

District Council Report

Cost of Living Help

Support packages to combat the cost of living, energy bills and council tax are all available through the Council.

Many schemes and rebates have been announced in 2022 to ease the financial burden on people across the UK as well as in our districts. The Council is urging residents to check they are receiving the support they are entitled to.

Residents can apply to pay less council tax through the Council Tax Reduction housing benefit. Using the councils' online calculator, they can find out whether they would be entitled to a 95% reduction in their council tax bill.

These steps are in addition to the national schemes already introduced and coming into effect this winter which include –

- The £400 energy bills support payment; this replaced the previous £200 payment announced and will not have to be repaid. Those with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.
- A £650 cost of living payment. Paid directly into claimant bank accounts by DWP, it is split into two payments (paid in July and October) for households in receipt of universal credit, income-based jobseekers' allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, income support, working tax credits, child tax credit or pension credit
- A £300 pensioner cost of living payment. All pensioner households will receive this as a top-up to their annual winter fuel payment in November/December 2022, and in addition to the payment above
- A £150 disability cost of living payment. This is a direct payment in September for those receiving disability living allowance, person independence payment, constant attendance allowance or war pension mobility supplement.

Cork Lane Offices

Work to transform the former headquarters of Babergh District Council in Hadleigh into new homes has now begun. The work started with the felling of a number of trees to make way for the new homes. Gipping Construction have the contract to deliver 49 new homes which will benefit from the character and features of the existing building through sympathetic conversion. It is expected that the new homes will be available early summer 2024.

Tree Canopy Survey

A tree canopy survey that has been completed by the Council has identified key planting locations and significant benefits in increasing tree coverage across Babergh that will help tackle biodiversity loss and climate change.

As part of their Biodiversity Action Plan, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have been working with specialists to identify and map existing tree coverage and habitat networks across their districts.

The aim is to identify and protect existing places where biodiversity is thriving, while also locating areas with low coverage or gaps where it could be strengthened.

Carried out by Treeconomics, it has found that just over 10% of Babergh is covered by trees, ranging from 5.5% in the Lavenham ward, to 19% in the Orwell ward.

The trees are benefitting multiple public sector services by preventing more than an estimated £64m* in extra annual costs, through:

- removing more than 53,000 tonnes of carbon and storing 1.3m tonnes more
- taking out over 2,000 tonnes of pollutants from the air
- draining away almost five million cubic meters of rainwater
- improved wellbeing benefits that greener spaces bring to people.

[Free Tree](#)

The Councils popular Tree for Life scheme, which offers a free tree for new parents, is open once again for 2022 applications.

The scheme is open to all families in the districts who have or are welcoming a new born, or newly adopted child, between 1 January and 31 December 2022. Parents who may have lost a child during the same period are also able to apply for a remembrance tree.

[Solar Panel Scheme](#)

Solar Together Suffolk, a group-buying scheme which has helped over 1,500 homes in Suffolk to install solar panels and batteries, opens for new registrations on 22 August 2022.

The scheme helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers, whilst increasing their independence from the grid and reducing their carbon emissions.

[CIL Funding](#)

The Council have again paid out funds to support local communities including –

- The ongoing renovation of Gainsborough's House in Sudbury - £152,504
- Children's Play Area, Capel St Mary - £100,000
- Bus Shelter Provision, Cockfield - £25,028.08
- Community Bus Parking Area, Sudbury - £2,024.72