

## **Monthly Report - Mar'24 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward**

### **UK Council of the Year**

Babergh (& Mid Suffolk) has been named UK Council of the Year at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards in London on Wednesday, 6 March. This award is presented to a council deemed 'outstanding' in transforming its services and creating vibrant communities. In the last year, the successes have included the opening of the Gateway 14 development on the outskirts of Stowmarket. The Range has been secured as first occupier, creating 1,650 jobs in its new distribution centre, while a full business case for a new £18million Skills and Innovation Centre on the site has also been approved. The councils have also led pioneering environmental work to cut carbon emissions. They were the first rural councils in the UK to start the switch from diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) to fuel its fleet of bin lorries. Hundreds of solar panels have also been installed on the roofs of Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury, Hadleigh Pool and Leisure, Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and Stradbroke swimming pool and fitness centre. Solar covered parking bays have been installed at Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre - the councils were, again, among the first rural UK councils to trial the technology.

### **Local Elections**

On Thursday 2 May 2024, there will be elections for:-

1. Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner
2. Chilton (Stowmarket) Ward
3. Baylham Parish

Only the first affects this ward. There are various candidates - I was surprised to hear that the Lib Dem candidate if he wins will refuse to take up the role. Not quite certain that he realised they will simply call the election again!

### **Bus Services**

SCC has received £3.6m in government funding to improve local bus services. A number of new routes are being implemented. Relevant to us is the new 8B which will run from Bramford through Sproughton via Farthing Road Industrial Estate and Sproughton Enterprise Park to Ipswich. See [https://www.ipswichbuses.co.uk/media/2617/8b\\_web.pdf](https://www.ipswichbuses.co.uk/media/2617/8b_web.pdf) for full details.

### **Trees for Life 2024**

If you are expecting a baby (or adopting) in 2024 and would like to apply for a free tree from the 'Trees for Life' scheme please see [Tree for life - Mid Suffolk District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together](#) for more information. You can have a tree in a pot if space is an issue or can plant one in your garden or a friend/ neighbours garden. Applications can be made at any point up to 10Jan25.

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### Car-Parking - Sudbury, Hadleigh & Lavenham

The Babergh Cabinet approved the new car parking charges on Mon 08Apr. This was a difficult decision for all of us. And the debate continues...I asked during the meeting that free permits be available for school pick-up (already included for those attending doctors surgeries, later extended to dental surgeries) and also for those in receipt of Universal Credit to mitigate the impact on the less well off, which was agreed. Also that the impact of scheme be assessed post implementation - there were concerns over reduction in footfall impacting businesses. But, I will be checking the minutes to see those points are in there & following up if they are not.....

### A bit of good news

My local budget grant applications are being processed and money should be winging its way to the parish councils shortly - a new bench for Pinewood (entrance to Belstead Meadows) and for Sproughton, a new dog waste bin (Playing Fields), recycling bins (Tithe Barn) and a small bench (new green space). Local organisations are welcome to apply once we hit the new financial year as my Locality Budget gets reset to £2,000.

Speaking of funding, on Thursday 18 April, council officers from the Communities & CIL teams will be holding their second funding surgery of the year. at Red Gables in Stowmarket from 10am to 1pm, officers will be joining forces with Community Action Suffolk and the National Lottery to help spread the word about how council funding can be used in the district. The surgery is targeting local VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise) groups, helping them to understand how community projects can receive financial support and how to secure it. The session is free to attend, but attendees will need to book their space by [emailing the grants team](#)

### Casework

Work continues although I had a bit of a break as I was away on holiday for part of the month. 71% relates to Suffolk County Council - I have been exchanging emails with Paul West who is SCC's portfolio holder for Operational Highways & Flooding about the traffic issues on Sproughton High Street. I actually sent him the proposed road layout that had been drawn up in 2006. It would be good if we could get a couple of layout options to present to people for comment and hopefully at some point agreement. I have already been told that funding is an issue - I await the response from Paul.

Category	#	Category	#
BDC	4	SCC	10
CiL	1	Flooding	3
Environmental	1	Lighting	1
Health			
Planning	1	Traffic	6
Policy	1		
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>14</b>

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If you ever have an issue to raise with me please use the contact details below. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Helen Davies*

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**Councillor Helen Davies: District Councillor for Sproughton & Pinewood**

**Posts:** Babergh Cabinet - Member without Portfolio,  
Vice Chair - Babergh Planning Committee,  
Member - Joint Local Plan Working Group,  
External Appointment - Greenways

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