

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council

March 9th 2022 Meeting.

Members of the Parish Council (PC) met at 7.30pm at Ecchinswell Village Hall, including councillors from Basingstoke and Deane (B&D) and Hampshire. Key discussion/action points were:

Borough and County Matters affecting our Parish/residents

- Our Borough Councillor John Izett has now been promoted to Deputy Leader of the B&D Council. Our congratulations go out to him!
- B&D Council are of the view that the Borough has taken a disproportionately higher number of new homes than other areas. An initiative is in hand to lobby MPs and the Government to reduce the local quota. This could have a significant impact on the B&D Local Plan Update, and also reduce the leverage that developers are using to argue for more houses to be built in our vicinity.
- Hampshire County Council are actively considering reducing the speed limit from 30 to 20 mph in residential areas. This is a welcome move, especially if it can be applied to rural locations like ours. A final report is not expected until October. It will primarily focus on the reduction of CO₂ and NO emissions that could be achieved because of the declared climate emergency in the County.
- A booking system is in place now for access to all the Household Waste Recycling Centres across Hampshire.

ESBG Parish Council matters

- There was full agreement to approve a letter of objection to the 50-house Woodside View development proposed for Bishops Green. This will be published and submitted shortly.
- The Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish has now progressed a 'Call for Sites' as required to address the expected 15 house target for the Parish to 2039. A number of options have been offered in the locality of Bishops Green and Ecchinswell. These sites will now be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment, and a subsequent ranking of preference for such sites. Eventually these will be put forward as part of the Plan for the community to consider and vote on. It has been noted that the Parish lacks sufficient 'green spaces' for residents to be able to walk freely within, and this might be an aspect of site selection.
- The members of the PC are subject to an election process every four years, which will be this May, if there are more applicants for the positions than the seven allocated. There has been an outstanding vacancy on the PC for over a year now, so an election process is unlikely to be required. It would be very good to fill the vacant position if someone is interested!
- After the recent storms two of the trees within the Ecchinswell allotments area came down in a residents' gardens. As the allotments are the responsibility of the PC, we have been required to cover the cost of the tree removal. This has prompted a decision to restart an annual professional tree inspection of trees on land for which the PC is responsible.
- The organisation of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations has been taken up by the two village halls. Bishops Green will hold their event on Friday 3rd June, and Ecchinswell will hold theirs on the Saturday 4th June. All are welcome to come along to either or both! Look out for more details soon.
- The Bishops Green Community Association has now managed to achieve a firm funding base to continue the youth club services it runs. Thanks to the Greenham Trust and other charities for their support.

- Speeding remains a problem in the parish. The working group on the PC are keeping an ongoing watching brief on incidents and requests the community to report such events to the PC.
- The PC supports two local Litter Wardens trying to keep the discarded rubbish in hand. An issue under discussion at this time is how best to then properly dispose of the collected waste.
- The annual Ecchinswell pond clearance work has been scheduled for 16th October. A date to put in your diaries if you are a volunteer who helps, or would like to help, with this teamwork project.

Paul Debenham, ESG Parish Councillor.