

**ECCHINSWELL, SYDMONTON AND BISHOPS GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
Minutes of the ordinary meeting held at Ecchinswell Village Hall on  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024, commencing at 19:30 hours  
**Present:** Cllrs Dain (Chair), Stamp (Vice Chair), Debenham, Parkes and Sadler.  
**In attendance:** Sarah Jones (Clerk), County Cllr Mellor, 0 members of the public.

Item		Action
1	<b>Apologies:</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Borough Cllr Izett.	
2	<b>Declarations of interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.	
3	<b>Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising</b> To receive and confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Wednesday 10th January 2024, and the extra-ordinary meeting held on 23rd January 2024, and matters arising. All Cllrs agreed them as a true record, and they were signed by Cllr Dain.	
4	<b>Public participation</b> There were no members of the public present.	
5	<b>Borough Councillor's Report</b> There was no report as Borough Cllr Izett was not present.	
6	<b>County Councillor's Report.</b> County Cllr Mellor advised he had circulated his report prior to the meeting.  Finances are the biggest issue, and the budget will be signed off on 15 <sup>th</sup> February. A consultation about service priorities is currently underway. At present the biggest expense is social care. HCC is putting pressure on Central Government to provide more funds as they are vital for HCC.  Cllr Debenham asked on behalf of EVH if there was still funding available for projects from the County Cllr's budgets. Cllr Mellor advised he as a small sum left and will ask Cllr Thacker if he still has budget available. EVH will need to approach the Cllrs directly.  EV charging points and parking are big issues being discussed at HCC - where potential charging points will be situated, and the cost of installing them.  The ESBG PC approach to HCC re increasing the 30mph zones was raised. HCC has not yet responded to ESBG PC but Cllr Mellor has been sent information which suggests that HCC considers that the road situation does not warrant a change in speed. This is despite the changes proposed by ESBG PC being clearly outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Mellor advised he will speak to the relevant people to support ESBG PC's proposal.  There being nothing further to report, Cllr Mellor left the meeting at 7.58pm.	<b>SJ</b>
7	<b>Planning</b> <b>a) New applications:</b> no new applications  <b>b) Decisions:</b> <b>23/02898/FUL</b> Dores Hill Cow House Lane North Sydmonton RG20 9AF Proposal: Installation of 27no. ground mounted PV solar panels (together with battery storage and battery inverter charger in enclosure and underground cabling) Decision: Granted <b>23/03036/AGPD</b> Bishops Green Farm Ecchinswell Road Bishops Green Newbury RG20 4JP Proposal: Erection of a steel portal framed barn <b>Decision: Raise No Objection</b> <b>T/00539/23/TCA</b> Royal Oak Hydes Platt Ecchinswell Hampshire RG20 4UH	

	<p>Proposal: G1 - Ash, Remove to ground level, group of ash trees with ash dieback and have become dangerous.</p> <p>T1 - Ash, Remove to ground level, Large tree with ash dieback becoming dangerous.</p> <p>T2 - Ash, Remove to ground level, Large tree with ash dieback becoming dangerous.</p> <p>Decision: Raise No Objection</p>	
8	<p><b>New Business</b></p> <p>a) <u>Pond – set clearance day date and azolla update</u>  Cllrs discussed the current azolla problem. The pond will be assessed in March as to how much azolla is there and whether the weevils are having any impact. Once this is established, next steps can be agreed.  Proposed dates for the pond clearance day are 6<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> October. The relevant parties will be contacted to ascertain their availability and then a date will be finalised.</p> <p>b) <u>AGM and Annual Assembly arrangements</u>  The Chair and Clerk will do their usual reports, as will the County and Borough Cllrs. The Police will be invited.  It was also suggested that BGCA and EVH committees should be invited to give presentations on the activities and events taking place in the village halls. They will be contacted.</p> <p>It was suggested individual Cllrs speak about a different area of parish work.  Cllr Dain then raised an item she was going to discuss under Item 9(g) involving working parties. She proposed that the speeding and planning working parties are amalgamated and make one group to oversee all items covered in the Neighbourhood Plan.  She also proposed the start of an environmental and sustainability group which hopefully residents will want to get involved in.  Cllrs agree this is a good idea. A questionnaire will be created to be sent out prior to the Annual Assembly so that results can be collated and reported at the Assembly. Cllrs were asked to come up with questions for the questionnaire.</p> <p>c) <u>30 mph zones</u>  This was discussed under item 6.</p> <p>d) <u>Village Maintenance Contract renewal</u>  The contract is usually renewed in November but was delayed.  The contractor has not increased the contract cost but advised that maintaining the hawthorn hedge at Digweeds would cost an extra £360 (4 cuts per year). Cllrs agreed that this was an unreasonable extra expense for a very unsightly hedge. It was agreed that the hedge will be cut close to the ground in an attempt to regrow from the base. This cutting will be done by volunteers. The contractor will be informed of this decision.</p> <p>e) <u>S106 monies available</u>  The clerk advised, after discussion with BDBC, that there are no S106 monies available at present.</p> <p>f) <u>Code of Conduct – adoption of Respect and Civility Pledge</u>  Cllrs agreed unanimously to adopt the Respect and Civility Pledge. The clerk will review the Code of Conduct and any other policy changes needed and then sign online on behalf of the PC.</p> <p>g) <u>Calendar for Councillors</u>  A calendar of parish actions has been created to provide a quick overview of actions needed each month. The working calendar will be updated as needed.  It was agreed to make a calendar review the last agenda item each PC meeting to ensure that Cllrs are aware of what will be coming up in the next month.</p>	<p><b>SJ</b></p> <p><b>SJ</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>SJ</b></p> <p><b>SJ</b></p> <p><b>SJ</b></p>
9	<p><b>Matters for discussion</b></p> <p>a) <u>Local Government Complaint Progress</u>  No response has been received as yet. HALC will be chased again and then NALC approached directly.</p> <p>b) <u>Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan update</u></p>	<p><b>SJ</b></p>

	<p>Cllr Dain reported that the LPU document from BDBC has been reviewed. Various comments have been made and the responses will be collated and sent in. The 2 main areas of concern are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the Neighbourhood Plan 15 house allocation is not shown in the figures for Bishops Green.</li> <li>2. The Ecchinswell Lowland Valued Landscape fails to cover the area to the east of the C155 in Bishops Green.</li> </ol> <p>Cllrs confirmed they were happy with the proposed response and these will be sent to BDBC.</p> <p>c) <u>CIL monies – clarification of website as viable expense</u>  The website upgrade project has been agreed and will begin shortly.  Monies have also been assigned to traffic calming measures. The company the SID was purchased from has been asked for a full refund but no response has been received as yet.</p> <p>d) <u>Tree surgeon progress and report</u>  The quote has been received for £1085 per day for 3 days work to remove the ash trees near the playing fields.  The tree surgeon reported that oak tree reported by a resident has been inspected and in his opinion is not dangerous but could be felled or cut back if causing concern.  A second quote will be sought for the ash tree work.</p> <p>e) <u>Solar Farm Proposal</u>  There is no action on this item.</p> <p>f) <u>Allotment renewals and working party</u>  All allotment renewals have been sent and responses received. The allotment holders on the whole have signed the new lease agreement but one needs to be reminded he needs to do this.</p> <p>g) <u>Speeding working party update</u>  This item was dealt with under Item 12c.</p> <p>h) <u>BGCA and EVH updates</u>  Cllr Dain reported that BGCA is looking to employ a full-time youth worker for the hall. The new centre coordinator has started a number of activities and is planning family events for the school holidays and a summer fete.  Work will start soon on fitting out the Treatment room as the grant has been secured for this.  Cllrs Dain and Debenham agreed the village halls should co-ordinate and share their projects and events.  Cllr Debenham reported that EVH has had a couple of incidents which seem to indicate someone is going in without permission but using a key and the code etc. The codes will start to be changed on a regular basis.  The finances should break even, which is good as it includes the spend of £5k on the new roof.  Cllr Debenham continues his efforts with the solar panel project and is looking into more grants and available funding.  Concern has been expressed with regard to possible competition from the pub who are looking to hold events such as Quiz nights.  The Race Night takes place on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.</p>	<p>MD/SJ</p> <p>MS</p> <p>SJ</p>																					
10	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>(a) Electronic Payments made in February:</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>S Jones</td><td>Clerk's salary (Jan)</td><td>£863.50</td></tr> <tr> <td>S Jones</td><td>Clerk's expenses (Jan) - petrol</td><td>£24.60</td></tr> <tr> <td>D McClelland</td><td>Litter warden – (Jan)</td><td>£191.60</td></tr> <tr> <td>R Wherry</td><td>Litter warden - (Jan)</td><td>£133.32</td></tr> <tr> <td>HMRC PAYE – RW, DM, SJ</td><td></td><td>£58.20</td></tr> <tr> <td>D McClelland</td><td>Expenses</td><td>£20.00</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Total</b></td><td><b>£1,291.22</b></td></tr> </table>	S Jones	Clerk's salary (Jan)	£863.50	S Jones	Clerk's expenses (Jan) - petrol	£24.60	D McClelland	Litter warden – (Jan)	£191.60	R Wherry	Litter warden - (Jan)	£133.32	HMRC PAYE – RW, DM, SJ		£58.20	D McClelland	Expenses	£20.00	<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,291.22</b>	
S Jones	Clerk's salary (Jan)	£863.50																					
S Jones	Clerk's expenses (Jan) - petrol	£24.60																					
D McClelland	Litter warden – (Jan)	£191.60																					
R Wherry	Litter warden - (Jan)	£133.32																					
HMRC PAYE – RW, DM, SJ		£58.20																					
D McClelland	Expenses	£20.00																					
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,291.22</b>																					

	<p><b>(b)</b> The actual/against budget up to end of February was agreed.</p> <p><b>(c)</b> The 3 year forecast has been completed and circulated. All items were agreed, and Cllrs also advised the replacement of allotment tools and a mobile phone need to be included going forward.</p>	<b>SJ</b>
11	<p><b>Correspondence</b>  15.01.24 – BDBC; Modified Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation</p> <p>06.02.24 – HALC, Annual Conference invitation – circulated to all Cllrs.</p> <p>7.02.24 – Litter warden - a query was received regarding whether the national living wage, or the Real Living Wage Foundation rate of pay was being used. The litterwarden will be advised it is the national living wage - used by BDBC who give the grant. The PC will review this for next year.</p>	<b>SJ</b>
12	<p><b>Highways and Rights of Way</b>  Volunteers will repair the bridge over the stream near Kisby's this month as HCC has provided the materials.</p> <p>Cllr Dain has been working with HCC on how to improve 2 flooded footpaths, the ranger has confirmed they are at the level where something needs to be done. A grant may be requested from Greenham Trust once a potential solution to the problem has been agreed with HCC and the landowner.</p> <p>Hyde Lane and the continual problems were mentioned again.</p>	
13	<p>Communications – newsletter (Clerk) and other media output  It was agreed the draft minutes do not need to be published this month.  Items for the magazine were agreed.</p>	
14	<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b>  Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm at Ecchinswell Village Hall.  There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.04pm.</p>	

## ACTIONS:

A consultation re HCC finances and spend has been sent out which ESBG PC will respond to in March.

The pond clearance day will take place on either 6th or 13th October. The relevant parties will be contacted to ascertain their availability.

It was also suggested that BGCA and EVH committees should be invited to give presentations on the activities happening in the village halls. They will be contacted.

Cllrs were asked to come up with questions for the questionnaire.

It was agreed that the hedge will be cut close to the ground in an attempt to regrow from the base. This cutting will be done by volunteers. The contractor will be informed of this decision

The clerk will review the Code of Conduct and any other policy changes needed and then sign on-line on behalf of the PC

It was agreed to make a calendar review the last agenda item each PC meeting to ensure that Cllrs are aware of what will be coming up in the next month.

Cllrs advised they were happy with the proposed LPU response, and this will be sent to BDBC.

A second quote will be sought for the ash tree works.

The allotment holders on the whole have signed the new lease agreement but one needs to be reminded he needs to do this.

The 3 year forecast has been completed and circulate. All items were agreed, and Cllrs also advised the replacement of allotment tools and a mobile phone need to be included going forward.

Litter warden - a query had been received regarding whether the national living wage, or the Real Living Wage Foundation rate was being used. The litter warden will be advised it is the national living wage but this will be reviewed for next year