

# BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm in St James's Barn, Church End, Biddenham, MK40 4AS.

## MINUTES

**Present:** Cllrs Stewart Briggs (Chairman), Peter Chase, Chris Gee, Caroline Cross, Simi Otukoya, Laura Simmonds, Helen Humphreys.

**In attendance:** David Brough (Clerk), Borough Councillor Jon Gambold, and two members of the public.

- 1 **Apologies accepted:** Francia Slade (Unwell), Harry Fowler (Away).
- 2 **Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:** None.
- 3 **To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting** held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.  
**Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meetings as an accurate record.
- 4 **Public Open Session**
  - A resident spoke in relation to parking issues on Main Road.
  - Borough Councillor Jon Gambold spoke in relation to the ongoing planning application for 57 dwellings north of Bromham Road (23/01106/MAR) and noted that BBC Highways had a key dependency on approval as they had multiple requirements for the applicant to resolve. In relation to rat-running at St Mary's, Cllr Gambold put forward a suggestion of closing the roundabout north east of St Mary's on a temporary basis until the completion of development; should the parish council wish to request this then approaching Jim Weir (Highways portfolio holder) would be the way forward.
- 5 **Clerk's report on matters in progress**  
Key items only:
  - Pavilion solar panels: The panels and battery are on order – once received then an install date can be agreed.
  - Pavilion playground refurbishment: The playground was completed; Cllr Simmonds and her daughter opened the playground to the public.
  - Trees For Streets: The 14 new trees on Biddenham Turn were planted by BBC, but not in the agreed locations, therefore they will need to be moved once the bollards have been removed to make space.
  - Stoning of the "Red Gate" right of way: Awaiting a date from the borough council.
  - Pavilion refurbishment works: The approved works to the bar area and reception are in progress.
  - Double yellow lines on Main Road: Traffic Regulation Order is now in place and painting of the lines is still expected this summer. Clerk will also follow up with Highways about parking restrictions on Gold Lane and Duck End Lane from last year.
- 6 **Borough Councillor Report**  
Report circulated to councillors and to be placed on the parish council website.
- 7 **Financial Matters**  
*To approve payments, note receipts, and receive the "Spend vs Budget Analysis" and balances.*  
**Resolved** to approve the payments in the appendix. The Spend vs Budget Analysis and the balances were noted; no concerns were raised. All documents are available in the appendix.
- 8 **Pavilion & grounds**
  - a) *To consider an approach for the maintenance of the memorial benches near the tennis courts.*  
**Resolved** to take on the maintenance of the benches on the basis that they are an asset to the grounds; to include the current costs for repairing the arm and refinishing them.  
**Action:** Clerk to inform the family of the approach.

b) *To approve the new 7-year hiring agreement with the Cricket Club for the use of the field and facilities at the Pavilion.*

**Resolved** to issue the hiring agreement and lease in its current form but to amend the fee to £1100 a year (increased annually by CPI from 2025) rather than having a cost per game charging structure.

**Actions:** Cllr Fowler to instruct the solicitors on the amendment, Cllrs Briggs and Fowler to sign hiring agreement and lease, and then it is to be issued to the cricket club.

c) *Cllr Simmonds: To agree the purchase of two picnic benches for the new play area at the Pavilion.*

It was noted that the playground had additional space for seating due to the relocation of equipment during installation when an unknown inspection cover was found. **Resolved** to purchase two Broxap Springfield timber picnic tables (with the extended table top for wheelchair users) at a cost of £543 (Ex VAT) plus delivery. To include costs required to fix the tables securely for safety and security reasons.

## 9 Highways & Open Spaces

a) *Proposal from Cllr Cross: To install a convex mirror near the corner of Gold Lane/Main Road for pedestrian safety.*

Cllr Cross withdrew this item as the mirrors are not Highways-approved street furniture. It was agreed to approach Highways to ask if there are any feasible options for making this crossing point safer (eg moving the dropped kerbs or adding a marked crossing).

b) *To consider an approach to the borough council's agreement in principle to proceed with average speed cameras on Biddenham Turn, fully funded by the parish council. The first stage would be a feasibility study/design.*

**Resolved** to spend £5k on the feasibility study, but to ask why this charge is being levied on the parish council when it's not in the ASC policy, and no other parish councils are known to have been asked to pay this; Clerk to ask if paying this fee will result in a higher prioritisation for the work.

c) *Proposal from Cllr Chase: To consider a response to a petition presented to the borough council for a blanket 20mph speed limit across Biddenham.*

The petition, created by a young Biddenham resident, reached the number of signatures required for the borough council to debate it at a full council meeting. It was **resolved** to put forward the following parish council response for their March meeting: Biddenham Parish Council shares the concerns put forward in the petition presented to Bedford Borough Council. The parish council would support a feasibility study into a 20mph zone within Biddenham and would also be interested to discuss other potential solutions the borough council may have to tackle speeding.

d) *Proposal from Cllr Chase: To consider requesting an upgraded pedestrian crossing (Zebra) at the exit of the Deep Spinney roundabout onto Bromham Road. This was requested by a resident.*

Councillors discussed that external consultants were being engaged by the borough council for improvements to the bypass at Biddenham. It was **resolved** to request that this crossing point is reviewed for ongoing suitability as part of that work; it is perceived that vehicle volumes and pedestrian numbers have increased in recent years.

e) *To consider placing one of the council's vehicle activated speed signs on St James Way in St Mary's. This would require the installation of a column/s for the sign, to enter an agreement with the developer to indemnify Vistry for any losses/damages, and to decide which speed sign to relocate.*

**Resolved** to purchase two columns with installation from BBC Highways for St James Way and to enter into the agreement with Vistry. Once the columns are installed, it was agreed to move the Gold Lane speed sign to St James Way on a rotational basis.

f) *To consider the annual grass cutting quote from Chris Horne Gardens Ltd.*

Councillors reviewed the updated quote, which showed a ~4% rise in costs, and **resolved** to approve it.

g) *Proposal from Cllr Chase: To consider submitting a comment on the borough council's proposed reduction in speed limit (50mph to 40mph) at the Deep Spinney and St James Way roundabouts.*

The councillors were supportive of reducing the speed limit at these roundabouts, but **resolved** to request a 30mph limit instead of 40mph, which is perceived to be more suitable to this area.

<Cllr Cross left the meeting at this point>

## 10 Risk assessment

*Annual review of the parish council's risk assessment.*

**Resolved** to adopt the proposed risk assessment, but with minor updates, including: in relation to budgeting to record the recent uncertainties over CIL and the requirement for a conservative approach

when forecasting for the budget, updating the comments on Pavilion Health and Safety, and to note that the council meetings are now held in St James Barn for improved accessibility.

**11 Annual Parish meeting**

*To agree an approach for hosting this year's Annual Parish meeting in April.*

It was agreed to continue with the same approach as last year, to put posters on the noticeboards advertising the meeting.

**12 Planning applications**

a) *To consider an update to the Planning Committees due to a change in councillors.*

It was agreed that Cllr Humphreys would fill the vacant position for planning responsibilities. The full list of councillors and their assigned responsibilities for roads can be provided on request.

b) The following planning applications were acknowledged without comment or objection unless noted otherwise:

APPLICATION NO: 24/00049/FUL Full Planning Application

PROPOSAL: Single storey rear and side extensions, two storey side/first floor extension above garage and single storey front extension.

LOCATION : 43 Day's Lane Biddenham Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 4AE

APPLICATION NO: 24/00384/FUL Full Planning Application

PROPOSAL: Proposed entrance gate with brick piers.

LOCATION : The Firs 21 Church End Biddenham Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 4AR

**13 Business for future agendas (No actions can be taken on items not on the agenda)**

- To consider options available to the parish council to assist in relieving the rat-running occurring in St Mary's, Biddenham. It is evident that vehicles are using St Mary's roads to avoid congestion on The Great Ouse Way (A6).
- Proposal from Cllr Chase: To provide an update on a resident's concerns about safeguarding at the borough council, as raised by the resident at their full council meeting in February 2024.

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 at St James' Barn – Annual Parish meeting at 7pm following by the parish council meeting.

**BPC - Payments Mar 2024**

Date Paid	Category	Payee/Payer	Desc	Transfers	Receipts	Payments Gross
17Feb2024	Internal Transfer	Transfer to 20448590		-£ 20,000.00		
17Feb2024	Internal Transfer	Transfer from 20448600		£ 20,000.00		
19Feb2024	Internal Transfer	Inward Payment - CCLA			£ 155,000.00	
22Feb2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (ANGLIAN WATER BUSI)	Water			£ 20.00
26Feb2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (BT GROUP PLC)	Broadband			£ 49.14
01Mar2024	Waste collection	Direct Debit (BEDFORD BOR COUNCI)	Bin emptying			£ 5.12
04Mar2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (E.ON NEXT)	Electrics Green			£ 13.64
08Mar2024	Pavilion Hire fees	12/02 - 08/03			£ 2,567.38	
13Feb2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (DYCE ENERGY)	Pavilion Gas			£ 786.21
29Feb2024	VAT Refund	HMRC	HMRC VTR		£ 9,265.78	
29Feb2024	Staff Costs	Multiple	Feb Staff Costs			£ 2,965.05
01Mar2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (BRITISH GAS)	Pavilion Electrics			£ 474.30
01Mar2024	Lawn Treatment (Greenthumb)	Greenthumb	Monthly - Village Green			£ 25.17
08Mar2024	Pavilion Utilities	Direct Debit (DYCE ENERGY)	Pavilion Gas			£ 704.95
Not yet paid	Pavilion Maintenance/Servicing/Inspections	D Slade	Cleaning supplies expenses			£ 185.35
Not yet paid	Internal Transfer	Transfer to 20448590		-£ 170,000.00		
Not yet paid	Internal Transfer	Transfer from 20448600		£ 170,000.00		
Not yet paid	Biddenham Conservation Group insurance	BCG	Grant approved Feb 24			£ 233.40
Not yet paid	Grass Equipment Maintenance	AMF SERVICES	Roller (Full invoice)			£ 1,193.88
Not yet paid	General Administration	D Brough	Phone SIM card cost - one off			£ 10.00
Not yet paid	General Administration	D Brough	Monthly rolling phone contract - Standing Order			£ 10.00
Not yet paid	General Administration	D Brough	Playground event - Ribbon/Scissors			£ 8.80
Not yet paid	General Administration	D Brough	Viking - Playground entrance signs			£ 67.37
Not yet paid	General Administration	Bidd PCC	Room hire for meeting - Mar			£ 20.00
Not yet paid	SSSI (Beds Wildlife Trust)	BWT	Annual maintenance fee for SSSI land			£ 600.00
Not yet paid	Pavilion Maintenance/Servicing/Inspections	L Worrall	EICR testing & additional works			£ 3,000.00
Not yet paid	Pavilion Maintenance/Servicing/Inspections	Gemini Locks	Fire door works			£ 498.00
Not yet paid	Pavilion Maintenance/Servicing/Inspections	Gemini Locks	Thumbturn fitting & other works			£ 552.00
Not yet paid	Pavilion Maintenance/Servicing/Inspections	P Bartram	Hot water kitchen install			£ 498.00
Awaiting payment	New Pavilion playground	Proludic	1st installment			£ 91,799.64
Awaiting payment	New Pavilion playground	Proludic	2nd installment subject to completion			£ 91,799.64

**BPC - Balances - Mar 2024**

Unity Trust	£ 14,865	Following playground payments
CCLA Savings	2,336	
C&C Savings	153,265	
<b>Total funds held</b>	<b>170,467</b>	

**Allocation of Balance Sheet**

CIL Monies	148,690	
Budget left to spend (Estimate)	3,000	
General reserve	18,777	Balancing figure
VAT refund due	31,168	

**BPC - Spend Against Budget 2023/24**

**BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**



	YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Full year (est)	Full year variance	
<b>Precept Income</b>	56,092	56,092	56,092	0	
<b>Grass Cutting Income</b>	2,468	2,250	2,468	218	
<b>Bidwells Income</b>	2,000	2,000	2,000	0	
<b>VAT Refund</b>	0	0			
<b>CIL Receipts</b>	167,881	0	167,881		
<b>Other Income</b>					
Pavilion bench - Dandara	500	0	500	500	
<b>Bank Interest</b>	4,529	500	4,529	4,029	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>233,470</b>	<b>60,842</b>	<b>233,470</b>	<b>4,747</b>	
<b>Employment Costs</b>					
Staff Costs	22,481	18,207			
Payroll	385	476			
	22,866	18,683	24,000	-5,317	Includes Pavilion Staff PAYE/Pension
Audit Fees	780	545			
General Administration	1,714	399			
Affiliation Fees/Subscriptions	722	815			
Website	758	840			
CILr Training	50	200			
Clerk's Training	30	0			
<b>Admin</b>	4,054	2,799	4,054	-1,255	
<b>Insurance</b>					
Insurance	3,185	3,250	3,185	65	
Street Furniture repairs	870	1,150			
Minor Highways works	545	500			
Grass cutting	23,860	18,000			
Lawn Treatment (Greenthumb)	302	265			
Grass Equipment Maintenance	2,188	1,500			
Tree surgery	840	3,900			
SSSI (Beds Wildlife Trust)	1,650	600			
Play Area Safety Inspection	93	105			
Play Area maintenance	0	700			
Other works	270	0			
Christmas Tree	4,200	4,400			
<b>Highways, Parks and Open spaces</b>	34,817	31,120	34,817	-3,697	
<b>Grants to community groups</b>					
Biddenham Conservation Group insurance	233				
The Loop magazine	485				
Biddenham Conservation Group tools	638				
	1,356	1,500	1,356	144	
Pavilion bench	999	0			
Tommy soldier	495	0			
Replacement flagpole/flag	1,624	0			
Trees For Streets	5,850	0			
Freedom Of The Parish event	641	0			
New Pavilion playground	152,999	0			
Pavilion solar panels	8,128	0			
Contingency	0	1,500			
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	170,736	1,500	170,736	-169,236	Offset £164k with CIL reserves
<b>Total Outgoings</b>	<b>237,014</b>	<b>58,852</b>	<b>238,148</b>	<b>-179,296</b>	
<b>Year To Date Net P&amp;L</b>	<b>-3,544</b>	<b>1,990</b>	<b>-4,678</b>	<b>-174,550</b>	

**BPC Pavilion - Spend Against Budget 2023/24**

BIDDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL



		YTD (Actual) Net	Annual Budget	Full year (est)	Full year variance	
Pavilion Car Parking charge		5,725	6,360	6,386	26	
Pavilion Hire fees		27,172	19,579	25,180	5,601	Deposits removed
Pavilion Cricket Club Fees		1,507	1,412	1,507	95	
Pavilion Other income	Parish Council Reserves	0	0			
Pavilion Grant income		0	0			
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>34,404</b>	<b>27,351</b>	<b>33,073</b>	<b>5,722</b>	
Deposits returned	Deposits returned	4,090	0			
Employment Costs	Pavilion Staff Costs	10,873	11,919	13,399	-1,480	Partial offset with PC Staff costs
	Pavilion Utilities	8,698	8,717	8,698		
	Licences	2,405	1,162	2,405		
	Pavilion Maintenance/Service/Inspections	12,656	6,500	12,656		
	Pavilion Cleaning materials	1,199	519	1,199		
	Waste collection	725	524	725		Underbudgeted on music licence and Maintenance budget used on roof
Running costs		25,683	17,422	25,683	-8,261	
	Gate sign	123				
	Salt bin/spreader	730				
	Additional CCTV camera	845				
Improvements		1,698	0	1,698	-1,698	Offset with CIL reserves
<b>Total Outgoings</b>		<b>42,344</b>	<b>29,341</b>	<b>40,781</b>	<b>-11,440</b>	
<b>Year To Date Net P&amp;L</b>		<b>-7,941</b>	<b>-1,990</b>	<b>-7,708</b>	<b>-5,718</b>	