

## District Council Annual Report

### Simpler Recycling

Following on from the last Conservative government's decision to pass legislation for a weekly food waste collection and extra recycling collections, the waste collection process will change in June. There will be a three weekly collection cycle with general waste collected one week and then two weeks of recycling collection. Food waste will be collected every week.

- a weekly **food waste** collection
- a three-weekly **refuse** (general rubbish) collection
- a three-weekly **paper and card** collection
- a three-weekly **recycling** collection for glass, plastics, metal, and cartons

The new green lidded bins and the food waste bins are being distributed now and you should be receiving them over the next few weeks if you haven't already.

Below is an example of the new three-weekly collection schedule:

Collection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
<b>Food Waste</b>			
<b>Refuse</b> general rubbish			
<b>Paper and Card</b>			
<b>Recycling</b> glass, plastics, metal and cartons			

### Local Government Review

This year at council has been dominated by the upcoming changes to local government. Initially through the Spring and Summer the council worked with the other Suffolk district councils and Ipswich borough council to put together a proposal for a new unitary set up. The county council put together a proposal offering a single unitary council for the whole of Suffolk. Babergh and the other councils felt that a

single council would be too remote for local communities and submitted a proposal for three unitary councils.

The final decision was to be agreed by the government and last Month the government confirmed that they want to go ahead with the three unitary proposal. This will mean that from 2028 the services in Suffolk will be run by three separate councils, one covering Eastern Suffolk, one covering the Western side and the third covering Ipswich and Southern Suffolk.

Nedging with Naughton is expected to fall into the Western Suffolk unitary although at the moment no final decision has been made about how these unitary councils will be divided up into divisions and the number of councillors in each unitary has also not been finalised, although we expect the figure to be around sixty-five.

### **Housing improvements**

Since 2023 improving our housing stock has been a priority. Huge steps have been taken to get on top of the problems our tenants face and it was a great relief this year when the council came out of special measures. The government is now happy that we are meeting the required compliance targets, although there is still a lot of work to do elsewhere.

In addition to this success the council has now completed over 80% of its stock check, which was something that the cabinet pushed for from day one. The state of our homes had always been assumed, and we insisted that a quality check would be needed urgently to understand what needs to be done.

### **Car Parking Charges**

Unfortunately, it was agreed that car parking charges across the district would need to increase by 20%.

An independent report was commissioned by the council to review the effects of the car park charges implemented last year. The report, completed by the University of Suffolk, identified that while car park usage had declined, footfall and dwell time had remained fairly consistent, while spend had increased.

With the data showing that charges have had little to no effect on visiting numbers the cabinet have agreed to raise charges to ensure that full costs are recovered in the ongoing battle to shore up the council's financial position.

A full review of the effects of parking charges is due to come to Overview and Scrutiny next week

## **Neighbourhood Plans**

Until last year, local community groups developing a plan could access financial and technical support from the government, with basic grant payments of £10,000. However, in June last year the government withdrew this facility, and many parishes had to abandon their plans.

Now Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have agreed alternative funding of up to £20,000 to support groups preparing Neighbourhood Plans which help to meet housing need in the area.

The grants will support plans which seek to allocate sites for housing development, which make an agreed contribution to meeting the district-wide housing needs.

## **Listed Building Window improvements.**

In the Autumn Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils finally made a small step towards helping owners with listed buildings. Improving the energy efficiency of listed properties was a key council policy dating back to May 2023.

The councils have one of the highest numbers of listed properties in the country and unfortunately, owners of these historic properties often find it difficult to heat them due to their poor energy performance. Very often the single glazed windows are a significant factor in this, and it leads to higher bills for owners and is costly for the environment.

Previously owners had to submit a planning application to the councils for Listed Building Consent to make upgrades. This could be time consuming and was not always successful.

The Councils were finally successful, last year, in introducing a new Local Listed Building Consent Order – the first rural councils in the country to achieve this. Local Listed Building Consent Orders allow local planning authorities to make a pro-active and blanket grant of consent for listed buildings within a defined area. It makes sensitive improvements quicker and easier.

Also, amongst the successful bids was £85k for Burstall Memorial Hall to help extend the kitchen as part of a wider upgrade and improvement of facilities, and delegated approval was noted for a further award of just under £11.8k for the installation of solar panels, including on site battery storage, at East Bergholt Sports Pavillion.

## **Failure to pay community levy could cost developer.**

Babergh District Council took court action after TTV Industrial Ltd failed to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on a housing development in Old London Road, Copdock.

As mentioned above CIL money is invested in helping local facilities keep pace with housing growth. TTV Industrial Ltd, based in Old London Road, Copdock, had

planning permission to build seven homes on the site, and work on the first three of these started in 2020.

As a result, the business was served a Liability Notice for the required CIL payment relating to the three homes. It later argued, however, that this notice had not been served, while also claiming the homes were exempt because they were self-build.

Babergh District Council's attempts to resolve the matter were unsuccessful, and the business incorrectly maintained no CIL payments were due.

As a result, the council applied to magistrates' court for a Liability Order under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

After a hearing at Norwich Magistrates' Court, District Judge Bone has ordered TTV Industrial Ltd to pay the total CIL liability of £105,475, statutory late payment interest of £31,623, and the council's legal costs of £9,880.