**Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council.**

Our recent meeting took place on 11th October. At full strength we have 7 councillors but at present have 5. With holidays, illnesses and other issues, we run the risk of not being able to hold meetings as if there are less than 3 councillors present, as no decisions can be made. We currently have 2 vacancies, one of which has been empty for some time.

You may ask yourself whether it matters if the meeting runs, or even worse case scenario you have a parish council at all? Below is a flavour of the matters we are engaged with:

**What is discussed at the Parish Council meetings, and current actions**:

* **Planning Applications** - policing current housing proposals to ensure they align to our Neighbourhood Plan (see further detail below).
* **Allotments** - working with a fledgling allotment holders association to improve the site
* **Footpaths & Rights of Way** - continuing to upgrade styles to gates and keeping paths open
* **Roads and potholes** - ongoing interface with Hampshire County Council to push for local road repairs
* **Police liaison** - reacting to reported incidents of vandalism with community police officers
* **Traffic**- an active speeding working group monitoring output from our speed detection device
* **Community projects and Grant funding** - acting as a conduit for Borough Council funding to support local projects
* **Liaising with village halls** - coordinating community initiatives across the Parish
* **Web site and digital communications** - currently we are looking to upgrade and update our present web site.
* **Spending monies from your council tax and grants** – supporting community needs, litter collections, pond clearance etc

During the most recent meeting the council reviewed the revised planning application received from Catesby Estates. The proposal has been reduced to 300 houses, but Councillors agreed this was not a significant change. This large-scale proposal goes against our Neighbourhood Plan which has been made since this proposal was originally received. Councillors agreed that they will be responding to BDBC that, as well as the proposal going against the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies, all the original objections still stand.

If you feel you have some time to join our team and help with some of the issues that arise, and make a difference to your parish, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the clerk on clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk for more information or to express your interest. If we are unable to attract more Councillors, ultimately, we may get absorbed into a larger council such as Kingsclere, and lose our unique voice which would be a sad day indeed.

May we also remind you that the meeting taking place on 13th December (at Ecchinswell Village Hall) will start at 6.30pm, as at 7.30pm the new Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Harvey, and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure, Councillor Andy Konieczko, are presenting to explain the Local Plan Update (LPU) for Basingstoke & Deane and get input from ESBG PC. If you have any planning questions or comments you wish to direct to the borough councillors, please email them to clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk by the 20th Nov 2023, or come along and listen to the presentation if you want to find out more. It should be an interesting and informative evening.

The Parish Council will next meet on 8th November 2023 at Bishops Green Village Hall.

Sarah Jones – Clerk