

To Chairman & Parish Councillors – Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren

20 June 2022

Babergh District Council - Annual Council Meeting – 25 May 2022

Councillor Kathryn Grandon was elected as Chairman of the Council for the period 2022 to 2023 and Councillor Derek Davies was elected Vice-Chair for the same period.

Thanks were given to Councillor Adrian Osborne for his very able oversight as Chairman for the previous municipal year. During his tenure he raised over £3000 for his adopted charity Kerson. Chairs and Vice Chairs were also elected to all the major Committees and members were elected to numerous outside bodies.

Cost of Living Crisis

On 8th June 2022 the BDC Cabinet considered the Plan to help residents and staff tackle the cost of living crisis in our communities.

As Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing, I presented this paper which was endorsed and ratified by the Cabinet.

The Five Point Plan proposes the following:

Cost of Living

1. Co-ordinating Government Support by getting help to those who need it.
2. Exercising discretion in providing welfare, support and advice and advice and support for those people facing hard times.
3. Maximising partnership working and established systems to provide targeted support where there is a particular trend or need.

Preventing Crisis

4. Maintaining good health such as referrals for mental health support, use of council gyms and community led well-being initiatives.
5. Ensuring good health and nutrition such as healthy eating exercises/initiatives, community gardens, community pantries or extra support for food banks.

As a council we have been providing local support and advice, maintaining people's health and building on work already in place under our Communities and Wellbeing Strategy.

This includes support and funding for local Citizen Advice Centres and local community organisations, specialist support for council tenants struggling to pay their rent, a wide range of discretionary payments and grants, reduction for those facing financial hardship and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme to combat holiday hunger for families who are struggling through school breaks.

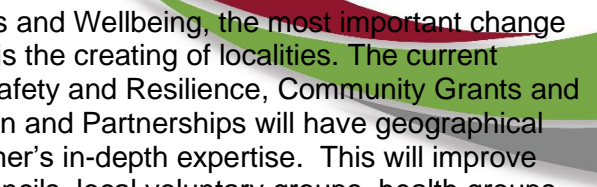
In addition, the council will be looking to expand the role it is already doing, in relation to social prescribing, working in partnership with health colleagues and partners to help residents maintain good health - whether in green spaces or through access to leisure activities.

Exploring new possibilities such as discretionary fuel and travel vouchers scheme to tackle loneliness of people who are isolated or vulnerable, ensuring family and friends can still meet.

The Cabinet approved the funds to appoint a Cost-of-Living Coordinator to help Key Agencies across both districts to join forces so help can be deployed where it is needed.



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Having taken over the Cabinet Portfolio for Communities and Wellbeing, the most important change about to take place within the Communities Directorate is the creating of localities. The current Managers covering - the specific areas of Community Safety and Resilience, Community Grants and Development, Leisure, Sport & Wellbeing and Integration and Partnerships will have geographical areas to oversee and support, whilst accessing each other's in-depth expertise. This will improve communication between them and residents, parish councils, local voluntary groups, health groups and ward members to ensure that there is good knowledge and intelligence in relation to actual need in our communities and how that can be addressed. Having met the managers and their teams, I am very impressed with their skill and commitment to residents.

CIL Money Projects

Towns and Parish Councils across Babergh District have received £567,726 in CIL Payments. Developers are charged a Construction Infrastructure Levy when building new homes in the District. This enables infrastructure to keep pace with housing growth. Payment is automatically paid to Town and Parish councils of up to 15% of collected funds and 25% if they have successfully adopted a Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the above, Babergh and Mid Suffolk allocated £4.5million to 15 successful bids during 2021/2022 allowing parishes to undertake community infrastructure improvements. e.g. Extension to Brooklands Primary School in Brantham.

In retrospect

The Women's Tour 6 June 2022

Babergh and Mid Suffolk were delighted to host this event and the Communities Team organised the practical implications of this event and I was very pleased to be at the Angel Hotel Bury St Edmunds to welcome over 97 women cyclists at the end of Stage One.

Jubilee Celebrations

Well done to all Parishes, Voluntary Groups and Residents who excelled themselves in celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend in style. The variety of events and the street parties held were amazing and meeting everyone in an informal setting was a great way of "feeling normal" again.

Well done to the Head, Staff and Students of the Royal Hospital School for their very spectacular Festival of the Sea programme. Everyone attending had a great time.

With all the events, the hard work undertaken to prepare, practise and present, requires commitment on the part of many people, so on behalf of all those who thoroughly enjoyed the fruits of your labour. THANK YOU.

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