

Effingham Parish Council



EFFINGHAM

www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Chairman's Report 2017-2018

Parish Council Annual Meeting

Tuesday 10 April 2018

8pm King George V Hall, Browns Lane Effingham

Agenda includes updates on:

Adoption of the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan

Howard School / Berkeley homes and Wisley Planning Appeals

Guildford Local Plan

Visioning the future of Effingham Parish Council Services

Howard of Effingham / Berkeley Homes Planning Appeal

As you may imagine, Effingham Parish Councillors are devastated by the decision of the Secretary of State to allow the appeal by Berkeley Homes/Howard of Effingham School to give permission to build up to 295 residential dwellings as enabling development to fund the building of a replacement secondary school in Effingham.

Only a month ago, after five years of intensive studies and consultations you, our residents, voted by 93.5% in the referendum to approve the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan. The plan makes provision for locally needed housing development in areas that will minimise impact on our rural village and more importantly minimise impact on the green belt wherein we reside.

The replacement school and up to 258 new dwellings will be built on green belt land, destroying a wildlife corridor and resulting in urban sprawl by joining the villages of Effingham and Little Bookham. No longer shall we be able to claim to be the first village with a clear separation of green fields between the village of Effingham and surrounding villages as you travel out from London. A further 37 houses are to be built on Brown's Field that is also in the green belt and the Neighbourhood Plan designates as Local Green Space. The development will lead to a more than 30% increase in the size of this rural village, eating into the green belt.

This decision by the Secretary of State brings into question the fundamental basis for the Localism Act – putting local decisions in local hands! We question whether Neighbourhood Plans actually carry any weight in upholding the wishes of local residents?

In the coming weeks, Effingham Parish Council will take advice from our own barrister and consult with Guildford Borough Council. If there is sufficient legal basis for challenging this decision, we shall pursue it if we possibly can. We shall also be looking into the wider implications of this decision.

The Effingham Neighbourhood Plan

The planning appeal decision rather overshadows the success of the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan that has now been adopted by referendum. However, in spite of the decision, the plan contains many provisions that should benefit our community in the years up to 2030. On 22 February, in a high turnout for a neighbourhood plan referendum (44% of eligible voters), the plan was accepted by an overwhelming 93.5% of voters. The plan is not invalidated by the appeal decision and is already being referenced by Guildford Borough Council (GBC) in determining planning applications from Effingham. Anyone considering applying for planning consent in Effingham should now refer to the plan.

This has been a real village effort. We thank the members of the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group (ENPAG) for their achievement in delivering the plan, for their tireless energy and commitment for the many public events and surveys undertaken and the Effingham Residents' Association for participating throughout. ENPAG members are:

Keith Cornwell Cliff Hacket Liz Hogger Tony Jones David Martland

Alison Mayall Paula Moss Di Skidmore Ian Symes Keith Walker Vivien White

We especially thank Councillor Paula Moss for leading ENPAG and Councillor Liz Hogger for ensuring that GBC was kept on side throughout the process.

We thank the Environment Working Group with special thanks to Harry Clarke for his drawing of maps and for our wildlife corridor; Andrea Lightfoot for her expertise on heritage, architecture and design; Jon Short, our clerk, for attendance at many meetings, minute taking and support throughout; and Dan Knowles at Guildford Borough Council for advice and expertise in neighbourhood planning.

Finally we thank you – the residents of Effingham – for replying to our consultations and attending consultation meetings and for turning out in numbers to vote in the referendum. This was recognised in the report from the examiner of our final draft plan where he stated “The extent of interest and participation by residents in the plan at the various stages is impressive”.

Wisley Planning Appeal

A planning application to build 2100 dwellings on the old Wisley aerodrome was refused by GBC and the developers appealed against the ruling. Effingham Parish Council (EPC) gave evidence in the appeal to the impact such a large development would have on Effingham, notably roads and traffic. The appeal has been referred to the Secretary of State and his decision is expected in June 2018.

Guildford Local Plan

The Effingham Neighbourhood Plan sits within the Guildford Local Plan (GLP) and must conform to it. EPC's work on the Neighbourhood Plan was complicated because the current GLP dates from 2003 and the new plan has still to be adopted. Hence, we could not formally refer to the new plan in our plan, as it might be amended before adoption. We did still have to be as sure as we can be that our plan would conform with the new GLP when finalised.

There have been two recent consultations on the new GLP and we are pleased that our plan is in line with GBC proposals that have now been submitted to the Secretary of State for "independent examination". The examination is planned to commence on 5 June 2018 at the Council offices, Millmead.

Parish Council services to you, the residents of Effingham

With the Neighbourhood Plan adopted it is now time to take stock of the services provided to the village by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is here to serve you and we want to do this to the best of our ability within the limitation of our powers. So, are we giving the right priority to the things that are of importance to you? Over the next couple of years we shall be consulting with you all and developing our plans to make certain that you get best value from your Parish Council. As the starting point for this process we provide herewith a breakdown of how the precept will be spent in the coming year. But can this be improved upon? Are there other things you would like us to do?

Village Newsletter

We are looking into the possibilities of having a village newsletter on a quarterly or bi-monthly basis. The aim is for the newsletter to provide local information and to be self-supporting. The enclosed paper gives more information and we encourage you to give us your views and to support the initiative.

Commoners Day – 30 September 2018

A date for your diary! We shall be holding Commoners Day again this year on Effingham Common. As well as exercising our Commoners' Rights to graze animals on the common there will be games and attractions for all the family.

Community Fund

This fund is available at any time in the year to help fund community activities. A form for applying to the fund is available on the Parish Council website or from the Parish Room.

Viewing Planning Applications

Guildford Borough Council is no longer prepared to send printed copies of planning applications to Parish Councils but has supplied a computer and screen for us to project applications at the Parish Room. Hence, in future we shall all either need to view planning applications on our home computers or to visit the Parish Room to view them. We recognise the costs involved with printing etc but this change means that we shall not be able to have full viewing at Effingham Parish Council meetings. GBC has agreed to supply printed plans where there are complex plans.



Chairman,

Effingham Parish Council

Parish Councillors

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

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