

ECCHINSWELL, SYDMONTON AND BISHOPS GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2016

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Tim Hall, welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending. He explained that the meeting wouldn't last too long and the Cllrs hoped residents would join them in refreshments afterwards.

He introduced the speakers – Borough Cllr John Izett and County Cllr Tom Thacker, who would be joining the meeting later. Unfortunately, PC Richard Baldwin, who was standing in for PCSO Damon Hope, was unable to attend, due to operational requirements.

Cllr Hall then introduced the Cllrs – Jackie Bayliss, Marian Dain and Paul Johnson - and the two new Cllrs who had joined the Council that evening – Sam Keyse and Lissa Tanner.

He also introduced the Clerk – Doreen Gascoine – who was the paid employee of the Parish Council and did a vital job in guiding Cllrs on policy and ensuring that things happened on time. The Cllrs couldn't carry out their roles without her and she was a fantastic servant to the parish – even though she didn't actually live in the parish.

The Parish Council also employs two Litter Wardens and he thanked them for the great job they do in keeping the local area free of litter.

He went on to explain that it had been a challenging year, due to changes in personnel and shortages of Cllrs. He was the third Chairman during the last 12 months, which made it even more difficult for the Clerk, as Responsible Officer, to maintain continuity.

Cllr Hall then pointed out the “pop-up” banners, which highlight the things the Parish Council is responsible for, and explained that this work was carried out using the precept and other grant funding. We are not a large parish – our total precept was only £11,468 last year - and for other projects the Parish Council has to rely on other sources of income, such as grants from BDBC.

One of the more substantial achievements this past year was getting a grant for work on the EVH car park entrance and re-marking of the pedestrian walkway. This grant came from BDBC's Community Infrastructure Fund and was for £25,600.

The Parish Council has also commissioned the design of a new website, which will be online in the next month or so.

Children from the local school were involved in a bulb planting project, funded by the Parish Council. Hundreds of native daffodil bulbs have been planted at the pond, around the war memorial and in the area of the school. Hopefully residents will benefit from these for many years.

During the past year the Parish Council also made a donation to the Ecchinswell May Fair held at the pub and it assisted the church and Ecchinswell Village Hall with grants towards the cost of grass cutting.

The Parish Lengthsman scheme – funded by HCC – has helped manage the allotments site, keep roadside signs clear and free from encroaching vegetation, and helped with additional litter picking. Unfortunately, the Lengthsman can't repair potholes, but we're constantly chasing Hampshire Highways to prioritise our village roads. Sadly, their budgets are very limited and there's no good news just yet about whether we'll see improvements in our roadways in the near future. (post meeting note – County Councillor Thacker pointed out in his address that repair works would be carried out on many areas surround our parish in the next three months. See later in these minutes)

Cllr Hall then pointed out that there is a substantial sum – around £57K – available to the parish under BDBC's Local Infrastructure Fund. This funding can be used for a number of projects and the Cllrs would welcome suggestions from residents as to how it can best be spent in the parish.

Some examples of how it can be spent include:

- Supporting projects that improve existing, or establish new facilities for community sport, education or public amenity use.
- Health and safety requirement – such as roof repairs, sports-related play surfaces, boiler/heating system replacement, re-wiring, dry rot.
- Improvements to accessibility – such as ramps, accessible toilets, parking, transport, foot and cycle paths, lighting projects.
- Modernisation – such as kitchen/toilet/pitch/play park/flooring refurbishments – where there is evidence the existing condition is affecting use.
- Extensions, new buildings or facilities to meet increased demand or proven deficits – such as cemetery provision, skate parks, youth buildings – or feasibility studies to determine viability.

Cllr Hall urged residents to come forward with ideas; if this funding isn't used within three years it will be lost to the parish.

Finally, Cllr Hall said that the Parish Council always welcomed residents' input, ideas and feedback. The Cllrs are here to serve residents and make the best use of the funds we have for the benefit of all.