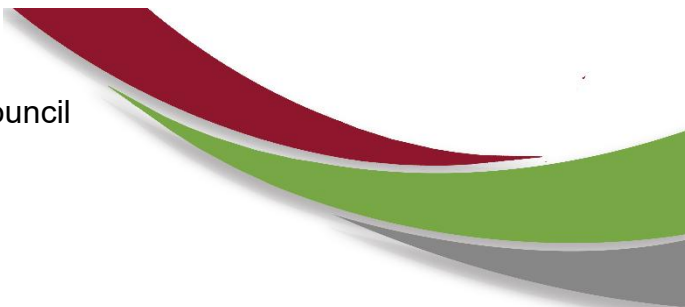


To Chairman and Councillors - Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren – Stour Ward
Monthly Councilor Report.
16 February 2026



Suffolk County Council Elections 2026

The Government announced last week that it was cancelling 29 elections including Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council that were due in May 2026.

However, some uncertainty remains as Reform UK has started Judicial Review proceedings to challenge the decision, and this case will be held by the High Court on the 19 and 20 February. If the challenge is successful, the elections may still go ahead.

In the meantime, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are ready to deliver the county council elections in our area if required and will continue to make necessary preparations until they are instructed otherwise. If these elections do not go ahead the next scheduled elections in line with LGR for the new unitary council/s will be the election of shadow councillors in May 2027.

Recycling Updates

Weekly food waste collections, and the ability to recycle more items from home like glass, tetra packs, plastic bags and film are coming to Suffolk including Babergh and Mid Suffolk this summer. Residents across the county will start receiving their new bins over coming months including what goes in each bin.

The first thing landing on doormats across January and February is the pre-information pack detailing the upcoming changes and what a resident can expect.

A variety of adverts have already started to appear on some buses, bus stops, billboards, petrol stations, supermarkets and locations across Suffolk.

To keep up to date make sure you are following Facebook, Instagram and TikTok and share information on your own channels and local noticeboards.

Helping Households save money, eat well and reduce food waste

Feel Good Suffolk - a collaboration between all Suffolks local authorities including Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and NHS Partners provides free support to residents who want to manage their weight, get more active and stop smoking.

The service has now teamed up with FiveDinners.com - the online platform founded by TV Chef and author Theo Michaels.

Through the partnership with Feel Good Suffolk it is offering households across the county free premium access for this year to the platform which would otherwise cost them £86 a year.

Residents must visit: - <https://FiveDinners.com/MyCommunity>, select the district council area that they live in and then put in their postcode – they will not be asked for any bank details which means they will not be charged for the service.

Once registered they will receive a meal plan every week, tailored to meet their needs and preferences. This can be personalised for low calories, child friendly, low cost, vegetarian, gluten free, quick and easy and many more. Alongside the meal plan members will receive a shopping list for the week ahead.



Paperless Billing

Council tax and business rates bills are due to land on doormats in the coming months. Now is the time to encourage all our residents and businesses to opt for paperless billing.

This not only reduces paper waste, and the need for postage and supporting the environment but also means residents can access their accounts and let us know of changes quickly and easily.

Access: -

- [Paperless billing for Babergh council tax](#)
- [Paperless billing for Babergh business rates](#)

***Special Note to Business Rates Payers**

Please go to the Babergh District Council website and access Business Rates for the most up to date information on the **proposed changes** in April 2026 and access for further discussion.

Borrow thermal cameras from your local library - Could your home be losing heat?

Sustainable Suffolk has placed thermal cameras in local libraries across Suffolk available to be booked out free. The cameras can reveal where heat is escaping from homes and businesses, making it easier to identify required improvements.

Last chance for free Net-zero support -

Babergh Businesses do not have long left to receive their free Net zero support from Groundwork East. This fully funded, expert advice can help businesses to save energy, cut costs and share their sustainability story with loyal customers. Find all the details on [Carbon Charter website](#)

Inspiring the next generation to explore their future in creative careers

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, in collaboration with East Suffolk Council and MENTA have launched a brand new initiative designed to ignite curiosity, confidence and ambition in young people.

Careeriosity has been developed to support young people across the region by providing free access to creative skills development, industry insight and practical career exploration opportunities.

They aim to bridge the gap between education and employment by offering young people hands-on experience to discover different creative industries, develop key skills and practical sessions. Careeriosity encourages participants to explore what is possible and build a clearer picture of their future pathway.

Careeriosity is open to young people aged 12-25 across East Suffolk, Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council Areas and participation is completely free. The programme is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and supportive of diverse interests and backgrounds.

Find out more about events and [book Your Spot on the MENTA website](#)



Both Councils call for urgent sewage sludge regulations

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are calling for urgent action by the Government to tighten regulations governing the spread of sewage sludge on agricultural land citing serious concerns for public health, farming and the environment.

Councillors at both meetings this week heard fears over evidence that sewage sludge contains a mixture of harmful contaminants including so-called “forever chemical” (PFAS), microplastics, pharmaceuticals and hormone-disrupting substances - many of which are not regulated or routinely tested for under current legislation dating back to 1989.

In late 2025 independent testing found water at a sewage sludge processing site near Wattisham Air Base contained more than 170 times the recommended safe levels of ammonia posing a serious threat to aquatic life in the area.

Following support at both District Councils meetings they are to formally recognise the risk posed by unregulated contaminants in sewage sludge and to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) urging stronger regulation to guarantee public safety.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are backing Ipswich’s bid to become City of Culture 2029.

A major campaign urging residents, businesses and organisations to back Ipswich’s bid which was launched earlier this month. The bid by Ipswich deserves the support of the whole county.

Dance East are leading the development of Ipswich’s Expression of Interest for the 2029 City of Culture competition with a deadline of 8 February 2026.

The winning place gets a guaranteed £10 million in Government funding to help deliver its yearlong programme of events.

People are being asked to go to www.ipswich2029.com and sign up to show their support.

Mary McLaren

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2 February 2026