

Seventeen years of Parish Record.....

..... Community News and the Community's Views.



The ELMSWELL Newsletter

JANUARY 2003

..... Your Parish Matters

Community Spirit ... long term vision ...
still thriving in Elmswell - look forward
... to 'Comment' on page 1

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This Month's "COMMENT"

comes from Mary Feeney of
Elmswell Community Wood

ELMSWELL COMMUNITY WOOD GETS THE GREEN LIGHT!

Planting trees is an act of faith. You will almost certainly not be around to see them when they are fully-grown and at their most splendid. So you need trust and hope - trust that future generations will

appreciate your actions on their behalf, and hope that they will both enjoy and care for the trees in the way that you intended when you set the seedlings all those years ago. Those addicted to the quick fix need not apply.

But there are also plenty of benefits along the way. You can have lots of fun collecting different seeds and watching them grow and, for those with vision on the grander scale, planning new landscapes and restoring old ones. Perhaps most important of all, it can become a real community project, bringing people together of all ages, working towards a common goal. This is what we are hoping for with Elmswell's newest community conservation project - Elmswell Community Wood, set up with help from the Green Light Trust, a charity devoted to establishing new community woodlands throughout the country. Members of the 15-strong Steering Group met with Grenville Clark, director of the Greenlight Trust, just before Christmas to sign up the agreement which officially constitutes the new group. As well as providing a set-up grant, the Green Light Trust will help and advise the project for the next two years. We're very grateful to them for putting *their* faith in Elmswell - in return we're sure that within a few months we can show them that community spirit and long-term vision are still alive in this village - they just need a little nurturing.

The Steering Group's action plan includes forging links with other village organisations, and this process has already started with the involvement of the primary school. We are delighted that the children and staff of the school will be joining us in this exciting new project, and we hope that the children who will be collecting seeds this autumn will enjoy the whole experience - right through to watching their trees grow in their own tree nursery, planting them out in a new woodland, and caring for them as they become part of the landscape.

Our official launch will be in March with the opening of the first tree nursery on land beside the Memorial Library. So if you are nurturing any tree seedlings in your back garden (and we know that lots of you are!), which you would like

to donate, please look out for all the details in next month's Newsletter - they will be the first occupants.

In the meantime, if you would like to know more about the project or have any ideas you'd like to share with us, please do get in touch.

Mary Feeney (241901)

Our Cover Picture Shows

Mary Feeney with Grenville Clark of the Green Light Trust in our new Memorial Library signing the agreement which opens a whole new chapter in Elmswell history.

You can find out more about the work of the Green Light Trust by Visiting their website, www.greenlighttrust.org, or have a look at the December Issue of The Suffolk Journal, which has an interesting article about the work they are doing in Lawshall.

ECW is organising a visit to the new woodlands planted at Lawshall by the Green Light Trust on Saturday 8th February. If anyone would like to join us on the trip, please contact me for details - Mary Feeney on 241901.

YOUR COMMENT INVITED . . . If you have a comment, a view, a statement - something to say about anything of concern to Elmswell - share it with our readers via the 'Comment' column or our 'letters to the Editor' feature c/o Gobblins, Station Road Industrial Estate. Please include your name and address and a telephone contact number - our next deadline is 12 February 2003.

The deadline for the next issue is 5.00 p.m. on **Wednesday 12 February 2003**. Copy to Gobblin's office on Station Road Industrial Estate or contact our Editors: Jean Barker 241135 or Peter Dow 241841. The Amenities Association, which publishes the Newsletter, will try to find space for all contributions, regardless of any point of view expressed, as long as space permits and providing that they are legal and that the writer's name and address are included.

Any views expressed or implied are not necessarily condoned or supported by the Association which offers, in the Newsletter, an impartial service to the community.

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Around and About ...

LITTLE ELMS FUN FACTORY



We had a busy Christmas and New Year. Lots of new faces, plenty of glitter, glue and hama bead crafts were sent home with the children.

We are getting ready for February half term when we will be open on 14th and 17th to 21st February. We are hoping to have a 'Woodland' theme for the week. Flyers will be sent out shortly via local schools.

Call Joy O'Doherty on to book your places.

Do you have any talents/special skills that you would be willing to share with the children during school holidays? If so please contact Debbie on 244276 or Joy.

We would like to say thank you to the 2 young lads who helped to close the container for us! Much appreciated.

Thank you.

ELMSWELL BAPTIST CHURCH

Hope you all had a good Christmas and I am sorry that I missed everyone at the Carols by Candlelight Service as I wasn't well. I hear that extra chairs were needed and that everyone enjoyed the participation of the CU club this year. You would not believe that we have had the PA system in our Church for nearly two years now, and people still don't know how to use it!! Thanks also to the

Ladies Group who invited several to their Supper and Musical entertainment by Cadenza. Everyone enjoyed the meal and singing with songs from my era like Abba's 'Thank you for the Music', and Dougs era with 'We'll meet again' by Vera Lynn.

We can now look forward to a new year - we should by now be getting used to the 10.30am start instead of the 11am one. (I now have to get up at 10 instead of 10.30am - you can tell I have no children). We also welcome Stephen to the leadership team this month on the 12th. We look forward to his help over the next year in all our activities. At 6.30am on the same date the 3 churches

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Last month we said farewell to one of our loyal delivery volunteers and appealed for a replacement.

We were inundated! We have filled the gap, and many thanks to all who have agreed to stand by as long term 'reserves'.

It is heartening to have occasional reminders of the support your Newsletter enjoys as it enters its 18th year of service to the community.

Thank you.

Around and About cont'd., pg3

in the village meet at our chapel for a service being led by Stephen, and first performance of a musical group with members from all 3 churches.

Our CU club restarts on Tuesday 14th at 6pm so give us a look and start the new year with us. We have between 15 and 20 children join us each week and I have not seen one go home disappointed yet.

On 3rd February the ladies meet for an evening of 'healthy eating'. They should of held this before Christmas - I must join that gym.

Don't forget Valentines Day on the 14th and the if you don't know my address, just forward them onto the Chapel. See you soon if not before - **Mark**

P.S Doug - some questions for your so called easy quizzes - How much deeper would oceans be if sponges didn't live there?; If a man says something in the wood and there are no women there, is he still wrong?; If olive oil comes from olives, where does baby oil come from?; Why do they sterilise needles for lethal injections?; How do I set my laser printer to stun? And finally if you are sending someone styrofoam what do you pack it in?

E.A.D.S

Panto Season!!! Posters around Elmswell will have alerted you to this year's panto production "Babes in the Wood". Due to popular demand we are doing an additional performance and so the season runs from January 29th through to February 1st. Evening performances start at 7.30pm and there is a Saturday



matinee at 2.30pm. Ticket prices are £3 and £3.50. All tickets for the matinee are £2.50. Tickets on sale from the Post Office and MACE. As always we rely on local support so buy your ticket now.

ELMSWELL TODDLERS

After our annual shutdown to prepare and recover from all the festivities, toddlers were back in force on 6th January.



We have already had our first trip of the year to Ocean Adventure, always a winner and great for burning off that excess energy - and not necessarily just the toddlers! Our next trip will be on Wednesday 12th February so remember to book if you haven't already. Advance payment is always appreciated to save hassle on the day and thanks to subsidised prices by Toddlers, it won't break the bank.

Looking ahead to Mother's Day and Easter presents, or even just as a little treat, Tempest Photos will be at Toddlers on Wednesday 19th February. A winning smile and fantastic prices guaranteed.

Many thanks to Sonia for her generous donation of a ride-on dinosaur and Little Tikes car - proving to be real favorites already. Talking of toys, we have **For Sale** a very sturdy Galt play kitchen which opens out into a cooker, ironing board and sink, all in tip top condition. If you are interested or would like more information, please phone Anna on 242348.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Sean is still collecting names for the

Around and About cont'd., pg5

petition to resurrect a Baby Clinic within Elmswell so again, if you haven't already, please add your name to the list. Our Health Visitor will be along at Toddlers on 27th January to introduce Rebecca, the Nursery Nurse, who will be playing an increasingly important role at the clinic.

Toddlers are at the Wesley Hall every Monday 1.30 - 3.00pm and Wednesday 10.00 - 11.30am. All welcome - the more, the merrier!

ELMSWELL W.I.

After all the eating and merriment at the December meeting and despite a very dark evening over 30 members and friends attended the first meeting of 2003.

As is usual early in the year our

President Anne Dyball had many events and competitions to announce.

A Scrabble evening, a fashion show, darts and bowls competitions, the annual dinner at Stowmarket Golf Club, a visit to Lopham Fen, a walk and BBQ in June and another visit to the theatre, something for everyone.

The Institute would also stage an entry to the Co-Operative Cup Competition at the Corn Exchange in March, this to involve 5 craft items.

After the lengthy business session we were glad to sit back and listen to Mrs Mavis Taylor telling of her career as a 'Lady Chauffeur' driving a Rolls Royce. Many amusing incidents involving interesting clients from royalty to art dealers (plus their evening companions!) and weddings both lavish and spartan, who would have thought driving a car in London and suburbs could be so entertaining.

Brenda Tullett won the competition for the most interesting key-ring. After the usual tasty refreshments the meeting closed everyone looking forward to next months speaker Mrs Susan Bates talking about 'Natural Therapies'

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ELMSWELL FUNDRAISER'S CHARITY BALL

23rd NOVEMBER 2002

A very successful Charity Ball held at the Athenaeum, Bury St. Edmunds on 23rd November raised £4000 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer.

Elmswell Fundraisers would like to thank the following for their support, sponsorship and kindness:-

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Adnams Brewery, Alan Crouch, All Over Beauty, Anglia Railways, Anna Sadler, Barry Brough, Beryl Martin, Body Shop, Boots, Britvic, Bury Leisure Centre, Bury Bowl, Delia Smith, Dixons, Eastern Frames, Gavin Ashley, Glasswells, Graham Cheseldine, Halcyon Days, HSBC Bank, Ipswich Town Football Club, Joan Hunter, John Purseglove, Lamberts Garage, Linden Tree, Mansfields, Marks & Spencer, Marchants, Marlows, Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, NV Hair Salon, P&O Ferries, Palmers, Paul & Gill Peachey, Pizza Hut, Roys, Sainsburys, Sarah & Craig Baker, Shrubland Hall, Solar Bowl, Spar St Olaves, Suffolk Golf Club, Tesco, Village Homes, Victoria & David Beckham, Warehouse Shop, Wildtracks.....and everybody who

helped in any way and/or attended the Ball.

Thank you

**Carrol Sadler, Cris Jackson,
Lorraine Revett.**

METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

The first month of the year is a quiet time for us. Coffee mornings resume in February, and the Ladies Meetings on 28th January when the speaker will be Mrs Maureen Newcombe.

February speakers

4th John Bean

11th Mr Stephen Roe

25th Pastor Lowe

The Exchange Club meets on 18th at 2.30pm when Mr P Driver will speak to us on Suffolk Curiosities.

The youth club is back in full swing on Thursdays 5.30 - 6.30pm, and the preachers appointed to lead Sunday Services at 10.45am are:

Jan26th Mrs Jean Pearson

Feb2nd Mr Andrew High

9th Revd. Stephen Yelland

16th Mr Graeme Garden

23rd Mr Cyril Mowles

We have some gifted young people in our village, and some of the instrumental and vocal talents were on display just before Christmas.

Congratulations and many thanks to the young ladies of DOMINOTE choir for the splendid concert they gave to the folk who were at Wesley Hall on Friday 20th December. A treat indeed. DOMINOTE meet every Tuesday in the Methodist Exchange Hall from 7-8pm. Any young lady between the age

GARDENING CLUB _ STOP PRESS _

Following the appeal in last month's Newsletter for new Officers and administrators to come forward to save the Gardening Club from folding, the extraordinary meeting, held in the Memorial Library on 16th January, produced a healthy crop of volunteers and the good work of the Club - Open Gardens and all, we hope - continues.

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of 9-14 who enjoys singing would be welcome to join - why not come along and give it a try?

ELMSWELL CRICKET CLUB

(Sponsored by Manvers
Triumph)



I once played cricket with a vicar. Not *just* him, of course - he was in the first team I joined when I came to Suffolk. This stands out in my mind for two reasons. Firstly, because I'd never played with a vicar before (knowingly, anyway) and never will again (if I can help it). Secondly, because the other ten players would typically turn up in T-shirts smattered with make-believe blood and emblazoned with names like Motorhead and The Grateful Dead. I didn't think I'd feel comfortable on either side of this apparent divide - not least since my concession to street-cred was a T-shirt eulogising Benny, Bjorn, Agnetha and, most important of all of course, Annefried. Many weekends later, I'd made lifelong friends with the leather brigade and the vicar, who had taken to, quite literally, locking his flock out on Sunday mornings, had decamped to an unsuspecting village in Devon. He might have been a mean spin bowler (his googlies hung in the air the way bricks don't) but his temperament made Roy Keane look like the tooth fairy during 'happy hour'. I mention this because I have often been asked the ultimate life/universe-type question - why cricket? The answer, it has to be said, has something of a

religious ring. Basically, non-believers just can't understand how anyone could allow themselves to fall under the spell of a mere game and, when you examine it, such a silly one that. After all, if you didn't know it existed, and you put Elmswell players end-to-end, what possible sport could you imagine such a disparate group of unathletic people participating in? Maybe village-pub orienteering? Collective getting lost in the Lake District? 'Lack-of-formation' dancing?

Village cricket is a matter of faith. You can't justify it. Let's face it, if you're not slashing your wrists after only two wins in the 2002 season there has to be something else keeping you going (apart from the wife wanting 'quality time' to herself every weekend). Either you believe or you don't. Problem is, the British (and Elmswell cricketers especially) are a meek bunch - always trying to justify themselves to significant others. Smiling politely as idiots pull out National Trust tea towels that purport to explain cricket by endless repetition on the words 'in' and 'out'. And like all entertaining religions there's no wishy-washy liberal nonsense to cloud the minds of the faithful - the laws of cricket allow no interpretation, *ne leeway*. A true believer knowth, even better than he knows the name of his wife and children (wherever they are) that if the ball pitches outside leg, he cannot be lbw. There is no appeal! We understand that and draw strength from the knowledge. Anglicans may *believe* Christ was resurrected after death but we *know* that Graeme Hick should have gone in

Around and About conf'd., pg 11

the touring party to Australia.

And, of course, we attempt to pass the basic beliefs on. We get married, have children, and teach them to hold a bar before they can walk. On their fourth birthday we take them into the garden and bowl late in-swinging leg-cutters at them until they pass out with tiredness. They then take up croquet or petanque... and we disinherit them. Looking back it is hard to think that, maybe once, when we were children, we didn't believe at all. Perhaps we were too busy with homework or engaging in random acts of violence that usually preoccupy the lives of small boys. Then, one day, a blinding light suddenly enveloped the land and a male voice did speak, and it was pregnant with authority and it was probably Richie Benaud and he said "Morning, everyone..." and life was never the same again. We've all been there - sad souls that we are.

And speaking of 'sad'. Congratulations to those who won our Christmas Quiz. We sold sheets of 100 questions. No question too small. None too easy. Two folk managed gob-smackingly high scores of 98 to share first prize - Linda

Challenor of Bury St. Edmunds, and John Scott of Stowmarket. Even they only just eclipsed Sally Lake (Elmswell...hooray!) and Linda Nixon from Ipswich who were just half a point behind. And a mention in despatches for Alan Hall from Crown Mill who was just a further hiccup behind them. If anyone wants a set of answers please give me a shout.

Doug Reed (Tel: 241009)

SERVICES etc., at ST JOHN'S CHURCH St John's Church

The Village Carol Service was as well attended as ever ... the list of people who took part is too long to repeat here, but it was good to see so many organisations from the village represented. This is one of the events organised each year by the three Churches in the village and is the result of excellent co-operation between them. The next event at which we all take part is the Women's World Day of Prayer, being held this year at St John's Church. (It is not just for Women - men and children welcome!). This year we shall be

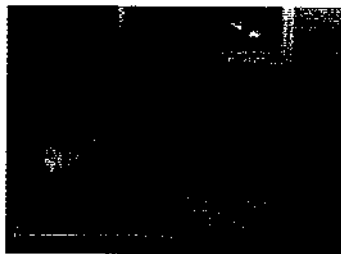
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Around and About cont'd., p212

thinking about the Lebanon and our service has been prepared by the Christian women of that country.

To complete our Christmas celebrations, we enjoyed a Christingle service on 5 January - to celebrate the work of the Children's Society. Elmswell School Choir and the St John's Music Group took part and about 100 of us took the last opportunity for this Christmas season to sing some carols and to light our Christingle candles, which remind us that Jesus came to give light in our dark world.

On 27 February in the Church at 7.30pm there will be a concert by the Tudor Rose Singers (Conductor Eileen Jones). The programme will feature works by the Fauré, Stanford and Rutter; admission is free but a retiring collection will be taken.

The induction of our new Rector, Revd Michael McNamara will take place in the Church on Friday 7 March and will be conducted by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Rt Revd Richard Lewis.

Services etc at ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Sunday 26 January 2003

10.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 2 February

9.30am Family Service with Music Group

10.30am Morning Prayer

11.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 9 February

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Parish Praise

Sunday 16 February

10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 23 February

10.30am Morning Prayer

11.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 2 March

9.30am Family Service with Music Group

10.30am Morning Prayer

11.30am Holy Communion

Sunday School in Church Room at 10.30am every Sunday except 1st in month.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH TOWER FLOODLIGHTING

A night's floodlighting costs £5.

Please make cheques payable to "ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ELSWELL".

DECEMBER 2002

SPONSORSHIP NOT

PREVIOUSLY

ACKNOWLEDGED

18 for Pat

JANUARY 2003 SPONSORSHIPS

1-2 John & Peggy Thurlow

3 'Alf' Lufkin. Loving thoughts of a dear Husband, Dad and Grandad on his Birthday

4-7 Anon

10 In memory of Kayleigh Wallace on her Daddy's Birthday. XXX

11 In memory of Kayleigh Wallace. Love Mummy, Daddy & Kyle. XXX

13 In memory of Ann Thorby. "Remembered by us all".

19 In memory of Hewes Orford

19 In loving memory of Natasha Smith

Around and About cont'd., p815

- 20 In memory of Henry Manning on his Birthday
22 In loving memory of Rob Dalby's Birthday
23 In memory of Ricky Woolnough on his Birthday.

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Trevor Sadler, Abbots Warren, Church Road, Elmswell (Tel: 240908)

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MONTHLY DRAW DECEMBER drawn by B Barter

No 275 J White £500

No 183 C Wade £115

No 353 S Hunt £75

No 320 P Kelly £30

No 26 M Pretty £15

Fixtures up to 22/02/03

First Team

01/02/03 Murray Rangers (Away)

08/02/03 Orwell Athletic (Home)

15/02/03 Mendlesham (Away)

22/02/03 Saint Clements (Home)

Reserves

01/02/03 Stonham Aspal (Home)

08/02/03 Murray Rangers (Away)

15/02/03 Claydon (Home)

22/02/03 Benhall St Mary (Away)

(A) Team

01/02/03 Barton (Away)

08/02/03 Black Boy (Away)

15/02/03 Barrow (Home)

Under 14's

02/02/03 Needham Market (Home)

23/02/03 Saxmundham (Away)

Under 11's

09/02/03 Stow Falcons (Away)

23/02/03 St Louis (Home)

Anyone wishing to join the Football Club, please telephone Barry Hayward on (01359) 240951.

Training nights Wednesday Nights, Blackbourne at 18.15.

Compiled by H Mulley (01359) 240889

Around and About cont'd., p217

BLACKBOURNE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

The BMA has, since the new committee was appointed in June, held monthly meetings rather than every six months as before. This has allowed for tighter management of the hall at Blackbourne which is the only responsibility allowed to them under the current rules. It is hoped that a review of these rules – the Constitution – may be begun soon in anticipation of more flexibility in May under the new Parish Council to allow a co-ordinated approach and the extension of the many matters of

external maintenance which are the Council's responsibility and which have such a damaging effect on the appearance of the hall. Nevertheless, projected bookings, many of them confirmed and paid for, indicate a healthy increase in income over the coming year. The accounts suffer, however, from the burden of inherited debt, including a £1300 electricity bill resulting from the fact that the previous management had not read the meter since June 2001. Nevertheless, professional help from Nick Brooks, Alan Sparrow and others is helping to gradually turn this important community enterprise around.



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“We will remember them”

**– an invitation to put on record the
lives of Elmswellians who are no
longer with us.**



Is there someone from your family buried in the village cemetery? Or perhaps a good friend? Would you like to help keep their memory alive by allowing us to record their life-stories for posterity? If the answer is “yes”, then please do get in touch with me.

You do not have to be a good writer to fulfil this task: it would be enough to have an informal chat with me, or scribble some ungrammatical notes, and I will do the rest (though I would be equally content to receive a finished essay!). I have in mind a few paragraphs including the important dates, and preferably also a photograph.

Elmswell History Group has a website (www.elmswell-history.org.uk) which, among a wealth of other information, contains a list of persons buried in the Cemetery up until last summer, and photographs including all the headstones. But the inscriptions, with very few exceptions, say almost nothing about the lives of the deceased or their association with the village. Your contribution will be “linked” to the burial location and photograph, so that other people now and in years to come may read about the lives of those who have gone before us.

Norman Kenyon Tel. 241569
(The Willows, New Road, IP30 9BT)

THE PRECEPT

...or,

That's the Way the Money Goes...

Once upon a time we all paid Rates. A tax based on the value of the house. Then came Maggie's Poll Tax, brief and inglorious. Now we pay Council Tax - a tax based on the value of the house. There's progress.

The Council Tax is paid to the District Council - to Mid Suffolk. They base the charge levied on each house on an Inland Revenue valuation - the 'standard' value is a Band 'D' house. Bands, A, B & C are lower - for example Band A is 6/9ths of Band D. Bands E, F, G & H are higher - for example Band H is double Band D.

The money paid to Mid Suffolk is split 4 ways. Last year an average' Band D household paid £981.31 which went as follows:-

£751.41 (76.6%)	to Suffolk County Council (highways, schools, social services etc)
£107.44 (10.9%)	to Mid Suffolk District Council (refuse collection, environmental health, planning etc)
£82.08 (8.4%)	to Suffolk Police
£40.38 (4.1%)	to Elmswell Parish Council

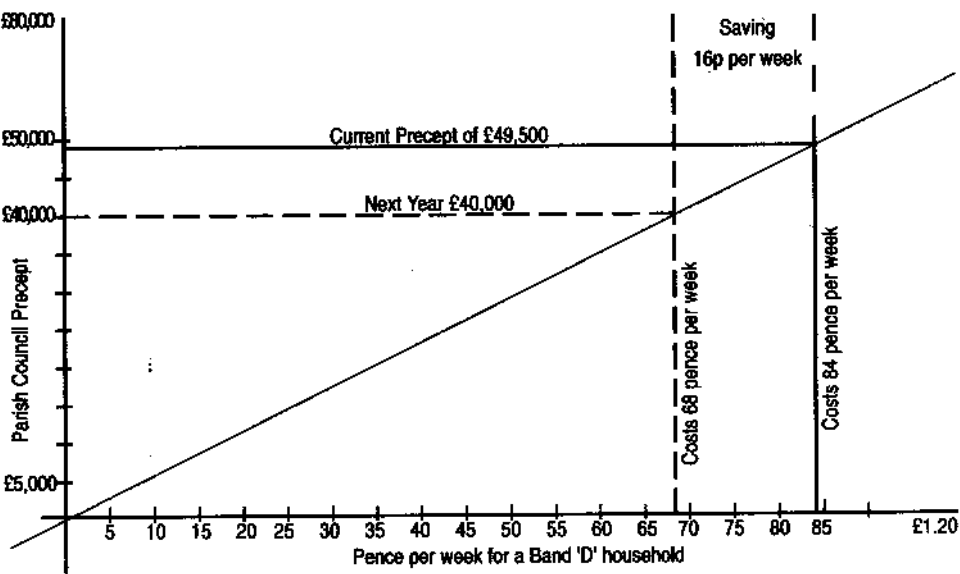
The Parish Council is not limited in the amount of money it can require from the Council Tax. In years past it added a one-off 'supplement' of £100,000 spread over 2 years to raise the money which kick-started the Blackbourne project and attracted over £150,000 in grant aid from outside the village. The current administration came to power pledged, by a majority of 9:2, to lower the spending of the Parish Council - 'currently far too high'. They inherited a £50,000 precept, and have since levied £45,000, £47,500, and £49,500 in successive years.

This year they have settled on £40,000. Their thinking has not been made public, but certain figures have slipped out amidst the chaos of their open sessions. We know that their budget relies on winning the court case against the Amenities Association where £15,000 hangs in the balance. The hearing is on 20th/21st March and, if the case goes against the Council, the new administration, elected in May, will have to struggle on £15,000 short. Further problems could arise for their successors if the arbitration in the matter of the final payment to the contractors who built the hall at Blackbourne goes against

them - a further £6,000 shortfall is possible here. We know that £25,000 is earmarked for the new Clerk's office at Blackbourne. Again, the new Council will have to decide what to do with it if their next Clerk is happy, as in all other villages locally, to work from home. We know that nothing at all is set aside for any spending to benefit young people in the village. We know that, of the £13,000 which could be made available to support local organisations with grant aid, only a tiny fraction has been put aside. We know that the road safety budget has been halved, whereas the cost of administration is set to rise yet again. In fact the administration, now including rent for offices, more hours for the Clerk, a website & the Council's own Newsletter, looks set to gobble up over £15,000 - over 37% of the Precept. The total 'housekeeping' costs - money which they cannot avoid spending...administration, plus street lights, audit fees, various maintenance jobs etc looks set to make up at least 100% of the precept. In other words the Council has set a 'negative' budget requiring the next Council to rely on 'reserves'. However, £25,000 of these 'reserves' are already promised towards the new office.

There is an old Suffolk tale of the farmer, in many versions a Woolpit man, who was training his donkey to live on no food at all. He succeeded after months of trying. Unfortunately, the day after his success was noted, the donkey died.

To avoid a parallel fate befalling a future Council the following graph might help. It shows how much an average household saves as the Parish Precept is cut back. Keep it for next year - we might even be asked what we think!



Letter to Ed. from Norman Kenyon of New Road

... "mightily ashamed of what they have done" ...

The Parish Council (PC) spent well over £2000 of our money on a website last summer: the money was spent unnecessarily and has largely been wasted.

There was already in existence an excellent Elmswell website (www.elmswell.org.uk, created and run by Neil Thompson) containing maps, a list of businesses and information about village organisations, etc. What was not available there was the important up-to-date PC stuff – minutes, planning requests, dates of future meetings, and so on – and therefore the case for a Council website would reasonably be to make such information available to Elmswell residents quickly. I even volunteered to set up such a site without charge, but it has now become evident why they would not have wanted me involved.

The PC site now available has lots of photos and fancy javascript, but it basically just duplicates the other site for general information, and the Council pages are hopelessly out of date: "Council News" gives just the chairman's report from nine months ago, there are no Council minutes later than 27th August, and the planning page has no dates at all! The contacts include Peggy Fuller, who has not been with us for many weeks now.

It is clear that the PC Chairman and associates are mightily ashamed of what they have done, since nothing has been done to publicise the site. Which of your readers know how to find it? Which of your readers would rather the money had been spent otherwise?



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Letter to Ed from Raymond Eyres from Cooks Road

I have telephoned Allan Sparrow, and requested that he clarified his letter in the December edition of Newsletter, however as I have had no reply I would in all decency ask?

If the destruction of our Memorial Hall was not to enhance Funds for the Blackbourne project, then why is, or for what purpose has its destruction served? He is just another person who has over a comparatively short period of time joined our community and is not familiar with the facts.

I am sure that, had the Doner of the Memorial site Mr Chamberlayne been alive the site would never have been an Issue. It is grossly cowardly, for an outsider to determine for what purpose his bequest should serve, as the benefactor cannot reply.

Another thought comes to mind, what has happened to the proceeds? I and others spent hours bringing the Memorial into being, We worked for a purpose, and gave freely of our labour, only to be insulted by an outsider who by guile destroyed our efforts, the Village's token of respect to its Sons who in two World Wars paid the Supreme price.

I took photo's of the Hall, after the Library was built, even then the photo's show was far from derelect.

Letter to Ed from Dave Hollings, Group Scout Leader

In November last year we held a Jumble Sale and raised a fantastic £275 for our funds. I would like to thank all those who helped us both on the day and in the preparation and clearing up afterwards.

Special thanks go to our Parents' Support Committee, The Methodist Church for the use of the Wesley Hall, The Baptist Church for the loan of tables, Barry Brough of Miko Coffee for the loan of the Coffee Machine and the tea and coffee supplies, to Shirley our Scout Leader's mother-in-law for her sterling efforts making the teas and coffees, to Dave at the chippy, to St John's Church, to Pippa Larkman, to Annie Coole and to all our parents for their support.

A really big thank you must go to Jim Coole our Scout Leader whose idea the whole project was and for his hard work and enthusiasm that kept us all going on the day.

Finally congratulations to young Charlotte Pask who won our treasure hunt. Many thanks again and apologies if I've forgotten anybody.

Letter to Ed from Bob Goodall at the Post Office

"Family Allowance Benefit change to method of payment"

As from April 2003 the government will change the method of payment for all Family Allowances. The current method of issuing Benefit Books will be discontinued and payments will be made directly into a bank account.

Therefore you must have a bank account to have your allowance to be paid in. "Although" the government have reassured us, that it will be possible to withdraw your allowance in full from a Post Office.

Anyone currently receiving this Benefit will soon be receiving notification from the DHSS which will give you a choice of three (3) options, you must choose one of these options and return the form to ensure continued payment.

OPTION 1. Paid into a Current Bank Account.

If you currently have, or open a Current Bank Account with any Post Office participating banks. (Lloyds/TSB, Barclays, Alliance & Leicester, Co-operative, Cahoot or Smile). You can draw cash by cheque up to the card limit daily.

OPTION 2. Paid into a Basic Bank Account.

If you currently have, or open a Basic Bank Account at any major branch of Bank

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or Building Society you will be issued with a Bank Card. This will enable you to withdraw your allowance from any Post Office, branch of Bank or Building Society.

A cheque book is not required, deposits and withdrawals can be made to the account and a statement can be given on request. The Basic Account can be opened in addition to any existing account should you wish to keep this Benefit separate from other accounts.

OPTION 3. Paid into a Post Office Card Account.

You will be issued with a Post Office Card which will enable you to withdraw your allowance at any Post Office. The card can be used at any Post Office for withdrawals only and a statement can be given if requested.

If in doubt ask us at the Post Office.

Letter to Ed from Thurstan Adult Learning Centre

Time Out

“Yoga and Relaxation” at the Blackbourne starts on Wednesday 26th February from 10.00 - 11.30am.

Think of yourself for once, take time out to attend a relaxing session of yoga and be fit for anything. Forget Madonna and Geri H., these sessions will not make you sweat. The emphasis here is on body awareness, improving both strength and suppleness through stretches and traditional yoga postures. Classes end with 15mins complete relaxation. When was the last time you did that?

Ring Shelley on 01359 232204 for more details.

STOP PRESS - KILN MEADOW WILDLIFE

Anglian Water have, in a dramatic move resulting from their frustration at trying to deal with our Parish Council, terminated the contract with the Council.

The move takes immediate and absolute effect.

The site is now closed • The public are not admitted • The scheme is finished.

It is, therefore, with a sense of sadness that I draw everyone's attention to

NATIONAL NESTBOX WEEK

14th - 21st FEBRUARY

The future of the dozens of sponsored nestboxes which formed such a key part of the project – all hand made from scrap & all sponsored by individuals in the community – is to be decided.

Watch your Newsletter for an update, and do *think* before you vote on 1st May.

Alan Thompson (241373)

ELMSWELL LUNCHEON CLUB

The Club rounded off the old year in style with Christmas festivities at The Bull, Woolpit. Pictured are two of the Club's members/helpers, (Anice and Harry Webb) who joined almost thirty more enjoying a marvellous spread of seasonal fayre.

Secretary, Rosalie Summons, organised a special raffle for the occasion and everyone won a lovely gift to add to their own celebrations.

The Club spent a longer time than usual at The Bull and afternoon tea with a piece of Jean Barker's beautifully decorated Christmas cake finished off an excellent day! The Club re-started on Monday January 6th and welcomed six new members. This is most encouraging for the committee, who are keen to attract new faces ... there are still a few places available though! Some of our regulars have not attended since the New year due to illness and seasonal coughs and colds but we hope to see them back soon.

January 6th turned out to be a 'full house' as we had a visit from the Chair and Trustees of Age Concern Suffolk. They were made to feel very much at home and enjoyed their stay. They had not experienced a Luncheon Club meeting in a pub and wanted to see how it operated. They went away very impressed

with the Club's friendly atmosphere and the service and facilities offered by landlords Trevor and Valerie. Age Concern Suffolk also took the opportunity to explain the services available from them and this was much appreciated.



So - if you're aged 55+ and retired, why not find out all about the Elmswell Luncheon Club by 'phoning our Secretary Rosalie Summons on 01359 240001.

PARISH COUNCIL

The January meeting, held on 20th at the Blackbourne, opened without a New Year's Greeting from Chairman Curry, without a Police presence and, more importantly, without Mrs Mary Mitson Woods who had, with a little help from the Constabulary, made the last meeting possible by toning down the excesses of Cllr Curry's paramilitary style. The Suffolk Association of Local Councils had provided Trevor Messenger to take the minutes, but he demonstrated none of the zeal of Mrs Mitson Woods who had made such a wholehearted and valuable contribution in December and had promised to do so at all subsequent meetings until the witching day - 1st May, election day. Presumably the experience had proved more of a strain than had appeared. Mrs Mitson Woods was absent, allowing Cllr Curry to make his presence well and truly felt.

As a legacy, however, there remained a ten minute opportunity before the meeting for the public to speak. 'Comment' only was allowed. The Chairman would not answer the question, 'can we ask questions?' because it was a question. However, in the confusion and harangue which ensued, questions were asked and the ducking and weaving implicit in the answers was of the expected high order.

An apology was demanded from Cllrs Clark, Curry, Marriott and Talbot for their victimisation of Roy Finch, a valued member of the community who had, it was suggested, achieved more for the good of the village than had all of the four councillors put together. Although this found loud support from many of the 30 members of the public present, the matter was ruled out of order by Chairman Ronald Curry. The condition of the village sign and the dilapidations at the play area on Crown Mill were the subject of questions. Although monitoring of the dangerously leaning sign had been carried out, nothing by way of remedial action was, 'yet before Council,' and quotations had been sought for remedying the dangerous situation at Crown Mill but not of a 'satisfactory nature'. 'It'll wait until May,' suggested several voices.

The lack of any action on correspondence sent to the Council was raised. Two specific matters were highlighted. The Council's cemetery and Crown Mill grass maintenance contractor has written to confirm that he has no third party liability insurance, never has had third party liability insurance and sees no reason to start now. This matter has been raised but no action, apparently, taken despite Council's fastidious approach to insurance in other areas as at

Kiln Meadow where it was quoted obsessively as an excuse for inaction. There has also been correspondence requesting the removal of Cllr Ronald Curry as the Council's Appointee to the Blackbourne Management Association following the recent well proven case of his having lied to the Committee of Management in the matter of his unlawful possession of documents. Cllr Curry informed the meeting that, as Council are operating without a Clerk, the arrangement must be that correspondence remains with him but could be made available for Councillors to inspect. As far as action to deal with the matters raised in correspondence was concerned, there can be none as the Council is operating without a Clerk.

The matter of the Parish Clerk was to become a catch-all excuse for inactivity. Although twelve weeks have passed since her resignation, no attempt has been made to replace her and it was pointed out that, without a 'Proper Officer', usually the Clerk, the Council cannot fulfil certain functions. For example, Councillors cannot be summoned to a meeting. Which begged an obvious question. However, the finer points of procedure seem to be in abeyance until May. This was graphically demonstrated when Cllr Mrs Mary Feeney pointed out that Councillors had received only one day's clear notice of the meeting - the law requires three days. Paraphrasing can be brutal, but the gist of Cllr Curry's defence was, 'so what!' Oh yes...and that they, 'don't have a clerk'. It was pointed out that, in her new post as Parish Clerk to Woolpit, a village of similar size but with a competent Parish Council, Mrs Fuller has agreed to work from home and that it was a pity that this option was not considered at Elmswell where the cost and disruption caused by the provision of an office was a major factor in creating the current friction.

Precept. One of the benefits of Mary Mitson Woods having attended the December meeting had been her advice to defer the setting of the Precept (see centre page feature). Council had been asked to approve a figure of £35,000 based on figures seen only by the 'Executive' and containing many very dubious assumptions. All councillors in the interim having had the chance to discuss the matter it was suggested that perhaps £40,000 would suffice. Cllr Dick Burch fought hard for his right to debate in public his reasons for seeking a higher figure - the same as last year at £49,500. Cllr Clark was keen to stifle such heresy - the matter had been discussed in private, why should the public be involved? 'Because they are entitled to know how their money's being spent.' Having won round one, the right to debate this most important of issues, the People's Champion went down gloriously in flames...20p per week on the average bill would buy a skateboard park...we need money to sort out the car park at Blackbourne...£40,000 only works if the Council wins the

court case to secure £15,000 from the Amenities Association, and this is far from guaranteed...nothing at all is earmarked for Youth Issues...this is a blatant and political attempt to leave the next administration without the money to do a proper job. The inevitable 5:4 vote (usually 6:4 but Cllr Talbot was missing) brought public disruption and much gavel banging. Those present apparently felt short changed, despite being 20p better off.

Kiln Meadow. Further public outcry was caused when Cllr Curry confirmed that Anglian Water have finally terminated the Council's contract for the wildlife area having lost patience after many months of intransigence and a bloody-minded refusal on the part of the Council 'Executive' to act responsibly in the interests of the community. The site is now closed to the public. The good work of many years is wasted. That's another few pence, it was suggested, saved on the Precept. Alan Thompson, a keen conservation volunteer who has been a leading light in the project, took issue. There should be an apology to the people of Elmswell from the few obstructive councillors who had followed their own personal agenda in destroying the project. The gavel was in danger of overheating. Mr Thompson was undeterred. He expressed the frustration and upset of the many friends of the project with admirable clarity given the level of his anger. He was ruled out of order. The wildlife site is ruled out of bounds. All objections were overruled. The matter is, like the project, closed.

Village Development Boundary. The District Council is in the very early stages of considering any suggested modifications to the boundary within which development is permitted in Elmswell. A dozen or so outline schemes have been submitted by landowners or developers for extensions to the boundary, largely for house building. Councillors had not had prior sight of the proposals which were available only on a small scale overhead projector map. (The Council has no Clerk). Comment was, therefore, limited, vague, poorly informed and often inaccurate. Basically, North of the railway line did not find favour (cries of 'footbridge' at this point) otherwise the only firm suggestion was the reduction of the size of one plot at Wetherden Road as it was considered that the 300 houses which it would produce might be excessive. There were several suggestions from the floor that the discussion was governed by personal loyalties to the landowners involved. No proposal was made for the communication of the Council's considered views to Mid Suffolk, but, as the review is not due for publication until 2006, there is time for wiser counsel - Council? - to prevail.

Road Safety. Cllr Doug Reed, gamely surviving as one of the few remnants of a functioning Council, has produced a report from his Community Action

Plan Working Party making recommendations for a way forward on 11 fronts including Shop Corner, lorry traffic, the railway crossing etc. The report is very full, clearly detailed and presents a strategy which has long been needed. However, having been summarily accepted by Council, no further action is determined as the Council is currently, 'without a Clerk'. Cllr Feeney's suggestion that Cllr Reed be given delegated powers to take certain aspects further was ruled out of order by Chairman Curry. Cllr Reed's observation that the lack of a Clerk did not seem to affect the Executives favoured projects - he cited the new Clerk's office - from progressing was ruled as irrelevant. Certain members of the public gave voice to the only realistic option: 'wait until May...and try not to get run over'.

Parish Clerk's Office. Building work is to start on 3rd February on the new Parish Clerk's Office which is to be tacked on to the side of Blackbourne along with some extra storage space. The project will cost £25,000 for which grant aid has not been sought. Completion is due mid May. The new Council will face the bills which, it is projected, they will be able to do from 'reserves'. The size and designs have not been made public, although, there having been no consultation with user groups, it seems clear from the little information which has leaked out that there is no chance that the storage element will allow adequate provision for the mat which would be required if badminton is to be accommodated in the hall. The Council is currently without a Clerk.

Blackbourne Hedge. Having won an earlier battle to have the minutes of the last meeting corrected to allow the allocation of the contract to allow much overdue work on the shelter belt hedging around Blackbourne Meadow, Mary Feeney was finally beaten when the Chairman refused to allow the matter to proceed as the details which she had put through his door had been 'incomplete'. Neither would he say how they were incomplete. The next meeting is too late - the nesting season is upon us. Sorry, incomplete correspondence. The complete correspondence is available here and now. Sorry, neither the time nor the place for reading correspondence. Mrs Feeney cares about hedges. She had almost, after much effort, and against all the odds, got something done. She was cross, as were certain other Councillors and a large body of public as Cllr Curry, freed from the civilising influence of Mary Mitson Woods, proceeded in a rude and insolent manner to quash all opposition. He had, it was claimed, done everything in his power to prevent this work going ahead because of personal issues relating to the chosen contractor. He had found a way to defeat the, 'wait until May,' jibes. This job, if it waits until May, will wait until November. Another year wasted - a total, it was suggested, of four years...totally wasted. This wasn't about hedges; it was about tactics, it was

about procedures, it was about revenge.

Planning. Cllr Dickie Birch drew Council's attention to the number of yellow Planning notices about the village. Dozens were posted, none came before Council. Why not convene a Planning Committee meeting? There are important developments going ahead with no local input or comment at all. Developers were getting away with schemes which should attract some 'planning gain' - a footpath adjacent to the site, some amenity provision, a contribution towards traffic calming. Another bloody session. Another blank wall on which to bang the head. All because, it seems, the Council does not, at this moment in time, and excepting certain favoured projects, have a Clerk.

Next Meeting. The next meeting is a Statutory Meeting. It should be more difficult to get out of. It should happen on 17th February. Mid Suffolk District Council should attend to make a presentation. The single notice will, if recent convention is followed, be posted between midnight and 6.30 am on Thursday 13th. Any variation, lawful or otherwise, will, no doubt, be a consequence of the fact that the Council does not, 'at this moment in time and within an immediate timeframe', have a Clerk.

Peter Dow



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What's On in Elmswell ?

To be included in our events diary make sure you send separate notification of your announcement.

January

- 27 Soft Furnishing and Upholstery, 9.30 - 12 noon, Blackbourne
28 Keep Fit for the More Mature 10.30-11.30am, Blackbourne
29, 30, 31 & 1 February E A D S panto "Babes in the Wood", Wesley Hall, School Road, 7.30pm (plus Saturday 1 Feb matinee). Tickets from Elmswell PO and Mace.

February

- 1 EADS panto "Babes in the Wood", Wesley Hall, School Road, 7.30pm (plus 1 Feb matinee). Tickets from Elmswell PO and Mace.
3, 10, 24 Soft Furnishing and Upholstery, 9.30 - 12 noon, Blackbourne
4, 11, 25 Keep Fit for the More Mature 10.30-11.30am, Blackbourne
5 Elmswell Exchange WI meets at Exchange Hall, 2pm, Speaker from the National Trust
13 History Group, St John's Church Room, 7.30pm, Peter Minter, 'A History of Local Brickmaking.'
18 Suffolk Curiosities by Peter Driver in the Exchange Hall, 2.30pm
26 Yoga, 10 am - 11.30 am, Blackbourne

February cont.

- 27 Concert by Tudor Rose Singers in St John's Church, 7.30pm

March

- 3, 10, 17, 24 Soft Furnishing and Upholstery, 9.30 - 12 noon, Blackbourne
4, 11, 18, 25 Keep Fit for the More Mature 10.30-11.30am, Blackbourne
5, 12, 19, 26 Yoga, 10 - 11.30 am, Blackbourne
7 Womens World Day of Prayer - Service St John's Church, 2pm
13 History Group, St John's Church Room, 7.30pm, Nick Sign, 'Emigration from East Anglia to Massachusetts.'
18 Visit to the Greene King Brewery

April

- 1, 8 Keep Fit for the More Mature 10.30-11.30am, Blackbourne
2, 9 Yoga, 10 - 11.30 am, Blackbourne

July

- 26-27 Fuchsia Festival, St John's Church

September

- 7 Autumn Fayre
12-13 Art Festival, St John's Church

October

- 16 Village Quiz

Tell us more - Tel 241841