

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 19th June 2023

- 1 Mid Suffolk's new Administration has moved swiftly to address the problem of access to their meetings when held out of District at Endeavour House in Ipswich. This can take up a whole day of my time in order to make a 3 minute representation to a Planning committee, as the order of the Agenda is only determined on the day. A Protocol is now in place allowing contributions on-line. As a further move towards bringing the decision-making process back to being closer to the electorate, satellite venues have been identified where full Council meetings are to be held. Blackbourne hosts the first of these on Wednesday 19th July.
- 2 The Rose Lane plot adjacent to Wesley is now purchased and I have made a Planning application for change of use to car park. Safety fencing is in place and I am looking at costs for remediating the site ready for surfacing.
- 3 I could not attend the Bowls Club meeting on 5th July but I have the Financial Statement which was tabled showing a healthy Balance at Bank and there seem to be no concerns regarding the Club's relationship with EPC.
- 4 I copied to Councillors the link to the various documents addressing Mid Suffolk's concerningly poor performance in administering the May 4th elections. Elmswell suffered considerable disruption of process. I will, when they materialise, forward the promised detailed action plan dealing with the issues raised in both the internal and external reports. Meanwhile, there has been further confusion regarding the current Notice of Poll. The error it carries does not invalidate the process but casts further doubt on the efficiency of the MSDC department concerned.
- 5 I have had further meetings through Community Energy South & the Greater South East Energy Hub towards firming-up on the specification for a possible community wind turbine at Blackbourne. The Government stance remains that they intend to resile on what has been, effectively, a blanket ban on onshore units and I would hope to be in a position to consider taking advantage of any policy change when it happens.
- 6 The Taxi-Bus experiment has proved to be very successful and continues through to September. There is good feedback on the benefits accruing, beyond the simple fact of being able to get into Bury and back, in terms of social interaction and in providing another counter to the possibility of rural isolation, as has become very true in terms of what Wesley offers. I am meeting with the operator and the other villages to consider requests for extensions to the scheme with any firm proposals to be assessed by Council.
- 7 The Elmswell Community Enterprise AGM on 29th June elected a Management Board to serve for an initial 7 month period pending a further election when the Shareholders have had a chance to better assess the individual strengths on offer and any deficit towards electing a full-term body. Meanwhile, a draft Lease is to be drawn up for discussion and a Pre-Application Planning consultation is in due process. In response to demand, an open Share Offer is to be put in place allowing fresh investors to come forward.
- 8 My thanks to Cllr Hancock for looking into the possibility of a pest control contract at the allotments. I have copied to Members the recent communication from a previous provider which gives an outline of the procedures, constraints and costing. Cllr Hancock seeks a steer from Council as to whether or not to continue towards seeking competitive tenders for the work.
- 9 I attended, together with MSDC Ward Members and David Brown as Road Safety Officer, a site meeting with Bloor homes at their School Road development. We walked the site including the pedestrian / cycle path with no serious issues emerging. Actions requested were the addition of a 'pedestrian' logo figure next to the cyclist as currently stencilled on the path, the re-location of the 'Cyclists Dismount' sign currently presenting an unacceptably brutal intrusion at the almshouses and the best attempts of the Developer to have EPC included in the Stage 3 Safety Audit consultation towards testing the probity of the decision to create a pinch point at the bend near the oak tree.