



Effingham Parish Council Chairman's Half Year Report 2016 - 2017

I am delighted to announce the co-option of Alison Mayell and Martin Whiteman to fill vacancies on the Parish Council. We already have a very able and active Parish Council but Alison and Martin's skills and experience will broaden the competences of the Council and add capacity at this critical time in the life of our Parish. We welcome Alison and Martin and look forward to working with them.

Effingham Neighbourhood Plan

Over the summer, the Parish Council undertook a formal consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Summary booklets and survey forms were delivered to every household and I am pleased to report that 54% of households responded. A total of 739 forms were returned from the 1054 Effingham households. 570 households participated in the survey with an additional 169 forms returned where multiple responses were received from different individuals within the same household.

All key policies in the plan received strong support. I believe this reflects the high level of engagement by our village community as the plans were being developed and the care taken by our Effingham Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group in reflecting those views in the plan for formal consultation. Perhaps unsurprisingly our environment policies attracted the highest levels of support, whilst individual housing site allocation policies were supported by about two thirds of respondents.

Key to the Plan are our housing policies. A total of 73% of respondents support the policy for the provision of 62 new homes in the village and of the 17% that disagreed, 16% of these (20 replies) suggested the number was too low. On housing mix, 78% agreed with the policy for smaller dwellings (20% one bedroom, 60% two bedroom) in order to re-balance the overall housing mix in the village.

Alongside the survey we also consulted with statutory consultees, e.g. Guildford Borough and Surrey County Councils, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Surrey Wildlife Trust, and have considered all the individual comments and issues raised by villagers. A response to these comments on behalf of the Parish Council will be published in early November and will be available on the Parish Council Website and in the Parish Room. A revised draft Neighbourhood Plan, taking account of the survey results and points raised, was approved by the Parish Council at our meeting on 30 September. It has been submitted to a further "health check" i.e. scrutiny by an independent expert, before being submitted to Guildford Borough Council for the next formal stage. All being well we should reach the final referendum stage by mid-2017.

Guildford Borough Council Draft Local Plan

While the Parish Council was consulting on our Neighbourhood Plan, Guildford Borough Council was consulting on the wider Local Plan for the whole borough. At every stage, the Parish Council has kept Borough councillors and officers informed about our plans and have been careful to explain the key issues for Effingham in any wider plan e.g. the strategic gap between Effingham and Little Bookham, which provides the first clear break to the urban sprawl from London. Hence, while we do not agree with every detail of the draft Local Plan there is some measure of agreement between the Plans.



One concern is the planned “insetting” of Guildford’s villages, including Effingham i.e. taking the main built up part of the village out of the Green Belt. Whilst we have concerns about this, revised national planning policy makes this harder to resist, and the Parish Council have proposed that Effingham’s inset area should be reduced so that green areas such as Browns Field remain in the Green Belt.

Berkeley Homes / Howard of Effingham School Planning Appeal

Berkeley Homes / Howard of Effingham School have appealed against the refusal of plans to re-site the Howard of Effingham School on Effingham Lodge Farm (north side of Lower Road) and to fund the building by developing 295 houses on three sites within the village. Eleven reasons were given for refusal and it is estimated that the appeal hearing will run for total of 12 days from 7 March 2017. Effingham Parish Council has instructed a barrister to present our case using the legal contingency fund that we raised from the Precept in 2015-2016. It is the same barrister that represented Guildford Borough Council – and won – on the care home appeal on Church Street some years ago. Guildford Borough Council have instructed their own QC. We have also instructed a heritage expert to support our case as the heritage aspects of the case are so important for the village. We believe we can win this appeal but it has been suggested by our Member of Parliament, Sir Paul Beresford, that this will not be the end of the matter. Hence, I shall be asking the Parish Council to authorise a further contingency sum of money to be raised by the Precept in 2017-2018 in order to be prepared for any unacceptable further planning application that may emerge.

Effingham Commoners’ Day

His Worship the Mayor of Guildford, Gordon Jackson, opened our event to exercise Commoners’ Rights on Effingham Common on 2nd October. This was the most successful Commoners’ Day we have held so far with about 480 villagers attending along with four sheep that seemed very content to be grazing on the Common. A climbing wall and face painting were very popular with the children and a number of village groups were present to explain their activities along with members of St Lawrence Primary School. I would especially like to thank Guildford Borough Council Parks & Countryside Dept., the Friends of Effingham Common and Effingham Local History Group and the Archeology Group for all their support for the event, the Effingham Cricket Club for refreshments, and for donations from Bevan’s Butchers for the barbeque meat; ‘The Bakery’ for bread rolls; and onions and sauces from the Village Market.



Community Fund

A reminder that Effingham groups and organisations can apply at any time for support from the Community Fund. Further information is available on the Parish Council website www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/community-fund/ or from the Parish Council Clerk.

Arnold Pindar
Chairman, Effingham Parish Council

Parish Councillors

Arnold Pindar, Chairman	Ian Symes, Vice Chairman		
Keith Cornwell	Cliff Hackett	Liz Hogger	Dr David Martland
Alison Mayell	Paula Moss	James Nicholls	Martin Whiteman