

Minutes of Elmsett Parish Council meeting held on 12 December, 2023 at Elmsett and Aldham Village Hall.

- 12.23.00 **PRESENT:** Alan Newman in the chair, Andrew Morton, Nick Bird, Paul Firman, Fiona Watt, Andrew Woodgate, County Councillor Robert Lindsay, District Councillor Leigh Jamieson, the clerk, and 2 members of the public were present.
- 12.23.01 **APOLOGIES:** John Sones
- 12.23.02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON AGENDA ITEMS:** There were no declarations of interest.
- 12.23.03 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** The Minutes of the meetings held on 31 October, and 28 November, 2023 were signed as accurate records.
- 12.23.04 **4.1 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Development in the Village**
There is no need for further development when there are over 60 properties still to be built. I will be supporting the village in the opposition to the nine properties being proposed.
Finance BDC biggest challenge will be delivering a balanced budget for 24/25 and beyond. Finances are tough, the council have been hit by inflation, pay rises and lack of major development across the district. Some difficult decisions will have to be made to ensure that we can continue to provide services.
Listed Building consultation. Our district benefits from old buildings that give our area character. Unfortunately, a lot of these buildings have terrible energy performance. While we must conserve this rich heritage, we also need to allow energy efficiency upgrades which are balanced and sensitively designed. Babergh & Mid Suffolk have opened a consultation until the 29th of December. We want to encourage reduction in energy bills, protect buildings from climate change, cut carbon emissions and help preserve aging properties.
Housing Repairs Babergh's new Green Councillors are prioritising the council to improve on the situation as soon as is possible. The council have released £943,000 from reserves to help clear the repair backlog. The money would also support wider improvements to the council housing service in the district.
Joint Local Plan Part one of the joint local plan was fully approved by full Council. last month. Babergh voted unanimously in favour of both part 1 of the JLP and the local development plan. This decision, will provide the council with up-to-date policies to direct planning decisions. Part 2 will be developed over the next two years.
Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy Babergh have developed a new strategy to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy has been developed by the new team and is focussed on.
- Early prevention & intervention.
 - Make rough sleeping rare, brief, and non-recurring.
 - Ensuring the health and wellbeing needs of households are met whilst in temporary accommodation.
 - To expand and future-proof the role and remit of Central Suffolk Lettings - improving access to the private rented sector.
 - To mitigate against the impacts of the cost of living.

There is currently a public consultation open for your input until the 14th January.

Christmas activities BDC is offering a range of festive fun to keep children and young people active and entertained.

Pylon opposition BDC has restated its objections to a new row of electricity pylons cutting through the countryside after the Chancellor pledged in today's Autumn Statement lower energy bills for those impacted.

4.2 COUNTY COUNILLOR'S REPORT: Aldham Road closure I am told the road will re-open to all but HGVs sometime next week and new signage has been ordered that explains exactly where the closure is located, also to be in place next week..

Hadleigh Road ditch Highways have asked the developer to place cones on the verge to highlight the ditch from the road while they complete the legal process to sec 278 agreement. There is no date for this at the time of writing.

Buses and new funding I am hoping that a combination of Hitcham PC, Bildeston PC and West Suffolk college will put in an expression of interest for a bus route that takes people from Hadleigh to Stowmarket at rush hour in time to meet the first off-peak train to London and the bus to West Suffolk College. Then back at rush hour in the afternoon. If approved HCT will probably be the operator and it is likely to run like the 461/ through Elmsett, Whatfield and Aldham.

Resurfacing minor roads before May 2025 county council election After the local elections in May the Conservative administration announced it would borrow £10m to spend on resurfacing minor roads up to end of March 2025 when county council elections are held. At cabinet on Tuesday 7 November, we heard the detail that the council plans to use reporting of poor road surfacing on less trafficked residential roads and cul de sacs where residents live to plot a programme of repairs over that period. This would seem to indicate that the more people report the need for resurfacing or potholes the more likely the road is to be resurfaced.

Flooding Investigations and Repairs Following the recent Storm Babet flooding around the county, Suffolk County Council teams have pumped away 4.7m litres of water, cleared 8,412 drains of storm debris and removed over 100 trees blocking roads. It will be administering the funding recently announced by the government whereby owners of flooded properties are able to apply for up to £5,000 to protect their homes and business from future flooding. Details of how to apply will be shared once they are known.

Libraries Consultation The council is consulting on the new library service for the county as the contract with the current provider ends in May 2025. A consultation has been launched to gather views from residents about what they value about the current service and what they think should be developed, especially in terms of outreach and mobile libraries used in the county. If you would like to share your views, you can access the consultation at the following link: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation>

There was discussion regarding the road closure at Aldham and the impact on the shop. Members of the parish council were concerned that if the road were to be open for smaller vehicles it would be difficult to enforce and potentially dangerous. Those members considered that it was unlikely that

the road would be open because of the nature of the works needed to repair the road collapse. There was also concern that the signage was still inefficient. Robert said he would report back to Highways.

There was also discussion regarding the replacement of the finger post. It was agreed not to wait to see whether the County Council would carry out the work but to go ahead with the cost being shared with Aldham PC after a contribution of £500 from Robert from his locality budget.

12.23.05 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The chairman had nothing more to add as road closure and finger post had been discussed. He did however confirm that the post office van continued to operate at the Rose and Crown car park on a Tuesday afternoon and was proving very worthwhile.

12.03.06 **VILLAGE HALL UPDATE:** Fiona reported that an acoustic and a structural survey had been carried out and results were awaited before further improvements could be considered.

The chairman opened the discussion for public comments. There was discussion about the merits of improving the hall and a new build for recreation and sport with one member of the public suggesting Elmsett should have a sports centre with more facilities. It was pointed out that it was not for the parish council to promote a sports centre without a properly defined need. Recent history has shown that village support for these facilities wain over time. Councillor Lindsay citing Bildeston as an example where they are struggling to keep their facility going.. This has been discussed in the past and the present committee cannot oversee such a large project. They have found it very difficult in the past to get the required help and are struggling to maintain the hall in its present condition. It was agreed to await the results of the surveys then the parish council could see what assistance can be offered.

A meeting with the village hall MC to be scheduled in the near future.

12.23.07 **PARISH FACEBOOK PAGE:** The merits of having a Facebook page was discussed. Some members thought that this would be a good way to communicate with residents but they were concerned about the potential for abuse. It was pointed out that there was an option not to allow comments to be posted. It was agreed to trial a page for six months in the first instance with this option.

12.23.08 **CORRESPONDENCE:** PC Niall Johnson has written to the parish council introducing himself as the new contact for policing in the village now the new structure is in place.
Joy Moran from community transport had written suggesting that the parish council could request gritting of minor roads on the local bus routes. The clerk had forwarded this to SCC requesting that the routes be gritted but were informed that this is not the case. Robert Lindsay was also party to the communication and he would now take the matter up, especially as the road closure at Aldham means that the buses are having to take alternative routes. Katy Hampshire, Environment Strategy, SCC confirmed that the application for EV points at the village hall car park had been received and we should hear in the new year of any progress.

12.23.09 **FINANCE:** A budget had been prepared based on expenditure of the previous years. In view of the cost-of-living situation, it was agreed that no increase should be made and that the council should request a precept of £10,400 as last year. Precept request signed to be forwarded to BDC.
 The clerk confirmed that the application to open a new savings account had been submitted together with a cheque for £70,000.
 New finger post The Street Aldham. The chairman had received confirmation from Aldham PC that they would reluctantly contribute £255 matched to Elmsett PC together with a contribution of £500 from Robert. It was agreed to go ahead and for Robert to arrange to get this underway.
 Tender for grasscutting. The clerk confirmed that requests to tender for the next three years had been sent to interested parties. Completed tenders to be received and awarded at the next meeting in January.
 Clerk's salary – the new pay awards had been received and it was agreed that the clerk's salary should be increased accordingly.

On-line banking has not yet been fully set up so the following invoices were verified and cheques signed.

E & A V hall	1053	Hire 28-11 & 12-12,23	45.50	
RoSPA	1054	Play eqpt inspection & report	111.00	
Ed Seeley Gardening	1055	St Peters Church Mnt 50% cost	115.00	LGA 1972
T Hitchcock	1056	Strim Triangles 23/11/23	40.00	
Alan Newman	1057	Rmbt Microsoft & Postage	81.94	

12.23.10 **PLANNING: DC/21/05844** - Alterations to site layout to provide dwellings in compliance with the nationally described space standard (NDSS), and road layout alterations to address space constraints on neighbouring land (The Maltings)

The council considers that the development should have adequate access both vehicular and pedestrian including the provision of the new footway over the pond at the front of the site. The access needs adequate geometric layout and visibility splays as allowed for within the outline permission, as yet we have not seen any details with regard to the access junction or the frontage footway. We are also concerned that an adequate management construction plan should be agreed that would allow safe access to the Nursery and also prevent the type of heavy goods vehicle traffic issues arising that we saw when the Hadleigh Road development was commenced.

For the second time we would request having a short meeting in order to understand the exact position so that the frontage footway is not overlooked. We understand that there is correspondence between the highway authority and the applicant in which the applicant is seeking to provide a footway solution and it would be very helpful to the parish to know that matters are in hand.

DC/23/05689 - Change of use of land to residential curtilage and erection of first floor and roof extension, single-storey rear and front porch extension (amended scheme, re-submission of DC/23/03430) Old Meadow Farm, Hadleigh Road, Elmsett

The parish council has no objection to the erection of first floor and roof extension single-storey rear and front porch extension but considers that the change of use of land to residential curtilage should only extend to cover the rear garden as shown on drawing 0923/04 existing and proposed site plan. The Council is also concerned that any further extension of the residential curtilage would unnecessarily include larger smallholding buildings which are not residential scale.

12.23.11 **DATES FOR NEXT MEETINGS:** 23 January, 2024. There was discussion as to the venue. The clerk to check the availability of the Methodist Church for future meetings.

The meeting closed.

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