

# District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

July 2021

Member Locality grants 21-22	MSDC has launched this year's locality grant scheme. Each district councillor has over £7k to award to community groups within their area. Although the deadline is not until 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2022, it is helpful if any group wishing to apply for funding gets in touch with their district councillor as soon as possible. The minimum application is for £250, and all applicants should meet at least one of Mid Suffolk's priorities for Grant Funding. See the website for more details: <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-2021-22/">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/locality-awards-2021-22/</a>
Sports and Leisure Strategy Refresh	Following a review of the sports and leisure provision across the district a refreshed Sports and Leisure Strategy is to be approved by Cabinet. The next step in the process is for the officers to develop a detailed action plan for the next 3 years.
Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre extension.	In June Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre opened the doors to its new £2.2m upgrade and extension. The work, funded by Mid Suffolk District Council included a range of state-of-the-art fitness equipment as well further improvements made throughout the leisure centre. The number of stations in the gym has been increased from 50 to 100.
CIFCO	CIFCO's annual business report was on the agenda for last month's Overview and Scrutiny committee. The portfolio now consists of 21 acquisitions and does bring in funds. Last year CIFCO brought in just over £2m to be ploughed back into providing services across both districts. However, the CIFCO accounts for the last year, 2021 show a paper loss of £4.4m made up of expected one-off acquisition costs of around £2m (including stamp duty and fees) as well as a re-adjustment on the value of the portfolio as whole. The rental income the properties deliver is not affected by these fluctuations in their value. The business plan will be discussed at the next full council meeting at the end of July.
Virtual High Street, Stowmarket	During the pandemic we have had to change the way we shop. Following on from the successful Virtual High Street in Sudbury, it has now come to both Stowmarket and Hadleigh. The aim of the Virtual High Street is to bring the local high street and market. Over 60 shops and businesses have signed up to the platform in Stowmarket. BMSDC have invested in the system and appointed a Town Centre Business Liaison Officer for the project which is due to be extended to Eye and Needham Market in due course. There is also a free digital skills programme offered to all businesses so they can make the most of the technology.
Joint Local Plan Examination	The hearing for the Joint Local Plan examination began last month, but after one day was deferred. A new date for the hearing has yet to be determined but is likely to be in September. The Stage 2 examination is still expected to take place in the autumn as previously expected.
Needham Lake Visitor Centre	Work has now begun on the construction of a new visitor centre and café at Needham Lake.
Biodiversity	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are to fund biodiversity projects costing over £90k. These include mapping wildlife corridors, council owned public space as well as county wildlife sites and local nature reserves. There will also be a tree canopy survey. These projects are based on the proposals from the Biodiversity Working group.

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