

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 17th April 2023

- 1 I have met with Cllrs Brown, Hancock and Pallett together with our Architectural Technician, David Magnani, towards refining the sketch plans for the proposed Tavern footprint and beginning the process of working these up to formal Pre-Planning Consultation application level. Meanwhile, Cllr Brown has advised on the choice of suitable Design & Construct Programme software which is now installed and will allow, when populated with appropriate key stages and the relevant estimated timings, some predictions as to the main progress points.
- 2 I joined an on-line briefing on 23rd March to begin engagement with the initiative, supported by Suffolk's Local Authorities and by Community Energy South, to encourage communities to benefit from locally owned renewable energy such as is proposed at Blackbourne by way of a wind turbine and at the Greene King site which offers community heating possibilities to benefit both the affordable homes and the pub. A formal Expression of Interest has secured Elmswell a place at the table as such proposals are developed county-wide.
- 3 Having registered an Elmswell interest in the proposals to allow use of Vertas electric mini buses to serve for community use when not on school runs, I joined a meeting of interested parties on 24th March towards devising a basis for a trial run. There is a proposal for a return service on Wednesdays from Elmswell / Woolpit / Thurston into Bury and back, the details of which are circulated. I seek Councillors' thinking on whether this might justify an underwriting exercise to ensure that the cost of each trip is covered regardless of how many fare-paying passengers use the service. The return trip cost is £45.00. If this is guaranteed by the 3 Parish Councils concerned it will allow a fixed fare. The fares thus gathered would defray the total cost for a trial period of, say, 6 weeks.
- 4 I met on 3rd April with the Chairman and Vice-chairman at the offices of Greene & Greene towards outlining the Heads of Terms of a Lease between the Council and ECE for the eventual handover of the pub to the village through their Community Benefit Society. The process which is now begun will be open to full Council scrutiny before ratification.
- 5 The Chairman has called the Annual Parish Meeting for Thursday 11th May. This is a community meeting and presents an opportunity for the village to meet its new councillors following the election on 4th May. Widening the scope for questions to be raised on matters of community interest, the Police have also agreed to attend, along with our sitting County Councillor, Andy Mellen. We are awaiting a response from SCC Highways who have been invited.
- 6 Following the election on 4th May, all councillors, whether re-elected or new to the role, cease to hold office on 9th May other than the Chairman and Vice chairman who remain in post until their respective successors are elected. Newly elected councillors cannot act unless and until they have made their Declaration of Acceptance of Office which must be signed at or before the first meeting of the new council unless that meeting determines otherwise.
- 7 The Chairman and I met at Wesley with Jo Churchill MP on Friday 14th April as she had sought an update on the situation regarding the site for a new primary school and was keen to help facilitate Government funding towards realising the aspirations for developing the Ex Greene King site, including the community pub. It was agreed that the affordable housing element of the site is in limbo unless and until MSDC Cabinet have met to reconsider their council's stance on the 5 acre holding at School Road where they had proposed a development of 50 houses which would, effectively alter the Housing Need dynamic in respect of affordable homes.