

## **District Councillor's Report – Apr 2022**

### **Babergh And Mid Suffolk District Councils Condemn The Russian Invasion Of Ukraine And Pledge Support For Refugees**

Councillors from across the political divide stood united across both Mid Suffolk and Babergh this month, voting unanimously in favour of motions condemning the war in Ukraine.

At Full Council meetings during March, both councils pledged their full backing for the Ukrainian people and support for refugees arriving in the districts. The motion described “the horrific devastation in Ukraine, and the escalating humanitarian crisis facing the country”. Both councils then voted unanimously to:

- condemn the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends, including those local to Suffolk
- stand ready to provide support to those affected by the war and to open their arms to people displaced and affected
- and to work with, and support, the efforts of local communities to provide and comfort to those in need.

### **Councils Mark Significant Progress Against Climate Change And Biodiversity Ambitions**

The climate change and biodiversity annual report by MSDC was published recently and contained:

- progress to date against the Council's climate change and biodiversity ambitions
- Greenhouse Gas Reports - showing the Council's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions trajectory since the establishment of a baseline in 2018/19
- next steps towards achieving the Council's ambitions over coming months and years

The report concluded that over the last year, some significant milestones have been achieved and that the Council on course to reach the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and in doing so, protect and strengthen the district's biodiversity. These include:

- Becoming the first rural UK councils to transfer its fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing our emissions by 90%
- Reaching the halfway mark of its £2.8m investment, thanks to Government grants, in solar at our leisure centres - this has seen over

1,000 solar panels placed on the roofs of council-owned centres to help power them with renewable energy

- Being the first rural UK council to commission a full tree canopy survey, as well as mapping of its existing and potential wildlife corridors, so it can ensure it is putting the right trees and measures in the right places to support net biodiversity gain
- Installing a new water filtration system at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury, providing an energy-efficient way to clean waste pool water. If successful, it will be considered for the three other council-owned leisure centres across both districts
- Launching several multi-million-pound grant schemes to improve the energy efficiency of homes in the district, including most recently Warm Homes Suffolk
- Hosting the first Local Energy Showcase, with 200 attendees from both community groups and businesses hearing from experts how they could cut their carbon emissions

Whilst the Council is moving in the right direction there is still more to do, so over the coming year it hopes to:

- Complete the remaining works to install 110 solar carports at its leisure centres, as part of our £2.8m investment in solar. This will increase our number of EV charging points as well as help further power our leisure centres with renewable energy
- Apply for Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) funding to significantly increase the number of EV chargers in its car parks.
- Publish the results and interactive map for the tree canopy survey, biodiversity wildlife corridor mapping, as well as a tree management strategy for the District
- Approve the first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to increase opportunities for active travel
- Compile a biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help reduce artificial lighting across the district.
- Relaunch the tree planting scheme for town and parish councils for its second year, and re-open applications for the annual Tree for Life scheme which has gifted over 1,000 trees to new parents to mark a new arrival
- Consider, as part of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, the implications of the Government's Recycling and Waste Strategy once published
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## **Babergh And Mid Suffolk On The Road To Sustainable Travel**

Pedestrian and pedal-power gears up next month, as councillors consider plans to improve the walking and cycling network across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a bid to tackle climate change.

At cabinets to be held in April, councillors at [Babergh](#) and [Mid Suffolk](#) District Councils are set to approve their first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plan sets out the councils' approach to improving and developing the local cycling and walking network across the district over the next 10 years, to support residents in shifting towards more sustainable transport. It identifies almost 200 potential infrastructure improvement schemes across the two districts. These have been prioritised according to a variety of factors such as effectiveness, policy, economic factors and deliverability. This prioritisation will be key to obtaining local, regional and national funding towards improving sustainable travel facilities and routes in the districts. In Mid Suffolk, examples of just some of the potential schemes include:

- improvements to Junction 49 roundabout to link with an existing cycle path in Stowmarket
- pedestrian access to schools and a new crossing on Church Road in Stowupland
- extending the footpath on Hoxne Road in Eye to connect it to other walking routes

Creating an LCWIP also forms a key part and builds on the ambitions of several of the councils' other strategies. Namely, their [carbon reduction management plan](#), [wellbeing strategy](#), and [joint leisure, sport and physical activity strategy](#), which set out how the councils aim to support residents to lead active, healthy and more environmentally-friendly lives for years to come. It will also ensure sustainable transport continues to be considered as part of future developments in the districts, and that Community Infrastructure Levy monies collected from developers are available for proposed initiatives.

## **An Egg-Cellent Way To Keep Children Active And Entertained This Easter**

Film-making, music, creative arts, sports, swimming, and outdoor cooking, are amongst the fun activities on offer from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and partners during the Easter school holidays. The councils are working with a range of partners to deliver the varied programme of activities to help families through the Easter period as part of the Government's holiday activities and food programme. There are also sessions for budding scientists, free swims and lunch at a number of council leisure centres, football fun factories, arts and crafts sessions, sports or dance sessions, and even workshops for youngsters interested in filmmaking and animation.

Although free places are allocated on a needs basis – with local schools identifying families in receipt of free school meals or eligible for other reasons – children not

meeting this criteria are also welcome to participate in many of the events for a small cost.

### **Residents, Tenants And Landlords Urged To Lower energy bills**

Residents, tenants and landlords across Mid Suffolk are being offered help to reduce the environmental impact of their homes, improve energy efficiency, and lower their energy use with a range of council support. “**Low Impact Living in Suffolk**” is a new campaign making it easier for residents to understand how to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and lower their energy use.

Homes are responsible for generating 20% of all UK carbon emissions, primarily through the heating and energy they use. There are many ways to reduce these emissions, with Low Impact Living in Suffolk sharing steps through [the Green Suffolk website](#). Information is available to demystify the products, technology and grants that help reduce the impact of our homes on the environment and save money on increasing energy bills. Residents can find out their carbon footprint, look for green energy tariffs and compare new, more sustainable heating systems including ground and air source heat pumps, biomass boilers, heat recovery, hydro and wind electricity. Detailed information on solar panels, including buying schemes, water heating and electricity sits alongside up to date advice on recycling. Options for improving or replacing windows across properties that vary in age, materials, location, and style are also available.

Anyone struggling to heat their homes can get expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and possible home upgrades through [Warm Homes Suffolk website](#), offering funding and free advice. The scheme can offer eligible residents a range of home upgrades, including cavity, loft and external insulation, installation of solar photovoltaic systems and switching central heating to more efficient low carbon heat pumps. Support is available to homeowners, those renting and landlords. There are some conditions to meet before being able to access funding, which is aimed at residents who are:

- earning under £30,000 per annum
- and/or currently receiving benefits (or think you may be eligible)
- living in homes with a low energy rating

Further information can be found on the Warm Homes Suffolk website, or by calling 03456 037 686. Lines are open Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm.

### **Campaign Urges Households To Recycle Glass Properly**

Residents across Suffolk are being encouraged to get behind a campaign calling for people to recycle glass properly. Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) is launching ‘**Glass – It’s Better in The Bank**’, a 12-week campaign aimed at getting people to stop putting glass in their household recycling bins and to use a bottle bank instead.

The SWP campaign runs until May 31 and will feature in adverts on buses, at supermarket billboards and on a van touring part of the county, plus on social media and on radio.

Glass is not accepted in household recycling bins as the Materials Recycling Facility at Great Blakenham near Ipswich, where the bins are taken for sorting, is unable to separate glass from other materials. Glass mistakenly placed in household recycling bins costs the SWP around £500,000 a year. It will NOT be recycled and can spoil other good recycling, especially card and paper.

Glass represents about half of all the wrong material in household recycling bins – other bad eggs include black rubbish sacks, food, nappies, textiles, and cartons – and rejection levels are currently running at around 20%.

### **Community Improvements Funded By Local Development**

Community Infrastructure Levy bids of more than £175,000 to help improve local facilities and play areas across Mid Suffolk recently received the go-ahead They include improvements in Stowmarket by the Museum of East Anglian Life, and at the town's football club – as well as new play areas for youngsters in Botesdale and Walsham le Willows.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is collected from developers when they build new homes in Mid Suffolk. The funding helps to ensure that local infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth and also supports the council's ongoing ambition for its communities to be attractive, successful and connected places for people to live and work.

Regards

*Rick*

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