

To Chairman & Councillors Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren –
19 September 2022 – Councillor Report

Cost of Living Support

There is no one who is not experiencing the impact of rising food, fuel and energy costs and for many households there is a balance between eating and heating. The rate of inflation continues to rise (and is expected to continue rising) and the UK now faces the risk of recession.

Babergh District Council approved its five point plan in May:-

Cost of Living support

- Co-ordinate government support
- Exercise discretion when we provide welfare support and advice
- Maximise the use of partnership working and established systems to provide targeted support

Crisis prevention

- Maintain good health
- Promote access to food and nutrition.

Nationally there are several schemes and rebates that have been introduced to help ease the financial burden many households and families face.

A Cost of Living Coordinator has now been appointed and a starting date is being considered.

We are urging our residents to check they are receiving the financial support they are entitled to. To make things easier we have put all the relevant information in one place. If residents are confident with on-line applications, then access the Babergh District Council Website and go to Cost of Living Support where you will find a range of services to be accessed with a Chat Box facility. For those residents who are unable to access the services on-line. **Telephone 0300 1234000**

Warm Rooms

I would like Parish Councillors to consider the provision of “Warm Rooms” across our parishes for the winter months for many of our residents who may be suffering from fuel and energy poverty. Different organisations could do different things.

Full Tree Canopy Survey

As part of our BioDiversity Action Plan, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been working with specialists to identify and map existing tree coverage and habitat networks across their districts. We were the first rural councils to commission a full tree canopy survey of our districts following cabinet approval of over £40K for the study in June 2021.

Undertaken by Treeconomics, it has found that just over 10% of Babergh is covered by trees ranging from 5.5% in the Lavenham Ward to just over 19% in Orwell Ward (Chelmondiston, Woolverstone, Freston & Wherstead). Stour Ward (Harkstead, Holbrook & Stutton) achieved 13%

The aim was to identify and protect existing places where biodiversity is thriving, whilst also locating areas with low coverage or gaps where it could be strengthened.

Next month the Cabinet will decide whether the full report and data which includes trees on public and private land should be made available as an interactive map on the council’s website.

The aim is to use this detailed baseline data to improve tree management as well as calculate where land is available for planting and increase tree coverage where it will be most beneficial. This will support our current support – Tree for Life, Wildflower and Hedgerow schemes.

District Council Elections – May 2023 – Have you moved house or has your household changed?

Residents are urged to check their voter registration details. BDC has already started the Annual Canvass of Electors and are asking residents to check the electoral details for everyone in their household who is eligible to vote.



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



Postal Votes & Proxy Vote

Residents can register for a Postal Vote or Proxy Votes at any time however nearer the election there will be a time limit for residents to apply - so do it early.

Switch to Digital Skills Programmes for Businesses

Business owners in Babergh can take advantage of free workshops to help boost their confidence online by accessing the Councils Digital Skills Programme

Simple Scheme to buy solar panels returns for Suffolk Residents

Solar Together Suffolk – a group-buying scheme which has helped over 1,500 homes in Suffolk to install solar panels and batteries is now open for registration.

Suffolk Waste Partnership backs national campaign to raise awareness of Safe Battery disposal.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership which includes SCC and all district Councils have signed up to Stop Batteries Fire Campaign which aims to raise awareness of how house holders can properly re-cycle batteries and electricals.

In June a Fire at the Materials Recycling facility in Great Blakenham which recycles waste from Suffolk is suspected to have been started by a battery dumped with household recycling. The fire was located deep within 400 tonnes of waste and took Firefighters and Staff two hours to extinguish.

Common electricals that contain batteries – Toothbrushes, shavers, chargers and toys.

Two weeks ago, I visited the site. Very interesting and would encourage groups of residents to visit. However, they are booked up until Easter.

Suffolk the Best Place to Film a Block Buster

Colleagues across the county have agreed to continue to attract filmmakers to the region. Since 2016 filming days have increased to 800 within the county. In addition to film makers of many of our leading brands choose Suffolk for the filming of advertisements. Estimated income to the Suffolk Economy £11.5m.

Previous Babergh District Council Headquarters– Corks Lane Hadleigh

Work by Gipping Construction to transform the former headquarters of BDC into 49 new homes is now underway.

Statement regarding investigation into procedural irregularities during the Babergh Planning Meeting

The outcome of an investigation into procedural irregularities that forced the adjournment of a Babergh Planning Committee is complete. This referred to the development application for 41 Retirement living apartments at Belle Vue House Sudbury. The Monitoring Officer undertook a thorough investigation with each Committee Member and was satisfied that the integrity of the Committee had not been compromised. A member who was a substitute for another Committee Member was removed from the Committee and would receive further training. The Planning Application will now be presented to the Committee at a future Planning meeting.

Mary McLaren
05 September 2022
Mary.McLaren@babergh.gov.uk



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