

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 15th November 2021

- 1 The ECE group continues to liaise with the adviser from the Plunkett Foundation and with the Assessor allocated by the UK Co-op Community Shares Unit towards refining the Share Prospectus which will go to all households, to local businesses and elsewhere inviting investment in the Elmswell Tavern community pub project. Once certified under the Standard Mark Assessment Scheme, the scheme becomes eligible for substantial matched funding through the Community Shares Booster Programme. In parallel, the exercise to produce an informed build-budget based on the concept plans is working towards producing a cost projection for the full scheme and a much lower cost for the minimum scheme that would produce a viable refurbishment.
- 2 The Elmswell Community Land Trust, through EPC, is seeking quotes for the first step in the process of providing locally controlled affordable housing on the back-land of the Tavern site as purchased from Greene King. This is the undertaking of a Housing Needs Survey and a first enquiry has been made of AECOM who carry out such exercises related to strategic and neighbourhood planning and with whom EPC has worked successfully in the past. Grant funding is available for this first step in defining the need towards developing an appropriate scheme and finding partnerships for delivery.
- 3 On 11th November, Cllr Pallett and I met with The Technical Manager of Matthew Homes Ltd regarding works under easement on EPC land adjacent to Blackbourne to provide an electric supply to the developer's development off Ashfield Road. It was agreed that previous negotiations, as seen by Council, have provided a workable way forward in both the matter of the easement and of the unacceptable incursion of the original swale works. Confirmation of the other side's acceptance of Council's legal costs will trigger the process of formal agreement.
- 4 In November 2020 the BWMA mooted the idea of installing 6 electrically controlled roof lights, with automatic rain-check and blackout blinds in the roof of the Chamberlayne Hall at Blackbourne with a view to the project being able to lean upon the on-going extension works for some elements of the cost (eg scaffolding already in place). This addressed the lack of natural light in the venue and, critically, the lack of ventilation which the extension had unsuccessfully sought to address. This latter aspect became and remains very significant addressing a post-Covid world. In surveying the job it was apparent that the 25 year life-span of the original roof (installed 1998) was almost elapsed and that it might be appropriate to replace the steel sheets as part of a larger job. An application for CIL funding could not be made for the re-roofing element (maintenance) but was made for the skylights (improvements). Covid featured again in that this application took a long time to be processed. During that time, the well-documented dramatic inflation in the cost of building materials has changed perspectives.
The relevant figures for consideration as per Agenda item 13 are:
 - a Original quote for re-roofing to include upgraded insulation as required by current regs. plus installation of roof lights (best of 3 quotes / known local contractor) £50,501.84
 - b Original quote (07.05.2021) for supply & install rooflights only £26,125.90
 - c CIL funding (from District-wide pool) offered - 75% of rooflight installation ref original quote - £19,593.81

d More recent quote (29.10.2021) for work as at (a) £67,883.93 (uplift 34%)

e More recent quote (02.11.2021) for work as at (b) £32,310.55 (uplift 24%)

If either the whole job or just the skylights were to be pursued, the cost to EPC (drawn from dedicated CIL funds) analysis, net of the CIL contribution on offer, would be:

Whole job £48,290.13

Skylights only £12,716.74

- 5 I was made aware of proposed daytime railway crossing 24 hr. closures at Elmswell scheduled for 6 weekends beginning 13th November and subsequently engaged in vigorous debate with Network Rail towards possible mitigation of what would be a seriously disruptive imposition on road users. The result is that NR have accepted that closures could be avoided with the use of temporary traffic lights. At the time of writing, this is still under review, despite the fact that the first event will, now, be in 6 days' time. I have suggested that, for future reference, merely liaising with SCC Highways in no way offers any realistic chance of a common-sense or realistic approach to such proposals and that EPC remains open to consultation on behalf of the community which would bear the brunt of such apparently ill-considered actions.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
14.11.2021