

Effingham Parish Council



EFFINGHAM

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2004

I am sorry to start my report this year with sad news, but in September John Davis, a long-standing member of the Parish Council, died suddenly. He served the Parish Council and village well for nearly thirty-five years. We miss him and send all our sympathy to his widow and family.

The vacancy was advertised in the village, and as no candidates came forward for election within the statutory period, the Parish Council has co-opted a new member, Mr Michael Bray, who lives in Beech Close. He has consented to be the tenth member of the Parish Council, and was co-opted at the January meeting. We welcome him to the Parish Council.

In May 2003 at the Guildford Borough Council elections, it was decided to use postal voting for the first time. Effingham voters should congratulate themselves on having the highest turnout in the Borough: at 66.84%, nearly 7 out of every 10 people voted.

As you will know, Guildford Borough Council has bought Effingham and Hooke Common. Unfortunately in August there was an invasion of about 15 caravans, mainly on Effingham Common. It took about two months to get them to move off the Common, having left a lot of rubbish and human excrement behind. The clearance of all this is paid for by ratepayers.

On a happier note, the Friends of Effingham Common are doing a splendid job in starting to clear the area around one of the ponds on the Common. Guildford Borough have used money granted them by SITA (refuse collectors) to bridge the ditch off the cricket pitch road and make a hard-core entrance there, and to make a similar one at the station end. I hope that the posts put in to block the entrances to vehicular traffic will be sufficient to stop future incursions by caravans, cars and lorries. The Borough Council have also started to upgrade the bridleway.

Effingham now has a Parish Room situated in the middle of the village in Home Barn Court, opposite the Methodist Church. It is easy to find as there is a large sign on the front of the building. It consists of three rooms, including an office for the Parish Clerk. Susan Morris, our Clerk, can pick up telephone messages from the office remotely if she is working from home. Susan is in the office on Mondays and Tuesdays and residents are very welcome to come between 11am and 1pm to look at planning applications or the many publications that the Parish Council receives from the Government, Borough Council and County Council. There are also pamphlets and papers from many other organisations such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and the Surrey Hills Project. When visiting the Parish Room you are asked to park in The Street, as parking in Home Barn Court is for the offices of Cornwell Affiliates.

The rebuilding of houses in Norwood Close is coming along well. The area has been cleared; road and house building are beginning. When I visited the site it looked well-organised and neatly fenced. There is bound to be discomfort for the remaining house-holders nearby, but I believe it is being kept to the minimum.

The Fireworks last November were the most successful Effingham has ever had; if you were there, I am sure you will agree. It was a splendid evening much enjoyed by all; congratulations to the King George V Management Committee and everyone who helped make it such fun. Don't forget to come next November, but before then there will be a summer Fete on Saturday 10 July, so please come and support that.

The Golden Jubilee Committee raised enough money to order the play equipment for older children on the KGV Playing Fields. It was installed in the last week of February and a small opening ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Guildford. The KGV Management Committee are hoping for a grant to make footpaths across the grass, linking the play area to the car park, which will help parents with pushchairs and people with disabilities to access the area more easily. There may be more money from the Borough Council later in the year, which could be used for a partially-covered seating area.

A committee was formed earlier last year consisting of our Borough Councillor Liz Hogger, members of the Parish Council and local residents, to look into traffic and road-safety issues in Brown's Lane, Crossways, Church Street and Chapel Hill. It was, however, agreed that this scheme could not be examined in isolation and that The Street must also be part of any scheme proposed. A meeting was held with officers from Surrey County Council Highways who agreed to look at the various suggestions that were put forward. However, to date we have heard no more. It was always realised that lack of money in the Highways budget might mean this project would take years to come to fruition, but if some of what was proposed meets with approval from both Highways and the village, ways might be found to bring it forward.

Surrey County Council has rebuilt some of the flint wall lining The Street. The Parish Council has been asking for this to be done for some time as the wall was becoming dangerous, and is pleased with the result. It would be nice if the wall could be continued down The Street where there is a rather straggly fence at the moment, but again, funding would be a big problem.

Surrey County Council was given the land on either side of Beech Avenue as a deed of gift in 1966. In the resulting Covenant made with the executors of Robert Reitmeyer Calburn, SCC agreed 'for ever after to care for maintain and preserve the said land in a similar state and condition as it is now'. However, times have changed and the County Council now wish to divest themselves of the land. The Parish Council were asked for their views and after discussion, felt strongly that SCC should be held to the undertakings entered into when they accepted the deed of gift in 1966. Discussions are still continuing.

The Parish Council will be holding its Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 20 April at 8.00pm in the KGV Hall, Brown's Lane. This is a meeting at which residents of the village can speak on any village matter; for instance, about things that have happened in the last year, or things on which you wish the Parish Council would take action in the year to come. Why not come and have your say?

This has again been a busy and interesting year, and I should like to thank the members of the Parish Council for their support and hard work. Special thanks go to Susan Morris, our Clerk; she is a very busy person, and takes a great interest in her work.

Jessica Page
Chairman of Effingham Parish Council