

# District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

June 2021

Annual Council Meeting	Due to the COVID restrictions the Annual Council meeting had to be held at Wherstead Park on 24 <sup>th</sup> May. This was the only place large enough to enable social distancing, but it was far from ideal. The Conservative and Independent group elected Conservative Paul Ekpenyong as the new Chairman of Mid Suffolk District Council, having served as vice chair last year. Last year's Chairman, Conservative Barry Humphreys, was elected vice chair. Both were elected by the chairman's casting vote, as the political situation is still deadlocked. There are 17 councillors on both sides, so the chairman's casting vote becomes crucial for decision-making. All cabinet and vice cabinet positions, bar the chair of Overview and Scrutiny, were filled by Conservatives, all with the chairman's casting vote being used. Cllr Ekpenyong's chosen charity for this year will be East Anglia's Children's Hospices.
Covid 19 delta Variant	Due to a small outbreak of the COVID delta variant, Tactical Management Teams sprang into action to support the arrival of mobile testing units in Needham Market's ex council offices in Hurstlea Road, with 2,000 tests completed in 3 days. The testing unit will stay in place with no appointment needed. Needham Market residents are urged to keep getting tested to prevent further spreading of the variant. All other community testing sites closed on 28 <sup>th</sup> May.
The Regal Theatre	The £3.6 million refurbishment of The Regal Theatre has been completed with the venue offering three screens, a new café and bar area, and improved parking and toilet facilities.
Free Fitness classes	'Our Parks' is running free fitness classes at venues across Suffolk, all venues are Covid secure. See website for more information. <a href="https://ourparks.org.uk/borough/babergh-mid-suffolk-district-council">https://ourparks.org.uk/borough/babergh-mid-suffolk-district-council</a>
Active Travel	A 2-month public consultation has been launched on walking and cycling infrastructure, allowing residents to share their ideas about current facilities and what they want to see in the future. Please make your contributions via the interactive map at <a href="https://baberghmidsuffolkactivetravel.commonplace.is/">https://baberghmidsuffolkactivetravel.commonplace.is/</a>
Land south of Old Stowmarket Rd. Woolpit.	On Wed 12 <sup>th</sup> May, Development Control Committee A resolved to grant outline planning permission for another 40 dwellings to the south of the David Wilson scheme. This new scheme offers land for the primary school extension should SCC think it necessary.
New Health Centre Car Park	The project to provide a new 136 space car park as part of the development to the south of Old Stowmarket Road has been brought forward in response to the COVID pandemic. The detailed planning application was approved by Development Control Committee A on Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June. There will be temporary access to the new car park from the rear of the existing Health Centre car park, but once access is available through the new housing development the temporary access will revert to pedestrian and cycle access only. The funds for the project are being sought from the Community Infrastructure Levy. The funding arrangements will be determined by Cabinet on Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> June. The proposal is to split the funding 50/50 between the Strategic fund and the Woolpit Ringfenced fund.
Neighbourhood planning	Three Mid Suffolk parishes held referenda for Neighbourhood Plans last month and these have now been formally adopted as planning policy for Eye, Drinkstone and Wilby.

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