

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

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

- 1 Cllrs Brown, Pallett and I met once again with the SCC Highways Community Liaison Engineer on 18th October to confirm the basis on which we are collaborating towards achieving EPC's Road Safety Initiative objectives, and it was agreed that:
 - (i) The best locations for speed survey points to inform the proposal for a 20mph limit through the heart of the village, survey to be funded by EPC;
 - (ii) The refreshing of white lining including the zebra crossing at The Street / New Road to be funded by SCC;
 - (iii) The installation of warning signs re road narrows / oncoming vehicles at New Road / The Street / Cooks Road junction to be specified and ordered by SCC but funded by EPC, cost to be determined.
- 2 Together with Cllr Pallett I met on 20th October with Greg Dodds of Orwell Housing towards an assessment of the feasibility of the Elmswell Tavern site for the proposed affordable housing towards a scheme which would retain local control but still attract the Government's Homes England funding. The outcome will inform Council's decision on the next step.
- 3 The National Highways consultation caravan was sited at Wesley on Friday 28th October and seemed to be busy throughout the day. I have undertaken to work with NH to keep the public informed via the Newsletter of the contraflow proposals as they develop.
- 4 I made a successful bid for funding from the MSDC Winter Warmth Fund Support Grant and Council has secured £1,000.00 towards subsidising use of the coffee shop at Wesley through the issuing of gift vouchers via various appropriate village organisations and to support events designed to offer a warm and comfortable option over the winter months. I am liaising with village groups towards managing this appropriately.
- 5 Arrangements are now in place to allow the Elmswell Food Bank to operate from inside the Elmswell Tavern back bar over the winter months.
- 6 In consultation with the ECE, revised opening arrangements for the Elmswell Tavern over the Christmas period and beyond have presented the opportunity to re-shape the staffing establishment to reduce back-office administration and formalise the line management. Recognising current industry-wide problems, the pub will open for Friday and Saturday nights only, barring special events. Accordingly, all current staff contracts will be terminated on 31st December and applications invited for the new limited posts as from 6th January. Volunteers have come forward to staff an afternoon session on New Year's Day to allow the walking group to gather.
- 7 The standing group of Ward Members, parish council representatives and officers from both SCC and BMSDC which is working towards the realisation of the plans for a community path providing a pedestrian and cycle link between Elmswell and Woolpit met at Wesley on 8th November. Progress is slow-but-sure on several fronts and is pursued by the various parties as appropriate. I have meeting notes on request, and the next session is scheduled for 7th March.
- 8 Re. Agenda item 12, I have consulted with our erstwhile Village Recorder towards suggestions of an appropriate name for the development at Grove Lane which centres upon Hedgerows. Field names and similar references have been exhausted in recent years given the number of developments established in that area of the village. Vernacular and dialect references offer a wealth of possibilities, with the hedgerow connection made in the suggestion of, 'Hulver' as the key name, as derived from the Old Norse '*hulfr*' meaning holly which is prevalent locally to the site. Reference was made to Claxton's, 'The Suffolk Dialect of the Twentieth Century', held in the Village Archive.
- 9 Councillors may be aware that the latest suggestion from the Boundary Commission regarding parliamentary constituency boundary changes takes account of EPC's suggestions (21.07.14 refers) that we should have at least one significant town within the new boundary. We are now proposed to be located at the eastern edge of the Bury St Edmunds constituency along with Woolpit and Stowmarket.

- 10 Council has been without a Tree Warden for some time and the vacancy advertised via the District Tree Warden group. Janet Spencer has offered to fill the post. Janet, new to the village, has previously held such a post for some 15 years in Huntingdonshire. I have relied on Janet's advice in recent weeks regarding tree problems presented by residents, towards the hedge planting around the new Blackbourne boundary and re the job at agenda item 15 where, in discussion with our tree surgeon, it was clear that her advice is sound. I recommend her without hesitation to fill our vacancy.
- 11 Cllr Pallett and I met with Bloor Homes on 10th November on their site at School Road to discuss the proposals for the closure of the road to allow infrastructure works, road widening and the creation of the pedestrian / cycle path. Clearly there is going to be serious disruption. However we asked that consideration be given to one-way routing of HGV traffic using Cooks Road outbound offering a better right-turn sweep for exceptional trailers and reducing the chances of HGV two-way conflicts. Council will be re-consulted when this has been considered. Meanwhile, the closure is now likely to be no longer than 12 weeks and liaison with the developers remains genuinely open and fully co-operative.

Peter Dow
20.11.2022