

Monthly Report Feb-Mar'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

GENERAL UPDATES

The district wide monthly update can be found here - [Download Babergh's town and parish briefing notes](#)

Devolution: Work continues on devolution - a lot of work, which seems to be taking up a lot of time and energy. Babergh met the 21st March government deadline to submit our first plans outlining our wishes (along with the other district & county councils in the country) as to how many unitary authorities there should be in Suffolk. Babergh District Council stated that we did not agree with Suffolk County Council's view for a single unitary authority but rather feel we should have two or three. A decision will only be made on that after both options have been fully investigated and consulted on. We need to be certain that the option chosen will allow us to provide better and more cohesive services than before, save money while still being able to represent residents properly. A conclusion must be reached by September - the government imposed deadline. Suffolk County Council have already produced some numbers which they say justifies their choice of a single unitary authority for Suffolk. How those numbers were reached is unclear - it's a bit like a maths exam - you need to show your working out otherwise you have no clue as to whether the answer reached is solid & evidence based!! In tandem with the local government reorganisation (LGR) we also have the consultation currently underway for the Norfolk & Suffolk Mayoral Combined County Authority - go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution> to have your say.

Planning: Babergh & Mid-Suffolk DCs held a meeting on 21st March to explain the new housing requirements to towns & parishes and encourage the creation of Neighbourhood Plans for those who do not have to make it more likely that development happens in the right place. Most are awaiting information on possible allocations to their parish. Sproughton has just begun to look at reviewing the neighbourhood plan and will need to consider where development might be suggested.

Suffolk County Council have met to consider the Bentley 'Brockley Wood' application - a decision on this was deferred due to the late submission of an additional document. The committee felt that the late submission meant that proper review of the document wasn't possible therefore a decision had to be deferred until all parties had an opportunity to review the new information. It is possible the Bentley Conservation Area decision will have been made by the time the committee reconvenes. If the conservation area is approved it could influence the Brockley Wood application.

The new Bramford battery storage application has been approved despite a number of concerns around safety. Burstall PC were represented at the meeting - they are hoping for better screening which would lessen the impact on the far-reaching views from Burstall & Sproughton...work will continue on that one.

Local Nature Reserve Strategy: The new Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Reserve Strategy went before the February Cabinet Meeting and was unanimously approved. It will be going out for

Monthly Report Feb-Mar'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

consultation shortly and everyone will have an opportunity to comment. Once tool is available to the public it will be a great tool to enable target biodiversity improvements that give us 'the biggest bang for the buck'

Community Infrastructure Level: More parishes are looking at CiL funding for community projects. Remember to register your proposal and bids need to be submitted by 5:00pm on 31May25 for this round of funding. I can facilitate the process - the main contact is Sarah-Jane Hatt (Sarah-Jane.Hatt@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk). In this latest round of awards, CIL funding of £338,230 was been allocated to seven projects in Babergh and £186,861 towards five projects in Mid Suffolk, each encouraging residents to be more social and active. Funding of £100K has been agreed for East Bergholt Tennis Club so it can make the clubhouse and toilets more accessible. A further £100K is going to Nayland-with-Wissington Village Hall for a major upgrade to its roof and insulation so it can continue to be a valuable hub for the local community. Further awards made in Babergh include:-

- £82,405 to the children's play area at Leavenheath
- £22,475 to upgrade a bridleway in Holbrook
- £17,450 to upgrade footpaths in Great Waldingfield
- £8,625 to support the Tattingstone Village Hall solar energy project
- £7,275 to create an all year round bridleway in Freston

MidSuffolk have also funded £35,000 to improve the River Gipping path between Stowmarket & Needham Market.

Consultation on how Planning Applications are publicised: Babergh & MidSuffolk are proposing to stop sending neighbour letters for certain types of planning application (the majority of neighbour comments are received electronically). There is a statutory requirement that we notify neighbouring residents about a planning application by sending a letter, or by placing a site notice on display in the relevant location. (cost of £63k in 2023/4). Currently, both are done. Letters will still be sent where the planning application involves 10 or more homes (Major applications) but not for other types. Please put forward your views by going to <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/bmsdcSCI/> The survey is open until 12May25.

PORTFOLIO

Climate Change: Babergh & Mid-Suffolk have received an extra £2.9m funding to continue to retrofit our social housing. We keep applying for pots of money to progress this but it is slow going. Hopefully this will continue under the new regime

Sustainable Travel: Deposit paid for Eezybike installation at Kingfisher leisure Centre in Sudbury - just waiting for the scaffolding and fencing to be removed to proceed with installation. Capel to Copdock scheme: public consultation received 96 responses overall with 70% of respondents agreeing that the plans will make it easier and safer for people walking

Monthly Report Feb-Mar'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

and cycling. SCC will now review feedback in detail and make any revisions to design in light of this. Capital funding still needs to be secured - cost of scheme likely to be in the realm of £1m-£3m.

THE WARD ITSELF

Parking at Suffolk One: I have asked Suffolk One to set a date for a meeting with residents to be held in Pinewood Community Hall. Once a date has been set we can notify residents. I did cycle road the impacted areas last week, early one afternoon and took photos. Still need to go back early evening and compare.....

Play Area near Burnet Close: Babergh recently surveyed this area and talked to residents. As a result, improvements are being made with the aim of completing in time for the school holidays. There will be some publicity nearer the time.

Traffic A14 Diversion via Sproughton: Suffolk Highways have now trialled the diversion route. Its safe to say there was a mixed response as some HGVs ignored the signage and carried on through Sproughton. While the village might have slept easier someone did voice their lack of appreciation in the local paper about the length of the diversion. We will continue to work with Highways Suffolk/England to establish a better diversion route & mitigating measures.

Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton: We are in the middle of writing up the results. The aim will be to suggest a package of measures along with options, which will contribute to mitigating the traffic issues in the parish. I suspect that some of the measures will cost a lot (e.g. 4-way traffic lights) - but if we don't ask we don't get!

Sproughton Nature Reserve: The biodiversity officer and I presented this at a cabinet briefing - it was then approved at full cabinet while I was on holiday. Ipswich Borough Council have also approved this. We are now working on a legal agreement between Babergh & IBC in parallel with completing the application form for Natural England to officially list it as a nature reserve. The comment from the cabinet was 'why don't we have more of these' so, I will be asking the other district councillors to ask their parishes if they have other areas suitable for this designation. Capel St Mary have already come forward with the same request. So, I will be visiting that site in a couple of weeks.



Monthly Report Feb-Mar'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

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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