

## **Chairman's address – May 2019**

A very warm welcome to everyone, thank you for taking time to support us. You notice on your seats that there is a short questionnaire which I've very much appreciate if you can fill in – it's totally anonymous, so no need to identify yourself, but it would give us some feedback on what we're doing and what we could do more (or less) of.

Firstly however, I'd like to say a huge thank you for the time and effort given by my fellow councillors – Marian Dain, Jackie Bayliss, Mike Sparrow and Elaine Kearney. Also I must mention our excellent clerk, Sarah Jones who this time last year had just joined us – so she's completed a full year now - and I can safely say she's made a huge difference to the work that we do and we are very grateful for her hard work keeping us all shipshape.

After you've heard from me, I will hand over to Sarah, who will cover finances and then we have Borough Cllr John Izett and County Councillor Tom Thacker, Lorrina Wooldridge from the Bishops Green Community Association and then our very own Cllr Elaine Kearney who will talk about potential future projects.

### **Oakfields Close**

You will have noticed that Oakfields Close has had some additional parking spaces built. This is something the PC has lobbied for over the last few years – and we've finally managed to get it completed. This will be a great help to the residents who have been blighted by a mixture of lack of spaces and some inconsiderate parking.

### **Name addition to war Memorial**

With the centenary of the WW1 Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November we were proud to be able to put right an omission from our parish war memorial. Private Frederick Allen, whose family lived in Bishops Green, died in Northern France in June 1916 and is commemorated in the Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery in Souchez near Arras. We're not sure how, but his name was not included in the names of the war dead shown on the Echinswell war memorial. After some excellent research from local resident, Adrian Wander - who spoke at our Parish assembly last May - the Parish Council was determined to get Pte Allen's name added to the memorial. We commissioned a local stonemason to get the name added and, at the Remembrance service held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018, we were proud to hear Private Allen's name being read out along with the others in the roll of honour. A fitting tribute to his sacrifice. When you next pass the memorial do take a moment to see the new plaque which has been added at the base of the front façade.

I must also mention that we have had two very generous donations from anonymous residents of the parish that have gone towards the cleaning of the memorial and addition of the plaque. We are extremely grateful for those donations and I want to say a huge thank you to the donors.

### **Beautify the Parish:**

We have a new initiative that will deliver new planting for some of the green areas in the parish. I'm calling it "Beautify the Parish" if that isn't too cheesy, but our aim is to create

more colour throughout the year with bulbs, shrubs and perhaps some small trees. Give us your ideas for what and where if you can. To support this effort we are using the kind donation from the May Fayre Committee and a parishioner who has donated I believe something like 800 daffodil bulbs. – our thanks to our kind supporters for this.

**Village Volunteer Group:**

Also – we have a band of volunteers who do some amazing work round the parish – clearing ditches, picking up litter, chopping down overhanging branches etc – all making our enjoyment of the parish that little bit better. My thanks to them – and they know who they are (in fact I see some of them here tonight) – for their hard work. It is very much appreciated.

**PC Vacancies:**

Whilst you see five of us here tonight, we have space for another two councillors on the PC. If you'd like to support the Parish, why not join us? We meet once a month and cover all the topics you see here on the banners behind me. It's a great way to give back to your community and you can contribute to the care of our parish alongside a great team.

**Supporting BG Village Hall:**

We have been working to support the re-opening and revitalisation of the Bishops Green Village Hall which had fallen into a state of poor usage and disrepair. Cllr Marian Dain and Cllr Elaine Kearney have spent a good deal of time to help the BG Community Association with the operational improvements needed to deliver a functioning facility. We will hear more from Lorrina later this evening who will tell us more about what they're now able to do at the BG Village Hall.

**Spare allotments**

Finally, don't forget, we have spaces available in the allotments – and I believe we will give you the first three months free whilst you get your plot set up and ready for the summer growing season. They are extremely good value and all you need to do is email the Clerk and she'll send you the details.

Thank you again for coming to hear from us – I do hope you'll be able to stay with us after the formal presentations to have a sandwich and a glass of wine and don't forget to complete your questionnaires and leave them on the table by the door.

Thank you.