

## **Parish Clerk's Monthly Report to the Council Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

- 1 As reported to the May meeting, the statutory Notice of a Casual Vacancy, as issued by the District Monitoring Officer, was posted on 23.04.202 and no request for an election was forthcoming. Accordingly I posted, on 17<sup>th</sup> May, a Notice inviting applications for consideration for co-option and applied the same computation of time scale for response as is accorded statutorily to the original Notice of Casual Vacancy. I received a response to the originating notice which had confirmed that, should an election not be called, co-option is the next step. I received a second response to the subsequent Notice and both are copied to Councillors for a decision as to who is, effectively, elected. I confirm that both applicants are properly qualified to serve. Agenda item 2 refers.
- 2 The Annual Parish Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May was attended by 25 residents, 6 of them Parish Councillors. Cllr Pallett, as statute requires, chaired the session. The issues raised centred on traffic problems, specifically at the crossing gates and heavy HGV use, plus the lack of appropriate play space for older children and teenagers. A presentation on the emerging Community Rail Partnership was organised by Cllr Shaw who remains EPC's liaison contact for the initiative.
- 3 There is revised interest on the part of BMSDC in encouraging an Emergency Plan for Elmswell. This has been taken further in past years but any initiatives have faltered over time. I can provide contact details should any Member be interested in engaging further.
- 4 I circulated Members with SCC proposals for, effectively, a reduction of the speed limit down Church Hill and beyond towards Woolpit to 30mph. I received a positive response from a majority of Councillors and will pass this on appropriately.
- 5 In the interests of the declared policy of Succession Planning I continue to focus on divesting the Clerk's role of certain aspects which might render it more difficult to replace the range of activities and responsibilities which currently go with the job. I recommend, therefore, the Proposal at agenda item 13 where day-to-day liaison with the Tavern management is delegated to Councillors and the Proper Officer then consulted before sanctioning action.
- 6 With Working Party Councillors and Council's Preferred Contractor for arboricultural works I attended on site at Crown Mill towards clarifying the process as per Agenda item 14 which includes liaison with our professional advisers, Connected Ecology, in line with their Report as ref 26.05.32. No extenuating factors were identified.
- 7 The increase in the number of Council employees consequent upon the Elmswell Tavern project and the specific requirements of the employment framework offered by the hospitality trades recommend a new look at Council's existing and proposed Contracts of Employment. Testing the HR advice services market on-line offers a bewildering range of costly options, confirmed in a face-to-face meeting with one such provider. The Proposal at agenda item 16 recommends what I suggest is a very affordable way forward. The possibility of new employment legislation before the end of this year confirms that it is the right time to regularise our HR framework.
- 8 The initiative to install a post-mounted sign at Wesley to echo that at the Elmswell Tavern originated from the BWTMA and was taken up by Cllr Hancock. With the design determined, the installation process has been complicated by siting close to underground services and an electrical supply. Hence the split responsibilities as per Agenda item 16. The aggregated sum is the cheaper of 2 alternatives, a third contractor having failed to quote.