

Minutes of the Biddenham Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 8th April 2020 starting at 7.30pm. In line with emergency Coronavirus Government legislation, the Parish Council will not be holding face-to-face meetings for the foreseeable future so this meeting was held by Conference facility.

Present: Cllrs P Chase – Chairman, G Bates, A Jacobs, S Briggs, C Gee, H Fowler, F Slade, K Osuch, J Warren and Mrs Lyn Lyman (Clerk). In addition there were 2 members of the public.

In attendance: Borough Cllrs J Gambold & R Rigby.

101. Apologies for Absence:

No apologies received.

102. Declaration of Interest regarding items on the Agenda:

No Declarations of interest declared.

103 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020 & EGM 19th March 2020 :

The Minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting were unanimously accepted. The EGM Minutes were accepted with the addition of the apologies from Cllr G Bates. Both sets of Minutes will be signed at the next face to face Parish Council Meeting.

104. Public Open Session:

Bryan Glasper spoke about the Speed Indicator Device which is operational in Gold Lane. He also said he had been approached by residents regarding the speeding vehicles on Bromham Road. He had thoughts of moving the SID to Bromham Road although at present the Speedwatch Group does not have permission to cover Bromham Road. B Cllr Rigby said he used to change the batteries in the permanent SID every week

Bromham Road Speed Limit Review: The PC has not received any indication of the decision which Borough has made and Cllr Chase also wants to know what they will do about more visible signage. It may well be that only an average speed camera may work successfully. Bryan Glasper suggested adding Average Speed Camera to a future agenda.

105. Coronavirus Measures:

The Loop went out to all households in Biddenham. The phone line has been set up and is manned by 14 volunteers each doing a morning or afternoon once a week. The help@biddenham.org.uk email address was also set up and is monitored by four volunteers. There is now a lot of information on the website and WhatsApp groups are working well at both village and street levels. The Biddenham Coronavirus Support Network is led overall by Kate Smith of St James Church.

Green waste collection has ceased until further notice and the Bedford Tidy Tip is closed. It is highly unlikely that Borough will open up for a green waste facility.

Various ways of controlling green waste were discussed but no action decided upon. Residents should compost their waste, not burn it. Cllr Chase will write about this in his next article for the Loop.

106. **To consider planning:**

The updated list which had been circulated was discussed.

107. **To Agree Financial Matters:**

i) To approve accounts for payment: The statement of expenses which had been circulated was accepted.

ii) To note spend against budget for the Parish Council and the Pavilion. The statement which had been circulated was accepted. This is the final report as the financial year end is 31st March 2020.

The Pavilion finances looked good for 2019/20. During the Coronavirus situation, however, the only possible income would be from car parking. Subsequently the hairdressers are temporarily closed and hospital vehicles are now using the hospital parking spaces.

It was discussed that we may invite Debs Slade to attend the next meeting to explain how the Pavilion is doing.

The Ward Cllrs explained about the Small Business Grant where up to £10,000 is available for small businesses who pay rates. B Cllr Rigby is checking to see if the Pavilion would qualify. **Action: RR**

108. **To Accept Reports:**

Clerks Report: was circulated previously.

CIL was discussed. Once it is obtained, it has to be spent within 5 years.

Borough Cllrs Reports:

B Cllr Rigby: reported on the Mayor's Question/Answer session he took part in today (electronically). 90% of Borough staff are working from home. 119 casuals have been employed. There are not enough care workers at present.

The Travellers who had set up camp on the verges near the Deep Spinney roundabout have now gone – it is hoped Borough staff will be clearing away the rubbish which was left behind asap.

There are Standing Instruments in place for moving on travellers.

The Highways works plan from last month is being worked through, although it is not known exactly what work has been completed from the list. Manton Lane is finished. Other major projects are on hold. The railway bridge is Network Rail's responsibility. and will hopefully soon be opened up for one way traffic only.

B Cllr Gambold: Nothing further to add.

109. **Discuss the preparation for Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting:**

Due to the Coronavirus situation, NALC are in talks with the Government as to the way forward regarding Parish Councils annual meetings which are normally held in May. Action will be taken once we have been advised of the outcome.

The Clerk will advise the outcome within two weeks of the date of this meeting.

Action: LL

110. VE Day Celebrations:

Due to the Coronavirus situation, VE Day celebrations may now be moved and held in conjunction with VJ Day. The Bugler and Piper have been cancelled for the time being.

111. Matters in Progress:

The cutting back of foliage around the Hospital sign in Gold Lane is to be followed up with Andy Prigmore.

Action: LL

Christmas Tree: The Clerk is to ask the supplier if we can book a good tree for this year as last year's tree was too small.

Action: LL

Three new "Biddenham Welcomes Careful Driver" signs are required: 1) at Deep Spinney Roundabout/Great Ouse Way, 2) before the Sports Pavilion by the new estate and 3) Bromham Road in the vicinity of 102 Bromham Road. The Clerk was asked to locate suppliers.

Action: LL

The two existing Festival Of Britain signs needs restoring. Can Borough restore the them? Signs of the Times (Tebworth) can possible do it but this would need to be checked. English Heritage may be able to offer some guidance.

The dog bin list is in hand.

Action: SB

112. Parish Concerns:

Drains around the village are blocked. Cllr Bates has reported this. Gary Gardner has a list and this will be done. B Cllr Rigby will check this with Gary.

Action: RR

The Paddocks sign has still not been re-erected but B Cllr Rigby said this is in hand.

Action: RR

It is understood that all Planning Officers are working from home at present so there are general concerns that there may be delays as the computer equipment they are using may not be up to the job.

One house had not received their copy of The Loop and there was concern that others may have been missed. Apologies were offered and it was confirmed that more volunteers had been enlisted who may not have been fully aware of the location of some houses.

Millennium Sundial: Gary Creek had been asked to do some clearance work around it. The work is still to be carried out. The Clerk agreed to follow this up.

Action: LL

It was noted that the bus shelter would benefit from being re-varnished. After discussion Cllr Osuch agreed to do this inside and out once the Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted. *Action: KO*

It was noted that Kate Smith is watering the flower pots for which she was thanked.

113. **Date of next meeting:**
13th May starting at 7.30pm - May well be through conference facility. TBA

Meeting closed at 9.16pm.