

Cllr Isabelle Reece : General Report to Parishes October 2025

Council Meeting 23rd October - Local Government Reorganisation

The main item of the Agenda was the motion to submit a business case for three unitary councils for Suffolk to be submitted to Central Government on October 26th. This was passed by a majority of 11. The three proposed councils would serve Central & Eastern Suffolk, Western Suffolk and Ipswich & Southern Suffolk. The decision rests with Central Government, which is expected to launch a public consultation in November 2025, running until February 2026, before making a final decision. For more information the link is: [See the full Case for Change on the Three Councils for Suffolk website](#)

Warm Winter Spaces Grant

The Living Well in Winter grant supports local organisations – including town and parish councils, village hall and playing field committees, sports clubs and centres, charities, social enterprises, community shops and community interest companies – to deliver accessible, inclusive spaces and affordable activities that help people stay connected throughout winter. Last year, the scheme funded 12 projects in Babergh, ranging from warm spaces and coffee mornings to films and dance classes. The grant window has reopened, with funding available for initiatives that promote social connections, physical and mental wellbeing, and access to welcoming community hubs. Eligible projects might include lunch clubs, after-school clubs, low-cost family sports sessions, craft workshops, community cafes, or any other initiative that brings people together and supports residents through the colder months. Up to £2,000 can be applied for and applications must be submitted by Sunday 19 October.

Planning – Norwich to Tilbury

National Grid's application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) was accepted at the end of September – next will be the six-month examination period. If consent was then granted, construction could begin in 2027. Babergh has previously called for a pause to the scheme so alternatives can be fully considered and consulted upon.

Whilst acknowledging the government's need to tackle energy security, carbon reduction and energy poverty, Babergh has significant concerns over the impact of energy development on communities, heritage environment and rural economy. Norwich to Tilbury has faced a huge amount of opposition from local campaigners, farmers, and local MPs, including our own MP James Cartledge. Local residents, landowners and stakeholders will be able to register an interest so they can provide comments and take part in the examination period.

Nature Recovery Strategy, National Landscapes

On 7th October Babergh Cabinet meets to approve the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is part of a nationwide move to create the space and connectivity needed on land and sea for nature to thrive, recover and be resilient. A key objective is to support the establishment of a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN). They are a result of the Environment Act 2021. They aim to identify opportunities and priorities for nature restoration at the local level. For more information see the following link: [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

The Public Consultation for the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Management Plan 2026-2031 is now closed. The Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Project Area Partnership produces a Management Plan every five years on behalf of the Local Authorities that operate across the Protected Landscape. For more information: [Management Plan – Dedham Vale National Landscape](#)

At the Dedham Vale National Landscape & Stour Valley Partnership Meeting on 12th September Lucy Gallard, of Essex Wildlife Trust, gave a presentation on *Bottengoms: Future Plans*. Lucy is the manager for the project to develop Ronald Blythe's legacy to Suffolk Wildlife Trust. For more information: [Bottengoms | Essex Wildlife Trust](#)

Macmillan Coffee Morning

I was delighted to attend the Macmillan Coffee Morning held by the residents of the Parkers Way Sheltered Housing in Nayland. Great company, coffee, and plenty of cake – all in a good cause, for which they raised over £200.

Babergh District Council is reviewing its Sheltered Housing and is considering the future of 8 sites across the district. The Review comes before Cabinet on 11th September

Communities brave the elements to show support for elite cyclists

Organisers of the Lloyds Tour of Britain this week thanked communities for braving the elements and turning out in force to support the race through town and villages across our districts. Despite gusty conditions and sometimes torrential downpours, thousands cheered on the riders at the start and finish in Stowmarket, and throughout the 100-mile plus route through Debenham, Eye, Thurston, Lavenham, Sudbury, Hadleigh and numerous villages between – including ours!

Community Governance Working Group

Last week I attended my first meeting as member of Babergh's Community Governance Working Group, which deals with parish and towns' submissions for changes to community governance, including boundary changes. For further details see the following link: [Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review](#)

For Further Information about Babergh District Council please see the Babergh District Council website: [Home - Babergh District Council – baberghmidsuffolk.com](#)