

3 Encouraged by the recent Consultation feedback, I have had on-line meetings and a face-to-face meeting with, variously, our neighbouring partner villages, SCC and BMSDC officers, and Vertas, regarding the current taxi-bus scheme and the proposal for a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) scheme centred on a possible Elmswell/Thurston partnership in owning and managing an electric mini-bus. A Major consideration is the fact that the introduction of funding from the Government Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) into the local Rural Transport Grants Scheme means that English National Concessionary Travel Scheme – ENCTS (bus pass) may have to be accepted in payment. The SCC Delivery Manager for BSIP+ is looking into the fine print so as to enable our current scheme to continue to derive income.

4 Cllr Brown attended a meeting re the forthcoming A1088 road closure to allow the replacement of the bridge at Norton. I have his report together with notes from Cllr Andy Mellen who is co-ordinating a series of such meetings for affected parishes. 4 months of work are scheduled to start on 8th July on the understanding that the A14 concrete replacement works are complete with a recommended diversion on to A14 from J43 to J47. A temporary bridge would be too costly. Investigative works will require traffic lights w/c 18th March.

5 I recently circulated in confidence to all Councillors details of a request from a householder for consideration of their wish to purchase a small area of Council land on their boundary. No Councillor has been in touch to suggest that this should be taken further and the matter is now closed.

6 The provision of the pedestrian / cycle link between Blackbourne and the Matthew Homes development adjacent is required under Reserved Matters ref. DC/19/02495 prior to the occupation of the 90th dwelling. We are now delivering Newsletters to 80 houses on the estate. I have made an initial approach to the Developer towards co-ordinating the joining of the sites. Experience suggests that communication will not flow easily and will require perseverance. Meanwhile, when ground conditions permit, I shall re-site the lorry container which stands on the proposed pathway. I have a meeting with the SCC Area ROW Manager scheduled towards improving pedestrian / cycle access up Ashfield Road to Grove Lane, as per feedback from the MSDC Consultation. This will include our link with the Matthew Homes estate along with the proposals for development at Oak Lane and the rationalisation of paths through Turners' Field.

7 I have continued to liaise with the Food Bank operation in light of an undertaking to provide emergency accommodation if necessary once the bowls pavilion becomes unavailable at the end of March. I am assured that an alternative venue is secured.

Peter Dow
17.03.2024