

## **Councillor's Report to Bildeston Parish Council Meeting**

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

### **Report from Babergh District Councillor, Deborah Saw**

#### **Bildeston Issues**

##### **Development on Ipswich Road**

The Council's Planning Committee held a hearing last week to discuss reserved matters relating to the developer's, Orbit Housing's plans for the site. An application for reserved matters is the next stage after outline planning permission has been given. Reserved matters relate to areas such as appearance, accessibility, landscaping, and layout.

The Parish Council had concerns over access to the site, the way it linked to the centre of the village and the safety implications of a narrow pavement running down Ipswich Road. Given the extremely wet weather we have been experiencing the Parish Council also believed that there was a danger that surface water run-off from the houses on the site might cause Bildeston Brook to overflow.

The site plans show a large green space and there was a suggestion that the Council or the Parish Council might want to manage this. I did speak at the meeting and shared the Parish Council's views and told the Committee that the Parish Council did not wish to manage the green space.

Orbit put forward its response and the Suffolk Flood Authority said it was satisfied with the approach Orbit had taken regarding mitigating any potential flood risk. Orbit has made some changes to its initial plans, and I had the opportunity to speak to its Regional Director who is arranging for the Construction Manager to meet with the Parish Council to discuss issues and to develop an effective working relationship.

##### **Noise Issues**

Following advice from two separate consultants TMJ took further action to remedy the noise/tone issue that been a disturbance to residents for some six months. Joanna Hart from the Council's Environmental Protection team has contacted residents and they all responded to say there has been a substantial improvement. The Council will continue to monitor the situation to ensure there isn't a deterioration.

##### **Parking issues at Paddocks Way**

I was contacted by Councillor Leigh-Hunt about inconsiderate parking at Paddocks Way. The Neighbourhood Officer has been visiting the estate regularly and putting warning stickers on vehicles that are parked on the green. Building Services has been asked to commission new parking signage and action will be taken against serial offenders.

## **Community Support**

District Councillors have a budget of £2,000 per year to support community groups or projects in their ward. Last financial year I supported B Natural, Kettlebaston Parish Council's wish to replace its village sign and Bildeston Community Support with two large larder fridges.

## **What's happening at the Council**

### **Devolution for Suffolk**

Suffolk County Council and the Government have signed a proposed, in principle, devolution deal which would transfer certain powers and funding from the Government to Suffolk.

The County Council has launched a public consultation on the deal proposals with other public sector partners, including district, borough, and parish councils as well as local communities and business. The consultation runs until 26<sup>th</sup> May and more information can be found here, [Suffolk Devolution Consultation Document](#) and the consultation form is here, [www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution)

All Babergh District Councillors have had the opportunity to be briefed on the proposed deal and in February the County Council's Chief Executive presented to the full council. Following this the Acting Leader of BDC wrote to the Leader of the County Council to convey the views of the council members.

An investment fund of £480m sounds a lot of money but it has to last 30 years and the sum is not index-linked. Suffolk's annual budget is £752m so £16m a year is a drop in the ocean. There is talk of an 'integrated transport settlement,' and a new partnership with Great British Railways but with little detail at this point and £5.8 million in 2024/2425 to build new homes on brownfield sites but Babergh does not have many of these.

Following the Consultation, the County Council will vote on the proposals at its July meeting but then Parliament has to approve it and if there is an autumn general election the legislation may run out of time. It is already late as a directly elected leader was meant to be voted on at the same time as the Police and Crime Commissioner, i.e. on 2<sup>nd</sup> May this year.

### **The Council's budget and car parking**

The Council is confronted by a prospective £6.7m shortfall over the next four years. Action has already been taken to make savings whilst preserving service levels, but more will need to be done. Obviously, the proposals to make modest charges for car parking at council sites in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham have stimulated a great deal of debate. The Oversight and Scrutiny Committee of the Council has examined the Council's plans and made recommendations. The Council has been in almost constant communication with the town and parish councils. There have been some constructive suggestions made and the Council will consider them. The plan will be discussed and voted on by Cabinet at a meeting to be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April, I shall report back at the PC meeting



## **Energy Efficiency**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk were successful in bidding for money from the Government's Social Decarbonisation Fund. They were awarded £1.6 million. The funding is to be added to the £2.25m already committed by the councils to install energy saving measures in social housing, taking the total investment pledged for retrofitting and decarbonising to £3.85m across both districts.

This additional funding will allow us to accelerate repairs and improvements to council homes across the two districts and will make by make them warmer and more energy efficient. It also helps our ambitious targets to reduce Babergh's carbon footprint and help to tackle climate change.

Grants are also available through Warm Homes Suffolk to make homes more energy efficient **if** you're a home owner or private tenant without mains gas central heating and the total gross income (from all sources excluding some benefits) of everyone in the property is under £36,000, [Warm Homes Suffolk](#)

Following a successful consultation on listed building consent orders which sought views as to how listed buildings could be made more energy efficient whilst keeping their heritage character the Council is developing a series of guidelines to address retrofitting windows, improving insulation and other energy efficiency members. We hope to have the first order ready for debate at a full council meeting in the Summer, so we are on track to be the first rural council to achieve listed building consent orders.

## **Action on Recycling**

The Council's Waste Team offers educational visits to local schools and community groups to help them improve recycling and reduce waste. If you have children at school, you could make their teachers aware of the opportunity. Email Sam Oldfield at [Samantha.oldfield@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha.oldfield@babergh.gov.uk)

Schools and community groups can raise funds through recycling.

## **Sponsor needed**

Later this year the Council is planning a Green Skills Summit for high school students. Run by Interclimate and hosted by Ipswich High School, the one-day event will bring together 60-70 students from schools across our districts to join a model COP29, as well as discussing local climate action, and how students and schools can make a difference.

We are currently looking for sponsors. If you feel you may know someone or an organisation who could help, please share [our Schools Green Skills Summit sponsor information pack](#)