

Town & Parish Council Newsletter

Newsletter No: 24 **September 2015**



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.

As our first newsletter after the Summer Holidays, we have a lot to tell you, including about devolution in East Anglia. As such this edition is quite long, but we shall return to normal service in time for our next newsletter.

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Devolution – What’s it all about?

You might have read or seen news reports about Suffolk councils’ involvement in discussions with each other, ministers and civil servants and others about their acquiring devolved powers from the Government.

We wanted to use the opportunity of this newsletter to bring you up-to-speed with what has been going on over the last few months and the next steps.

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill makes provision for local authorities and other parts of the public sector to ‘bid’ to run functions currently delivered centrally in return for certain agreed outcomes.

Suffolk’s district and borough councils and the County Council believe that locally-made decisions are likely to be better and more directly accountable to the communities we serve.

The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders’ (SPSL) group, chaired by Babergh Leader Cllr. Jennie Jenkins, set up a Devolution Working Group to investigate the level of interest about devolution among public sector organisations. The Working Group liaised with representatives from the health and police sectors as well as the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP). A final devolution ‘bid’ was produced and considered

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by the SPSL group on 4th September. A copy of this bid can be seen online: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/council-business/news-and-media/devolution/suffolk-devolution-bid-document/>

This devolution document was sent to Government as an expression of interest to ensure that our intention to bid for powers was submitted within its deadline. Separate bids were also submitted by a range of councils, including those bordering the Suffolk county area.

Initial – and very quick – feedback from civil servants suggested that the Government would look more favourably on Suffolk's bid if the conversations were widened to include some of these councils and other partners.

During the week of 7th September, meetings were held with representatives of both Norfolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP. From these, it became clear that there was a desire from the political leaders across both counties to work towards constructing a joint devolution bid centred around the linked issues of economic growth and public sector reform (ie closer working between councils, health bodies, the police and business leaders).

The SPSL group met on 18th September and clarified a number of key points both about the emerging joint 'bid' and the next steps in working with both Norfolk County councils, the Norfolk districts and boroughs and NALEP. The SPSL was clear that:

- Growth and wider public sector reform will be the two elements for the 'bid'
- The mechanisms by which the elements will be devolved from Government are likely to be different, but linked
- Growth could be devolved to a Combined Authority across Suffolk and Norfolk comprising representatives from participating councils. **This does NOT mean the scrapping or merging of the two county, or any other, councils.** Combined authorities are separate organisations, created where they are considered likely to improve transport, economic development and regeneration at a strategic level. There are currently five combined authorities in England
- Wider public sector reform would focus on education, health, care and safety and be devolved on an individual county basis

The SPSL agreed to take these proposals into a meeting held with colleagues from Norfolk and NALEP on 22nd September. At this meeting all partners agreed the framework for the development of a joint devolution bid between NALEP, Suffolk and Norfolk's councils and other public sector partners.

More detailed work will now be carried out to ensure further develop the coverage, which is based on the proposals contained in the Suffolk 'bid', but across two counties. Public sector partners will be working with Government officials over the next month to develop the detail around the proposals and ensure that any 'bid' is fit for purpose to be sent to Government over the next few weeks or so.

Nominations now open for 2015/16 Community Achievement Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2015/16 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Community Achievement Awards. This year, for the first time, the awards have been aligned so there will be one awards ceremony in April 2016 to cover both Districts.

Town and Parish Councils are invited to nominate individuals, groups or businesses in their communities that have gone above and beyond. There are four categories available:

Category 1: **Rising Star**

This nomination would recognise a young person or group of young people (under 18 years) who have made an outstanding contribution to their local school or community.

For example:

- Undertaking voluntary work/involvement with local voluntary organisations
- Supporting/mentoring others
- Care and dedication shown to another individual
- Fundraising for local projects

Category 2: **Community Hero**

This nomination would recognise a person who has provided selfless service to a voluntary body or made a significant contribution to their community, making a real difference to the people and place that they have supported.

For example:

- Dedication to helping/supporting members of the local community
- Working for the benefit of the local community by contributing to the improvement of its local facilities
- Fundraising for local projects
- Voluntary work/involvement with local voluntary organisations
- Work in relation to improving the environment

Category 3: **Action in the Community**

This nomination would recognise the work of groups of people in the district whose actions affect the wider community either by improving the environment or by providing help to those in need.

For example:

- Working together on a project to support and benefit the local community
- Fundraising activities
- Work in relation to improving the environment

Category 4: **Outstanding Local Business**

This nomination would recognise a business located within Babergh or Mid Suffolk (with exception of our sponsors) which has made a significant contribution to either the social or environmental wellbeing of the district and its residents.

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For example:

- Any business that benefits the community/district by contributing to the improvement of facilities and services and works towards reducing the barriers between the business sector, the voluntary sector and the local community.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from our websites:

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

Mid Suffolk: <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community/community-achievement-awards/>

You can also request forms by contacting 01449 724654. Nominations must be in by Thursday 31 December 2015. Winners will be alerted in the New Year and invited to attend an awards ceremony along with the nominator on 21 April 2016 at Wherstead Park.

November Town & Parish Liaison Meetings

The next Town & Parish Liaison Meetings will be held in November with morning and evening sessions both held on the following dates:

Babergh: Tuesday 3 November

Mid Suffolk: Thursday 5 November

Keep the dates free and more information will be distributed soon.

How can we make the Newsletter better?

We're now on the 24th edition of this newsletter, with some form of this regular update going back to March 2011.

We're always looking for ways to improve the content we send to you, and want to know what you think of this newsletter. As such we will be discussing how we can make this newsletter as relevant and useful for you at the November Liaison Meetings.

To help us make the most of the opportunity those meetings offer, please send your suggestions for improvement or views on the current newsletter to:

duncan.merren@babergmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Mid Suffolk Councillors' Locality Award

There is now an opportunity for not-for profit groups or organisations, including Town and Parish Councils, within Mid Suffolk to receive direct support from their District Councillor.

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In a 'One Off' Awards Programme Mid Suffolk District Councillors will have a total allocation of £5000 each to support groups and projects within their Wards. Awards made can range from £250 upwards.

The application period will run from 1st October 2015 with an application deadline of **8th January 2016**. To apply, please read to Guidance Notes below and complete the Application Form, available online at <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community/community-development/councillors-locality-award-funding/>

All applicants will need to complete the Application Form, demonstrating how their activities meet the strategic priorities of Mid Suffolk District Council, which are listed in full in the Guidance Notes above.

Please send completed Application Forms to Emma Bendall, Communities Officer Grants, at emma.bendall@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Application Forms will be returned to the Communities Team purely for co-ordination and forwarded on to the respective Councillor as they are received. Any questions or queries you may have on the Awards can be supported by the Communities Team on the above email address.

UCS & Police looking for survey input

University Campus Suffolk (UCS) is working with police in Suffolk and Norfolk to understand the public's perceptions of crime, anti-social behaviour and local policing services in their area.

The online Suffolk and Norfolk Community Safety Survey, launched in July, will be a pivotal part of research led by UCS. It asks the public about their opinions on crime and anti-social behaviour, whether they have witnessed this in their local area and their experiences of encounters with the police.

The results will feed into change programmes currently underway in both counties to identify where cost savings can be made in light of government cuts to policing budgets. It is part of an approach called Evidence Based Policing (EBP) that is being adopted by both police forces as a way of identifying the best way to deliver policing to suit the needs of today's communities.

The anonymous online survey can be completed by visiting:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/norfolksuffolksurvey>

More information can be found here: www.ucs.ac.uk/communitysafetysurvey

Community Emergency Planning Events

Workshop

On the 5th October there will be two workshops running for established CEP groups across West Suffolk, Babergh & Mid Suffolk as well as for anyone who would like to know more about CEP or groups that are just embarking or already working on a plan. These are identical workshops so you can choose which location and or time suits you better. The first takes place from 10:00 -13:00 in Bury St Edmunds and the second from 18:30-21:30 in Needham Market. Please contact Sue Herne to book your place. The Agenda & event details can be found at

<http://www.getpreparednow.co.uk/home/training-and-workshop-program/>

Community Emergency Planning Steering Group (Suffolk) AGM

The group's first AGM will take place on the 13th November from 11:00 – 13:00 hours at Stowupland Village Hall, Church Road, Stowupland, Suffolk, IP14 4BQ.

This is a great opportunity for volunteers from across Suffolk to represent the Community Emergency Planning Groups within their District and help to shape the future for this valuable work across Suffolk. The steering Group meets on a quarterly basis and there are sub groups that meet in between.

The key areas of focus for the Steering Group are:-

- encouraging more parishes/community groups to get on board
- communications which includes the Newsletter, Twitter, Websites etc.,
- sourcing and applying for funding,
- training and exercising

Members of the steering group are appointed for 12 months and are voted in by those volunteers present at the AGM. Those elected will then vote amongst themselves for the positions of chair, vice chair & treasurer. Anyone who would like to be nominated as a rep for the Steering Group, or to book a place for the AGM, should contact Sue Herne by the 31st October 2015. Details of the existing Steering group Members can be found on <http://www.getpreparednow.co.uk/home/steering-group/>

The Conference

The AGM will be followed by a conference from 14:00 - 20:00. The conference is to gain feedback for the report to Awards for All about the training and workshops which have been funded by the Awards for All funding, as well as to look at how other volunteers in your community could work more effectively by working together. The conference will be a mix of presentations from a variety of speakers, but will also include networking and workshop sessions. The keynote speaker is local MP Jo Churchill and the conference will be opened by Mid Suffolk District Council Leader Derrick Haley. There will be a number of stands for you to visit during the networking sessions including Age UK, The Community First Responders, Community Fire Safety Officers, UK Power networks, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, Norfolk &

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Suffolk 4x4 Response, Joint Emergency planning Unit. A copy of the program for the day can be found on the following link.

<http://www.getpreparednow.co.uk/assets/Uploads/CEP-Conference-Program.pdf>

For more information, or to book your place for the events above please contact Sue Herne, 01449 724851 or 07776 481787 or email emergencyplanning@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Fit Villages up and running

Fit Villages is a popular, well established project run by Suffolk Sport across the county. The project is supported by Suffolk County Council and Sport England and is part of Suffolk's aim to be the Most Active County (MAC). The project helps villages in rural locations set up their own sport and physical activity programmes, using village facilities such as village halls, community centres or playing fields. Previous projects have included activities such as Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Nordic Walking, Zumba, Beginners Running or Keep Fit but Fit Villages is always open to ideas and suggestions.

The project aims to set up sustainable classes that local people want to take part in, as well as making good use of local village facilities. As well as providing a local opportunity for people to be more active, the project aims to offer a social opportunity and improve community spirit. The sessions are always followed by refreshments, enabling people to get to know other local participants.

A couple of participants on recent projects have provided the below feedback:

- "I have lost half a stone over the last 8 weeks, just from doing this Fit Villages activity and I am absolutely delighted."
- "I have thoroughly enjoyed this completely new activity and doubts about whether I could cope with my new hip haven't arisen. Wonderful to be able to dance without pain. Never thought it could happen."
- "Beyond expectation - thoroughly enjoyable. Having never done any exercise before I didn't know how I would cope, but want to carry on now and do more."

Fit Villages are always looking for new villages to get involved with the project. For more information, please contact Maddy Knox, Suffolk Sport, on 07825790832 or via maddy.knox@suffolksport.com

Helping Residents 'Green Up' Their Street

The Community Tree Planting Scheme has proved such a success that we have decided to extend and promote it. With reduced resources Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are exploring ways to plant more trees.

Residents who would like to improve their local environment through tree planting are being invited to contact Alice Martin, scheme co-ordinator with their initial ideas.

Who can apply?

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Individuals, resident groups, Parish and Town Councils, in fact almost anybody who would like to improve their local environment by having a tree on the verge or other public open spaces.

Applicants will:

- Need to be prepared to contact the landowner (if it is not BDC or MSDC land) to seek permission to plant
- Organise funding of £60 per tree
- Take responsibility for watering the tree (up to the first two summers)

Mid Suffolk and Babergh will:

- Advise on land ownership
- Obtain underground service locations
- Advise on resident groups gaining additional funds
- Agree planting location
- Offer a choice of appropriate tree species for the location
- Plant the tree and maintain it until establishment
- Provide a replacement tree free of charge if it is lost for reasons such as disease or vandalism

Anyone wishing to find out more about this scheme should contact Alice Martin, Assistant Arboricultural Officer on 01449 724942 or email at alice.martin@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Families come first with Suffolk Family Focus

All families can face challenges in day-to-day life. From relationship breakdowns to issues such as ill health or unemployment, there are times when it isn't always clear where to go for help. That's where Suffolk Family Focus comes in with a revolutionary approach to support families when they need it the most.

Suffolk Family Focus is a partnership between local councils, NHS, the police, voluntary sector and others who all work together to help families in need. In practice, this means a clear, joined up approach in which over 4000 Suffolk families with complex and difficult needs, during the next 5 years, will have a single point of contact and one family plan that sets out what support they will receive from a range of organisations for the whole family.

Suffolk Family Focus means not having to tell the same story multiple times because public sector organisations, with the permission of the family, share information to understand the issues with which the family is trying to cope. This is a new way of working, and it involves everyone from social workers to police community support officers.

For more information contact Stuart Hudson, Suffolk Troubled Families Co-ordinator, via stuart.hudson@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Family Focus was created as Suffolk County Council's response to the national troubled Families Programme which started back in 2012. This 3 year

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programme has now moved into phase 2 of the national programme and will run until 2020.

Events

Project Funding Event: The National Churches Trust enables the repair and revitalisation of places of worship for the benefit of all the community.

For an introduction to the funding available, a workshop is being held from 9.30am on Thursday 22 October in Chapel St Mary.

For more details and to book your place, contact Josephine Beever, on 01449 724 654 or via Josephine.beever@baberghmidsuffolk.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 duncan.merren@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.