

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ECCHINSWELL, SYDMONTON AND BISHOPS GREEN PARISH

**HELD at Ecchinswell Village Hall
WEDNESDAY 11th May 2022
AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Councillors Dain (Chair), Bayliss (Vice Chair), Stamp, Debenham, Coward and Parke
Borough Cllr Izett and County Cllr Thacker
S Jones (Parish Clerk) and 19 residents.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies as all Cllrs were present.

2. Minutes of Assembly held on 5th May 2021

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Chairman's Report

ES&BG PC Chair's Report 11th May 2022

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all to our Annual Parish Assembly. It is a great pleasure to see so many of you at our first face-to-face assembly since 2019. Last year we were only able to offer you a virtual glass of wine after listening to our speakers. This year we can do better than that!

As some of you know, I'm Marian Dain the current ES&BG Chair and here is the rest of the team:

Jackie Bayliss, Rachael Coward, Paul Debenham, Caroline Parkes and Mark Stamp. It is good to see some new faces to add to the old hands. We still have a vacancy for one more councillor which I hope we can fill soon.

The last year has seen a gradual return to a more normal way of working for the parish. Face-to-face meetings restarted last summer, alternating between the larger rooms of both halls. It has been good to see both halls coming back to life and well-loved events like Santa's Sleigh Ride and Grotto at Bishops Green and the panto at Ecchinswell taking place.

Another well-loved parish event - Pond Clearance – took place last autumn. After the scare of the previous year with Azolla, it is great to see the pond now looking even better than it has for years.

One way and another the parish council has spent much of the last year on planning issues. On the one hand we have worked hard to provide credible objections to the two major developments proposed in Bishops Green, while on the other, we have moved on at a swift pace with our own Neighbourhood Plan so that residents can say how we want our parish to develop. Both of these require the council to work with the wider community and it has been pleasing to see the level of participation there has been from residents in both the objections and the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan. We are still awaiting the Basingstoke and Deane

Borough Council decision on both the planning developments, and you will hear more about the Neighbourhood Plan progress later.

The council continues to seek ways to improve the safety and fabric of our roads. Our Traffic and Speeding Working Group continues to collect data to push for more traffic calming measures. We commissioned a traffic census last autumn to get some hard data about traffic movements and speeds within the parish. We plan to build on this. Hampshire County Council made some improvements in Bishops Green after the serious accident there last autumn, but we are pushing for more and have ideas we can incorporate into our Neighbourhood Plan. Following the success of installing kissing gates behind Ratt's Cottages we have embarked on two further projects to improve access to parish footpaths. One is on the footpath which runs from Sun House near Featherbed Lane to Hyde Lane and the other is on the path from the Kingsclere Road to Mill Lane. Gates will replace stiles there soon – they are on order. If anyone would like to help with the installation of these please let me know.

The need for volunteers leads on nicely to the next thing I want to talk about – the budget. You will see that the percentage increase of the precept this year is much higher than it has been for a number of years. Although the parish precept is a very small part of anyone's council tax any increase is something we consider seriously. The council deliberated long and hard about the increase but agreed that it is needed. Over the last year we have become aware of a number of costs we were not factoring into our budget. One major issue was the fact that our clerk's salary was well below the going rate and needed raising to be in line with other similar parish clerk posts. Another turns on the work of volunteers. One-off big volunteer jobs like Pond Clearance are very valuable events which help build our community and we want to keep these going. In the past a number of regular maintenance tasks, like hedge trimming, have been done by volunteers. For a variety of reasons, we can no longer rely on volunteers to do all these regular maintenance jobs, so we have increased our maintenance contract to cover some of them. Storm Eunice brought some trees down in the allotments and, in dealing with this, it came to light that in the past all parish owned trees were regularly inspected by a professional tree surgeon. In recent years this inspection has been undertaken by a volunteer using a check sheet. The large unbudgeted cost of clearing the trees would have been reduced if we had removed the trees earlier rather than needing to hire a cherry picker to lift them off a neighbouring oil tank. We will therefore be reinstating the regular professional checks. Hopefully this helps you to see some of what your extra contributions are going towards. If you have any questions, do ask me at the end of the evening.

Scanning the minutes of the last year's meetings shows that some old favourites continued to make the agenda – Newtown Recycling Centre and Broadband. The new payment scheme at Newtown is not a perfect solution to our waste issues but gives us an option of not travelling to Andover or Basingstoke. Broadband continues to be an issue for some in the parish and a group of residents worked hard to try to bring about a group solution. Sadly, this was not possible because of uncertainty in the grant system.

Finally, thank you all again for attending this assembly. We really appreciate you turning out this evening and, if you think you would like to become a Parish Councillor, don't forget we do have one vacancy. We would very much welcome anyone who puts themselves forward.

Now I would like to hand over to Sarah Jones, our clerk, for her financial report.

Marian Dain
Chair ES&BG PC
11 May 2022

4. Parish Financial Report

Finance Report 2022

It's nice to be back in person after our 2 year break. PC business continued as usual and expenses incurred were not reduced due to lock down etc.

The precept for 2022/23 was set at £15870, for 2021/22 it was £12396 so there has been a sizeable increase as mentioned by Marian. I would reiterate all increases are seriously considered and hopefully the impact on any household kept to a minimum.

Here is a brief overview of what the PC spends its money on – all numbers are approximate: Salaries are the biggest expense at £13k a year.

During the year we spent £3k on village maintenance. This number excludes the lengthsman scheme which we participate in. We are assigned hours and the lengthsman carries out a variety of projects in the parish including cleaning road signs and cutting back vegetation round them, additional litter picking in areas not covered by the Litter Wardens, and work to clear blocked roadside ditches. This scheme it is very beneficial to the parish, providing £1000 of labour for small, mainly Highways related, tasks like these.

Insurance cost £730 last year. It is currently renewing, and we are expecting an increase.

The internal audit is taking place next week and expected to cost £210. We will also have to have an external audit this year and we anticipate this costing another £200.

We incur costs from website maintenance and hosting, village hall room rental for meetings, courses and presentations attended by Cllrs and the clerk, and an annual subscription to HALC.

We have a small amount of money available for allocation to various groups throughout the year. £70 was given to the Basingstoke Conservation Volunteers for their help with Pond Clearance Day. They have the licence which enables the PC to carry out the works, but they also provide both practical help and invaluable advice. We also made a payment of £550 to Ecchinswell Village Hall towards the cost of grass cutting at the playing field. £100 has been allocated to EVH and BGCA to go towards their Jubilee Celebrations.

Apart from the precept, we receive a grant to cover the cost of the litter wardens, and a grass cutting grant. Other income is received from allotment rental; allotments are £40 per annum. There are currently 2 allotments free.

Overall, the finances continue to look healthy with the balance in the Parish bank account at 31/03/2019 being £23,724.94. We are aware that the surplus looks large but it has actually decreased over the last year. We are all finding costs increasing and the PC needs funding available for unforeseen situations which may arise. This could include professional help such as for the letters of objection for the 2 proposed developments, or maintenance within the village such as the cleaning of the war memorial and clearing fallen trees. We are also responsible for some land and need to take preventative measures such as the new, soon to be instigated, tree inspection.

Further to this, the council have to ensure there is enough money to enable the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan. The costs relating to the plan may exceed the grant available from

central government a small amount. There is a chance this might be the case and we need to be prepared for that.

The parish council are not allowed, by law, to raise any money beyond the annual precept we set. We are totally reliant on the precept and BDBC/HCC grants for our income. This is why we need to be careful and ensure we have monies available to cover all eventualities, and that we are not left in a position to not be able to pay our bills.

I hope this gives you a good insight into the finances. There is a report on income and expenditure in every set of minutes for those who are interested.

I'll now hand over to our Borough Cllr, John Izett.

Sarah Jones

Clerk to Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council

5. Borough Councillor's Report

Borough Cllr Izett advised his report would focus mainly on planning and housing.

He advised there has been little development in ESG at present, but Evingar is a ward with a growing population and needs a 'planned' approach to planning. He went into detail regarding the Local Plan and the need for it to be updated. Up to date, most planning has been located appropriately, but recently that has changed. The 5-year land supply, in spite of the development which has happened within the borough, is unable to demonstrate the 5-year plan in terms of new housing numbers. This means the presumption falls in favour of development which is why the area has been open to prospective large development.

He advised the frustration is that BDBC are delivering lots of new homes but being frustrated by Central Government and their criteria which purportedly has not been met.

Cllr Izett advised the parish council has carried out a survey and are opposed to developments of the size of either of the 2 in for planning permission at present. Cllr Izett supports the PC's position. The scale of the proposed development, for either application, is disproportionately large for the parish.

The correct processes are being carried out for the developments and responses are awaited from various companies and utilities for their views.

Cllr Izett advised, looking ahead it is important for BDBC to 'restore their defences' and they are working on a Local Plan update to do this. They have expressed discontent with Central Governments' reaction to housing in the borough when they have built so many new homes. At present the recommendation for the parish is 15.

Cllr Izett advised the community are taking steps to control this situation by creating a Neighbourhood Plan. This will strengthen planning defences. He commended and thanked the people who are working so hard on the Neighbourhood Plan, to get it in place and hopefully prevent excessive development.

He advised a new policy has been instigated which levies a value on houses that have been built, and this will ultimately create a greater tax on housing development.

Cllr Izett advised in other news; elections took place on 5th May. There is a much-reduced

Conservative majority in BDBC. Cllr Sam Carr retained his seat.

The Jubilee Grant fund received an application from EVH and a £500 grant was given.

Cllr Izett praised the efforts of ESBG PC. He said they work very hard and effectively for the community.

He advised the BDBC planning office is not fully staffed, there are enough planning officers but not enough policy workers.

Cllr Izett had nothing further to report.

6. County Councillor's Report

Hampshire County Councillor from Cllr Tom Thacker
Annual Parish Meeting Report 2022

Facts and Figures Hampshire's population is 1,389,200 (2020) the third most populous county in England (85% is rural and 15% urban). Hampshire CC maintains 5400 miles of roads, 4300 miles pavements, 474 maintained schools for 138,000 pupils, 52 academy schools for 38,000 pupils, 10 residential homes for children and young people, 18 Older Persons Care Homes and 5 Country Parks.

Budget HCC approves £2.4 billion spending on local services in 2022/2023

Plans for the next financial year focus on the county's ongoing work following the pandemic, support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.

The annual council tax charge has risen by 2.99%, of which 1% is for adults' social care. The budget includes £556.2 million of capital expenditure over the next three years to boost jobs, the quality of the environment and to tackle climate change.

The proposed capital programme includes:

- £109 million in new and extended school buildings to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire
- £136 million for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire over the next three years
- £109 million for integrated transport schemes including over £50 million specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements
- £95 million for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings and land holdings over the next three years following the £33 million for decarbonisation schemes covering solar PV, single to double glazing window replacements, transition from oil to gas and the implementation of heating controls that took place in 2021-2022

Climate Change Hampshire County Council has been taking active steps to ensure Hampshire is

resilient to the impacts of a 2% rise in average temperature and in mitigating further changes through carbon reduction measures. HCC's own emissions have reduced by more than 43%, with more than a 50% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

County Deal

"In line with our level of ambition, we are prepared to work through the details of a Combined Authority with a Directly Elected Leader."

"Pan Hampshire's sub-geography will be reflected through area-based collaboration building on existing partnerships. These will be included in the structure of a Deal – i.e. North, Central, and South Area Groups."

The County Deal will devolve to a Combined Authority the powers to:

- Deliver strategic services
- Support local businesses
- Develop and control local strategic transport
- Make strategic and long-term investments
- Give adults the skills needed by the labour market
- Control local infrastructure decisions
- Keep the public healthy and safe. This includes control over the Police and Crime Commissioner's functions
- Rate taxes and business tax supplements towards funding the above.

Hampshire is proposing a Directly elected Leader, rather than a Mayor, to lead a cabinet of County and District members.

Waste and Recycling

In November I wrote to Kit Malthouse and Cllr Rob Humby about the need for a national or at least regional approach to access to Recycling Centres, so that the current cross-border charging, such as that being made by West Berkshire Hampshire Residents' access to the Newtown Road site, can be resolved.

Last month a government consultation paper was published, which proposes to put greater costs onto waste authorities by allowing DIY waste to be accepted without charge. There was no mention of cross-border charging, so sadly the situation remains the same.

New Leadership

Rob Humby
Roz Chadd

7. Presentation by the Police

Unfortunately, the police did not provide a report and were unable to attend.

8. Neighbourhood Plan presentation by John Dain

Update on ES&BG Neighbourhood Plan for Parish Assembly 11th May 2022

Thanks for the opportunity to update you. You might be wondering...

What is this Plan all about?

Who is doing what for whom?

- Our plan for our parish.
- Community-Led plan for our future.
- Parish Council own the plan on your behalf.
- Small team of **volunteers** working on this for you – many of the team are here.
- We need a plan to ensure our views are included in the B&D BC plans for the borough.
- Without a plan, we are vulnerable to predatory developers... plan gives some protection.

Three main parts to the plan:

- Vision and Objectives for the parish
- Policies for Housing
- Other policies and projects – sustainability/environment/facilities & services

Where are we so far?

- We had a consultation event last September where we asked residents their thoughts about the parish, our environment, the need for housing, our facilities and services. We got a lot of good material from this and from many other conversations with residents.
- I hope you have a green leaflet...you should also have had one delivered to you recently...
- If you open the leaflet, the right hand page summarises what you and other residents told us about your vision for the future.
- We now have a lot of detail that make the main building blocks for the plan and we want to test this with the community in three consultation events at the end of the month.
- The left-hand page tells you what we want to achieve in these events.
- Assuming the direction gets support, we then create the full draft plan for more consultation and official inspection.
- Objective to have plan complete & inspected by end of the year – then has some power.
- Final referendum by next May

Please make every effort to join us on one of the days and also encourage others to come.

We look forward to seeing you then.

Happy to answer any immediate questions.

9. Residents' memories of the parish from the past – a talk to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Annual Assembly 11 May 2022

Trip down Memory Lane Talk by Jaydon Perrin.

Good evening, my name is Jaydon and I've lived in Echchinswell for nearly 6 years now, moving from Birmingham, which believe me, has been a huge lifestyle change.

But, the reason I am stood here tonight is due to how I now feel at home here, thanks in no small part to the wonderful people I have had the chance meet from this community, from the fabulous people of the Echchinswell Panto, and the Royal Oak where I worked for the first 6 months of moving here, meeting the locals who make this place what it is.

I have recently had the pleasure of listening to stories from two fascinating people, both of whom were living here at the time of our Queen's coronation. That is what I'm going to talk about today, taking you on a trip down memory lane in the eyes of Alan and Florrie.

Starting with Alan, who is a descendant of Florence Nightingale and originates from Kingsclere, Alan's father worked as a farm hand, so their family moved around many different farms, before settling at Mill Lane. At that time Mill Lane was slightly different, it had a working mill, and a blacksmith's nearby.

Faith was a big part of the society at that time as well, and after the old church had been knocked down, church services were still attended in full, but were held in a barn while the church we have today was being built.

Something else extremely hard to imagine for me now, is that there once was a railway line that ran through the villages down towards Winchester.

Schooling was also a little different all those years ago, there were only two teachers at the school for example, and that you knew about it if you were in trouble with your teacher.

But, for the queen's coronation in 1952, Alan was overseas serving in the army reserves from the age of 18, during this time there were some other changes locally, namely at Greenham common, where the Americans had a base. There used to be a road going through the common, and a road was built from Kingsclere to the Swan Roundabout.

Then in early 1955, Alan came out of the reserves after 3 years service, going back to Mill Lane where he met a young lady on a blind date that had been arranged, and they ended up getting married.

There were also a few other changes to the village in those 3 years. The Royal Oak was a Simmons pub and there was a barracks where the bungalows were, alongside a post office, petrol pump, a shop and a bakery. At that time the villages were self-sufficient, people growing

their own veg, making their own jams and baking what they could, exchanging anything left over with others within the community.

There was also a Harvest Festival which was a huge thing to help raise produce for the residents of the workhouse in Kingsclere, which was where the industrial estate is now.

Staying in Kingsclere, Alan explained that the council and registry offices used to be on Swan Street, and the medical practice used to be a senior school, and lastly that a lot of Kingsclere used to be a quaker's burial ground.

The last thing Alan talked to me about was the difference in the community spirit then, compared to what it is now. People used to look out for each other, children were much safer and given more freedom as he would always be home when he was hungry, a lot due to the lack of cars back then, they were reliant on public transport to get to the markets or to the cinema, where Alan loved to go and see the latest cowboy film.

Now Florrie, I actually lived next door to Florrie for almost 5 years. She lived with her husband John at that time before he sadly passed away in 2016 at the age of 103, they lived there for about 65 years. Myself and my partner Suzi, granted more Suzi, would check in on Florrie a few evenings a week for as long as I can remember, before Florrie moved to Rose Hodson in Kingscler, where she is now.

We've heard lots of stories from Florrie throughout the years, and she used to like telling us that all those years ago our house and garden was a big field full of wildlife, namely pheasants that would run across the field, parents with their babies in toe, and in my head they were taking a lunch trip to feast on the many vegetables that were growing in their garden.

John and Florrie had a motorbike with a sidecar, but John still used a pushbike most of the time, going around farms for work, earning about £10 a week.

During the queen's coronation, Florrie described how the village came together to have a street party, full of singing, dancing and bunting everywhere, and like Alan explained, the community spirit was much on a personal level back then.

The first village hall was a nissen hut which is a steel structure that was developed in the first world war and was actually used by the forces.

Florrie liked to take her children to Newbury to watch the newest Disney film once or twice, but there was only a bus on certain days of the week and the latest bus back was 7:15 so everything had to be timed perfectly, and there was one year, she was not 100% sure which one, in December or January time that there was so much snow that the roads were closed for almost a week, with it being over 5ft deep in places. So it was candles and fires to keep warm and somehow entertain the children.

I for one am not sure how I would have coped in those days, without a phone, without the internet, but with the community spirit I'm sure everyone would have the support of each other. Maybe that's something to take away, say hello to your neighbour, ask if everything is okay, be part of what makes village life great.

Thank you for listening, I hope you've enjoyed it, and take care.

10. Any Other Business

None.

Chair.....

Date.....

DRAFT