

The latest Parish Council meeting took place on Wednesday 9th February at the Bishops Green Village Hall. Three members of the public attended.

Borough Councillor John Izett reported as follows:-

1. The Leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has resigned, and they aim to appoint a replacement as quickly as possible.
2. It was also reported that due to changes to the Environment Act the way waste in the Borough is handled will change. There will be an increase in the range of plastic items that can be recycled. It is not planned at this time to include food waste in the changes. Further information will follow in due course.
3. On a positive note, there is funding available to recruit an extra waste/recycling crew to assist with collections.
4. The council is planning to lobby government for a reduction in the number of new houses to be built in the Borough. Their reason is that development in the borough has been above the national average for many years and time is needed to improve the infrastructure to support it.

County Councillor Derek Mellor then delivered his report as follows:-

1. He confirmed that the white line work had been completed in Bishops Green at the accident black spot close to the West Berkshire border. Additional signage will follow shortly to support it. A traffic survey funded by Hampshire County Council will be undertaken to see if these additional measures are effective.
2. He also advised that social care is costing the county more than anticipated. Urgent Government funding is being sought to prevent the County Council having to plug the shortfall from their reserves.

Turning to parish matters, littering is a major problem everywhere and this area is no exception. Recently the volume has increased even more, with some very unpleasant items being dumped on our roads and footpaths. Bishops Green and Ecchinswell each have a paid warden, but this is only funded for a total of nine hours a week which does not cover the time it takes to keep on top of the situation. We are reliant on an increasing number of unpaid volunteers who help to keep our villages tidy. Our thanks to all of these people. Every piece of litter that is dropped by an inconsiderate minority has to be picked up by someone else. Please dispose of unwanted items responsibly and help keep our parish a pleasant place for everyone.

Further to the first phase of improving access to the countryside, where stiles were replaced with kissing gates on the footpath from the side of Ratts Cottages, funding of £1600 has now been obtained so phase two of the project can now commence. This will enable two more gates to be erected on the path from Mill Lane to the Kingsclere Road. Any surplus money will be used for improvements elsewhere in the parish. If anyone has any suggestions as to how this could be spent, please contact our clerk at clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk

A reminder for anyone wishing to comment on the proposed development for 50 homes at Woodside View in Bishops Green (Ref. No: 22/00174/OUT): please contact BDBC planning as soon as possible.

The ninth Ecchinswell Pantomime took place on the 28/29th January and was a great success raising in excess of £2400. This money will be spent on updating the play park adjacent to the Ecchinswell Village Hall and ongoing maintenance costs for the defibrillator sited at The Royal Oak. A big thank you to everyone who gave their time and made it all happen.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th March at Ecchinswell Village Hall commencing at 7.30. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Cllr Jackie Bayliss