

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 22nd April 2021

- 1 On 19th March I attended on site with Cllr Pallet to discuss with the Developer and sub-contractor the routing of the proposed electricity connection to the new 106 dwelling development adjacent to White House Barns. It was accepted that the easement might best be granted on the north side of the ditch and as close to the ditch as practicalities allow so as to impinge as little as possible on the use of the recreation area which the newly acquired land will represent. Paperwork and a formal Proposal from the Developer is awaited.

- 2 Meanwhile, on 6th April, I attended on site with Cllr Pallet to discuss with the Developer the incursion on to Council land by the Developer's sub-contractor to gouge out a deep 3m wide ditch running for some 85m close to and parallel with the northern boundary of the newly acquired Council land adjacent to the development site. Council's solicitor has been instructed to write in the strongest possible terms regarding a clear breach of the land Transfer conditions which stand to present a serious constraint on the recreational use of the land.

- 3 Elmswell Community Enterprise Limited (ECE) is now well established with the 10 founder members making progress, as advised by the Plunkett Foundation, in selecting an architect and producing a draft concept plan for public consultation towards a design for the Elmswell Tavern as a community pub. A Plunkett Bursary of £2,500 has been granted to defray the setting-up expense and this will, as anticipated, repay to EPC the costs incurred thus far in advertising for Expressions of Interest from architects and for Plunkett Membership fees. The group is in the process of establishing a bank account. This could not begin until it was formally registered as a Community Benefit Society with the Financial Conduct Authority which process itself was not able to be completed until 22nd March. In the interim, I have agreed that ECE can channel their funding, which includes £600.00 from the Hopkins Homes Charitable Fund, and draw expenses on those funds, through EPC until their own account is established. All transactions are identified in the monthly financial Reports to Council and the stand-alone account is expected to be in place within 6 weeks.

- 4 The possibility of refreshing the play area safety inspection training for our caretaker and village warden has been made difficult by the restrictions over the past year. Therefore I arranged for a bespoke training day at Blackbourne on 15th April with the Play Area Inspection Company who are the organisation which, under the joint inspection programme

made available by BMSDC, conduct the annual inspections of our play areas including the Multi-Use facility at Blackbourne and the green space at Clay Field. This is an expensive option @ £795.00 but I was able to sell places to 5 other parishes. Both of our employees are now up to date with their training and certified as such and our Caretaker, Mark Edwards, now RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International) certificated.

- 5 I have worked through several false starts, as circumstances have obviously dictated, with Cllr Pallett towards a formal opening at Wesley. Jo Churchill MP has agreed to officiate on Friday 9th July at 11.00am should those same circumstances allow. I am working with user groups to allow the limited exhibition of what their organisations have to offer and with ECE towards taking the opportunity to inform and consult on the Elmswell Tavern project. It is suggested that the event might benefit from appropriate entertainment / refreshment and the proposal at item 15 on the Agenda reflects this.
- 6 The Mid Anglia Rail Passenger Association volunteers have worked with us via Cllr Friend on maintaining pressure for the improvements to Elmswell Station, including the real-time information screens etc. They provide a valuable link to the various elements of the behemoth that is the various railway provision infrastructures. It has been suggested that it would seem appropriate that they are supported in their good work, hence the Proposal at 16.
- 7 I had an on-line meeting with Mid Suffolk CIL grant & funding officers together with Cllr Mansel on 19th April seeking a way forward towards financing the ventilation and insulation improvements to the Chamberlayne Hall which were considered at the inception of the recent expansion scheme but abandoned in the changing circumstances of the Covid impingements. Improved ventilation is essential, but it is now clear that the hall needs to achieve this by virtue of much better natural air circulation rather than the recycled-air options considered earlier and that electrically controlled skylights present the best way forward. It would seem remiss not to seize the opportunity with the building scaffolded and accessible to upgrade the insulation to up-to-date spec. which offers an improvement factor of 3+. It was suggested that the installation of more solar panels might bring the project under the aegis of specific grant aid from the Salix Finance scheme. An overarching consideration is the chance to renew the external roof sheeting which is approaching the end of its projected life and increasingly prone to corrosion. I am pursuing these options.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
21.04.2021