

## **ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

- 1 I attended the Fox Bowls Club AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> November as per the Club's Agreement with EPC. The accounts to 31.10.2022 show a £675.54 deficit of income over expenditure which reflects the extraordinarily dry summer and the subsequent cost of watering. Nevertheless, there is a positive balance at the bank and the Club seems to be in robust health, well worthy of the trust placed in it by EPC in terms of the maintenance of the green. The strengthening membership runs counter to local trends which see other bowls clubs struggling and closing and is testament to the very healthy community spirit within the Elmswell club.
- 2 I attended with Cllr Pallett the AGM of the Poor's Land Charity on 28<sup>th</sup> November. The deadline for applications for Co-op gift cards towards addressing hardship was extended for a month to 9<sup>th</sup> January. Acknowledging current circumstances, emergency funding with a starting balance of £1,000 is to be made available in grants of up to £100 at the discretion of the Chairman in liaison with two other Trustees. Furthermore, a grant of £500 was agreed to the Stowmarket Food Bank. The rent for the Trust's remaining land holding at Town Field is to be increased by £25.00 pa to £175.00, this to hold for the 5 years of a new Tenancy.
- 3 On 29<sup>th</sup> November I attended on-line the Appeal against the Refusal of Planning permission for 19 dwellings on land at the corner of Grove Lane and Ashfield Road. I was able once again to reinforce EPC's case that the more than adequate District Council Housing Land Supply removed any Planning case for this incursion into the countryside which seeks to present a more urban gateway to the village from the North by way of an unsustainable development from which residents would be dependent on car use. Local input was useful in confirming that the domestic lights suspended over the small practice kickabout area do not constitute a floodlit football pitch and that, not only is the bus service now reduced to one journey each way during school terms, but that, however often they run, the buses do not venture north of the railway line. The inspector's decision is pending.
- 4 On 30<sup>th</sup> November I attended a meeting at Woolpit to assess support for a sustainable transport initiative to address the problems of rural isolation and the difficulties of accessing services for residents without a car. Mid Suffolk and SCC Ward Members and officers were present along with parish councillors from Woolpit, Norton, Thurston and Haughley. Cllr Pallett and I recently met with Bethany Taylor, the Mid Suffolk officer overseeing sustainable travel, and made her aware of Elmswell's willingness to be part of any such scheme. Mid Suffolk are to pull together some of the ideas and areas for further investigation which the meeting generated as a basis for a future meeting.
- 5 The annual Councillor training session on Budget Setting and the Precept held on 5<sup>th</sup> December generated feedback which has informed the final document towards a well-considered decision on the Precept requirement for 2023 / 2024 to be addressed at the January meeting.
- 6 Cllr Pallett and I met with PC Stefan Henriksen, Community Engagement Officer for the Safer neighbourhood Team on 6<sup>th</sup> December to make him aware of the road safety initiative in which EPC is currently engaged with SCC Highways who will be seeking evidence of Police backing for the 20mph proposals. We were also able to seek co-operation in helping ensure that our Community Speed Watch team has full Police support.
- 7 I attended on-line with clerical staff for a MSDC CIL update and refresher on 13<sup>th</sup> December. It confirmed that EPC is up-to-date and compliant with the CIL procedures and was a useful way of ensuring that staff are aware of the due process which encourages involvement in what is a very valuable area of resource.