

## **Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

- 1 On 23<sup>rd</sup> March I met with Bethany Taylor, our BMSDC Communities Officer and Vicky Moseley, the Head of Service, Communities and Wellbeing, for an update at their request on the various EPC initiatives where the District is involved. They stressed the importance of the Neighbourhood Development Plan review which will be considered in light of the emerging new Joint Local Plan and which will begin the process of taking the village's aspirations forward in terms of social development as much of the relevant administration undergoes the stresses of Local Government Reorganisation. I suggested that, for Elmswell to continue to address the need to keep community provision adequate to deal with the inevitable population expansion, consideration of new community land acquisition might be appropriate. They undertook to broach this with colleagues towards discussion regarding the MSDC land at School Road, currently embargoed under the Housing Revenue Account. The Tavern development and the recent Crown Mill play area refurbishment were noted as exemplary schemes where the co-operation with District had been of considerable benefit.
- 2 The latest MSDC Town & Parish Council Liaison meeting was held at Blackbourne on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Presentations included on the emerging Joint Local Plan and the need to integrate Neighbourhood Development Plans to avoid conflict, the forthcoming changes to waste collection, Local Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain, MSDC budgets and the impending Local Government Review & Devolution. All relevant factors are noted, but I have the presentation slides on request.
- 3 The pedestrian / cycle Community Path to Woolpit remains problematic in terms of actual progress. Spearheaded by Cllr Andy Mellen, there is an attempt to bring some order and continuity to the process by the community representatives taking more responsibility for agendas and follow-up. A meeting is currently to be convened by EPC w.b 11<sup>th</sup> May.
- 4 I have sanctioned the continuing support of the Gardening Club volunteers in their work to maintain the station flower displays which are consistently excellent and which attract positive comments. Meanwhile, volunteers have undertaken to plant-up the car park border at the Tavern in time for the opening week.
- 5 Cllr Pallett, as Parish Council Chairman, has called the Annual Parish Meeting for Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May. This will be held in the chapel at Wesley. There will be a presentation on the new Community Rail Partnership proposals and a chance to air views on the need to re-present the Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan together with more information on the emerging Local Government Review. Our new County Councillor will be invited to make themselves known.
- 6 Our Internal Audit is scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> April when Heather Heelis of Heelis & Lodge will spend the day examining the year's accounts as well as checking that practices and procedures are properly defined and observed. Councillors are welcome to attend, by appointment, and raise any issues or concerns.
- 7 The Tavern opening week signals the hand-over of the continuing project to the General Manager, Nadia Tunmore. Liaison with the existing management systems of purchasing, payroll etc are developing aiming for integration as far as is practical with the Wesley and Blackbourne venues.

- 8 On 14<sup>th</sup> April I met, at his request, with Richard Ratcliffe, the new head at Elmswell School who was keen to explore ways to better integrate the school into village activity. We discussed the history whereby the school does not benefit from a spacious site and the possibility, long-term, of pushing for any expansion of primary schooling to be built in Elmswell, thus avoiding the very likely scenario of our children having to travel to Woolpit every day. I encouraged the school's involvement in the Neighbourhood Development Plan process and further community contact, including through the Newsletter.

**Peter Dow**  
**19.04.2026**