

MARCH 2019

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Last Council meeting was on 19th February 2019. This was the budget meeting so plenty of items to report. At this meeting the following items were agreed:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2022/23 and HRA Budget for 2019/20
- Mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.90 a week as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act, be implemented.
- Garage rents be kept at the same level as last year.
- Sheltered Housing Service charges be kept at the same level as last year but utility charges be increased by 5% (average £0.61 increase per week).
- General Fund Budget for 2019/20 is based on an increase to Council Tax of £5 per annum (10p per week) for a Band D property, which is equivalent to 3.15%, to support the Council's overall financial position.
- A further £25m be invested in CIFCO
- A discretionary Care Leavers (young people leaving care will be eligible) Council Tax discount of up to 100%.
- However, the council also agreed that for a Council Tax discount of up to 100%.
- Second empty property premium is increased as per the regulations
- The 2019/20 Joint Capital Strategy, Joint Investment Strategy, Joint Treasury Management Strategy.

The budget comes into effect on 1 April this year and will see council tax rise by 3.15 per cent,

Councillors made the tough decision to increase Babergh's part of the Council Tax (equivalent to £5 per annum or 10p a week for a Band D property) as Revenue Support Grant from central government drops to zero this year, down from £2.3m in 2015/16.

The Next Council meeting on 19th March 2019

Cabinet Decisions since last report include:

- That the introduction of a discretionary retail discount policy for the financial years for 2019/20 and 2021/21 be approved.
- That the draft content of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Area Parking Plan be agreed by Cabinet and the commencement of a stakeholder consultation process commencing February 2019 be authorised.
- That the result of the stakeholder consultation and recommendations arising from it be presented to Cabinet later in 2019 for approval.

The cabinet will debate and where appropriate decide on a number of issues in March, including:

- Amendments to the current Regulatory Reform Order Policy for the Disabled Facilities Grants
- Scope of the Environment Strategy

- CIL Business Plan
- Hardwick House (Sudbury) and the Sudbury Town centre rejuvenation project
- Homelessness & Rough Sleepers strategy
- Joint Community Strategy

I would like to remind you that full reports from past Council and Cabinet Meetings, can be found online at:

Babergh: <http://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=521&MId=1017>

Mid Suffolk: <http://baberghmidsuffolk.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=522&MId=1029>

CHILTON WOODS

Following the grant of outline planning permission in March 2018 the county council is now ready to market the site to prospective developers.

On completion of a site disposal by the county council it is the developer(s) who will build the scheme subject to securing permission from Babergh District Council for their detailed designs.

COMMUNITIES INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Babergh have announced the first advance notice of new CIL Bid round (no 3) opening 1st May and closing 31st May 2019.

The CIL Bid round No 2 process is almost at an end with decisions for any valid Bids (which were capable of being taken forward) being determined at the beginning of March.

ONLINE PORTALS

Babergh and Mid Suffolk have launched MyAccount, an online portal which provides residents and businesses with paperless bills, 24-hour account access and more. It enables customers to view bills, reminders & notices, apply for discounts, and update personal details online.

Other platform features include being able to check balances, view received payments and due instalments, see updates on housing benefit and council tax reduction claims, set up or amend direct debits, search for a council tax band and apply for discounts and exemptions.

FLY TIPPING ACTION

A man found guilty of fly-tipping over 28 tons of commercial and industrial waste in Mid Suffolk and Babergh was recently sentenced to 15 months imprisonment.

The perpetrator dumped over 28 tons of waste in two incidents in April 2015 one of which was in neighbouring Acton. Clearing the waste cost over £6,500 and caused distress to the landowners and villagers.

The sentencing comes at the conclusion of a long investigation during which evidence was collected and proof that the council and law endorsement agencies are taking rural crime seriously and will prosecute offenders where possible.

POST OFFICE

I am delighted that the Post Office has officially announced that the Old Tourist information centre in Lady Street, recently acquired by the Parish Council to set up a community hub, will house a permanent post office for the village. The parish council worked hard to keep a temporary service going following the closure of the last post office branch and to then obtain permission and acceptance of a new full time site is wonderful news.