



BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The **Parish Council** met on Tuesday 10th October. This was our first meeting at St James Barn rather than the Pavilion. Present at the meeting were Parish Councillors Peter Chase, Caroline Cross, Harry Fowler, Chris Gee, Aaron Melvin, Simi Otukoya and Laura Simmonds. Apologies were received from Francia Slade. Also present were the Clerk, David Brough and myself and Borough Councillor Jon Gambold.

The meeting updated those present with the on-going issues we have raised - principally with the borough council - regarding issues flagged with us that affect residents. One of the frustrations we experience is the length of time it takes to get answers or to make things happen with the borough council. However, it was encouraging to report that with the assistance of our local borough Councillor, Jon Gambold, I had had a meeting with the Mayor, the Environment portfolio holder, Councillor Jim Weir, and relevant officers to raise some concerns that had been passed from residents to the Parish Council and our local Councillor. It was encouraging to be heard.

Among the items discussed was when the new bottle bank site would open at St Mary's. Apparently, the requirement was for it to be functional after the 300th occupation of the development. Borough officers are now going to chase the Developer to expedite this. Another matter discussed were the traffic flows north and south of the Deep Spinney roundabout on Bromham Road. Officers will look to see if two lanes can be accommodated on the north and south exits, similar to the double lanes at the east and west exits. While the north exit may only be a few car lengths it would regularise what is happening already. The aim is to increase capacity and improve traffic flow. Watch this space.

Parking issues in Main Road at school times were also raised but I suspect the solutions to manage this may be harder to solve and may mean deciding on some less than palatable outcomes in terms of signage on the road or just accepting the status quo. Let's see what comes forward. Also raised was the issue of speeding in the parish as it doesn't go away. I'm sure many of us have witnessed cars speeding in the village and have also been disturbed late at night by speeding cars and motorbikes. We have already raised the issue of average speed cameras and continue to press for these. However, it is recognised there are ongoing revenue costs which add to the Borough's budget pressures but this shouldn't detract from making our streets safer. So again, we will wait to hear what proposals Officers put forward to the Mayor and Environment Portfolio Holder to ameliorate these issues.

As part of our Parish meeting it was agreed to replace some of the 84 bollards installed on Biddenham Turn with trees (as part of the Trees for Streets initiative). Doing so will soften the visual impact of the rows of bollards. Our Clerk will share our suggestions with the Borough's arboricultural officer to assess the suitability of the proposed locations.

One regular topic at the moment is the Pavilion. We agreed to arrange for a tradesperson to inspect our fire doors and, if possible, realign them so that they are a tighter fit. It was also noted that elements of the facility are starting to look tired and, like many of us, in need of a bit of TLC. The members of the Pavilion committee will meet to assess immediate and future maintenance issues so that we can prepare a planned programme to make sure the facility remains fit for use and appealing to hirers over the next few years.

Finally following our decision to upgrade the play area next to the Pavilion, the Clerk reported that the appointed contractor was working to start the work after Christmas and complete it by the end of February. Hopefully, there will be some nice days soon after for children to come and enjoy what we hope will be a great new revamped play area.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 7.30pm** at the **St James's Barn, Church End** and all are welcome.

Stewart Briggs
Chair – Biddenham Parish Council