

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Meeting 15th July 2024

- 1 On 1st July, together with Cllrs Brown and Mansell, I met with Cllr And Mellen, officers from SCC, MSDC, a representative from Milestone and representatives from Woolpit to chase the progress, or otherwise, on the proposed community pedestrian / cycle path between Elmswell and Woolpit. This was not the first time that the matter has been addressed by the various agencies and interest groups. I was able to table a quaint drawing from Mid Suffolk's 'Construction and Services Division – Engineering Section,' dated May 2000. Apart from the considerable change at the Woolpit end as a consequence of development in the interim, and the School Road path in Elmswell, the core issues remain the same and remain very difficult to address both in terms of engineering and cost.
The group reconvenes on 16th July to, once again, walk the route and discuss the options.
- 2 I met with Bee Taylor, our Communities Team link at BMSDC, on 2nd July to provide an update on 7 areas of joint interest, noted as:
- a) The Community Affordable Homes on the Tavern site Seeking appropriately experienced valuer so that we can have the land valued, as recommended by our Solicitor, before entering into any negotiation with RP's. CLT advising & chased. NB Mid Suffolk Offer of £2,955 re legal advice expenses accepted 30.04.2024
 - b) Play area EPC accepted advice from their T&FWP, backed by BWMA, for possible split scheme to refurbish existing and establish new area for under 6's on play area further into Crown Mill
NB Affected residents informed that this is under consideration (and see Agenda item 13. Proposal for pre-app consultation goes to next Council meeting 15.07
3 original schemes come in at £80k...proposed extra takes it to £120k?
 - c) Tavern 11 Eol's received and all now had full Questionnaire re experience, probity etc for return by 15.07 towards Tender issue 5th August & eventual Contract placed 30th September for Mid-October start. Confirmed Process of drawing down s106 funds towards starting with recent architect fee (£2827.50 net paid 20.05)
 - d) Taxi-bus Meet Weds 24th July when full year figs. Available. Likely agenda:
Size & nature of funding available
Possible extension – Thursday to Stow. + Norton?
Bus Co's extending coverage based on recent grant aid – can MSDC advise on crossover of services?
 - e) Blackbourne solar PV' s / batteries BT to confirm no further action needed to trigger CIL payment in September
 - f) Footpaths EPC has promised in principle £11,250k (25%) to SCC re Grove Lane back to Lord's Bridge route – Liaising James Pickerin
 - g) Football club Precise funding direction not yet identified awaiting amalgamation of clubs into Elmswell Community Football Club.
- 3 I met with Victoria Savoulidis, an Archivist from Suffolk Hold, on 3rd July to identify the way forward with regard to an appropriate accessioning, storage and retrieval system for the Elmswell archive which is accumulating, safe but unclassified, in the archive room at Blackbourne. We agreed that the Excel model as used by Lawshall Archives Group would offer a possible way forward and I am now in touch with the group for further information.

- 4 The Options Report commissioned from Anthony Collins, Solicitors, in the matter of the aspiration to build community affordable homes on the Tavern site requires discussion with registered Housing Providers whose involvement seems, according to the advice in the Report, inevitable. Before entering any negotiations, Council is obliged to have determined the value of the land as constrained by the proposed use. Land Agents are not keen to advise in these circumstances. However, I have secured 4 recommendations and some positive responses, as reflected in the proposal at Agenda item 14.

- 5 The Inspector's Decision which dismissed the Appeal against the refusal of Planning permission for a dwelling on the Council's land adjacent to 10, Crown Mill confirms that one of the protected characteristics which informed the ruling was that the site provided play space needed for young children. The clear need for play provision in this vicinity dedicated to a younger age demographic than that currently offered at Station Road was originally suggested as being deliverable by extending the current fenced area. This has met opposition with regard to the proximity of the queuing traffic at the railway crossing gates and, as indicated in indicative plans from facility providers, the very constrained result in terms of extra space delivered. None of the reasons presented in the Inspector's Report would seem to mitigate against the proposal that the area should continue as community play space but with the provision of play equipment, hence the suggestion at Agenda item 13 that this be further investigated by virtue of a Pre-App discussion with Mid Suffolk.

Peter Dow
14.07.2024