

Notes from Beenham Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 8th January

Public Forum

-The Digital Infrastructure Initiative has been installed at the Six Bells. This is intended to improve the mobile phone coverage for Vodafone by up to a 500 metre radius from the pub. At present, the system is not fully optimised so that coverage has not yet been achieved, but is expected to once optimised. The operator would like to explore the possibility of locating additional systems in Beenham to improve Vodafone coverage for the whole village.

Councillors Reports

-WBC have been notified of the Parish Council's concerns over the substantial earthworks that have been carried out at Chowdry Farm. WBC have acknowledged the notification, and have advised that full planning has been granted but they will follow up on enforcement as a priority even though they have a backlog of cases.

-Following the Thames Water works on Stoneyfield, the damage to verges has been reported to WBC for rectification by the contractor. It is not clear whether Thames Water have fully completed their work there as some of their plant is still in place. Photographs of the verges have been supplied to WBC to send to Thames Water.

-The traffic lights on The Green which have been installed due to the closure of Clay Lane for Thames Water works have caused severe traffic disruption. Due to the location of the lights adjacent to the Six Bells, the single carriageway section becomes blocked between the pub and Orchard Rise if only a few cars are queuing at the lights. It is not clear whether these lights are necessary, but they may be a Health and Safety compliance requirement. The Parish Council will contact both WBC and Thames Water to clarify and hopefully rectify the problem.

-The WBC Public Rights of Way Officer visited Wickens Corner after flooding issues had been reported, cleared existing grips and dug new ones, which should improve matters.

-The Annual Parish Assembly date was confirmed as Monday 11th March 2024.

Planning Applications

-Application #23/02825/FULMAJ for demolition of the existing Comfort Inn on Bath Road and replacement by 22 flats has been submitted. This is in addition to the 10 flats currently under construction immediately west of the Comfort Inn. The location falls within Padworth Parish Council jurisdiction, so Beenham Parish Council will contact Padworth PC to obtain their views. The existing traffic junction opposite the Comfort Inn partly falls within the Beenham Parish Council area. The initial view of Beenham PC is that the current application appears to be overdevelopment and that we have concerns over the need for affordable housing, which are not included, and traffic issues. Should the junction be altered for a successful application, we have concerns about traffic flow to and from Beenham Village due to increased traffic from the proposed site and the nature of any possible changes to the junction.

Parish Council Assets

-Approval for repairs to the path next to the tables/seats on the Rec was given.

-The leaning Telephone box library has been further assessed for repair. It was advised that the books be removed and the box taped off to prevent access as it could represent a possible Health and Safety issue until the lean has been rectified. A quote for the works was agreed.

Community Events Initiative

-There will be a public meeting in the Victory Hall on Friday 2nd February to explain and discuss this initiative to parishioners. The various village assets, such as The Six Bells, The Victory Hall, Beenham Club, the School PTF and Pre School, BVE, the WI, the Church etc will have representatives of their organisations available to explain the severe financial situation they are facing following the effects of the pandemic, cost of living crisis and other factors, with a view to encouraging increased parishioner attendance to events they organise and the community cohesion they help provide. The meeting will be asking parishioners their views and suggestions on how to preserve these assets both currently, and for the future. Please try to attend this meeting if possible as loss of these assets would represent a serious setback for the entire community, and if lost would be unlikely to be recovered.

The meeting will start at 7.00pm and is open to all parishioners.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 4th March in the Community Room at 7.00pm.

