

District Councillor Report: Palgrave Parish Council

March 2024

Council Budget agreed	The first Green Administration budget was agreed by Council in February. There will be a 2% increase in Council Tax (lower than most authorities). The cost of services to residents and communities is expected to rise by £1.8M, and Core Government funding does not match inflationary pressures, so the Council Tax increase should help protect key services and develop the priorities of the Council. The Green Administration is putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the heart of all its activities.
Housing Revenue Budget	The housing revenue budget has financial challenges ahead, notably an increase of £1.1M in the cost of operation. The housing revenue account and council general fund account are separate - there is no way to cross subsidise. In order to compensate a 7.7% increase in housing rents will be applied to keep pace with rising costs. There will also be increases in service and utility charges for sheltered housing tenants. Advice and help for those struggling financially is available from the Council.
iESE Council of the Year Award	Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have been jointly awarded <i>Council of the Year</i> for their transformation, collaboration and focus on their communities. This was awarded by the iESE, a not-for-profit organisation created by local authorities as a shared resource to transform public services and retain experience within the sector.
Rural Transport grants	A new rural transport grants scheme has just been launched to help provide passenger transport options across the district. Existing community transport operators can apply for funding before 15 th April. More details are available here: https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/rural-transport-grants-scheme .
Joint local plan (Part 2)	All parish and town councils across both districts have all been invited to complete a survey about the services and facilities present in each area. This information is needed to prepare the next phase of the Joint Local Plan.
Tree Cover	SCC has secured over £200K from the Government's local authority Treescapes Fund for over 1500 new trees in a bid on behalf of all Suffolk councils, including MSDC. The funding will go toward planting as well as maintaining the trees.
Funding for Insulation	Funding is available to help residents with the cost of installing loft insulation, in partnership with Travis Perkins. There are four product options available and residents will receive a 50% discount off their purchase (up to £200), with free delivery. According to The Energy Saving Trust, it is estimated that an uninsulated home loses a quarter of its heat through its roof. Correctly installed insulation should pay for itself many times over in its 40-year lifetime. More details can be found at the Green Suffolk website https://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/grants/

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