

District Cllr Report Battsiford and Ringshall Ward

Barking, Battsiford, Great Bricett, Offton, Ringshall, Willisham

March 2021

General Fund Budget 2021/22

At the February Council meeting next year's budget was agreed. There is to be a 1.66% increase in Council Tax despite budgeting for over £3M surplus each year for the next 3 years. Cross party working groups are to decide how to spend approx. £4M to help in the recovery following the pandemic.

Housing Revenue Account

MSDC are to increase their Council House rent by approx. £1.25 per week. Sheltered Housing service charges are to go up by £1 per week, but there are no changes to Sheltered Housing utility charges or garage rents. The Council has a Capital programme 2021-24 to develop 254 affordable and 119 shared ownership homes. MSDC are also bidding for S106 acquisitions in many new developments in the district.

Needham Lake Visitors Centre

The Council have completed the procurement process and appointed a contractor to build the Needham Lake Visitor Centre and Café. The facility is a high quality and environmentally sustainable building which will become a real asset to the Lakes as a tourist attraction and as a benefit to the local community.

Census 2021

Census day is March 21st. It is vital that everyone completes the survey as the responses will help to identify society's needs now and in the future. This information helps plan and fund services in the locality including transport, healthcare and education. All households should receive information in the post explaining how to complete the questionnaire online or to apply for a paper form if necessary.

Gateway 14

Gateway 14 has submitted a planning applicant to MSDC for a mixed-use business park. This has followed an extensive community engagement exercise. The public consultation on the planning application runs until 3rd March and it is hoped that the application will be determined in April or May.

Covid-19 Update, Community Testing Sites and Grants

The Prime Minister has now outlined the stages necessary to get back to a more normal way of life following Covid-19. For this to proceed as planned it is vital that everyone takes up their offer of a vaccine.

Rapid testing centres are rolling out across the county. Needham Market Community testing centre opened on Wednesday 24th Feb for people who are not displaying symptoms of COVID. You need to book an appointment via the SCC website <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/getting-a-test/>. If you do have symptoms you must book a test via the national website <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

Mid Suffolk is administering the Self-Isolation Support Payment for those who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. Government support grants are available for businesses in Mid Suffolk. For more information, visit: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>

The Home, But Not Alone Helpline is staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday: **0800 876 6926**

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