To Chairman & Parish Councillors – Holbrook Parish Council

From Councillor Mary McLaren

Babergh District Councillor.

19 July 2021

**Babergh District Council**

**Update on Covid 19 in Suffolk**

Regular bulletins continue to be produced to keep all residents informed regarding the Covid-19 situation in our county. With the proposed changes to restrictions provided by the Prime Minister for 19th July in England only, Parish Councillors need to consider keeping in touch with what is actually happening via the County Council Website.

The vaccination programme is integral to the present and our future, so the vaccine roll out can be found on the SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website.

BDC continue to play a part alongside public sector colleagues within the Suffolk Resilience Forum in a response to the pandemic by continuing to offer support to our communities and businesses. Access the BDC website.

**Councils Joint Local Plan examination to reconvene in September 2021**

Our Joint Local Plan submission for examination and subsequent hearings unfortunately was scheduled for June and July but due to covid restrictions and digital difficulties will now take place over a concentrated period in September with Stage 2 in mid-autumn as planned. This will enable them to be fully inclusive whilst ensuring public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Going forward with the councils biodiversity and climate change agreed**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have given the go ahead for £97k for projects aimed at boosting biodiversity and tackling climate change across their districts. From the fund, BDC have been allocated £32,849 towards biodiversity mapping and a tree canopy survey across the district. Already in progress this covers wildlife corridors and council owned public realm spaces. This will help deliver suitable sites for tree and hedge planting. The tree canopy survey will identify a more accurate tree stock across the district.

**“Virtual High Streets” only a click away.**

As online shopping has become the norm over the past 18 months you may wish to access the delights of the Sudbury and recently Hadleigh’s Virtual High Street experience even though they are not physically very near to our own village. Over 100 new businesses have signed up to Hadleigh and 130 to Sudbury. VIRTUALHIGHSTREET.uk This is good news for our local economy.

**Celebrations to mark Armed Forces Week**

The council proudly flew the flag for our Armed Forces last month with various events to show support for our servicemen and women. I too want to acknowledge the mostly unseen work undertaken by the many residents of our village who every day undertake their military duties with commitment to protect our freedoms. Thank you.

**Reminder - Locality Awards**

Applications are now open for community groups to apply for some funding to enable them to improve their facilities and gain new skills. Download an application form from BDC and complete it. I need to support the application. So worth emailing me with your idea so we can explore the possibility of funding because some e.g. Religious, Political and organisations in receipt of public funds are exempt from applying. Any payments will be made after the end of the year.

**BDC awards £237,750 to Holbrook Academy**

Construction Infrastructure Levy is collected from developers when they build new homes in the district. The funding helps ensure that local infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth and also supports the council’s vision for communities which are attractive, successful and connected places for people to live and work. In the latest round of District CIL funding, the BDC Cabinet approved Holbrook Academy’s CIL bid to enable the school to increase its capacity from 500 to 600 pupils. This will be achieved by reconfiguring existing facilities meeting the identified need of housing growth within Stutton and Chelmondiston.

**Changes agreed to social housing allocation to ensure fairness and consistency.**

Both councils recently agreed to amendments to Gateway to Homechoice – the lettings system used to allocate social housing across the local authority areas of Babergh, Braintree, Colchester, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Maldon and Midsuffolk.

This was in response to national legislative and policy changes including a new Code of Guidance issued by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2020 and will ensure that key decisions will be made fairly by all Gateway Local Authorities.

**The NHS is awarded the George Cross by the Queen**

Since 1948 the NHS has given us unfailing service and commitment through extraordinary times in our country’s history. I was part of that history until I retired a few years ago. However the past 18 months has demonstrated its uniqueness in its creation and development. It is not replicated anywhere else in the world. Since the pandemic it has sacrificed many of its own staff and has demanded much of all those ordinary people who everyday go to work to undertake the extraordinary task of giving their patients comfort and hope, many times with limited resources.

To those people in Holbrook who are part of this great public family that is so integral to the DNA of our nation. A very big Thank You.

Mary McLaren

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