



EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

Annual Meeting for the Parish of Effingham

8 p.m. on Tuesday, 17 April 2012

King George V Hall, Browns Lane, Effingham

Your Parish Council exists to represent and work in the interests of everyone in Effingham. To be effective we need to tell you what we are doing and to seek your views and at times your help and participation.

Following the May 2011 elections, we have an excellent mix of new and experienced Councillors, with new ideas and the energy to take them forward. As you will read in this report, we have made a good start on a number of initiatives.

Community Fund

For many years your Parish Council has supported the work of the Effingham Village Recreation Trust (EVRT). The Trust manages King George V Hall and grounds, the Effingham cricket ground on Effingham Common and a small piece of woodland close to Effingham Junction Station. Over the past two years the Parish Council has been re-assessing the structuring of grants made to EVRT. This is partly to meet more stringent auditing requirements – better demonstrating that our tax-payers' money is properly spent – but has also given us the opportunity to re-think and to broaden the scope of our grant-making. With this in mind, the Parish Council has decided to establish a **Community Fund**. The purpose of the fund will be to provide financial support for not-for-profit community projects, activities and new initiatives that will benefit some or all of the residents of the Parish of Effingham.

With careful budgeting, in a year when we have decided not to increase the Parish Precept, (that is the money each Effingham household pays annually through council tax to support Parish Council activities), we have been able to establish a fund that will be able to continue to support EVRT and will also be able to support one or two additional small community projects in Effingham. The budget is very tight so **we must not raise expectations too highly** – we anticipate having about £3000 available in 2012-13 after we have met the needs of EVRT. However, **we invite groups and individuals to consider making a bid to the Community Fund**. Guidance notes are available from the Parish Room and bids will be assessed according to agreed criteria. We advise any group or person considering accessing the fund to speak to myself or the Parish Clerk.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

On **Saturday 23 June** this summer, Effingham's contribution to the Jubilee celebrations will be a **Village Day** on the KGV Playing Fields. A recently formed group called ICE (Improving Communities in Effingham) is working hard to provide a new take on this established village tradition. All surplus funds generated by the range of attractions will go towards funding community facilities and activities. ICE has identified facilities for young people as its first target. Please come and enjoy the Village Day, in aid of a very worthy cause. To volunteer either your help with the organization now, or on the day, or - importantly - if you can provide some up-front sponsorship money, contact Sarah Montgomery on 01372 456886.

Meanwhile, on 'the day' itself, Polesden Lacey is having a free (ticketed) event including fireworks and the lighting of a Jubilee beacon. The staff is very keen for Effingham residents to be part of this and more information will be forthcoming.

Success! Grit bins for Effingham

Well we did it! Ten grit bins were delivered and filled in time for the winter's snow and ice. Checking one bin recently it appears that about two thirds of the salt was spread during the cold spell, so we hope to top up the bins in good time for next winter. Thanks to Liz Hogger and James Nicholls for arranging to get them in place and to the village residents who generously allowed bins to be placed on their properties.

Effingham Commoners' Day

In my half year report I reported on the 2011 Effingham Commoners' Day. Over 300 attended the event which I found a very pleasing and relaxed afternoon on our own very special Common. Thanks to those who filled in the feed-back form. **The 2012 Commoners' Day will take place on Sunday 30 September.** This year's theme will be the fruits of the Common. There are still copies of Effingham Local History Group's publication *Studies in Local History: Effingham Common* available from local shops.

Effingham Local History Group

Our local history group organised a very well-attended exhibition 'Effingham in Wartime' held on 29 October last year. By popular demand, the group will shortly be publishing a book of the display panels from the exhibition, entitled *Effingham in Wartime: The book of the Exhibition*.

Contact the Local History Group if you would like to purchase a copy, via the Clerk to the Parish Council.



Damaged street furniture (railings etc)

At long last I can report some progress on getting the pedestrian railings on the A246 repaired – with some innovative thinking to reduce the repair costs by using undamaged panels from one end of the railings, hence shortening the length of the run a little, I believe we should see the repairs carried out fairly soon.

“Sprucing up the village”

I am delighted to report our first success under our “sprucing up the village” initiative. Our attention was drawn to the poor state of the Effingham Common Road footway. We were delighted when Surrey County Council recognised the dangerous state of some sections of the footway and overgrown nature and break-up of the surface at other places. SCC has recently completed repairs improving safety over almost all sections of the footway.

We hope to make further progress with sprucing up the village during this coming year, with a tree-planting week planned for November, and various unkempt areas targeted for a tidy-up and replanting. We would welcome volunteers to help – watch out for further information.

Police Matters

We are fortunate that crime in Effingham remains relatively low. Gregor Culross, our Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), subject to availability, attends Parish Council meetings to give us the crime figures and to consider any issues raised by the Council or villagers present. Last year we commenced a procedure of inviting residents from small groups of roads to attend specific meetings at 19.45hr to discuss any issues relating to their roads. This has been very successful in helping the police to prioritise activities in Effingham. We are sorry that we have not kept to the original schedule but we plan to reinstate the procedure, very shortly, starting with the roads that missed out last year. There is a new simple telephone number to report incidents and concerns to your police Safer Neighbourhood Team: Telephone: 101. Of course 999 remains for genuine emergencies.

Home Farm Estate

During the year the Parish Council has strongly supported the residents of Calvert and Chester Roads in their campaign to make the Borough Council take responsibility for managing its property. This includes repairs to boundaries, the road surface, the removal of fly-tipping, and unauthorised development.

Planning applications

The Parish Council has continued to scrutinize and comment on planning applications throughout the year.

Building activities at Long Barn, High Barn Road, have been of considerable concern. There is planning approval here for a replacement house, but the developer has gone far beyond the approved plans with the removal of a large slice of hillside and the excavation of very deep foundations for the house. A subsequent application for a basement to the property has been turned down, although the excavations had already taken place, and enforcement action has been taken by GBC to ensure the hillside is returned to its original state. Here Google Earth has provided some useful photos of the former landscape and we are watching carefully to see the land is properly restored. In addition to the property, High Barn Road and parts of its hedgerow have been badly damaged by the site traffic and has covered for much of the winter with mud. This will need remedial work as the building works are completed.

Planning application for a Care Home

At a Parish Council meeting (4 October 2010) developers Minton Healthcare Group presented outline plans for a 70 bed care home specialising in dementia care to be built on the old St Lawrence School playing field site in Church Street. The short presentation was followed by a lively debate by Councillors and 69 members of the public in attendance. In planning policy terms, the proposal is for a sensitive site which is

- outside the Settlement Area of the village (i.e. the agreed area containing the collection of dwellings forming the core of Effingham)
- inside the Conservation Area (this is an area where there are buildings of high architectural quality (listed buildings); have an interesting and attractive layout; and are interesting or important to social history)
- in the Green Belt.

Your Parish Council expects to consider these plans at its meeting on 24 April 2012. It is planning application number 12/P/00526 if you want to study it on the web at www.guildford.gov.uk.

The Coming Year

In addition to pursuing further progress of our “sprucing up the village” project, the Parish Council has been looking into the possibility of developing a neighbourhood or village plan. This will be challenging within our resource constraints but we believe will be very valuable in mapping out our future plans and aspirations for our village. To be successful this plan needs to involve everyone in our village and we shall need active support from as many as can spare a little time to help. It will include all aspects of village life including housing needs, employment, environment, education and leisure facilities. We shall also be finding out more about what the “Localism Act” means in practice, which is expected to have implications for a village plan.

ARNOLD PINDAR

Chairman, Effingham Parish Council

Contact the Parish Council:

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