



## *BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL*

The most recent **Parish Council Meeting** was held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 using the Zoom conferencing facility. Present were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase (Chairman), Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Kryz Osuch, Francia Slade and Joe Warren. Borough Councillors Roger Rigby and Jon Gambold, Clerk David Brough and three members of the public were also present.

### HOUSES WEST OF GOLD LANE

I wrote last time about our discussion concerning the development west of Gold Lane at our February meeting. Our only news this month was that Dandara, the house building in question, has reviewed our suggested improved road layout for the access point and rejected it. They sent a nicely-worded email, which basically said the extra cost of the redesign and resubmission to planning would cost a lot of money which they don't want to spend. Given how much you'd think they will make out of the development, this is disappointing. However, Borough may yet side with us – it is up to them to ultimately decide how to respond to their planning application.

### SPEEDING ON BROMHAM ROAD

We have always known we have a problem with speeding on the main Bromham Road between Deep Spinney and town. Borough have stubbornly refused to do anything about the 30mph signs at Deep Spinney, although we are renewing our efforts to get these moved so they are more visible. These signs are practically invisible to drivers going towards town, and end up with them being unclear what the limit is. As there are virtually no "repeater" signs either, the charitable among you may think people believe it's still a 50mph zone. But then there are clearly those who know perfectly well, and speed anyway.

Now what we know anyway has been confirmed with hard data. After several weeks of SID – our Speed Indication Device – being in place just east of Windmill Hill, we have information on traffic speeds in both directions. Some highlights for you are that almost half of all traffic is speeding. This drops from about 45% to 32% if the smiling/frowning light-up faces are turned on, but when left off 15% of traffic is doing more than 35mph. We measured violations on Biddenham Turn in the first two months of this year, where speeds of over 70mph were occasionally recorded, but the volume of traffic overall is only about 600 cars per day. On Bromham Road, the top speeds recorded so far are 84mph in one direction and 86mph in the other. The volume is more than 10 times that of Biddenham Turn, so from a safety point of view, the level of risk to pedestrians crossing the road is hugely greater.

All this means your Parish Council's view of average speed cameras has had to change. We don't like introducing such things, but it cannot be denied – we have a problem. As a result, we are looking to get to the top of Borough's list of "ASC" installations to be done. We know they are already keen to introduce them, as they were about to do so a while ago, but without any consultation with us. Perhaps if they'd put forward their arguments at the time, we'd already have them. But when Borough try to do things to you (not with you) the reaction is understandably negative.

A resident of the village who is a professional in the field of traffic management has suggested putting in three refuges at various points, i.e. places in the middle of the road where you can stand as you cross from one side to the other. This is bound to calm traffic, and we are going to push ahead and confirm, with Borough, what the cost of introducing them would be.

One would be placed where the footpath from the east edge of the Deep Spinney estate emerges, one near the defunct bus stop west of Gold Lane, and another at the exit from the service road. Each of these places are where people naturally want to cross the road. But they are also nicely spaced out for hopefully the maximum calming effect on speed merchants.

### BIDDENHAM POND

I walked to the pond and back the other day, and sat on the bench which remembers Alison Southern, our ex-clerk who sadly passed away a year ago of cancer. The pond was looking lovely – very full, but all neat and tidy and no green algae at this time of year. We are very lucky to have this quiet place, and such an active bunch of volunteers who look after it.

They have recently decided they need a small shed in which to store their equipment, and asked if the Parish Council would make a contribution towards it. They wanted £450 of your council tax money, and we gladly resolved to provide it.

I still hear people say they don't know where the pond is, or have stumbled upon it in wonderment that they'd missed it all these years. If you haven't been, go and find it! The walk will do you good, and the peace you find there even more so.

#### PAVILION

We are hoping that the improving Covid pandemic situation will lead to a return of classes and other activities at the Pavilion. We considered a number of improvements that the manager, Deb Slade, would like to make, and were supportive of them all. This should see the introduction of wifi and Internet access, improved security and better radiators in the main hall (quotes for this are being sought).

#### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (APM)

Our next meeting is at 7pm (note not 7.30pm) on Tuesday April 20<sup>th</sup>. This will see the return of the Annual Parish Meeting, customarily a larger gathering at which leaders of our many community groups have a chance to say a few words about their activities. It wasn't held last year due to the onset of the pandemic. However, this year – given almost everyone has learned how to get on with Zoom since – it's back.

I have invited a good variety of folk to give short updates on their organisations and activities, including the Biddenham Society, the friends of the pond, the Pavilion, and representatives of the SSSI, the local primary schools and even the pub. I will also give my own annual report as Parish Council chairman.

Do please join us so we have a reasonable audience for all these good people (and me).

You can consult the [biddenham.org.uk](http://biddenham.org.uk) website for the full agenda and details. There will be a normal Parish Council meeting off the end of the APM, with the usual public open session at which we very much welcome hearing from residents.

To participate, please use a computer or tablet by accessing the Internet and carefully entering <https://zoom.us/j/6877285966> (NB this is a new meeting number).

Alternatively, use a phone to ring **0208 080 6592** and then use its keypad to enter the code **687 728 5966** followed by the # key. Calls are national rate, I'm afraid.

Peter Chase  
Chairman