

In Touch for August

Derek Davis - Babergh District Councillor for Ganges ward (Shotley & Erwarton)

)New Locality Grants Fund

One piece of good news for all our community, sports or social groups, that may have got lost in among all the Covid-19 emergency funding is a new grants scheme available for clubs or organisations in Shotley & Erwarton.

I'm delighted to say that in my role as Cabinet portfolio holder for Communities, I have secured a Locality Budget for all Babergh District councillors, who can spend it within their ward, funding whatever groups or clubs at their discretion. It is not a huge amount, £2,000 for the year and I plan to try and share it with as many worthy groups as possible, with small amounts from £250. We know how even small amount can make a huge difference in getting a scheme started or supporting existing good causes. Use the contact details at the bottom for more information or to details on how make an initial bid.

Cross party working

I've said it before and I'm happy to say it again, being an Independent councillor means we can focus on getting things done for our communities, without party politics getting in the way. It also gives us the freedom to work with those parties with good policies and give credit where it is due.

I was delighted to second a Greens proposal for Babergh to adopt a cycling strategy, including having a dedicated officer, to ensure all new developments factor in foot and cycle paths, while also developing and improving current cycle and footpath routes.

We also saw a new policy adopted meaning greater emphasis is made on achieving our stated aim of being carbon neutral district by 2030. That was put together by Conservative Liz Malvisi, my cabinet colleague for the environment, who worked very closely on a cross party basis to put together on the strategy which was voted through in July.

Also, big congratulations to the AONB, in particular chairman David Wood, in getting the extension to the Suffolk Coast and heaths area, which now takes in even more of the Shotley peninsula and into parts of north Essex. I enjoy being on the AONB committee and seeing at first hand the impressive work that is done to protect and preserve our area.

I also find the Suffolk Community Safety Partnership a worthwhile group and was delighted to be elected vice-chairman this month. The partnership work in many areas of community safety and well-being for our residents and includes representatives from the police, fire service, CCGs, housing association, and Babergh, Suffolk County, West Suffolk and Mid-Suffolk councils.

Shellfish foraging update

Working together and getting things done, was the cornerstone of our skirmish with the proliferation of shellfish foragers that flooded our foreshore at Shotley. I worked extremely closely with the Inshore Fisheries Protection team, whose knowledge, experience and pro-active actions, along with Babergh's health and safety and environmental officers meant we were able to get on top of the issue. As I write this, it would seem the commercialised collection of oysters, cockles and mussels slowed to a trickle, and now appears to be over. We will take swift action once more if they come back in numbers.

Contact: me at derek.davis@babergh.gov.uk or call 787275 or 07548153784