

District Councillor Report – Battisford and Ringshall Ward

Battisford, Ringshall, Great Bricett, Barking, Offton and Willisham

January 2024

Call for land to support Nature Recovery

MSDC working with The Woodland Trust are calling on landowners to help us increase tree coverage and improve biodiversity in the district. Of particular interest is land of low agricultural value, close to existing natural habitats, or land that can help join up existing habitats and create new 'wildlife corridors'. Our district has a very low tree cover, around 8%, and MSDC is actively planting more trees and changing the way our public open spaces are managed.

Flood Relief and Mitigation Payments

Flood payments are being processed by Mid Suffolk based on information from the SCC highways reporting tool and information submitted to MSDC. Homeowners who want to make their homes more resilient to future flooding can also access a grant worth £5000 from DEFRA and Suffolk County Council. Homeowners are required to pay for a survey before the grant can be awarded. More information can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/property-flood-resilience-grant>

Empty homes and Council Tax

MSDC are proposing to increase the amount of Council Tax payable on long-term empty homes to incentivise bringing those homes back into occupation. If approved, the new policy will come into play in April 2024. It will attract levies of 100% for homes left empty for one to five years, 200% for five to ten years and 300% for ten years or more, with exceptions for properties under probate or undergoing major repairs. Additionally, it is proposed that second homes attract a 100% levy from April 2025.

Fees and Charges for 2024/25

There will be increases in some fees and charges set by Mid Suffolk for some of our non-statutory services such as litter and dog bin services and taxi licence renewal. Inflation and labour costs involved, and general cost increases were strong factors. Fees and charges are reviewed annually; however, MSDC cannot charge for some statutory services and national Government sets others.

Home Insulation

Eligible households will be able to apply for energy efficiency measures in their own homes, including homes that are privately rented. Applications will be open from 15th November 2023. Full details to be available soon. Households that are particularly vulnerable can continue to access help via the wider Suffolk scheme www.warmhomessuffolk.org

Locality Award

This year's locality awards are still open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for amounts of £250 or more. Please contact me for an application form.

Dr Daniel Pratt

Mid Suffolk District Councillor

E: daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk

T: 07775389193