

APRIL 2019

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Last Council meeting of this term was held on 19th March 2019.

At the meeting many end of term items were covered, the vast majority of which are required to help set up the council when it reconvenes after the elections in May. Other items discussed and decided include:

- Agreeing the strategy for the Joint Communities Strategy (with Mid Suffolk)
- CIL Expenditure Framework was reviewed and agreed
- Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Cabinet decisions since last meeting:

- Changes to the charging schedule for pre-application planning advice.
- Conservation areas in Brent Eleigh and Great Waldingfield have been extended and noted under new planning guidance
- Sale of land in Sudbury to help the development of the new health centre and public sector service hub

The new cabinet will debate and where appropriate decide on a number of issues at the start of the next term including:

- Equality and Diversity policy
- Assets strategy
- Joint local plan

The First meeting of the new council will be 22nd May 2019. It should be expected that under further financial pressures the new council will have to look more and more into profit generating enterprises such as investments in property or possible even business. The financial situation whilst managed well for the last four years is only getting to get harder in the future.

CHANGES TO PRE-PLANNING CHARGES

Starting from 1 April 2019, the new charging schedule will come into force. A range of charges will apply to different types of development; ensuring homeowners looking to build an extension do not face the same charges as major developers proposing hundreds of new dwellings. Advice available from pre-application enquiries covers a wide range of planning issues, from Highways and Heritage to Ecology and Landscaping advice. Details can be found on the Babergh website.

'BABERGH GROWTH' NEW COMPANY

Babergh have created a new joint venture companies to transform council-owned land and assets into much-needed local housing. The new company – Babergh Growth – will deliver both private and social housing across the districts, working in partnership with property firm Norse Group.

OLD COUNCIL OFFICES

Planning Permission has been granted to convert the former Babergh District Council offices in Hadleigh into 57 new homes, bringing the site back into use and delivering housing in the market town.

At a meeting held on 25th March in Hadleigh's Guildhall, members of Babergh's Planning Committee voted to grant permission for the redevelopment of the former council offices and the Bridge Street car park, which served the former offices.

CIL SUCCESS

Good news in that Lavenham was successful in its bid for two lots of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to help fund the community hub in the old TIC building at 2 Lady Street and also for new electric motor vehicle charging point for the village. Some new development will also happen, but the CIL allows the opportunity to benefit the community with positive investments such as these.

PUTTING ART INTO THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Babergh District Council has approved a cash injection of £100,000 to help regenerate St Peter's Church – to create a welcoming self-sustaining venue at the heart of Sudbury significantly helping the centre in meeting their National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) match funding target of £500,000 by March 2020. If successful the overall project value, with National Lottery Heritage Fund support, will be in the region of £2.5m.

ELECTIONS – 2nd MAY

The current Babergh council term finishes at the end of April 2019 and on May 2nd there will be local elections across the country, Babergh included, to vote in your new council.

Register to Vote for the Local Elections - the deadline to register to vote is 12 April. Anyone who has moved into a new house since their last registration must re-register, as well as any new voters in the area. Registration is quick and easy and can be completed online via the Gov.uk website.

Some of you are already aware that due to outside pressures, I will not be able to re-stand for the 2019-23 term. It was always my intention when I was voted in, back in 2015 to stand again and offer some continuity, after 3 terms of different councillors for our village in the past decade, but life has a habit of catching you out and unforeseen changes to my work commitments over the four years have rendered this unattainable.

I would like to thank each and every one of you who have contacted me over the four years on whatever the subject. A district councillor can only help on issues where they know about it, and whilst I may not always have been able to give the answer people wanted, I can honestly say I have always fought the residents' corner to the best of my ability when it comes to local matters and issues with the council. I have and would always put the residents first and over the years between the residents, the parish council & the district council we have managed to reduce the lorry movements through the village, including finally securing a temporary weight restriction (county council helped here too); there have been new social housing projects both started and completed in the village, Lavenham became the front runner in the 'Wooltowns' collective area marketing strategy and we navigated a tricky patch around sheltered housing provision for those of our residents most in need.

More recently the Parish council took ownership of the old Tourist information centre turning it into a community hub and the post office has been re-instated. Things never move very fast when it

comes to council decisions and changing minds, but I feel over 4 years we all collectively have done more than most other villages would achieve in 10 years.

Lavenham will now become part of a 2-members ward in the future, and I hope this will allow you to have double-the-strength in dedicated and hard-working members representing you in the future.

It has been a considerable privilege to represent this fantastic village at the council and I can only wish the village and its residents the very best for the future.