

# District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

May 2020

Decision making and committee schedule	At the beginning of the lockdown all meetings and briefings were cancelled. Now that new legislation has been adopted 'virtual' meetings are now able to take place. The first planning committee is to be held over Skype on Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> April. The Senior Leadership team has been using emergency powers to make some decisions and there are regular online meetings and briefings with the group leaders and cabinet members. From the beginning of May there will be a reduced timetable of virtual Cabinet meetings and Overview and Scrutiny meetings. The Annual Council meeting which was scheduled for 18 <sup>th</sup> May should be held later in the year.
Planning matters	Due to the difficulty of taking planning decisions to committee, the senior planners have catalogued all the major decisions in order to prioritise. Where there is a possibility of a delegated decision planning officers are discussing cases with ward members before deciding whether to take each case to committee. The first virtual planning committee was held on 28 <sup>th</sup> April and there is to be a second one on 13 <sup>th</sup> May.
Community Infrastructure Levy	Developers are still liable for paying CIL contributions but a 3-month interest free delay is being brought in. The new CIL expenditure framework has been agreed by the Chief Executive using his emergency powers and the new bid round will begin on 1 <sup>st</sup> May. The normal process for determining bids will continue as decisions on new bids is not due until September. The new expenditure framework can be found on the website. <a href="https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=571">https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=571</a>
Grants for small businesses.	The council is able to support small businesses with grants and so far has distributed over £32M to nearly 3000 businesses across both districts. Officers have tried to make contact with all small businesses but there are still some outstanding. More information about how to apply for a grant is available on the website. <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/</a>
Emerging needs grants.	Grants are available for community groups to help vulnerable people during the pandemic. So far 71 applications have been processed and about £80k has been distributed across both districts.
Housing	Officers have been extremely busy attempting to house all rough sleepers as well as sofa surfers in order to reduce risk of virus transmission. Council houses falling vacant are not being inspected and repaired for reletting as 'moving house' is discouraged by government at present. This is creating extra pressure. Achieving these actions has required the renting of two entire hotels in the district.
Civil Parking Enforcement	The new legislation for Civil Parking Enforcement begun on 6 <sup>th</sup> April. Babergh and Mid Suffolk enforcement is effectively contracted out to either Ipswich or West Suffolk Councils. There is a map on the website and further information about the powers of enforcement officers. <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/parking/civil-parking-enforcement/">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/parking/civil-parking-enforcement/</a> Enforcement officers are dealing with both on and off street parking offences but due to the current situation a common-sense approach is being used regarding fixed penalty notices.
Waste collection	The Household Waste and Recycling Centres are all currently closed. Brown bin collection service was suspended and should be restarted during the week commencing 11 <sup>th</sup> May. Residual waste and recycling bin collections have continued as normal.
Locality Awards	Locality Awards have been launched for 2020/21, along very similar lines to previous years. Any community groups are welcome to contact me if they wish to apply for a grant.
Help line	Staff are continuing to run the helpline - 0800 876 6926 - and this is receiving several hundred calls a day.

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