

## **Echinnswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council.**

Parish Council meeting report for January 10th, 2024

### **Public consultation by Hampshire County Council (HCC); input on focus for seriously cut services.**

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is facing operating with approximately 50% less funding from central Government relative to 2019 levels. The HCC reserves are being used up to cover running costs, so cuts in services have to be made. The public consultation, running to 31 March, seeks feedback on potential cuts to services such as adult social care, grant schemes, highway maintenance, homeless support services, household waste recycling centres, library stocks, passenger transport, street lighting. Please go to: [www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation](http://www.hants.gov.uk/future-services-consultation)

HCC is also launching a survey asking residents where they would like to see improvements for nature recovery. Please go to: <https://lnrs-hampshireonline.hub.arcgis.com/pages/Leave%20a%20comment%20on%20the%20map?preview=true>

### **Government legislation will support our Neighbourhood Plan!**

The Government has now published the new National Planning and Policy Framework. This document indicates that our Neighbourhood Plan should now have a strong role in local planning decisions, particularly in resisting unwanted housing development, for up to 5 years. Given Basingstoke and Deane are still working on their Local Plan Update, it will be important that our Neighbourhood Plan continues to align to expected housing allocation for our parish, which it is at this time.

### **Parish Council to propose improvements to local infrastructure.**

The Parish Council is starting work on proposals for local infrastructure projects to secure funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy available, liaising with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. The proposals will be based on priorities brought forward in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, particularly with a focus on making our roads safer with reduced speed limits and improved road layouts.

### **Solar Farm proposals change to avoid our Parish!**

Anglo Renewables have reduced the size of their proposed Stratton Solar Farm to now exclude fields that are within our Parish. The notification indicates that this change is in response to listening to local residents' opinions! However, as the proposed development still immediately adjoins our parish, the Parish Council will continue its active monitoring of this proposal.

### **Water Table Levels and flooding**

The Parish Council discussed areas within the parish that may be at risk of flooding, and wondered whether anyone locally was measuring water table levels? Perhaps dwellings etc with wells might have records and/or are actively monitoring levels and would like to share these to provide a basis for understanding trends. Additionally, is there anyone amongst the community that would actively like to pull together such data if provided? Please contact the PC Chair or Clerk (details below).

### **Bishops Green Community Centre now has a new Co-ordinator for its village hall activities.**

The Bishops Green Community Association is pleased to report that the new Co-ordinator is in place and planning activities for the hall.

**Ecchinswell Allotments availability**

It is expected that a few allotments may become available shortly for rent, at an annual fee of £40. If you are interested to take on an allotment, please advise the Chair or Clerk of the Parish Council (see detail below).

**Overhead power line upgrade 2024-25 means minor roads and path closures across the parish.**

The Parish Council (PC) has been notified that the progression of work on the Bramley to Melksham overhead power cables upgrade will require the local closure of roads and footpaths when/where necessary, over the next year. The PC expects to be advised of affected areas in advance, and locals should be advised by letter drops. Keep an eye out for advance notices from the National Grid.

**New Parish Council members please!**

Our Parish Council is working with two vacancies and is very keen to find locals interested to join in this community work. If the breadth of topics covered, as the above notes indicate, is of interest to you then do please let the PC know!

**To contact the Parish Council**

Please either contact Marian Dain the Chair ([cllrdain.esbg@outlook.com](mailto:cllrdain.esbg@outlook.com)) or Sarah Jones the Clerk ([clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk))

**Next Meeting**

The Parish Council will next meet at 7.30pm on 14<sup>th</sup> February in the Bishops Green Village Hall.

*Councillor Paul Debenham, ESBG Parish Council*