

## **BRITISH LEGION CLOSES CAR PARK**

The Parish Council was shocked and disappointed to be told on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June that the Royal British Legion (RBL) car park is to be closed within a week or two. This is awful news for the village.

Since early March, the Council had been trying to arrange a meeting with the RBL. In a series of emails and letters it had stressed the importance of the car park and the building to the Long Melford community. In particular, it had underlined the importance of the car park for staff and patients of the GP surgery and for parents dropping off and picking up children at the primary school.

Eventually, the RBL agreed to meet with representatives of the Parish Council on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. At that meeting the RBL Property Manager said that the car park would be closed very soon because of advice from its insurers about “public liability and the risk of travellers occupying it”. They also wanted vacant possession as they intend to sell the building and car park.

We suggested several times that the Parish Council might be willing to take a short-term lease on the car park and take over the insurance issues. But each time, the answer from the RBL was a firm “No”.

It took over three months for the RBL to agree to meet the Parish Council and only two working days after the meeting to announce the closure, despite the Council’s strong representations. Clearly, the RBL has no concern for the residents of Long Melford, some of whom have served in the forces.

The Parish Council intends to remain in contact with the RBL to represent the village in regard to the anticipated sale of the site.