

EGGLESCLIFFE & EAGLESCLIFFE COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

Issue Number 96 February/March 2021



WELCOME TO EAGLESCLIFFE & EGGLESCLIFFE COUNCIL'S LATEST NEWSLETTER.

Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, door to door delivery is not possible. So, this shorter version has been produced with copies in the council notice boards around the parish, the telephone kiosk on the village green and hopefully, some of the local shops that are still open.

We feel it important to try to keep in touch with the residents of our Parish. A list of Councillors is displayed in the notice boards with telephone numbers; if you would like help and advice they would be happy to assist you. In these very strange and uncertain times we do all need to try and pull together. Perhaps it might be nice to keep a check on our elderly and those living alone. Just a knock on the door or a socially distanced chat. Maybe shopping, taking round a nice piece of cake or some homemade soup would be a welcome treat. If we do all work together and observe COVID 19 guidelines we will eventually defeat this dreadful virus.



WHAT ON EARTH IS THE PARISH COUNCIL?

If you've watched a recent YouTube video of a Parish Council in Cheshire then be reassured, we're much more organised and civilised than that! Egglecliffe & Eaglescliffe Council is the first tier of local government in our area, not related to the Church parish council. It uses a small amount of Council Tax each year for its work, but councillors get no payment. It is responsible for two allotment sites, four play areas, The Green and Memorial Garden in Egglecliffe, Queen Elizabeth II garden on Urlay Nook Rd and, with Preston Parish Council, Memorial Park (Tittybottle Park) on Yarm Rd. In recent years the council has held a summer fete on The Green, working with Egglecliffe Area Residents Association and others. It is also working on producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It owns the recreation field at Allens West which is leased partly to Leven Junior Football Club and partly to Taylor Wimpey for the provision of play facilities for older children from the new Allens West housing development. There are 13 councillors elected for 4 years at a time. The next election is in 2023. Between elections it is open to the council to co-opt members to fill any vacancies. Currently there are two vacancies so if, after reading this, you're interested then please do get in touch.

In more normal times the meetings are held in a room at All Saints' Church, Dunnottar Avenue. However, current advice is to avoid such face to face meetings where possible and so the council is meeting online via free video conferencing. Members of the public are welcome to attend so just ask for the link. Our usual pattern is to meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm, with a summer recess in August and the possibility of an extra meeting in January for budget setting.

COUNCIL TAX – GOOD NEWS

Local authorities, even in these unprecedented times, in the early months of the calendar year fix their budgets for the forthcoming financial year beginning on April 1st. Your Parish Council works out how much money it will need from the Council Tax, which is then collected from households in Egglecliffe Civil Parish on the same bill as tax for the Borough Council, the Police and the Fire Service.

The budget for the year ending 31st March 2021 was fixed before the effect of Covid-19 in this country was known. The restrictions meant that planned activities, such as the Village Fête and marking the 75th anniversary of VE Day, could not happen, so the budget for them remained unspent. The Parish Council's Finance Committee also calculated the expected underspend as at 31st March 2021. This amount is used to cover some of the budget for the following year. The net result of all the calculations is that Band D households in the Civil Parish of Egglecliffe will be charged Council Tax for the year ending 31st March 2022, of which £12.35 will go to the parish council (compared with £17.57 for the preceding year). This reduction has happened in unprecedented circumstances. No-one can say yet what the budget for the year ending 31st March 2023 is likely to be. For many years the Parish Council's policy has been neither to charge more tax than is necessary nor to borrow money.

During lockdown people have been more aware of their natural surroundings whether through daily exercise, visiting parks or spending time in their gardens. It is the Parish Council's aim to enhance the Queen Elizabeth 2 garden on Urlay Nook Road and encourage local wildlife to make their homes there. In the latter part of last year the Parish Council approached the Co-op in Sunningdale to partner with us and their response was enthusiastic. They have already supplied a hedgehog shelter and the project to create the QE2 wildlife garden is ongoing.

At Christmas, as a sign of Hope and Community Spirit, a trail of Christmas trees appeared across the Borough of Stockton in seven community partnership locations. Each one was lit with different coloured lights and we were privileged to be able to be a part of this beautiful representation of love and caring. The Queen Elizabeth 2 garden Christmas tree was blue and represented the spirit of our community. Just before Christmas all twenty-two of the Christmas trees were removed and placed in the North Tees Hospital central courtyard, in a rainbow of seven colours where staff and patients could see them and would be reminded that their community would remain in the hearts of the people of Stockton-on-Tees as they struggle to overcome the virus.

STAY SAFE - How often do we hear that said these days? Unfortunately some people seem to think that the acceptable way to dispose of used masks is to throw them onto the ground. Perhaps it's accidental - you meant to hit a bin but missed, or you meant to put it in your pocket but missed. Whatever the reason it means that the virus which was stopped by the mask from reaching your nose is now sitting on the mask waiting to go onto the hands of an unwary child who picks it up, or finding its way back into the air to be breathed in by you or others. Please dispose of them as you would a soiled tissue or bandage. Preferably before binning, cut through the ear loops so that they cannot hook over the heads of birds or other wildlife finding them on landfill sites or accidentally blown into a field.