Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green Parish Council

April’s meeting was held on Wednesday 13th in Ecchinswell Village Hall. We were pleased to see three very new residents of the village who’d come along to hear more about the workings of the parish council – a bit more about that later.

Borough Councillor John Izett reported that the Basingstoke and Deane local plan has been approved by the local inspector and should be ratified by council shortly. This plan outlines requirements for housing and development right up to 2029. It includes things like the expected large housing development this side of Basingstoke around Manydown.

The treasurer of the Ecchinswell Village Hall presented a plea about the number of dog walkers who let their animals foul the playing fields and/or dump their plastic dog-poo bags at the end of the field. This is massively anti-social behaviour and we ask any dog walkers to do the right thing and place any poo-bags in the bin provided. BDBC are looking to get another bin installed at the end of the field. Local residents and members of the EVH committee will be watching out for offenders and, in some cases, police anti-social behaviour notices could be issued.

Many of you will have noticed the two fallen trees in Digweeds – especially the one across the Digweeds bridge near the stream. Notwithstanding the damage to the bridge, this has caused the closure of a key right-of-way which we’re working with Hampshire CC to get cleared as soon as possible. The Parish Council doesn’t own the land where the fallen tree resides so we’re trying to establish ownership. I’m hoping it will be cleared – and the bridge repaired – shortly, perhaps even before you read this.

On the subject of Digweeds, I’m sorry to say that the PC has had to remove a rope swing that had been put up in one of the trees there. Unfortunately, our insurers advised that we could be held liable if anyone got hurt because we maintain the land. Sounds a bit bah-humbug, but we’d rather not be exposed to this risk – apologies to the young (or old!) who were using it.

We still have vacancies on the council and I’m delighted to say that we’ve had two expressions of interest to become a councillor – including from one of the new residents I referred to above who sat in on April’s meeting. I hope we will be asking both candidates to join us at the next meeting – and annual assembly in May – and we look forward to having their support, knowledge and enthusiasm to help us.

I’ll finish with a reminder – and an invitation – to join us for the annual assembly on the 11th May in the Ecchinswell Village Hall. It starts at 7.30pm and gives you the opportunity to meet the team and hear from them, and our Borough/County Councillors. Plus, there’s the added bonus of some free snacks and drinks afterwards! I hope to see some of you there.

Tim Hall

Chairman, ES&BG Parish Council