

Town & Parish Council Newsletter

Newsletter No: 21 January 2015



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

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Community Emergency Planning Training

The next workshop for any parishes or community groups wishing to find out more about emergency planning or how to start/write a plan, is being held on 18 March in the Dove Room at MSDC. The course will run from 09:30 – 12:30 and places can be booked by calling Sue Herne on 07776 481787 or emailing emergencyplanning@midsuffolk.gov.uk.

In addition, for those who have already formed a group and have completed or are working on a plan, there are spaces available on the First Aid Course taking place on 26 Feb 2015 in the Dove Room at MSDC. Places are free and the course will be running from 09:30 – 16:00. Those attending will receive a certificate valid for three years. Again, please book places with Sue via the phone number or email above. Both events are free to attend.

A full program of workshops and training for 2015 will be published shortly.

Elections on Thursday 7 May 2015

Electors will be heading to polling stations on Thursday 7 May 2015 to vote in the elections for the UK Parliament and District Council. There will also be Parish Council elections if contested. This means that there are more candidates nominated than the number of seats available on the council and residents in the parish will be able to vote for their preferred candidate or candidates.

If you are interested in standing as a candidate you must meet certain criteria. You will also need to complete a nomination paper which is signed by two electors from the parish. Nomination papers are available from the Electoral Services Team or from your parish clerk. The completed nominations must be delivered by hand to the council offices, during normal office hours, from Monday 23rd March 2015 and no later than 4pm on Thursday 9th April.

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We will be sending out poll cards in early April which will give you information about the elections taking place and how you have chosen to cast your vote (for example in person or by post). If you are not on the register you will not receive a poll card and you will not be able to vote.

The deadline for registering to vote at this election is Monday 20 April 2015 – you can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The deadline for applying for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 21 April 2015.

For more information visit:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/council-business/elections-and-voting/> or
<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/council-business/elections-and-voting>

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are seeking your views on focussed revisions to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The councils are inviting comment on the following:

- New residential development size thresholds (i.e. the number of houses in a proposal); and
- New residential development rates on sites of 10 units or fewer.

CIL is a Government scheme to raise funds for essential infrastructure to offset the burden created by new development on existing services and facilities. It is intended to replace older Section 106 processes, as the main tool for raising funds from new developments.

The CIL levy is based on the size of the building and where in the district it is built. A “typical house” of 100sqm will generate between £12,500 and £16,500 at the time of construction but it is subject to an individual assessment.

Nationally almost every council is developing a CIL charging schedule and in East Anglia Babergh and Mid Suffolk are broadly in line with other local authorities in terms of the proposed charging rates.

It is anticipated that the councils could raise around £20 million each over the next 15 years to contribute towards schools, flood defences, community facilities and other essential infrastructure.

A guide to the types of infrastructure that CIL will be spent on (called the Regulation 123 list) has been prepared. However this will need to be refined to set spending priorities once the CIL is adopted and the councils start to collect payments.

Local communities will benefit directly from CIL, as 15% of funds raised (subject to cap) shall be passed on to the parish or town council where development takes place. Where parishes have embraced development and have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, they will receive 25% of CIL money with no cap. The money raised is not ring-fenced so the local community can spend it on whatever it considers best.

The focussed changes to the proposed CIL have been made having considered the Government’s recent announcement that limits the council’s ability to secure Section 106 (S106) payments that would normally be levied on small scale residential developments.

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As developments of 10 or fewer houses no longer have to pay S106 or affordable housing contributions, the council's evidence shows that there is greater viability in these schemes for additional CIL payments.

The councils are analysing the comments people made during the consultation held in December and they will be responded to alongside any new comments received from this consultation. All the comments will be put before an independent inspector at a statutory Examination in Public to be arranged later this year.

For more information and to download an official response form visit:

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/cil or www.babergh.gov.uk/cil

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) will help you choose where to eat out or shop for food by giving you information about the hygiene standards in restaurants, pubs, cafes, takeaways, hotels, and other places that serve food. Supermarkets and other food shops are also included in the scheme.

The scheme is run by local authorities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Each business is given a 'hygiene rating' when it is inspected by a food safety officer from the business's local authority food and safety team including Mid Suffolk and Babergh. The hygiene rating shows how closely the business is meeting the requirements of food hygiene law.

In England and Northern Ireland, when you eat out or shop for food, you might see a sticker in the window or on the door, showing you the hygiene rating for that business. Businesses are encouraged to display these stickers at their premises in a place where you can easily see them when you visit. In Wales this is mandatory.



If you're planning to eat out or buy food, you can search the FSA website www.food.gov.uk/ratings to find out the hygiene rating for the premises.

How the Scheme Works

The food safety officer inspecting a business checks how well the business is meeting the law by looking at:

- How hygienically the food is handled – how it is prepared, cooked, re-heated, cooled and stored.
- The condition of the structure of the buildings – the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and other facilities.

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- How the business manages and records what it does to make sure food is safe.

At the end of the inspection, the business is given one of the six ratings. The top rating of 5 means that the business was found to have very good hygiene standards. Any business is capable of reaching this top rating. Ratings of 3 and above means the business is generally satisfactory.

The food safety officer will explain to the person who owns or manages the business what improvements are needed and how they can achieve the top rating of 5. The local authority will check that these improvements are made.

The FHRS has been designed to make sure that the ratings given to businesses are fair. Look out for these ratings and if possible, please spread the word to your parishioners via your parish council magazine or newsletter.

Your chance to shape your local community

Do you want to have a chance to shape the community you live in? Getting involved with Babergh and Mid Suffolk's first Joint Local Plan is the way forward!

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been working together since 2010 – now we're planning the future of our districts together too and want your help.

A consultation on what a new Joint Local Plan should look like has just started (19 Jan) and is open until 12 March 2015.

This is a chance for everyone who lives in either Babergh or Mid Suffolk to have their say on the key planning policies that will affect housing developments and growth across the area until 2031.

Residents, businesses and interested parties who have responded to consultations like this have already been written to but there are other ways we would like to gather feedback and get people involved.

We have planned a series of sessions for Babergh and Mid Suffolk Members and representatives from the towns and parishes across both districts.

Details are as follows:

- Monday 9 Feb - BDC Council Chamber, Hadleigh: 10am-12pm
- Monday 9 Feb - BDC Council Chamber, Hadleigh: 6pm-8pm
- Tuesday 10 Feb - MSDC Council Chamber, Needham Market: 10am-12pm
- Tuesday 10 Feb - MSDC Council Chamber, Needham Market: 6pm-8pm

Members and representatives are welcome to attend any of the four, identical sessions as convenient. The sessions will be carried out in a similar way to the CIL workshops, held in December, which received good feedback.

We are aware that once town and parish representatives have had a chance to read and digest the consultation material, there may be further questions. Therefore, a further follow-up session has been arranged in the first week of March to clarify points before any formal submission is made.

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Again, members and Parish/Town Councils from both Districts are welcome at either session.

- Tuesday 3 March - MSDC Council Chamber: 6-8pm
- Wednesday 4 March - BDC Council Chamber: 6-8pm

We will also be consulting with the general public and have planned a variety of consultation and engagement events.

Officers will be available to answer questions and explain the documents, process and details of the Joint Local Plan consultation at special drop-in events taking place across the two districts. Everyone is welcome and no appointment is necessary.

The events are as follows:

- Monday 23 Feb - Sudbury Leisure Centre Foyer: 4pm-8pm
- Tuesday 24 Feb – Dove Room, MSDC: 4pm-8pm
- Wednesday 25 Feb - Hadleigh Leisure Centre Foyer: 4pm–8pm
- Thursday 26 Feb - The Mix Centre, Stowmarket: 4pm-8pm

Further information and consultation documents are available on the councils' websites at: www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan and www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan.

Please let us know if you plan to attend one of the above sessions. You can email us on ldf@babergh.gov.uk or planningpolicy@midsuffolk.gov.uk or call 01473 825881 or 01449 724843.

Consultation set to begin on Chilton Woods development

Residents are being urged to take part in a consultation and have their say on proposals relating to the Chilton Woods development in Sudbury.

The consultation, which opened on Friday 30 January, will detail proposals which recognise the site to the north of Sudbury as an ideal location to meet local housing and employment needs and deliver wider benefits for the area.

These benefits will include provisions such as a new primary school, village hall, community woodland, a pub, shops, sports pitches, walking and cycling routes.

Councillor Jenny Antill, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for resource management, said: "The county council remains absolutely committed to seeing this development happen and there is much hard work taking place to ensure those living locally benefit from this development.

"I strongly encourage all those who have a connection with the area however remote, to engage with us through the consultation exercise and drop-in exhibitions; enabling us to gather a well-informed view."

As part of the consultation residents will be able to view and comment on proposals for the site and see what has changed since a housing developer presented a scheme back in 2012.

From Friday 30 January 2015 plans and other information will be available from the county council's website, at www.suffolk.gov.uk/chiltonwoods.

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The webpage will also include an online survey to help residents provide feedback.

A drop-in exhibition will be made available on Friday and Saturday at the Masonic Hall, North Street, Sudbury, CO10 1NA where plans will be viewable and officers from the project team will be on hand to discuss proposals and answer questions.

The drop-in exhibitions will take place at the following times:

- Friday 30 January 2015: 2pm – 7.30pm
- Saturday 31 January 2015: 10am – 1pm

Consultation closes 5pm on Monday 16 February 2015. Views and feedback during the consultation will help to inform the planning application which Suffolk County Council hope to make in spring 2015.

If you have any questions regarding the consultation, please email chilton.woods@suffolk.gov.uk or call 0345 603 1842.

Parish Planning guide

Within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, a significant number of parishes already have some sort of community plan in place. These can take the form of Parish Plans, Community Plans, Village Design Statements, Town Action Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

As you will be aware, Neighbourhood Development Plans concentrate primarily on the use of land and buildings in an area. Parish Plans and Town Action Plans tend to be more comprehensive in scope and cover a wide range of social, environmental and economic issues.

The following webpages provide more information including a review of the different plans available and example survey questions to help you decide what approach to planning is right for your community.

MSDC <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-led-planning/>
BDC <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-led-planning/>

Plain English guide to the Planning system

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published a new guide to the planning system explaining how the system works in England, making clear the opportunities for people to get involved in the debate over what gets built in their neighbourhood.

Communities looking to have their say over the future development of their local area will have all the information they need at their fingertips. The guide is intended to give an overview only and does not set new planning policy or guidance. It offers a quick and easy explanation of how the new planning system works, how local and neighbourhood plans are written and adopted locally, and how to go about obtaining planning permission.

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You can access the guide at www.gov.uk/government/publications/plain-english-guide-to-the-planning-system.

Planning guidance can be accessed online via the Planning Portal at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

Useful links

The Rural Housing Alliance has launched an informative guide - Affordable Rural Housing: a practical guide for parish councils.

For further information visit:

<http://www.rsonline.org.uk/images/files/ruralhousing-guideforparishcouncils2014.pdf>

On 8 January 2015, Communities Minister Stephen Williams announced new measures to remove the bureaucratic burdens faced by community groups wanting to set up a town or parish council and give local people a greater say over what goes on in their neighbourhood.

For further information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-it-easier-to-set-up-new-town-and-parish-councils>

Keeping warm and active this winter

Chair based exercise and Otago strength and balance exercises are designed to help build up your activity levels without putting unwanted strain on your hips, legs or arms. By doing some simple exercises at home each day you can help improve your arm and leg muscles, flexibility, posture and help keep yourself warm.

If you would like to have a try, there are a number of classes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. You might be surprised at how good it makes you feel!

For further information, venues and class times, please visit

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Uploads-BDC/Communities/Healthy-Communities/Leisure-and-Culture/WhatsOn/Otago-A4-Poster.pdf>

Alternatively, call Sue Longhurst, Community Health & Wellbeing Officer on 01473 826656 or 01449 724653 or email sue.longhurst@babergh.gov.uk

Next Town and Parish Liaison Meetings

The next Town and Parish Liaison Meetings are planned for early June 2015. A letter of invitation will be distributed nearer the date and every parish is encouraged to send a representative.

We would recommend newly elected parish councillors attend as our Heads of Service also attend and can offer an insight into their service areas.

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If your parish has an idea for a topic which you feel would be of interest to other parishes, please pass the information to your Babergh or Mid Suffolk Ward Member or email josephine.beever@babergh.gov.uk

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 stuart.atkinson@midsuffolk.gov.uk.