



Welcome to our joint newsletter. Our aim is to keep you informed about relevant council business across Babergh and Mid Suffolk and other information useful to your towns and parishes.

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New reactive Newsletter

This edition marks our first reactive Newsletter, allowing you to comfortably read all about it on any device!

We've been asked several times whether we can publish our newsletter in a reactive format, allowing easy reading on any device. In the past this has been difficult, but with the soft launch of the new Babergh and Mid Suffolk website we've been able to make it a reality.

You can find the most up-to-date edition of the newsletter online at:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/communities/town-and-parish-council-newsletters>

While space restraints mean that previous editions will continue to be available online only in the non-reactive PDF format, you can visit this page to read the current edition at any time.

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Our new website is still in “beta”, and it is still subject to changes and upgrades. However, we hope to continue offering this reactive format for all of our future newsletters. We will keep you updated and include the link in our future editions.

If you are looking for our previous editions you can still find them online at:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/home/town-and-parish-council-newsletter>

or:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/home/town-and-parish-council-newsletter>

Across Babergh & Mid Suffolk

Message from the new Joint Chief Executive

Arthur Charvonia - Chief Executive, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Hello! As you will know from the last newsletter, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have appointed me as their new Joint Chief Executive and I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

Although I only took up my post with Babergh and Mid Suffolk at the start of this year, over the preceding few months the Members and staff at both councils gave me a warm welcome and the opportunity to get to grips with the organisation and what challenges we face. Now I’m in post, I am looking forward to really getting involved and ensuring that the district councils work for you, our communities.

We in local government need to be absolutely clear about who we are and what we do. I’m sure many of you have heard both praise and criticism from your residents about “The Council”, a single term that could cover work you do in your towns and parishes or the county-wide work carried out by Suffolk County Council. Most people neither know nor care where the boundaries – in terms of responsibility or geography – lie between the councils.

And the fact is, it is not their job to know. It is our job, in the public sector, to make sure we support our communities and provide the services and growth they need, regardless of what tier of local government we work in. We need to become used to working as closely with you at Town and Parish level as we do with our colleagues at county level, as accomplished at collaborating with Suffolk Police as with the Clinical Commissioning Groups. As we share more services and work together more, we in the Suffolk public sector have to keep our communities at the heart of everything we do.

The public sector is not going to stay static: the challenges we face, from the diminishing central government grant to an aging population of more people who are living longer, will demand that we change to meet them. We shouldn’t be scared of

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this change and I am looking forward to the challenge of ensuring we keep delivering for our communities.

As part of this, I will be looking at the best way to engage with you in towns and parishes. Look out for updates on this in future editions of this newsletter!

I know that the next few months will be hard work: we're carrying out a lot of projects all at the same time, to transform the way we work and the way we engage with you, and with our communities. Meanwhile, our ambitious plans to increase economic prosperity remain in place – as you know, it is still at the heart of our Strategic Plan, alongside our commitment to ensuring our communities are strong and sustainable. It's not going to be easy, but our efforts will ensure that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are able to work with you, for you, and in support of you, putting our communities at the heart of what we do.

All Together: Your Public Access update

Arthur Charvonia - Chief Executive, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

We are working on a number of projects at Babergh and Mid Suffolk and one of the biggest is our work on Public Access. This year is going to see big changes to how we serve local communities and how they will contact us. These changes will make what we do better, simpler and more effective and I wanted to take this opportunity to update you.

Last September, both Councils voted overwhelmingly in favour of our Public Access Strategy – The *All Together* project to deliver that strategy is rightly a high priority. You'll remember our project team's presentation at the last Parish Liaison Meeting and their explanation of how we are moving to fully integrated digital, automated and better services. However, we are also committed to ensuring face-to-face contact for those who need it: this option will always be available, and the team was also able to update the meeting on our work to establish customer access points in each district.

It is vitally important, before any changes are put in place, that we get it right. An example of how hard we are working to get it right is the thorough trialling of our new website – on which you might even be reading this newsletter! – at:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/>

This website is in draft form, as we continue to make improvements, and there is still time to let us have your feedback on where final changes need to be made. You can provide feedback at:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/provide-feedback>

In addition, work is underway to ensure that, as we change the way we work, all our staff are trained to use new and more effective systems. For example, ahead of the move of our HQ to Endeavour House in Ipswich, our planning team are currently all working from one site to trial new IT together. While planning decisions are, and will continue to be, made by each authority, this practical move is focused on the future delivery of better, more effective and simpler services.

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We'll continue to make progress over the coming months as we focus on providing a better service for residents that is simpler for staff to deliver and is more cost-effective for taxpayers. Look out for more updates and news on how we'll be consulting with you in future editions of this newsletter.

Provisional dates for Liaison Meetings set

Provisional dates for the next Town & Parish Council Liaison Meetings have now been set.

The proposed dates are Tuesday 16 May in Mid Suffolk and Thursday 18 May in Babergh.

These dates remain provisional and we will be in touch soon with the final details. If you have any thoughts on topics to be covered, please contact Josephine.beever@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

The Pub is the Hub: Your community asset

On Monday 20 March, speakers from “Pub is the Hub” will be on hand in Bentley to talk about the opportunities presented by Community Assets.

Community Rights legislation gives communities the opportunity to list certain buildings as “Assets of Community Value”, with many pubs across the country receiving this designation through the hard work of local people. This event will give you an insight into the work involved - not only in securing that designation, but also in how to turn it into a real hub for your whole community.

Working in partnership with “Pub is the Hub”, speakers Bernard Lee and Terry Stork will talk about ways to maximise the pub as an asset through diversification using libraries, theatre, cafes, cinema and post offices as a means of increasing use. Babergh and Mid Suffolk's own Assets of Community Value Officer, Stef Osborne, will attend to discuss the process you need to go through to register an asset.

There will also be an opportunity to meet and hear from the people behind “The Case” in Bentley, who have made a success of their own local pub after it was threatened with closure.

The event is primarily aimed at parish councils, pub landlords and managers. It is due to take place in the afternoon, but the exact time is yet to be finalised and we will advise you of it shortly. If you would like to come along, please make sure to book via Josephine.beever@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

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Councils approve changes to Sheltered Housing Services

Proposals for changes to the services provided for residents in sheltered housing schemes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk were approved by councillors and tenants at a series of meetings held at the end of last year.

The reshaping of the service took into account the changing needs and aspirations of sheltered tenants and, as a result of a consultation carried out during the review process, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have ensured that the services most important to residents in these schemes will be protected.

As a result of the changes, 16 schemes will be de-sheltered. No tenants are required to move if they do not wish to do so and there will still be assistance for all those who wish to continue to receive support or an emergency alarm.

The schemes being de-sheltered are:

- Albert Close, Rickinghall
- Ash Street, Boxford
- First Avenue, Sudbury
- Grimwood Corner, Sudbury
- Hill House, Bildeston
- Millars Close, Walsham le Willows
- Richer Close, Badwell Ash
- School Close, Norton
- Spring St and Spring Lane, Lavenham
- St Georges Road, Stowlangtoft
- St Nicholas Close, Rattlesden
- Tacon Close, Eye
- Tayler Close, Hadleigh
- The Orchard, Felsham
- Victoria Gardens, Wattisfield
- Woodlands Close, Thurston

We are also de-sheltering bungalows, which are linked to larger schemes, at:

- Elizabeth Court, Eye
- Hartismere House, Laxfield
- Hurstlea Court, Needham Market
- Jubilee Court, Stowupland
- St Peters Court, Claydon

The purpose of the review into the services provided for residents in Sheltered Housing schemes across both Councils was to look at the best use of each Councils' housing assets, so ensuring the service is efficient, cost-effective and meets the needs of current and future tenants of sheltered housing.

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Following the review, a major consultation programme was carried out. This involved 27 drop-in events at the sheltered schemes for tenants and their relatives. For those who were unable to travel, transport was provided and for housebound residents, a home visit was arranged if requested.

Over the course of the consultation, 44% of residents spoke with officers and 6% provided written feedback. As a result of this, Babergh and Mid Suffolk made changes to the original proposals to protect the services which tenants said were important to them.

Members of the Joint Housing Board, which is comprised of councillors from both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, as well as elected tenant representatives, met on 14 November and voted unanimously to approve the proposals. Babergh's Strategy Committee and the Executive Committee for Mid Suffolk met in November and both voted to approve the recommended changes.

Cllr John Levantis, Mid Suffolk District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing Delivery, said, "Over the years, the provision of sheltered accommodation has become less than ideal with some residents living in properties that are not suited to their needs. This review has given us an opportunity to focus our support where it is most needed and, in the long term, to ensure we have the right type of housing and tenure in the right places".

Cllr Jan Osborne, Babergh District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing Delivery, said, "We know that residents in our area are living longer and that their needs are changing, which is why we made every effort to talk to as many of our tenants as possible through the review process. We have listened to what they have told us and as a result, we've been able to use this as an opportunity to shape a sheltered housing service for the present and the future".

The changes will be implemented from April 2017.

A message from our NHS partners

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the county are asking representatives of local authorities – including Councillors and people working in the community - to help them out at this time of year, when health services are under pressure.

GP surgeries, hospital Emergency Departments and ambulance services are very busy at the moment and this is likely to continue over the coming weeks. Representatives of Suffolk's parish, town and district councils can assist by spreading the word to our friends, family and community contacts that other sources of help and advice are available as a first port of call, rather than GPs or A&E. The following communication went out via local media and social media channels earlier this month to make people aware about the current pressures in the system:

"Our doctors, nurses and paramedics are under a lot of pressure today, and they are asking for your help.

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“Most of the people we are seeing at hospital Emergency Departments and at the GP surgeries need a lot of time to make sure they are treated well. This is not unusual – people who are already quite ill get a lot sicker during the colder winter months.

“You can help by using pharmacies and, if that is not enough, by ringing 111.

- Pharmacies are open for good long hours including evenings and weekends and can help with lots of conditions, like if you have a cold, a sprain or strain, if you have small cuts and bruises, have indigestion, heartburn or diarrhoea. You don't need an appointment to speak with the pharmacist.
- If you are not sure what to do, call 111 for free. It is a 24/7 service.
- The Wellbeing Suffolk service offers support if you feel stressed or depressed. Call them on 0300 123 1781 to find out how they could help. If you feel in crisis, are in despair or suicidal call the Samaritans on 116 123.

“If you do have an emergency, we are there for you. If it is not urgent, help your NHS by trying other ways first.”

More information, including how to stay healthy this winter, on the West Suffolk and Ipswich & East Suffolk CCG websites:

www.westsuffolkccg.nhs.uk

www.ipswichandeastsuffolkccg.nhs.uk

Young people make over 1,000 baubles in recycling campaign

Schools and groups from across Suffolk made their own festive decorations as part of a campaign aimed at teaching children how they could have fun reducing waste in the run up to Christmas.

Following on from the successful 1,000 Suffolk Stars project last year, the Suffolk Waste Partnership invited schools and groups across the county to make 1,000 Brilliant Baubles. As part of the campaign to promote reuse and recycling, children and young people were asked to use recycled materials to decorate old CDs, which were displayed at two major Suffolk venues – The Apex in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich Town Hall over the Christmas and New Year period.

Twenty-four schools, two guide and brownie groups, and one library took part in the project, with around 1,200 baubles being created and hung up just in time for Christmas.

The fantastically festive decorations captured the imagination of the children, and acted as a reminder that making decorations and presents from reused and recycled materials is especially important at Christmas when more waste than normal is produced.

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Old CDs you no longer need can be sold on or sent for re-use at charity shops. They can also be placed in media banks at Suffolk Recycling Centres. If they are still in their cases they'll be sorted for reuse, if not they'll be recycled.

All schools that took part were also entered into a prize draw to win a £50 gardening voucher. There were so many deserving entries but the winning school, Tudor Primary school in Sudbury, was presented with the prize on Friday 9 December.

Emma Ince from Tudor Primary, said: "Children at Tudor were very excited to take part in this innovative recycling project. The children were given the activity as a half-term family challenge and we had over 100 CDs brought into school. We were delighted at the creativity and enthusiasm from so many of our families. A great way to recycle and celebrate Christmas at the same time!"

Cllr Clive Arthey, Chairman of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said: "The 1,000 Brilliant Baubles campaign has been a fantastic way to celebrate how good we are at recycling and reusing in Suffolk!"

"It's great to see the pupils, parents and staff all working together. It's the same as recycling in general, if we all do a little bit it adds up to making a very big difference. Thank you to everyone who took part."

Cllr Matthew Hicks, Vice Chairman of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said: "The baubles looked wonderful and thank you to everyone who took part. We generate more waste than normal at Christmas time and this is a real example of how we can re-use items we no longer need. These recycled materials used to decorate old CDs really produced a stunning display."

Winners of glass recycling promotion campaign announced

Three Suffolk residents have been declared winners of a county-wide competition aimed at promoting glass recycling.

The 'message in a bottle' competition, organised by Suffolk Waste Partnership, was part of a campaign to promote glass recycling. Recycling officers handed out entry cards, which residents filled in with their details before placing inside a bottle and recycling it at their local bottle bank.

The winners, Jackie Day, from Sudbury, James and Iris Taylor, from Martlesham, and Mrs Oliver, from Moulton, were selected at random by computer from those who entered. They all won a hamper which contained £100 worth of Suffolk produce, packaged in glass bottles and jars, which are 100% recyclable.

Data shows around 70% of all glass bottles and jars used in Suffolk are recycled through the glass bank network – about 16,000 tonnes of glass.

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Indigo Waste Services, which operates the glass recycling scheme, has supported the campaign along with Suffolk Waste Partnership. Since 2015, Indigo has installed 21 new sites across Suffolk and increased the recycling capacity at a further 19 sites.

Gary Lee, from Indigo, said: “We are delighted to be working with the Suffolk Waste Partnership to improve glass recycling services in Suffolk. By putting in more glass banks, we are hoping to increase the levels of recycling and are working hard to make sure that banks are emptied regularly and kept clean. We would encourage people to separate glass into different colours, wherever possible, as this helps us get the most from your recycling.”

Cllr Clive Arthey, Chairman of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said: “Congratulations to the winners of the glass recycling competition, I hope they enjoy their hampers. The campaign was very successful and has helped us raise awareness across Suffolk. Glass can be recycled an infinite number of times, so there is no reason why, as a county, we can’t do more to give our old glass bottles and jars a new life!”

More information on recycling in Suffolk can be found online at www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk

Mid Suffolk District

Upgraded gym opens its doors for a day of free fitness fun

A newly-refurbished leisure facility in Stowmarket opened its doors to the public for a day of free fitness fun.

The gym at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre has recently received a £100,000 upgrade, and Everyone Active helped customers enjoy the new facilities by offering the chance to test them out for free on Saturday 14 January.

From 10am – 2pm, fitness instructors led free 30-minute inductions on the gym floor, before giving customers time to try out the new equipment at their own pace. A number of free group exercise taster sessions were also hosted from 10.45am – 12pm.

The updated gym was unveiled on 2 January and was officially opened by Cllr Julie Flatman on Friday 13 January. It features new state-of-the-art cardio vascular apparatus from equipment designer Technogym, as well as aesthetic improvements to the gym and changing area.

The upgrade was funded by Mid Suffolk District Council as part of its partnership with Everyone Active, which also sees the latter manage Stradbroke Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre. Together, the organisations are aiming to meet their goal of encouraging more people to lead healthy, active lifestyles by giving customers access to a variety of improved facilities.

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Everyone Active's contract manager, Anselm Gurney, said: "We were really excited to offer the community a chance to come and enjoy the new gym for free, as well as get a taste of what else we offer at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre.

"There are lots of people who have started off the New Year with the aim of getting more active. We want to help customers achieve and sustain this goal, and giving them the opportunity to get fit for free will have helped them on their journey."

Cllr Flatman, Portfolio Holder - Community Capacity Building & Engagement, said: "I am delighted we were able to unveil these fantastic new fitness facilities and give people a chance to try them out for free.

"Encouraging our residents to live healthier lifestyles is one of our key priorities, which is why we made the decision to invest £100,000 in refurbishing the fitness suite. We hope those who already use Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and potential new customers, enjoy getting active with the new state-of-the-art equipment."

For a full timetable of activities and to book a place on any of the free sessions, call Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre on 01449 674980 or visit www.everyoneactive.com

Prosecution finds three guilty of illegally-sited mobile home

Three individuals have been fined £1,050 for failure to remove a residential home and stored building materials from land in Burgate.

On Monday 12 December 2016, three defendants were found guilty at Ipswich Magistrates Court of failing to comply with an enforcement notice requiring the cessation and removal of a residential mobile home and the cessation of use and removal of stored building materials from land in Great Green, Burgate.

The first hearing for the prosecution, during September 2016, was brought about after a lengthy investigation into the activities on the land from Mid Suffolk District Council's Planning Enforcement team. The Enforcement Notices on the land have been active since an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate was brought forward by the defendants and subsequently dismissed in 2008. Since then, negotiations with the defendants failed to resolve the issue and prosecution proceedings were launched in July 2016.

Mr Donald Wiseman, Mrs Jean Wiseman and Mrs Donna White were found guilty of the six offences brought before Ipswich Magistrates' Court and were fined a total of £1,050 plus £105 victim surcharge and ordered to pay £450 costs.

James Buckingham, Corporate Manager – Sustainable Environment, at Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, said: "When issuing any Enforcement Notice we always provide a sufficient amount of time for the recipient to comply. Unfortunately in this case, although we have conducted prolonged negotiations, the failure to comply has forced us to resort to a prosecution. This is a last resort and the Council will always seek to enforce notices through all options available.

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“We will continue to work with the Wisemans and Mrs White to ensure that the notice can be complied with as smoothly as possible.”

Babergh District

Consultation launched into Long Melford NDP area

A four-week consultation has been launched following an application by Long Melford Parish Council to designate the area to be covered by their Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The area proposed by Long Melford Parish Council for neighbourhood planning purposes follows the parish boundary. Babergh District Council is now keen to hear the views from people who live, work and carry out business in this area on whether the boundary is appropriate or not.

Details including a map of the area can be found online at:

<http://baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/LongMelfordNP>

Comments can be submitted by email to:

communityplanning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Alternatively, they can be sent by post marked ‘FAO Mr Paul Bryant, Business Support Officer - Community Planning’ at Mid Suffolk District Council, 131 High Street, Needham Market, Ipswich, IP6 8DL

Responses must be received before **4:00pm on Friday 10 February 2017**.

Comments will be kept on a public file and may be reproduced publicly in writing or on the Babergh website.

Please note that issues on specific planning matters in Long Melford are not appropriate to this consultation; instead these should be saved for when Long Melford Parish Council holds its next community engagement event.

Neighbourhood planning allows communities to develop their own planning policies which will guide new development and help meet the needs of the community. When completed, the Neighbourhood Development Plan is put to a local referendum and, if adopted, is used by Babergh District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, when deciding planning applications in this area.

Cllr Simon Barrett, Babergh District Council Portfolio Holder for Business Growth and Increased Productivity, said: “Neighbourhood Development Plans give communities the opportunity to shape the growth of their villages, and Long Melford is putting an incredible amount of work into theirs. I would urge everyone in the village to have their say on the Plan area and let us know if it accurately reflects how the people and community of Long Melford live and work.”

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Newsletter ideas

What topics would you like to see covered in future editions of the Town and Parish Council Newsletter? Please let us know by emailing duncan.merren@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk