

## **Parish Council - District Councillor Report (February 2024)**

Dear Councillors,

I hope everyone's enjoying the respite from the recent 'rainy season' of weather we've had? From a gardener's perspective, a time to start to get a bit excited that you can get a few seasonal jobs done! I keep looking at a large apple tree I have that needs almost a day of pruning to be done. Snowdrops and Aconites showing their faces – spring must surely be on its way...!!

On other matters a few notes below on general community action themes as follows:

### **Babergh Notes**

Since my last note at the end of January. I'm writing now following the government offering a little more financial support to local authorities (County & Districts) – Although the 'headline' numbers announced in the national media sound quite large, the reality for Babergh is around an additional £100k, the vast majority of these extra funds will go to SCC. We still face significant financial challenges moving into the next 24/36 months (assuming there isn't a change in the way central government funding to local authorities doesn't change). I'm hopeful we will see the recognition that 'rural' authorities are desperately under-funded as opposed to their 'urban' cousins...!

I alluded to the issue of parking cars in Babergh car parks in my January report. BDC cabinet have now made recommendations, moving this matter forward, to analyse and attempt to understand the value of our parking facilities to residents across the community in Sudbury, Lavenham & Hadleigh, but also in parish's. Once this consultation is complete, the paper and recommendations will be put to Babergh Overview & Scrutiny committee for consideration, then back to cabinet and full council. These are difficult choices; particularly as subsidised car parking has been available in these towns for quite a while.

Babergh planning committee hasn't met this month, so nothing to report. This is indicative of the general downturn in development and major planning applications currently being put forward. There are several pipeline applications which will be going to committee in the next few months. Both Babergh & Mid-Suffolk planning committee members have been undergoing training and development sessions on the new JLP. We are now starting to discuss and consider the additional Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for Housing & Biodiversity including Trees.

The BDC Overview and Scrutiny committee met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. We considered and reviewed the General Fund & Housing Revenue Accounts along with an update from BDC Public Realm on BDC Car Parking prior to our fully considering this subject in February. I remain open to any residents who would like to be briefed on specific anonymised examples of the council's work, in this area, please let me know. Equally, and it's worth remembering, these meetings are open to members of the public wishing to attend either in person or online.

Full Council meets on 20<sup>th</sup> February. Again, it's open to councillors and members of the public wishing to attend.

### **District Councillor Resident Surgeries**

My regular meeting opportunity for residents in Capel library. The next meet up will be Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 10-12. No appointment is necessary, but if residents need more of a confidential chat, please let them know beforehand so I can arrange some privacy.

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