

**News and information from Jane Gould, Babergh District Councillor.
To the Parish Councils and residents in Orwell Ward
January 2021**

Happy new year to all residents of Orwell Ward. What a strange year 2020 was and 2021 shows early signs of being difficult too for a few more weeks. There is light at the end of the tunnel as we begin to get the vulnerable members of our communities vaccinated against Covid and spring is on the horizon. I notice bulbs popping up in my garden and the evenings are beginning to pull out. I would like to thank all of you for the way in which you have looked out for each other over the last ten months, the caring way our communities have pulled together is continually brought to my attention and the random acts of kindness are as much appreciated as the organised, more structured level of support so thank you all again.

Covid news

An alarming rise in COVID-19 infection rates across Suffolk and pressure on hospitals, care homes and social care has resulted in the county entering Tier 4. As I write this there is no plan for primary schools to remain closed after the winter break but who knows what the situation may be by the time you are reading this! More residents on low incomes or benefits can now get financial help if they are told to self-isolate due to COVID-19 as Suffolk councils extend support payments to help more people.

Councillors to consider budget for 2021/22

Councillors are set to discuss the first draft of Babergh District Council's budget for 2021/22 which is designed to deliver financial stability post Covid while still delivering the council's commitment to climate change. Babergh District Council's cabinet is due to decide in the New Year whether to approve proposals that would see a 2.96% increase in council tax, meaning an extra £5 a year, or less than 10p a week, 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, to help meet its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and to maintain services for residents and communities. The budget is set to be considered by Babergh cabinet members on Thursday 7 January and by Overview and Scrutiny on Monday 18 January. It will then receive further consideration at the next cabinet meeting before going to Full Council in February. If approved, it will come into effect on 1 April 2021.

Babergh's parking proposals

Parking provision across the district is also on the agenda for Babergh's cabinet who are seeking a way to retain an element of subsidised parking, while encouraging more sustainable transport options for the future, and strengthen the council's finances.

Councils look to slash fleet emissions

Babergh and Mid Suffolk will consider proposals to cut their fleet's carbon emissions by up to 90% thus supporting the councils' carbon neutral aims.

100th business joins the Virtual High Street

Shoppers in and around Sudbury have even more choice as the Virtual High Street welcomes its one hundredth business.

Babergh communities set to benefit from £338,000 funding boost

Housing growth in Babergh will fund a range of local projects, following agreement by councillors, including upgraded CCTV in Sudbury and Hadleigh, electric vehicle charging points and new community facilities.

Financial support for leisure trust gets go ahead

Babergh's cabinet have agreed further financial support for their leisure partner,

Abbeycroft Leisure, to help keep residents fit and healthy well into the future.

Government Green Home funding.

Residents in Babergh are set to benefit following recent Government announcements about its Green Homes Grants.

Voting safely at next year's elections

On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in Suffolk will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at Suffolk County Council and who will represent them as the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. The elections may be a way off, but we are already making plans to help residents stay safe while casting their vote.

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.

Jane Gould

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