

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green (ESBG) Parish Council

Some highlights of July 20th Meeting

Population growth!

Borough Councillor John Izett reported on the first data released from the 2021 Census for Basingstoke and Deane. The population of Basingstoke and Deane has grown by 10.4% in the ten years since the Census of 2011, while the national average is only 3.6%. A key aspect of the population increase is the over 65-year-olds who have increased from 23.6% in 2011 to 28.9% of the local population. There has been a 10.5% increase in the number of households in the same period.

Spread the word; Cost of Living Assistance to be available from 1st August for those in need.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) will start an initiative (COLAF – Cost Of Living Assistance Fund) to distribute £1m in funds to those in need in the borough. Access to such funds will be through the BDBC web site and depending on your income one-off payments, will range from £200 - £1000. The assistance fund will continue until the funds are used up.

The ESBG Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is progressing to its first official inspection in August.

The NP covers our Parish and will become a formal planning document setting policies for housing, housing design, community facilities etc through to 2039. The NP has been systematically evolving since its inception in February 2021, including several community engagement meetings so that at its heart it reflects local values and needs. The NP is now at a stage that, with ESBG Parish Council approval, it can be submitted to BDBC for what is called Regulation 14 scrutiny. This is the first of several inspection steps the NP must proceed through, hopefully progressing to a community referendum in May 2023.

Crime summit and local anti-social behaviour

Our MP Kit Malthouse has informed the ESBG Parish Council of the key points considered at a panel meeting of senior Hampshire Police, and Crime Commissioners. A key theme overwhelming the discussion was the drive to make our streets safer. Initiatives for increased police numbers in North Hampshire, tackling gangs transporting drugs into the area, rural equipment theft, and speeding in villages were all addressed. In our Parish the level of anti-social behaviour in Bishops Green is not decreasing, but there has been an encouraging meeting of the Bishops Green Community Association, BDBC and the Police to address this matter. We understand that Tadley Police are now more active in their coverage of our area.

Community engagement: coffee mornings are well received.

It is recognised that many in our Parish work from home or are alone at home and have sought details of how to meet others from our community. Well, if you can, there are well attended open coffee mornings both at the Bishops Green Village Hall (every third Wednesday of the month) and at the Ecchinswell Village Hall (first Tuesday of the month). Do come along!

Still one vacancy for a Parish Councillor.

The ESBG Parish council is presently working with 6 members and our Parish Clerk, but we ideally need a 7th member to complete our team. If the work of the Parish Council is something you might consider, then do please contact our Parish Clerk (clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk) to let us know of your interest. Our next meeting is 14th September at 7.30pm at Bishops Green Village Hall.

Paul Debenham, Parish Councillor.