

Town & Parish Council Newsletter

Newsletter No: 34 March 2017



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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We upload every issue of the newsletter to our website in a reactive format to make your reading as easy as possible, whatever device you use. If you would prefer to share the newsletter from there rather than as an email attachment, you can always find the latest edition online at:

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

Across Babergh & Mid Suffolk

All Together: Your Public Access Update

As we prepare to move our headquarters to Endeavour House, Ipswich in the autumn, we are working through the details for our Customer Access Points in the districts. These will be our walk-in buildings for residents who need assistance to access information and support about our services.

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We have identified two locations in towns where more of our population live, work and access other services. One of these is on Ipswich Street in Stowmarket and the other in the Town Council offices in Sudbury. The detail is now being worked on so that we can open these centres as we vacate our current council buildings in Needham Market and Hadleigh.

Later this month we will be launching our new look website. We will be adding more features to it in the coming months to make it easier for you to access our services and make all payments online. Moving towards a more digital service allows our residents to interact with us 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We welcome your feedback on the new site and encourage you to share the attached poster on your websites and noticeboards.

May Town & Parish Liaison Meetings Confirmed

The dates for the May Town & Parish Liaison Meetings have now been confirmed. The meetings will be:

Babergh: Tuesday 16 May

Mid Suffolk: Thursday 18 May

Each date will consist of a morning meeting will start at 10am and an evening one at 6.30pm, with venues to be confirmed. The agenda is yet to be finalised but will be sent out much nearer the time.

If you have any specific topics you and your town or parish would like to suggest for the agenda, please contact Jo Beever on the address below.

Towns and Parishes are invited to send two representatives, councillors, and/or clerk. To register for a place please provide names, role, and an email address (preferable) or telephone number on which you can be contacted.

Please send these to Jo Beever, Communities Officer, by email at:
Josephine.beever@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

You can also do so via telephone on 01449 724654 (Mon, Tues or Weds). Places are limited for all these sessions, so do please respond asap.

Public Realm Transformation Project Underway

Did you know that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are responsible for cutting approximately 2 million square metres of grass, emptying 1,800 dog and litter bins, and maintaining around 19,000 trees across the districts?

These responsibilities and many more - including street cleansing, litter clearance and highway verge work - come under the remit of the Countryside and Public Realm Service.

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To ensure we are delivering the best service at the best value for our residents, we are currently undertaking a review of the Councils' Countryside and Public Realm Services, which includes:

- Countryside services
- Arboriculture
- Amenity areas, parks and open spaces
- Street scene (street cleansing and fly-tipping)
- A14 litter clearance and Highway verge work for Suffolk County Council
- Council owned playgrounds
- Public conveniences
- Council owned car parks (white lining, litter picking and cleansing only)

Currently, Public Realm services in Mid Suffolk are largely delivered by an in-house team; in Babergh, the service is largely contracted out. We have now commissioned consultants with extensive experience of public realm and environmental services to carry out an options appraisal to identify how these services could be delivered in the future, and to work with us to help us identify the preferred options and supporting business cases.

We look forward to updating you on how this work progresses over the coming months, so look out for updates in future editions of this newsletter. We've already spoken to some of you, who manage larger open spaces, and we will be in touch with all of you as we continue to look at how we deliver these services.

Council Housing Officers feature in latest TV show

Two members of staff from Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Supported Living Schemes will once again feature in the latest series of the BBC One daytime show 'The Housing Enforcers'.

The fourth series of the show started on Monday 3 March and will air each weekdays at 9.15 am until Friday 24 March 2017. It is hosted by presenter Matt Allwright and looks at the work of Local Authority Housing Officers who deal with a whole range of issues such as signing up new tenants, antisocial behaviour, overgrown gardens and environmental health-related matters.

Community Housing Officers Ian Watson and Andrew Weavers have been working with the producers of this show for the last two years and they have already appeared in series 2 and 3. In the current series, viewers will see Ian or Andrew in 10 episodes altogether, where their work on the front line will show them dealing with anything from



Presenter Matt Allwright (right) with Andrew Weavers (left) and his crew

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'right to buy' fraud and abandoned properties to attending evictions and serving notices.

Andrew Weavers said, "The programme producers and crew have been very supportive and it has been good to show the mixture of issues we deal with every day. Social worker, mediator, police officer, support worker and friendly face – these are just some of the people we are expected to be during the course of our work. We have no doubt changed people's lives or even saved them along the path of our careers."

Ian Watson said, "The shows have been fair and quite positive, not like some other benefits programmes, so when we were asked to do more programmes after series 2, I was quite happy to do this because of the way they portrayed our work."

Cllr Jan Osborne, Babergh District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing said, "Our housing officers are a real credit to both councils and this programme shows just what an invaluable service they provide for our tenants. Viewers of the programme will see just how hard this team works to find solutions, even when they lie outside their normal area of activity, and the positive impact they have on people's lives."

Cllr Jill Willshaw, Mid Suffolk District Council's Member with Special Responsibility – Landlord Function said, "We know our tenants can have very individual needs and this programme does a great job of shining a light on just how hard our staff work to handle anything that is thrown at them. Their willingness to roll up their sleeves and do whatever it takes to solve problems and improve the lives of our tenants is a testament to the commitment and professionalism of the whole team."

Series Producer Kent Upshon said "We were really keen to open up the series this year, to look at the more human side of housing, and the challenges faced by both tenants and Housing Officers. Both Ian and Andrew were brilliant guides through today's housing crisis. There's an old cliché about there being no such thing as an average day as a housing officer, but our time in Suffolk and Babergh proved time and time again this to be true. Through them, we saw a huge range of different housing challenges, but the one thing that didn't change was Ian and Andrew's honest and professional approach to doing their jobs. We feel we really captured an authentic feel of what it's like to be on the front lines, and I know our viewers will feel the same".

The Pub is the Hub: Book Your Place Now

There are a few spaces left on the "Pub is the Hub" discussion on Assets of Community Value on Monday 20 March.

This event will give you an insight into the work involved in Assets of Community Value – not only in securing that designation, but also in how to turn it into a real hub for your whole community.

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.

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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@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Hate Litter and Love Suffolk? Join Spring Clear Suffolk

With Spring on its way, the Suffolk Waste Partnership is again keen to support local community efforts to clean up towns, villages and countryside by getting involved in a litter pick.

Several groups across Suffolk are already planning to give their neighbourhoods a sprucing up, and it's hoped that with more groups and individuals taking part in litter picks this year, a real difference can be made.

Last year 266 groups and events were registered, involving more than 3,000 volunteers from schools, businesses, youth clubs, churches and other community organisations.

Cllr Clive Arthey, Chairman of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said: "It is a great way to involve the community, get out and about and improve the habitats of local wildlife – as well as being really satisfying to see the difference it can make, it can be fun and a chance to meet other people too.

"Of course, it's best if we prevent rubbish ending up in the wrong place to begin with, as we'd all prefer not to have to pick up other people's litter at all.

"Keeping the county litter-free is good for our residents and wildlife, and a clean and tidy environment is more attractive for visitors to our beautiful county."

All of the district and borough councils across Suffolk will support community efforts to carry out local litter picks throughout the year.

Groups organising a litter pick in Suffolk can call their local district or borough council with their group information and give details of the location of the planned pick and the equipment they require.

They can also make arrangements for the council to collect the gathered litter by calling their local district or borough council.

People can check for events in their local area by viewing the online calendar of litter picks in Suffolk at:

www.greensuffolk.org/recycling/campaigns/suffolk-litter-picking

The website also hosts a gallery of photos submitted by community volunteers. If anyone would like to submit a photo of their event to be added to the gallery can be done so by emailing waste.management@suffolk.gov.uk

Prolific Fly-Tipper Fined £2000

A 36 year old man from Ipswich has been successfully prosecuted for fly-tipping and waste offences committed in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk during 2016.

On Tuesday 21 February 2017, Tommy Gorham, formally of Kingfisher Avenue, Ipswich, now residing at Upper Orwell Street, appeared before Ipswich Magistrates Court charged with four waste offences committed during 2016, including illegally fly-tipping waste in Bullen Lane, Bramford and also Church Lane, Sproughton.

Mr Gorham attended court and pleaded guilty to all four charges. The court took into account Mr Gorham's guilty plea before ordering him to pay penalties including a £400 fine, £590.44 clearance costs and £1,150 investigation and legal costs.

The first incident took place in January 2016, when a large amount of household and building waste was found to have been dumped on farmland in Bullen Lane, Bramford. Documents addressed to Mr Gorham, or to properties which he owned, were found amongst the waste and as a person responsible for renting out properties, Mr Gorham had a legal 'duty of care' to ensure that all waste from his business was disposed of correctly and that Waste Transfer Notes were retained.

The second incident took place in February 2016 when a large van load of household waste was found to have been fly-tipped at Church Lane, Sproughton. Once again, a piece of correspondence linked to a property owned by Mr Gorham was found in the waste.

Officers invited Mr Gorham to attend an interview under caution in relation to the matter, but after he repeatedly failed to attend, he was arrested so that he could be interviewed at the Police Investigation Centre in Martlesham. Mr Gorham denied dumping the waste at the locations. He was unable to account for how he dealt with waste arising from his rental properties, nor produce any paperwork for the waste, despite being issued with a notice to do so and having previously been advised about his responsibilities in relation to waste disposal in 2013.

James Buckingham, Corporate Manager – Sustainable Environment, for both Councils said "We are pleased with the outcome of this case, whereby a prolific fly-tipper has been brought to justice. It's good to see that the level of penalties given to Mr Gorham, even with the court taking account of his guilty plea, represent the cost of his crimes and the contempt he had shown for the environment and local community. Mr Gorham had a legal duty to ensure that waste from his business activities was disposed of properly. I hope this case will send a clear message to other offenders that we will not tolerate this behaviour and we will not hesitate to prosecute in such cases. The Environmental Protection Team at both Councils will continue to place a high priority on the investigation of fly-tipping and we are grateful to Suffolk Police for their assistance in arresting Mr Gorham so that we could interview him".

Cllr John Ward, Babergh's Portfolio Holder for Environment commented "Church Lane in Sproughton has been a historic hot-spot for fly-tipping within the district, and so we

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are particularly pleased to have once again caught someone offending at this location”.

Cllr David Burn, Mid Suffolk’s Environment Portfolio Holder added “Unfortunately, the cost of removing fly-tipping on public land falls to taxpayers, and on private land must be met by landowners. I am therefore, very pleased that the court has specifically ordered that Mr Gorham pay the full clearance costs that both the Councils and the landowner incurred as a result of his unacceptable actions”.

The Councils are members of the Suffolk Tipping Action Group which aims to reduce fly-tipping across the county through the ‘Tip-Off: stop fly-tipping in Suffolk’ campaign. Individuals and Businesses have specific legal responsibilities in respect of waste. For further information, please visit the Green Suffolk website at:

<http://www.greensuffolk.org/recycling/fly-tipping/>

Mid Suffolk District

Day of free Fitness Fun gets Stowmarket Active

People in Stowmarket have been given a helping hand to achieve their New Year’s fitness goals thanks to a local leisure provider.



Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, which is managed by Everyone Active, opened its doors for a day of free fitness fun on Saturday 14 January to showcase its newly refurbished gym.

Customers were given the chance to try out the new, state-of-the-art cardio vascular equipment, which has been installed as part of a £100,000 upgrade, as well as take part in free gym inductions and group exercise classes.

The open day came after colleagues from the centre joined members of Mid Suffolk District Council to officially unveil the refurbished fitness suite on Friday 13 January. Guests were given a tour of the centre and even got to try out the new equipment for themselves.

Everyone Active’s general manager, Anselm Gurney, said: “Together with the Council, we aim to encouraging more people in the community to lead healthy, active lifestyles. We can achieve this by ensuring they have access to top-class facilities at the centre and enjoy every visit they make to us.”

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“I was delighted by how many people attended the open day and we hope they have been inspired to continue getting active throughout the year. We look forward to helping them on their fitness journeys.”

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.

Cllr Flatman’s, Portfolio Holder - Community Capacity Building & Engagement, said: “I am delighted to unveil these fantastic new fitness facilities and given 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 more information on Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, call 01449 674980 or visit: www.everyoneactive.com

SnOasis Reserved Matters: An Update

We are continuing to work on the Reserved Matters application for SnOasis. After discussions with the applicant and his agents we are now expecting the final details of their plans to be submitted to our Planning Team in early May. This information will include a new and revised Environmental Statement and the outstanding ‘deliverables’ outlined as part of the planning application.

To allow a full public consultation to take place after these details are submitted we have agreed an extension until the 31 August 2017 for the determination of this application.

We are committed to running a full five week consultation on this application and we want it to be as detailed and thorough as possible. By allowing this extension we are ensuring that all the details will be available for the full length of the consultation, allowing your responses to be as comprehensive as possible and ensuring the members of our Development Committee can make a fully informed decision.

We will continue to provide updates in this newsletter, while we will also be in direct contact with Parishes in the immediate area of the proposed development to keep you update as we continue to work on this application.

For more information visit our website at: <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning/snoasis/>

You can also contact the Planning Officers working on the application directly via snoasis@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

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Council Buys Two More Redundant Sites for Redevelopment

Mid Suffolk District Council has just completed the purchase of two more redundant sites from Suffolk County Council which it will now develop to provide much needed new housing.

One of the sites, Paddock House and former Day Care Centre in Wellington Road, Eye, includes a 30 bed redundant care home and a detached 3 bedroom bungalow in the grounds. The other is located in Walnut Tree Walk, Stowmarket and includes the former Middle School and Community Education Centre located on Childer Road.



Part of the former Middle School site

These two latest acquisitions, together with the former Middle School site in School Lane, Needham Market, which was bought last year, demonstrates the determination by Mid Suffolk to invest in its market towns and provide new homes to meet the needs of local people. In addition to this, it is anticipated the construction phase will bring more jobs into both areas and give local businesses a vital boost through increased footfall.

Work to appoint development partners for these sites will begin this summer and any proposals which are drawn up will be subject to a public consultation through the usual planning processes. It is hoped that work on both sites will start next summer.

Cllr Nick Gowrley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council and Portfolio Holder for Assets and Investment said, "We are extremely pleased we've been successful in buying two more disused sites from Suffolk County Council. We now have prime residential locations in our three market towns across the district and this is significant because it means we can begin work to turn these redundant sites into places to live for local people. However, this is not just about meeting the demand for new homes; we firmly believe this sort of investment is crucial in helping to ensure our market towns continue to be sustainable and are able to flourish."

Let's Walk launches in Stowmarket

Monday 6 March saw the opening of Let's Walk, the mini walking festival in the Stowmarket area. Let's Walk is a free walking festival spread through March and April this year, encouraging people of all ages and abilities to get out of the house and explore the areas of Stowmarket, Combs Ford and Stowupland. Stowmarket town

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Mayor Barry Humphreys officially opened the festival alongside experienced walk leader Bob Halls, with an eager crowd of walkers of all abilities.



The first walk underway in Stowmarket

The opening walk of the festival was the Stowmarket central walk, a casual 90-minute stride around the centre of Stowmarket accompanied by local historian Steve Williams with regular stops for gentle exercises and even a few songs! Participants were treated to a wealth of local knowledge with opportunities to photograph local landmarks and wildlife

The 6 weeks of walks are being organised by the Mid Suffolk and Babergh Communities Team in partnership with Everyone Active at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre. The walks are designed to be a simple and free way to increase your daily activity with many health benefits including: reducing risks of heart disease, the lowering of blood pressure, reducing the risk of diabetes and lowering the risk of falls and fractures.

All walks are led by a qualified walk leader and are also a great opportunity to socialise and learn about the beautiful local area and de-stress. All bookings are to be made via the Tourist Information Centre by emailing TIC@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or telephoning 01449 676800.

To find out more information about the walks, please visit <http://www.suffolkyearofwalking.co.uk/assets/NewFolder/Stowmarket-Walk-A5-Leaflet.pdf> or pick up a leaflet from the Tourist Information Centre or Library in Stowmarket. Walks take place throughout March and April and everyone is welcome to take part!

Babergh District

Formal Consultation Launched on Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan

Babergh has commenced a six-week consultation following the formal submission of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Lawshall. The Plan has been prepared and produced by the local community.

Neighbourhood planning allows communities to develop their own planning policies which will help guide new development in their area. The District Council is now asking whether the policies contained within the Lawshall Plan are appropriate and are seeking views from people who live, work and carry out business in this area.

The Plan and details of the consultation process can be found online at:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/LawshallNDP>

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
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council
131 High Street
Needham Market
Ipswich, IP6 8DL

Responses must be received before **4:00pm on Friday 31 March 2017**. Comments will be kept on a public file and may be reproduced publicly in writing or on the Babergh website.

The District Council will be organising an Independent Examination of the Plan. At the end of the consultation period any comments received will be sent to the Examiner who will determine whether the Plan can go forward to a local referendum later this year.

Cllr Simon Barrett, Babergh District Council Portfolio Holder for Business Growth and Increased Productivity, said: "Lawshall is the latest in a growing number of parishes across Babergh to put their Neighbourhood Development Plan to their residents, and their hard work could soon form a part of local planning policy. Everyone in the village can take part in this consultation and make sure that the plan serves the whole community."

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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