

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

16 May 2022

### Changes to Babergh Cabinet

The following changes were made public on 28 April 2022:-

- Cllr John Ward (Ind Con) leader and cabinet member for Economic Development.
- Cllr Clive Arthey (Ind) deputy leader and cabinet member for Planning
- Cllr Dave Busby (Lib Dem) cabinet member for Finance, Assets and Investments
- Cllr Jane Gould (Green) cabinet member for Climate Change, Bio-diversity and Sustainable Transport.
- Cllr Liz Malvisi (Ind) cabinet member for Environment
- Cllr Alastair McCraw (Ind) cabinet member for Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement
- Cllr Mary McLaren (Ind Con) cabinet member for Communities & Wellbeing.
- Cllr Jan Osborne (Ind Con) cabinet member for Housing.

As your elected District Councillor, I wish to explain my reasons for leaving the main Conservative Councillor group on the council. When I was elected by the residents of Harkstead, Holbrook and Stutton in 2019, I made a personal commitment to serve them to the best of my ability, to uphold the Code of Conduct for those in public life and not to bring the Council into disrepute.

Due to an internal dispute within the Conservative Councillor Group, I could no longer support their ideas and direction as that would have jeopardised those very principles I uphold. This decision meant I joined the Independent Conservative Group.

I was invited to join the Cabinet for the remainder of this administration.

My only regret is that as a Cabinet Member I had to relinquish my Chair/Co-chairmanship of BDC /Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committees and membership of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

### New annual resident survey

In March this year Babergh District Council participated in the LGA Corporate Peer challenge. A group of officers and district councillors from other areas review the culture, performance and programmes of the council. One of their recommendations was to deliver an annual resident survey. We want to hear from residents about their personal and community resilience, how our council is performing and how we can improve your customer experience.

Mixed methods combining online and telephone responses will be undertaken by an external research agency.

Field work will start in June 2022 for two months.

### Rent Increase notification error

Council rents are annually review in April in line with central Government rent policy and we are required to give our tenants 28 days' notice in writing.

This year 4.1% increase was agreed at the February council meeting from 4 April 2022. Unfortunately, we were advised by the mailing company on 11<sup>th</sup> April that due to an error on their part, 1050 Babergh tenants did not receive their rent increase notices.

There is a financial impact for the Council due to this error as we will not be able to increase the rent for the affected tenancies resulting in a loss of 9 weeks of the 4.1% increased rent.



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**Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils**  
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX  
Telephone: (0300) 1234 000  
[www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk) [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk)

A letter with the correct notice will be sent to all affected tenants week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> May with the rent increase to them coming into effect on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

### **Council Tax Energy Rebates.**

Payments of the Governments £150 energy rebate are now well underway for eligible households across Babergh.

There is one payment per household, regardless of the number of occupants or council taxpayers named on the bill.

Payments have started with those who already pay their council tax by direct debit as we already have the bank details of those residents.

If you do not pay your council tax by direct debit you will receive notification of the process to be followed to receive payment.

### **More Accessible Facilities**

Changing Places facilities are larger accessible toilets that feature specialist equipment such as hoists, privacy screens, adult sized changing benches, peninsula toilets with ample space for carers. Due to a grant of £200,000 between the two Councils, the first of two in Babergh will be installed at Flatford Mill working in partnership with the National Trust who will manage it on an ongoing basis. This will be a great asset for the hundreds of visitors who come to Flatford and Dedham Vale.

### **Women's Tour**

This Month saw the **full route for this year's Women's Tour** which will travel through both districts on Monday 6 June.

Some of the locations the world class riders will race through include:-

**Cattawade, Brantham, Holbrook/Stutton, Wherstead/Tattingstone, Capel St Mary/Bentley, Hadleigh, Bildeston (x 2), Stowmarket, Needham Market, Monks Eleigh/Brent Eleigh, Lavenham, Cockfield.**

Our Communities team are now encouraging community and cycling groups and schools along the route to show their support that day. Please do encourage your local residents to get involved and give the riders a cheer when they race through in June. We are regularly putting posts on our social media which you are welcome to share.

### **Electric Vehicle Experience Day**

Businesses of all sizes who may be interested in finding out more about electric vehicles and charging infrastructure are invited to attend an **Electric Vehicle Experience Day** taking place at Trinity Park in Ipswich on Wednesday 22 June 2022.

Suffolk County Council are supporting this event and has secured discounted tickets which can be booked by **Eventbrite**

### **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

National Stalking Week took place between 25-29 April however it is important that in our communities, Women and Girls are aware that help is available when someone is sending unwanted messages or gifts. When someone is constantly contacting you and you have told them not to is not acceptable behaviour. Stalking behaviour is fixated, obsessive and dangerous. To stalk someone is a criminal offence carrying a sentence of up to 10 years imprisonment.

**Contact SCC's community safety team**



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## Ukrainian Refugee Update Homes for Ukraine Property Inspections

Our officers are responsible for carrying out property inspection of homes once sponsors in the district have been matched by the Home Office to a Ukraine family or individual.

The Private Sector Housing Team have been out and about across the districts and in the first 3 weeks carried out over 60 inspections ensuring that our Ukrainian guests have safe and suitable homes in which to stay. They are working to carry out all property inspections as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that numbers of inspections will increase, and additional resources will be put in place as required to keep up with demand.

### Weekly updates

Suffolk County Council are producing weekly bulletins with updates on the situation in Suffolk along with the work of the county council and partners within Suffolk's Ukraine Task Group. Members of the public can sign up to receive a weekly email by sending their details to [Refugee Support. Supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees / Suffolk County Council](#)

Mary McLaren  
3 May 2022



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