

Babergh District Council Report for March 2021.
By Cllr Bryn Hurren.

Despite concerns being voiced from almost all who were consulted, it does seem that the CC and PCC elections are going to go ahead on 6th May this year, the PCC elections were already delayed from last year. The popular view from a huge majority of returning officers was to delay the elections until September when hopefully we will all be able to move around much safer and the District Councils will have had time to recover and allocate staff to this function. Should the election be formally declared on 25 March the Councils will enter a period of Purdah which means that no favour or political view should be shown by staff and Chief Executive. Postal votes will be readily available by all those who wish to apply and all precautions will be taken in the polling booths so that all feel safe to vote. These elections are important for local democracy so I would urge all to engage and exercise their right to vote.

At Babergh the incidents of Coronavirus amongst the local population are down to 36 per 100,000 which is the lowest they have been for some time, having said that we have lost now 236 of our residents to this horrible virus and care needs to be taken now more than ever as we try to move back to our more normal lives.

Since we have last met Babergh District Council have set their 20/21 budget. We have proposed an increase to our share of the Council tax by 2.96% which is £5.00. yearly for a band D property, or just under 10p weekly. Our share of the council tax is however only about 9% and as other authorities are raising their share by at least the same amount, the total increase in tax per household will be at least £60.00 per Band D property. I do feel that these constant increases are unsustainable and we either need to look at three unitary councils across Suffolk better devolved government or better funding from central government. There is also a small increase in the Brown bin service of £2.50 per week and free car parking has been cut to one hour which was bitterly fought for. We are also increasingly supported by our CIFCO investment of now nearing £100 million which in the last financial year brought in close to £1.5 million. to help with budgetary pressures. This along with income from our services and the solar project are now making up an ever increasing percentage of our income.

I will comment on Church view, locality budget and other matters at your meeting this evening.

Happy as always to answer questions from members of Council or Public.

All Very Best Regards to All. Bryn.