

# Effingham Parish Council



EFFINGHAM

## Chairman's Report 2014 - 2015

EFFINGHAM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Tuesday 21st April at St George V Hall, Browns Lane, Effingham

Open to all village residents

**This year is election year and a new Parish Council will be elected on 7 May 2015. James Wetenhall will be retiring at this election. His sound judgement and careful analysis, particularly of planning applications, will be sorely missed. Gill Bowerman also resigned due to other commitments but we are very pleased that she is able to continue to Chair the Effingham Village Recreation Trust. On behalf of the Parish I thank them for their years of dedicated service to the Council. We are very pleased to welcome David Martland and most recently Perry Stock who were co-opted to the Council to fill vacancies and Hilda Brazil who has re-joined the Council earlier in the year.**

We need to renew. I am very pleased that most current Councillors are prepared to continue but we need more volunteers to offer to become parish councillors. Please speak to me or other Councillors if you think you may be willing to join us. Nominations close on 9 April. We need a full Council to ensure that the widest range of views and experiences are brought to our activities to protect, maintain and develop our historic village of Effingham.

Last year I reported that "the past year has been the most active & challenging for the Parish Council for many years". These threats and opportunities for Effingham have continued unabated!

- The long term threat to Effingham came in the form of Guildford Borough Council's draft Local Plan. Following a disastrous consultation on plans that were totally unacceptable for Effingham, further development has been put on hold until after the elections in May this year.
- The immediate threat has been the planning application from the Howard of Effingham Secondary School and Berkeley Homes to replace the school with new buildings on land to the north of Lower Road – the Effingham Lodge site – and to build 295 homes in the village to

pay for the development. This application has now also been put on hold until September.

- The opportunity for Effingham comes from our Neighbourhood Plan on which the Parish Council commenced work in 2013. These delays have given us more time to press ahead with the development of our plans, so that we shall be better prepared to insist that the draft Guildford Local Plan and the planning application fully take account of the views of our residents.

### FINANCIAL

The Council is funded through Guildford Borough Council's local taxation. This is known as the precept. As well as covering inflationary cost increases, there is a potential need for substantial additional funds in the coming year:

- Firstly, with the experience of last year's GBC consultation on the GBC Local Plan whereby the Council Leader, Councillor Mansbridge and the then leader for the GBC Local Plan, Councillor Juneja, seriously misled the Parish Council over their plans for Effingham. We are very concerned that we need a significant contingency for expert legal and technical advice on any further draft GBC plans that are expected to be issued later this summer.
- Secondly, statements have been made by Councillors and Council Officers at Guildford and Surrey County Council that appear to pre-judge the Howard School / Berkeley Homes planning application. Hence, we also need a contingency fund to ensure that the plans are properly considered. It is very likely that the plans will go to appeal and funds will be needed to ensure that the views of Effingham residents are fully taken into account.

In order to provide for these contingencies, the Parish Council has increased the precept by £30,000 with the intention of reducing the precept next year to more normal levels. This is equivalent

to adding £24.10 to the household Council Tax payment for a Band D property, just 46p per week. I hope everyone will find this necessary investment acceptable to protect our village.

#### HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM/BERKELEY HOMES PLANNING APPLICATION

The Parish Council consulted widely throughout the Parish and beyond on the planning application, including holding a public meeting on 9 December 2014 attended by approximately 200 local residents. The meeting supported many of the views presented by Cllr Paula Moss on behalf of the Parish Council and expressed their views that were taken into account in the Parish Council's final submission on the planning application. I would like to thank Paula and all the Councillors and residents that worked with us to complete the very extensive and evidence-based submission. It is available on the Parish Council's website.

Whilst the submission objected to this planning application, I must make it clear that the Parish Council wants to see the Howard of Effingham School continue to thrive and improve and we are keen to discuss ideas on how this can best be achieved to the benefit of the school and the community of Effingham.

#### THE VILLAGE PLAN

We have made excellent progress on the development of our Neighbourhood Plan.

A Housing Requirements Survey of all households in the village was undertaken late in 2013. A high percentage, over 60%, of the survey forms was returned. This has allowed a robust analysis of housing needs and has provided some additional information that will assist in developing wider plans for the future of our village. Based on the survey, some housing development will be needed in Effingham over the next 15 years to meet local needs and to allow some "in-coming". We must ensure that any development is proportionate and based on our survey results. The essential need is for one and two bedroom accommodation with some three bedroom housing requested.

The results of this survey along with information from residents at a number of events and meetings over the year has helped us to build a robust 'Evidence Base' to support the development of our Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council, supported by a number of residents and also working with the Effingham Residents' Association, has developed draft policies to be included in Effingham's Neighbourhood Plan. These draft policies were presented to residents at a well-attended public meeting and exhibition on 14 March 2015. Some policies

were presented as options and residents were asked to express their views. There was overwhelming support for a number of key policies and we were delighted that so many residents (almost 200) took the time to come along to the meeting. These policies are now being revised and will be re-presented to the village at the Annual Parish Meeting on 21 April 2015.

You can find latest details on the village plan website at [www.effinghamvillageplan.com](http://www.effinghamvillageplan.com)

#### PARISH CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Sadly our Clerk, Clare Ritchie, has left us for a full time post with Reigate & Banstead Council. She was only with us for two years but in this relatively short time made a considerable contribution to the life of our Parish. We thank her for her time with us and wish her every success in her new role.

However, as one door closes!...We are very pleased to welcome Jon Short our new Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer, who is joining us just after Easter. You will have an opportunity to meet him at the Annual Parish meeting on 21 April 2015.

#### THANKS

I would like to thank all our Parish Councillors for their work and commitment over the past year. I also thank the Effingham Residents Association and other residents who have worked so effectively with us on the challenges facing the village. I repeat that we need more volunteers to join the Council. It is essential that we continue to reflect the views of Effingham people as we develop our vision and policies for the future of Effingham through the Village Plan.

Arnold Pindar  
*Chairman, Effingham Parish Council*

#### Contacts

Cllr Arnold Pindar  
Cllr Ian Symes  
Cllr Hilda Brazil  
Cllr Liz Hogger  
Cllr Andrea Lightfoot  
Cllr David Martland  
Cllr Paula Moss  
Cllr Perry Stock  
Cllr James Wetenhall  
Clerk – Jonathan Short (after Easter)

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Current Parish Room Opening Hours –  
11.00-1.00pm, Mondays & Thursdays