

ES&BG Parish Council: Article for March 2020 edition of News from the Villages

We begin our update with confirmation from Hampshire County Councillor Derek Mellor that from April 2020 non-residents of West Berkshire will be charged a fee (currently unknown) to use the facilities at Newtown Road Recycling Centre in Newbury. Please ensure you have registered your vehicle(s) to use Basingstoke's Wade Road Centre, for free, at www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/recyclingcentres/vehicle-registration

Cllr Mellor also advised that HCC's 2020/21 budget for rural highways has dropped but there is potentially good news in that this reduction could be reversed as a result of the Fairer Funding Review, which could be implemented as early as April this year.

We're seeking ideas to develop open spaces across the Parish. Funding may become available this year for projects to create or improve our access and enjoyment of our surroundings. If you have a space or project in mind, get in touch with the Clerk (see below).

We're aware of the inconsiderate littering by drivers and cyclists and while there may be technological solutions in the future, for now we appreciate all help from litter-pickers across the Parish. We are looking into the possibility of receiving financial assistance from some of the large fast food outlets, who seem to be the main culprits, and whether we can increase the frequency of our Litter Warden patrols.

Now is the time for allotment renewals and there are currently three empty plots for rent. At only £30 per year it's a great opportunity to join a friendly community of gardeners of all capabilities.

Finally, some of us have been admiring the pond's lovely pink hue but apparently it's not a good thing. We believe it is an Azolla fern and if not properly contained can damage the pond's ecosystem. We're taking advice and looking into remedies, as natural as possible, starting with skimming and possibly using weevils depending on the outcome of the skimming.

Our next meeting takes place at Echinswell Village Hall on Wednesday 11th March.