

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Meeting 20th January 2025

- 1 I joined a Suffolk Enhanced Partnership Passenger Group meeting on-line on 8th January in order to keep track of progress towards any DRT (Demand Responsive Transport) initiatives which might inform the development of our Taxi-Bus pilot towards a DRT service. The Brett Valley Digi-Bus project seems to be the nearest example and I am in touch with them.
- 2 I have had confirmation that a site inspection is scheduled for Friday 31st January at Lawn Farm Quarry in advance of the recently deferred SCC Planning Committee meeting called to determine the Application for the northern expansion of workings. There has been recent disruption there which has required Police attendance and which has caused the enterprise to close down for a period, but it is hoped that this will not delay the inspection visit to which I am hoping EPC will be invited.
- 3 Council's chosen contractor for the Tavern Project, Stroods, have signed the Letter of Intent as authorised at 24.12.15 and an inaugural first contract-progress meeting is scheduled for the end of January. Meanwhile, permeability tests have been carried out on site towards informing the drainage plan. The first draw-down of the Mid Suffolk s106 funding, for structural engineer consultancy services, has been agreed.
- 4 Our Chairman has received a response from the office of our new MP, Peter Prinsley, regarding the well-versed road safety issues at the A1088 / A14 roundabout. He has agreed to look into the concerns raised towards a possible face-to-face meeting.
- 5 I have included for formal acknowledgement on the Agenda the recent developments towards Devolution of Local Government and of the BMSDC decision in the light of the NPPF review to undertake a new Joint Local Plan. Both initiatives are well publicised and I have an on-line liaison meeting with BMSDC on 22nd January when I might learn more. Anything of import or needing a Council view will come to a meeting.
- 6 Work has begun on the development of 5 houses between White House Barns and Blackbourne. The hedge at the boundary, on the developer's land, has been grubbed out and I am working with Cllr Mansell to ensure that there is replacement hedge, as indicated on the Proposed Site Plan along the eastern boundary and part of the southern boundary. The site foreman has suggested that it is all to be close-boarded fencing.
- 7 I have had further comments from new residents on the Ashfield Road estate adjacent to Blackbourne that the link path is difficult to use, particularly for bicycles, buggies etc., given the nature of the surface, being made up of large wood chippings. I am working with Ward Members to help co-ordinate resurfacing.
- 8 I have had a query through Cllr Hancock re the stopping-up/ diversion and recreation works at FP 12 from Hawk End Lane across the railway line. Cllr Mansell has pursued this on our behalf given the complexity of the relevant Condition which was time-limited. Plans are well advanced for the works which will take the path down one side of the railway line, crossing at the Hall Farm underpass and back up the other side.

- 9 The Proposal at Agenda item 11 re Fox View marks progress in the matter as previously discussed. The access way to the dwelling there is subject to a covenant in favour of EPC as owners of Crown Mill that no building or structure can be erected. Council has agreed in principle, subject to a binding written agreement, to grant a licence solely for the fence and gates which have been erected on the land. The legal costs of both parties to any agreement are to be borne by the Fox View landowner.
- 10 When the Co-op was extended in 2005, EPC negotiated certain aspects of the proposals with limited success [it was suggested that the car park might not be wholly adequate] but did secure the promise of a community notice board adjacent to the post office access. The subsequent fall-off in Post Office trade means that this notice board served little purpose and the Co-op agreed to re-site it as part of the most recent upgrading. This they have done, but it remains tucked away next to the new parcel collection lockers rather than at the front of the main shop as requested. Our notice boards are well maintained and are monitored by volunteers so that they serve as a genuinely useful method of community networking. I am pursuing the Co-op to have the board moved to where it can, as per the name, be noticed.
- 11 The Proposal at Agenda item 12 repeats earlier suggestions that, effectively, it removes from the ElmsWild volunteers the need to raise funds to pay the rent on Town Field which, sited down Spong Lane, is the last remaining land holding of the Elmswell Poor's Land charity. The rent goes towards supporting the charity's objects in the village. There has been debate in the past regarding the possible sale of the land with the proceeds invested to further the charitable cause. This has been the case since 1897 when 14 such holdings were listed, including this one and Town Meadow adjacent which were jointly rented to W G Warren for £10.5s pa. The sale proceeds are invested to allow the annual disbursement of support to *the most deserving and necessitous of persons resident in the parish.* However, Trustees have always felt that this last vestige of the village's history should be retained as a public good. The ElmsWild initiative keeps the land available for open access without discrimination and follows the group's conservation principles.

Peter Dow
19.01.2025