

## **Report from the ES&BG Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

This was our second online parish meeting and we are pleased that all the parish councillors and our borough and county councillors were able to attend. There was much to report from both Basingstoke and Deane and Hampshire about the current situation.

Councillor Izett informed us that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) has responsibility for distributing around £19.5 million in grants to local businesses and charities. Over £18 million has already been paid out to more than 1,400 businesses and they are confident the rest will be allocated soon. Do check the BDBC website for more information if you think your business may be eligible. Both our village halls have benefited from this fund. The council has been coordinating all the local practical helplines for residents through Basingstoke Voluntary Action and has dealt with over 1,100 enquiries. Distributing food parcels, shopping and collecting prescriptions have been the main forms of help needed so far. Please do remember to use our local helpline if you need support with any of these. Either email [coronahelp.esbg@outlook.com](mailto:coronahelp.esbg@outlook.com) or call 07469 75983.

Along with all other forms of government BDBC has moved over to more online working methods. The council is aware that this has caused delays in planning applications, but it is working hard to ensure that the backlog will be dealt with in the next few weeks.

Councillor Mellor reported on the county wide effects of Covid-19 in Hampshire. Hospitals currently have spare capacity and no staffing issues. PPE supplies have been available for NHS facilities. Schools are open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Uptake has increased since Easter and currently about 3% of Hampshire children are in school. The vehicle registration requirement at Hampshire waste recycling sites has been waived for the time being. Good news for our parish is that West Berkshire opened their Newtown site on 14<sup>th</sup> May and our Hampshire permits will be valid there until at least this July. Access to the site is via a booking system. This can be done online at the West Berkshire website or by phoning 01635 519080.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) are running their regular summer minor road resurfacing program and some roads around us will be affected. These are in the Burghclere direction so you may need to watch out on some routes. Potholes continue to be a problem and HCC has committed funds to tackle this. As a parish council, we are aiming to log as many as we can on the HCC website. If you have any information to share please send details to us on [clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk)

Spring is now well upon us and I, for one, am enjoying walking and cycling around our lanes and paths. One positive I have seen from the lockdown is an increase in the number of people doing just the same. We have been able to continue with our parish maintenance routine, so things are looking tidy. The flower beds opposite the school are now planted with lavender and we hope the scent adds to the enjoyment of the many people who now pass by. We are managing to keep the Azolla growth on the pond in check and look forward to the arrival of the hungry weevils next month to continue doing this for us in a less arduous way.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm and will either be at Bishops Green Village Hall or, most likely, online. Everyone is welcome whichever way the meeting runs.

Cllr Marian Dain