

THE ELSWICKIAN

NEWSLETTER OF ELSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

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HOUSING THREAT TO VILLAGE AVERTED -FOR NOW

Last week Elswick received wonderful news when Eric Pickles the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that he was scrapping the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy. Villagers will recall that the Parish Council wrote to all residents at the beginning of April advising that the Borough Council was considering several sites in the village for possible new house building which would potentially treble the size of Elswick with the construction of 711 new homes. Similar surveys were being undertaken in all towns and villages in Fylde Borough in an attempt to meet the Borough Council's target of 7038 new houses by 2021. This target had been imposed by Government North West via the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The new Coalition Government intends to replace the Regional Spatial Strategy with a system which allows local councils to determine housing needs. Guidance is not expected to be issued to councils until the autumn so it is too early to judge how this will affect Elswick. It is more than likely however that the housing requirements will be drastically cut. Whilst Fylde Borough has stopped all work on its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) the Council has said that it will retain all the information accumulated to date and review it when the new proposals are published. The threat to the village has not therefore completely gone away.

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who responded by submitting objections to the Borough Council's survey. The response from the village was fantastic with several hundred responses received by the Borough. Some criticism was received by the Parish Council from a handful of residents regarding the tight deadline for submitting objections to the Borough Council. The Parish Council recognises this was a problem which was created by the Borough Council's refusal to extend the one month consultation period. Elswick was the only Parish Council in the Borough which managed to circulate every house in the Parish with the proposals within the period allowed by the Borough. The Council will update villagers as soon as there are any further developments on this issue.

Parish Council Tax Cut

By now you will no doubt have received your 2010/11 Council Tax demand and will have paid at least part of the amount due. You may have noticed on your demand that for the second year running the Parish Council has managed to reduce the amount that the Council levies. Last year the Parish Council reduced its precept by 33% and this year the council has managed to trim a further 10% from its Council tax requirement.

The Council enjoys healthy balances and is constantly reviewing its expenditure to achieve best value without cutting services. This is achieving excellent results and members are hopeful that a further cut in the Parish precept will be possible in the forthcoming year.

Vandalism

One of highest aspects of expenditure incurred by the Council is caused by vandalism and wilful damage. This year the Council has already had to replace many of the flowers in the village due to theft and wilful damage and has had to undertake repairs on several of the Council's buildings.

With the school summer holidays due to start this month the Council respectfully asks parents to remind their children that the Council will take action against anyone that wilfully causes damage or ignores the byelaws on Council property. Council property is owned and paid for by everyone in the village and the Council therefore has an obligation to report any damage to the police. CCTV is operational 24hours 7 days a week at the village hall site and will be used if necessary to identify possible offenders.

Best Kept Village / Britain in Bloom

The village has once again entered both the Best Kept Village completion and Britain in Bloom. I am sure that everyone will agree that the floral displays created by Andrew Atkinson get better every year. The village has already been judged for the Best Kept Village competition but the results will not be known until the autumn. Britain in Bloom judging takes place on Monday 19th July and it is hoped that we can go one better from the runners up prize achieved in the Village class last year. Since Andrew took over the flower contract the village has been successful each year with two 3rd places in the Large Village category in 2006 and 2007 and two 2nd places in the village category in 2008 and 2009.

Cycle Racing

For many years cycling clubs have used Elswick as a base for races and time trials on the flat roads of the Fylde and particularly around the loop formed by the roads between Elswick, Roseacre, Wharles and Inskip. Many of these clubs rent the Village Hall for their events and have been a regular and valuable let for the Hall.

Earlier this year some incidents of antisocial behaviour by cyclists taking part in organised events were reported to the Parish Council. As a result a public meeting is to be held on Wed 21st July at the Village Hall with the cycle clubs, Police and Treales, Roseacre & Wharles Parish Council.

If villagers do witness any such incidents it is vital that they note the date, time and race number of the individuals concerned as the cycle clubs themselves are very keen to police themselves and to maintain the best possible relations with the communities in which they ride.

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at 19:45 at the Village Hall. All residents of the village are welcome to attend. Alternatively you may wish to keep up to date with Parish matters on the Council website at www.elswickparishcouncil.gov.uk.