

Effingham Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2005

I am pleased to be able to start my report to you on a high note, having just attended the re-opening of the Rugby Club Bar at the King George V Hall (KGV) in Browns Lane.

As you will no doubt recall, the KGV Hall was the subject of an arson attack in July 2004. The part of the premises used by the Rugby Club was devastated, the interior being badly damaged by fire, smoke and water and parts of the structure being left unsafe. The rest of the building was largely undamaged, thanks to the swift response of the fire brigade. But now, only nine months later, the bar area has been completely refurbished, and the club have a base to be proud of.

In December 2004 the new affordable homes in Champion Down, off Norwood Close, were completed, and the development was opened by the Deputy Mayor of Guildford, assisted by Santa Claus, who had presents for all the new junior residents. The houses and bungalows are well designed, spacious and have enable many more people to be housed on a site that was previous occupied by homes with minimal sound-proofing and very large, and mainly underused, gardens.

The homes were developed by Mount Green Housing Association, who also developed the site at Barnes Wallis Close in Browns Lane.

Although the main development has been finished, some problems do remain with the condition of the road, which has been badly damaged due to the number and weight of vehicles using it during the building work, but the Parish Council is putting constant pressure on Surrey County Council, which is the body responsible for roads, to carry out the necessary repairs.

The Safer Roads Group (SRG), which is made up of our Borough Councillor Liz Hogger, members of the Parish Council and Effingham residents has continued to try and find solutions to the various traffic issues which affect Effingham. Having taken advice from various bodies including Surrey County Council Highway Department and Engineers Department a very well attended Public Meeting was held in March 2005 to discuss the following schemes which it was felt might be viable:

1. The Street: kerb build-outs and road tables
2. Browns Lane / Church Street / Chapel Hill / Crossways: one-way system or closure to most vehicles
3. Lower Road / Church Street: yellow lines, road table, or pavement widening near St Lawrence Primary School

Although funding has not been promised for any of the schemes, a very constructive debate was held and the following improvements were favoured by those present:

1. Kerb build-outs and wider pavement at junction of The Street and Crossways
2. Regular speed monitoring in The Street
3. Double yellow lines around the corner in Church Street
4. Widening of the pavement on the north side of Lower Road at the end of pedestrian barrier

The SRG will continue to work throughout 2005, and hopefully some of the work wanted by villagers will be able to be carried out.

An ongoing problem, not just for Effingham, but throughout Guildford Borough has been with planning enforcement issues. The Enforcement Officers employed by Guildford Borough Council (GBC) are responsible for taking action against those who violate planning rules. This involves not only the carrying out work in contravention of planning permission, but also work carried out where no planning permission has been granted or sought.

Effingham Parish Council notifies GBC as soon as we become aware of any potential violation, but we are finding in almost every case that action on the part of GBC is very slow, allowing the perpetrators to continue with their infringement of the planning rules for a considerable time. Effingham Parish Council has joined together with a number of neighbouring parishes who are experiencing the same problems to try and pool our resources, and to pressure GBC into acting faster whilst making constructive suggestions about how procedures could be improved.

On Tuesday 19th April at 8pm we will be holding the Annual Parish Meeting at the King George V Hall in Browns Lane. This is a meeting which any resident of the village can come along and raise any issue affecting the village. The meeting is open to those residents aged under 18 too – you don't have to be on the Electoral Role to attend, take part and ask questions.

For example, you could raise something which has happened in the village, good or bad, in the past year, an issue on which you would like action taken, a concern you have about one of the areas in the village which belong to the Parish Council, or you can come along without wanting to raise any specific matter, to meet other villagers, and to see what others are talking about.

I hope to see you there,

Alison Mouser
Chairman, Effingham Parish Council