

Barry Stone - County Councillor for Clavering

Parish Council News Update



Community Tree Give Away Opportunity (2021 Pilot Scheme)

It's not too late to get your application into me for the Tree Give Away. The deadline has been extended to **14th January 2022** so please publicise the give away to all your residents as these trees can go to any interested households as well as community groups.

Tree stock is available in packs of and falls into three categories:

1) 10 Fruit Trees: For community orchards or for interested households to plant a tree in their garden.

2) 10 Small Trees: Suitable for gardens and small spaces (mini copses)

3) 10m of Native Hedging Plants (these could also be used for filling the gaps in existing hedges)

(This equates to approximately 3 packs of fruit trees, 9 packs of small trees and 8x 10m of native hedging plants per county councillor to allocate to parish councils –depending on the uptake across the 84 County Councillors, more stock could

become available and the 1MT team will keep a track of this.)

We are suggesting these three options as they seem to be the most popular requests to our team so far.

Packs include tree guards, supports, postage and packaging.

To help reduce postage costs we suggest that tree packs are delivered to parish councils for distribution within the parish.

A Guide To The Process

Step 1

Parish Councils submit their planting schemes to County Councillors for the coming planting season (which runs from November 2021 to March 2022)

County Councillors review the applications and identify which planting schemes to authorise under this 2021 pilot scheme.

Step 2

The county councillor contacts the successful parish councils and gives them the green light to proceed with the application process.

The County Councillor needs to keep track of their £1500 allocation for this scheme (there may be opportunities to go over this amount but that must be negotiated with the 1MT team).

Step 3

Parish Councils fill in the on-line application form (available around mid- September) to request their trees.

Applications will close from Jan 14th 2022 to allow tree nurseries to manage their stock.

To keep costs down, Parish Councils will need to identify a named person as the direct point of contact for tree nurseries to deliver the reserved trees.

Step 4

The application will be reviewed by the 1MT team who will verify the application supports the “right tree, right place” principles.

Step 5

The 1MT team will contact the applicant to confirm that the application has been successful and trees will be dispatched from the supplier to the named recipient, as specified in the online form.

Unsuccessful applicants will be directed towards other funding opportunities for obtaining trees for their planting schemes.

Step 6

Suppliers will liaise directly with the named recipient for tree delivery. This person will receive the trees and then distribute as required throughout the parish.

Step 7

Once planting has taken place, the parish council must inform the councillor and the 1MT team and the planting added to the 1MT map. The 1MT team are developing a user - friendly form to enable this and will be in touch with further details of this in the autumn.

This map will build a visual picture of all the tree planting around the county and allow people to see how their planting contributes to the bigger picture.

£106m bid for better buses in Norfolk

Ambitious plans have been announced to bring up to a £106m boost to bus services across Norfolk.

Supported by all Norfolk’s bus operators, over the next 5 years Norfolk’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) aims to simplify ticketing and journey information, cut fares for under 25s, bring in cleaner and greener buses, improve accessibility and bus stops, and make better and more frequent links between the places people live, work and shop.

The approach will also take account of the future transport challenges arising from the need to decarbonise transport while continuing to stimulate economic growth and recovery following the Covid 19 pandemic.

Public transport is a vital service in our rural county, not only for people to get to school, work, shops and medical appointments, but also key to keeping our market towns and urban centres vibrant and accessible. The important role that public transport plays to alleviate social isolation and help towards peoples' wellbeing, and to assist with our roadmap to net zero will be targeted in particular.

Norfolk's plan was developed following a call from the Government in March 2021 for local authorities and bus operators to work together to develop plans for their area. The detailed document, which has been submitted to the Department for Transport this week, links closely with the government's ambitions on decarbonising transport, better buses and active travel, as set out in the Decarbonising Transport and Bus Back Better initiatives.

Objectives set out in the plan, and agreed with bus operators, are:

- To rebuild and increase passenger confidence
- To have a green and sustainable transport offer
- To have a public transport network that is the first choice mode for most journeys, for existing and new customers
- To have a simple and affordable fares and ticketing offer

Work is already well underway to set up a partnership board, which will include bus operators, to drive forward the aims of the bus service improvement plan over the next five years. It is expected that funding approvals will be announced later this financial year.

Budget

Highly challenging circumstances surround the county council's latest budget proposals, requiring further savings that need to be found and we should explore every option to avoid raising Council Tax by more than is absolutely necessary.

The council's cabinet wants to avoid a Council Tax rise of over three per cent and has asked officers to find £5 million of extra savings.

A report to cabinet recommends that the council's executive directors find "further recurrent savings of £5 million" and "agree to undertake a full review of how the council operates to deliver its future services and strategy".

The report says that, until the financial settlement for councils is confirmed in December, there is considerable uncertainty over the council's funding, plus rising pressures:

- Most of the additional Government funding for adult social care reform will be focussed on the NHS in the next three years

- The Government's fair funding review and reforms to business rates were not mentioned in the budget and may be postponed again
- There is no new funding for Covid pressures
- The end of the pay freeze and the National Insurance increase will add to pressures, particularly for adult social care providers

The council must bridge a £39 million budget gap next year. It has already identified £2.2 million of savings and is now bringing forward new proposals, worth £24.4 million:

- Adult Social Services: £12.440 million
- Children's Services: £4.315 million
- Community and Environmental Services: £2.961 million
- Strategy and Transformation: £0.3 million
- Finance and Commercial Services / Finance General: £4.175 million

Once cabinet has considered the report, it will go to the council's select committees, followed by the scrutiny committee on November 24th. It will then go out to public consultation.

Cabinet will consider the overall budget position and consultation findings in January 2022 and make its final recommendations to council. The full county council meeting will decide the budget and Council Tax level on February 21st 2022.

Get ready for Winter

Winter will soon be upon us and as more unsettled weather returns, the Met Office have launched their 2021 'WeatherReady' campaign. WeatherReady is run in partnership with Cabinet Office and provides tips and guidance on simple actions people can take to reduce the impact of severe weather on their lives.

Why not take one action this weekend to make yourself and your home more 'WeatherReady':

- Plan to get your flu jab – to protect yourselves and others
- Check your vehicle is winter ready – top up your screen wash, check tyres and pack a winter kit
- Check your heating – don't get caught out in the cold
- Check your plumbing – like making sure your pipes are insulated and knowing where your stop tap is
- Weatherproof your garden – tidy items that could be impacted by strong winds or flooding
- Keep basic supplies handy – keep a torch, water and emergency numbers where you can easily find them
- Make alternative plans – for you commute or any caring responsibilities

- Think of vulnerable neighbours – do they need help with supplies or information to keep them safe during winter?

As always, I am here to help in any way I can and will always respond to email and telephone requests for assistance.

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Kind regards

Barry