

# Monthly Report January'26 - 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:** Well, my comment on the likelihood of elections being called off was spot on. SCC's letter to the government said it would be difficult, with resources they have to manage the day job & Local Government Reorganisation. So, the government cancelled the county council elections & Ipswich's - what a surprise!! So we have a county council past their sell by date shaping what the next council will look like. So much for a fresh start, new thinking etc. Reform UK are challenging this decision via a Judicial Review. We are on tenterhooks awaiting the government decision on the number of unitaries - that comes in March after which it will be full speed ahead.....Still lots of decisions to come especially on the people side. This reorganisation isn't going to come without a cost to people's jobs 😞

**2026/27 Budget:** The updated budget has been published now that the governments funding settlement has been unpicked and incorporated. Its tight but balanced. We just hope nothing else upsets the apple cart in terms of funding or unexpected expenses. Next years budget is likely to be even tighter. Last month I wrote about increasing carparking charges and the reluctance to increase them but budget needs overwrote this. The cabinet voted by a majority to approve the increase. The decision was promptly 'called-in' by local councillors so that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee could review the decision. Overview & Scrutiny do exactly what it says on the tin. They do a deep dive into particular areas of the council and ensure that we have made good decisions based on comprehensive evidence via sound process.

**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](#) I've seen the information pack that will be issued shortly which includes a 9-page FAQ so it should answer the majority of questions.

**Joint Local Plan:** The second call for sites has now been completed. This one included a request for employment sites as well as residential. Apparently around 1,100 sites have been submitted. These are now being reviewed. Then individual parishes have a chance to comment on them

## PORTFOLIO

**Biodiversity:** The Biodiversity Action Plan has been presented at our January Joint Cabinet Briefing. A decent number of questions so hopefully the presentation for approval at full cabinet in February will go well. 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.

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### THE WARD ITSELF

**Parking at Suffolk One:** Still waiting to hear back from the Highways Design team on costs for the measures suggested. Still getting photos through of cars obstructing junctions, driveways and pavements.....

**Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton:** We had 62 responses to the revised solutions paper. I thought traffic lights on the High Street and Lower Street would be the most popular request as that doesn't result in any loss of parking spaces. But it was yellow lines at the High/Lower Street junction - maybe indicative of people's frustration at not being able to see well enough around the parked cars to exit safely! The paper is now done and just needs a final review by the parish council before going to Suffolk Highways. 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. There is also another nature reserve up for approval in Capel - I'm hoping to get loads more through so people have some suggestions as to where they could be established please let me know.

**Gipping River Path:** We have funding to repair the sleeper bridge by the river in Sproughton and to repair parts of the riverbank between Sproughton & Bramford. Start date is being finalised but it won't be until it dries up a bit. Apparently to repair the bridge it needs 7m long wooden supports - quite a length to carry across a field and along the riverbank! I'm working on the potential removal of the old Ipswich Flood Barrier - this is more complex and also requires funding so will not be a quick fix.

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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**Councillor Helen Davies: District Councillor for Sproughton & Pinewood**

**Mobile:** 07514 951190

**E-mail:** [Helen.Davies@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Davies@babergh.gov.uk)

**Facebook:** Cllr Helen Davies

**X:** @HelenDSproughtn