

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

June 2020

Covid-19	Staff are continuing to work from home, making use of Skype or Teams to hold virtual meetings with colleagues and residents; non-urgent site inspections are not taking place. Many officers have been seconded to different duties to help MSDC respond to the issues arising from the pandemic.
Meetings	There have been very few meetings held, all of them virtual meetings via Skype or Teams. Joint MSDC and BDC Cabinet meetings have been held in May and June. A virtual full Council meeting is being planned for July; this will be the Annual General Meeting at which the Chair of the Council will be elected for the year and appointments to committees and outside bodies will be confirmed.
Trees for Life	The Tree for Life scheme has been relaunched. Parents of children born or adopted during 2020 can apply for a free tree to plant in their own garden or other suitable location. It is open to all families in Mid Suffolk who welcome a new arrival between 1 January and 31 December 2020, in addition to parents who may have lost a child during the same period to apply for a remembrance tree. The closing date for applications is 17 January 2021.
Small Business Grants	<p>A new Discretionary Grant is now open for businesses based in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, market traders, bed and breakfasts and small charity properties. The value of the grants range between £2,500 - £5,000 and can only be claimed by businesses who have been unable to access any other grants. Details are on the MSDC website.</p> <p>Help is available from many different schemes so if you run a business or know someone who does and may not have applied, please get in touch with us or go to the MSDC website where there are details and an on-line application form.</p>
Emergency Needs Grants	<p>MSDC has funds to support organisations providing help to vulnerable residents. A Covid-19 Emerging Needs Grant was set up last month, ensuring much-needed funding could be provided to new and existing groups within communities and parish councils. Grants of up to £2,500 can be applied for to cover increased costs incurred as a result of the Coronavirus.</p> <p>There are details on line, or contact one of us.</p>
Safer Shopping and Outdoor Leisure	As lockdown measures are eased, there is a need to change the way we visit businesses, shops and open spaces. MSDC is working with other councils across Suffolk to introduce measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading as more people are out and about. We have suggested measures such as partial road closures and traffic restrictions to give more space for pedestrians and encourage social distancing in shopping areas.
Business Innovation and Growth Fund	A new £300,000 funding programme for small businesses across Babergh and Mid Suffolk has been agreed - with funds to be allocated over the next three years. The aim is to help sustain and create jobs, provide opportunities to grow and innovate as well as react to the changing business landscape.
Planning	It is anticipated that the draft Joint Local Plan (JLP) will be discussed by full Council in July. A cross party working group from both councils has been working through it but the allocations for development along the A14 corridor is little changed. There are further stages, including Examination by an Inspector, before the JLP can be adopted as a planning document will full weight.
Locality Awards	A reminder that Locality Awards have been launched for 2020/21. If you know of a community group in need of some funding please put them in touch with us.

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