

**News and information from Jane Gould, Babergh District Councillor,  
to the Parish Councils and residents in Orwell Ward  
August 2022**

**Ward news**

I'm pleased to have been able to allocate some of this year's locality grant funding to Tattingstone to help with expenses that the village magazine, The Tattler, incur. There's still money left though so don't be shy about asking for some; not all councillors at District and County levels allocate all their locality funding but I have managed to so far! If it isn't allocated it doesn't roll over to the next year, it is lost. It is there for our communities to use.

**Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme launched**

In addition to the main Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme, Government has made £300,000 available as a discretionary fund for our councils, meaning people in need of support who were not eligible for the main fund can now access up to £150. The discretionary fund is for people in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who were in their property from 1 April 2022 and fall into the following categories:

- people who live in a house where the Council Tax is paid by the property owner or for those in a house of multiple occupation (HMO)
- the property is in valuation bands A-H
- the property owner, or occupier is not eligible for the main £150 Council Tax energy rebate payment for this property
- the occupier is liable to pay rent or pays the energy bill
- the occupier is in receipt of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit
- the occupier is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, Discount or certain exemptions and the property is in bands E-H

Applications for the Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme must be submitted by 4 September 2022. Many of those eligible for the Discretionary Energy Rebate Scheme may not appear in our records as they are not the Council Tax payer,

therefore we are encouraging parishes to share information about this scheme through their local village networks.

### **Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan submission**

The final Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan was submitted to Government by the Monday 1 August deadline. Launched in April 2022 as part of the wider Levelling Up agenda, the aim of the funding is to support district and borough councils build upon their own strengths and address local needs while creating “pride in place”. In consultation with key stakeholders and partners, including councillors, town centre vision boards, health & wellbeing partners including the Integrated Care System (ICS), VCSE partners, cultural groups, local chambers and business groups, town & parish councils, and MPs, we have developed an investment plan addressing how the three SPF priority themes: community & place, supporting local business, and people & skills, can help Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils achieve their vision to build great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home. Several projects have been identified from the Communities and Wellbeing Strategies and the recently adopted Economic Recovery Plan and these have been grouped into six broad project themes:

- town centre and cultural programmes
- events and festivals
- recruitment support
- business support including net zero activities
- skills and employability support
- community engagement and development

A full delivery plan and detailed projects will be worked up over the next few months so that we will be ready to deliver on year 1 projects as soon as our investment plans are approved in the autumn.

### **Attracting visitors to our districts**

In April, we ran the first of two campaigns in partnership with Visit Suffolk to attract visitors to explore everything Babergh and Mid Suffolk have to offer. As part of the

activity to promote our tourism, leisure, and cultural businesses as well as showcase what's happening across the two districts, we ran a competition to win a weekend stay in each district. The competitions attracted over 7,000 entries with more than 3,000 subscribers to our new monthly newsletter. We will be keeping our audience up to date with activities and events, places to visit, and any topical tourism information.

### **Update on solar carports**



The installation of solar carport structures at Kingfisher Leisure Centre in Sudbury and Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket are almost complete, and the panels are already generating electricity. However, we are experiencing longer than expected delays receiving a specialist piece of equipment, which is essential to complete the works. The delay is due to global supply chain issues beyond our control and unfortunately, the equipment is not expected to arrive until early autumn. In the meantime, we will be making 24 of the 40 carport spaces at Sudbury, and 30 of the 70 carport spaces in Stowmarket, available for use as well as exploring any alternative interim options that may enable some functionality. Electric vehicle charging points will be switched on as soon as it is safe for us to do so.

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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