried yoga or other exercise regimes at home? Do you have an ambition to learn a new language? Have you been looking for a chance to research your family history? Do you want to release your creativity through art, writing or crafts? Have you plans to reinvigorate your garden?

How will you keep the children amused? It's going to be a long summer holiday for many of them.

I would love to hear from you with stories and pictures of what you have been up to and will publish as many as I can over the coming months. Not only will this celebrate your initiatives but also might give others ideas to stop us all going stir-crazy.

I would particularly like to publish any artwork or creative writing but please remember that we print in black and white!

You can email loopeditor@gmail.com or put contributions through the letterbox at 22 Day's Lane.

Please get in touch.

Jean

Quotations for our time

'I wandered lonely as a cloud - as the government advised' with apologies to Wordsworth.

'When shall we three meet again.....when the hurly burly's done, when the battle's lost and won' (Shakespeare's Macbeth).

'Little Jack Horner sat in a corner eating his pudding and pie; he put in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said what a good boy am I' Congratulations on self-isolating!

Please send me any more you can think of - as long as they are not too dark to publish.

Jean

Are you Struggling? Help is at Hand - Just Ask!

Our Village Agent is here to help older people to access the services and support they might need. Her services are free of charge, and she can phone you at home. Just call 0800 039 1234.



Biddenham has a strong support network, and you are not alone at this difficult time - someone living nearby will be happy to help you. If you don't know who to ask, call our Freephone 0800 039 1234. Here are some more resources which you might find useful.

Order Your Shopping by Phone - If you don't use the internet, Sainsburys offer a telephone ordering service. You can phone them with your order 9-5 Mon - Fri, but be prepared to wait in a queue. They are reserving some delivery slots for elderly and vulnerable people. This is the only supermarket who offers a telephone ordering service, and there are charges to cover the cost. To place an order costs £3.95, and delivery slots cost between 50p and £7. Minimum order value is £25 plus a £7 surcharge for orders under £40. Sainsburys Telephone Order Line 0800 328 1700 (choose option 3).

Meals Delivered to your Home - Several companies deliver frozen ready meals, which could be a helpful solution to the shopping problem. Two examples are Oakhouse Foods 0333 370 6700 or Wiltshire Farm Foods 0800 077 3100.

Get Your Prescriptions Delivered to Your Door - Some pharmacies offer free home delivery of prescriptions to villages in Bedfordshire - you should check whether your current supplier offers this service. If they don't, you can nominate one of these chemists to receive your prescription electronically from your GP.

Kidmans Chemist, 141 Castle Road Bedford O1234 863062
Smarta Healthcare <https://smartahealthcare.co.uk/> 01234 831768

Bus passes - You can now use your bus pass free at any time, even peak hours.

Feeling Lonely - Silver Line is a free confidential helpline, founded by Esther Rantzen, which provides information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. www.thesilverline.org.uk Call anytime on: 0800 470 8090. The Samaritans will listen to you and help you talk through your concerns, worries and troubles. This number is free to call from both landlines and mobiles, including pay-as-you-go mobiles. You do not need to have any credit or call allowance on your plan. Call 116 123. (You can also email jo@samaritans.org)

Any queries or worries - contact your Village Agent on Freephone 0800 039 1234 (This is an answerphone service, so please be ready to leave your name, address & telephone number, & we will aim to call you back within 48 hours.)



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Coronavirus planning: Latest advice

Dear all,

Following the Government's latest advice around social distancing, it is with sadness and reluctance that we recommend that all forms of recreational cricket are for now suspended.

This extends to training, pre-season friendlies and any associated cricket activity.

Sport plays an absolutely vital role in the nation's mental and physical wellbeing, and it helps people find meaning where there is fear and uncertainty, so one of our goals in the coming weeks will be to explore ways that we can support some levels of physical activity in communities - particularly at junior levels.

Using our cricket community to support others could be one of the most important services we can offer during the difficult next few months.

It will be critical that any decisions we do make are medically-led. And we will continue to work with Government and their advisors to ensure we are informed by science in our decision making.

Over the coming weeks we will work with the game to understand what support is required across the cricket community, particularly local clubs and leagues.

We understand that countless hours of work from thousands of volunteers have already gone into getting ready for the 2020 season and we know how disappointing this will be. We are thankful for the huge role that volunteers play in local cricket, to ensure the game remains at the heart of communities.

We know that you and your clubs can play an important role in bringing your community together once we get past this period of time.



Biddenham Show - something to look forward to

Biddenham Show has been provisionally fixed for Sunday 13th September. We are once again grateful to St James' School governors for agreeing to host the Show.

Who knows where we will be by then but keep the Show in mind when you are stuck at home and in your garden during the coming months.

Biddenham Show Committee



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Biddenham Cricket Club



It is very sad that all cricket is suspended, particularly for the youngsters who are going to have a lot of time on their hands this summer. You can see the letter from the ECB alongside which shows their concern about the loss of sport's vital role in keeping people healthy, both physically and mentally.

Here are a few ideas to keep fit and well:

- Create a temporary new routine to help you feel safe
- Continue to prioritise your physical, social, mental and emotional well-being through routines and practices
- Remember many others may be suffering more than you
- Think how you can stay grounded so you can ground others and be a reducer, not a producer of anxiety
- Think before you post or speak - will this create calm or chaos?

We will be trying to keep the field in the best condition possible for people to use as much as they are allowed.

Richard Fone

Up to date news appears on the website at: <http://biddenham.play-cricket.com>

The 100 club provides the club with useful income and also raises its profile within the village amongst the residents for an annual fee of £12. If you would like to join the cricket club as a member, you will also gain automatic entry into the 100 club draw, which is held each month.

Contact numbers:

Chairman	Glenn Taylor	07778 479479
Cricket Secretary	Richard Fone	07818 678697
Junior Chairman	Chris Spurgeon	07707 771606
Club Welfare Officer	Maija Bissett	589473
100 Club	Judith O'Quinn	363489

Peter's Picturehouse

On a cold night in March we showed the film Downton Abbey. It was good to see the excellent support for Peter's Picturehouse continuing. We had further comments about the impressive quality of the new screen. The film, being packed with fabulous actors and actresses and filmed in glorious locations, held our attention while many plot lines were resolved.

Sadly, we now have to take a break from our schedule whilst the Village Hall is closed. Our showing of Rebecca on Tuesday 7th April is cancelled. Our planned programme for the next few months is below but may be subject to change. We will publish further updates as matters develop. Please check village noticeboards and/or village website for the most up-to-date information.

Programme, to be resumed when possible:

Tuesday 5th May	Red Joan
Tuesday 2nd June	Stan and Ollie
Tuesday 7th July	Bridge of Spies

Rose Houghton



This month in the garden

It is very sad that the celebration of new life at Easter and in springtime that should be the main feature of this month is being dominated by the isolation, illness and fear associated with coronavirus. Many of you may well feel that with all the problems and worries at this time gardening will take a pretty low priority. On the other hand, if, like my wife and I, you are amongst the isolated, this may be an opportunity to give the garden more attention than usual and it will help to keep you positive as you reap the benefit of being out in the open air. You might even have time to sit in the garden as the weather warms up. The current difficulties with shopping also bring home the advantage of growing your own fruit and vegetables. The worst predictions of the length of the outbreak offer the prospect of reaping a home-grown harvest and not just getting it started.

The lack of sunshine and continuing rain after the wettest February on record may mean that you haven't been able to get much started in the open ground in the vegetable garden. You need to rake the soil into a fine tilth to sow seed and it is difficult to achieve that in wet and heavy soil. If you have a greenhouse or conservatory or a cold frame you can get quite a few things started by sowing seeds in modules, seed trays or pots using sowing or general purpose compost. The sort of things you can sow are brassicas (cabbage, broccoli etc.), salad leaf crops (lettuce, rocket) and leeks and spring onions. Root crops don't take kindly to being transplanted so carrots, parsnips, beetroot and radishes need to be sown directly into the soil where they will grow. Some seeds, such as tomato, cucumber, courgette and sweetcorn, need heat to get them started and that needs a propagator or an airing cupboard. In the latter case put the container in a plastic bag. In either case, check frequently for signs of germination and remove from the heat as soon as growth is visible. When you water newly sown seeds in containers it is best to stand the container in a tray of fresh tap water so they soak up the water rather than watering from the top with a watering can. It is best to use clean tap water rather than water from a water butt.

If you are the sort of gardener who isn't overly keen but still likes things to look good there may still be some tidying up to do after the winter months when you haven't been very active outside. Cut back any dead growth in flower borders, and lightly fork over the soil with a hand fork removing weeds. In many gardens your lawn will be the most prominent feature and this will need some attention. Before you start mowing, check for tree debris

blown down during the winds and clear it up and make the first cut with the mower set fairly high. The appearance of a lawn is much improved by sharp edges and for this you need a pair of long-handled shears and a half-moon edging tool. Cut the edges and clear up the grass cuttings before sharpening the edge, keeping the tool vertical.

If you haven't started feeding plants it is not too late. For beds and borders and the vegetable patch and soft fruit this can be in the form of a mulch of garden compost or well-rotted manure or in granular or pellet form; either organic or inorganic. Growmore is a good general purpose inorganic fertiliser which is in granular form. Organic materials are blood fish and bone fertiliser or bonemeal which are like a coarse powder and are good for forking into the hole when planting. Chicken pellets can be bought most cheaply in a large sack and are easy to scatter by hand. There are specialist rose fertilisers which should be applied in spring and again in late summer. Heavy feeders like tomatoes and clematis do best with a frequent application of liquid tomato feed. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for frequency. Container grown plants need a fortnightly application of liquid feed such as Miracle Grow; general purpose or, for acid loving plants, azalea and camellia feed.

Daffodils which have finished flowering should be left for at least six weeks before being mown or cut back and can be fed with growmore. Don't put out frost-tender plants until the second or third week in May. Supports for taller perennial plants should be put in place as soon as possible so they get hidden as growth increases.

Jeremy Arthern

Working from home?



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Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 11th March 2020 in the upstairs room of the pavilion. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Krys Osuch, Francia Slade and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold (who arrived later on) and Roger Rigby, Clerk Lyn Lyman and 4 members of the public were also present.



Public Open Session

There was only one query this month, concerning the golf course between Biddenham and Great Denham. As some of you may know, this is land owned by the Wingfield estate, who own lots of land in the area. The lease for the golf club expires at the end of this year, and rumours are circulating that it may not be renewed. This would presumably be in order for the land to be put to some other use – you've no doubt guessed it: housing.

Several Councillors gave their views in response. The fact is the land cannot be put forward for a large scheme under the Borough's new local plan for 2021 to 2030, as it hasn't been proposed as such already. There is, however, a new, new local plan now required, due to start in 2023 and run to 2040. The land might be proposed for that when Borough invite applications for sites some time next year.

I fear there is little we can do but to see whether Wingfield want to exploit their land in this way. Should they decide to, Borough will be keen to make it happen. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the demand from central government for more houses in our area continues unabated – not least because north Bedfordshire has now been identified as central (literally) to the "Oxford / Cambridge arc" – an area for development of many tens of thousands of houses between these two hi-tech academic centres.

Secondly, within The Branston Way, we are officially part of the Bedford urban area. To try to reduce house building in rural villages, Borough have a policy to prioritise new builds within that urban area.

I was recently invited to meet our new MP, Richard Fuller, at the Houses of Parliament. Mr Fuller has sought to reach out to all Parish Council chairs in his constituency, to tell him about their concerns. My meeting focused a great deal on housing development, and I was heartened to hear that Richard is very keen to understand and, notably, challenge the assumption that gazillions more houses still need to be built here.

Since the new government came to power in December on a manifesto of "levelling up" the country, north to south, and also to restrict immigration to skilled labour, one might think there should be a review of all this demand for houses in the south east. Richard, as our MP, is one of the few people who might really be able to get to the bottom of all this and challenge the prevailing view.

Daffs

Coronavirus did not figure at our meeting; we were just in advance of when things got really serious, as they now are. Be in no doubt, however, your Parish Council is getting involved in measures to provide self-help around the village, and we are open to the use of our funds for sensible ideas.

In the meantime, I don't believe there is any ban on going for a walk around our lovely village. With spring nearly upon us we are all very taken with the display of daffodils in particular spots around the parish. Thanks must go to Roger and Jon, our Borough Councillors, for their initiative and support in getting these planted in greater numbers than ever.

We need cheering up, and their vibrant yellow is

blooming marvellous!

Our Next Meeting: Important Info

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of most months at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney.

Our April meeting is meant to be the Annual Parish Meeting at which we invite representatives of our community to update us all on their activities. However, this meeting must be held in person (by law) and the current situation regarding the Coronavirus prevents that. We have therefore decided to make April's meeting an ordinary one, conducted via a conference call service. The Annual Parish Meeting is provisionally moved to Wednesday 13th May – or possibly later if circumstances dictate.

We very much welcome hearing from residents, there being a public "open session" near the start for anyone wanting to say something. Please dial in and let us know anything concerning you about our village, or just listen in. The date for this meeting is Wednesday 8th April.

To participate, please ring **0203 051 2874** (a service called "Zoom") and then use your phone keypad to enter the code **912 526 0859** followed by the # key. Calls are national rate, I'm afraid. We cannot stretch to a service where we pay for your phone call via a toll free number.

Alternatively, and at no charge, you can use a computer or tablet by opening your web browser (Safari / Chrome / Edge) and carefully entering **<https://zoom.us/j/9125260859>**

This information will be posted on our village website at biddenham.org.uk. Please keep viewing the site for important communications about Coronavirus measures.

Peter Chase
Chairman

P.S.

An extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council was held in private on 19th March at 5:30pm. Seven councillors, one Borough Councillor and the clerk accessed an online conference call. The agenda discussed the Coronavirus Support Network being set up in the village, and agreed to fund a copy of The Loop for all households (£600), a helpline number (£10 per month) and a conference calling facility for future PC meetings (£12 per month).



The splendid display of daffodils at the entrance to Deep Spinney

St James' Primary School

Interesting times for us all! As I write, (17th March) school is open and we continue to try and make sure everything is as normal as possible for the children. Our staff are incredible, showing real determination and commitment to ensuring our children continue to receive the very best education we can provide, and I could not be more grateful or proud of the team we have here.

Since Christmas, we've been busy and below are some examples of just some of the things we've been up to.



We won prizes in the BMS Art competition - Jack came first in his category.



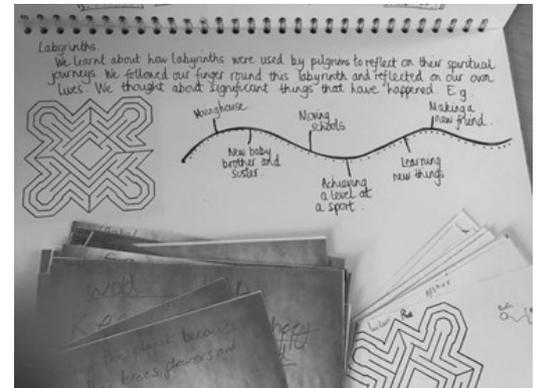
Green Jays have learnt to become Fish Keepers this term. We've got loads of fish and some of them have even had babies!



Our Pupil Governors ran fundraising activities to support animals affected by the Australian bushfires .



Athlete and boxer, Leon Baptiste visited and took us through our paces!



We've been following the Diocesan Lent Project 'God in the Place', which has really got us thinking about God in Jacob's life and in our lives. Archdeacon Dave joined us for the morning and led our worship.

For more news and updates, please follow us on Twitter: @StJamesHead

Maria Soulsby



View from a landscape

You will all be aware of the profound changes proposed for the view from the Gold Lane roundabout and as you proceed towards the countryside away from Bedford the open landscape to your left will change radically.

Perhaps as a bystander, the noble Wych Elm presiding over the landscape from the side of the road will shed a tear as its view is curtailed again. It survived the Bromham Bypass and the roundabout to live on into the C21. These elms have some resistance to Dutch Elm Disease. This one is a survivor and maybe I can find some cuttings to grow on, as its seed tends to be non-viable. Attempts to recreate the English Elm of yesteryear are fraught with difficulty and recent excitement about new developments in Elm rebreeding are qualified by crosses with non-English species. The holy grail of elm breeding still seems to recede and so we should be grateful for the survival of The Biddenham Elm.

Chris Haydn Jones



With regret, following government advice, the Village Hall will be closed for April. We will review the situation at the end of April.
Village hall management committee

Biddenham Gardeners Association Coronavirus

As new reports of Coronavirus (Covid-19) continue to develop along with Government advice to withdraw from social activities, the BGA Committee took the decision to cancel the Gardeners' Question Time talk which was due to take place on Tuesday 17th March. The health, safety and wellbeing of our members and visitors is always our first priority. This is an unprecedented and dynamic time which is continuing to evolve. At the time of writing (17th March), we are pleased to say that there are no known reported cases of the virus amongst our membership. We hope this remains the case and we are closely monitoring the changing Government guidelines.

Unfortunately, the 30th birthday celebrations and talk from Nick Bailey in April have also been cancelled. With regards to our future talks in May and beyond, it is currently impossible for us to know if they will be able to go ahead. We believe it is critical that we do our bit to help reduce the transmission of Covid-19.

We hope that our members and associates keep well and take comfort in the fact that we are all connected through our love of gardening. Please do refer to our website www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk for further updates and for a source of support and inspiration with regards our love of gardens. All comments and queries are welcome on the website. Further queries can be made to Paula on 01234 602039. For any queries regarding membership, please contact Linda on 01234 270747. www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

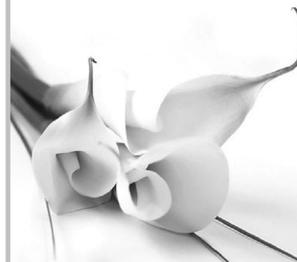
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100 CLUB



February draw

1. Peter Culverwell 14
2. Peter Marks 408
3. Brian Johnson 464

Drawn by Marlene Baker

Regular Events in Biddenham

The Village Hall is closed from 22nd March until the end of April, the Church Barn and Great Denham Community Hall are closed for the foreseeable future and many organisations have cancelled their events. It seemed sensible to suspend this column until normal times return. Please contact the organisers of your events for up to date information.

Café B...



With regret, following Government advice, Café B will be cancelled in April. We will review the situation at the end of April.

Welcome Packs for

New Biddenham Residents

Contact Richard Church Tel: 214805



The Friends of St James

- the charity which helps conserve the church, churchyard and barn for future generations

Membership
Treasurer

Peter Leverkus
Paul Fricker

Tel: 353662
Tel: 342843

First Friday Lunch



With regret, following government advice, the First Friday Lunch will be cancelled for April. We will review the situation about further lunches at the end of April.

If you need help with shopping or other needs leave a message with your phone number on 07412 59584 or email firstfridaylunch@outlook.com

Hall Booking Details

Biddenham Village Hall

From the Village Hall website you can check availability on the diary, look at the facilities and fill in a booking form. Contact details for regular events are also there. www.biddenhamvillagehall.org.uk

Church Barn

Contact the Booking Officer, Jan Burns on 344019 or janburns@gmx.com if you would like to hire the barn. Smaller than the Village Hall, it is ideal for a small party or meeting.

Pavilion

The hall is available for children's parties, anniversary lunches, christening receptions, meetings etc. We can also hire the small upstairs meeting room which has tea and coffee making facilities. Booking enquiries to biddenhampavilion@hotmail.co.uk or Debs Slade on 07808 579330.

Great Denham Community Hall

www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk

Mobile Library

Great Denham Community Hall

Saturdays, 4th & 18th April
2.20pm-2.40pm

Biddenham

Thursdays, 9th & 23rd April
Three Tuns 10.45am-11.00am
Church End 11.05am-11.25am



At the time of going to print there were no plans to cancel the mobile library service but please check with the Bedford Borough website for up to date information.

Coronavirus caution curtails community life

As the threat of the coronavirus increases many organisations are adapting or cancelling their events. You can find more specific details inside but a brief summary is as follows:

- St James's Church services are suspended for the time being but the church will still be open for private devotion.
- barn@2 is cancelled for the foreseeable future as is Bridge at the Church Barn.
- Biddenham Village Hall is closed at least until the end of April so First Friday and Café B are cancelled for April.
- The April meeting of Biddenham History Society is postponed until July.
- Biddenham Gardeners Association meetings, including the special event with Nick Bailey are cancelled until further notice.
- The Christian Aid Soup Lunch which normally goes ahead in May is cancelled for the time being.
- Friends of Biddenham Pond have cancelled their April work morning and the annual Frog Foray. See page 8.
- St James' School will be partially closed as per Government policy. Please check the school website or twitter account for updates.
- Great Denham Parish Council have cancelled their Annual Meeting and the planned Litter Pick.
- Easter events at Great Denham Community Hall are cancelled.
- Sadly, the ECB have advised that all cricket activities should cease - a great blow for all cricketers old and young in Biddenham. You can see more on this on page 10

Other events and businesses advertised within the magazine may be affected. Keep an eye on the village websites and noticeboards for up to date information.

Subscribe to The Loop

Biddenham Parish Council has funded the distribution of this edition of The Loop to every house in Biddenham. I hope you have found it useful.

Normally The Loop is full of news about parish events, reports of what's happened and what is coming soon. It is published 10 times a year at a cost of £1.00 per issue, £10.00 per year.

If you don't already subscribe to The Loop and would like to do so you can subscribe for the rest of 2020 for £7.00.

Please put your subscription in an envelope with your name and address and deliver it to Richard Harris, 6 Noddors Way or Jacqui Piper, 27 St Mellion Drive as soon as possible. Please make cheques payable to Biddenham PCC.

April

Sat 4 Apr	Mobile Library, Great Denham, see p15
Mon 6 Apr	Great Denham Parish Council meeting, see p5
Wed 8 April	Biddenham Parish Council, 7.30pm, TELEPHONE MEETING, see p12
Thu 9 Apr	Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p15
Sat 18 Apr	Mobile Library, Great Denham, see p15
Thu 23 Apr	Mobile Library, Biddenham, see p15

What's on

The Loop

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All **May** articles, preferably by e-mail in Word format, to loopeditor@gmail.com

or to 22 Day's Lane and adverts to 3 Queen's Close (cj.sugars@talktalk.net) by

Wednesday 20th May please.



The views expressed in 'The Loop' by various community groups do not necessarily represent the views of St James's Church or the Parochial Church Council.