

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 21st February 2022

- 1 I am to attend an on-line meeting co-ordinated by MSDC with SCC officers and Ward Members to review the proposed scheme and estimated costs re the pedestrian and cycle link between Elmswell and Woolpit towards being in a position to secure developer contributions and other funding. I have been involved on EPC's behalf in the concept and various levels of planning for this community path since October 2000, including securing Planning permission in 2008, and would hope to be able to contribute towards delivery within a shorter time frame than has been required thus far.

- 2 It has become clear, working with the Elmswell Community Enterprise (ECE) Management Committee towards realising the Elmswell Tavern Community Pub scheme, that the time scale between now and building works being possible is, probably, some 9 months. The group has suggested that much valuable work can be done in developing the community pub concept prior to refurbishment if the tenancy is taken in-house. Accordingly, the Proposal at 19 on the agenda develops this by seeking to have the Chairman of the ECE group, himself a long-serving licensed trade professional, take on the Licence and for the group to manage the enterprise underwritten by EPC which would therefore benefit from any trading profit. There has already been considerable interest from some experienced local residents keen to be employed as part of a team to help lay the foundations of a community-based enterprise in advance of the major refurbishment. It is suggested that there would be considerable benefit from the customer feedback in the interim. All administration will come through the Clerk's office. I have begun the process of putting in place the necessary agreements with suppliers and other agencies.

- 3 The meeting arranged for 10th February to take further the possibility of a new site for another school in the village was postponed due to the illness of one of the key SCC officers. It is re-scheduled for 8th March.

- 4 The grass cutting contract for maintenance of the cemetery, Crown Mill green space and the playing field at Clay Field is allocated bi-annually to save administration costs. We have been with the current contractor since he started out in business in 2014 during which time he has grown and developed, offering an extremely good service. It often proves difficult to secure quotes for this work and the paper detailing approaches made to known operators and to those who have made an approach over the past 24 months has been circulated showing just 2 prices tendered.

- 5 I have held 2 meetings with those interested to help the village mark the forthcoming Platinum Jubilee on Sunday 5th June. There is a strong indication that local street parties are suitable in some locations and that these are already under discussion. I have agreed that the Clerk's office will act as a clearing house for enquiries on the logistics and can advise on the measures put in place by MSDC / SCC to help facilitate such events. However, there is appetite for a central gathering which has crystallised into a proposal for a beach picnic at Blackbourne with appropriate seaside entertainment and attractions.

Cllr Brown has secured, free of charge, 30 tonnes of sand for the beach which will then be spread after the event, under the direction of Cllr Burch, over the senior football pitch to aid drainage. Other aspects are in hand and agenda item 22 refers. Grant aid is promised via MSDC and I shall monitor this and apply accordingly. Meanwhile I am talking to the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches who are keen to have the Salvation Army band attend and to a resident who has been selected by the Woodland Trust to receive one of their 60,000 Memorial Trees which they are keen to plant on the day at Blackbourne

- 6 My thanks to Cllrs Barker, Pallett, Roots & Shaw for their patient attendance to the tedium of examining processes and procedures re the Clerk's Office. This is something which I feel that should have encouraged sooner. It proved to be a useful opportunity for analysing a situation which has developed organically over some 20 years during which time we have moved from free accommodation in my old office at Gobblin through to expanding the subsequent accommodation at the Council's Blackbourne office, in the meantime taking on the workload of a busy and innovative council serving a fast-expanding population. Since that meeting more relevant factors are drawn to my attention – the current reliance on private transport for various tasks, including ferrying stock between Blackbourne and Wesley, together with the ever-increasing schedule of 'schemes' such as the Road Safety Initiative. I have also had a chance to properly assess the savings on external 'handyman' jobs to be done in-house under a new Caretaker contract and I put this at £3k pa, ie in excess of the figure quoted as 'handyman 4hrs'.

I stress the succession-planning element of thinking in recommending the Proposals to the agenda.

I shall leave the meeting if there is any detailed discussion at 17 and advise that the public be asked to leave if there is any detailed discussion emerging re items 15, 16 & 17.

- 7 I have agreed to the use of an area of the car park at Blackbourne for bicycle safety training undertaken by Elmswell School in conjunction with the SCC Road Safety team. This is because the expanded school does not have enough playground space.

- 8 I relied on delegated powers in Planning matters to respond to the SCC suggestion that EPC might like to comment on their well-developed proposals for waiting restrictions outside Elmswell School. I circulated this by email given that the response deadline was just 7 days from notification. The Council's comments are circulated suggesting:

- that the consultation might have been earlier;
- that the community would like equal access to this fast-track process towards suggesting other measures as part of their Road Safety initiative;
- that the proposals detailed should be amended to extend further than proposed.

- 9 The Archive confirms the beginning of the Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan process proper in my letter to MSDC dated 5th October 2012 confirming EPC's wish that:
Elmswell be regarded as a front-runner in the District Council's Neighbourhood Plan process as it becomes defined and that the extant land bids lodged in 2000 be dealt with as soon as possible as part of this process.

This was derived from a meeting which I called on 5th January that year to, '*begin the process of re-drafting the Elmswell Village Plan*'.

I recommend agenda item 20 as a next step in this process.

10 My thanks to Cllr Mellen are due for the extra impetus he was able to give to resolving the very long standing problems with the street light unit 102 in New Road. It finally transpires that Repair is not possible as the lamps and control gear are obsolete. I have authorised with SCC the replacement of the luminaire and switch gear with a far more efficient LED unit at a cost of £1,400.00 net. The lead time might take us to the end of May before the work is done. Thanks again to Cllr Burch for championing the issue and for informing concerned residents of the outcome.

11 I have received the first report back from Cllr Brown on the resumption of the data collection from the SID devices. Any queries directly to him, please, as our new-found specialist. He confirms:

Church Hill

The majority of the data were collected from August 2016 to November 2018, with some more up to date data from November 2021 to January 2022.

Taking a holistic view the AADT (annual average daily traffic) figure has increased by approximately 400 vehicles over the last 6 years.

The ADT (annual daily traffic) 5 day figure has increased similarly.

The average speed and the percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit have remained consistent.

The 5 day morning peak traffic flow has increased by approximately 25% during the period November 2018 and January 2022, probably due to the effects of the recent developments in the village.

The average speed and the percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit have remained consistent.

Ashfield Road

This was covered by two monitoring positions.

At the Grove Lane monitoring position the traffic flow data is again consistent over the monitoring period.

This could be as result of there not being significant development north of these positions.

It is significant that the incidence of excess speed and the speeds attained are approximately 20% higher at this location, but have remained consistent, with approximately 60% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit

This is probably due to the 30 mph sign being at the end of a long straight at national speed limit.

It is significant that White Barns showed a significant reduction in the speed of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

This is probably due to the fact that White Barns is significantly closer to the village centre.

Over the monitoring period the traffic flows have remained consistent.

12 Cllr Hawes drew to my attention, as advertised in the Press, a Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence for 5 more goods vehicles at the Operating Centre at Lawn Farm Quarry. Consultation on O Licenses extends only to owners or occupiers of land near the site who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected. I have argued to the Traffic Commissioner that, as representatives of the community of Elmswell, EPC effectively has an interest on behalf of the owners and occupiers of the land adjacent to the application site. I have raised objection on the grounds of the long-standing and well-documented nuisance caused by the HGV traffic from the old A45 which can only be exacerbated by increased use.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
20.02.2022