

Councillors' briefing notes for town and parish councils- March 2021

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To: All BDC Members

Councillors' briefing notes for town and parish councils



March 2021

Dear councillor,

As you know, you are currently receiving [regular updates](#) on our response to Covid-19 in our districts and **we suggest that you review the most recent update to see the most up-to-date situation** in terms of our support for local business, communities and impact on our services ahead of your town or parish meetings.

You have continued to receive all media releases as they are issued and can [see them on our website here](#), but to assist you in giving your towns or parishes a rundown of activity during February, we include all recent announcements below:

An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk

Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins through existing updates for councillors, or [via the Suffolk County Council website](#). An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the [SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website](#).

Community testing

1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 do not have symptoms and may be unwittingly spreading the virus to other people without knowing. To tackle this, Suffolk has introduced community testing (also known as lateral flow testing or rapid testing) for those who are unable to work from home. A number of community testing centres have recently opened across Babergh, including sites in Sudbury, Nayland and Holbrook. To find out more, or to make an appointment go to [the Suffolk County Council website](#).

Councils pledge to provide further financial support for struggling households

Thousands of households across Babergh will be eligible for a reduction in their council tax bill after councillors approved further support for residents facing financial difficulties due to Covid-19.

[Read the full story.](#)

Covid support grants for businesses

There are several business support grants available which cover different local and national lockdown periods. For businesses mandated to close (including those in retail, leisure and hospitality) that have applied and received a lockdown grant since November 2020, our plan is to automatically pay additional grants following pre-payment checks.

However, for businesses that may be eligible but have not heard from us, or are yet to apply for any grants, we are encouraging them to find out more and to submit an application form as soon as possible. Further information about all the covid business support grants can be found on [our grant funding schemes webpage](#)

Babergh budgets for financial stability and sustainability

Councillors have agreed Babergh District Council's budget for 2021/22 – delivering financial stability post-Covid while still delivering the council's commitment to climate change.

[Read the full story.](#)

CIFCO portfolio nears completion

Property investment company CIFCO Capital Ltd is set to increase the £1.5m it has already ploughed back into council services so far this year – with the recent purchase of a Coventry trade park.

[Read the full story.](#)

Babergh parking changes agreed for October at the earliest

Babergh District Council will continue to subsidise an hour's free parking to support its high streets, with changes to council car park charges expected to come into effect later this year.

[Read the full story.](#)

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Green light for new taxi fares

Babergh's Cabinet recently approved new taxi fares in the district, following wider consultation with cabbies, which will see the basic day time rate increase by 20p.

[Read the full story.](#)

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Sale of Chilton Woods

The £35m sale of a significant part of the development site at Chilton Woods is now complete, with Taylor Wimpey taking immediate ownership to progress plans for a new community. Proposals will bring much-needed housing as well as future employment opportunities, facilities and infrastructure for Sudbury

[Read the full story.](#)

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Councils confirm support for Freeport East

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have confirmed their support for Freeport East, following the bid being formally submitted to Government by Hutchinson Ports.

[Read the full story.](#)

Everyone will benefit from Census 2021

Households across Babergh will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

[Read the full story.](#)

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An extra £3m for warmer, greener Suffolk homes

More Suffolk residents, including those in Babergh, are set to benefit from Government Green Homes Grants thanks to a further successful bid for £3m funding by a Suffolk consortium of local authorities.

[Read the full story.](#)

Councils help combat holiday hunger

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have continued to fund a joint initiative offering food and activities for families in need during the school holidays.

[Read the full story.](#)

Plug in Suffolk

Plug in Suffolk is now providing grants for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at non-profit locations such as community centres, parish council car parks and village halls. Visit [Green Suffolk's website](#) or contact Suffolk County Council's environment strategy officer [Peter Frost](#) to find out more about the funding.

The Postbox Project

Many of our residents will have experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness since the Covid pandemic began. To combat this we've partnered with The Forge Church and Suffolk County Council to launch [The Postbox Project](#). Our aim is to connect people across Suffolk, using letter writing to build new friendships. We are currently recruiting volunteers to write letters, so if you can spare a little time, [please let us know](#). Alternatively if you're aware of someone who is experiencing loneliness and would benefit from a letter, you can [refer them directly to the project](#).

Postponement of the Women's Tour

The Women's Tour, the international cycle race originally scheduled to finish in Suffolk on 12 June 2021, [has been postponed](#) due to COVID-19. Organisers, Sweetspot Group, have requested alternate race dates of Monday 4 to Saturday 9 October from the sport's governing body. Once new dates are confirmed, we will begin our community activity and work with local schools and businesses to promote the tour coming to our district.

The Sustainable Development Fund

The Sustainable Development Fund is available for community and conservation organisations (or individuals) to support projects for the conservation and enhancement of Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley. The AONB is seeking applications from local projects that benefit the public, are innovative, socially inclusive, sustainable, and involve partnership working. For information and advice about the fund please [visit the website](#) or [contact AONB grants officer Oka Last](#).

