

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 21st September 2020

1 Practical Completion of Wesley was officially marked on Friday 11th September. The remaining snag list is well in hand and includes no major items. The fitting-out is progressing, including the coffee bar kit and, crucially, fire fighting equipment which must be in place before general public access is permissible. This is likely to be w/b 28th September when, if pandemic regulations allow, tours will be offered in small groups beginning with Councillors, BWMA and EAA members followed by user-groups and the general public. The general view from those who have seen the facility is favourable.

2 The Tavern site is now fenced off and the new rear access to the pub will soon be secured which completes Council's obligations in this regard and paves the way for moving procedurally towards the development of the 2 schemes, affordable housing and community pub, as consulted with the village. Progress on both the Community Land Trust (CLT) and the establishment of a Community Benefit Society are painfully slow as a result of pandemic constraints on third parties, but due process is gradually gaining ground. The founder Trustees of the CLT have met with Mid Suffolk's Community Housing Enabling Officer to formalise an essential partnership in the process. Public consultation is key and, clearly, difficult under current circumstances but it is hoped that, should it remain possible to have properly managed 'open days' to view Wesley, such consultation can be grafted on to the process given the likelihood of a considerable throughput of residents attending.

3 The Chamberlayne extension is at the roof trusses stage and there have been no major problems. Meanwhile, use of the facility continues to gradually grow back with the first significant outside-hiring taking place by way of a Suffolk Constabulary training day which some take as an unofficial seal of approval that the measures and procedures put in place are adequate. Suffolk County Council Archives have been in touch having heard that the works will provide a dedicated storage / search archive room for Elmswell. They are keen to help with advice and support in setting this up.

5 The distribution of wheelie bin stickers showing a 30mph reminder graphic has been made, as evidenced on bin days. My thanks to all of the community volunteers who came forward to help.

6 Having taken legal advice, I have sought to ratify the position regarding gates inserted by householders at White House Barns where they share a boundary with Blackbourne. Letters have gone to the 7 properties concerned allowing access and confirming that the permission can be withdrawn. This anticipates the need for certainty as the development to the east of Ashfield Road emerges where there will, again, be a boundary contiguous with the village's land.

7 As one of the few progenitors of the Neighbourhood Plan process left standing and involved, I am very mindful of the extraordinary circumstances which have dogged the process in Elmswell. I also have a very real awareness of the task which Cllr Philip Shaw took on when, as a relative new boy, he undertook to pull together 8 years-worth of paperwork, documentation, reports and related ephemera into a cohesive document to begin the formal submission process of the Plan. The result, to be tabled at this meeting, is hard-won and to be highly commended. It will now be shaped and augmented on Mid Suffolk's advice towards a viable text which will go before the Inspector. On the community's behalf, a formal thank you to Philip is due and is here unreservedly accorded.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
13.08.2020