

## Monthly Report May'25 - Sproughton & Pinewood Ward

### GENERAL UPDATES

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

**Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation:** There is a lot of work going on at district and county councils at the moment with regards to Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation. Devolution is speeding along with mayoral elections planned for May 2026.

This may seem rushed but as Norfolk & Suffolk are part of the government's priority programme to establish Mayoral Combined County Authorities timescales are short. The list of powers that the mayor will have centre around housing, economic growth, transport (seems to include rail as well as roads & buses), education, health, policing & climate change. This will be a huge job and the mayor will need a large team to support their efforts especially as they will need to work closely with the new unitary authorities - this won't come cheap?!

Babergh & Mid-Suffolk are working with all the other district councils in Suffolk defining what a 2 & 3 tier unitary authority would look like to determine which is the better choice in terms of provision of services, costs and democracy. This is a chance to improve things if done correctly. This all takes time but will be ready for September when the government expects us to put forward our analysis and chosen option to them.

At the moment, Suffolk County Council's responsibilities include repairing roads, children's services, and adult social care. District councils are responsible for things like collecting bins, housing, and planning applications. Once the unitary council/s has been formed in 2028 it will do all these things. These councils must be responsive to the needs of its varied communities - rural, urban, coastal, industrial, and agricultural. They must be big enough to deliver, but local enough to care and residents must feel truly represented by councillors elected to these new unitaries.

In contrast Suffolk County Council is proposing a single council for the whole of Suffolk ~ 800,000 people. With much reduced councillor numbers, it will be harder to represent and respond to residents. SCC have claimed that two or three unitaries will be inefficient and unaffordable. But the figures they quote are from a national report commissioned by the County Councils' Network - not certain that can be regarded as an independent source! SCC are holding a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June at Holbrook Village Hall from 19:30-20:30 to explain their vision of a single unitary to parish councils (Babergh cllrs don't seem to have been invited). To reserve your space, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/suffolk-county-council-briefing-on-local-government-reorganisation-tickets-1343910294869?aff=oddtcreator> I really recommend sending a representative, you are allowed up to two people.

I have also been reading Ipswich Borough Councils document 'The case for a "greater" Ipswich Unitary Council' ([Case for a greater Ipswich Unitary Council March 2025.pdf](#)) and

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found a tiny map on P5 showing what a Greater Ipswich might encompass - those fringe parishes abutting Ipswich would do well to think about the implications about being subsumed into a Greater Ipswich.

In the meantime Babergh have published a survey to obtain people's views on the reorganisation. Please complete it as this gives us clear information on what people want to see - the survey runs until July 25. The survey can be found at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr>. The responses to the survey will be fed into the work on 2/3 unitary councils.

**Annual Council Meeting:** Babergh held its annual council meeting in the middle of May. This is when all the posts come up for re-election/confirmation. Ruth Hendry is our new chair taking over from Liz Malvisi. The chair raises money for one or two charities during their year as chair - these are normally charities close to their hearts. Last year a good amount of money was raised for the 'Men's Shed' and this year Ruth is sponsoring 'Compassion' a charity addressing the issues around domestic abuse.

I have retained my membership of the Planning Committee & Joint Local Plan Working Group; chair of the Sustainable Travel Group & Biodiversity Group and remain Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Nature Recovery & Biodiversity.

### **PORTFOLIO**

**Sustainable Travel:** I've done the publicity on this. Somewhere there is a video of me and another councillor wobbling down the road on the electric bikes ([new electric bikes in Sudbury - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk)). These are good solid bikes and well placed next to a cycle-path from Sudbury to Long Melford. A great spot for trying these out! We need to confirm the next spot to put an installation - currently looking at Shotley & considering Lavenham.

**Biodiversity:** The first meeting of the Biodiversity Group has been held. We aim to define a biodiversity strategy for Babergh. There were a lot of good ideas put forward and we hope to pull a draft together over the next couple of months.

The Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Strategy was approved by Babergh earlier this year. Suffolk County Council has now put this out for public consultation on 16 April, closing on 11 June. If you haven't already put comments in there is not much time left to do so - but even brief comments are valuable. You should have received a request to comment in SALC's regular updates to parishes.

### **THE WARD ITSELF**

**Parking at Suffolk One:** This meeting between Suffolk One and residents has been moved to 5<sup>th</sup> June @18:00 in Suffolk One. Representatives from Highways and Community Policing are due to attend so hopefully all questions from residents can be answered. It is hoped that a way

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forward can be defined. I am still getting regular emails from residents and there has been a notable uptick since the meeting was publicised.

**Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton**: The parish council is due to discuss this shortly after which the results can be disseminated for comments by residents prior to discussing the favoured options with Highways. This includes the HGV issue along the Hadleigh Road. I drove along the Hadleigh Road recently with Highways to look at the problem. Further news on this next month.

**Locality Budget**: I have £1,000 remaining from my locality budget. £1,000 has been allocated to the new playground in Sproughton. Applications welcome.....

**Biodiversity Surveys**: the Norfolk Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been out for public consultation since 16<sup>th</sup> April. This consultation closes on 11<sup>th</sup> June. If you have any comments to make please go to [Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) Public Consultation](#).

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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