

Mid Suffolk District Councillors' November 2020 Report to the parishes in the Claydon & Barham Ward

District Council Meetings

A special Full Council meeting will now be held on Wednesday 11th November to consider and approve putting out the Joint Local Plan (JLP) for its "Regulation 19" consultation prior to the JLP being submitted to the Planning Inspector. This "Regulation 19" consultation process period requires a minimum of six weeks and to enable this to be completed prior to Christmas a special meeting of Full Council has had to be scheduled. This part of the consultation process is to solicit technical responses rather than public responses to the JLP but is an important part of the statutory process. Prompt submission of the JLP should ensure that both districts have a new and up-to-date JLP in place prior to any changes to the planning process arising from the recent government consultations.

Other important matters that will be considered by Cabinet and/or Full Council in the near future will cover Bio-diversity Action, and Infrastructure Funding Statement, an Asset Management Strategy, a Statement of Licensing Policy and an ICT Strategy. Parish councillors and other readers of this report will appreciate that all these cover important topics but there is not space or time to go into any detail within this report. Agendas and detailed papers for all items coming before Cabinet and Full Council are available at least seven days in advance on the Mid Suffolk website for those who want to know more about these topics.

COVID-19 Grants

The latest COVID grants initiative from central government that we are coordinating and distributing at a district level covers self-isolation support payments for low-income earners. Those that fall within the definition rules and are unable to work because they have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace can now claim a £500 payment to compensate for loss of earnings. A further pot of money to enable discretionary payments has also been made available. These discretionary payments are available in exceptional circumstances to individuals not in receipt of qualifying benefits but who can demonstrate that they are facing severe financial hardship.

Councillor Localities Grants

Both your district councillors are allocated a localities grants pot each year. For 2020/21 is £7,350 each. We pool this together to create a total pot for the Claydon & Barham Ward of £14,700. Many of our councillor colleagues in other parts of the district find that grant applications are quickly received to cover the full amount of their allocations. Historically this has not been the case locally and we are keen that applications do come forward so that this money is utilised locally. If parish councillors become aware of any local organisations with projects that could benefit from grant funding please do point them in our direction. The application form and process are very straightforward.

Policing Update

The number of fixed penalty notices for Covid enforcement issued in Suffolk is now 291 (23/10/2020). Please remind everyone to stick to the regulations in spite of the frustration as the last thing needed is a permanent lockdown which would be socially and economically disastrous

There is an extra £270k allocated to the police for extra Covid related costs and a similar amount for local authorities. A protocol is being established for organisations working together which will be published by the end of the week

Financially the police are in a reasonable position for this year with a forecast underspend and with the government underwriting council tax and lost income (72%)

A new unit has been established to deal with modern slavery and exploitation in Suffolk. There is also a new domestic abuse perpetrator programme to help offenders improve their behaviour for good.

Planning permission has now been granted for the new joint police and fire station in Stowmarket.

A meeting is being scheduled very soon to discuss the funded PCSO proposal with Gt Blakenham parish council

The new serious crime disruption team is being launched at the beginning of next month focussing on drug supply and violence as well as organised crime groups.

Tim Passmore & John Whitehead

(our contact details are on parish noticeboards and on the MSDC's website)