



Welcome to our joint newsletter. It is aimed at keeping all town and parish councils, across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, informed about our plans to meet the financial, and other, challenges facing us.

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Urgent Update: Community Achievement Awards: Deadline Extended

The nomination periods for the Community Achievement Awards in both Babergh District and Mid Suffolk District have been extended. With the Christmas period approaching, individuals and groups are reminded to not forget the importance of recognising those that make such a difference in the community.

For a nomination form and more information, visit:

Babergh:

Website: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/your-community/babergh-community-achievement-awards-scheme/>

Any Queries: 01449 724 648

Mid Suffolk:

Website: <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community/msdc-community-achievements-awards/>

Any Queries: 01449 724 650

Nominations must now be in by **5pm, Thursday 4 December**.

You can find the full details on how to nominate your community here on our websites:

Future Ways of Working and Our Accommodation

In response to the economic downturn and the impact it was having on local government, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils decided to provide services in

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a more joined up manner. In 2011, a joint chief executive, a single management team and single workforce were appointed. These changes have saved around £1.8m over the last three years.

Central government is only about half way through its austerity programme and the general approach is to cut the deficit by reducing public sector spending – especially local government.

Our current financial model shows that £10m of savings or additional income is needed across both councils over the next four years. Central government funding is reducing and whilst we are getting income from the government through New Homes Bonus – whether that funding will continue – and for how long is uncertain.

So even as the economy returns to growth and the deficit shrinks, there's a need to ensure we are providing services as efficiently and effectively as possible – with a modern agile workforce and in an environment that promotes collaborative working across the whole of the public sector.

The two councils know that having the right accommodation is critical to the efficient and effective delivery of the councils' priorities and services, and agreed to carry out a review of the main accommodation buildings through two phases.

The first phase was completed in September and showed that the current buildings are inefficient in terms of use and occupation, and would not be easily converted into modern office accommodation suitable for a modern workforce.

A combined financial and quality assessment showed that the best options for a modern flexible public sector organisation, that allows collaboration, locality working and joined up services are those that focus on service delivery points at key points within the districts, and an administrative hub – we are calling this the hub and spokes model.

We are now starting the second phase of the review - the production of a business case for the preferred approach incorporating a detailed assessment of risk and delivery – and to produce the business case by:

- Developing the hub and spokes model further
- Identifying space for the spokes and what sharing arrangements are available
- Doing a more detailed appraisal of what / who should be at the hub
- Exploring options for the existing sites.

The timescale is to carry out this work over the life time of the current councils with a view to final decisions being taken by the new councils after the May 2015 elections.

Council Christmas Opening Hours

While we will continue to provide services throughout the festive period, Babergh's offices in Hadleigh and Mid Suffolk's Needham Market offices will be closed to the public over the holidays.

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Both offices will close at **4pm on Christmas Eve** and will reopen as usual on the morning of **2 January**.

If anyone needs to contact the Councils in an emergency over this period, please call our Emergency Out of Hours contact numbers, which are:

Babergh: 01473 826 622

Mid Suffolk: 01449 724 500

From 2 January the offices will again be open their normal hours, which are (excluding bank holidays):

Babergh: 8.45am to 5pm Monday to Thursday

8.45am to 4.30pm Fridays

Mid Suffolk: 8.30am to 5pm weekdays

Suffolk's Leaders Secure £3.35m Government Funding

A major bid by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) for £3.35m government funding to invest in new ways of collaborative working that support communities, reduce costs and generate benefits for residents has been successful.

The SPSL group, which brings together public sector leaders including, district and borough councils and the county council, as well as members from NHS England and Suffolk Police among others, were notified on Thursday 27 November by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that it had been successful in securing the extra funding.

The Suffolk group were also given the green light to have restrictions on spending of £1.8m of their own capital receipts lifted. This will mean that funds raised by the sales of the Councils' assets can be spent in different ways to help the transformation.

DCLG Minister Kris Hopkins announced SPSL had been successful in bidding for the Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) - a one off pot to help local authorities, with at least one partner, to transform their operation.

He said all of the bids were submitted by partnerships which set out how they would work together to eliminate duplicate services and provide more coherent support for people.

Mr Hopkins added:

“By working with the local police, health bodies, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary groups and others they are eliminating waste and creating services which help people first time – not services which send people from pillar to post to get problems sorted.”

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The announcement means that Suffolk's public services will be in an even better position to meet their shared financial challenges while developing new ways of working that tackle issues that matter to their communities.

The group aims to redefine their relationship with Suffolk residents to collectively achieve more with less. The TCA award will be invested in new ways of collaborative working that support communities, reduce costs and generate benefits for residents over the next ten years.

The amount secured places the group in the top ten largest bids awarded across the UK and means that they will be able to do this in a more sustainable and rapid way.

DCLG were impressed with the bid which has the sole principle of putting Suffolk residents at the heart of everything. The group explained how the integration across the whole system - and not just local government - was the way forward and at the same time aiming to achieve more for our communities with less.

The size of the award reflects the scale of the ambition set out in the bid. The funding is expected to generate in excess of £19m of benefits over the next ten years.

Residents can expect:

- Seamless and quicker access to the help that people need (regardless of which agency delivers it)
- Increasingly one front door to services and advice in local areas
- Families and communities are empowered to support themselves without the need for additional public service help
- More homes and jobs by accelerating the delivery of major sites already allocated for development. A greater supply of age-appropriate housing types that mean people can live independently for longer and that communities are more vibrant

Cllr Derrick Haley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, said:

"This bid has always been about putting the people of Suffolk first. The money from the bid will enable us to do just that. Exciting times ahead!"

Cllr Jennie Jenkins, Leader of Babergh District Council, said:

"We are truly delighted we have been given the green light from the DCLG. The whole of Suffolk working together for a joint goal - it is what we are best at. Suffolk knows it needs to work differently in order to deliver better for less - this funding will help us do this."

Council Tax – Taxbase for 2015/16

We have now produced a list of the updated taxbases for Parishes for 2015/16 compared with 2014/15. You can find these figures in the attached Excel Spreadsheet; figures for Babergh are on the first worksheet, with Mid Suffolk listed on the second.

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Variations may occur parish by parish due to a combination of extra properties, changes in discounts, empty properties and the council tax reduction scheme. Any queries on the taxbase can be directed to Sue Palmer, Senior Financial Services Officer on 01473 825816 or email sue.palmer@babergh.gov.uk .

Information has already been sent to each parish on the amount of grant which they will receive.

If you need a replacement Precept form these are available on the councils' websites as follows:

Babergh: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Resources/Financial-Services/Parish-Precept-Forms-BDC-201516.pdf>

Mid Suffolk:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/UploadsMSDC/Resources/Financial-Services/Parish-Precept-Forms-MSDC-201516.pdf>

Community Trigger to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour

The Community Trigger is a new process, set up by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, which allows victims and communities which experience Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) to request a review of their case if they feel agencies have not taken action in respect of their anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaint.

The community trigger can be used by individuals, businesses or community groups whose case meets the local defined threshold.

When can I use the Community Trigger?

The Community Trigger can be used if your concern is about anti-social behaviour or a hate crime, where you consider that the agencies involved have not taken action in respect of your complaint and it meets the locally defined criteria.

The Community Trigger threshold requires that:

- You have reported an ASB issue to the Council, Police and/or Registered Housing provider (Social Landlord) on three separate occasions relating to that same issue in the last six months and you are requesting a review of that process;

Or

- The issue or concern affects more than five households or business premises.

Also, in order to activate the Community Trigger:

- the anti-social behaviour must have been reported within one month of it taking place

and

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- the application to use the Community Trigger must be made within six months of the report of the anti-social behaviour.

What do I need to do?

Complete our Community Trigger online report form online at:

You can also request a printed form by contacting us via:

Email: safercommunities@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01449 724642

Or write to:

Community Trigger,
Communities (Safe)
Mid Suffolk District Council, 131 High Street
Needham Market
Suffolk, IP6 8DL

Work Underway to Fill Empty Homes

Reducing the number of long-term empty properties is a key priority for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. Bringing an empty property back into use is almost always a change for the better; most significantly it provides a much needed home. Neighbours and communities gain as they lose a potential eyesore and the risk of an empty building becoming the focus for anti-social behaviour, vandalism and squatters.

If you are the owner of an empty property and are considering what options are available or to find out ways in which we can be of assistance please contact 01473 826622 or email customer.services@babergh.gov.uk

Or if you wish to report an empty property near you please contact the same number or email address. We will need the full address of the empty property and any other information which may help us, for example how long has it been empty or last known owner.

Brome & Oakley Community Recycling Centre Open

The Brome and Oakley Community Recycling Centre, in Brome Industrial Estate, Brome, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7HN, is open to help dispose of any additional recycling over the Christmas period.

Open:	Monday to Saturday (excluding Wednesdays)	9.00 to 4.00 p.m.
	Sunday	10.00 to 4.00 p.m.
	Bank Holidays	10.00 to 2.00 p.m.

Closed: Wednesdays
Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day

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Telephone No: 01379 873 371

The centre is privately run but there is no charge for most recyclables. Occasionally the site is closed without notice so it is best to ring first if uncertain.

What's On?

Tai Chi: New classes start at Withersdale and Mendham Village Hall on Thursday 8 January with a free taster session from 10.30am to 11.15am.

For more information or to book a place contact Val Lindsell on 01379 852 125 or via valerielindsell@aol.com

Otago Classes: For those who may feel they are too old to take up any new type of regular exercise, Otago Classes will be run in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Otago Strength and Balance Exercises may help you to become more active, steadier on your feet and help with balance.

Classes are taking place throughout Babergh and Mid Suffolk. For a full list of venues, visit: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Communities/Healthy-Communities/Leisure-and-Culture/WhatsOn/Otago-A4-Poster.pdf>

Keeping You Informed

Our councils have set aside a section on both our websites where town and parish councils as well as other key stakeholders can access information of particular relevance to them, including these newsletters.

These can be found at either:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/council-business/key-partners-area>

or:

www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/KeyPartnersArea

You can also find all the latest reports going to Council or to Committee on our websites, including the topics up for discussion at each Council Meeting.

You can find these papers at either:

<http://apps.midsuffolk.gov.uk/cmiswebpublic/>

Or:

<http://bdcdocuments.onesuffolk.net/>

Funding Your Project: Grants Available

Do you or your community have a project underway that would benefit from additional funding? You may be eligible for a Community Grant or Funding from your District Council. To find out more, visit our websites at:

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<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community/community-development/grant-aid/>

Or:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/your-community/community-development/grant-aid/>

Newsletter Ideas

What do you want to see covered in the next newsletters?

We try hard to bring you as wide a selection of information as possible but there may be some areas you are keen to know more about. Let us know by emailing

duncan.merren@midsuffolk.gov.uk