Cllr Isabelle Reece: General Report to Parishes (October) November 2026

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

On 29th October, the Minister of Housing Communities & Local Government, Jim McMahon, made a statement to the House of Commons to the effect that the first phase of the review into LGR is complete; the criteria and process for it are robust and aligned to the Government's priorities and that they are to make arrangements for a decision on Suffolk. Elections for Shadow Unitary Authorities will take place May 2028 and assume authority on 1st April 2029.
You can see the MHCLG media release and watch the Minister's statement to the House.

Full Council 20th October

- Council voted 'through gritted teeth' to amend its Constitution to incorporate the changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegations and the Planning Charter to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026. My Group's proposed amendment to the recommendation, adding that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State to express the Council's extreme dissatisfaction with the Scheme of Delegation was agreed.
- Council voted through the final recommendation of the Community Governance Working Group (of which I am a member) that the number of parish councillors serving on Burstall Parish Council be reduced from 11 to 7.
- Cllr Peter Beer's Procedure 13 Question asked Cllr Laura Smith (Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities) if, as the Kingfisher Swimming Pool is non-operable, she had considered a temporary use of the Cornard Leisure Pool as an interim alternative by financing a roof in partnership with the new CIC formed for the Cornard Pool. Her reply confirmed that this was the case and that there are ongoing talks among the relevant parties, including owners of the Cornard Pool and CIC.
- A very lengthy Motion on Notice brought by Cllr Michael Holt on Israel's Right to Exist, Community Cohesion and Opposition to Antisemitism was considered by many of us to be a totally unnecessary and inflammatory item, which gave rise to a substantial bout of party political posturing and the Administration's even lengthier and wider amended motion being passed.

The next scheduled meeting of Full Council is 24th November
The October Cabinet Meeting was cancelled: the next scheduled meeting is on 10th November

Planning

The Planning Committee's refusal to grant permission for an extension to a Travellers' Plot has been widely reported in the press. This was an extremely controversial case, with a long and complex 'history'. The Ward Member, Cllr Bryn Hurren, had referred it to the Call-In Delegation Panel, but the Director of Planning's own decision to refer the case to Committee rendered that unnecessary. It is worth noting that this would have been the last possible Call-In by a District Councillor. Furthermore, since the new Scheme of Delegation takes effect from 31st October, as a Schedule 1 Application, this case would automatically be decided solely by Planning Officers.

National Landscapes

- The annual Sustainable Development Fund has opened for applications in both national Landscapes. The Dedham Vale Sustainable Development Fund has a fund of £30,000 to distribute and the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape has a pot of £49,000. Grants are usually made up to a value of £6,000 per project although in exceptional circumstances higher awards may be made. Link: GRANTS & FUNDING
- Staff from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) along with staff from National Landscapes across the south and east of England gathered in Bures to learn about updates to the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. The DEFRA funded programme is worth £400,000 in the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths and over £250,000 in the Dedham Vale has been well received by farmers, landowners and Environment Secretaries of State (from this Government and the previous one) on its ability to support projects to conserve and enhance natural beauty in protected landscapes.
- The Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State issued a decision re the works at Manningtree Station on 24 September 2026. The Secretary of State concluded that due to the nature, scale and location of the alleged development and the types and characteristics of the potential impacts, that the development with mitigation fully realised, that no Environmental Impact Assessment is required. The Secretary of State also concluded that the works were not considered to have led to a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty of the Dedham Vale. The Dedham Vale Society, which instigated the initial Judicial Review relating to the case, are closely monitoring the situation and considering their next steps.

For further information & news, see Dedham Vale National Landscape

For Further Information about Babergh District Council link to the Babergh District Council website at:
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