

## STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 16 March 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllrs T Pulham (Chairman), G Leggett, R Kember, Mrs V Lane, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey and G Tancred.  
District Cllr D Burn, County Cllr A Stringer and four members of the public.

#### 1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Kember proposed Cllr Pulham chaired the meeting, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane – unanimously agreed.

#### 2. Apologies for absence and to consider approval of apologies received – none.

#### 3. To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda - none.

#### 4. PUBLIC FORUM: to receive the following reports:

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.

County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his report (copy attached to the Minutes). Items raised included the recently produced digitised footpath maps, these had been circulated to members.

District Councillor – Cllr Burn stated the monthly MSDC report had been circulated. Cllr Burn referred to the Parish Council queries raised regarding the Hill Farm application. These had been referred to the MSDC Area Planning Manager and a response would be received from her shortly. Cllr Burn went on to report on the water situation in the region, this was supplied by Essex and Suffolk Water, he stated there was too much water overflow during prolonged rain with water authorities allowed to deposit rubbish into rivers and ditches. Due to the lack of investment consumers were now having to pay the price.

Cllr Burn had previously stated he would not be seeking re-election during the forthcoming district council elections. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Cllr Burn for his work on behalf of Stoke Ash & Thwaite over the last 4 years this had been much appreciated by the Parish Council and its community.

#### Parishioners and Public

Well Cottage, Stoke Ash – Mr P Smith raised concerns over a retrospective planning application he was required to make relating to work carried out before his ownership of the property. It was understood the work had been allowed under permitted development rights but an issue had now been raised as to whether this was correct and whether the land in question was classed as agricultural. Cllr Burn offered to discuss these issues with Mr Smith and the Planning Case Officer in an attempt to resolve the situation.

Footpath 14 at Hill Farm, Huggins Lane – Mr P Morris reported on issues with Suffolk CC Public Rights of Way relating to a blocked section of the footpath causing obstruction to users of the path. The footpath had been blocked in the past during 2021. Cllr Tancred offered to walk the path to identify the location of the obstruction and would then report it to Suffolk Cc via the reporting tool.

St George's Hall, Thwaite – Mr and Mrs Mullins from Thwaite raised concerns over the condition of two large trees bordering St George's land and another located on the Allotment land, the concern related to their height and stability. Cllr Maisey stated he would ask a local Tree Surgeon used by the Parish Council in the past to inspect the trees and would report any recommendations back to Mr and Mrs Mullins and the Council.

#### 5. To consider Health and Safety items for report

Trees at St George's and Allotment Lane, Thwaite – Cllr Maisey to arrange inspection by a local Tree Surgeon.

#### 6. To consider for approval Minutes of the Meeting held 19 January 2023

Subject to the following amendment – the Thwaite Flower Festival was to be held 22 and 23 April and not 23 and 24 April, Cllr Maisey proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Trancred – unanimously agreed.

#### 7. Matters arising from the Minutes for report only

1.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Vacancies regularly reported in the parish magazine. Parish Council elections 4 May had been advertised.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. No repairs as yet by Suffolk CC Highways. It was agreed this item was removed.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall	Projects Group to make further contact with Thwaite parishioners on future and/or sale of the Hall and/or joint Thwaite/Stoke Ash Village Hall

	Improvements to Old School Room to be pursued via Church Architect, David Wymark.  St George's Hall woodwork and quinquennial inspection Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR Trees at St George's and Allotment land	GL  Deferred.  Cllr Pulham to look into work required. Would be carried out during June. RM to arrange inspection
18.7.19	Stoke Ash Play equipment/play surface Notice Board for information	New Play Equipment to be installed March 2023. Remove from agenda.
16.1.20	Lunch Club	GL pursuing funding with District Councillor. Remove item from agenda.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP & RK
29/9/22	Hill Farm, Huggins Lane – query to P Isbell as to why the application had not been called in to be dealt with by the Planning Committee.	Reply from Philip Isbell stated the queries had been forwarded to the Planning Area Manager for response. In meantime RK to draft further letter to P Isbell requesting clarification of 'controversial without guidelines'.
29/9/22	St George's Thwaite – pedestrian bridge – repairs to rotted upright on handrail and replacement plank	RK pursuing locally.
29/9/22	Allotments, Thwaite – preparation for letting	TP
29/9/22	CPR Course – 21 March 2023	11 attending
17/11/22	Mobile Post Office for Stoke Ash	Make enquiries at Thorndon/Stanton – VL
17/11/22	Road flood at Wash Lane	Clear pipe - PM
17/11/22	Christmas Tree Festival	The list had been circulated. A number of items on the list had been dealt with. No further action.
16/3/23	Mobile Library	Available in Thwaite but not Stoke Ash. Two stops in Wickham Skeith. Availability had been published in the Parish Magazine.

## 8. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/23/00187: Application for Listed Building Consent – Coppins Cottage, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – erection of conservatory to existing single storey extension, alterations to fenestration and erection of porch following demolition of existing. Application supported.
2. DC/23/00385: Brookside, The Street, Stoke Ash – application for approval of reserved matters following approval of Outline Planning Permission DC/21/02447 – severance of garden and erection of 1 dwelling including creation of new vehicular access and works to ditch and submission of details for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.  
A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
3. DC/23/00303: Rose Cottage, Church Lane, Thwaite – discharge of conditions DC/22/03373 – condition 12 (windows and doors). Members agreed a response of 'no comment'.
4. DC /23/00807: 158 The Street, Stoke Ash – Application for Listed Building Consent – replace internal plasterboard over infill panels in C15 range at first floor with lime plaster. Response of No Comment agreed.
5. DC/23/00803: 158 The Street, Stoke Ash – Application for Listed Building Consent – reinforce floor to first floor bedroom. Response of No Comment agreed.
6. DC/23/00800: Application for Listed Building Consent – 158 The Street, Stoke Ash – repair window in C15 range on ground floor south elevation, replacement of 7 windows and 1 door. Members agreed a response of No Comment.
7. DC/23/00931: 158 The Street, Stoke Ash – Application for Listed Building Consent – creation of door opening on ground floor between dining room and kitchen. Response of No comment agreed.

- 8.DC/23/00755: The Walnut Tree, Norwich Road, Thwaite – installation of 2 electric vehicle charging stations and lighting lamp post within the carpark of the Walnut Tree. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
- 9.DC/23/01012: Well Cottage, Ipswich Road, Stoke Ash – erection of detached garage and (retention of) conversion to annexe ancillary to main dwelling. A recommendation of support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.
- 10.Planning Appeal – application DC/21/04476 – land at Norwich Road, Wetheringsett part in the parish of Stoke Ash & Thwaite – application for Outline Planning Permission (access to be considered) - erection of 14 dwellings comprising 5 two bed units, 7 three bed units and 2 four bed units. Notification received from MSDC the Appeal had been withdrawn.
- 11.Planning Appeal – application DC/22/04071 – Junedale, Chapel Lane, Stoke Ash – conversion of and extension to outbuilding to form one dwelling. A recommendation of further support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

#### 9. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- 1. DC/23/00193: Thwaite Hall Barn, Wickham Road, Thwaite – construction of 2 solar panels to roof out outbuilding. **Planning Permission Granted.**
- 2. DC/23/00186: Coppins Cottage, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash - Erection of conservatory to existing single storey extension; alterations to fenestration and erection of porch (following demolition of existing) **Planning Permission Refused**

#### 10. Planning correspondence

- 1. DC/23/00106: Land north of Wickham Road, Thwaite – application to determine whether Prior Approval is required for the proposed erection, extension or alteration of a building for agricultural or forestry use. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2 Part 6 – erection of a building for secure cover and storage of machinery, grain and other agricultural goods.
  - 1. MSDC notification: Application Withdrawn
  - 2. To consider request for parish councillor attendance at site meeting. Deferred pending any further request for a site meeting.
- 2. Land at Norwich Road, Thwaite (south of Walnut Tree) – Parish Council asked to consider support for a Stoke Ash & Thwaite Housing Needs Survey to determine whether the site could be considered for a MSDC Rural Exception Site for affordable housing  
 Although members were in support of low cost housing there was uncertainty as to whether the site in question was suitable it being detached from Thwaite centre and not within walking distance of local amenities. Part of the site was situated in a flood plain and if a small portion was allocated for affordable housing there would be opportunity for additional housing at a later stage. It was also understood should an affordable housing need be established there would be a requirement to put out a ‘call for sites’.  
 The Chairman put to members whether they were in favour of a housing needs survey at the present time, 2 in favour, 5 against: Support declined.

#### 11. Neighbourhood Watch report

No new incidents for report. A reply had been received from PCC T Passmore with an apology for the way the previously reported enquiry (January 2023 Minutes) had been dealt with, lessons would be learnt from it. A better response would have been received by contacting the Neighbourhood Watch Team direct.

#### 12. Report on Local Post Office facilities following closure of Stoke Ash Post Office

Cllr Mrs Lane stated she had contacted Stanton Post Office regarding the possibility of the mobile PO visiting Stoke Ash and Thwaite. The route was currently full and there had been no further contact at present. It was agreed this item was removed from the agenda pending any further information.

#### 13. Thwaite Community Projects Group

- 1. Ditch Clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite – to consider further quotation.  
 Due to the open ended nature of the work Cllr Kember had been unable to obtain quotation/s. Cllr Pulham stated he would look at the extent of the work involved and report at the next meeting.
- 2. Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite – Cllr Pulham stated he hoped the work would be carried out during June.
- 3. St George’s Hall – report on further contact with parishioners regarding the future of the Hall. Deferred to next meeting.
- 4. St George’s Hall inspection and woodwork report – deferred pending decision on future of the Hall.  
 As part of this work it was suggested improvements to the Old School Room – providing a kitchenette and composting wc were considered.

Cllr Leggett suggesting obtaining advice initially from David Wymark the Church Architect on the type of work that could be carried out

5. Pedestrian Bridge at St George's Hall – to consider quotation for repair work. Cllr Kember stated he was in the process of obtaining a second quotation. If less than the original quoted at £3050 Cllr Leggett proposed the quote was accepted so that the work could be carried out, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.

6. Report on Allotment Agreements and Rentals 2022-23 – deferred.

#### 14. Stoke Ash VH Play and Exercise equipment report

1. Report on installation of new play equipment

Cllr Tancred stated installation should be complete by 20 March 2023. Payment would be required 28 days after completion of the work. The Chair recorded thanks to Cllr Tancred for his work on the project.

2. To consider Annual Play Inspection report

Cllr Tancred stated the majority of the issues raised in the report were low or very low risk. The pond on adjoining private land was raised with recommendation of a fence along the boundary. Cllr Tancred would discuss this with the adjoining landowner and report at the next meeting.

#### 15. Wash Lane report

Cllr Tancred stated he had walked the lane and all appeared in good order. Regarding ownership, if the Parish Council could evidence maintenance for 10 years an application for ownership could be made to the Land Registry. If agreed by the Council, Cllr Tancred would pursue. The procedure involved and any anticipated costs to be reported.

#### 16. To confirm CPR Training Session – Tuesday 21 March 2023, 7pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall

Ten parishioners and one parish councillor would be attending.

#### 17. Report on community Litter Pick 11/12 March 2023

Both litter pick events had been successful, the Chair thanked all those who had taken part for their help.

#### 18. Report on community event to celebrate HM King's Coronation

An application for a street closure, the stretch near the Village Hall, Stoke Ash, would be made to Suffolk CC Highways. Food and a bar had been arranged plus a raffle with prizes, £75, £50 and £25. Coronation Medals would be purchased for children attending and any remaining would be sold in both parishes. Other activities included Childrens' Face Painting and a competition for pets. The working group requested a contribution from Parish Council funds towards the event, a sum not exceeding £1,000 was suggested. Cllr Maisey proposed the Council agreed that figure, seconded Cllr Kember - unanimously agreed.

District Cllr Burn had been asked whether he could support the event. Cllr Burn stated he unfortunately had no locality funding available.

#### 19. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

A report and letter of support had been received from Suffolk Accident Rescue. Cllr Leggett proposed a donation of £50, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.

2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decl d	Ch no.
16/3/23	Clerk	Sal-expen Jan – Mar 23	£605.26	-	£605.26	Agreed	100572
16/3/23	Anglian Water	OSR water charges July 22 – Jan 23	£25.01	-	25.01	Agreed	100295

Cllr Maisey proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Kember – unanimously agreed.

3. To consider for adoption Financial Internal Control Policy 2022/23

The Internal Control Policy document had been circulated prior to the meeting. No queries were raised.

Cllr Leggett proposed adoption of the document, seconded Cllr Tancred – unanimously agreed.

#### 20. Clerk's report/correspondence including Parish Council Elections May 2023

The Clerk offered to deliver completed councillor election papers to the Eye collection point before the due date for return.

21. Chair's report – none.

#### 22. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Grass verge, Wickham Road - A query was raised as to whether the painted van tyres on the grass verge outside a property in Wickham Road, Thwaite were an obstruction to passing vehicles. Cllr Stringer stated the first meter of the grass verge was considered to be highway and should not contain anything that could cause obstruction. Cllr Kember stated he would report the query via the Suffolk CC reporting tool.

Minutes – Cllr Mrs Lane enquired whether there was a legal requirement for the PC Minutes to be published on the parish Notice Boards. It was stated these could be displayed on the Notice Boards. Cllr Mrs Lane offered to put copies on the Notice Boards after meetings.

23. **Date of next meetings: Stoke Ash & Thwaite Annual Parish Meetings - Thursday 27 April 2023, 7pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash**  
**Stoke Ash & Thwaite Annual Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 18 May 2023, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall (meeting venue changed to Old School Room, Thwaite).**

Meeting closed 9.55pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

## Summary of Action Points

1.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Vacancies regularly reported in the parish magazine. Parish Council elections 4 May.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall  Improvements to Old School Room to be pursued via Church Architect, David Wymark.  St George's Hall woodwork and quinquennial inspection Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR Trees at St George's and Allotment land	Projects Group to make further contact with Thwaite parishioners on future and/or sale of the Hall and/or joint Thwaite/Stoke Ash Village Hall  GL  Deferred.  Cllr Pulham to look into work required. Would be carried out during June. RM to arrange inspection
18.7.19	Stoke Ash Play equipment/play surface grant funding.	New Play Equipment to be installed March 2023.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP & RK
29/9/22	Hill Farm, Huggins Lane – query to P Isbell as to why the application had not been called in to be dealt with by the Planning Committee.	Reply from P Isbell stated the PC queries had been forwarded to the Planning Area Manager for response. In meantime RK to draft further letter to P Isbell requesting clarification of 'controversial without guidelines'.
29/9/22	St George's Thwaite – pedestrian bridge – repairs to rotted upright on handrail and replacement plank	RK pursuing locally.
29/9/22	Allotments, Thwaite – preparation for letting	TP
29/9/22	CPR Course – 21 March 2023	11 attending
17/11/22	Mobile Post Office for Stoke Ash	No further action at present.
17/11/22	Road flood at Wash Lane	Clear pipe - PM
17/11/22	Christmas Tree Festival	Report on Wish List – complete.
16/3/23	Mobile Library	Available in Thwaite but not Stoke Ash. Two stops in Wickham Skeith. Availability had been published in the Parish Magazine. Complete.

16/3/23	Blocked footpath 14 at Hill Farm	GT to report via reporting tool
16/3/23	Trees at St George's and Allotment land	Arrange inspection - RM
16/3/23	Pond adjoining play area – discuss fencing with adjoining landowner	GT
16/3/23	Wash Lane – provide procedure and any possible costs	GT

### County Councillor Report – March 2023

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) or [ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

### Homes for Ukraine: One Year Anniversary of War

The 24<sup>th</sup> February marked the one-year anniversary since Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Suffolk continues to do its part through the Homes for Ukraine programme – hosting refugees fleeing the war.

In total, 1256 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Suffolk through the programme. Currently, we have around 330 host families, supporting 750 Ukrainians – with others in private accommodation.

Suffolk is in need of new hosts, to continue to offer a safe haven for Ukrainian refugees who are not yet ready to enter private accommodation. Based on numbers, Suffolk needs 50 new hosts in the coming months.

If you think you can help, please visit [www.suffolk.gov.uk/Ukraine](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Ukraine).

Hosts are entitled to £350 per month, which increases to £500 after 12 months.

### SCC Finance Budget

At the beginning of February, the Council's budget for 2023/24 was voted in. The budget will now increase tax by 2.99% - broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a .99% increase in general tax.

Council services have faced a gruelling year of demand and additional cost pressures. In addition, the Council is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030, our group proposed an additional 0.89% increase (19p weekly increase) to ensure vital care services were protected from cutting support to residents, and that more direct action is taken to close the gap on our carbon emissions.

Our Group proposed to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a stronger pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we proposed to facilitate a review into Suffolk's speed limits, in the hope to provide residents with a clearer path to more appropriate travel in their communities.

We proposed using £1m to actively recruit, retain and reward frontline staff in adult social care, as well as providing more for Suffolk Libraries to help maintain services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we wanted to invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage.

Our budget amendments did not gain a majority.

### SCC Cabinet Meeting

Cabinet agreed to move the West Suffolk Archives in Bury St Edmunds to a new location in the town on Western Way. Our Group were concerned about the lack of sufficient public transport access to the new location – being far from the train station with an irregular bus service.

Finally, the Cabinet discussed the Fire & Rescue Service's new risk management plan. The plan outlines all foreseeable risks in Suffolk and indicates the service's priorities and proposals to improve the service. Currently, the service suffers from low recruitment, poor retainment of officers, unmet response targets, and an increase in demand through extreme heatwaves caused by climate change. Our Group support the plan, hoping more investment can now be provided to the essential and increasingly ever-needed service.

### New Highways Services: Contract Agreed

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded SCC's new highways services contract. The contract, worth between £800m-£1bn, will begin 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and will last up to 20 years. The service will provide maintenance of roads, pavement, Rights of Way, drainage, hedges, construction of new roads, and snow clearing etc.

Our Group campaigned last year for Suffolk Highways maintenance to quote for the service to be brought back in-house. This was due to the extortionate prices the previous provider, Kier, gave for simple jobs such as tree cutting and speed bump designs (i.e., £5,000 for a pair of dropped kerbs, £7,500 to cut down a single tree, £10,000 to design four humps in a road).

Our Group has been given reassurance from Suffolk Highways that the same mistakes will not be repeated, and that the contract is more robust to deal with the inflated quotes previously received. However, our Group will closely monitor to ensure this is the case.

### **Household Support Fund: Extension Granted by Government**

The Government has agreed to extend the Household Support Fund, meaning local authorities will continue to receive funding to help residents through the current cost-of-living crisis. The grant is distributed through small payments to support vulnerable household meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

To apply for help, visit Suffolk's Cost-of-Living support leaflet at: <https://suffolk.pagetiger.com/cost-of-living-support/scc1>

#### **Follow us on:**

**Twitter** - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

**Instagram** - [https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli\\_group/](https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/)

**Facebook** - Search 'Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group'

**Website** - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

## **District Council Report – March 2023**

### **Council tax freeze plus £2m for energy saving measures**

Mid Suffolk District Council has confirmed a council tax freeze for residents and ring-fenced £2m for household energy-saving measures for those most in need, despite rising costs and increased demands on services. [More information](#)

### **New £12m depot would 'future-proof' services for residents**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are exploring plans to consolidate three aging operational sites into a shared £12m depot – future-proofing services for residents and improving conditions for their staff. [More information](#)

### **New service aims to turn more than 1,000 empty houses into homes**

With over a thousand homes across Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts currently classified as empty, 'Houses4Homes' encourages owners of vacant residential properties to come forward for advice and support in turning their property into a home for another family. [More information](#)

### **First look at culture, heritage and visitor economy strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk**

The first steps towards a dedicated cultural, heritage and visitor economy strategy could be taken should proposals be approved by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' cabinets in March. [More information](#)

### **Food network approved to help people through cost-of-living challenges**

Action to support even more people through the cost-of-living challenges will be taken in Suffolk as food bank usage rises. [More information](#)

### **VCFS Resilience Fund: Councils launch third sector funding 'lifeline'**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are delivering vital support to incredible organisations already helping those in our communities most exposed to the cost-of-living crisis. [More information](#)

### **Target to end rough sleeping in Suffolk**

Suffolk's public sector leaders, including those from Babergh and Mid Suffolk, are targeting an end to rough sleeping across the county by 2027. [More information](#)

### **Suffolk's Exemplary Commitment to Retrofitting Homes**

Commendable efforts are being made across Suffolk to ensure the retrofit of energy inefficient homes. [More information](#)

### **Suffolk councils secure £2.2m to improve tenants' quality of life**

Suffolk's district and borough councils have secured £2.2m of Government funding to improve the standard of private rented homes in the county – tackling poor housing conditions and improving tenants' wellbeing. [More information](#)

### **Gateway 14 officially opens main estate road**

Mid Suffolk District Councillors joined representatives from Jaynic, town and parish councillors and partners involved in the Gateway 14 development for a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the first road on the site built by the infrastructure contractor Jackson Civil Engineering Ltd. [More information](#)

### **Community supports Chairman's Civic Service**

Civic dignitaries from across Suffolk joined Mid Suffolk District Council's Chairman and local community representatives for a special service at St Mary's the Virgin Church in Bramford earlier this month. [More information](#)

### **Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Land Charges team shortlisted for new national award**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are in the running for a national award, for making a critical step in the house buying process as easy as possible for residents. [More information](#)

### **Half-term activities for schoolchildren in Babergh and Mid Suffolk**

A week of swimming, sports and fun activities for children of all ages was staged for half term in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. [More information](#)

### **Supporting the elections this May**

As you will know, the local and parish elections are due to be held on Thursday 4 May. You can [see a full election timetable on our website](#).

- **Voter registration**

We will be supporting the Electoral Commission's 'Got 5?' campaign running through March and April to raise awareness of upcoming elections and drive voter registration. The Commission will be advertising across a combination of channels including TV, radio, posters, social media, website banners, cinema advertising, and Google search. We will also be sharing the messages through the council's social media channels and invite our towns and parishes to do the same.

- **Staffing**

There are still positions that need to be filled to ensure the elections are run smoothly across the districts. If you want to get involved, or know someone else who is interested please [see our website](#) or [email the Babergh and Mid Suffolk elections team](#) to find out more.

- **Voter ID**

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station, which will be implemented in the upcoming local and Parish elections in May. [More information](#). We will continue to support the Electoral Commission's national awareness campaign through all available council channels and ask that you also help where possible. You can find Electoral Commission resources, including posters and social media, here: [Voter ID resources | Electoral Commission](#)

- **Webinar by the Electoral Commission**

The Electoral Commission is hosting a pre-election webinar on **Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 12pm – 1pm** for candidates and agents taking part in the upcoming elections.

The webinar will provide an opportunity to gain essential information on the nomination process and the spending and donation rules, including information on:

- standing for election
- the nominations process
- when the spending rules apply
- how much you can spend
- notional spending rules
- who you can accept donations from
- what you need to report after the election

There will also be a chance to ask questions. **To confirm attendance please email Stuart Butler on [sbutler@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:sbutler@electoralcommission.org.uk)**

For those unable to attend, we understand the Commission plans to publish slides from the webinar after the event.