

To Chairman and Parish Councils Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren – Stour Ward
Monthly Councillor Report
19 October 2026

“SUFFOLK PREPARED” – Local Community Emergency Planning

In the light of recent tragic events in Brantham, local burst water mains and lengthy road closures, emergency planning is an essential part of a parish council discussions internally and externally with their parishes and the re-visiting of procedures and processes. Parish Councils can take the lead however the plan must include many other people, skills and venues within the parish.

Community Emergency Planning is about people understanding local risks and knowing what resources they have available to help minimise the impact of an emergency on their community. Emergencies can take many forms, from house fires to flooding or widespread power outages. Experience shows that those who are prepared cope better during an emergency.

Communities with local knowledge, enthusiasm and information are a great asset and a Community Emergency Plan can help.

Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council have Emergency Planning Officers who together plan and prepare for emergencies in their areas and can support communities to prepare their own emergency plans.

How can you prepare your community:-

- Liaise with your local Emergency Planning Officer from the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit. The Emergency Planning Officer will provide you with useful information and advice in creating your plan
- Set up a Community Emergency Planning Group and appoint a Co-ordinator
- Identify all local skills and resources available.
- Work with others in your community to complete the plan.
- Once your plan is complete, please ensure that your local Emergency Planning Officer has a copy as well as anyone else in the community who needs one.
- Review your plan on an annual basis and if necessary, update and redistribute it.

What training is offered: -

There are a number of workshops and training sessions for anyone who is actively involved Community Emergency Planning Groups. It is not just for key committee members but is open to all those who would like to help in the event of an incident occurring. The subjects covered in this training include

- Types of rest centres
- Activation of a rest centre
- Roles and responsibilities
- Registration of evacuees
- Processes for feeding and emergency bedding

Rest Centre training also gives candidates the opportunity to gain experience in the setting up and functions of a Rest Centre in an operational environment.

Two local comments made recently: -

- Designate a field for Car Parking as most villages have very little car parking spaces for Emergency Services, Emergency Teams and helpers from across the country.
- Use Village Halls and Leisure Centres to accommodate the crowds.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

Babergh Town and Parish Liaison Meeting

The town and parish liaison Meeting will take place on Tuesday 20 October 10am to 12pm at Sudbury Town Hall.

There will be an opportunity for Parish Councils to discuss the important planning changes following the new National Planning Policy Framework. It would be useful for one member of the Parish Council to attend this meeting.

Swimming pool at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury Closed with immediate effect

The swimming pool at the Kingfisher Leisure Centre has been closed to ensure public safety after surveys showed the pool requires a complete re-build. Further information can be found on the BDC website.

Councils e-bike partnership receives national recognition

A partnership between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and e-bike provider Eezybike has been shortlisted for two national awards recognising the innovative work done in both districts to create active and sustainable travel options. Since partnering with Eezybike in January 2024 the councils have introduced Eezybike pods in Sudbury and Lavenham and Stowmarket and Needham Market.

Let's quit smoking together – Feel Good Suffolk gets behind national Stoptober campaign.

Feel Good Suffolk is raising awareness of this year's Stoptober campaign and the support it offers for any smoker in the county who want to stop.

Since launching in 2012 Stoptober has helped millions of people across the country to quit smoking for good by encouraging them to stop smoking for the month of October. Research shows that staying smoke free for 28 days means you are up to five times more likely to quit for good.

Here in Suffolk smoking is the single greatest risk for early deaths contributing to nearly 1000 deaths per year and costing an estimated £586 million every year. Around 10.5% of people in Suffolk smoke which is slightly above the national average of 10.4%

The good news is that its never too late to stop.

Find out more on the Feel-Good Suffolk website.

Free Classes to help older people improve their balance

All local councils are delivering a 12-Week Strength and Balance Programme which aims to improve the balance, co-ordination, flexibility and confidence of residents age 65 or over who have had a recent fall and feel unsteady on their feet

The strength and balance classes are aligned to an evidence-based programme called OTAGO which is a mixture of both strength and balance exercises led by a qualified instructor in a safe space. Classes take place each week over a 12-week period and each class last approximately 60 minutes. The exercises are designed to help people feel more confident on their feet and provides an opportunity to socialise with other members of the community with a shared goal of increased activity.

The programme is open to those over 65 years old who are at risk of falls or have recently had a fall and who are registered with a GP within the Babergh District Council area.

Council Scheme puts local residents on the set of an award -winning drama

In 2024 an initial cohort of 23 people took part in “Set Ready” – a free course funded locally by Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils and delivered in partnership with Screen Suffolk.

Set Ready helps people aged 18 or over take their first steps into the film and tv industry through practical training, master classes and sessions with the industry’s professionals. Participants learn about crew roles, set etiquette, industry terminology, radio communication, working with the public and health and safety on location. They are then given the opportunity to support crews filming locally.

Among those who seized this opportunity was Tracey Powiesnik who was keen to get involved in filming taking on her doorstep in early 2025 for the sixth series of the award-winning spy drama Slow Horses.

After completing the course Tracey’s first work was for a night shoot. Working as a location marshal, she liaised with residents and the public, helped keep filming areas clear during takes and supported the demands of a busy set.

23 trainees took the course and the lead trainer from Set Ready Training: - said “it was rewarding to see the trainees come in on day one with little or no knowledge of the industry and by the end of the course they are prepared and ready to work on the set. We are proud that our graduates have got to work on a range of different productions since taking part”

Councillor Derek Davis - cabinet member for Sustainable Economy said “This is an amazing example of our councils identifying and funding skills training to help local people explore career options that they may never have thought possible, while also strengthening Suffolk’s burgeoning reputation as an ideal location for tv and film productions - and the economic benefits this brings to our district”

We all wish Tracey the very best for her future career.

Mary McLaren

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