

Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Report – November 2022

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

At present, residents on low income can get a discount on their council tax bills of up to 95% under a permitted council tax reduction scheme. In line with the neighbouring Suffolk borough/district councils of Ipswich and Babergh, Mid Suffolk is currently consulting with the public, affected bodies (county and police) and with various charities and voluntary organisations as to whether the council tax bills should be reduced by up to 100% for working age adults with the lowest income. It is anticipated that if the council tax reduction scheme for 2023/24 is changed in this way that the loss of income at district council level will be offset in its entirety by the administration savings resulting from the elimination of the production and collection of these 5% bills. The consultation runs to November 24th with the final decision to be made by Mid Suffolk as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

Community winter warmth funding

Winter warmth support grants, worth between £250 and £5,000, have been made available to grassroots groups to enable them to keep the doors of their activities open for longer periods this winter. These grants will enable those groups to keep operating, despite the rising costs of energy, rent and food, without the need to pass those increased costs on to residents across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Name Mid Suffolk's new bin lorries

Mid Suffolk and Babergh have launched a public competition to help them name their new, environmentally-friendly bin lorries – or refuse freighters to give them their proper designation. This is the biggest upgrade to our fleet of refuse freighters in almost 10 years. The competition judges will be looking for the wittiest play on words and the winning names will then appear on these new bin lorries. More details on the rules and closing deadline are on the Mid Suffolk website.

Stowmarket's John Peel Centre set for expansion

Mid Suffolk DC purchased the freehold of the former NatWest bank on the Market Place, Stowmarket several years ago after it had remained empty and unused. The building connects directly to the John Peel Centre (JPC) behind it. Mid Suffolk have now agreed that the building can be combined with the JPC to provide direct access off the Market Place and to provide enhanced customer facilities and to welcome more visitors, events and experiences to this much cherished cultural centre.

Delivery of an exemplar housing development in Elmswell

At Cabinet, on Monday 7th November, approval was given to progress an exemplar housing scheme on council owned land in Elmswell. Initial design work concluded that an exemplar low carbon housing scheme of circa 50 homes could deliver new affordable and market

housing, showcasing the council's new design guide and specification. This will provide high quality sustainable new homes for residents over a balance of tenures, affordable rented, affordable ownership and market-priced homes. The site design will evolve as engagement with the local community, the local planning authority and other key stakeholders progresses. The work will be undertaken through the council's own housing delivery company, Mid Suffolk Growth Limited.

More details on our website

These reports can only ever be a very brief update and both parish councillors and residents are encouraged to visit our council website for regular news announcements and to obtain more details. The council also regularly uses social media to reach and inform residents.

Tim Passmore & John Whitehead

(contact details are on parish noticeboards and on the MSDC's website but please note that Cllr Whitehead's have changed effective 3rd November)