

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Meeting 18th November 2024

- 1 Cllr Pallett and I met with the Site Manager at Mathew Homes' development adjacent to Blackbourne on 23rd October to confirm in principle the situation regarding boundaries and responsibilities as the contractor prepares to quit the site. Nothing untoward was noted. The public areas of the development will be in the hands of the designated Management Company whose details we have should liaison be necessary.

- 2 I attended with Cllr Pallett the BMSDC T&PC liaison event at Wesley on 17th October which was based on presentations from Cllr Andy Mellen as Council Leader, Arthur Charvonia as BMSDC Chief Exec., and Tom Barker recently appointed to the new post of Chief Operating Officer. The main points noted were:
 - A move back towards Strategic Planning through the Mid Suffolk Plan
 - The end of the County Deal devolution proposals in advance of new legislation which might well suggest a new governance framework for Suffolk
 - A healthy financial situation benefitting from the emerging Gateway 14 project and income from CIFCO, acknowledging that the Balance Sheet for the latter shows much reduced capital values for the properties purchased in 2017.In discussions away from the meeting proper EPC's secure position re the CIL input towards the Elmswell Tavern project was confirmed.

- 3 I attended the Launch Event for the Mid Suffolk Taxi Bus scheme on 29th October which brought together many of the principals involved in our local rural transport services which include our own pilot taxi-bus scheme. I have registered my concern regarding the very confusing multiplicity of such schemes which have sprung up encouraged by central government funding. I have tried to make the case for some coordination towards a more coherent picture for the public who are currently presented with a variety of options advertised in various ways, often with overlap of service which does not make for an efficient approach. I am speaking with various other groups towards developing demand responsive transport which, effectively, manages bookings, journeys, and timings on a door-to-door taxi basis. This model already exists in other areas. Meanwhile the bus stops at Elmswell are confusingly festooned with timetables and interactive screens which do not function. This does not encourage faith in public transport towards avoiding car use.

- 4 The Chairman, Vice chairman and myself met with the developers Hartog Hutton seeking to learn of their proposals for resuming the lapsed development of housing off Warren Lane. The meeting was held at their invitation and under the Council's pre application protocol. It sketched out very generally a lower density development than has been previously proposed stopping short of the southern extremity which formed part of the most recent proposal. The landowner is reserving the right to access to the land at the South. Survey work will continue towards a likely Planning application.

- 5 The redevelopment of the Co-op has left us without the community notice board which we negotiated from them when the site was improved and enlarged some 20 years ago. I am in touch with is their community liaison in the hope of having a new board installed at the front of the shop to carry village notices as before and I also requested permission to site a display stand for the Elmswell Newsletter

- 6 The process outlined in my report last month has continued with regard to the Elmswell Tavern project. The subjected tenders have been clarified so as to present the basis for comparison and this process continues including, where appropriate, through meetings with developers face to face. The positive outcome, ie that the project can be realistically managed within anticipated budgets, remains valid.
- 7 Progress continues on the community path between Elmswell and Woolpit at an appropriately pedestrian pace. The CIL funding bid is in and an outcome expected by February. Discussions have taken place with the landowner regarding works at Bunkers Hill addressing the severe level variations there. An ecology survey has been carried out and identified no protected species, but a work plan is in place to deal with minor vegetation removal before the February window for such works. Meanwhile, specific design details are being worked up and discussions with National Highways are in due process regarding crossing A14.
- 8 In light of a recent incident whereby waste cooking oil was tracked up and down the access road to the Station Road industrial estate I have renewed efforts to persuade the various authorities to ensure that the kebab van stationed there conforms with proper rules and regulations. This includes the suggestion through our Ward Members that BMSDC considers establishing licences for street trading. At the moment this is entirely unregulated and imposes an unfair burden on other traders whose overheads include business rates etc.
- 9 I had the first of the newly-inaugurated Annual Progress meetings with Cllr Andy Mellen as leader of MSDC on 14th November. We covered a range of issues including:
- * The possibility of the establishment of a Street Trading Licensing system,
 - * The sometimes unrealistic time-lag in allowing CIL bids at 6 monthly intervals
 - * The chaotic multiple bus / taxi-bus initiatives
 - * The culture of buck-passing still evident in some departments, instancing a current regular specific problem with bin collections
 - * Difficulties in making effective contact with officers in trying to help residents access BMSDC services
 - * Shortcomings in effectively publicising some MSDC initiatives
- I also snuck-in current SCC Highways issues such as the A1088 bridge works which would seem to highlight repeated failures in the core business model across the board. The only realistic possibility of positive change would seem to be a shake-up in the SCC Administration on 1st May.
- 10 The 3rd Monday in April falls on Easter Monday, 21st. Accordingly, I propose that the April Ordinary Meeting be moved forward to the 14th.

Peter Dow
17.11.2024