

Report for Chelmondiston Parish Council from Jane Gould, Babergh District Councillor

Meeting date: 5 November 2019

Babergh Name Change

The extraordinary council meeting planned for the 22nd October was cancelled at the request of Cabinet leader John Ward. Councillor Ward, who has been the main driver behind the name change, decided to withdraw the motion for now. It was felt that it was unlikely to get the 2/3 majority that would be required.

By withdrawing the motion the idea can be kicked into the long grass and resurrected at a later date. Councillor Ward is still keen on the idea and feels that the name change would be beneficial for the district, bringing it into line with the other districts in Suffolk. Cllr Ward said: “We have received valuable feedback both for and against the proposals over recent weeks that will help in our future discussions and we are extremely grateful for the free publicity we have received in the meantime, both nationally and internationally, that has helped people understand exactly where Babergh is located, and how to pronounce it!”

Paperless council

The environmental task force that was set up after the July Climate Emergency motion has now sat for the first time. The first decision that has been made was to ensure we are digital first. Senior staff and councillors are being challenged to go paperless for council and committee papers. Distributing hard copies of these papers' costs more than £50,000 a year.

Having a digital first approach is an expectation that will also be an ask for all staff in their day to day roles and the council will continue to encourage residents to self-serve via the 24/7 resources available online. Our public council and committee meetings provide a great platform to set an example about how we work in a digital way.

The task force is a joint committee between Babergh and Mid Suffolk and is due to sit monthly until March.

Parking Motion

During last Tuesdays council meeting a motion was put on notice to review the parking in the Hadleigh/Sudbury district. Concerns were

raised by Robert Lindsay and the Green Party that extra capacity should not be the default setting and it is the level of capacity that should be considered. Before increasing the parking and ultimately the cars on the road we should be looking at what options are available to provide residents with a serious alternative to driving. This will include public transport and cycling, particularly for residents of the towns, who may not need to drive every time.

Robert, with the backing of all the other parties, including the Conservatives, amended the motion slightly to bring these alternatives to the forefront. This motion will now go before Cabinet for consideration.

Free Swimming – Hadleigh, Sudbury & Stowmarket

Both councils extended their free swims offer during the October half term and plan to do this again during the Christmas holidays. This follows a successful summer take up, which saw thousands of under 17s take part, equating to more than 14,000 swims across the two districts.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are extending their free swims offer for under 17s to help promote healthier and active lifestyles in the districts.

Free swimming will now be available during the Christmas holidays from 20 December to 5 January 2020 inclusive at the following centres:

- Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Sudbury
- Hadleigh Pool and Leisure
- Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, Stowmarket
- Stradbroke Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre

New users in Babergh will need to sign up for an Abbeycroft Leisure Free Swimming Membership in order to claim their free swim.