

## **Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council Newsletter**

**January 2022**

The latest meeting of the Parish Council took place on Wednesday January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at Ecchinswell Village Hall. Because of the keen interest around the planning application for 350 homes in Bishops Green, we set up a zoom link for residents to listen into the council discussion.

Our county councillor, Cllr Derek Mellor, gave us an update on issues affecting our parish, with these highlights:

- HCC is developing an Electric Vehicle strategy and it is becoming clear that the underlying infrastructure will need significant improvement if targets for charging facilities are to be met.
- Online methods of reporting highways issues to HCC have been improved.
- Various highways projects are being considered, including extending 20mph areas to improve emissions.
- HCC waste recycling centres will continue with a booking system as this has proved popular with residents.
- HCC is looking at ways of improving Adult Social Care provision as the current situation is unsustainable.
- Highways and West Berkshire are in discussion about the positioning of signs on the A339 to inform HGVs of the unsuitability of the roads in the parish. We should see these appear in the spring, alongside the traffic calming measures we have been promised.

Our borough councillor, Cllr Sam Carr, reported the following:

- BDBC's budget review takes place on Jan 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The number of employees within the planning department, waste collection services, and customer services will all be increased.
- The Local Plan Update is progressing, and rural housing allocations have now been discussed at a BDBC meeting on Jan 6<sup>th</sup>. There is an issue with the proposed allocation for Tadley because of the proximity to AWE. This may have a knock-on effect on the housing allocation for our parish which currently stands at 15 homes. Cllr Carr was hopeful that there would be no substantial change to this since our settlements are very small by borough standards.
- BDBC is making good progress on meeting its affordable homes target.

Both councillors were involved in the discussion of the planning application for 350 homes in Bishops Green. A draft letter produced by the PC's planning consultant was discussed. By now this letter will have been submitted and be available to view on the BDBC Planning Portal and our website (<http://www.ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk>). It reflects the strong opposition to this proposed development expressed by residents.

On other planning issues, the Neighbourhood Plan has reached the "Call for Sites" stage. Letters have gone out to landowners with land close to Bishops Green and Ecchinswell as we seek to find one or more small sites to build the small number of

homes our consultation and the Local Plan Update suggests are needed in the parish. Do look on our website for more details of the Neighbourhood Plan and the 'Call for Sites' process. Once a shortlist of sites has been made, using recommended screening criteria, this will be tested by community consultation to decide the final site(s). We will keep you well informed on how you can take part in this. We expect this to happen in spring/summer 2022.

The PC is hoping to work with the wider community to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June. A small group has begun thinking about this and would welcome more volunteers to put forward ideas and get involved. Do contact the PC (via the clerk or any councillor) or your village hall committee if you have suggestions. We need a strong team of helpers to create a memorable event for the whole parish.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at Bishops Green Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Cllr Marian Dain