

Annual Report for Boxford Parish Meeting.

Given by Cllr Bryn Hurren 27th April 2026

Firstly to tell you that this year has been dominated by LGR (local government re-organisation) This was stated as a government intent in late 2024 and has remained on the agenda ever since that time and although the Mayoral election for an area across all of Norfolk and Suffolk has been put back 2 years, everything else remains on track for unitary elections in 2028, with a 3 council set up for Suffolk along with Norfolk. This means that these councils will do everything that is currently carried out by BaberghMidSuffolk along with the current Suffolk County Council.

This proposal was put forward by the combined efforts of the 5 districts and boroughs across Suffolk due to worries of 1 council being too large and remote to do a proper job. While the decision has been largely welcomed by the good people of Suffolk, council leader Mathew Hicks did not take it well and issued a pitiful statement, along with a withering speech.

For us the district council, we have once again set a balanced budget with a modest tax increase of 2.9%, this brings the cost of Babergh up to just over £4.00 a week for a band D property, which I feel is very good value indeed for all we do, this includes planning to a set prescribed standard, with a housing plan and land supply into the future to allow for prescribed growth, heritage and environmental work to ensure that we and our buildings are kept safe and up to a required standard, without ever allowing a complete free for all.

Moving seamlessly on to waste collection, this has now moved on to a highly technical operation with recycling becoming a vital part of this. This is now moving on again with changes to what we collect and its frequency, glass at kerbside will now be an option along with some widening of options for more recycling and much less in the black bin. Also now we have a commitment to keep the bottle banks for another year or so and I believe payments will be given up front, this will be ratified after the election when purdah has ended. The days of a tin bin on the shoulders of the operative tipping it into an open lorry and then clattering onto the street are truly over.

A good time to remind you that in BaberghMidSuffolk, no kerbside waste goes to landfill, all goes to the Power from Waste facility to make electricity for the national grid. Also our solar panel initiative on just over 2,000 of our council houses which brought in just over £350,000 in tariffs during the last financial year, as well as providing cheap electricity for our tenants.

I will just touch on housing, our target numbers remain at 775 per annum for Babergh but for how long I am unable to say, the demand for housing generally is slowing but the need for first time housing and downsizing is increasing quite dramatically.

Maybe with costs of raw materials and labour increasing and housing not selling, this might be a good chance to actually build something that is actually needed most.

One of the things that we are doing currently is to organise the County Council elections for probably the last time. We should be doing the elections for the unitary shadow cabinet and PC next year but much can change.

Ask me in 12 months.

For Boxford itself, I have been instrumental in saving and negotiating the deal for the Woodland Trust to take over Primrose Meadow. I understand that clearing work has started already and contractors are booked to erect gates and fencing along the front perimeter, this will I am sure become a jewel in Boxford's crown and brilliant asset for nature and our village, along with the nearby pond.

Some quite tough talking to stress upon the Brook Hall care facility that they need to create some more adequate parking for their increased parking needs. I have meeting booked after the elections with relevant planning officer.

Parking in the village remains the most serious problem we face and I sincerely hope that the long term ambition to put a car park on the designated area beside the school and the disposal of Bell House can be enacted this year. This must be a goal now along with meaningful parking restrictions for the village. If everyone can work together on this, it will be the Parish Councils greatest ever achievement for our village.

Happy to take questions from PC and Public. Bryn.