

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 20th June 2022

1 Discussions have continued, including site meetings, with Ward Members, the Mid Suffolk Chief Planning Officer, the MSDC Planning Case Officer, SCC Highways officers and with the Developer, regarding the highways mitigation measures and Community Path detailing re the site at Scholl Road ref DC/18/02146 for 86 dwellings and a pre-school facility.

It seems that the disparity between the Minuted decision at the MSDC Planning Committee and the subsequent publication of the relevant constraints with regard to the trigger point for the commencement of building works in relation to the Safety Audit and highways works is not a material problem.

It also seems that School Road will have to be closed for 6 months, being the most practical way forward considering the number of Statutory Undertakers needing to lay and / or divert services and for the actual highway works to be carried out.

I have secured the promise of Council's very early involvement on the community's behalf in the planning of road closures and diversions.

Meanwhile, Cllr Mellen is liaising with Highways officers towards securing detailed improvements to the scheme in light of observations he has had from residents and cyclists regarding road width and adequate separation between the highway and the community path.

I am attending the MSDC Planning Committee meeting at Ipswich on Wednesday next, 22nd when I shall reinforce the case which, under Delegated Powers, I made against the Approval of Reserved Matters, being:

Elmswell Parish Council urges rejection of this application for the following reasons:

1 *The early years provision as proposed suggests a cramped result both in terms of the lack of space for formal and informal external play or recreation facilities, for on-site parking and for drop-off / pick-up short term parking arrangements.*

2 *The tight site on which the early years facility stands will encourage parking for pick-up and collection to be on the estate roads which will considerably inconvenience the residents at these times. This factor will also encourage parking on School Road itself to facilitate pedestrian access gained along the boundary footway presenting the hazardous prospect of a line of parked cars at peak times on this busy feeder road.*

3 *The lack of differentiation between the highway traffic and the community cycle/footway is a retrograde factor which goes against the expectations derived from the many years of negotiation in which the community has engaged with Sustrans and others. The opportunity should be seized for grade differentiation and a green barrier to encourage the use of the more sustainable route and away from the road.*

4 *As at 3 above, the proposal effectively removes the opportunity for the community cycle/pedestrian path to pass behind the church, a route which not only presents a far safer and more pleasant option towards encouraging use but which also lessens the major engineering problems regarding the crossing at Bunkers Hill.*

5 *The visibility to the east down School Road from the proposed crossing point at the Church Road / School road junction will not be improved by what is proposed, despite the heavier traffic flows generated by the proposal. The opportunity should be taken for the verge fronting Church Mount & St Lucy to be widened so as to allow pedestrians access to a crossing point further to the east allowing a clear view of the School Road traffic approaching the junction.*

2 On 25th May I met with Cllrs Pallet and Mansel to hear from the developer, Orbit, and their agent Armstrong Rigg details of the proposals for the 65 dwellings on the extended Bacon Factory development. ref DC/20/01677. The principles on which it is suggested the

final estate will be designed seem to be soundly based in terms of density, sustainability and space requirements to NDSS standard or better and the whole site will be available on better than commercial rental or shared equity basis.

3 I am liaising on the community's behalf with Network Rail regarding all-day closures of the railway crossing for three Saturdays in August and one in October for the complete replacement of the gates and ancillary equipment when it is proposed that a mini-bus service for pedestrians will take them over the line by a diversionary route. We are trying for meetings at an early stage with the team managing the process towards minimising inconvenience and encouraging the exchange of information.

4 The Platinum Jubilee beach party at Blackbourne was a great success and benefitted from having the indoor facilities available given that the weather was not spectacularly encouraging. As part of the funding agreed I have promised grant aid to 2 separate street party groups who approached me at the steering meetings. The exercise remained within budget. Particular thanks go to David and Rosie Brown who toiled for many hours working as volunteers with David Austen, our new weekend caretaker / handyman, to distribute the 30 tonnes of beach sand as a dressing across the main football pitch providing valuable drainage improvement. The work was done in heat and humidity that was somewhat lacking on party day and their tenacity is to be applauded.

5 The consultation on the draft Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan remains live until 1st July. Responses are monitored by our professional advisers, Planning4People, who confirm that a steady trickle has been received from public and consultees alike. There is still time for the encouragement of further response and I would ask that Councillors spread the word whenever possible.

6 The joint exercise of fitting rooflights and re-coating the steel cladding to the original Chamberlayne Hall / changing rooms roofing was much affected by the weather but is now completed to the satisfaction of Cllr Pallett whose professional assessment was key to both the specification and execution. The roof now has a further 25 years of guaranteed life. Some of the detailed work to the seals on the existing penetrations was carried out by David Austen, now retained as weekend caretaker and handyman, at a considerable saving over the quoted 'variation' price.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
18.06.2022