

# **District Cllr Report Battsford and Ringshall Ward**

## **Barking, Battsford, Great Bricett, Offton, Ringshall, Willisham**

**March 2022**

### **MSDC Budget 2023/24**

At last week's full Council meeting the administration agreed the Green-Lib Dem group's amendment to put aside £2M to help residents most in need with energy-saving measures. The MSDC council tax freeze was also confirmed. The housing revenue account budget was also agreed, and this includes a 7% increase to council housing rents, just to try to keep pace with costs for some services soaring by almost 40% and to enable continued investment into repairs and maintenance.

### **Proposals put forward for a new Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Depot**

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils have agreed to provide a total of £12 million to improve the depot facilities. This is likely to end up with a single joint depot for the two councils. Currently, the depots at Stowmarket, Sudbury and Gt Wenham are no longer fit for future purpose, and are unlikely to meet the needs of the Council and residents in the medium term.

### **People and Place plans**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are to be part of a Government pilot project which aims to get more communities shaping the places they live with a new approach to planning. People and Place Plans are simpler than full Neighbourhood Plans and should be a more accessible way to highlight local planning priorities.

### **Pylon Action Group meeting**

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March the Essex Suffolk and Norfolk Pylon action group hosted two MPs and speakers including the X-links CEO Simon Morrish who talked about his project to deliver electricity generated by renewables from Morocco to the UK via a 3,800 km undersea cable. Derek Wyatt made a presentation about an offshore grid and energy island projects involving Denmark and other European countries.

One of the key messages of the event was that a 'coordinated offshore grid' akin to Denmark's plan would be more cost effective in the long term compared to our current 'piecemeal and pylons' approach. Our MP's reassured us that East Anglia GREENs plans will be reviewed by the Electricity System Operator's (ESO) and Offshore options will be considered in this review and community input will be sought.

### **Overview of Locality Budget**

The fund for 2022/23 is now closed. This year there was more demand than ever for the fund and a range of projects benefited. The fund contributed to the upgrade of audio-visual equipment in Offton and Willisham Village Hall, improvements to the beer garden the Battsford Punchbowl CIC, equipment for a sensory wellbeing garden at Ringshall Primary School, and tree planting and new benches for Battsford's recreation ground. The next round of locality funds will open in May 2023.

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