**Chairman’s Report – 9 July 2014**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor John Broxis welcomed all those present

He first introduced the team; Doreen Gascoine – Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Fabrice Vaisset – Vice Chair responsible for advising on financial matters, Mike Sparrow – responsible for roads and potholes, Dani Court – Neighbourhood Watch advisor and Jacky Bayliss – village pond maintenance and environmental matters. (Cllr Bayliss was absent as she was on holiday and Cllr Court was absent following recent surgery.)

He also advised that there are two vacancies on the Council, positions it is hoped could be filled after the summer break. Please contact the Clerk if you would like to join our happy band. Special thanks were given to Malcolm Jones who continues to look after the allotments following his retirement from the Parish and ex-councillor Margaret Curtis who continues to monitor and report on foot paths and rights of way for the Council.

The Chairman reported that whilst the Parish Council is the first tier of Local Government and has some formal & procedural duties i.e. raising money by precept & reporting what is done with it, the Council is not required by law to do anything, although this is far from what actually happens. With regard to the precept, due to a recalculation by Government on how the money is allocated, the Council Tax to householders remains similar but the actual funds received by the Parish Council are reduced. Consequently the precept needs to be increased marginally for receipts to remain the same.

With regard to the Localism Act and village plans, the Chairman explained that we have been advised that if planned developments for the Parish are minimal, in BDBC’s Local Plan up to 2029, there is little value in putting together our own proposal for the area.

The Chairman continued to explain that the Parish Council funds regular maintenance work in the parish and this year has also donated money to the May Fair, Basingstoke Conservation Volunteers (who assist with the annual pond clearance) and Ecchinswell Village Hall for their grass cutting. Equipment has been bought to maintain the common areas at the allotments and also repairs made to the water system there. Trees which fell onto power lines by the pond during the bad weather in December, have been removed and our notice boards in Bishops Green had been repaired and up-graded.

During the year the Parish Council has arranged with landowners for the repair of stiles & rights of way, regularly reported pot holes to Hampshire CC Highways, negotiated a replacement drainage system at Bishops Green to negate the flooding problem there and facilitated resurfacing of the road between Bishops Green and the A339 with West Berkshire Council. Currently we are negotiating for monies from the infrastructure fund to enable ditches to be cleared in the Parish and have applied for S106 money to repair the heating system at Bishops Green village hall.