

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 18th October 2021

- 1 Council received positive feedback from residents who had followed the live-streamed SCC Development & Regulation Committee meeting held in Ipswich on 23rd September which considered the proposed extension at Elmswell Community Primary School. I made the well-rehearsed local objections as presented by EPC to the initial consultation (SCC/0054/21MS) and again in written form to the Planning Application. There was a certain inevitability about the outcome as the Authority has, it is suggested, failed to plan in the longer term and is left with few options. These views were reiterated in an on-line meeting held with MSDC on 5th October to discuss the CIL allocation of £1,559,966 plus s106 Funding of £664,878 giving a total of £2,224,844 to tally with the RIBA Stage 3 cost estimate. I was invited to present Council's case against putting this funding towards a short-term solution to the looming longer term problem, thus avoiding the need to bus our children each day to a new school in Woolpit. The ensuing letter is appended. The matter is determined at Cabinet and the outcome not known at the time of writing.
- 2 I attended the recent wildflower seed-sowing community event at the Poor's Land Trust holding at Town Field down Spong Lane, where Council has encouraged the ElmsWild group to manage the area as a wildflower meadow. The volunteers have made considerable headway towards rescuing this last vestige of community-owned Trust land from anonymity and expressed appreciation of Council's continuing support.
- 3 The twice-postponed formal opening of Wesley took place on Friday 15th of October. Jo Churchill MP, newly promoted Parliamentary Undersecretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, formally handed over the chapel door key to Cllr Pallett. A substantial gathering was entertained by Donimo the magician whilst the Elmswell Ukulele Band provided musical accompaniment and there were exhibitions from several community user-groups. Community volunteers helped with the general stewarding and those who have championed the project since 2014 finally saw the official seal put on their efforts which have produced a facility to stand the community in very good stead for the future. Jo Churchill made particular mention of the Tavern project, having been aware and involved since its inception, and suggested that if the same standard of design and functionality driven by the same community energy were to be applied, the Elmswell Tavern will be equally successful.

- 4 I have accepted the request to make a presentation explaining EPC's very successful initiatives at Blackbourne and at Wesley to install sustainable energy heating systems as part of the BMSDC Local Energy Showcase event at Wherstead Park on 22nd October. Meanwhile, I continue to pursue the SCC Environment Strategy team towards their promised grant aiding of EV charging points at both venues where we have already made advance infrastructure provision to the service points.

- 5 The ECE group has now refined the Share Prospectus which will go to all households, to local businesses and elsewhere inviting investment in the Elmswell Tavern community pub project. The extra work was required for the document to be of a standard required to achieve Community Shares Standard Mark recognition which opens the door to substantial matched funding. The document is now undergoing formal assessment. Meanwhile, a small group with relevant skills, experience and professional qualification is engaged in producing an informed build-budget based on the concept plans now completed by the architect and drawing on the immediately recent experience of the similar exercise which produced Wesley. In the interim, a walkway has been created linking the Tavern site with Wesley by the removal of a small section of the dividing wall, thus allowing shared car parking without the need to walk along School Road where there is no pavement.

Peter Dow

Clerk to the Council

17.10 2021