ECCHINSWELL, SYDMONTON & BISHOPS GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

The most recent meeting of the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council took place on Wednesday 11th June at Bishops Green Village Hall.

We were pleased to have five residents attend the meeting. Two were there to raise the issue of the Strattons Farm Solar Farm and the other three were there because they were interested to see how PC meetings are conducted, one with a view to joining us. They engaged with the PC and our County and Borough councillors, and I hope they found the experience interesting and useful. Certainly, when invited to comment during the meeting, our councillors welcomed their input. We hope more of you will drop in in the future to see what we get up to.

The residents speaking about the solar farm presented an informative report giving a great deal of detailed research about solar farms. As I write there is not yet a planning application for the Stratton Farm site, but this report will be part of the evidence the PC will use when deciding the response to any application. We will be working closely with Kingsclere PC as most of the proposed farm is in their parish. We will keep you informed as the process progresses. Thank you to all who have emailed into the PC with comments already. We represent you, so need to know what you think.

Cllr Mellor, our Hampshire representative, reported that there have been minor reorganisations in the county council since May. He was able to inform us of an increase in spending on road repairs, particularly potholes, so we hope to see some of this spend here in our parish. There are certainly places where repairs are desperately needed. Please remember that you can report potholes on the Hampshire website - it only takes 4 clicks to get there from the home page. (<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes>)

Once a pothole is logged you will get a reference number. The PC and our Hampshire councillors can chase slow repairs if we have this reference number.

Cllr Izett, our Basingstoke and Deane councillor, reported that there have been major changes to the council since the May elections. There is a new Cabinet in place and there may well be changes in policy direction. You can find out more on the Basingstoke & Deane website or sign up for their weekly newsletter if you are interested to see what is going on in the wider borough. Cllr Izett was able to tell us that the funding for a new hospital in North Hampshire is reported as guaranteed, so we should have a new facility in the borough around 2030-32.

We had several planning applications this month and this gave us the chance to make use of our Neighbourhood Plan for the first time. This was a very satisfying feeling for us all. We now have our own set of policies against which we can consider any application in addition to using the Basingstoke polices.

On another planning issue, the PC agreed unanimously to take our complaint with Basingstoke & Deane over the handling of the planning application at Woodside View in Bishops Green and the council’s response to this to the Local Government Ombudsman. We will keep you informed as to how this goes.

Our tree survey and maintenance program has begun, and I am pleased to report that the vast majority of our parish trees are healthy, and the tree surgeon found no major urgent issues. Hopefully, with regular maintenance we will avoid future problems.

The temporary Speed Indicator will be replaced by the end of June. Our new device will move its way around the parish regularly thanks to our team of volunteers.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 12th July at 7.30pm at Ecchinswell Village Hall. This is our last meeting before our summer break. You are very welcome to join us there.

Cllr Marian Dain