

# ES & BG

## Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council

The Parish Annual Assembly was held on 9<sup>th</sup> July. John Broxis (Chair) introduced the team, Doreen Gascoine - Clerk & Financial Officer, Fabrice Vaisset - Vice Chair responsible for advising on financial matters, Mike Sparrow - responsibility for roads & potholes, Dani Court - Neighbourhood Watch advisor & Jacky Bayliss - village pond maintenance & environmental matters. He also advised that there are two vacancies on the Council, positions it is hoped could be filled after the summer break. Please contact the Clerk if you would like to join our happy band. Special thanks were given to Malcolm Jones who continues to look after the allotments following his retirement from the Parish and ex-councillor Margaret Curtis who continues to monitor and report on foot paths and rights of way for the Council.

JB reported that whilst the Parish Council is the first tier of Local Government and has some formal & procedural duties i.e. raising money by precept & reporting what is done with it, the Council is not required by law to do anything, although this is far from what actually happens. With regard to the precept, due to a recalculation by government on how the money is allocated, the Council Tax to householders remains similar but the actual funds received by the Parish are reduced. Consequently the precept needs to be increased marginally for receipts to remain the same.

With regard to the Localism Act and village plans, we have been advised that if planned developments for the Parish are minimal, in BDBC's adopted Local Plan up to 2029, there is little value in putting together our own proposal for the area.

The Council funds regular maintenance work in the Parish and this year has also donated money to the May Fair, Basingstoke Volunteers (who assist with the annual pond clearance) & Ecchinswell Village Hall for their grass cutting. Equipment has been bought to maintain the common areas at the allotments & also repairs made to the water system there. Trees which fell onto power lines by the pond during the bad weather in December, have been removed & our notice boards repaired & up-graded.

During the year the Parish has arranged with landowners for the repair of stiles & rights of way, regularly reported pot holes to Hampshire CC Highways, negotiated a replacement drainage system at Bishops Green to negate the flooding problem & facilitated resurfacing of the road between Bishops Green & the A339 with West Berkshire Council. Currently we are negotiating for monies from the infrastructure fund to enable ditches to be cleared in the Parish and have applied for 106 money to repair the heating system at Bishops Green village hall.

The Borough Councillors report covered the Government requirement for housing in the Basingstoke area, the freezing of Council Tax for the 5<sup>th</sup> year and Cllr John Izett's significant involvement with the Parish Council on planning matters.

The County Councillors report referred to the Hampshire Council tax freeze, also for the 5<sup>th</sup> year. In addition Cllr Tom Thacker covered the budget for road repairs & the Lengthsman scheme, which is shared between ten villages and offers additional village maintenance paid from a central source.

Finally, the police reported on local crime, mainly the current spate of thefts from sheds & garages. They also introduced the opportunity of a speed-watch campaign, which requires six volunteers, full details of which can be found on our website - [www.ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk](http://www.ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk).

The next meeting will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> September at 7:30pm held in Ecchinswell Village Hall.

John Broxis (Chair)