

# District Councillor Report: Bacton Ward – Sept. 2023

Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone

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|   | <p>The Pride in Your Place campaign continues with the aim to clean-up neighbourhoods, build community pride and tackle the doorstep issues that voters say matter to them.</p> <p>Under the funding scheme, parishes with a population over 1,500 are eligible to apply for up to £400 in funding. For those with a population below 1,500, up to £250 can be applied for. Applications can also be made by voluntary, community and social enterprises with support from their local town or parish council. They must be received by the council by 31 October 2023 and awards and payments will be made within 21 days of receipt of an eligible application. Can I encourage clerks and council chairs to make use of these funds to make a difference in your village.</p> |
| <b>New business grants</b>                                      | <p>Businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are set to benefit from a new round of funding thanks to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). Mid Suffolk District Council was allocated £821,658 over the next two years. Grants are available between £5,000 - £10,000 per application and will fund a maximum of 50% of total project costs up to the maximum value of £10,000.</p> <p>Eligible projects include net-zero developments, agriculture and farm diversification, visitor economy business expansion as well as SME investment and diversification or investment in community facilities in our rural areas.</p>  |
| <b>Free trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme</b>             | <p>This scheme is open for applications that both help wildlife and have public access. Applications can be for individual trees, tree planting schemes, small community woods, hedgerows, community or scattered orchards and wildflower meadows.</p> <p>MSDC also want to increase tree canopy cover across the district, currently well below the national average. We want to help get 30% of our land managed for wildlife by 2030 (30 by 30 national initiative). We are doing what we can on the council's land, but need help on other land to be really successful. This can include parish land, school grounds, recreation grounds, land open to the public regularly, millennium greens and community spaces.</p>  |
| <b>Support for residents struggling with the cost of living</b> | <p>The following support was provided for residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who were struggling with the cost of living during 2022/23. £100,000 was awarded to tenants through the household support fund, £150,000 to households struggling with the cost of their rent through Discretionary Housing Payments and a reduction in council tax for low-income households. During last winter, a total of £110,995 was provided to 62 organisations through Winter Warmth grants. Over 588 homelessness applications were received in Mid Suffolk. Additionally, Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice received a 30% uplift in funding.</p>  |
| <b>Solar farm applications</b>                                  | <p>Mid Suffolk is receiving a number of planning applications for solar farms, and the current central government policy gives us very little scope for refusing these – if a planning committee does decide to refuse an application, this can be overturned at appeal with significant costs for the council.</p>  |
| <b>Permitted development rights</b>                             | <p>The government is currently consulting on a further relaxation of planning rules and further expansion of permitted development rights – particularly allowing the conversion of farm buildings and business premises to residential.</p>   |

**Planning app. DC/  
23/1154/OUT –  
Warehousing  
Shepherds Grove**

Discussions are taking place with MSDC planning re: traffic implications of this development. The aim being to get MSDC to put pressure on Suffolk Highways to require traffic restrictions to be imposed for the interests of the impacted Mid Suffolk villages.

Cllr Andy Mellen

[Andrew.Mellen@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Mellen@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

07790 992619