

## **Parish Clerk's Report to the Ordinary Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

- 1 Since purchasing the Tavern there has been a liability for Council Tax on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor accommodation which was redundant for our purposes but remained habitable, although marginally so. The Valuation Office Agency have finally accepted that the flat is no longer useable from the date that we can prove the staircase was removed and there remains access only through an external door at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level to be reached only by a ladder. Accordingly, we shall have a rebate backdated to 3<sup>rd</sup> June last year and no further liability until the premise are restored and accessible. The monthly bill was £597.00 pcm which included the substantial, 'empty homes,' premium.
- 2 Councillors may recall that Ward Members and others have expressed concerns regarding the very slow and seemingly chaotic process whereby SCC officers are administering the eventual delivery of the Elmswell – Woolpit community cycle & walking path. A meeting was due to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> January but this is now postponed ufn on grounds, proffered by officers, that:  
*We have received a quotation for the design work; however, due to the cost, we have challenged this and sought a further quotation from another contractor. The second quotation has now been received, but it does not cover the same scope of work.*  
*We are currently working to reconcile the two and agree a clear and consistent scope as soon as possible.*  
I have expressed concerns at an apparent lack of due process. Cllr Mellen is pursuing the matter through the Portfolio Holder.
- 3 In light of the arboricultural report commissioned to inspect 2 large ash trees at Crown Mill which were reported by residents to be showing ground heave in windy conditions, I have attended on site with Wayne Jarvis, our preferred contractor, and taken the opportunity to inspect other tree problems at that location as reported from residents. This ties in with the job of removing the diseased acacia tree to make way for the Junior Play Area expansion. The total cost of all works would be £2,635.00 and, in consultation with residents and our Tree Warden, I shall press on and instruct appropriately.
- 4 Work starts on the refurbishment of the junior play area at Crown Mill in the last week of January with a possible build-time of 4 weeks depending on the weather. The final spec. for the toddler/ pre-school kit is awaited following further consultation with the residents at a Working Party meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December.
- 5 As reported in the Newsletter, the Tavern post main-contract works proceed apace, most dramatically the groundworks which are, literally, changing the landscape. UKPN are still due to lay on the electrical power on 27<sup>th</sup> February when commissioning works can begin. Meanwhile progress is being made with kitchen fit-out including extraction, a Lead Brewer Supply Contract with Greene King, final works to wi-fi, security alarms, CCTV & lighting. Internal decoration has begun and quotes are in hand for flooring. Our General Manager, Nadia Tunmore was able to meet with several Councillors at the carol service and stands ready to begin formally on 1<sup>st</sup> February. This will allow for progress on recruitment, menu range and furniture / foodservice fit-out.