



NOTES of the ELECTORS' MEETING
Saturday 25th July 2022 at 10am Birdham Village Hall

Present: 60 to 65 residents. Parish Councillors Graham Campbell, Gordon Churchill, Elizabeth Hamilton, Laurie Pocock, Clive Bush and Timothy Firmston.

Apologies received from Cllr. Rachel Glover.

The Chairman, Timothy Firmston, welcomed all those present and explained that the normal annual Electors' meeting had not been held for the past two years due to Covid pandemic restrictions. Three speakers were planned with questions taken at the end of each presentation.

Birdham Neighbourhood Plan Review – Cllr Clive Bush

There are some planned changes to the existing policies within the made Plan of 2016. Recent years have seen the housing number allocation issued by Chichester District Council (CDC) change from 50 dwellings to 125 dwellings for Birdham, with little or no allocation for some of the other parishes on the Manhood. The district allocation set by the Government has also changed from 435 dwellings to 635 houses built each year.

The updated Birdham Neighbourhood Plan is not yet ready for publication as there are too many uncertainties due to the delay in issuing the CDC Local Plan.

Questions / Observations from Residents.

Within the housing allocation would the 15 proposed dwellings off Crooked Lane count within the housing numbers? The answer given was Yes.

What is the position on the Travellers' site off the main road? There is ongoing work by CDC and the legal officers but the backlog of cases to be heard by the High Court is delaying the next stage.

What is the position on the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order to secure the track and access route for the 15 dwellings off Crooked Lane? CDC are still considering the purchase order and the appropriate District Councillors have been tasked to decide on the next step.

Speed Limits and Traffic Issues. – Cllr. Graham Campbell

On the main road A286 and Church Lane there is no real consideration for pedestrians and cyclists along these busy roads. The Parish Council is planning to submit a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for a 20-mph speed limit for Westlands Lane, Crooked Lane, Bell Lane and Church Lane. West Sussex County Council are reviewing their overall speed limit policy to be published sometime in the Autumn 2022 or after, which may make it easier to attain our objective. The traffic volumes along Church Lane require data capture in advance of any submission.

For the A286 main road the suggestion was made to remove the central bollards and central white line hatching to create a normal two-lane highway. The road width thus released can be used for a two-direction cycle path and a wider pavement. Two pedestrian crossings and village entrance marker gates should create the feel of a rural village road.

A Community Highways Scheme is being worked up by the parish council for submission to West Sussex County Council Highways by the 31st July - the annual cutoff date for schemes. There then follows a consultation period. Progress is being made on developing an integrated cycling and walking plan for the Manhood. There are also proposals for Green Lanes, Quiet Lanes and Equestrian routes.

Questions / Observations from Residents.

Can Bell Lane be included in the 20-mph proposed speed limit to improve safety, reduce noise and reduce overtaking? A pedestrian crossing is required across Bell Lane particularly with the recent Rowan and Tawny housing developments. There is a need to enforce the 40mph speed limit in Bell Lane with camera evidence. Vehicles overtaking is not uncommon. Suggestion to request the attendance of the mobile speed camera van.

Church Lane. There is no footpath or white lines to help pedestrians but this is a rural country lane and needs to avoid urbanization.

Westlands Lane. The increasing number of large building lorries and trade vans has an impact of pedestrians and other road users.

Cycling commuters require a straight route to reach their destinations and won't use a wandering route

The bus stop at Church Lane on the Witterings route side needs to provide more space for people to alight and board the buses as it is very close to the roadside and hedge behind.

Suggestion to install mini-roundabouts at each of the road junctions along the main road.

Possible Plans for the Playing Field - Cllr. Timothy Firmston.

Various suggestions have been forthcoming but without the comments from the community it has been challenging to submit funding bids for the developments.

Each development will require local support from the residents and a few 'champions' to work on and push through to completion a particular project / development.

In no particular order these are the possible plans with an update on recent additions.

Playground. Recent additions have been the play tractor and trailer and the double toddler swing. There is probably space to install a further two play items. Suggestions are sought.

All Weather Perimeter Footpath. This could be installed in three sections to aid dog walkers and those walking from the main road towards the scout hut corner in all weathers. Quotations had been received a few years ago.

Tree Planting and Biodiversity. Thanks are given to the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group for arranging the planting of the tree whips in the Spring 2022 with the aid of the Scouts and Cubs. Tree watering remains an issue particularly with a dry Spring and now Summer. Three water butts have been provided by the Parish Council and installed at the Village Hall. Request for old but intact watering cans to be left by the water butts.

Games / Football Pitches. Competitive games require greater space and facilities for changing. A set of goal posts has been suggested previously to provide some activity for the older children.

Allotments. There are 5 Birdham residents using allotments at the West Wittering site with several more from Birdham on the waiting list.

Community Orchard / Fruit Growing. There are several projects running elsewhere for greater home-grown production and advice is forthcoming. Orchards and trees require maintenance by a local group of volunteers.

Bequeathed Land. This is located in the East corner of the playing field close by Old Common Close. The land was gifted with covenants by Mr. Adams to be used for the community of Birdham. Investigations continue with various legal advice and solicitors to be able to lift some / all of the covenants and thus widen the choice of future uses.

Funding. The Community Infrastructure Levy is allocated by CDC using central government funds. Parish Councils can then apply with their chosen projects that may be selected by CDC. Time limits for expenditure are set

and if the money is not spent by the time limit then the funds are lost. With recent housing developments Birdham currently has £86,990.66 available for projects.

Ideas are sought from electors.

Questions / Observations from Residents

An all-weather perimeter footpath is a good idea for children walking to school and to encourage more to do so.

Purchase a water bowser to be towed around the field to reach all the trees. Place notices by each entry gate and around the field asking for volunteers to help with the watering.

Install a sports ball wall incorporating a goal, cricket stumps and a netball hoop. A picture of a possible such ball wall was circulated at the meeting.

Install adult keep fit / exercise equipment.

Allotments. Several other sites were suggested instead of the playing field.

Community Orchard could be located on the bequeathed land.

Install a new rubbish bin in the corner of the field close by the newish footbridge where a bench is located.

Install wooden ramps on either side of the footbridge to enable wheelchair and buggy access. This improvement could link up with part of the proposed perimeter footpath running parallel to the main road.

General Questions from Residents

Repair the bus shelter at the end of Church Lane. The roof is in a poor condition. Alternatively install a new shelter to give a better sight line for those waiting for approaching buses and to include cycle storage.

Use the 'Next Door' social media platform to pass on information and updates from the Parish Council to residents. CDC are using this communication media. Disadvantages include the rude and abusive messages that are left and the I.T. time it requires to operate.

Close of the Meeting.

Timothy Firmston thanked the large number for attending, how the projects and ideas will be considered further and additional information gathered.

The meeting closed at 12.00 noon.

Timothy Firmston.

22nd July 2022