News and information from Jane Gould, Babergh District Councillor to the Parish Councils and residents in Orwell Ward
March 2021

Locality grant

I'm pleased to be able to report that all my locality grant for last year has now been allocated; any community projects wishing to apply for some of this years' funding should speak to me in the first instance and I will move it forwards if the project meets the criteria.

Babergh District Council's budget for 2021/22 agreed

The budget agreed at February's Full Council increases Babergh's share of council tax by 2.96%, the equivalent of less than 10p a week or £5 a year, for an average band D property. The increase is part of a package of measures that will allow the council to meet the medium-term financial challenges presented by the pandemic; help meet its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030; and maintain services for residents and communities. Councillor Leigh Jamieson, one of my Green Party colleagues, put forward an amendment to the Housing Revenue Account to ensure progress is made in the retrofitting of Babergh's housing stock, the amendment was however not accepted by council. Cllr Jamieson also put forward amendments to the General Fund in four areas to help our communities overcome the effects of the current pandemic and recover effectively and to help the council meet their commitment to net zero climate emissions by 2030, this amendment was not accepted either. It is interesting to note that conservative councillor, Peter Beer, Chair of the Planning Committee at Babergh voted against the budget.

Babergh District Council leader and cabinet member for finance, Cllr John Ward said: *"We have supported businesses and the most vulnerable in our communities throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so supporting the local economy and helping our district through this crisis and beyond. However,*

this is not without cost. We have also made climate change commitments that we must be able to afford to meet not just for Babergh's residents now, but for generations to come and there are still ongoing challenges as all councils become independent of Government financial support."

In addition to the council tax increase, the draft budget will also include a proposed increase of £2.50 a year to the annual brown bin garden waste subscriptions, taking the cost from £52.50 to £55 – the equivalent of an extra 10p per collection. As part of the council's wider Carbon Reduction Management Plan, it already intends to move its vehicle fleet, including 35 waste lorries, to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). This would cut approximately a quarter of councils' total CO_2 emissions, but also comes at an initial cost of around £50k, with a further £56 - £97k per year to cover fuel costs.

Motion of no confidence

Labour councillors for Sudbury, Trevor Cresswell and Alison Owen put forward a motion to the February council meeting calling for the immediate resignation of Conservative leader John Ward. In the submission, Mr Cresswell highlighted four issues which had prompted the motion, the abandoned plans to change the council's name to South Suffolk District Council, plans to pursue a hotel on the former swimming pool site at Belle Vue Park in Sudbury, the move of the customer access point in Sudbury and the recent controversial decision to reduce free parking across the district that will come into force later in 2021. The motion saw 10 votes in favour of his resignation, 20 against and two councillors abstaining. The Green group voted with the labour motion because we feel strongly that Cllr Ward's choice of cabinet members shows poor leadership. In the last District Council elections in 2019 the Green Party got 23% of the votes cast and Cllr Ward has repeatedly refused to give a cabinet seat to the Green Party, democracy is at stake here.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any issues that you think I can help with and all the very best to you all.

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