

The Loop

June 2021

£1.00

Peter Culverwell

We are sorry to record the death of Peter Culverwell on 11th May.

Peter was well known to many Biddenham residents who have fond memories of him over many years. I would like to try to capture some of those memories in a special article in next month's Loop.

So, if you have specific recollections or anecdotes of Peter, or perhaps a special picture, please email them to me at loopeditor@gmail.com by Friday 11th June please. If you can keep your contributions to around 100 words it will help considerably with the editing.

Thankyou.

Jean Gambold



On 18th March 2013, at Woburn, Peter Culverwell received his British Empire Medal for Services to the Community from Helen Nellis, H.M. Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire. Here he is pictured with Glenys and the Lord-Lieutenant after the ceremony.

Photo kindly supplied by Keith Mayhew, Photographer

Peter's funeral

The funeral will be held at 11.30am on Thursday 10th June at St James's church for an invited congregation in line with Covid restrictions.

You may like to be involved by standing in Church End at 11.15am to clap, wave and create a 'guard of honour', safely distanced along the lane. It will provide an opportunity to say farewell and celebrate his long life and contribution to the village and to many of us personally.

Peter's family are investigating using loudspeakers that would enable the service to be heard safely in the churchyard.

Carol Leverkus

Volunteers needed

Biddenham needs Peter's spirit to live on. Organisations including the church, the cricket club, the show committee and conservation are all looking for people to join them. The more people come forward, the lighter the load so please consider if you can help. There are details inside.

Introducing Biddenham's new Parish Council Chair

Stewart Briggs was elected Chairman of Biddenham Parish council at the latest meeting on 18th May.

Stewart came to Bedford in 1974 and after several excursions away has lived in the area since 1990, moving to Biddenham in 1997.

He spent 27 years working for Bedford Borough Council and also spent time as a Governor at Bedford College and a Trustee at the Marston Vale Forest.

He has been married to Laura since 1992 and they have two grown up children and a delightful Westie. You may well have seen them walking round the village.

Stewart has been a Parish Councillor since 2019.



'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

Letter from the Vicar

Dear All

The Magi are surely a subject for Christmas or Epiphany rather than June, though I remember attending the Greenbelt arts festival in 2019 and taking part in a wonderful Christmas themed Holy Communion in the open air. Of course, it did not seem to matter that Christmas was being celebrated on a scorching August Bank Holiday weekend. Jesus may well have been born in December but he could just have easily been born in the 1st century Judaeon equivalent of June.

In December, of course, because of Covid, Christmas barely happened at all, so perhaps as our society treads cautious steps out of restrictions it would be a good time to celebrate new birth and new beginnings.

T.S.Eliot was one of the most well known early 20th century poets, and his poem 'Journey of the Magi,' has had a profound impact on me. It speaks of the Magi setting off to visit the infant Christ and hints at their reticence and profound disappointment when at last they arrived. There is no golden ambience when they arrived or hovering nimbus above the child's head. In fact the Christ child was almost invisible to the poem's author. Then the writer talks about death, the kind of death hinted at through the mention of 'three trees on the low sky'. This was as much about an encounter with the death of Christ as it was about the birth of Christ. The writer then talks about a return in which all has changed. The Magi had been transformed by what they had seen on this journey; 'We returned to our places but no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their alien gods.'

Hopefully, barring the Indian variant (if it is fair to call it that), we will be emerging from one of the most



challenging social catastrophes in recent times. We, as a Church and as a community, have been on a difficult journey which has left us, in many cases, weary and demotivated.

We know that many amongst us have lost people close to them. Because of restrictions, the processes of grief for these people have been limited. I have missed singing (though I think that not many people have missed the sound of me singing). The question for many, however, is what the church will be like when we come out of this. Certainly, the times of worship will change and how people see the church in the context of their daily lives and we must be prepared for some changes.

Prior to this we had become, some may say, a little stuck in our ways and while the nature of society has moved on the Anglican Church may have gathered dust.

The Bible talks a lot about journey. We have the journey of Abraham who was instructed to leave his home in a place called Ur and go to the place where God commanded him to settle. We also have the Israelites journeying through the wilderness for forty years. Then there was Jesus, spending forty days in the wilderness and ultimately taking the road to the cross.

In the Bible this always resulted in change. Paul met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and this led to the Good News of Jesus being spread throughout the gentile world. On the road to Emmaus two despairing individuals, like St. Paul, encountered the living Christ and were, as a consequence, invigorated to serve him as disciples. 'See,' one of them said, 'as he spoke, how our hearts burned within us.' (Luke 24:32).

With all the struggles of our journey through lockdown - the isolation, the despair; reflect on how you have heard the still-small voice of God and at these times your hearts have burned within you. Now, as we move hopefully beyond this crisis, see how he has used these circumstances to blow away the stale dust of religion and set us free to be a new, dynamic pilgrim church. We 'are a new creation, behold the new has come, and the old has passed away' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God bless.

Eric

T.S. Eliot's poem is on page 7.



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

Vicar	Rev Eric Lomax rev.ejlomax@gmail.com	Tel: 328452
Readers	Christopher Dawe Paul Fricker Sue Richards	Tel 363890 Tel 342843
Churchwardens	Laurie Hurn Lois Price	Tel 364251 Tel 961826
Verger	Hilary Hurn	Tel 364251
Secretary	Jacqui Piper	Tel 356993
Treasurer	Michael Hurford	Tel 271746
Organist/Choirmaster	Graham Weeks	Tel 07552 052840
www.stjamesbiddenham.com		

Website Manager and Barn Bookings Manager needed by St James's church

We are seeking to fill two volunteer roles - Website Manager and Barn Bookings Manager. Both roles can mostly be carried out from home and in your own time. They can be as big or as small as you make them.

If you are interested in either role please contact Jacqui Piper on 0778 6886 710 or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.



Biddenham Show

As we look forward to the removal in June of the last of the 'legal' restrictions put in place for Lockdown and the return of some semblance of normality for the summer, the Show Committee's thoughts have turned to the 2021 Biddenham Village Show. **Very sadly we have concluded that we will not be able to safely run a Show this year and have decided to cancel. We are sorry to disappoint you.**

Although the restrictions preventing outdoor events should have been removed, there is still uncertainty as to the social distancing rules that may still be in place for the running of Covid free events. Unfortunately, we do not have the organisation, support structures or funds to allow us to manage an event this year, and the last thing that we would wish to do is to potentially be responsible for a local Covid outbreak.

Our intention is to return in 2022 but to do so we need help and lots of it. Since our last Show in 2019, 4 committee members have retired, and we would like to thank them all for their individual contributions to the success of the Show over many years. But we now need more help if the Show is to continue into the future!

If you enjoy the Show and what it offers your family and the village, **please consider joining the Committee.**

We need people to organise the Teas, the Raffle, on-field Entertainment, Hospitality and Stalls as well as liaison with other village organisations, planning and general organisation. We have about 5/6 meetings a year between March and September and then you would need to be available on the Saturday and Sunday of the Show weekend. The Show weekend is usually the first weekend in September after the schools return from their summer holiday.

If you are unable to commit to a committee but would like to be involved, we also need help delivering our brochures in the July, help on the Show weekend to set-up and take-down and volunteers during the Show to work on the gate, the raffle, the teas, in the beer tent or as marshalls.

We can't deny that the Show weekend is hard work, but it is great fun and very rewarding, with the profits being used to support village organisations and groups. Without a Show this year, our priority is to put a committee in place ready for next year. So please, don't leave it to somebody else to volunteer, but contact one of us now.

Thank you.

The Show Committee

Contact details:

Stelios Mores Stelios.mores@btinternet.com
Jane Knight jane@80klted.co.uk
Liz Hurford lizhurford@btinternet.com
Pia Carey piacarey@live.co.uk



Assistant Grounds Person / Main Grounds Person

With the planned retirement of our Groundsman the club seeks a replacement. This might initially be an assistant to learn the ropes who goes on to take on the main role in time.

Jobs include preparing the wicket for matches, tutorial available if not experienced and ground maintenance including the grass mowing on our new tractor.

This is a wonderful opportunity to work on our fine ground and enjoy the surroundings and the social arena that it is.

Contact Richard Fone on 07818 678697

Players Wanted

For our Sunday Beds League Division 1 side.

Committed every weekend sports people preferred to join a friendly but competitive squad.

Please recommend the club to new residents and old, the club has one of the best squares in the County.

Contact Will Lowerson on 07533 807353



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Biddenham History Society

Weddings

June is a very popular month for weddings and thousands of couples have been waiting for 21st June 2021 and thereafter in the hope that the road map will continue to plan and restrictions on weddings will be lifted. The regulations especially about the number of guests that may be permitted at a wedding have changed so frequently this last year that many couples have cancelled their planned weddings and have decided to wait in hope of better times rather than have the problem of which of their relatives and friends to invite to share their special day.

In a less affluent age, cost and time off work dictated the organization of a wedding. Albert Church, who was born in 1905, wrote in his 'Recollections of My Life in Biddenham' that in the 1920s there were rarely more than twelve people at the service. Nearly all working class people walked to the church across the field and there were very few weddings where there was a horse and cab. He remembered one in 1915 or 1916 when he was a young tower bell ringer, where the bride came from Day's Lane, but the bridegroom came from Wootton on a Saturday morning, in a pony and trap. The pony was tied to the railings opposite the church during the service.



William West ringing at St James's Church in the 1920s.

As a bell ringer, Albert was delighted if the couple could afford to have the church bells rung. The fee was £1:3s 4d per bell. If it was a Saturday afternoon, this fee was shared amongst all the ringers, but if it was during the week, six ringers were chosen who were not getting a large wage, so that the money would make up for the hours that they lost at work. After the wedding, the celebrations were usually a get together in the evening. The main drink was beer and the men would often go to The Three Tuns to celebrate, but not the bride or any women. Albert Church wrote that 'I never saw any female drinking in this pub until the late twenties.' By the

1920s, anyone who was getting married could have the use of the village hall for free. You had to live in the village and no alcohol could be consumed, but the ladies could take part in the festivities. There were no honeymoons. The newly married couple either had a cottage to go to or they lived with their parents until a cottage became vacant.

By the 1960s, weddings for the affluent in Biddenham were on a larger scale. The Women's Institute Scrapbook for 1965 reported on three of the weddings that took place in the church that year. Receptions were in the gardens of the bride's home or at the Bedfordshire Golf Club. There were honeymoons – one was in Spain.

Detailed descriptions were given of the bride's dress and the dresses of the bridesmaids. One bride wore 'a long, slim cut dress of white crepe, the empire line bodice and sleeves being of French guipure lace. Her long train was held at the waist by two small bows, and a short veil of scalloped silk was secured by a tiara of pearls. She carried a bouquet of pale coral roses and white stephanotis.' Another bride wore 'a parchment coloured dress in English wild silk cut on classical lines. Her head dress held a Limerick lace veil belonging to her grandmother and she carried a bouquet of butterfly orchids.' This wedding dress



Wedding dresses in the 1960s



and those of the bridesmaids were made by one of the Women's Institute members, Mrs D Dowler of Biddenham. At this time, there was usually someone in every village who was a skilled dressmaker: there was no need to go any further for beautifully designed and well fitted clothes!

A tradition that recent brides have established is to decorate the archway over the gates leading to the churchyard. There have been many imaginative designs using flowers and foliage. We hope that there will be many more imaginative decorations and happy celebrations after 21st June, unaffected by lockdowns and tough Covid restrictions!

Kathy Fricker

Nick Sleep
Proprietor

N.A.Sleep Plumbing & Heating
7 Ison Close
Biddenham,
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Biddenham Cricket Club



In contrast to April there does not seem to have been a day so far in May when it has not rained. Consequently, this has challenged everyone involved with planning for, and participating in, cricket matches or training. The photo shows the rather damp scene on the evening of 15th May. Yes the game the next day was cancelled!



We do have some great news about junior membership that now exceeds 80 youngsters. Training and matches have taken place when at all possible. The other photo shows the under 9 match in progress against visitors Ampthill on 9th May.



Very pleasingly this was the first time we had been able to stage two junior matches at the same time at Biddenham on a Sunday morning since 2019.

If anyone feels that they would like to become involved in helping with the junior section of the club, please contact Chris Spurgeon. A separate DBS certificate from the England and Wales Cricket Board will be required to be obtained by anyone wishing to become involved. This is now a much improved online process and details can be

provided on how to access this.

For the adult Sunday team there has been a much slower start with just one match played so far because of a concession by our opposition in one game, and the wet weather causing the cancellation of another. Numbers available to play have varied a great deal week to week, and the relaxing of restrictions on 17th May has understandably resulted in a sudden drop off in those wishing to play cricket. After almost six months of lockdown other plans have been made, and we hope that in time availability will improve.

In the last week in May we do hope for an improvement in the weather because on Friday 28th we are scheduled to host the Bedford School Ousels team that evening for a "competitive" friendly. On Sunday 30th we plan to field a development team including at least half the players as juniors in a friendly match at Biddenham against Shenley Church End.

Covid restrictions and rules have, at the request of the authorities in Bedford, remained unchanged due to the rise in incidence of the Indian Variant. This appears to be a very sensible approach at a time of great uncertainty. The club continues to be grateful for the co-operation and organisation at the pavilion by Deborah Slade and the 'cleaning team' to support our ability to run training sessions and play matches.

A reminder that Junior training is held for the Under 9s and Under 11s on Monday evenings at 6.30pm and Under 13s and Under 15s on Wednesday evenings also at 6.30pm. Due to the excellent numbers we are now only accepting new registrations for the Under 15 age group. Details of how to join the junior section and the dates for all matches can be found on the Biddenham CC website.

Club news, fixtures and results appear on the website at: <http://biddenham.play-cricket.com/home>

The 100 club, that has been relaunched this year, 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
Junior Chairman	Chris Spurgeon	07707 771606
Cricket Secretary	Richard Fone	07818 678697
Club Welfare Officer	Joe Derilo	07468 431304
100 Club	James Gardner	07928 478563

BIDDENHAM CRICKET CLUB - HOME FIXTURES - JUNE

01-Jun-21	Tuesday	Under 13 Development	v Langford	18:00
06-Jun-21	Sunday	Under 11 County	v Blunham	09:30
06-Jun-21	Sunday	Sunday League XI	v Caldecote	13:00
08-Jun-21	Tuesday	Under 13 County	v Bedford Eagles	18:00
10-Jun-21	Thursday	Under 15	v Pavenham & Felmersham	18:00
11-Jun-21	Friday	Midweek XI	v Ousels	17:30
13-Jun-21	Sunday	Under 11 Development	v Harrold	10:00
13-Jun-21	Sunday	Under 9	v Kempston Hammers	10:00
15-Jun-21	Tuesday	Under 13 County	v Queens Park	18:00
17-Jun-21	Thursday	Under 15	v Olney Town	18:00
20-Jun-21	Sunday	Under 11 Development	v Olney Town(A)	10:00
22-Jun-21	Tuesday	Under 13 Development	v Clifton	18:00
27-Jun-21	Sunday	Under 11 County	v Elstow	10:00

It's a sign!

In the September 2020 Loop, I wrote about the two signs that had adorned the village green until being removed in 1987. One had been erected in 1951 by the Bedfordshire County Council to commemorate the Festival of Britain held that year, and the other by the Parish Council in 1977 commemorating the Queen's Silver Jubilee. They were replaced by the then new village sign but it was proposed to re-erect them elsewhere within the parish. But where were they?

I wondered if one of them was the rather battered sign in Bromham Road near the junction with Biddenham Turn. There were three faded and incomplete illustrations on it, the one to the left looking like what remained of the Festival of Britain star, and the one to the right what remained of the Bedfordshire County Council coat of arms which had been officially granted in April 1951, the month before the Festival of Britain opened. The central disc commemorated the village's successes over the years in the Best Kept Village competition.

So I was really chuffed early last month on returning from Bedford to see - a sign! Not the old battered sign but in its place a shiny new sign complete with three colourful illustrations of the Festival of Britain star, the Bedfordshire County Council coat of arms and in the middle the Best Kept Village Award mark. Have a look next time you pass by.

Many thanks to everyone concerned with re-creating and putting in place this piece of Biddenham history and how appropriate in 2021, the 70th anniversary of both the Festival of Britain and the granting of the Bedfordshire coat of arms.

Peter Applewhite

Before.....



..... and after



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From Our Biddenham Village Agent

As life returns to normal there may be problems you now need to sort out. Our Village Agent, Teresa Moon, is here to help older people in Bedford Borough villages to access the services and support they might need. Her services are free and she can visit you at home. Just call Freephone 0800 039 1234.



Do You Need Help with Transport?

Bus Pass Applications

Do you need help to apply for or renew a bus pass? I'm happy to assist.

Do You Struggle with Mobility?

You might be eligible for a Blue Badge - I can help you to fill in the application form.

Door to Door Transport in Bedford Borough

- Do you struggle to get on a bus? Did you know that the Door2Door minibus service will collect you from home, and has facilities to take wheelchairs and mobility scooters using a tail lift?
- A subscription costs £30 for the first year and £20 annually thereafter | (Minimum charge per journey £3.00)
- The minibuses operate between 9:15am to 4:15pm, weekdays only. You need to book your journey two days ahead - or earlier for health-related appointments.
- Did you know that you can sign up for Door2Door without giving up your bus pass?
- Call the Door2Door admin number (01234) 834933 for more details.

Do You Need Access to Disabled Toilets?

Some disabled toilets can only be used by people who have a special RADAR key. If this would be helpful to you, I can provide one.

Are You Eligible for Pension Credit?

The minimum income for people over State Pension age should be receiving is £177.10 if you live alone, or £270.30 for a couple. Ask me for a confidential review of your finances if you think your income might fall below this amount.

Are You Struggling with Debt? Help is At Hand.

St Andrews Church Bedford run a highly recommended Money Advice Service in Bedford. To contact them, just call 07599 618602,

Would a helpful gadget make your life easier?

We have a range of handy gadgets to distribute free of charge to people who may be struggling to manage, including a jar opener; button hook and zip puller; automatic night light; 'Good Grips' potato peeler; digital room thermometer; handy reacher; extra-long shoe horn or seat belt helper. Just call and ask for the item you would like.

Contact our 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.)



St Joseph's and St Gregory's Primary School



Orienteering in Queens Park

Year 4 pupils from St. Joseph's and St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School ventured out for a learning walk around Queens Park recently. We set off in sunshine to find buildings and facilities used by the local community.



We followed directions, used a map and matched OS map symbols to the places we found. All of this helped us to understand how to use maps and the impact of humans on our local environment. We ended our walk with a look at the River Ouse.

The Higgins reopens

The staff are very pleased to welcome you back to The Higgins Bedford. Both the museum and the café are now open.

Measures are in place for the safety of staff, volunteers and visitors, and to help ensure an enjoyable experience for all.

To help manage the number of people in the museum, capacity has been reduced and visitors will need to pre-book a FREE timed entry ticket online. If you are unable to book online, please telephone the Box Office on 01234 718044 - available Monday to Friday from 11.00am to 3.00pm.

There are plenty of special displays in addition to the permanent exhibitions. These include 'Under the Same Sky' an art and social history show; 'Edward Bawden; Architectural Elements'; and the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Sculpture Exhibition'. Details are on The Higgins website.



Journey of the Magi

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the
lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and
death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

T.S.Eliot
1927

Then you saw it, now you don't.

Around 1700, Sir William Boteler and his wife Elizabeth built in Biddenham a pond to provide fish for their manor table. Sir William died in 1703 and some three years later Elizabeth built a dovecote near the pond to provide meat and eggs for the manor.

We know their fish pond today as the village pond, off Gold Lane behind the Manor Hospital. But where's the dovecote? Despite efforts to save it, it was in need once more of restoration, early one morning in 1966 it was demolished.

The domestication of wild pigeons happened between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region. The key was finding a way to keep the birds captive until mature and able to reproduce. Possibly the Egyptians were the first to domesticate the rock pigeons and we first learnt from them how to keep and rear pigeons for profit. They bred pigeons for eggs, meat and droppings which were prized by farmers for fertilising their fields.

The Romans reared pigeons from an early date, and France particularly has a long history of keeping pigeons in dovecotes, perhaps arising from the Roman occupation. Pigeon holes have been found in Roman ruins in the UK but the traditional view is that dovecotes and the art of pigeon keeping were introduced into England by the Normans.

The earliest known examples of dove keeping are nest holes in Norman castle walls. The earliest surviving definitely-dated free-standing dovecote was built in Garway, Herefordshire, in 1326.

In the Middle Ages only manorial lords could keep the birds so the few remaining medieval dovecotes are connected with manor houses, castles, parsonages or former monastic sites. When laws were relaxed later others also built dovecotes until their use declined with changes in farming practices and the pigeons' voracious appetite substantially damaging grain crops. There was a view that dovecotes were uneconomic for the nation, producing luxury for a few but holding back efficient farming for the many. Many dovecotes were demolished and others became derelict.

Medieval dovecotes were usually massive round stone structures. If they were timber framed they had to be square, rectangular or polygonal. In their time, they were functional buildings generally built in a local style with local materials.

The Biddenham dovecote was a square timber framed building with brick in between and plastered over. It had a hipped tiled roof with four gabled dormers whose ridges met at the apex which was crowned with an ornamental finial. There were 461 nests inside, built on elm wood boards, some of brick and some of clay mixed with straw and cow dung. The clay came from clay pits in the village which had also provided clay for the village's wattle and daub houses.

We don't know when the Biddenham dovecote ceased to be used for its original purpose but we do know it was

restored in 1932. Sir Herbert Trustram Eve, the new agent for the Biddenham Estate, recognised the then distressed dovecote was a special building and organised its restoration.

Professor (later Sir) Albert Richardson, an eminent British architect who lived in Amptmill advised on the project and the restoration work was undertaken by estate workers, Foreman King and craftsmen Poole and Hulett.



Sir Herbert organised a village party on Monday 11th July 1932 at which the restored dovecote was officially opened by Colonel Wingfield. Newspaper reports said the opening was a jolly affair with a 'racily reminiscent' speech by Sir Herbert on the law of dovecotes and 'good advice' given by the Vicar, Reverend Norman, to the four pairs of newly installed pigeons rejoicing in royal names.

Sir Herbert began his speech in characteristic style: *'The idea of this village party is to get back to the simple life.'* Life, he said, had become progressively complicated since 1918. Were we happier, or would the more simple life lead to greater happiness? Biddenham people responded right heartily to Sir Trustram's view that *'Monday's function had another and perhaps more valuable purpose' ... 'of reawakening something of the old communal spirit and good fellowship of English village life and the taste for simple pleasures'.*

Speaking to the children, Sir Herbert said that pigeons' milk was difficult to obtain. If the children went to Mrs King and asked for a pennyworth of pigeons' milk and she laughed, that meant she had none that day.

The party was interrupted by a thunderstorm that raged overhead and a 'tropical downpour' of rain. Retiring to the barn close by, guests enjoyed 'mugs of tea and delectable buns' served by Sir Herbert's old friend Miss Tanqueray-Willaume and her partner Mrs Lilly 'and a bevy of assistants picturesquely attired in Old English costumes' (some of whom can be seen in the front row in the the photo above). Most of the 130 large local stones which after the party were due to have been placed around the village, started by *'the oldest and the youngest boy in the school, the wisest man and the oldest woman'*, had to be put in place later: even later the stones gradually began to disappear, many pieces possibly still even today residing in rock gardens around the village!

Despite the good work and fine words in 1932 about the future care of the building, it gradually fell once more into disrepair. The Biddenham WI 1965 Scrapbook includes a newspaper report under the heading "This dovecote is dangerous". The Biddenham Society approached the Wingfield Estate but without achieving any result and approaches were made to the Rural and County Councils but all the efforts to save the building failed and early that morning in 1966 a unique feature of the village's heritage was lost forever.

Peter Applewhite



A rather large bulge in one wall, and a hole exposing some of the 461 nests.



Peter's Picturehouse

We are very much looking forward to showing our next film, on Tuesday 6th July, in the Village Hall. We will be following all government guidelines in place at the time and our film is JoJo Rabbit, (Certificate 12A) written by Taika Waititi and based on the book Caging Skies, written by his mother Christine Leuneun.

It is a quirky film which is both hilarious and heartfelt. The acting is superb; the story thought provoking. It is both funny and heart-breaking in turns. The film shows a boy's misguided fantasy and faith (in Nazi Germany) and how easy it is for society to be manipulated into hating minorities, religions and/or groups of people especially when fake news and social media are present. But, by the end of the day, the boy shows us that compassion and love will help us to build a better world.

We do hope you will join us as we get together in the Village Hall to enjoy a film (hoping it is the first of many!) in 2021. There will be a range of soft drinks, wine, beer, tea and coffee on sale, as well as the ever-popular tubs of ice cream. Doors open at 7:00pm for a 7:30pm showing and entry, on the door, is £5.00.

Our next film, Knives Out, is planned for Tuesday 3rd August 2021.

The committee would like to express our sadness at the news of the passing of Peter Culverwell in May 2021. It was his original idea that brought Peter's Picturehouse to Biddenham Village Hall in 2019 and he has continually supported the project both financially and by his enthusiastic attendance and suggestions for films. We shall all miss his friendly smile and thoughtfulness and send our condolences to his family and friends.

Rose Houghton

Café B...



**15th June
10.30 - 12 noon
Village Hall**

Coffee, tea and homemade cakes

It was lovely to see everyone in the Village Hall in May and it felt like old times! Although it feels as though some normality is returning, in June numbers will once again be limited so please call Maggie on 346550 to book a place.

Thank you - we look forward to seeing you!

Cafe B Team



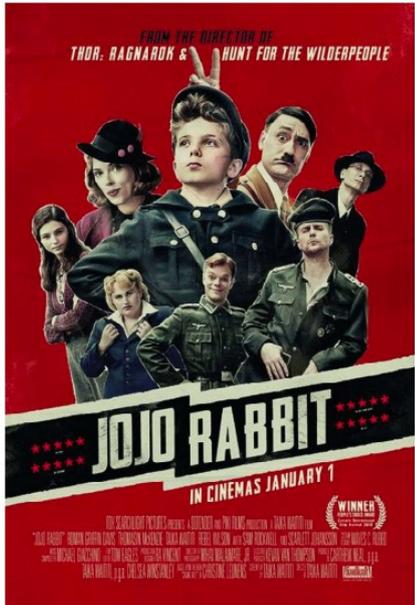
Peter's Picturehouse

....is back in July 2021....

Date: Tuesday 6th July 2021

Following government guidelines

Time: Doors open 7:00pm, Film starts 7:30pm
Location: Biddenham Village Hall



Certificate: 12A

Ticket price: £5

For further information contact
Marihelen -
marihelen@btinternet.com
OR 07710288933

Jojo Rabbit © 2020 Disney. All Rights Reserved

Future Showings at Peter's Picturehouse—subject to review

Tuesday 3rd August: Knives Out
More details in the Local, on the Biddenham Village website and on village noticeboards.

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This month in the garden

For half the time since I last wrote I have not been tending my own garden because I have been able to take advantage of the gradual easing of Covid restrictions and my wife and I have been away for two weeks with our caravan just outside Chichester.

It is a lovely area combining the attractions of the shoreline around Chichester Harbour and the beautiful South Downs centring on Midhurst. For the last fifteen months my own garden has been a great solace throughout the difficulties caused by Covid but now I was able to savour the delights of visiting other people's gardens and the Chichester area provides plenty of opportunities for doing this.

Probably the best-known in the gardening world is West Dean near Midhurst. It is the home of West Dean College of Arts and Conservation which provides short courses on a wide variety of subjects and the gardens have been developed not only as a place of great beauty but as a superb example of a wide range of gardening techniques.

The centrepiece of West Dean is a walled garden with a fascinating range of techniques for training fruit trees, a number of glasshouses and cold frames demonstrating the many ways in which glass protection and heating vastly extend the range and time-scale of what you can grow in the open air. Within the walled garden there is also a lot of space for vegetables, cut flowers and herbaceous borders. Beyond the walled garden there is a famous rose and wisteria pergola, a sunken garden and a big, wilder but still well-cultivated, area exploiting the use of water from the stream running through the garden. There are wide lawns and everything blends beautifully with the surrounding parkland and the wider downland scenery. The standard of cultivation is, everywhere, exemplary. There is a very good restaurant and plants for sale.



West Dean Garden's celebrated apple collection is housed within and around the Walled Garden. There are over 100 varieties of apple and 45 varieties of pear, including heritage varieties with links to West Sussex, many of them trained into exquisite traditional shapes.

A less-known but very beautiful garden also near Midhurst is Woolbeding owned by the National Trust. Again, the setting is the parkland of a large country house, bordered by the river Rother and containing two well-separated and very different cultivated gardens. The first is a formal garden with a magnificent herbaceous border and a number of different 'rooms' separated by manicured yew hedges. Here, as at West Dean, the water in the area has been exploited and, in a fine contrast to the formal garden, there is dramatic gothic landscape dominated by Neptune in his watery grotto.

Very close to West Dean is the Weald and Downland museum now well-known to TV viewers as the home of



Artist's impression showing how the ten-sided 'kinetic' glasshouse planned for Woolbeding will open. It will exhibit flowers, shrubs and trees that depict the key regions of the Silk Route. This route from Asia to Europe was used to bring the many plants that characterise English gardens and parks.

'The Repair Shop'. The museum presents a large collection of rural buildings and artefacts moved from all over the Weald and South Downs and rebuilt on a 43 acre site to demonstrate the history and crafts of the area. Many of the houses have cottage gardens where there is particular interest in the variety of herbs grown for culinary and healing purposes. The Repair Shop is out of bounds but can be seen fairly close up, sometimes with filming in progress.



Historic houses at Weald and Downland Museum

Returning to my own garden I find that the frequent rain in May has transformed the rather lack-lustre look created by the drought and cold in April into a vibrant green and things are growing at last in spite of the continuing cold.

If you haven't yet managed it there is still time to buy bedding plants for containers or to fill gaps in borders. Keep feeding container grown plants with liquid feed like seaweed, tomato fertiliser or Miracle-Gro. When planting hanging baskets, mix the compost with some water-retaining gel. Flowering shrubs like camellias and clematis will also do much better with frequent feeding. Dead-heading can take a lot of time but it is well worth it to prolong flowering and prolific self-seeders like love-in-the-mist need flower heads cut off before making seed if you want to stop them becoming rampant. Containers and hanging baskets need frequent watering whether or not it rains and watering is also particularly important for roses, soft fruit, beans and sweet corn. Cut grass fairly high rather than shaving it and keep lawn edges trimmed. When the foliage of spring bulbs growing in grass has died down the grass can be safely cut.

Keep going with successional sowing of lettuce, radish and other salad crops and keep watching tomatoes other than the bush varieties, to nip off side shoots. Biennials like wallflowers and foxgloves can be sown now to flower next year as can many perennial flowers. Take cuttings from perennial wallflowers and grow them on under glass as a precaution against existing plants being killed off by frost.

Jeremy Arthern

Editor's note: all pictures and captions are taken from the Gardens' websites.



If you have not been down to the pond recently, do go. It is so very tranquil and pretty. The water level remains high, the trees are all in leaf, and the last time one of us visited there were 2 families of moorhens buzzing through the rushes and 2 male mallard ducks asleep on the jetty. A great place for some quiet contemplation.

Sadly, there has been some recent vandalism, this time to the tree planted in memory of Dorothy Richards, the driving force behind the pond restoration project. It looks as though someone has tried to climb it, breaking a branch, and causing a significant lean to the tree itself. It is such a shame when acts like this occur, but at least it does not detract from the ambience.

Please come and enjoy this lovely corner of Biddenham.

The Pond Team

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www.biddenhamvillagepond.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/biddenhamvillagepond



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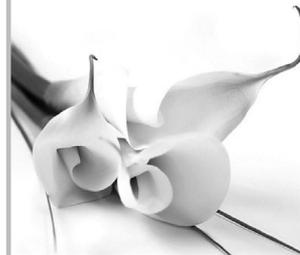
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Biddenham Parish Council

The most recent Parish Council Meeting was held on Tuesday 18th May 2021 at the Pavilion with social distancing and safety measures in place. The emergency Government legislation that allowed the Parish Council to hold meetings by video conferencing had expired so we had no option but to return to face-to-face meetings.



It seemed strange to be meeting in person rather than via a pc screen and had we all not needed to wear face coverings, sit 2 metres apart and have the doors and windows open I'm sure it would have been a welcome change! The social distancing and face coverings made it difficult to be heard and to hear so my apologies to those present if at times some of what was said was not clear and audible.

Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Graham Bates, Stewart Briggs, Peter Chase, Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Alan Jacobs, Krysl Osuch and Francia Slade. Borough Councillors Jon Gambold and Roger Rigby, Clerk David Borough, Pavilion manager Deborah Slade and 2 members of the public were also present.

Annual appointments

At this year's May meeting appointments are made for the forthcoming municipal year. As was telegraphed in previous Chairman reports, Peter Chase stood down from the role of Parish Chair at this meeting. Before moving on I think it is important to recognise the fantastic work Peter has done as Chair for many years. Peter has provided great leadership and shown real empathy and support for the village and its residents. He will be a very hard act to follow but the Parish is lucky in that Peter will remain as Parish councillor and continue to apply his enthusiasm and drive to the issues facing our Village. On behalf of myself, and I am sure of all Parish Councillors and residents he has helped, I would like to say a big thank you to Peter.

So, as you may have gathered a new Chair for the Parish was elected for the 2021/22 year. I am very pleased to receive the support of my fellow Councillors for the role and to be able to represent local residents. I hope to meet more of you as I walk my Westie dog around the village. Please do stop and say hello.

As well as electing a new Chair, I am really pleased to say Peter hasn't completely moved to the back benches as he agreed to take on the role of Vice Chair, so I will have his experience and knowledge to nudge me along. We also agreed three sub-committees to provide scrutiny of

planning applications for different parts of the village, a Personnel Committee and for the first time a new Pavilion Committee to provide support to the Pavilion Manager in developing and growing this wonderful asset.

Councillors undertake these roles in a voluntary capacity and I'd like to thank them all for contributing their time for the village.

Parish Council Meeting

Each meeting starts with a public open session which provides an opportunity for the public to raise issues of concern with the Parish. At this meeting we received an update on the continuing monitoring of speed data on Bromham Road. Despite speeding continuing to be a problem on this road the data did show that the SID, Speed Indication Device, was having a mitigating effect which is encouraging but all recognised the only true way to manage speeding on this road was by having average speed cameras. Unfortunately, due to the volume of traffic using the road the SID's battery unit needs regularly replacing and this is not sustainable on a voluntary basis. This is an issue we discussed later in the meeting. Councillors were also alerted to correspondence with the Clerk and the subsequent actions he had taken. More detailed information is provided in the Agenda papers which can be accessed on the website (<http://biddenham.org.uk/>).

The Parish Council was updated on the application for the construction of a roundabout on Bromham Road by Davidsons Developments Limited which had been agreed at the Borough Council's Planning Committee the night before (APPLICATION NO: 20/02761/FUL). The Parish had responded to the consultation but as is the way with many planning applications, several aspects of the proposal were dictated by national and local policies/guidance which the Parish Council was unable to influence. The Planning approval requires the roundabout to be built within the next three years so expect some congestion when the work starts.

The Parish Council also agreed, subject to the Highway Authority's approval (the Borough Council), to the installation of a standalone column on Bromham Road to allow a solar charging unit to be fitted to the SID thus negating the need for the constant replacement of the battery. It also reviewed the proposal from Borough Highways for an extension of yellow line parking restrictions on Deep Spinney.

A separate report prepared by the Pavilion manager was also considered by the Parish Council. It had become clear to the Parish Council that it needed to improve the functionality of how users of the facility could book activities at the Pavilion, reflecting how more and more people are conducting life via the web. The wi-fi has been improved and the Parish Council agreed to implement an improved booking system so that users could see the availability of the facilities and make online bookings. We hope this will encourage and increase the use of the facility and thanks to Deborah Slade for researching options and recommending a solution.

Our next meeting

The Parish Council meets every THIRD TUESDAY of most months. 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 Tuesday 15th June at 7.30pm at the Pavilion in Deep Spinney.

Information about the next meeting will be posted on our village website (<http://biddenham.org.uk/>) and in the noticeboards around the village.

Stewart Briggs
Chairman

Don't forget the Foodbank

IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES THE NEED IS URGENT

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/>

CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT NETWORK

Need local help? Ring 01234 815393 or email help@biddenham.org.uk.

National Meadows Day Saturday 3rd July

Only 3% of the UK's meadows remain. We've lost 7.5 million acres of flower-rich grasslands in less than a hundred years. How very fortunate we are, therefore, to have the Cowslip Meadow 'right here on our doorstep' in Biddenham.

Someone who knew this meadow really well was Dr David George, who sadly died earlier this year. He was a brilliant botanist whose recordings of flora contributed to the publication, Flora of Bedfordshire. On a few occasions I was fortunate enough to go with him on explorations and he and Jane helped me when I was involved with Plantlife's National Plant Monitoring scheme.

Over many years David kept records of the flora in Cowslip Meadow and other sites in the village. At least 100 specimens have been identified there, not just cowslips!

I referred to David as my 'Go-to-Guru'. If I couldn't identify a plant, he most definitely could. This very modest man, who loved 'botanising', will be dearly missed but, we can keep his love of flora alive by taking a real interest in what grows locally, in the hedgerows, on the roadside verges and especially in our very own Cowslip Meadow. With so much of the land about us being swallowed-up by building developments we must surely encourage our children (and grandchildren) to take an interest in conservation, why we need flowers for pollinators, the birds and animals and our own pleasure and well-being.

Due to Covid restrictions, and the emergence of the different variants, it has not been possible for Plantlife to organise any specific activities for groups on Saturday 3rd July but one or two of us (from the erstwhile Conservation

Group) hope to be around to help with the identification of some of the wildflowers and grasses. We know how important the meadow has been for walks during Lockdown so, please visit Cowslip Meadow whenever you can and marvel at this wonderful green space. Just learn the names of one or two flowers and then build on that knowledge. We are all Happy Amateurs who are willing to keep learning.

Let's hope for some sunshine!

Val Fitzhugh



Aren't we all lucky to be able to look out of a window and readily see such beautiful and striking birds as this goldfinch, enjoying the sun between the showers, on the bamboo in our garden?

Carol & Peter Leverkus



30th
annual
event

FRIDAY 4th
June 2021

PAVENHAM
PARK
GOLF CLUB

The 30th St Philip & St James Charity Golf Day

Can't wait to get back out on the golf course? Well, here's your chance...

After such a difficult year, we're giving you the opportunity to have a **great day out** and support two **amazing local causes** at the same time with a round of golf at the county's number one golf course followed by a delicious two-course meal. What could be better than that? Over the past 30 years, the **St Philip & St James Charity Golf Day** has raised the incredible sum of **£85,000** for local charities, and it's all thanks to supporters and donors like you. In 2019, we shared an amazing **£14,000** between Carers in Bedfordshire and FACES Bedford, and this year, we're supporting two equally deserving causes:



CHUMS

CHUMS provides mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people. This year they have a special focus on the Bedfordshire Suicide Bereavement Service, helping families to cope with their grief via specialist one-to-one counselling and group support for both adults and children. chumscharity.org



Living It Up Events CIC is a not-for-profit company providing social and educational opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and autism in Bedfordshire. They hold regular events where members can meet in a safe environment, and fund a performing arts centre where members can learn creative arts and perform. livingitupevents.co.uk

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Playing golf and enjoying a two-course meal – £50 per person • **Sponsoring a trophy or a hole** – starting from just £50 • **Donating a prize** for the raffle or auction

IN RETURN, YOU'LL RECEIVE

Advertising for your service or company in our promo material • **Your company details** on our **Main Sponsor Board** • **Your company details** in our **programme** given to every golf team

Should you wish to sponsor us by bank transfer, our charity's account details are:

Bank NatWest Account name St. Phillip & St James Golf Society Account number 63141876 Sort code 60-02-13

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS. Please get in touch if you want to know more...

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Lockdown by Edwin Martin

Silence

The streets are empty
The doors closed
The shops are shuttered
Litter blows down the street on a chilly wind
Fear walks the street
And comes in through the letter box

A bus rumbles by

Usual red colour,
Usual bored driver
Totally empty.
A dog barks
A voice from behind the closed-door yells
And a child cries

At number 15 a couple watch television

All day
As they did yesterday and the day before
He is furloughed, she's lost her job
They search the paper
For what to watch tomorrow
As they did yesterday

At number 20 Mrs Brown washes the floor

She's not quite sure why
Nobody has been out or come in for a week

Mr Brown died

In the hospital 2 weeks ago,
Bert, whom she married 47 years ago
She last saw him as he was carried out
Breathless and distressed
Now he is gone
Just like that

Jim phoned up to say sorry

Jim is Mrs Brown's son
Today is Thursday
When she looks after Janine, Jim's daughter
But she can't now
It's forbidden

Today too is when the food parcel comes

There's a tap on the door
And there is that nice black lady from the food bank
The parcel is on the step
And it's a bit of a stretch to pick it up
The nice black lady is way back near the gate
Smiling over the top of her mask
She can't pick up the parcel for Mrs Brown
It's forbidden

They say that it will be over by Christmas

That is three more months
With seeing and talking to and hugging nobody
Even if it's over
Bert won't be there

Biddenham Gardeners Association

Colin Ward

We were pleased to welcome Colin Ward to our May meeting. Colin is the owner of Swines Meadow Farm Nursery at Market Deeping. The nursery is open to the public and specialises in rare plants and shrubs. There is an excellent website detailing all the plants available and a mail order service is provided for those people who are unable to visit. However, having listened to Colin's fascinating talk and realising that here is someone with an in-depth knowledge and passion for unusual plants I am sure there will be many BGA members beating a path to his nursery door.

Colin showed a series of excellent photographs of his favourite plants and shrubs. He told us that he is a particular fan of plants with green flowers and showed many examples of these. He described in detail the characteristics of his favourite plants, highlighting the unusual and those with odd features. He was able to tell us not only the Latin names but the more colloquial names which stem from the plant's use, its shape and form, where it is found etc. To give an example, *Euonymus Cornutus* is also known as the jester plant as its pinkish-purple fruits are characterised by five slender horn-like extensions with the appearance of a jester's cap.

Colin gave us a wealth of useful information on plants for all the different seasons, those plants which were good for pollinators and information on their care and propagation. Colin described flowers, fruits, scents, foliage, form and bark but it is clear that his main love is foliage.

It was pleasing that Colin spent some time describing plants that do well in dry shade, plants that give good ground cover, plants for woodland areas and plants to attract the pollinators, all the things that we gardeners want to know. The number and variety of plants Colin described is far too numerous to mention here but I would certainly recommend his website as an excellent source of information, www.swinesmeadowfarmnursery.co.uk.

It is clear that gardening is for all the year round and there is something for every season. Many thanks to Colin for an excellent talk which provoked a lot of questions and interest from members.

Please join us next month on 15th June when Adam Pascoe will be giving us advice on how to "Grow the Best Glorious Plants". Details can be found on our website. As usual this meeting will be open to all members and visitors.

Linda Truscott

New members and visitors are always welcome. For more information contact: Linda Truscott on 01234 270747 www.biddenhamgardenersassociation.org.uk

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Environmental volunteering

Those of you who are community minded will be particularly sorry for the passing of Peter Culverwell. He was a member of our village footpath group that operated in the 90's in the days of "Big Government" with the support of what was then Beds CC.



One of the things we did was to organise the painting of the footpath gate known as "Redgates" by the post box at the bottom of Day's Lane.

We hope to do that again and indeed before he was unwell Peter offered to help so I bought the paint and the brushes.

Covid put a stop to things so here we go again and hope to get this done in June.

If you would like to help with this iconic village feature please let me know.

I also hope to start a conservation working group for the winter so let me know if you are interested.

Training given.

At the moment there are two of us so more are welcome.

Chris Haydn Jones
chrishj49@gmail.com
01234 211759



Retiring Parish Council Chairman, Peter Chase and Borough Councillor, Roger Rigby kitted out to combat the graffiti in the underpass at the Great Ouse Way.

What's On?

June

Fri 4 Jun Charity Golf Day, see p13
 Sun 6 Jun 9.30am service at All Saints
 11.00am Virtch, online Zoom service
 Mon 7 Jun 9.00am Morning Prayers via Zoom
 Wed 9 Jun 6.00pm Virtch, online Zoom service
 Sun 13 Jun 9.30am service at St James's
 11.00am Virtch, online Zoom service
 9.00am Morning Prayers via Zoom
 Tue 15 Jun 10.30am-12noon, Café B, see p9
 Tue 15 Jun 7.30pm, Biddenham Gardeners
 Association, see p15
 Tue 15 Jun 7.30pm, Biddenham Parish Council,
 Biddenham Pavilion, see p12
 Wed 16 Jun 6.00pm Virtch, online Zoom service
 Sun 20 Jun 9.30am service at All Saints
 11.00am Virtch, online Zoom service
 9.00am Morning Prayers via Zoom
 Wed 23 Jun 6.00pm Virtch, online Zoom service
 Sun 27 Jun 9.30am service at St James's
 11.00am Virtch, online Zoom service
 9.00am Morning Prayers via Zoom
 Wed 30 Jun 6.00pm Virtch, online Zoom service

July

Sat 3 Jul National Meadows Day, see p13
 Tue 6 Jul 7.00pm, Peter's Picturehouse, Biddenham
 Village Hall, see p9

You can access Zoom church services by entering
 meeting ID 998 074 6039.

Biddenham Cricket club fixtures are on page 5.

*Contributors please note that the next edition will cover
 July and August.*

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 Jacqui Piper on 0778 6886 710 or
stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.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
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Great Denham Community Hall

www.greatdenhamcommunityhall.co.uk



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The Loop

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All **July/August** 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 16th June 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.*