

# Effingham Parish Council



EFFINGHAM

## Chairman's Autumn Report 2017-2018

**VACANCY** - There is a vacancy on the Parish Council and we invite anyone interested in being co-opted for the period to May 2019 to contact the Parish Clerk, Jon Short, at the Parish Room.

Firstly, I would like to thank Martin Whiteman for his services to Effingham Parish Council. We are very sorry that he has found it necessary to stand down due to work commitments. Hence, a vacancy has resulted on the Parish Council.

A number of initiatives and issues undertaken by the Parish Council are at last approaching completion:

- **Effingham Neighbourhood Plan** under development for the past four and a half years has now reached the final step before the plan is adopted;
- **Berkeley Homes / Howard of Effingham School** planning appeal has been heard and we await the decision of the Secretary of State;
- **Wisley Planning Appeal** is being heard as I write this; and the
- **Draft Local Plan** where Guildford Borough Council has consulted on certain aspects, but only on changes to their plan that will not directly affect Effingham.

### **Effingham Neighbourhood Plan**

We submitted our draft Neighbourhood Plan to Guildford Borough Council (GBC) in March 2017 and, following a Guildford-wide consultation it was submitted for examination to ensure it complies with all the rules and regulations. I am delighted to report that the examiner delivered his report in September 2017 recommending that the Plan should proceed to referendum subject to some amendments and clarifications. GBC is currently making the changes and the referendum is likely to take place in **February 2018**. I thank all the many people of Effingham that have contributed to the plan. ***We all have one last thing to do and that is "vote in the referendum"***. Please make your vote count. Very many of you have contributed to the various

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meetings, surveys and consultations during the development of the plan and we are very pleased that this was recognised by the examiner:

“The extent of interest and participation by residents in the plan at the various stages is impressive and I am satisfied from the evidence that the communication and consultation which took place provided full opportunity for the community’s participation.”

So please turn out one last time to **vote on the plan**. It is your plan and it will protect and influence the future of our village at least until 2030.

### **Guildford Borough Council Draft Local Plan**

Following an earlier consultation on GBC’s draft Local Plan, a number of significant changes have been made to the draft. However, with one minor exception, no changes have been made to any policies directly affecting Effingham. Where changes have been significant, GBC has re-consulted. They are expected to submit the Local Plan to government, revised if necessary, by the end of this year.

### **Berkeley Homes/Howard of Effingham School Planning Appeal**

The planning appeal was heard over three weeks commencing 16 May 2017 with GBC, specialists and Parish Councillors presenting the case for dismissal of the appeal. The inspector has now completed his report which has been submitted to the Secretary of State for decision. We have been led to expect the result by 7 December 2017.

I would particularly like to thank the Parish Councillors that gave evidence in the Appeal and for the enormous amount of preparative work that went into developing the village’s case. Cllr Liz Hogger described how the development would cause harm to the greenbelt. She countered claims that the development could progress due to “very special circumstances” and also demonstrated that the proposals would be contrary to the draft Effingham Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Cliff Hackett dealt with traffic and parking issues presenting considerable evidence of the everyday problems we encounter as we drive, cycle or walk along our narrow rural village roads. Cllr Keith Cornwell with experience as a past Governor of the Howard of Effingham School, described how, although appropriate on-site improvements would be supported, the current school buildings and grounds were generally fit for purpose and the site was capable of regeneration if and when needed. Cllr Paula Moss gave an impressive presentation on the lack of an educational need for the development to go ahead and how it may lead to a reduction in choice in surrounding schools. All Councillors are to be congratulated. All were cross-questioned and gave a good account of themselves.

In addition to evidence from our Councillors, two experts gave evidence on behalf of the village. Peter Bell, of Asset Heritage, gave evidence on the heritage conservation impacts of the appeal proposals, describing how they would have a harmful and irreversible effect on designated heritage assets or their settings.

Paul Whitby, of The Ecology Co-op, provided impressive evidence covering: harm to the Effingham wildlife corridor, enshrined in our Neighbourhood Plan; the impact on Thornet Wood, a site of nature conservation importance; the high value of marshy grassland in the construction zone highlighting the potential impact on Dormice and the Great Crested Newt.

As has been expressed by a number of people, for Effingham, it would be a travesty of justice if a developer could override the carefully considered plans of the community as expressed through our nearly completed Neighbourhood Plan!

### **Wisley Airfield Planning Appeal**

Effingham residents are perhaps not so immediately affected by this potential development as those that live in Ockham village. However, we believe the development would still seriously affect residents of Effingham. The Parish Council presented a statement to the appeal covering three major concerns. The first relates to highways issues where our narrow rural roads, often without pavements, are simply inadequate to carry the increased traffic from an additional 2000 dwellings. The fact that the appellants have been chopping and changing their highways plans, right up to the first day of the appeal, shows there is no acceptable solution to highways problems. If solvable, they would have been solved many months ago! Secondly, we challenged the inadequacies of public and private transport, including the inadequacies of parking at Effingham Junction Station, and non-viability of a sustainable bus service. Finally, we challenged the lack of timely schools and medical facilities explaining the pressures that would be put on existing services in Bookham and Effingham. The Effingham Residents Association also made a statement, focusing on the joint village survey results and the implications for residents. Many thanks to everyone that took part in the survey. Almost 1000 comments were received! As yet we have no indication as to when the result will be published but, like the Berkeley Homes appeal, the result will be delivered by the Secretary of State on advice from the inspector.

### **Council Services**

As your chairman, I have recently attended two meetings with Parish Council Chairs from across Surrey and Sussex. We all have the same concern. Due to the squeeze on local authority funding, discretionary services are being cut. Many of you will be aware of Surrey County Council's plans to close four

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waste tips including Dorking, used by many Effingham residents. Whilst there has been a stay of execution, charges for DIY waste will rise – including payment for the first bag!

Of course we recognize there is great pressure on County and Borough budgets and some suggestions were made by those present at the meetings that Parish Councils may in the future need to consider whether they can play a part in the provision of some of the services wanted by their communities that our parent Councils are unable to fund. I don't anticipate any significant increase to the precept for 2018/19, but it would be timely for us to carry out a thorough consultation during 2018 about what services you want from the Parish Council and what you would be willing to pay for via the precept.

### **Community Fund**

Finally, a reminder to all Effingham groups and organisations. We welcome applications to the Effingham Parish Community Fund for financial assistance to enable your projects for the benefit of our community. Further information is available from the Parish Clerk or on the website.

[www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/community-fund/](http://www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/community-fund/)



### **Parish Councillors**

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