

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 20th December 2021

- 1 I attended the Elmswell Fox Bowls Club AGM on 1st December at Wesley. Unusually for its sector during the recent difficult times, the Club has thrived, enjoyed success, secured promotion and, significantly, attracted new members. The green is improved, in excellent fettle and now provides a much faster game which suits the current players. A change to the arrangement for informal 'roll-ups' means that these are not paid for on a session by session basis but, rather, that membership fees are increased to allow free ad hoc access to members. In consideration of the fact that 20% of the fees would have come to EPC under the terms of the Agreement between the two bodies, it was agreed that the usual grant of £500.00 paid to EPC in appreciation of the co-operation the Club enjoys should be uplifted to £550.00.
- 2 I attended the BWMA AGM and subsequent Committee meeting on 2nd December at Wesley, there having been just 6 meetings since the last AGM in September 2019. The Meeting noted the successful completions at Wesley and regarding the Chamberlayne extension together with the ECE moves towards developing the Elmswell Tavern offering considerable benefits to Wesley. A 5% uplift in letting fees across the board was implemented and there was broad agreement for consideration to be given to the re-shaping of the parking and sports changing facilities at Blackbourne once the extra 6 acres of land are available following the unfortunate incursion by the adjacent developer.
- 3 In June of this year Council agreed that I should approach Messrs HR Services, as recommended by SALC, to undertake a review of the staffing and structuring of the Clerk's office with an eye to succession planning and the considerable expansion of roles and responsibilities as the village grows. This has yielded no progress, despite best efforts, and I have asked SALC for a second recommendation. This introduces Messrs CBR Business Solutions of Norwich and I hope to have details of their proposal prior to the January meeting.
- 4 I have had notification from SCC of a project to upgrade to LED some of their maintained streetlights in the village, beginning in January. This offers the opportunity for the upgrading of some of the Parish Council owned units with financial benefit by virtue of economies of scale. I will put any suggestions that come to me to the January meeting with costings.
- 5 The practice of changing Council's Internal Auditor every 3 years means that we lose the excellent Heather Heelis. Further to the proposal at Agenda item 20, I have known Dave Crimmin for many years as a fellow Clerk and member of both SALC and SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks). His website at www.davecrimmin.co.uk gives an excellent overview of his background and current practice as auditor / consultant / mentor to the sector.

- 6 I attended Mid Suffolk Development Control Committee A on 8th December at Endeavour House to confirm EPC's objection to the Planning application ref DC/21/02956. This was on grounds that the extension to the original site, which gained permission in 2018 for 38 dwellings creating a southern development boundary contiguous with that proposed in the emerging JLP site allocation plan, would open up access to the east encouraging development to link up with the new Wetherden Road estate. Further, that it proposed bringing housing much closer to the problematic nuisance from the Lawn Farm Quarry site which is expanding to meet the new proposed development envelope.
- It seemed unlikely that Members would vote to refuse the application given the previous Permission upon which this one is predicated. I argued that a deferral would give the Applicant a chance to pull back to the original boundary, thus satisfying our principal objections.
- There was strong support for our case from Cllrs Mansel and Geake and an eventual admission from the Case Officer that the recently granted permission for expansion of the quarry site had not been taken into account.
- The Application was, by unanimous vote, deferred and I will seek to reiterate and strengthen EPC's arguments in favour of reverting to the original southern boundary of the site and, effectively, of the village.

Peter Dow
Clerk to the Council
19.12.2021