

**John Dain**

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**From:** clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 03 March 2021 13:50  
**To:** clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk  
**Subject:** What is the future for our community? A message from ES&BG Parish Council

## What is the future for our Community? **YOUR** opinion and involvement matters...

Your Parish Council strongly believes a **Neighbourhood Plan** is essential for the views of our community to be heard and actioned and to enable us to shape and protect the future of our Parish.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a formal planning document that looks at housing development, protecting our environment, reviewing our roads/traffic and the services, facilities, and infrastructure that our community will need over the next 10+ years.

Many of you responded with a clear “no” to the possibility of 400+ houses being built in Bishops Green with particular concern over the environment, access to schools, doctors, dentist, social and recreational activities, recycling, etc. The potential for this and other developments has not gone away, and we need to be able to influence planning decisions that affect our Parish.

The Parish Council has agreed to start the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council who are responsible for Planning in this area of Hampshire support this initiative and will use the plan to guide decisions relating to our Parish.

To progress development of this plan, we now need a good number of volunteers from across the parish.

It does not matter where you live within the Parish or how long you have lived here. Everyone will have something to offer and diversity of ideas, knowledge and skills is important in the development of a successful Neighbourhood Plan.

We need some people to be part of a steering group to manage the project and others to participate in working teams that will look at all the different aspects that make our rural community what it is and to secure its future.

**There is much more detail on the [Parish website](#)**

This is well worth reading.

To make this happen we need everyone in the parish to be involved one way or another.

Please help us to define your future by:

- **Signing up for further communications on the parish website.**
- Giving your opinions in surveys and meetings.
- **Volunteering** to be a member of the steering group and work teams that are required to develop the plan. Even if your time is limited, your contribution will be valuable.
- Encouraging your neighbours and friends to participate.

We look forward to your help and participation.

Kind regards,

CLlr Marian Dain - Chair

On behalf of Echchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council

# **What is the future for our Community?**

## **YOUR opinion and involvement matters...**

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Your Parish Council strongly believes that the community needs to develop a **Neighbourhood Plan** that defines our view of the right way forward for our Parish.

A Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish is a formal document that should guide decisions on planning by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

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More detail on the Parish website ([www.echinswell-pc.gov.uk](http://www.echinswell-pc.gov.uk))

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**Looking forward to your help and participation!**

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# **Neighbourhood Plan Launch Communications**

**Material for working up into leaflets, website material, social media etc, etc.**

**Headline messaging – short version:**

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## Headline messaging – longer version:

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## ES&BG Neighbourhood Plan – Some questions answered.

### What is our community?

- The Civil Parish of Echchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green is our local community, and the Parish Council is our voice within the Borough and County Councils.
- Our Parish is one of several communities in the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The Borough Council is responsible for many of the services we use and for housing and other development in the area. Hampshire County Council oversees the county as a whole and is responsible for roads, education, social care and other services.
- Our Parish is very diverse, comprising two core villages, several smaller groups of houses, some big agricultural estates, and a population with a wide span of age and wealth.
- You probably consider yourself a member of a smaller community (e.g. Bishops Green, Echchinswell, member of an association/club or resident of a small group of houses) but for the purposes of influencing planning and services we need to come together as a parish.

### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- Neighbourhood Plans have been around for some years and have usually been developed by parish communities in response to Borough Council (or other authority) Local Plans requiring development of significant new housing. Local Plans are driven by central Government driving the building of more houses to address a national shortage especially of “affordable” housing.
- Development of an approved Neighbourhood Plan requires a team from the parish to follow a tightly prescribed format and process working with the Borough Council. The final plans also need to be approved in a local referendum.
- The primary focus of the formal Neighbourhood Plan is future housing development – how many, what type, and where. On these matters, it has some legal force. It can and should lay out future requirements for facilities and services but influence on these points may be more limited.
- A good Neighbourhood Plan will only be made possible via widespread engagement with the local community and the creation of a **community-led, forward looking vision for the parish**. This vision needs to address not only housing but also the facilities and services the community will need in the future and a clear view of what kind of place we the residents want the parish to be (and not to be!).
- Developing and communicating a Neighbourhood Plan is a significant undertaking – for example Burghclere and Kingsclere have mobilised big teams and each taken 2+ years to develop and get approval of their plans.

**Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan now?** Two things are prompting your Parish Council to kick off development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1) Actions by Potential Developers

- There are three ideas in play for up to 500 houses to be built in Bishops Green. None of these is yet a formal proposal seeking official planning permission.
- As was seen in the recent consultation triggered by the Catesby Estates Vision for ~400 houses at Bishops Green Farm, there were overwhelmingly negative views on such a development not least because of concerns over the extra stress on already overloaded facilities and services but also the impact on our current basically rural community. Feedback from the consultation has been given to Catesby Estates.
- Two other sites in Bishops Green have been offered to Basingstoke and Deane as having the potential for up to 100 houses. No plans of any sort have been tabled.
- A well-founded Neighbourhood Plan can help check the flow of unsolicited development plans that are inappropriate to the parish and do not support our vision.

## 2) Response to Local Plan Update by Basingstoke and Deane

- Basingstoke and Deane are responsible for the development and maintenance of a Local Plan for housing development.
- The current plan issued in 2016 covers up to 2029 and did not require extra houses in the Echinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green parish which was seen as rural with limited facilities and hence not appropriate for significant development.
- This contrasts with neighbouring parishes like Burghclere and Kingsclere which were targeted with ~10 and ~ 50 houses; this prompted both parishes to create Neighbourhood Plans.
- Major developments for thousands of houses are proposed in Basingstoke and Deane in the Manydown and potentially the M3 Junction 7 areas.
- With continuing pressure for more housing from central government, the update of the Local Plan from Basingstoke and Deane may target our parish with some development despite the positioning of our parish as not appropriate for significant development in the previous plan. This may be as few as 10 houses but could be more.
- We have been advised by Basingstoke and Deane to start preparing for development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Basingstoke and Deane plan will likely not be complete for a couple of years, but we could have a firmer indication of a parish housing target later in 2021.
- Having a clear community-led plan will help us ensure any targets set for the parish are met in a way that fits our vision for the community.

### **How does the Parish Council want to move forward?** We see a number of steps.

- Communicating the need for a Vision and a formal Neighbourhood Plan for the parish – the objective of this and related communications.
- Ensuring we have the means to keep the whole community aware and involved in the Vision and Neighbourhood Plan as they develop. Hence the request for everyone to sign up for further communications.
- Recruit and mobilise a diverse team of volunteers to develop the plan. We will need people from across the community with a good range of knowledge and skills. Please step forward

if you would like to help – we will also be out encouraging volunteers! There is a small team already forming but we need many more people with different backgrounds.

- By means yet to be defined, we want as many people as possible to be involved in the first stage of developing a forward-looking vision for the Parish. More on this coming soon.
- We understand that development of the formal Neighbourhood Plan follows standard steps. When we have a better understanding of this, we will communicate it. We expect the activity to continue throughout at least 2021 and 2022.
- We ask that everyone in the community gets involved in discussion with friends and neighbours on the plan for the parish and also encourages widespread participation in the teams and in the various consultations.

### **Who do we think should be involved?**

Advice from parishes which have done Neighbourhood Plans indicates that a substantial team is required to complete a good quality plan. The team needs to represent the whole parish and contain a good mix of skills and experience. Obviously, people will vary in the level of time and commitment they can bring. **The team would comprise a steering group and working parties.**

The key roles we envisage for the steering group are:

- Chair to lead the processes.
- Vice Chair to support and stand in as required.
- Secretary to ensure the process is fully documented.
- Communications Lead to ensure the whole parish community is connected/engaged.
- Financial Lead to develop and run the project budget.
- Data Collection Lead to manage the surveys and collection of key statistics.

We expect there will need to be several working parties covering, at least, the following areas:

- Community communications & engagement
- Environment & Sustainability (inc climate change)
- Heritage, History & Conservation (inc existing Ecchinswell Conservation Area)
- Traffic & Roads
- Services (inc transport/education/medical)
- Facilities & Infrastructure (inc electricity, telecoms, water/sewage, gas etc)
- Local Businesses & future employment opportunities
- Resultant Housing & Development needs/opportunities

A critical first step in the process is the recruitment of the team.

**If you are interested in joining the team, please [register](#) on the PC website.**

### **What is a “Community-Led Forward-Looking Vision” for the Parish and why do we need this?**

- The formal Neighbourhood Planning process is very focussed on housing development based on targets cascaded from central government via Basingstoke and Deane’s Local Plan.

- Beyond this, there are developers and landowners looking for opportunities to build housing – their objectives are basically commercial.
- Neither of the above considers fully the views of the community. Such community views often focus on current shortcomings in facilities and services as well as the change or problems that significant development can bring.
- A “vision” or “ambition” for the Parish should include all this but ideally should also include our views on what kind of community we want to be in the future and what needs to change or be developed to bring this about. It could say we want to be like this or that village or place or **not** like this or that place. It should also talk about the facilities and services the community will need and in what ways we want the environment to remain as it is or to change.
- Despite all the current constraints we have over meeting, we want to find a way of thinking about this with as many people in the parish as possible. If you have ideas, let us know!

**Our parish is mainly about 2 different villages – Bishops Green and Ecchinswell – surely, we need more than one plan? The answer to this is NO.**

- The parish is more than a couple of well separated villages which are different in many ways, although nominally sharing some unique features. We also have several smaller groups of houses and some big agricultural estates.
- Common to the whole parish is a high dependence on external facilities and services (shopping, medical services, public transport, most education, etc).
- The Neighbourhood plan normally looks for a single plan covering a Parish.
- We want to ensure both the Vision and the Neighbourhood Plan take full account of the current differences but also build and describe a cohesive picture of how we collectively see the future.

## Want to Know More?

Please contact the Neighbourhood Planning Team at ([N.Plan.ESBG@gmail.com](mailto:N.Plan.ESBG@gmail.com))

### Links to useful documents:

Existing Basingstoke & Deane [Local Plan](#) .This was adopted in 2016 and covers 2011-2029.

[National Planning Policy Framework](#) Published in Feb 2019.

[Locality](#) – a community support organisation who guide Neighbourhood Planning activities.