**Parish Report – July 2024**

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***Apologies, late addition due to election.***

**Communities invited to ‘fun days’ across the districts**

Community Fun Days are coming to Babergh and Mid Suffolk this summer, giving people the opportunity to come together and have fun during the school holidays.

Taking place at six locations across the districts, the fun days will provide attendees with a large selection of activities, with everything from climbing walls and axe throwing to arts and crafts and dancing on offer.

There will also be a range of information stalls where attendees can access valuable resources and information from a range of local services, charities and community organisations.

The events are part of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, with funding coordinated by Suffolk County Council and delivered locally by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

Events are happening in:

• Stradbroke Playing Field & Community Centre, Wilby Road, Eye, IP21 5JN – Friday, 26 July

• Stowmarket Recreation Ground, Recreation Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1JT– Monday, 29 July

• Stevenson Centre, Stevenson Approach, Great Cornard, Sudbury, CO10 0WD – Friday, 2 August

• Holbrook Village Hall, The Street, Holbrook, Ipswich, IP9 2PZ – Monday, 5 August

• Hadleigh Pool and Leisure, Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 5BH – Friday, 9 August

• New Green Community Centre, New Green Avenue, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 3TG – Monday, 12 August

All of the Community Fun Days are free to attend and everyone is welcome – just turn up on the day. However, children that receive free school meals can book their places on select activities and secure a free packed lunch by using the <https://eequ.org/baberghandmidsuffolkcommunityfundays>

**£1.5million fund to enhance Stowmarket town centre**

Mid Suffolk District Council is set to create a £1.5million fund to enhance Stowmarket town centre.

The Stowmarket Town Centre Gateway Fund would be made possible thanks to the council’s income from its investment in the Gateway 14 business park on the edge of the town.

The first step would be working with landlords to bring under-utilised properties, including empty shops, back into use. This could involve the council buying buildings, renting them for a short term or helping to support refurbishment.

Potential occupiers wanting a town centre presence would then be supported to find a location – opening the door for new businesses, pop-ups and other ventures looking to launch their first store or space.

The types of use that would be encouraged include arts and cultural experiences, tourism, community activities, retail, small business workspaces, leisure, food and drink and activities that bring something new to the town.

A report outlining the proposals will go to Mid Suffolk District Council’s cabinet on 15 July. If the new fund is agreed, it will go to full council for approval later this month.

**47 new electric vehicle chargepoints in council car parks thanks to £300k grant**

An additional 47 new electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints are now available in Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils’ car parks, to help more people transition to EV cars and reduce emissions.

The 22kW fast chargepoints can charge two cars at the same time, resulting in 94 new EV parking bays spread across a number of council car parks in the districts.

Funded by a £300k grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), their aim is to help more people transition to EV cars over the coming years – in turn helping to cut carbon emissions and reduce air pollution.

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| Mid Suffolk car parks with the new chargers are: | Babergh car parks also benefitting |
| * **Ipswich Street**   Stowmarket  **• Bury Street**  Stowmarket  **• Milton Road**  Stowmarket  **• Iliffe Way**  Stowmarket  **• Union Street West**  Stowmarket  **• Station Yard**  Needham Market  **• Buckshorn Lane**  Eye  **• Cross Street**  Eye | * **Cock Inn**  *Lavenham* * **Girling Street**  *Sudbury* * **North Street**  *Sudbury* * **Station Road** *Sudbury* * **Maiden Way** *Hadleigh* * **Stonehouse Road** *Hadleigh* * **High Street** *Hadleigh* |

Locations were specifically chosen to provide an off-street EV charging option for residents living nearby, who currently use on-street parking spaces.

However, they are also available for all other car park users – including visitors and tourists.

The chargepoints will be added to EV location services like Zapmap to make them as easy as possible to locate when planning a journey or visit.

**Mid Suffolk Accounts:**

The end of the financial year General Account was surplus to the projected budget by £4.6M these funds will be added to the ‘Thriving Communities Fund’ to enable it to be allocated to projects across the District

**An innovative out-of-hours monitoring service, allowing patients to receive**

**Hospital level care in their homes, has been launched in Suffolk and north east Essex.**

The service, the first of its kind in the UK, reduces admissions to emergency departments, calls to 999 or 111 services, and the need for patients to remain in acute hospital wards unnecessarily, while ensuring they can access the care they need.

In a recent trial 98.5% of patients said they were satisfied with their monitoring and care.

The virtual ward out-of-hours monitoring service has been created through a partnership with the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST).

It monitors patients who are well enough to remain at home but still need support and care.

Patients can have their vital signs such as their heart rate monitored remotely, and also have an SOS button for emergencies. They can also contact the team with any queries related to their condition or clinical equipment.

A multi-disciplinary team of nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists carry out daily ‘ward rounds’ to check in on patients.

The virtual ward service currently supports over 150 beds across the Suffolk and north

East Essex ICB region, with multiple clinical pathways, and the new service extends monitoring to allow 24/7 cover.

The virtual ward out of hours monitoring service has been commissioned by the ICB though CallEEAST, the ambulance service’s commercial wing.

Call EEAST provides overnight monitoring and contact services and can escalate any patient concerns or issues through the service’s internal Clinical Assessment Service.

**People in Suffolk experiencing anxiety and depression are to benefit from an enhanced new NHS Talking Therapies service providing tailored care and support as close to their home or place of work as possible.**

The new partnership approach brings together voluntary, community, social enterprise and statutory (VCSE) organisations and will ensure people in Suffolk can get quick and easy access to talking therapies services, enabling them to live their lives with improved mental health.

The contract award for NHS Talking Therapies, known locally as Wellbeing Services, has been announced by the ICB. The new contract will start on 1 September 2024 and will be in place for a minimum of five years.

NHS Talking Therapies are effective, confidential and free treatments delivered by trained clinicians, online, on the phone or in person. A range of therapies are offered depending on people’s symptoms, from guided self-help, cognitive behavioural therapy

(CBT) and counselling for depression, to interpersonal therapy (IPT) and mindfulness- based cognitive therapy.

Patients will be able to continue to self-refer into the new service or ask their GP to refer them. The services are available to anyone aged 16 or above and living in Suffolk.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises working with NSFT in partnership to deliver the new service include:

MTCIC – a not-for-profit social enterprise providing counselling services

Relate providing couples counselling

Shaw Trust providing employment support

Suffolk Family Carers facilitating wellbeing support to carers.

**Capital grant window reopens as £368k awarded in 23/24**

Community groups can apply for capital grants once more as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils highlight some successful projects from the 2023/24 financial year.

Capital grants help to cover the cost of a project up to a maximum of £10,000. Funding is available to help make improvements and repairs to social infrastructure, including anything from village halls and communal spaces to play areas and sports facilities.  
In the 2023/24 financial year, a total of £367,803 was distributed across the districts to dozens of successful capital grant applicants, with £128,293 awarded in Babergh and the remaining £239,510 going to projects in Mid Suffolk.

**Locality Budget**

Each Councillor has a budget of £7,350 to allocate. Eligible projects range from improvements to community facilities and sports clubs, to wildflower planting, and the purchasing of equipment for youth groups or community shops. I have sent the 2024/25 form to all my parish clerks.