

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

March 2021

COVID update	<p>The Prime Minister has now outlined the stages necessary to get back to a more normal way of life following the pandemic. For this to proceed as planned it is vital that everyone takes up their offer of a vaccine.</p> <p>There are currently 10 different covid-19 business support grants open for applications. The grants relate to different periods of national or local lockdown restrictions since November 2020. The Home but Not alone phonenumber is still active for those who need it.</p>
COVID community testing sites	<p>Rapid testing centres are rolling out across the county. The first Mid Suffolk site was at the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. Elmswell and Needham Market Community testing centres opened on Wednesday 24th Feb and it is hoped to open test centres in both Eye and Debenham in due course. These test centres are for people who are not displaying symptoms of COVID and you need to book an appointment via the SCC website https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/getting-a-test/</p> <p>If you do have symptoms you must book a test via the national website or phone 119. https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test</p>
General Fund Budget 2021/22	<p>At the February Council meeting next year's budget was agreed. There is to be a 1.66% increase in Council Tax despite budgeting for over £3M surplus each year for the next 3 years. Cross party working groups are to be set up to decide how to spend approx £4M across all parts of the organisation to help in the recovery following the pandemic.</p>
Housing Revenue Account 2021/22	<p>Since the Government removed the cap of rent increases, MSDC are to increase their Council House rent by CPI+1% (this equates to approx £1.25 per week increase). Sheltered Housing Service charges are to go up by £1 per week, but there are no changes to Sheltered Housing utility charges or garage rents. The Council has a Capital programme 2021-24 to develop 254 affordable homes and 119 shared ownership homes. MSDC has engaged Icen Homes to identify development sites. Over the next 3 years it is hoped to bring forward sites at Cedars Park, Bacton and Haughley. MSDC are also bidding for S106 acquisitions in several new developments all over the district.</p>
Needham Lake visitor centre	<p>The Council have completed the procurement process and appointed a contractor to build the Needham Lake Visitor Centre and Café. The facility is a high quality and environmentally sustainable building which will become a real asset to the Lakes as a tourist attraction and as a benefit to the local community.</p>
Gateway 14	<p>Gateway 14 has submitted a planning applicant to MSDC for a mixed use business park. This has followed an extensive community engagement exercise. The public consultation on the planning application runs until 3rd March and it is hoped that the application will be determined in April or May.</p>
Census 2021	<p>Census day is March 21st. It is vital that everyone completes the survey as the responses will help to identify society's needs now and in the future. This information helps plan and fund services in the locality including transport, healthcare and education. All households should receive information in the post explaining how to complete the questionnaire online or to apply for a paper form if necessary.</p>
Waste Services	<p>The waste collections were disrupted by the snowy weather and they have been working on Saturdays to try to catch up, and I think it is mostly up to date now. The Brown Bin service is set to resume on w/c 15th March in this area. Subscribers will have their payments adjusted to account for the missing collections.</p>

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