The most recent **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Wednesday 11th November 2020 using the Zoom conferencing facility. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Krys Osuch and Francia Slade. Apologies were received from Councillors Alan Jacobs and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk Karen Cotton and two members of the public were also present.

SPEEDING

Bryan Glasper, who has led efforts to establish our local Speedwatch group, reported his frustrations that a combination of lockdown and the local authorities’ own speed enforcement activities were curtailing the group’s activities.

On reflection, however, it seems Biddenham is now getting some attention, from both the police and Borough. The worst offenders seem to use the stretch of Bromham Road down to Bromham Bridge, the main Bromham Road into town, and Biddenham Turn. The former two roads get consistent levels of speeding at all times of the day and night, whereas Biddenham Turn is different. There, the offences are at higher speeds, but much less frequent – mostly happening at anti-social hours like late evening and the night.

If you know anyone who puts their foot down a bit too heavily, take it from me it is only a matter of time before they get caught.

We agreed at the meeting to relocate the Speed Indication Device (SID to its mates) from Gold Lane to Biddenham Turn. Since having Speedwatch volunteers monitoring sporadic traffic in the dead of night is asking rather a lot, we are going to let the tech do the hard work. I will report what results we get in a future edition.

GOLF COURSE LAND NEWS

Despite a few intrepid golfers still using the now shut down Great Denham Golf Course, the land is now in transition to sheep grazing and hay production. A sad state of affairs indeed, which flies in the face of both local wishes and local government policy to retain sports facilities wherever they exist.

I reported to the Council that two meetings had taken place recently – one with the prospective new operators of a nursery at the golf course clubhouse, and the other with the landowner’s agents, Bidwells.

At the first of these, Mr and Mrs Townson explained their background, experience and plans to open the “Little Putters” nursery. They certainly have a lot of experience, having run three successful nurseries near the A1 before then opening the existing nursery in Great Denham. This they sold four years ago to a national nursery chain, who are its current operator. They chose to retire at that time, but a combination of opportunity, lockdown boredom and the enjoyment of running a business has tempted them to propose the new nursery idea to the landowner.

They seemed sure there is a market – which one can understand given all the housebuilding that’s taken place in our area. And they have agreed a prospective lease, which is only contingent on them successfully applying to the Borough Council for a “change of use” of the building. They hope to open in September next year.

Secondly, Bidwells informed us that the idea of possibly hosting a nine-hole golf course is still under consideration. The landowners are not very taken with the idea, and yet an outright rejection of it has not yet happened. We made it clear at the meeting that it would be much preferred if all parties could agree a constructive way forward that saw the nursery, a smaller golf course, grazing and hay production all taking place on the land.

Borough passed a motion on 14th October to stand by its planning policies as regards the land – namely to keep it as green space and used for sport. I fervently hope the landowner directly or indirectly chooses to support both of those policies. We will see.

MR ZUCKERBERG AND THE FACEBOOK

I am reliably informed that there is something on the inter-web called “Facebook”. It seems I am not the only one in Biddenham who has heard of it but either doesn’t use it or doesn’t like using it. However, Councillor Gee set up a Facebook page in March at the start of the pandemic – as a way to allow community communication and support – and it certainly now has a reasonable following. He informed us at the meeting that it really should be “moderated” by someone, as adverts are now starting to sprout up like online weeds, and the odd submission is really not right for a genteel village such as ours.

We are therefore looking for keen Facebook-using volunteers to become moderators of the Facebook page for Biddenham. If you know anyone who might be interested, please ask them to email the Clerk at clerk@biddenham.org.uk. Or, I guess, say so on Facebook.

I suggested we put up notices on the village noticeboards to raise awareness of this need – mainly because I just like delicious irony.

CHRISTMAS

Our meeting was the last one of the year – and what a very strange year it has been. What will Christmas be like, you can’t help wondering? Well one thing’s for sure: we will have our Christmas tree on the village green – and yes, it will be the proper size this year.

Indeed, our new clerk Karen Cotton is doing her very best to get Linden Homes at the new St. Mary’s development to get a second one put up there, too. I am keeping everything crossed that she is successful, as time is short. Even if not, then we will have one there for next year and beyond.

Regardless of how Coronavirus inflicts its reckless toll on our lives between now and December 25th, we must uphold the spirit of Christmas, and each of us look to send love out in all directions as much as we can. We live in a communication age, where getting on the phone, quizzes and drinks over Zoom and yes, even “the Facebook”, can play an important part.

The virus’s days are numbered. Vaccine after vaccine will be arriving soon. Life will return to normal. Life is amazing, and sometimes rather hard, but we must remain positive and hopeful. With hard work and kindness, we will soon be able to be with our loved ones again, and to enjoy life fully once more.

Merry Christmas to you. Thanks for reading my words here during 2020. Here’s to a happier, virus-free 2021.

OUR NEXT MEETING – **IMPORTANT INFO**

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of most months (but not December). We very much welcome hearing from residents, there being a public “open session” near the start for anyone wanting to say something. Please call in and let us know anything concerning you about our village, or just listen. The date for the next meeting is **Wednesday 13th January 2021** at **7.30pm**.

To participate, please use a computer or tablet by accessing the Internet and carefully entering **https://zoom.us/j/524544164**

Alternatively, use a phone to ring **0208 080 6592** and then use its keypad to enter the code **524 544 164** followed by the **#** key. Calls are national rate, I’m afraid.

This information is provided on the village website at biddenham.org.uk.

Peter Chase
Chairman