

Report for District Councillor 10th January

I hope everyone had a good family holiday over the Christmas period and were able to meet as many family members and friends as they could safely do so.

Unfortunately not too much to report since the December update but of course everyone has still been working and providing services at the Council but there was a period where the office was closed. Our Bins may have been collected a little later than normal but as far as I know all collected.

Covid continues to spread and is a worry to hospitals etc. I am sure Cllr Hicks will continue to update us on figures etc. In the meantime I have just heard the Council can now move to some online committee meetings. However they will be slightly different and the legal words are being sorted. In essence because the Officers can have delegated powers a meeting can take place, for example a planning meeting to discuss matters and give a steer to Officers who have those delegated powers. This will happen this Wednesday but will revert to in person meetings thereafter

On that point the Council will shortly be discussing council tax for next year and I think we may have some exciting news but we will have to wait and see.

As regards the Joint Local Plan you may have seen in the papers that part of it has been accepted by the Inspector which is good news. What that means is they are going to deal with it in two parts to allow the Plan to move forwards. In essence a part 1 plan would contain the majority of the strategic policies and development Management policies with Policy SPO4 regarding housing spatial distribution moved to a part 2 plan along with updated open space designation as site allocations. Settlement boundaries would also be updated in a part 2 plan the part 1 would retain the current adopted settlement boundaries in existing adopted Plans. The housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plans would also be in a part 2 plan.

Residents in low income homes across Mid Suffolk can look forward to warmer, more energy efficient future thanks to a £1.9m government funded scheme. This will be shared with Babergh council and around 80 of the least energy efficient homes will benefit to include, where possible and beneficial, solar panels air source heat pumps as well as a variety of home insulation. These homes have been identified and residents will be notified but aim to help those who would struggle to make efficiencies

Midsuffolk and Babergh have been chosen for a pilot scheme to boost participation in Neighbourhood Plans. A Neighbourhood plan has statutory weight and once adopted is used to help decide planning applications. One must remember these plans need updating and regular contact with MSDC Officers to find out what improvements might be made is recommended. It is a living document.

An Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant is now available to claim. It is for the Hospitality Leisure and accommodation premises who offer in person services and who pay business rates (based on their valuation in December 2021)

Business RV exactly £15000 or under on 31/12/21 grant £2667

Business RV £15000 less £51000 on 31/12/21 grant £4000

Business RV £51,000 or over £6000 only businesses who were trading in December 2021 are eligible.

Not sure if you recall receiving information last year regarding 'quiet lanes' but I have seen signs across the region and as we are in a heavily horsed area I wonder if the Parish Council made any claims for that. Details at www.quietlanessuffolk.co.uk Might be something which would benefit our community

Stay safe kind regards

Kathie Guthrie

District Councillor