

# Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Report – November 2021

## Joint Local Plan update

The public examination of Babergh's and Mid Suffolk's Joint Local Plan has been paused by the Planning Inspector to allow the councils further time to review its evidence. The development of a Local Plan takes on average seven years with the examination element usually taking around 18 months. BMSDC are just over 5 years into this process so although this delay takes us beyond our initial, ambitious target of winter 2021/22, we are still making good progress. This pause will allow us the opportunity to review parts of our evidence to ensure, to the satisfaction of not only the Planning Inspector, but more importantly to our residents, that the plan is thorough and robust when it is adopted. Further information on the revised timescales will be shared on the councils' website as soon as they are known.

## Local Energy Showcase

BMSDC's first Local Energy Showcase was held at Wherstead Park over two days in October. The event featured a marketplace for green energy businesses and organisations to showcase their products and services. The first day was focused on alternative energy solutions for businesses and the use of new technologies. Local energy is a growing sector with the potential to bring more skilled jobs to our region. The second day was focused on community groups and parishes and explored the benefit of local energy sources such as solar energy and ground source heat pumps. As well as the marketplace, there were keynote speeches, practical workshops and Q&A sessions lead by a panel of experts.

## Tree for Life Scheme

The return of this popular scheme which welcomes applications from new parents for free trees, is now open for 2021 applications. The scheme is open to all families who have welcomed a new arrival (birth or adoption) in this calendar year and gives these families the chance to mark their arrival by planting a tree. The deadline to apply, via the councils' website is 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Over 100 families have already applied but we encourage all families that fit the criteria to apply. Parents who have lost a child during this calendar year may also apply for a remembrance tree. The scheme aims to benefit families, communities and the environment by boosting tree coverage across the district.

## "Careeriosity" Festival in Stowmarket

A four-day event called "Careeriosity", was held in the school half-term holiday in Stowmarket. It was aimed at students in the age range 14 to 19 with sessions offering practical tips and guidance on different career paths as well as workshops providing a taster of media, technology and creative job opportunities available in our county. Although organised by BMSDC, the festival was funded through the government's Welcome Back Fund to explore careers in "Steam" – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths. The event helps to shine a light on many exciting career paths that young people may not have previously considered,

## **Policing Update (TP)**

The new draft police and crime plan has been out for consultation which closes on November 22nd. There has been a good response and details of the survey are on the PCC website

Recruitment is progressing well with full time officer numbers due to rise to well over 1330 by March 2022 and with confirmation of the further government uplift programme there should be nearly 1400 officers by March 2023

The option for Council Tax has been set at a rise of up to £10 per Band D household per year. this will depend on the final settlement figures from the Home Office which we will receive just before Christmas

The last data set from the Office of National Statistics showed crime levels in Suffolk has fallen slightly which is good news

**Tim Passmore & John Whitehead**

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