

District Councillor's Report – Sep 2022

MSDC's Cost of Living Crisis Plan

Support packages to combat the cost of living, energy bills and council tax are all available through Mid Suffolk District Council, with residents urged to check they are receiving the support they are entitled to

In a report published in May, the Council outlined the serious financial challenges that many households are being confronted with. Mounting food, fuel and energy costs are causing living standards to fall. The rate of inflation continues to rise (and is expected to keep rising) and the UK now faces the risk of recession. In response to the cost-of-living crisis, MSDC has instituted a five point plan, which will bring new initiatives alongside work already started.

The five points are:

Cost of living support:

- Co-ordinate government support
- Exercise discretion when we provide welfare support and advice
- Maximise the use of partnership working and established systems to provide targeted support

Crisis prevention:

- Maintain good health
- Promote access to food and nutrition

To find out more detailed information about these points, please access the plan:

<https://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s27341/Cost%20of%20Living%20Crisis%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Councils Set To Lead The Way In Transforming Tree Planting For Generations

Tree coverage across Babergh and Mid Suffolk is set to increase to help tackle biodiversity loss and climate change, after a pioneering council-commissioned tree canopy survey identified key planting locations and significant benefits. As part of their Biodiversity Action Plan, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been working with specialists to identify and map existing tree coverage and habitat networks across their districts. The aim is to identify and protect existing places where biodiversity is thriving, while also locating areas with low coverage or gaps where it could be

strengthened. The first step was becoming the first rural UK councils to commission a full tree canopy survey of their districts, following cabinet approval of over £40k for the study in June 2021. Carried out by Treeconomics, it has found that just over 10% of Babergh is covered by trees, ranging from 5.5% in the Lavenham ward, to 19% in the Orwell ward. Mid Suffolk's coverage sits at just over 8% ranging from 6% in the Stow Thorney ward to 12.8% in the Claydon and Barham ward.

The trees are benefitting multiple public sector services by preventing more than an estimated £64m* in extra annual costs, through:

- removing more than 53,000 tonnes of carbon and storing 1.3m tonnes more
- taking out over 2,000 tonnes of pollutants from the air
- draining away almost five million cubic meters of rainwater
- improved wellbeing benefits that greener spaces bring to people.

The councils' aim is to use this detailed baseline data to improve tree management, as well as calculate where land is available for planting and to increase tree coverage where it will be most beneficial first. This will support the councils current schemes, such as [their trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme](#). It will also enable officers to apply for more funding streams and create a tree planting strategy. This will ensure the right trees are planted in the right places, to boost biodiversity across the districts for years to come.

Don't Lose Your Vote – Residents Across The Districts Urged To Check Their Voter Registration Details

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have started the Annual Canvass of Electors and are asking residents to check the electoral registration details for everyone eligible to vote at their address. This is to ensure no one lose their chance to vote in future election on the decisions that affect them.

The councils' electoral services team will be sending emails and letters to residents with instructions on how to check and update their information. [Find information about the Annual Canvass can be found on the councils' website](#).

Simple Scheme To Buy Solar Panels Returns For Suffolk Residents

Solar Together Suffolk, a group-buying scheme which has helped over 1,500 homes in Suffolk to install solar panels and batteries, opens for new registrations on 22 August 2022. The scheme helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers, whilst increasing their independence from the grid and reducing their carbon emissions.

Solar Together Suffolk is supported by Suffolk County Council and all local borough and district councils, including Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

From 22 August 2022, Suffolk residents can [register for free with the group-buying scheme](#), with no obligation to go ahead with an installation. It is open to anyone interested in:

- installing new solar panels (with the option for battery storage and EV charge points)
- adding battery storage to an existing solar panel array

The innovative scheme builds on four years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run across the UK. To date, Solar Together Suffolk has:

- installed 17,900 solar panels at over 1,500 Suffolk households
- retrofitted over 200 batteries
- avoided carbon emissions totalling 28,730 tonnes of CO2 across the county

Suffolk Waste Partnership Backs National Campaign To Raise Awareness Of Safe Battery Disposal

Suffolk Waste Partnership is backing a nationwide campaign urging people to safely dispose of old batteries in a bid to avoid starting fires in refuse vehicles and waste processing facilities. The Partnership – which includes both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils – has signed up to the Stop Battery Fires Campaign launched by national safe electricals recycling group Material Focus, which aims to raise awareness of how householders can properly recycle batteries and electricals.

Batteries, or electricals containing batteries, that end up inside bins or recycling and waste lorries with other materials, get crushed in the waste or recycling process.

- This can result in them being punctured and self-combusting, setting fire to dry and flammable waste and recycling around them.
- In June a fire at the Materials Recycling Facility in Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, which recycles waste from across Suffolk, is suspected to have been started by a battery dumped with household recycling.
- The fire was located deep within nearly 400 tonnes of waste and took firefighters and staff nearly two hours to extinguish.
- Electricals containing batteries that tend to be discarded the most are smaller, frequently used and often cheaper electricals like toothbrushes, shavers, chargers and toys.
- Lithium-ion batteries are responsible for around 48% (more than 200) of all waste fires occurring in the UK each year,
- These fires cost some £158 million annually to waste operators, fire services and the environment.
- A recent survey found 45% of householders are unaware of the fire risk if they do not safely dispose of batteries hidden inside electrical items.

Councils Awarded £60k For Gum Busting Clean Up

West Suffolk Council and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are among the first of 40 council areas to receive cash from chewing gum manufacturers to help remove the mess left when gum is spat onto the street. The money comes from a fund established by [the Government's Chewing Gum Task Force](#), established with major gum manufacturers including Mars Wrigley and Perfetti Van Melle, to tackle chewing gum stains. The successful £59,940 bid was made jointly by the three councils. It will pay for specialised equipment that will leave paving close to its original condition, training for staff, and measures to stop gum being dropped in the first place.

Regards

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