

Monthly Report December'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

GENERAL UPDATES

The district wide monthly update can be found here - Download [Babergh's town & parish briefing notes](#).

Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation: Hopefully you have all put in your comments on the consultation which closes on 11Jan26. ([Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#).)

News has come out that the government has postponed the election for the new Norfolk/Suffolk mayor that was due to take place in May'26 to May'28. Pretty annoying given that everyone was already geared up for the May election. The government have also sent a letter to councils who are on the priority list asking them to say if they will find it challenging to work on both LGR & Devolution(?) and hold the May county council elections as they may consider cancelling these elections to ensure the LGR timetable is not hit. Call me cynical but I suspect the answer will be 'yes'. Cancelling elections doesn't seem very democratic to me. You might not like the way people vote & the result but that is part of living in a democratic country.

Marks & Spencer @ Copdock: This was passed by the Planning Committee with a unanimous vote. The opening date is sometime in 2027. It will be odd not to see the Toys r Us sign as I come up to the Copdock Roundabout - that sign (to me) is the sign I am nearly home.

2026/27 Budget: The budget is still being worked on. The government funding settlement has been published and is being worked through - apparently it is quite complicated, but we see an updated budget in January. You might have seen something in the local papers about increasing car-parking charges. These were introduced last year in Hadleigh, Lavenham and Sudbury. Not a popular thing to do and something people didn't want to do but we are stuck with the legal requirement to have a balanced budget. Babergh had asked the University of Suffolk to research the impact of introducing charges on footfall and spend in the town centres. There was an impact but was small. For example, people were spending less time in the centre - probably to tie in with the charging periods. Spend & footfall was down 5-8%. It should be noted that Sunday & Bank Holiday parking is still free. Not the dire drop everyone was predicting. Small increases are being proposed which go to cabinet in January.

Better Recycling (formerly known as Simpler Recycling): Simpler Recycling has been renamed Better Recycling because it isn't really simpler but it is better in the sense that more is being collected for recycling. This new style of collection goes live in April next year with the introduction of food waste collection and restructuring of the remaining waste collections. Surveys have been done to determine who will need assistance &/or different sized bins/bags and a publicity campaign is being launched to update people on what is happening when - new bins & bags will be delivered from February onwards. More information can be found at [Future changes to bin collections - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](#)

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Below is an example of the new three-weekly collection schedule: [What you can and cannot put in your waste bins / containers](#)

Collection Type	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Refuse general rubbish			
Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons			
Paper and Card			
Food Waste			



Paper & Card

- Cardboard
- Paper

Containers

- Glass bottles & jars
- Metal food & drinks cans
- Cartons
- Plastic pots, tubs, trays, film & bottles

Food Waste

- Plate scrapings
- Meat (inc bones)
- Fish (inc bones)
- Fruit & veg
- Tea bags & coffee grounds
- Breads
- Dairy

General Rubbish

- Soiled fast food containers
- Bagged vacuum contents
- Nappies
- Other non recyclable waste
- Bagged animal waste

Garden Waste
Subscription only

- Small branches
- Leaves
- Dead plants & flowers
- Grass trimmings

PORTFOLIO

A Suffolk-wide Community Energy Hub proposal has been developed and submitted for consideration for funding from Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, this would complement and support Babergh's CE activity from 2026 onward.

Battery Box (Amp Energy) installations: four currently under construction, one goes to planning in January 2026 and is recommended for approval.

Warm Homes Local Grant Update: An additional £1.38m has been secured from DSEnz, however, the challenge is to deliver this project by 31st March 2026. Targeted Comms through BMSDC are being utilised to spread the message to eligible residents. Eligible measures include loft insulation, external wall insulation, air source heat pumps, storage heater upgrades, solar power and batteries. Applications have reopened, and residents can apply via the Warm Homes Suffolk website. Eligibility screening is managed by Yes Energy Solutions.

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Biodiversity: We have completed the draft Biodiversity Action Plan which will go to cabinet in the New Year. Babergh does not have as big a budget as Mid-Suffolk. Mid-Suffolk can afford to buy land for rewilding - Babergh can't, so our plan focusses more on engagement, encouragement & facilitation. We hope to interact more with local groups, parishes & schools on biodiversity initiatives. The plan covers the period up to April 2028 i.e. when Babergh is dissolved. We have presented the approved Norfolk/Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy to the Joint Local Plan Working Group followed by a discussion on how it may be incorporated into the plan. The LNRS is a guide to what can be done. It doesn't have many teeth, so incorporating its principles into the Local Plan which will have legal weight is a good approach.

Suffolk Climate Emergency: Sustainable Suffolk has shared the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan progress overview, giving an insight into the work done since the plan was published in 2021. Included within the document is a breakdown of lots of work carried out by partner organisations, which includes our council. See [Our progress so far: the 2025 Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan Progress Overview - Sustainable Suffolk](#) for more information.

THE WARD ITSELF

Parking at Suffolk One: The paper (finally) was submitted to the design & costing team. I am waiting on the results. I'm continuing to get updates from people when students are causing an obstruction - particularly from Wentworth Drive.

Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton: We are reasonably close to submitting this paper - there were many responses to the suggested measures which is good as this gives us a good evidence base so Highway know that the proposed solutions are backed by residents. Highways know that this paper is on the way.

Sproughton Nature Reserve: The final version of the legal agreement is now ready to go to IBC's Executive Committee - scheduled for Mar'26. After that the agreement is sealed by both parties. Then everything goes to Natural England for review and designation.

Gipping River Path: It looks as though there may be some funding available to remove the barrier but there is a way to go before that can be confirmed. But the good news is that Babergh, Ipswich BC, Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency & Network Rail are now all in contact. Watch this space.

If you ever have an issue to raise with me please use the contact details below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Davies

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