

District councillors report to 13 January 2020

With the general election and Christmas and New Year behind us I will just update you with one or two matters

The first draft of Mid Suffolk District Council's budget is set to be considered later this month. It is proposed that there is a 1.66% increase in its share of Council Tax adding £2.76 per year to the bill of a Band D property

Change to empty property discount, reducing the period that unoccupied and unfurnished properties pay discounted council tax from three months to 28 days in order to bring empty properties back into use.

Continued investment in CIFCO the council's property investment company – currently contributes over £1.4m a year in income to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

A reserve of £500,00 set aside to tackle climate change for 20/21

The budget report also recognises the cumulative savings/income of £30.9m achieved by the council since 2011/12 through shared services efficiencies, better use of technology and commercial opportunities.

As previously reported councillors are also considering the introduction of penalties to tackle council tax fraud, alongside the adoption of a new protocol produced by Citizens advice and Local Govt. Association for the collection of council tax arrears in order to help those in genuine need.

Moving on to the CAB. I lobbied our cabinet members to ensure we still funded the CAB at an appropriate level as sadly we lost the outreach service at Debenham but MSDC actively promotes their use as demonstrated above and in other meetings. I am pleased to report MSDC agreed to fund £260,00 over three years.

New Sixth form supported at Stowupland to the tune of £2.4m which is excellent news.

Date for Town and Parish Council liaison meetings Mid Suffolk Tuesday 4th February 2020
9.30 – 12.00 at the Mix 127 Ipswich Street Stowmarket. These are for Parish Councillors to attend contact Keziah.Ohara@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Planning – for information. The Debenham Parish Council are holding their next meeting at the Debenham Leisure centre and they will be debating further the Taylor Wimpey Site application reference DC/19/05769. The proposal is for 295 houses. I have arranged with the planning officer to extend the time for comments to be put on line until the 31 January 2020.

As with any application please note Mid Suffolk have no control over when they come in and whether they are included in any Neighbourhood Plan or on land supported by the call for sites. The Planning Officer has to deal with what is before them. Large applications go to committee as a matter of course.

Finally please be aware that the Enforcement section is revamping how they deal with matters along with updating of updating software so they have asked that although cases will be prioritised some decisions may take a little longer. The upgrade should be completed by the end of March as it is not straightforward as cases come in and current cases have to be settled.

Cllr Kathie Guthrie Ward member for Debenham Ward 01728 861752