

## Monthly Report June'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:** Work continues on which option all the district councils feel is the best option - 2 or 3 unitaries. We are expecting results to be published in August so they can be reviewed by parish & town councils - hopefully updated having taken into account our collective view before the final proposal is submitted in September. I attended a LGR workshop where we all tried to agree on what our priorities would be in a new unitary - a lot of discussion!

I have heard that responses to Babergh survey are being received, with local representation being a major concern. If you haven't completed the survey, please do so. The survey runs until 25 July. The survey can be found at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr>. The Suffolk County Council (SCC) favour a single authority one closes on 18 August [Suffolk County Council Local Government Review Survey](#)

**Planning:** Babergh District Council voted unanimously at our June Full Council meeting to write to Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner - Secretary of State for Housing, about concerns over Government plans to modernise planning committees as part of their current Planning and Infrastructure Bill. Proposals within the bill include a national scheme of delegation for planning decisions, designed to reduce the role of planning committees by restricting the type and numbers of applications heard by committees in future. This is to remove perceived obstacles to development and housebuilding, increasing the number of decisions being made by officers than committees - despite only 8.6% of planning applications being heard by committee. The government is blaming planning committees for the lack of building but the real reason why development is delayed is the 4,300 dormant planning permissions we currently have sitting in Babergh (~1m nationally). We can grant as many planning applications as quickly as we can, but if developers don't build them out, then we are stuck! Concerns were also raised over the Government's removal of funding to support the creation of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans are essential for communities to guide development in their area. The Government's withdrawal of locality funding for them is an erosion of democracy and a serious barrier to residents' having their say.

### PORTFOLIO

**Sustainable Travel:** Still haven't decided where to put a second Eezybike installation - I need to visit Shotley & Lavenham again. I am also looking at the quality of the River Gipping footpath from Stowmarket to Ipswich. Some bits are good, some not so good. I'm hoping we can fix the 'not so good' sections!

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**Biodiversity:** The Biodiversity Action Group met at the end of June to start to determine an action Plan. We had a half day workshop to forward what we felt was important. Richard Parmee (BMSDC Biodiversity Officer is now translating our thoughts into a coherent strategy.

**Student Surveys:** We met with two teachers from Suffolk One (S1) for a walk around Belstead Meadows and the woods off Grove Hill, Belstead which Babergh have just taken over to determine the best sites for students to practise surveying techniques. We have one final site to visit (Sproughton Nature Reserve) before S1 decide which site meets their requirements best. Babergh will have access to the collected data going forward to evaluate how the site is doing.

**Sproughton Nature Reserve:** Babergh, Ipswich Borough councillors, Greenways and local volunteers went for a walkaround the new nature reserve to see how the planting & the river was doing. I met the environment portfolio holder for Ipswich Borough Council and asked her to chase the progress of the BDC/IBC LNR agreement as it has disappeared into a black hole.

### **THE WARD ITSELF**

**Parking at Suffolk One:** The meeting at Suffolk One was held on 5<sup>th</sup> June. It was attended by around 40 residents, Suffolk Highways the police and the (deputy) heads from S1. It was an entertaining meeting. S1 head Jake Robson had the opportunity to go through their efforts to persuade the students not to park locally but use the Tesco Park n Ride. The residents clearly communicated their displeasure at the current state of affairs. It was useful to have Highways and the police there as a couple of questions could be answered quickly. The outcome of the meeting was that I and Suffolk Highways would survey all the impacted roads and come up with options to address the parking problem. A paper would be circulated for review/& consultation. The preferred outcome would be designed and costed by Highways. Then the fun starts in the search for funding.

**Traffic Solutions 4 Sproughton:** The final version of the traffic paper has gone out for review. This will be delivered to parishioners shortly. We are hoping people will respond so that a final choice can be made and put to Highways.

**Locality Budget:** All of my locality budget has been allocated now - £1,000 for the new Sproughton Playground and £1,000 for the new dog & litter bins in Pinewood.

**Marks & Spencer - Copdock:** Marks & Spencer invited a number of Babergh councillors to a presentation on their plans for the old 'Toys r Us' site. The development itself looks good. It will offer all their products and services - food & drink, clothing, homewear etc. General concern for accessibility for walkers and those less mobile but the bus will stop there before going to Park n Ride. A planning application is expected shortly.

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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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