

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council Newsletter

A Happy New Year to all our residents!

The latest meeting of the Parish Council took place on Wednesday December 14th 2022 at Bishops Green Village Hall. Because of the recent planning approval for 42 homes in Bishops Green the meeting was preceded by a Community Forum to discuss the implications of the development on our Neighbourhood Plan.

At the forum, Cllr Dain delivered an update on the progress of our plan and explained the advice the Parish Council had received on the various options moving forward. This advice was gained from our Neighbourhood Plan consultants and the Planning Policy Team at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Residents were then able to ask questions of the Parish Council. A show of hands at the end of the discussion gave unanimous support for continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan in its current form to gain protection from predatory development proposals as quickly as possible. The information from the evening was distributed to the parish via email, website, and Facebook for further reactions.

Once the parish council meeting started there were even more planning issues to consider. We usually deal with one or two planning matters each month but this month there were eight. These included a large-scale agricultural development in a neighbouring parish and yet another predatory development proposal in Bishops Green. Northwest Hampshire feels under siege. The Parish Council has raised objections to the latest proposed development at Bishops Green Farmhouse as it is unsustainable, against the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed development style is inappropriate for a rural location. Those of you who know Hyde Lane will also appreciate its inability to take any significant amount of extra traffic.

Our county councillor sent an update on issues affecting our parish. This focussed on the financial difficulties that Hampshire is facing. As yet, HCC has been unable to evaluate the total financial impact of the Chancellor's autumn statement, so no council tax rate has been set. We could expect a rise of up to 4.99% under the new rules.

The Parish Precept for 2023/24 was agreed at the meeting. We have been forced to raise the precept (by 58 pence per month for a band D property) because of increases in parish responsibilities and rising costs. We are lucky enough to have a large number of mature trees on parish land. The storms last winter showed us that some of them are reaching the end of their life or need maintenance. We have a duty of care to ensure that our trees do not cause damage to people or property. There is a significant cost implication for this. The new Speed Indicator Device we have purchased requires maintenance and we need to build up reserves to replace it. We aim to spend your money carefully on things that benefit us all.

Good news from Bishops Green Youth Club. They have been chosen as one of the three local organisations to take part in the Tesco Community Grant Scheme early in 2023. From mid-January you will be able to use your blue token to vote for the Youth Club. Your token will raise funds to help Bishops Green Community Association keep the club open.

The Ecchinswell Village Quiz Night in mid-November and the Bell Trust's Sleigh Event are two more examples of our community working together. Our two village hall committees have activities planned for the new year so please join in and help to support your halls.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 11th January 2023 at Ecchinswell Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Cllr Marian Dain