

To Chairman & Councillors Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren
20 March 2023

Babergh District Council Meeting 20 February 2023

BDC has agreed its budget for 2023/24 – ensuring that rural communities have access to the services they need and provide ongoing support for the district's residents, businesses, towns and villages. The net cost of delivering services is set to increase by almost 20% from £10.43m in 2022/3 to £12.45m in 2023/24 while the cost of running and maintaining the councils housing stock has already increased by 50%. Savings and investment income are helping to balance the books but next year's budget 2023/24 will also see an increase to the district councils share of council tax of 2.99% from 1 April 2023. (The equivalent of an extra £5.30 a year or 10p per week for residents in a Band D property).

Council Tenants will also see a 7% increase in rents to try and keep up with costs and ensure that the necessary investment and repairs is maintained.

BDC has also agreed additional help for those in most financial need with a council tax reduction of up to 100% for residents on the lowest incomes and a simplification of the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for residents on Universal Credit.

New £12million depot would future proof services for residents

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are exploring plans to consolidate three aging operational sites (Stowmarket, Sudbury, Great Wenham) and improving conditions for staff. Recognising the sites are over 50 years old and vehicles have to travel to the Waste Centre at Great Blakenham it is essential that we have a depot fit for purpose. Babergh & Mid Suffolks fleet were one of the first in the country to convert all our vehicles to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil and because of the Government's Resource and Waste Strategy (RAWS) we will be working towards kerb-side waste collection, our present sites would struggle to accommodate all that additional activity.

Over a thousand empty homes across both Districts

Introducing our House4Homes schemes is an essential contribution to the council's need for more housing. This scheme is to reduce the number of long-term empty properties within the district by helping to bring them back into use and discourage owners from leaving them empty.

The service offers: -

Construction Advice, Financial Assistance (a £20k interest free loan for property owners) and private letting support.

Online help:- www.house4homes.org or by calling 0300 1234000

Food network approved to help people through the cost-of-living challenges.

Suffolk Public Sector Leaders approved on the 17 February to deliver £1.5 million into the new supported Food Network over the next three years. The plans will be led by the county's Collaborative Communities Board. The network will work with new and existing food outlets including food banks, providing more stock and ensuring a range of enhanced support is available to meet local needs.

Recent Data

In October 2022 - 9,460 food parcels were provided in - one month. This was up on October 2021 when 5868 were distributed.

One in five children in Suffolk are receiving free school meals. Citizens Advice are dealing with double the number of people requiring support and advice.

Further details of cost-of-living support available to Suffolk resident can be found on the Suffolk County Council website.



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
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Culture, Heritage and Visitor Economy Strategy March 2023

As a district we are aware that the Pandemic and the Cost-of-Living Crisis has impacted all business within all our areas. As part of Shotley Peninsula we want to attract more visitors, walkers, cyclists to the area so that as well as enjoying the scenery, local businesses will benefit from the increased trade. I personally have encouraged small businesses to join the Virtual High Street which many have done and have benefitted from the wider client base.

The above Strategy will be approved by BDC Cabinet in March and is to support residents in Babergh to live full cultural lives, building cultural confidence and civic pride in our local surroundings and have a Heritage and Visitor Economy Sector that champions our region's distinctive qualities.

What is distinctive about your Parish, what do you want to identify as a special place of interest. Most people visit areas because they have heard a story about an event or a person. I would be pleased to hear your ideas.

VCFSE Resilience Fund (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise)

There was £50,000 made available in our district and is targeted at supporting grassroots and medium sized groups to keep them financially viable in these challenging times.

I hope that local groups took advantage of this fund which closed on 26 February 2023.

For Parish Councils I will always forward Press Releases to the clerks regarding such funds so that groups on your network can be informed and apply.

Voter ID for the Forthcoming Elections Basic Information


From May 2023 voters will need to show photographic identification (Photo ID) when voting at the Polling Station. This starts with the next local elections.

You can use:-

- **passports issued by the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, a European Economic Area state or a Commonwealth Country.**
- **photographic driver's licence (including provisional) issued as above,**
- **EEA photo ID cards**
- **biometric residence permits.**
- **identity cards that bear the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (Pass Scheme) hologram**
- **Blue Badges**
- **60+ Oyster photocard**
- **Concessionary travel passes funded by the government, or a local authority, including bus passes for older and disabled people, travel cards from Wales and Northern Ireland**



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Only original documents are accepted, but expired documents are ok if the photo is still a current likeness. If you don't have one of the accepted forms of the photo ID and you want to vote in person, you need to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. You can apply for this now: www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate. If you would like a paper application form or need help with your application, contact Elections at 0300 1234000 or email elections@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

People recently moved into this area or reached 18 years of age – need to register on the electoral roll or you will be unable to vote.

If you apply for a postal vote or already are registered for a postal vote, Photo ID is not required.

Deadline for receiving applications for Postal Vote or Proxy vote - 5pm 18 April 2023

Encouraging residents to vote is important for Parishes and Districts, with the ID Changes that have been implemented we need to get the information out to as many of our groups and organisations as possible. Thank you for your help.

Mary McLaren

3 March 2023

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Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing



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