

Welcome to the first ESG report of 2019 and we are hoping it will inspire you to support and assist your Parish Council throughout the year. As ever, we are looking for new members, especially those with I.T. skills and knowledge of social media networks which will enable us to significantly improve our communication with our Parishioners.

It is probably a distant memory to most of us, but the very hot summer of 2018 has been blamed for contributing to some minor damage to equipment in the Play Area near the Echchinswell Village Hall. We have listened to the concerns of local residents and plan to work with the Echchinswell Village Hall Committee to ensure the continued success of the area.

We continue to support Bishops Green Village Hall and are pleased to inform you that our next parish meeting will be held there on Wednesday 13th February commencing at 7.30pm. The Bishops Green Community Association is working to increase the use of the varied hall facilities to ensure financial viability. It is worth saying that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have been very supportive of everyone's efforts and we trust will continue to demonstrate a great commitment to the success of the facility. Come along on the 13th to see the hall for yourself.

We would also like to bring to your attention the issue of Lost Footpaths. There are over 140,000 miles of public footpaths that criss-cross England and Wales. However, miles and miles of our paths are unrecorded and if they are not put on a map by 1st January 2026, they will be lost forever. Unrecorded paths, including bridleways and urban shortcuts will be vulnerable to landowners' fences and unofficial garden extensions unless action is taken. You can get more information from **Rights of Way: Restoring the Record. A guide on how to collect evidence and make an application to register a right of way.**

You will remember that last year we explained the HARA scheme (Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing) and suggested that anyone with a housing need and a connection to the Parish should complete a survey form obtainable direct from Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council outlining their needs. The results from that survey are now available in draft form and further meetings are being arranged between BDBC and the Parish Council. We will keep you informed of progress on this issue.

Finally, as the severe winter seems to be on its way, we should all be looking out for neighbours and friends as not everyone can cope with the extra demands that really cold weather creates. Look around you and see whether you can give assistance, however small, if it is needed to help someone through this difficult period.

As mentioned above, our next parish meeting is on Wednesday 13th February at Bishops Green Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. We look forward to seeing some of you there.

Cllr Michael Sparrow