

To Chairman and Parish Councillors Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren – Stour Ward
Holbrook Parish Council – 21 August 2023

Babergh District Council – The future

Having a coalition council has certainly focused the minds of the newly elected and the returning elected Ward Members. The rainbow Cabinet have set out their ambitions for the four-year council term. They are committed to increased climate change action, close collaboration with communities and a focus on good housing.

Collaboration and partnership with communities, the voluntary sector, business, and neighbouring councils are at the heart of the coalition vision.

Supporting market towns and villages to flourish will also be a focus, alongside business support, promoting inward investment, and ensuring people can learn new skills and secure good jobs.

The council will also lobby to bring infrastructure up to 21st Century standards in a way that minimises its impact on our countryside.

An ambitious programme which we all would subscribe to.

The cost-of-living crisis continues.

For many people, especially of previous generations, asking for help is difficult and embarrassing.

Finding out what help you are entitled to is the message from the Council and Sudbury and District Citizens Advice. If residents are feeling the financial squeeze, then checking what help they can access is important particularly if they have not done so before. Sudbury CA delivered £5,500 worth of fuel vouchers during the last financial year.

The biggest increases were from people looking for help with consumer goods e.g., food, energy, phones, and internet bills.

The BDC Customer Service Team is ready to listen if your life has been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and you are not sure what to do next.

BDC Customer Services
Sudbury Citizens Advice
Ipswich Citizens Advice

The Citizens Advice Service in Sudbury and Ipswich are supported by Babergh District Council and are a confidential service where everyone is treated with dignity and care.

Warm Homes Suffolk – Homes that are warmer and more energy efficient.

Warm Homes Suffolk is now accepting applications to fund improvements to houses across Babergh, making them warmer this winter and saving residents money on their energy bills.

The scheme is administered by Suffolk County Council and delivered by East Suffolk Council on behalf of all the councils in Suffolk.

An average of £18,000 in funding is per property if they meet the following criteria:

- Homes not heated by mains gas
- Homes with an EPC rating of D and below
- A combined income of under £31,000 (for certain postcodes)

Landlords and tenants are also eligible to apply with qualifying properties getting up to two thirds of the cost as an average grant of up to £12,000.

www.warmhomessuffolk.org or 03456 037686.



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
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Babergh & Mid Suffolk programme funds first innovation projects with Essex Researchers

The two councils in partnership with the University of Essex have funded four business innovation projects thanks to the Innovate to Elevate programme.

A digital services agency, an architectural and interior design practice, a school photography specialist and a fine wine merchant have all achieved access to £10,000 worth of academic expertise to find solutions to their business and make them grow.

Annual Canvass underway

The BDC annual canvass of electors 2023 is underway ensuring that everyone eligible to vote across our district can have their say in any forthcoming elections and referendums.

This is a legal requirement to carry out an annual canvass to ensure we maintain an up-to-date electoral register meaning we must contact every residential property within the boundary of the District Council

The canvass started in July with most households responding online. Those who do not respond online will need to complete paper annual canvas forms instead. Residents need to be reassured that this is an essential exercise. More information can be accessed on the website Annual Canvass of Electors 2023.

Residents Survey

The residents survey also commenced in July. Approximately 16,000 people across our districts are asked about a range of subjects including the local area, facilities, public services, communities, getting around, internet access and wellbeing.

Only those invited can take part as there is a need for a representative mix of people.

Any requests not completed online will be followed up by a paper version which will be sent on 25 August 2023.

Encouraging our residents to participate is important for everyone.

The consultation period ends on 1 October 2023 with results due on 15 November.

Elections Review

Earlier this month Chief Executive and Returning Officer Arthur Charvonia wrote to all town and parish councils sharing the outcome of a review of issues experienced during the district, town, and parish councils.

A report by the CEO of the Association of Electoral Administrators in consultation with the Electoral Commission and the outcome of an external internal “wash up” review was shared ahead of being published and was discussed at July’s District Council Meeting


The external report confirms that the district, town, and parish elections were safely and securely delivered and that there were no inherent failings in our election process. The review also notes the issues were resolved efficiently and effectively and that the mitigating issues are unlikely to arise again. A detailed action plan is being developed and will be brought to the Joint Audit and Standards Committee for consideration.

Hybrid Meeting Option for Planning Committee.

Planning applications can evoke many different responses and emotions from Parish Councils as Statutory Consultees and residents who are able to contribute to the process either as objectors or supporters.



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The Planning Department are offering a hybrid facility for some of our planning committee meetings. This enables public speakers including town and parish representatives, objectors and supporters have the option to participate in the meetings via Microsoft Teams rather than attending in person. The hybrid option will only be available for meetings which are held in the Council Chamber due to technology requirements. The agenda for each meeting will include details of the location of the meeting and whether speakers will be able to join virtually.

People attending virtually will do so through Microsoft Teams and will be required to inform the Committee Team at least 24 hours before the meeting that they wish to attend virtually to enable the team to put arrangements in place. Full details will be emailed to attendees joining virtually once they have registered.

Members of the Committee, presenting officers, the planning lawyer and the governance officer will still be required to attend in person to ensure that should there be any technical issues the meeting can still proceed.

Local News – Pin Mill management changes

Babergh District Council has resumed management responsibility for a key part of Pin Mill on the banks of the Orwell.

Since 2010 the Pin Mill Management Community Interest Company has managed and maintained the Hard on behalf of the district council.

However, the volunteer run CIC has chosen to wind up meaning the council once again has responsibility for the area.

The council will be looking at what improvements can be made in due course.

Within the rules the CIC regulator requires that any remaining assets are transferred to another approved organisation which meets the regulator's specific requirements.

The Council has thanked the volunteer group who have supported the CIC throughout the years and has delivered a useful asset for people on the river.

Mary McLaren

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3 August 2023

Babergh Customer Services 0300 1234000

Sudbury Citizen's Advice 01787 321400

Ipswich Citizens Advice 0300 330 1151



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