

Town & Parish Council Newsletter

Newsletter No: 28 May 2016



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: 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://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

Our Joint Strategic Plan – a Refresh for 2016-20

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have this week approved a “refreshed” Joint Strategic Plan for the next four years, as the foundation for change, growth and a sustainable legacy for future generations.

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The original Joint Strategic Plan for the two Councils was developed and published in 2013/14. Following a number of significant changes in the local, regional and national context since that original plan was created, as well as the considerable changes in our own political make-up since the local elections in 2015, it was felt necessary to revisit and realign our priorities.

The focus for the “refreshed” plan still reflects the ambition of both Councils to improve the prosperity of our area, through growing new homes, new jobs and new businesses. It outlines the context in which we are operating at the moment and the challenges and opportunities of the future that will influence how well we do.

Our key priorities of Economy and Environment, Housing, and Strong and Healthy Communities remain unchanged; the document describes how we will deliver these under five strategic outcomes:

- Housing Delivery
- Business Growth and Increased Productivity
- Community Capacity Building and Engagement
- Assets and Investments
- An Enabled and Efficient Organisation

Chief Executive Charlie Adan said: “This strategic plan takes into account the realities we all now face and must adapt to, in terms of reducing resources, competing priorities and rising expectations. It also reflects the aspirations we are setting ourselves as councillors and staff to be the type of agile, quick-moving and responsive Councils our communities want us to be.

“We must also make sure we are able to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the Devolution deal for East Anglia.

“The plan recognises that we will need to collaborate with our public sector partners, local businesses, local communities and the voluntary sector for it to be successful. We hope it acts as an inspiration for them to work with us, with shared direction and a common purpose, to deliver the kinds of outcomes we all want to see.”

Work has already been started on delivering parts of this strategy; detailed plans for implementation are being developed, and will be announced in the summer.

June Town & Parish Liaison Meetings Confirmed

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

Babergh: Tuesday 7 June

The morning meeting will be held at 10am at Tattingstone Village Hall, with the evening meeting beginning at 6.30pm at Cockfield Village Hall.

Mid Suffolk: Thursday 9 June

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The morning meeting will start at 10am and the evening one at 6.30pm, both to be held in the Council Chamber in Mid Suffolk District Council's Needham Market offices.

The agenda is yet to be finalised but will include an item on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

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 telephone 01449 724654 (Mon, Tues or Weds). Places are limited for all of these sessions, so do please respond asap.

A full agenda will be sent out much nearer the time

Charlie Adan to take up new post in Kingston upon Thames

Charlie (Charlotte) Adan, currently the Chief Executive of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Charlie will take up her post in mid-August.

While with Babergh and Mid Suffolk, Ms Adan oversaw the integration of the award winning Smaller, Smarter, Swifter programme, which transformed the two councils' workforces into one shared service. The new structure created a more streamlined and flexible council that serves both sovereign authorities and their communities. In 2013, the two councils received an award from The MJ (Municipal Journal) recognising this work.

Cllr Derrick Haley, the Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council to receive news of the appointment, said: "We will be sorry to see Charlie leave, but we are delighted that she has been appointed to such a prominent new role. Since her appointment as Joint Chief Executive for Mid Suffolk and Babergh five years ago, Charlie has been hugely successful in guiding the workforce of both councils through our ground-breaking integration and transformation process. Indeed, I have personally learned a lot through working closely with Charlie and am grateful that through all her efforts, she will leave behind a strong and dynamic organisation as her legacy, and her successor will be able to start from a solid foundation."

Cllr Jennie Jenkins, Leader of Babergh District Council said: "It has been a privilege to work closely with Charlie over the last five years and there is no doubt that her hard work and determination has helped to put both Babergh and Mid Suffolk at the forefront of collaborative and transformational ways of working. By working constructively with all our partners and external stakeholders, Charlie has ensured everyone remains focused on delivering the very best outcomes for all our communities. We wish her every success in her new role."

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Engagement Events coming soon

As you know, Community Leaders are expected to drive and shape economic growth at a local level according to Government. This has been echoed recently by the debate about devolution of powers and is now a critical part of our local agenda.

We appreciate the challenge we face, in particular how we can deliver on our housing and employment requirements and the role that our planning policies will play in the wider growth agenda, needs serious decisions to be made. This is likely to impact our communities, who play such an important role in making our districts pleasant and vibrant places to live.

We are very keen to have a stronger dialogue with our communities about growth, housing provision and the future sustainability and prosperity of our districts. An Engagement Plan is currently being created and a series of local engagement activities will be commencing very soon which we hope will start to raise awareness of the importance of growth to local residents and businesses. As this is a very important topic we would like you all to be a part of these discussions, and will be updating you directly on our plans.

The engagement will be as far reaching as possible, involving as many sectors of the community as we can, including those we have sometimes found hard to reach in the past. This is likely to require several techniques, including:

- Information events
- The use of leaflets and flyers
- The use of social media
- Online information

More information will follow and we will keep you informed about events planned in your area.

In the meantime if you would like to know more about the community engagement activities please contact either Nick Ward on Nick.Ward@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or David Clarke on David.Clarke@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.

Developer Contributions Update (CIL and S106)

Teams across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have worked hard to complete Section 106 agreements and determine planning applications ahead of the April start of CIL charging. With CIL charging now in effect, we are very happy to say that this was achieved successfully. Thank you to all who helped us maintain momentum of applications, especially Suffolk County Council and legal colleagues.

Now CIL charging has started in both districts and, given the national and local commitment to continued sustainable growth, it won't be long before CIL payments

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are made for developments in Mid Suffolk and Babergh and, in turn, passed on to Town and Parish Councils to spend as the Neighbourhood Portion.

As you know from their February introduction, the new BMSDC Infrastructure Team is now in place and working on a programme of support for Town and Parish Councils on developer contributions. The programme, that will be rolled out soon, will include a guidance document for Town and Parish Councils to explain more about the Neighbourhood Portion and your responsibilities for spending and reporting on CIL, a slot at June's Parish Liaison events and we are also looking into holding specific workshop sessions to support you in understanding these new duties and how developer contributions will change.

Please keep an eye out for the guide and refer any queries to Bron Curtis, BMSDC Infrastructure Officer at bron.curtis@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.

We'd also like to hear from you if you have any specific issues you'd like information on.

Community Heroes recognised at Awards Evening

Award winners, their family and friends, nominees and councillors recently attended the first joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Community Achievement Awards at Wherstead Park in Ipswich.

The awards evening on Thursday 21 April, saw 29 winners across Babergh and Mid Suffolk recognised for their voluntary work within communities across the two districts. Both Chairmen, Cllr Nick Ridley at Babergh District Council and Cllr Derek Osborne at Mid Suffolk District Council were presenting the awards alongside Minnie Moll, Joint Chief Executive at the East of England Co-Op Society. The East of England Co-Op were the headline sponsor for the event, with SERCO and the Landscape Group offering support also.

Guests were treated to an evening which showcased a two minute film on each of the winners with the nominator also talking about why they made their nomination. The films were put together by Sudbury-based company, Offshoot films.

During the evening, guests were able to enjoy local food and drink including donations kindly made by James White Drinks and Alder Tree Ices. The evening was compared by BBC Radio Suffolk presenter Mark Murphy.

For more information about award winners, and to watch their films, please visit:

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

Or:

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

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Tourism Development in Mid Suffolk and Babergh

Tracey Brinkley, Tourism Development Officer

Further to my article in the December issue on how we are supporting tourism development and promotion in the districts, I wanted to provide Town and Parish Councils with a brief update!

A workshop for Tourism Businesses and operators was held in February this year, which was very well supported. Positive feedback was received to progressing with the creation of Tourism Action Groups across the two districts and to developing more activities and initiatives to encourage visitors to come to the area – particularly out of season – to stay longer and move through the area. You can find more information on the workshop at:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/economic-development/tourism-development-in-babergh-and-mid-suffolk/latest-tourism-news/>

I am now arranging to establish these Action Groups around the areas of the Stour Valley, Waveney Valley, Heart of Suffolk and the Shotley Peninsula, so I would be really pleased to hear from any Town or Parishes who'd like to be involved in promoting their area to visitors, or to receive any help in getting this information about to local Tourism businesses. Please do get in contact with me on 01449 724 637, or via tracey.brinkley@babermidsuffolk.gov.uk

For more information on the Tourism Development work see our webpage at:

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/economic-development/tourism-development-in-babergh-and-mid-suffolk/>

Councils on the Lookout for Fraud

A clerk has kindly alerted the Suffolk Associations of Local Councils (SALC) to the fact that she was contacted by somebody who stated they were phoning on behalf of Norfolk Police (they are near the border) asking for a donation towards a youth project they are running. This is a scam. On checking with Norfolk Police, as she was suspicious about the call, they confirmed this was not something they were doing.

Regardless of whether this scam would have affected the council or any clerks individually, it is worth councils being generally on their guard as attempts to defraud organisations and individuals are becoming more audacious and, in many cases, more convincing.

There is a national body set up to receive reports and deal with scams:

<http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

<http://www.phonepayplus.org.uk/> is the website for PhonepayPlus which receives complaints about premium-rate telephone scams 0300 30 300 20. They have a number checker on the home page so you can check numbers before ringing back.

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The local police and trading standards are among the other options.

Composting offer now available to all residents

The Suffolk Waste Partnership has launched a fantastic new scheme to help people compost garden waste at home across the county. A number of items can be purchased through www.getcomposting.com which helps people reduce their garden and kitchen waste. This includes the opportunity to buy a 220 litre compost bin for £8.99 or a 330 litre bin for only £9.99, which is 50% off its normal retail price.

Residents who choose to buy one compost bin can get another of the same size for half price, so if two neighbours share the cost, there's quite a saving to be found. There is limited stock of the compost bins, so get your order placed now. As well as the composting leaflet residents will receive, the Suffolk Waste Partnership can also help with lots of information and tips on how to get the most from composting at home.

Working in partnership with the national composting experts at Getcomposting.com, the scheme helps residents reduce the amount of garden and food waste currently being disposed every year. Suffolk currently throws around 50,000 tonnes of food and garden into their rubbish bins every year. This costs the Suffolk taxpayer over £3.5 million.

Chair of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, Cllr Clive Arthey, said: "This is a great promotion which will help Suffolk compost more of our garden and food wastes. Composting at home is easy; it can save you money, and making free compost by using up all your leftover food and garden clippings is better for the environment. So why not give it a go?"

Residents can purchase subsidised composting bins by visiting www.getcomposting.com or by calling 0844 571 4444 quoting SUF16L.

Mid Suffolk District

Mid Suffolk announces its Leader & Portfolio Holders

Cllr Nick Gowrley was confirmed as the new Leader for Mid Suffolk District Council at Mid Suffolk's Full Council Meeting on Thursday 28 April.

Cllr Nick Gowrley previously worked for Mid Suffolk District Council from 1988 until his retirement as Corporate Director in May 2012. He then stood as Conservative candidate for the Stowmarket South Ward in the 2015 district council elections and after winning the seat he became Mid Suffolk's Deputy Leader and also Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Having now accepted the Leadership role, Cllr Gowrley takes over from Cllr Derrick Haley with immediate effect.

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Councillor Glen Horn is now Deputy Leader and Councillor Elizabeth Gibson-Harries was elected as Chairman of the Council.

In addition to this, the following Portfolio Holders were also approved at yesterday's meeting.

- Business Growth and Increased Productivity – Cllr Gerard Brewster
- Environment – Cllr David Burn
- Community Capacity Building and Engagement – Cllr Julie Flatman
- Assets and Investments – Cllr Nick Gowrley
- Enabled and Efficient Organisation – Cllr Glen Horn
- Housing Delivery – Cllr John Levantis
- Finance – Cllr John Whitehead

The following Members with Special Responsibilities were also appointed:

- Waste – Cllr Roy Barker
- Community Activities – Cllr Diana Kearsley
- Public Access – Cllr Suzie Morley
- Planning – Cllr David Whybrow
- Landlord Function – Cllr Jill Wilshaw

These members have no executive powers. They are a point of contact so that soundings may be taken.

Cllr Nick Gowrley said “Firstly I would like to say a huge thank you to Cllr Derrick Haley for all his hard work and inspirational leadership over the last three and a half years. Derrick has diligently steered the council through challenging times and he will be a hard act to follow. However, he and other members of the previous council have left us with a strong legacy through all their work on the new Mid Suffolk and Babergh Joint Strategic Plan Refresh which sets out how we aim to deliver enduring and positive changes for our many and diverse communities and businesses over the next five years.

Having lived and worked in the district for nearly 28 years, I know what a wonderful place this is and how dynamic and resourceful our communities area. There will be difficult times ahead for us, but as Leader I intend to make sure we take full advantage of all the opportunities presented to us, especially those we expect to emerge from the developing Devolution Deal.”

Consultation Launched on Draft Development Brief in Stowmarket

From Tuesday 3 May Mid Suffolk District Council will be consulting local residents on a draft Development Brief for land in Stowmarket. For four weeks both local residents and statutory consultees will have the opportunity to comment on the draft, which relates to some 13 hectares of land to the south of Union Road.

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The Stowmarket Area Action Plan (adopted in February 2013) identified the land to the south of Union Road as a location that is appropriate in principle for future additional housing development. In line with the requirements of the Area Action Plan, a development brief has to be produced for this site. The purpose of this is to show how the site should be developed in line with relevant planning policies as well as conform to the aspirations of the local community.

The site, which is being put forward for development by Hopkins Homes, has already been subject to initial consultation, run by the developer, in December 2015. The feedback they received from this was used to help inform the draft Development Brief document.

Mid Suffolk District Council are now consulting on the draft document. The consultation period will run for four weeks and closes at 5pm on Tuesday 31st May 2016. Further details can be found on the Council's website at:

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/UnionRoadBrief

At the end of the consultation period the District Council will consider the comments received and take these into account before the brief is endorsed and subsequently used for the purposes of determining future planning applications.

New Tenants Pick up their Keys

The first new council tenants to move into a council-built property in more than two decades cut the ribbon at a special opening ceremony on Tuesday 26 April where they were given the keys to their new home!

Work commenced on site at Oakey Fields, Thurston, in September and has delivered a three-bedroomed, wheelchair-accessible, bungalow for a local family.

The new home is part of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' joint project to deliver 65 new council homes across both districts. New government initiatives meant that made it easier for local authorities to build their own homes and both councils seized the opportunity. In May 2014, the councils appointed Havebury Housing Partnership, as their development partner, and work began on developing the project. A £1m grant from Government was secured to build the 65 new homes – 38 in Mid Suffolk, across six sites and 27 in Babergh, across two sites.

Now, the first property out of the eight schemes has been completed and the tenants are beginning to move in.

Cllr Nick Gowrley, Mid Suffolk District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: "We are all delighted that our new tenants will be able to move into their new home in the very near future.

"All of the new council homes are a landmark for both Mid Suffolk and Babergh but this one in particular has really helped a family in our community. This property has been specifically designed with wheelchair accessibility in mind.

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“The family were identified by the Occupational Therapy team as having an urgent need for adapted accommodation, were on our choice based lettings register and already living in MSDC, so we are so pleased that this gave us the opportunity to really have a positive impact on this family’s life.”

The other council homes in the scheme are being built at:

- Acton Close, Bramford – 2x 2-bed houses
- Fox Meadow, Barking – 2x 2-bed houses and 1x 2-bed bungalow
- Kingfisher Drive, Gt Blakenham – 4x 1 bed flats, 10x 2-bed houses, 9x 2-bed bungalows
- Meadow Close, Lavenham – 12x 1-bed flats
- Mill Road, Laxfield – 3x 2-bed bungalows
- Noyes Avenue, Laxfield – 4x 1-bed flats, 2x 2-bed houses
- Schoolfield, Glemsford – 9x 2-bed houses, 6x 3-bed houses

All of the sites have already gained planning permission through the normal planning application process. And It is expected that all of the homes will be finished in by mid-2017.

While both councils have worked hard over to bring on site as many affordable homes as possible over the years, many of those built are run and managed by housing associations.

These new homes will be run and managed by both councils and will form part of their housing stocks. All of the homes will be advertised though Gateway to Home Choice.

Babergh District

Babergh Announces its Leader and Portfolio Holders

Councillor Jennie Jenkins has been confirmed as the Leader of Babergh District Council at the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday April 26. The Council also confirmed that Cllr Simon Barrett will continue in his role as Deputy Leader.

The role of Chairman was handed over to Cllr Peter Burgoyne. His vice chairman will be Cllr Peter Beer.

The following senior team of Portfolio Holders were also approved:

- Housing Delivery – Cllr Alan Ferguson
- Business Growth and Increased Productivity – Cllr Simon Barrett
- Community Capacity Building and Engagement – Cllr Jan Osborne
- An Enabled and Efficient Organisation – Cllr Peter Patrick
- Assets and Investment – Cllr Jennie Jenkins
- Environment – Cllr Frank Lawrenson

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The following appointment of Members with Special Responsibilities were also endorsed:

- Housing Delivery – Cllr Jennie Jenkins
- Business Growth and Increased Productivity – Cllr David Holland
- Community Capacity Building and Engagement – Cllr Margaret Maybury
- An Enabled and Efficient Organisation – Cllr Lee Parker
- Assets and Investment – Cllr Nick Ridley
- Environment – Cllr John Ward

Cllr Jenkins said: “I would like to thank all of the members who have worked so hard over the last year for Babergh. It has been a hugely busy, challenging, and rewarding first year as a Conservative-led council. This political direction for Babergh has given us a renewed sense of purpose and confidence - the pace with which we have been working over the last 12 months has rapidly increased and I am confident we are delivering positive outcomes for our communities and businesses.

“We plan to further build upon these key foundations by fully endorsing Babergh and Mid Suffolk’s Joint Strategic Plan refresh. We hope this will show how we plan to deliver even more positive changes to our many diverse communities and businesses over the next five years.

“Babergh will be working closely with our partner Mid Suffolk District Council and continuing to build upon the transformation that has seen us well on the way to becoming an increasingly agile and more resilient workforce in the face of ongoing financial cutbacks. We believe by working in this way, we are more able to deliver the sustainable economic growth needed to provide the jobs and housing our communities need, want and deserve.

“Of course, there may be more difficult times ahead but I am confident that Babergh will be at the forefront in taking all opportunities afforded to us, not least those we expect to emerge from the developing East Anglia Devolution Deal.”

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