

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR NEDGING & NAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

TUESDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2017

Introduction

The summer months are traditionally a quiet period for Council business and in most respects that has been the case in 2017. However, the move from Babergh to Endeavour House, Ipswich has generated significant activity that's the main source of update in this report

Public Access

The move of Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council staff will be completed by the end of the September. Then, anyone wishing to visit Council Officers will have to go to Sudbury or Stowmarket unless a special meeting is arranged. The new arrangement will be significantly beneficial for the Babergh/MS Officers but it's clearly a reduction in service for those who are not computer literate/owners of smart phones etc . It's important to get the message around that a single phone number has been introduced to make it easier to contact an individual of department in the new building. It is:

0300 123 4000.

In theory at least this should make contact with Council Officers easier but it has been subject to teething troubles. Please keep me advised.

Boundary Commission

The Boundary Commission has 3 inputs for a restructuring of Babergh to come down from 43 to 31 District Councillors (in 2019). One input is from the Conservative Group for 30 DCs; one is from the opposition Group for 32 Councillors and the third is one that Councillor Dawson and I developed for 31 Councillors. This number (31) was the proposed number from the Boundary Commission. We will be given the Boundary Commission's proposal in October when the next consultation period will start.

Housing – Private Sector

The Babergh Planning Committee has approved applications for about 350 houses in the last couple of months. Some of these approvals have been as a direct result of Babergh no longer having a 5 supply of land bank of potential building sites.

New Joint Local Plan (Draft)

The new draft Joint (Babergh & Mid Suffolk) Local Plan has redefined the village built up area boundary and identified just one potential site for development in Nedging & Naughton (behind the cottages along the road into Bildeston.

It's important to appreciate that their inclusion in the new Joint Local does not mean that they will be approved when they go to a Planning Committee. If they get that far they will be subject to the full standard Planning Committee scrutiny.

Drawings For Planning Applications

As you will be aware, Babergh no longer provides large scale drawings to Parish Councils when they consider for planning applications in the village as a routine. However, you can request them and I strongly recommend that you do so but be specific to ask for **the larger versions, if you don't, they will send you the A4 that you can print off yourselves**. In my experience the larger drawings are essential if the PC is to have a full understanding of the application. Your call !

Babergh DC Bye Election – Sudbury

Following the recent resignation of a Babergh Council Conservative Member in Sudbury a bye election was held on 5th September 17. The Labour candidate won the seat **by one vote after several recounts**.

Rumour Control Merger Babergh & MS

You may have seen the article written by Paul Geater in the East Anglian about the resurrection of discussions concerning a possible merger of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils. It would be dishonest to tell you that the option is not being debated following the move to Endeavour House. However, I can absolutely assure you that no decision has been taken and from a personal perspective I am very aware that 6 years ago Babergh voters elected **NOT** to merge in a referendum by 60% to 40%. Even if another referendum is not required this cannot be ignored in any future discussion of the option.

Alan Ferguson

12th September 2018

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