

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

December 2021

Full Council meeting	November's full council meeting was cancelled because not enough substantive items of the agenda, the opposition Green/LibDem group strongly disagreed with this decision stating it eroded democracy and accountability as a result of fewer council meetings per year. The group had planned to put forward 2 issues for debate, how the council could improve house building standards in terms of environmental performance in relation to Cop26 and the efficiency and structure of council decision- making. These will be heard at the next meeting.
Housing Land Supply	The Land Supply position statement currently out for consultation state that MSDC has double the minimum five-year land supply required for the provision of new homes. The opposition Green/Lib Dem councillors warned that it could mean the housing market is 'over-heated' and the council will fall short of supply in the future leaving the council open to more government sanctioned unplanned development.
Planning process peer review	MSDC has organised the peer review of its planning committee processes, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), to check a number of aspects of the decision-making process. The review team has been meeting with a range of stakeholders during the week to find out about their experiences before reporting back to the council with its findings and recommendations.
Warmer Homes initiative	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have secured over £248,000 in funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to ensure privately rented properties in Suffolk meet minimum energy standards, ensuring warmer homes.
First EV Taxi in Mid Suffolk	MSDC's licencing team have now licensed the first EV taxi in the district. The operator will be logging his running costs, charge locations, and experience to help the team shape our future EV policy and encourage other drivers to make the switch in future.
Virtual High Street	MSDC's virtual high street has a Christmas campaign to try to encourage more users of the service. A number of businesses in Needham Market, Stowmarket and Eye have joined the scheme and are offering festive deals to try to encourage us to 'shop local'. More information can be found at http://www.virtualhighstreet.uk/ .
Woolpit Health Centre Carpark	The new carpark at Woolpit Health Centre was officially opened on Nov 5 th and has already been used for the recent vaccination clinics. Currently access is via the existing health centre carpark, but once more homes are occupied on the adjacent housing development access will be via Old Stowmarket Road.
Locality Awards	There is still funding from the annual locality awards. Amounts of £250 or more are available to local community groups and organisations. Please encourage groups in the village to contact us for an application form or telephone for further information and help in applying. Recently Elmswell Football Club received funding for the purchase of a new white lining machine.
National Tree week	Babergh and MSDC worked with parish councils during National Tree Week (27 th Nov – 5 th Dec) to plant nearly 5,000 trees to help tackle biodiversity loss.
Needham Lake visitor centre	An online poll to choose the name for the new visitor centre at Needham Lake concluded last month and the name 'Duck & Teapot' was announced at the topping-out ceremony. The visitor centre and café will be a big boost to the district's most popular tourist attraction and is due to open in early 2022.

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