

Minutes of Elmsett Parish Council meeting held on 29 October, 2024 at the Methodist Church Hall.

- 10.24.00 **PRESENT:** Alan Newman in the chair, Fiona Watt, Nick Bird, Andrew Woodgate, John Sones, Fran Williams, Robert Lindsay, SCC and the clerk was present.
- 10.24.01 **APOLOGIES:** Paul Firman (annual leave) Leigh Jamieson BDC (Leigh reported that he may be late)
- 10.24.02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON AGENDA ITEMS:** There were no declarations of interest.
- 10.24.03 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 September and additional meeting held on 1 October were signed as accurate records.
- 10.24.04 **4.1 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Unfortunately, Leigh Jamieson did not make the meeting but had sent his report –
Whatfield Road Footpath I contacted Rose Builders regarding the footpath that they are obligated to build as part of the Maltings development. They confirm that the details they were provided with, were to form a footpath in the road, this is what they have been contracted to provide. Based on our conversation they are going to speak with their client, alongside discussing the situation further with highways.
Community Energy Revolution Residents are invited to join the council at Sudbury Arts Centre on 30 October from 6-8pm for an event facilitated by Community Energy South. The meeting will provide an opportunity for communities to find out how they can generate clean energy, cut bills, and help the planet. With the councils able to gauge interest in setting up a new local community energy scheme for the area.
Living Well Grant The Living Well in Winter grant is open for applications again with aims to help local organisations such as town and parish councils, village hall or playing field committees, sports clubs and sports centres, charities, social enterprises, community shops, and community interest companies deliver new and existing accessible spaces and activities during the colder months.
Last year, successful projects included community cafes, additional family sessions at preschools, coffee and chat sessions, and activity clubs. Other eligible projects might also include lunch clubs, after-school clubs, the continuation of warm spaces, subsidised family sports sessions, hobby workshops and beyond.
Organisations can apply for a minimum of £500 and a maximum of £2,000, and have until Friday, 8 November to do so.
Corks Lane properties up for sale The first eleven homes have been completed on the Corks Lane council offices site. The site, which is now known as Bowlers Croft, is up for sale following a sympathetic conversion of the buildings to preserve and enhance the original structures, ensuring the character and features are retained. The development will eventually see the original buildings transformed into forty-nine new high-quality homes, a mix of one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments and one cottage, which are ideally located close to shops, schools, and the town's amenities.

4.2. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT: Robert reported as follows -
Aldham Road Closure End in sight but another week's delay as Anglian Water work dragged on. Now projected re-opening week ending 8 Nov.

Footway Whatfield Road Highways tell me they are challenging the developer's insistence on building a footway on the road instead of across the pond.

Ditch beside Hadleigh Road According to the officer on the team handling the S278 agreement, the details over making the Hadleigh Road ditch safe have been agreed but the whole agreement has been delayed by the difficulty of finding sites for laybys on the Ipswich/Flowton Road, the other part of the planning conditions. He is now predicting final agreement in about six weeks –. I have asked what measures Highways can take to protect drivers from the ditch in the meantime.

Flooding prevention – Storm Babet a year on. The county's cabinet will on November 5th allocate an extra £1.5m to deliver flood prevention work it has identified in the parish-based investigations it has by law to conduct (seven out of an estimated 50 total investigations done so far). It is asking for another £20million from government. The council has already committed £12.25m but only £2.25m of this was related to Babet directly. A further £10m was allocated over three years to try to address the massive ten-year backlog of drainage repair work it already had, even before Babet.

Separately, cabinet in October agreed to contribute £2m to a scheme to protect Benacre, south of Lowestoft. The Environment Agency is contributing £30m and Sizewell C £27m. The scheme will protect the A12 with a bank but will allow the valley, drained years ago, to be re-flooded by the sea, creating hundreds of acres of saltmarsh habitat which will also act as a powerful carbon sink.

Improving Access to GPs Health Scrutiny committee on Wednesday 9 October, heard from the NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) about what they were doing to improve access to GPs in the county.

The committee heard how many practices are outsourcing their phone systems to digital providers and also using Artificial Intelligence systems to handle online bookings and prioritise them.

Some work – such as blood pressure checks and contraception - is being pushed onto pharmacies. The committee was concerned that pharmacies are also under pressure and that surgery buildings need investment. They will be looking at the NHS estate would be investigated at a later date.

Warm Homes The council announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to home owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest. The scheme will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November, but you can register your interest now at <https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>. Unlike the earlier

Warm Homes grants, which failed to get adequate take up, and means that the council will have to return £5m to Government, these loans are not means tested. However, I am not convinced loans are the answer to get our existing homes properly insulated.

Pavement safety and preventing trips and falls At Council on 17 October my political group brought forward a motion that the county review its priorities for repairing pavement defects. Currently, if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more, this will be repaired, but we argued that in areas of high footfall or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high. Most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65, and it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the council voted down our motion. They claimed a review of highways processes was being undertaken but in the past motor traffic has been prioritised over people walking or cycling. Our group will try our best to input into this. My feeling is that there ought also to be some flexibility over the width of pavement that highways will clear of encroaching vegetation – currently no more than 50cm.

Suffolk Local Transport Plan A proposed final draft of the county's latest local transport plan for the next 15 years is out to consultation and will close Monday 25 November. The consultation is available via www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP .

- 10.24.05 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The chairman reported that the ditch adjacent Mannings had been cleared. He also reported the Neighbourhood Plan Review is ongoing. Whatfield Road - chairman to arrange a meeting regarding the footway. The chairman to contact Ipswich BC regarding the timing of the next tree survey
- 10.24.06 **GRANT APPLICATION POLICY:** – Two documents had been circulated to councillors for consideration. There was merit in both documents. Fiona Watt agreed to see whether the two could be merged before further discussion.
- 10.24.07 **ALDHAM ROAD CLOSURE UPDATE:** The chairman confirmed that the works were still programmed to start during the week commencing 16 September to be finalised at the beginning of November.
- 10.24.08 **VILLAGE HALL/COMMUNITY SHOP:** Work is progressing well. Fundraising is continuing. They are looking to launch a share option for the shop open to residents. There will be room for a noticeboard inside the shop and it is hoped to be able to open in late January. They are currently advertising for a part-time Manager.
- 10.24.09 **RECESS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No members of the public present.
- 10.24.10 **PLANNING:** DC/17/05204 Discharge of Conditions Application for - Condition 9 (Fire Hydrants) and Condition 16 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting) - The Malting Whatfield Road. - Members of the parish council resolved to forward the following comment to BDC- Elmsett Parish Council wish to

strongly object to the proposed street lighting scheme which the developer has put forward for the Discharge of Condition 16 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting).

Looking at the wording of Condition 16 itself:

PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME A lighting design scheme for biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall identify those features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used for foraging; and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority

This condition does not require streetlighting specifically – it simply refers to external lighting – which in the opinion of the parish council, means external lighting on the properties themselves as much as any possible street lighting.

Elmsett is a village which does not have street lighting and so the Parish Council believe that no street lighting is required for the development. Sufficient lighting will be provided by any external lights on the houses themselves and it would be very out of character for there to be street lighting – i.e. lampposts with street lights within the new development. We believe that our Neighbourhood Plan, as adopted December 2019, supports this position.

Paragraph 3.10 of the plan, describing the feelings of the residents as gathered during the process of making the plan, states “...”No Street lights” is a decision supported by the majority of residents and we therefore enjoy dark skies and clear views of the heavens.”

Within the Objectives of the plan, there are 3 objectives relevant:

Within the Housing Objectives:

3. New development is of a high quality design, eco-friendly and of a scale that reinforces local character.

within the Historic and Natural Environment Objectives:

5. Protect and improve the features which contribute to historic character

8. Protect important views and links to the countryside.

The addition of street lighting both negatively changes the character of the village (objective 3 and objective 5) and, however low the illumination levels, will restrict the view of the night sky currently available to residents whose properties surround the development site (Sawyers, Whatfield Road).

The site of the development directly borders the area identified in the plan as a Special Character Area, being the area around the Village Green, which includes The Malting – the development’s direct neighbour, as well as Mannings and The Old Rectory, with its moat which is a scheduled ancient monument.

Policy EMST10 – Elmsett Special Character Area states that consideration should be given to how a proposal enhances the distinct characteristics of the identified area.

Standing within the Special Character Area, at least some of the Street lights /posts will be visible during the day and the impact at night will be even stronger, adding illumination to a previously dark space. Thus the views enjoyed from within the Special Character area will be negatively affected and therefore we believe Streeting Lighting on the development site is in contradiction to this policy.

Policy EMST12 – Development design Considerations states that “Proposals for new developments must reflect the local character of Elmsett ...” and in EMST12 – para b) “maintain or create Elmsett’s sense of place and / or local character.”

Elmsett has no streetlighting and therefore introducing street lights would not be in keeping with the character of the village and the sense of place (as described in the earlier sections of the Neighbourhood Plan).

Therefore, we believe the proposal for discharge of Condition 16 is in contradiction of policy EMST12.

We trust that these points, and our strong objection, will be considered when the decision as to whether to approve or reject the application to discharge Condition 16(Wildlife Sensitive Lighting) is determined.

For the avoidance of doubt, Elmsett Parish Council have no objection to the proposals in relation to Condition 9 (Fire Hydrants).

10.24.11 **TRAFFIC SIGN SURVEY AND FUTURE PROPOSALS FOR SPEED REDUCTION:** This item to carried forward to the next meeting.

10.24.13 **FINANCE:** The following invoices were verified for electronic payment. Clerk to set up Fiona Watt and Paul Firman to authorise.

CAS	Website hosting	60.00
RosPA	Play Equip Insp	117.60
D Jarvis	On-going work VH	25,455.82
SALC	Payroll services to Oct 24	22.80

The clerk confirmed that £10,000 had been transferred to Jarvis against the invoice above and that £15,455.82 was still to be paid when the money has been received in the current account. A withdrawal form had been sent to Cambridge BS for £30,000 which was not received so there was a delay in the funds reaching the TSB current account. It was agreed that an additional request for a withdrawal of £25,000 be made to enable the remainder of the invoices to be paid from the current account.

Cambridge Building Society – Change of Signatory to Savings Account – As Andrew Morton has now left the council it was proposed and agreed that our new councillor, Mrs Fran Williams be added to the signatory list as the fourth member for this account and Andrew Morton to be removed.

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10.24.14 **DATES FOR NEXT MEETINGS:** 3 December, 21 January, 2025.

The meeting closed.

Signed:-..... Dated:-.....
Chairman