

To Chairman and Parish Councillors Holbrook Parish Council
From Councillor Mary McLaren - Stour Ward
Monthly Councillor Report
17 August 2026

Summer Fun returns with free community days

Delivered by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, the events will take place between 10am and 2pm on Wednesday 12 August at Belle Vue Park in Sudbury and at Stowupland Village Hall on Wednesday 19 August.

Families that attend can look forward to taking part in a wide range of activities including everything from bouncy castles and axe throwing to arts and crafts and dancing.

Alongside the free activities, local organisations and charities will also be on hand with information stalls, offering advice and access to important local resources.

Each community fun day is free to attend, and families need only to turn up on the day to take part.

However, children that receive means tested free school meals are also able to pre-book some activities and order a free lunch by

Visiting the Eequ booking platform.

Further details about the council's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provision, the community fun days and booking free lunches can be found by visiting the Babergh or Mid Suffolk websites.

Steps taken to manage meadow land and reduce fire risk during hot weather

Residents are being reassured over action being taken by both councils to manage its meadow areas by reducing risks of fire during hot dry weather while also protecting wildlife.

The councils operate several wildflower meadows within open spaces it manages to increase biodiversity across both districts.

However, the recent heatwaves and drought have led to increased concerns over the risk of fires – with biodiversity experts offering re-assurance over the steps being taken to ensure responsible land management.

Seasonal mowing would usually start in August, but the councils have decided to bring this forward following

- The prolonged hot dry weather in July
- Discussions with partners
- Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service raising awareness of increased risk of field fires due to the recent weather conditions.

In many areas the grass is brown to the ground and therefore no longer supports as much wildlife so the councils will be clearing them early as a precaution.

Priority will be given to meadows close to fences and houses with more remote meadows left until later to retain habitat for wildlife.

Any ecological impact will be limited with the hot weather already having hastened the life cycle of many species.

Latest community investments are child's play

Playgrounds, a leisure centre upgrade and a children's library are amongst the community projects set to receive a share of more than £745k from Babergh District Council this month.

The awards, including an investment of nearly £550k in Belle Vue Park Sudbury, are thanks to the latest round of funding from the council's Construction Infrastructure Levy.

Belle Vue Park receives a total of £490k to cover the increased costs of the new toilet block and accessible facilities plus upgrading the play area to create a more inclusive space for younger visitors and complement the council's plans for a new café.

A further £55k will improve play equipment for further play area in Sudbury and £76K for a play area in Hadleigh.



Hadleigh Leisure Centre receives £101k to improve the capacity of the fitness suite and re-purpose a ground floor room into a community space and Great Cornard receives £19k to add to a children's library to attract younger visitors and their families.

Constable Country protected as conservation area expanded

The historic area in and around East Bergholt made famous by the work of John Constable has been given enhanced protection after Babergh District approved the expansion of the existing conservation area. The new East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 2026 will protect the area around the most important features of Constable's work – Flatford Mill and Willie Lott's Cottage which until now had not been included within a conservation area despite their architectural and historic interest. A conservation area is designated for the purpose of preserving and where appropriate enhancing an area of demonstrable or historic interest. Babergh's decision to expand the existing East Bergholt conservation area which was unanimously agreed at its full council meeting on the 21 July, ensures that the boundaries properly reflect the true significance of both the village and its surroundings.

The decision comes during the year of Constable 250 celebrations since the birth of one of Britain's greatest artists. It also coincides with the arrival of The Hay Wain - Constable's iconic 1821 oil painting depicting Willy Lott's Cottage - in Suffolk for the first time and now on display at Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich. There are more than 180 sites within Flatford and East Bergholt that have been depicted in the paintings and sketches of John Constable which can now be found and admired all over the world.

The expanded conservation area replaces boundaries first designated in 1968 and marginally extended in 1975. Going forward the conservation area and its accompanying appraisal will help guide future planning decisions and the sensitive management of change.

“Unconventional Constable” at the Artist's East Bergholt Birthplace

Visitors to East Bergholt in August can turn back the clock and step into the world of landscape painter John Constable using mixed-reality headsets.

Delivered by immersive technology specialists Xibitr in partnership with Babergh District Council and Ipswich and Colchester Museums, the pop-up exhibition at Constable Memorial Hall is free to attend and will be open from 10am to 3pm from 17-23 August 2026.

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