

COMMUNITIES ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



INTRODUCTION



The Communities Team works to strengthen and support communities in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, in line with the Corporate Strategy priorities of Communities and Wellbeing.

Summary of the Year:

What an exciting year the communities team has had. During 2023/24 we have continued to deliver and support a number of activities and programmes that contribute to the success of our communities whether that be in supporting our diverse VCFSE through community grants, advice and guidance, or through working with health and leisure partners to deliver exciting new opportunities aimed at encouraging and supporting communities to become more active.

We have created a new service called Feel Good Suffolk that aims to support those in our district wanting to become healthier by stopping smoking, managing their weight and to be more active.

And lastly through continued and effective partnership arrangements the team has worked hard to ensure that our districts remain safe places to live, work and visit.

Vicky Moseley, Corporate Manager for Communities

WHAT WE DO



COMMUNITY GRANTS & DEVELOPMENT

We work with voluntary and community groups across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to support community activity and the creation and improvement of community, sport and play facilities.



LEISURE, SPORT & WELLBEING

We manage sport and leisure provision through contracted providers. We also support community-based activities through help to local sports clubs and by coordinating the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme for children.



HEALTH & PARTNERSHIPS

We support the health of our communities with health partners and voluntary & charitable organisations on projects such as Dementia Connect service, Ageing Well programme, and Active Living Pathway.



COMMUNITY SAFETY & RESILIENCE

We work with internal and external agencies to assist with preventing and designing out crime and disorder across the district.

END OF YEAR RECAP



Health, Wellbeing, Sport and Leisure

8,088

eligible children attended free enriching, holiday activities with nutritious food.

477

clients supported by Feel Good Suffolk to support adult weight management, quit smoking and physical activity.

12

schools engaged in the Active Schools project.

14

care homes supported through Dementia projects.

Community Grants



£367,803.92

Capital Grant allocated to 50 projects to support community initiatives

£58,094.00

invested to support communities to live well in winter

£306,678.52

Locality Awards spend

£1,346,726.33

Section 106 allocated to 55 social infrastructure projects



Community Safety

475

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Cases reviewed

3

Closure Orders (court orders that prohibit access to premises for a specified period to prevent nuisance or disorder)

2

ASB Case Reviews (Formally known as Community Triggers)

18

Training & Awareness events

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our Health and Wellbeing strategy aims for families to lead active, healthy, safe and independent lives.

Holiday Activities

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, funded by the Department for Education until March 2025, offers free holiday activities and food for children eligible for means tested free school meals over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils also fund half term activities for eligible children.

This funding ensures that eligible children receive nutritious food as well as fun, enriching activities during school holidays to help keep them active.

We have strived to ensure activities are spread across all rural and urban areas of the districts. We have worked with providers to offer a wide variety of activities including: dance, multi sports, and science experiments.



Guardian Feedback - "Family Park Cooking was a great way to spend time as a family, and for my son to learn life skills."

8,599

HAF spaces made available

6,327

HAF spaces booked

2,127

Half Term Activities spaces made available

1,761

Half Term Activities spaces booked

25

Activity Providers

- **80.2%** of guardians reported an improvement in the young person's confidence from partaking in the activities.
- **62.6%** of guardians reported an improvement in the young person's physical health
- **61.5%** of guardians reported an improvement in the young person's mental health
- **77%** of guardians either 'liked' or 'strongly liked' the food provided

Child Feedback - "I had the best day ever, I made new friends and had a yummy cheese toastie."



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Youth Social Prescribing

BMSDC and partners have commissioned a joint project with The Mix and 4YP to deliver a Youth Social Prescribing programme in 4 schools. Since September 2023, youth workers have been working in the selected schools to support young people with their general wellbeing and promoting activities that encourage good mental health as well as providing opportunities to learn new life skills and build positive relationships and connections both within the school and the wider community. So far this has been achieved through 1-1s with young people requiring individual support, group sessions, attendance at assemblies as well as drop in sessions and the creation of 'safe spaces'. The Mix and 4YP have also worked with feeder schools promoting the five ways to wellbeing and to support year 6 students with the transition between primary and secondary schools.

Case Study

A Youth Worker was asked to support the Young Person who was struggling within school with panic attacks and anxious thoughts. The young person had moved from Ukraine with his family two years ago and started in Year 7 this year speaking little English. They were finding their school experience overwhelming. The Youth worker established that there are 41 students who have English as a Foreign Language within the school, who may be experiencing similar challenges. The Youth Link Worker explored this with the Head of Year and Head of English as an Additional Language (EAFL) and the idea of a new club within school was formed with the hope of increasing the sense of community for young people experiencing this barrier. This new project is started after the October half-term with personalised invitations to those within the EAFL remit, including the young person above. The project is named 'World Café Club' and will aim to create a safe space where students who identify with a diversity of cultures and languages can be nurtured and celebrated.

"The impact of having a youth worker in school is massive. Their wealth of knowledge and contacts is paramount to helping the school function in a high level. The young people have great things to say about their school youth worker and feel they can relate to them and feel comfortable in speaking to them. Our school youth workers' attitude and personality shine through at all times and they are every student's biggest advocate. They build relationships of trust with us and are a joy to work alongside."

Stowmarket High School

Girls Group

Diadem Girls Group is a group to help girls improve their confidence, mental health, relationships. Over the course of six 2-hour sessions, the youth workers facilitate discussion about a wide variety of topics that affect young women today. With games, activities and guided discussion, Diadem provides the space to explore and develop thoughts on healthy friendships and relationships, body image, social media, self-worth and future aspirations. These sessions are delivered in a fun-filled way, which provides the potential to create new friendships that can support beyond the group sessions.

6,201
young people
were engaged
with between
September 2023 -
March 2024.

1,284
1:1s
have taken place
since September
2023.

3,698.61
contact hours
within schools have
taken place via the
Youth Workers since
2023.

2,320
young people
have attended
assemblies where
the Youth Worker
has presented.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our Dementia Projects

Our dementia projects have reached many local groups, care homes and residents, plus their families and carers, across the district.

Silver Sunday

Funding was provided to Hadleigh Memories Café to host an intergenerational Rock 'n' Roll themed disco on 5th October to celebrate Silver Sunday, a national older people's awareness day. The event was well attended, and activities included games, dancing and food.

Silver Sunday highlights loneliness among older people, celebrates their contributions, enhances their happiness, and fosters a sense of unity among generations.



Interactive Tables

Over a 6-month period, 2 tables lent by OM Interactive rotated between 6 care homes across Mid Suffolk. These tables supported those with sensory or memory issues through playing music and quizzes. Feedback captured that it brought families together.

Interactive tables stimulate brain parts, offering activities for residents to engage in individually or with care staff and family.



12

Care Homes supported

13

Events in community and care settings

400

older residents have benefitted from Council funded events

Worked in partnership with over

20

VCFSE providers

Interactive Pets

14 interactive pets were gifted to residents living with dementia at **4 care homes**.



Interactive Pets support older residents by offering companionship, bringing comfort to those people who have previous owned pets, and offer a sense of purpose. Staff in the care homes also enjoyed interacting with the residents through play with the pets.

Residents reported the positive psychological impact of the interactive animals as they boost their wellbeing by encouraging socialising in a more relaxed environment, and thereby lowering feelings of isolation.

"Singing for the brain"

Mid Suffolk District Council worked with various partners to host **8** interactive and therapeutic musical sessions for residents living with dementia. These sessions are designed to engage residents and promote wellbeing.

Over **140** residents attended and feedback highlighted reduced stress levels as well as increased energy from attending.

Singing for the Brain sessions are already widely popular across the districts. These bespoke sessions offer residents the opportunity to sing and share joyful experiences, stimulate muscles through low impact tapping and dancing to music, and bringing each other together as a collective group.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our Dementia Projects

Pop-up Farm

In May 23 The Council funded a fun and interactive pop-up farm in Stowmarket, including mini donkeys and petting animals. Hosted by partners at Stowmarket Dementia Community Group, the event attracted over 100 people, including older residents, grandchildren, and carers, and provided opportunities to interact with animals and local agencies. Residents living with dementia, from care homes, Suffolk Sight and other charities attended the event. The event created opportunities to sign-post residents to local agencies and support, including Communities Together and Suffolk Family Carers.



Musical Memories

The Council ran 'Musical Memories' interactive, orchestral sessions and performances in both districts to support older residents and those living with dementia. The projects visited 10 community and care settings, featuring workshops, performances, and a culminating event with acclaimed musicians. These events were created to provide unique and high quality musical wellbeing experiences to residents, and offered opportunities for communities to make music together and learn new skills. In Mid Suffolk, attendees co-produced a one-off piece called 'Community Spirit'.

"More of this please! Getting older shouldn't be a barrier to being creative and enjoy culture."

The Archie Project

In Mid Suffolk four primary schools were funded to take part in an intergeneration project linking 30 children per school with a neighbouring care home to learn about dementia and its effects. The project included interactive online learning which connected schools and care home residents, focusing on the story of "Archie" and dementia's impact on his life. During the year long programme, students visited care homes to share memories and activities together.



Family Fun Days 2023



The Communities Team organised 5 family fun events which took place during August in Eye, Stowmarket, Shotley, Hadleigh and Sudbury.

Providers offered a variety of free activities for families to take part in together, ensuring universal accessibility. Over 100 children took part each day and eligible children received a free lunch. Activities included a climbing wall, archery, and circus skills, despite the weather.



100% of individuals who attended a Family Fun Day would return next year

We also worked with Cromwood Housing Group to provide transport to the events and free lunches to families with refugee status.

Support services, such as Citizens Advice, Warmer Homes, and BMSDC Housing Teams, also attended the events to assist with cost of living enquiries.

200
families
received provider
services

139
Picnics were
provided to
families

Provider feedback: "Several families (parents and grandparents) expressed their gratitude in these free events being organised, especially because of the cost of living crisis."

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our Volunteering Strategy

Our work to support and develop volunteering infrastructure across the districts has been twofold. Internally, the Councils' new Volunteering Policy raised the profile and has strengthened a culture of volunteering. Externally, training, networking and recruitment opportunities have improved the volunteer experience within VCFSE groups, contributing to strengthening retainment.

MHFA Training

724

beneficiaries

26 delegates completed the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training over 3 different intakes, reaching 698 staff and therefore a total of 724 beneficiaries. 100% of respondents praised the course for its impact on team support and workplace wellbeing.

"I honestly felt that this was an excellent course and could not think of any way to improve it. I feel the MHFA course is as important as First Aid within the workplace. I hope going forward it becomes compulsory or at least made best practice to have MHFA people within all organisations".

ESV Policy

Approved by cabinet in October and launched in November 2023, the new Employer Supported Volunteering policy allows staff to take 3 days of volunteer leave each year, potentially investing £62,400 a year in local VCFSE groups.

Staff volunteering will potentially provide 2000 hours a year of additional manpower to VCFSE groups in the district.

3

days of volunteer leave each year for staff

40

groups supported with a donation

Valuable Volunteers

The BMSDC Valuable Volunteers campaign received 54 nominations for 40 groups, indicating over 200 years and 18,000 hours of volunteer service by staff across the districts. A staff thank you lunch was organised, and the relevant VCFSE groups received donations.



BMSDC staff thank you lunch

Volunteer Managers Training

A two-day training session on Volunteer Management was delivered to volunteer coordinators of 9 VCFSE groups in Mid Suffolk and 10 in Babergh, covering a variety of topics including volunteer law, attracting volunteers, and handling difficult volunteer situations. The session introduces the key principles of volunteer management and how to apply them in an organisation.

19

volunteer coordinators trained in VCFSE groups

Staff Volunteering Days

The Communities team volunteered for 75 hours with the Befriending Project's Red Rose Community Farm in Lindsey, digging to enhance their sensory garden, painting animal enclosures, and cutting back and clearing hedging.

The Communities team and HR & OD teams volunteered at the Food Museum which involved sorting, cataloguing, cleaning and moving over 500 objects to allow for roof repairs. The staff benefitted through this rewarding work as they built on teamwork and boosted staff morale.



Communities team volunteering day at the Red Rose Community Farm

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Feel Good Suffolk

Overview of Service

Feel Good Suffolk launched on **1st October 2023**.

Feel Good Suffolk (FGS) supports people to make positive changes to their health and wellbeing by losing weight, giving up smoking, and becoming more active. It is designed to provide a choice of services close to people, at the right time to support steady and lasting improvements to their health.

Milestones and Key Activities

- Working in partnership with all the District and Borough Councils in Suffolk and Public Health to design and develop the service.
- Delivering behaviour coaching to clients to make meaningful changes in their lives.
- Working in partnership with slimming world to support individuals manage a healthy weight.
- Funding workshops delivered by Allen Carr's Easyway to help people to stop smoking.
- Partnership with Leisure Centres to create access to physical activity opportunities.
- Introducing Swap to Stop and Nicotine Replacement Therapies services.

1,112

referrals received

452

interventions prescribed to clients in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

"The fact that you get a free membership for 3 months through Feel Good Suffolk has helped me to get started...Going to the gym has made a massive difference - it is helping to counter-act my weight gain. My flexibility has also improved, and I can now touch my hands together behind my back and lift 2kg weights above my head! It has been great for my mental health too - I just feel so much better. When I come out of the gym I am buzzing!"

Referrals

Since launching in October 2023 **1,112** referrals have been received for Feel Good Suffolk. With 438 in Babergh and 674 in Mid Suffolk.

- **717** for Adult Weight Management (AWM)
- **330** for Smoking Cessation (SC)
- **207** for Physical Activity (PA)

Interventions

Since launching in October 2023 **452** interventions have been provided for Feel Good Suffolk. With 200 in Babergh and 252 in Mid Suffolk.

- **278** people supported for Adult Weight Management (AWM) and prescribed interventions.
- **139** people supported to stop smoking through interventions.
- **78** people supported to become physically active.

SPORT AND LEISURE

The Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy seeks to support sustainable active spaces and places, encouraging residents to become active people, aligned together in an active partnership.

Strength & Balance

We have worked in partnership with Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance, who have provided funding to the Council to deliver Strength and Balance programmes across our districts. To date, a number of sessions have been delivered via our Leisure Providers, Abbeycroft and Everyone Active, and by smaller community based groups based in more rural settings.

ActivLives have received funding for a year to help support their Step-by-Step programme, which is delivered to those over the age of 55 in Shotley, East Bergholt, Needham and Stowmarket. The classes utilise OTAGO-based falls prevention exercises to help reduce falls and fractures. This can help maintain strength, balance, coordination and flexibility as well as promote social inclusion in community settings.



East Bergholt Strength & Balance group

Why was this needed?

Suffolk's population is ageing, with a predicted 1 in 3 people to be over 65 years old by 2033 and an increase of 39% of people living beyond 85. Focusing on older people's health and activity can reduce NHS costs due to falls and the associated health risk factors.

25% of residents completed a week programme to date.

feel good SUFFOLK

...tending made me more aware of my balance and breathing correctly"

"This has been amazing, so glad I came. I'm a lot more confident in moving and stronger in my legs."

Tour of Britain



The Tour of Britain, Hadleigh

In September 2023, the Councils supported the Tour of Britain, Britain's premier men's stage cycling race, as it returned to Suffolk for the first time since 2017. 96 riders from 16 international teams lined up at the start on Thursday 7th September to race through Suffolk for Stage 5 of the race, which took them along the Shotley Peninsula, into East Bergholt, Hadleigh and Stowmarket. Residents, schools and local businesses lined the streets to watch the event pass through towns and villages.

Over **113,000** spectators lined the **192.4km** route on the day.

SPECTATORS

113,750

41% Female
57% Male



30%

cycled to the event

52%

of spectators inspired to cycle more often



The Tour of Britain passed through **24** towns, parishes and villages across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, passing directly by 6 schools along the route.

SPORT AND LEISURE

Move Your Mind

Everyone Active are supporting the delivery of weekly Move Your Mind classes at Stowmarket Leisure Centre and Stradbroke Leisure Centre (with 1 class per week at each location). This will promote health and combine activity and discussion around mental health. Suffolk Mind will refer people into the sessions in Stowmarket & Stradbroke.

Active Week

Active week was delivered at Wells Hall Primary School, Great Cornard from 12th-16th June 2023. Over **700** children from 7 schools participated in up to 25 activities over 5 days, including activities such as archery, fencing and karate. Officers assisted the event planning by providing contacts of club groups who could assist with both the financial costs towards kickboxing and karate sessions, and planning the activities. This was extremely successful and the school came runner up at the Active Suffolk Awards for Active Primary School of the Year,



Wells Hall Primary School



Leisure Centres:



Babergh:

Kingfisher Leisure Centre:

311,505 total admissions.

- Gym admissions - 96,146
- Public Swims - 78,325

Hadleigh Pool & Leisure:

124,232 total admissions.

- Gym admissions - 17,946
- Public Swims - 15,987

Mid Suffolk:

Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre:

575,387 total admissions.

- Gym admissions - 114,718
- Public Swims - 68,048

Stradbroke Pool:

68877 total admissions.

- Gym admissions - 6327*
- Public Swims - 19379

*swipe was not working for around 4-6 months



Suffolk Walking Festival

The Suffolk Walking Festival took place at Thornham Walks from Saturday 13th May until 28th May 2023. With over 70 walking routes, the festival ran at near 100% capacity with **1,195** people participating.

14.8 MILLION
 **footprints**
were left
across Suffolk

6,600
miles were
walked

44%
of attendees reported they were
more active as a result of
attending the event.

COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT

We aim to support communities in taking the lead in deciding how they want their community to be and how to make it a better place. This is enabled through the provision of grants.

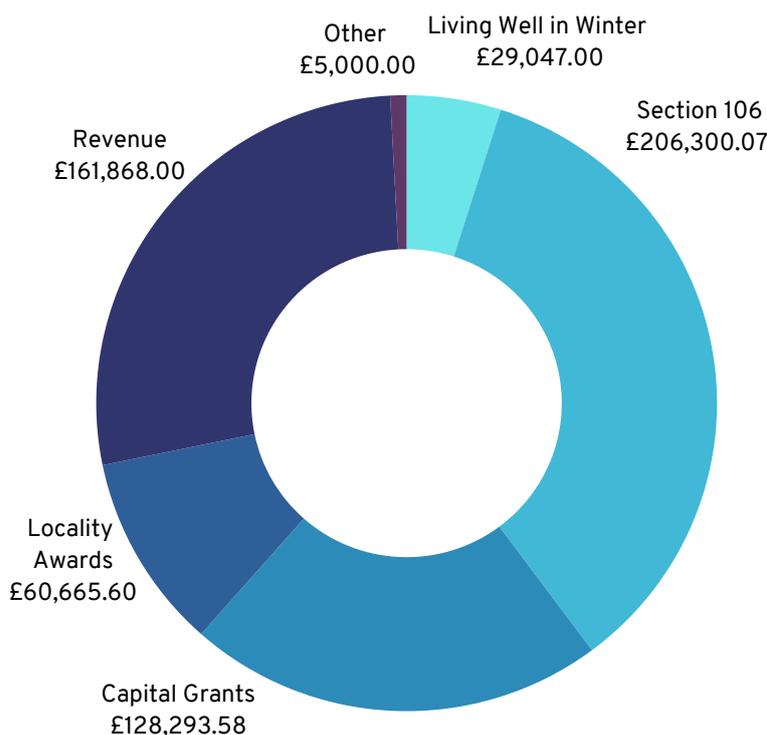
Babergh

Section 106 – across Babergh in 2023/24, over £200,000 in developer contributions was allocated to 12 social infrastructure projects, including a new 3G pitch at AFC Sudbury, a redeveloped pavilion at Hadleigh's Layham Road Sports Ground and new play equipment in Great Cornard, Hitcham, Holbrook and Acton.

Capital Grants – nearly £130,000 was allocated to 18 projects improving community facilities in Babergh. This includes new chiller and freezer units at Monk's Eleigh Community Shop, a new boules pitch in Nedging with Naughton and improvements to Village Halls in Newton Green, Burstall and Kersey.

Living Well in Winter Grants – nearly £30,000 was allocated to 20 projects providing social spaces, community cafes and lunch clubs over the winter across Babergh, including Leavenheath, East Bergholt, Groton and Thorpe Morieux.

Funding allocated in 2023-2024
Babergh



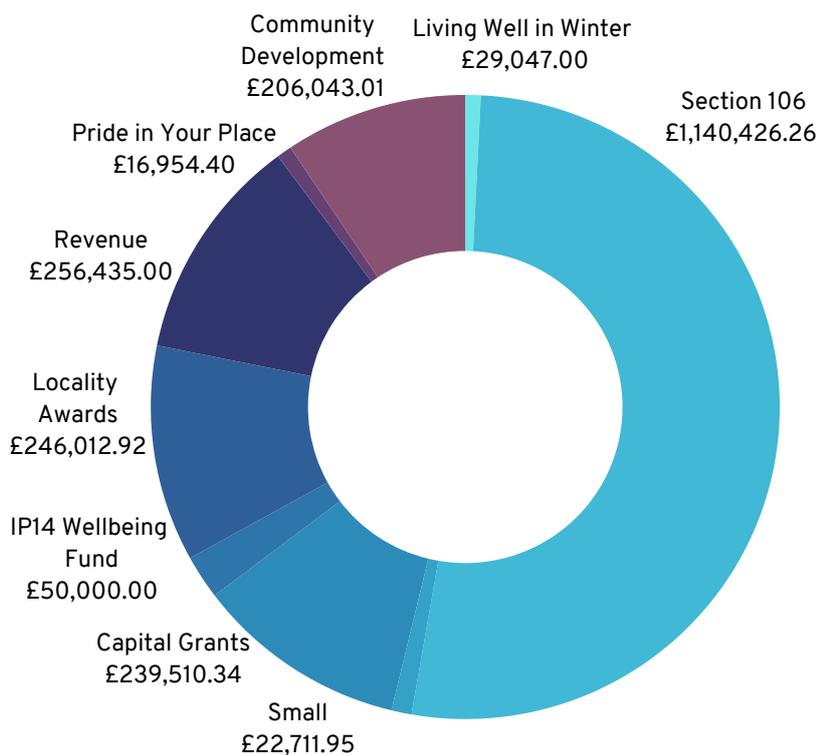
Mid Suffolk

Section 106 – across Mid Suffolk in 2023/24, over £1.1m in developer contributions was allocated to 43 social infrastructure projects, including a new pavilion at Gipping Valley Bowls Club, a new children's play area in Bramford and a new airdome for Stowmarket Lawn Tennis Club.

Capital Grants – nearly £240,000 was allocated to 32 projects improving community facilities in Mid Suffolk. This includes kitchen refurbishment projects at Buxhall and Wyverstone Village Halls, new play equipment in Yaxley and Debenham as well as improvements to community car parks in Somersham and Palgrave.

Community Development Grants – over £200,000 was allocated to 15 projects, including the rejuvenation of The John Peel Centre's 11 Market Place building, a new Scout Hut in Mendlesham Green and the extension of Norton Village Hall.

Funding allocated in 2023-2024
Mid Suffolk



COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Case Studies

Stratford St Mary Institute - Energy improvements

Stratford St Mary Institute is a community facility which had been facing issues with high energy costs and mould due to poor thermal efficiency, as well as an often-cold interior in need of a face-lift. The Institute were awarded a Capital Grant of £8,964.60 towards the interior refurbishment of the Hall, including new lighting, insulation, Wi-Fi, projector and re-decoration. The project has resulted in a refreshed, brighter and more appealing space for community groups and prospective hirers, as well as improved energy efficiency and reduced running costs. The project saw 15 volunteers from the local community get involved in painting and re-decorating the space, while the project's completion has seen increased usage of the venue, such as a new choir and dance sessions being established since the project's completion.



£10,000

Capital Grant

Buxhall Village Hall - Kitchen Refurbishments

Buxhall Village Hall is a well-used community facility, which currently has a kitchen that is not fit for purpose. Following consultation with the community, user groups and catering firms, a kitchen redevelopment project was created with the support of Buxhall Parish Council. The new kitchen has enabled the committee to attract a wider audience and increased use of the hub including a monthly tearoom and its use as an outlet venue for various micro food vendors such as Pizza Regia (which is also supported by the Buxhall Bar on a monthly basis). The committee have subsequently been encouraged to consider their next steps for further improvements to this valuable community asset.



£10,000

Capital Grant

COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Food Network and Food Security Fund

Food Project:

BMSDC are working with Community Action Suffolk to support the development of Community Food Networks across the Districts. This involves working with two Food Officers from Community Action Suffolk to:

- Help develop the sustainability and governance of community food groups in the districts
- Support building local and district-wide partnerships and developing sustainable sources of funding.

Part of this work also includes the development of the Food Security Fund

£25,000 of Capital funding is available in each district until March 2025, which can be used towards the purchase of materials and equipment to support group activities in our communities.

Applications so far have been made for the purchase of equipment to support a community vegetable growing scheme, storage cabinets to house equipment and food, and a weatherproof blackboard to assist with a community skill-share scheme.

The intention of the Food Security Fund is to encourage the following:

- Create or support sustainable, community led initiatives
- Improve access to affordable, quality food
- Ensure the re-distribution of food waste or food surplus, thereby reducing the environmental impact of food production.
- Create quality opportunities for community members of all ages to learn new skills and build confidence
- Enable community food projects to be opportunities for 'warm handovers' and the sharing of support around prevalent issues such as social isolation, diet and nutrition, money management and employment issues.

The Food officers are working with colleagues In Public Realm to put together a fruit tree map across B/MSDC. The aim is to establish an interactive map that people can add public spaces for forage for free and also see the species of trees and recipes to follow using the food they have foraged.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Community Safety Team work alongside partners with the aim to protect our local community from crime and the fear of crime and strive to ensure Babergh and Mid Suffolk remain safe places to live, work and visit.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The term Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) covers a wide range of unacceptable behaviours or activities that have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of residents, visitors and businesses in an area. These acts in themselves although may be considered as low-level nuisance can vary to being serious and classified as a high risk of harm depending upon the nature of the conduct and the impact upon the victims and/or witnesses.

ASB STATISTICS

Number of cases of ASB

- Babergh (from April 2023 - March 2024)
- Babergh (from April 2022 - March 2023)



Number of cases of ASB

- Mid Suffolk (from April 2023 - March 2024)
- Mid Suffolk (from April 2022 - March 2023)



The graphs above detail the volume of ASB cases received by the Community Safety Team these range from low to high risk rated cases. There has been a significant increase in the number of cases over the year, which could be due to the promotion of improved communication between partners and increased public confidence.

247

ASB Cases in
Babergh

228

ASB Cases in
Mid Suffolk

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Anti-Social Behaviour

NATIONAL ASB AWARENESS WEEK

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week took place in July with public engagement events in Hadleigh, Sudbury, Eye and Stowmarket. These events promoted the work of Community Safety officers and helped raise awareness of victims' rights and ASB Case Review.

63% of survey respondents reported an increased knowledge around rights as a victim of crime and ASB as a result of attending these events.

VICTIM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Suffolk County Council Community Safety Team officially approved BMSDC's "Victim Impact Assessment-Pre-ASB Case Review" as a best practice for the entire county. As a result, all Suffolk district and borough councils will now employ this in their ASB Case Review process.

MEDIATION SERVICE

BMSDC commissions a mediation service that offers a range of independent mediation approaches and conflict coaching for resolving conflict and building relationships in a no-blame, neutral and solution-focused manner, and within a confidential environment. Examples of issues addressed include neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour, family conflict, property boundaries, different lifestyles, pets, noise, parking, harassment, and litter.

"I feel that they cared about us, they worked hard to ensure we all met and spoke about our differences"

"Yes our situation greatly improved after meeting with our neighbours"

"We were both able to let a lot go within the meeting and seeing things from the other side helped us"

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS (DHRs)

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are a statutory process, which seek to evaluate the actions of agencies in the lives of those affected in domestic homicides. The Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) commissions DHRs, and they are led by an independent Chair who reviews each agency's involvement in the case and makes recommendations to the WSCSP to improve responses in the future. Over the past year, work continues to support two Domestic Homicide Reviews.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

THE HOME OFFICE SAFER STREETS FUND

BMSDC, West Suffolk Council and partners were successfully awarded more than £300,000 to help build safer streets.

The Safer Streets Fund, launched by the Home Office, aims to tackle issues that blight communities, including anti-social behaviour, violence against women and girls and acquisitive crime, by putting measures in place to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, support victims and make streets safer for residents across West Suffolk.

The fund will support:

- CCTV improvements
- Educational outreach work with young people targeting behaviour and attitudes and the impact on victims
- Environmental improvements
- Target hardening measures such as property marking, home security and awareness raising.

£323,826.00

RURAL DIVERSION ACTIVITIES

Inspire Suffolk and The Mix were commissioned through the Shared Prosperity Funding to deliver a mobile outreach youth work programme in rural areas across the districts. The project was designed to build an understanding of the issues that young people experience and help to create safe places in those areas that young people 'hang out'. With the aim to deter anti-social behaviour and to develop resilient, confident young people with increased aspirations. Time was spent exploring new areas trying to reach young people they had never engaged before. This approach led to increased engagement with young people, with their detached youth workers engaging with over **1300 young people** across the districts.

SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

A new serious violence strategy was launched in January 2024 detailing Suffolk's vision and priorities which will prevent and reduce serious violence in our communities.

In addition to the Strategy a new Serious Violence Prevention and Reduction Fund was launched, designed to compliment the strategy, looking for innovative initiatives, focusing on young people and violence prevention.



Prevention & Early Intervention

The focus is on directing resources and commissioning towards preventative services and interventions to enhance the life course of young people.



Strengthening the system

We actively collaborate, innovate, and work in partnership to create a whole system approach to tackling serious violence.



Communication & Engagement

We work with communities to continuously develop innovative responses to issues and promote successes.



Safety of Young People

We use evidence-based methods to identify communities in need, with a particular focus on young people.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

BMSDC remain committed to working with our partners to do our best to help safeguard our residents and communities - particularly those who are vulnerable and need us most.

We have a vital role to play in keeping people safe across our districts and it's important that we know what to do if we are concerned about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk.

That is why we have refreshed our Safeguarding Policy, launched our new internal safeguarding SharePoint site - providing advice, guidance and support in one place, and increased our Designated Safeguarding Leads- people across our organisation who will provide advice and support us through the process.

12

Designated Safeguarding Leads

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Education & Awareness Raising

The Community Safety Team support a number of national and local campaigns to help raise awareness of community safety issues and promote the work and priorities of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership. We co-ordinate and facilitate several activities including, training events, engagement events, outreach activity and workshops, this is to assist with raising awareness around the theme, identifying what we can do in certain situations and how to report it and to also signpost to the appropriate support services.

PREVENT AWARENESS WEEK

Prevent is a term used to encompass the ways in which we can 'prevent radicalisation' and safeguard people and communities against different forms of terrorism.

Prevent week of action this year focused on young people and how we can intervene early to protect, support and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity.

During a targeted week of action which took place week commencing 18th September, the Community Safety Team alongside partners raised awareness of Prevent through several different events including:

- Social media campaign focusing on spotting the signs within young people
- Outreach activity, including Suffolk One to coincide with Freshers week
- Training and awareness raising with internal teams

CRUCIAL CREW

Crucial Crew The team supported Crucial Crew which is a multi-agency safety educational event aimed at 10 to 11 year old children. The project provides a fun and stimulating environment for children to learn about personal safety and skills on how to react to dangerous/threatening situations as they transition from primary to secondary school.

Over **1000** students and staff attended The Mix Crucial Crew Event.

Over **600** attended the Babergh Crucial Crew event delivered by The Bridge Project.

CAMPAIGNS SUPPORTED:



#itsnotok

#Suffolklookcloser

Sexual Violence and Sexual Abuse

Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week

White Ribbon



Suffolk Modern Slavery Awareness Week

National Hate Crime Awareness Week



Suffolk Prevent Week of Action

8

Campaigns Supported

10

Training sessions delivered

Over **150**

Attendees

LOCALITY WORKING



Our work in localities supports communities to grow the projects, groups and facilities that are important to their local area. It is a partnership between us, our elected councillors, charities, parish councils and community groups to make our villages and towns vibrant and caring places.

Each of the team works as a Locality Officer in a 'Locality' of 5 electoral wards. In each Locality we support councillors to award funding to community projects.

This year **£306,678.52** was given to **272** projects ranging from cultural events to defibrillators, fetes to village hall upgrades, road safety measures to social groups & play groups.

Within our Localities we:

- support groups and facilities to develop by helping them strengthen their organisations
- find funding
- access Council expertise
- get better outcomes from planning

We also work with partner organisations such as Parish Councils, health bodies and local forums on projects and initiatives for better social, cultural and wellbeing opportunities in our communities.

LOCALITY WORKING



EXAMPLES OF OUR LOCALITY WORK INCLUDE:

Parishes working together

What happened? - A Locality Officer coordinated meetings between 5 neighbouring Parish Councils to collectively consider their concerns around the impact of a large planning application. The developer was involved in future conversations recognising the impact of their proposal.

What changed? - This resulted in the developer entering into a voluntary Section 106 agreement to provide solar panels on community buildings, to modernise one village hall, gift a local nature area to the community and provide a small fund in perpetuity to support biodiversity projects within the 5 Parishes.

What was the impact? - The Parish Councils continue to work together on a shared plan for future development.

Community Transport

What happened? - Locality Officers have been working with rural communities who are isolated by a lack of public transport.

What changed? - They have worked with local groups on a pilot community transport scheme.

What was the impact? - The groups plan to bid for the Council's Rural Transport Grant Scheme to extend the pilot.

Developer Contributions

What happened? - Locality Officers have worked with local groups to invest developer contributions (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy) into their communities.

What changed? - Previously unspent developer contributions have been channelled into community facilities, such as village halls, sports facilities and community shops.

What was the impact? - Community groups were supported to ensure funding reached the facilities their communities need and would benefit from the most.

LOCALITY WORKING

EXAMPLES OF OUR LOCALITY WORK INCLUDE:

Bildeston Community Support

Officers have been working with Bildeston Community Support (BCS), Sudbury Citizen's Advice and local elected member since the new year, on a fluid project aimed at promoting the good practice delivered by the Bildeston community group / charity, and encouraging neighbouring communities across the district, to utilise similar practices and develop locality based solutions to issues affecting residents. BCS started as a food bank provision in response to the pandemic and through on-going commitment by the Chair, Shaun Moffat, volunteers and a full committee, the group has evolved to now support more than 50 families / households (from Bildeston residents and outside villages) and offers bespoke support and advice to a wide range of other issues which affect local people. The development of the project has raised the question wider afield from those working at BCS and wider afield that messaging about what help is available and how to access it, is not readily available information in some communities. BCS has already had a slot speaking about their project at the Babergh Mid Suffolk Food Partnership Forum, and is now planning to host it's own 'community support workshop', supported by staff in the communities team, on 7 June. Staff at the council have been pivotal in supporting the charity to set up the workshop, liaise with partners and keep the project moving forward. This has combined close joint working with staff in communities and Poverty Reduction Lead, with the local elected member and partners at Food Partnership, Good Neighbourhood Scheme and locality based partners.



Severe flooding in Debenham

It was a very distressing experience for many of our residents and for staff living in those communities, with it being the worst flooding we have experienced for many years.

Members of the Communities team alongside other internal departments and partners worked throughout the weekend and the following weeks to help support our communities.

Community hubs were set up allowing members of the community to walk in and obtain advice, support and signposting to aid recovery. Officers from the community team were a part of this initial response alongside Parish Councils, Citizen Advice, Environment Agency to name a few. This allowed us to undertake a mapping exercise and to feedback any issues and concerns to the council's Tactical Management Team. We worked collectively across Suffolk, to identify properties affected and to collate the required data to access government funding.

Bringing partners together to tackle domestic violence

The team works with partners in health in local areas through the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. The health partners for Stowmarket and Needham were particularly keen to support victims of domestic violence. We introduced them to specialists from our own team, the County Council and the charitable sector so they could better understand the issues and the services available.

From these discussions Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid created a project to provide a coffee morning and creche for people experiencing domestic violence, a training course for victims of coercive control and a healthy relationships course with young people at The Mix. We were then able to help match the health partners' funding with some from the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership and thereby allow this valuable new project for Stowmarket to go ahead.

LOOKING FORWARD

Health and Wellbeing:

- This year's Community Fun Days, previously known as Family Fun Days, are set to take place in 6 locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk in July and August.
- Continuing making an impact to families by increasing the number of HAF providers and bookable spaces to finish the last known fundable year.
- Increasing links with more community groups and provide a bigger offer of activities to young people.
- A further £15,000 is being allocated in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk on another Musical Memories Orchestral Project for those living with dementia.
- Funding for 4 new Archie Projects to be trialled in Babergh schools and neighbouring care home, in addition to funding the current 4 projects running in Mid Suffolk schools.
- Supporting more community settings and groups to take up 'Dementia Friends' awareness courses
- Delivery of the newly developed Feel Good Suffolk, Healthy Weight Programme.
- Year one evaluation to review Feel Good Suffolk's service outcomes and impact, and implementing strong monitoring and maintenance processes.

Sports and Leisure:

- To further expand on the success of the Healthy Behaviours Programme by introducing partners and wrap around support for clients, as well as building relationships with VCFSE organisations.
- To continue to work with the Leisure Centres to develop their activity offer away from the traditional gym activities and more within the Wellbeing space.
- To work with partners to drive more initiatives into the community such as SEND activities, SPOT Wellbeing, Strength and Balance programme and Fit Villages.
- Officer support to drive Sport and Leisure initiatives in SHELF, which will in turn create a stronger community voice when making decisions within the Council.

Community Grants and Development:

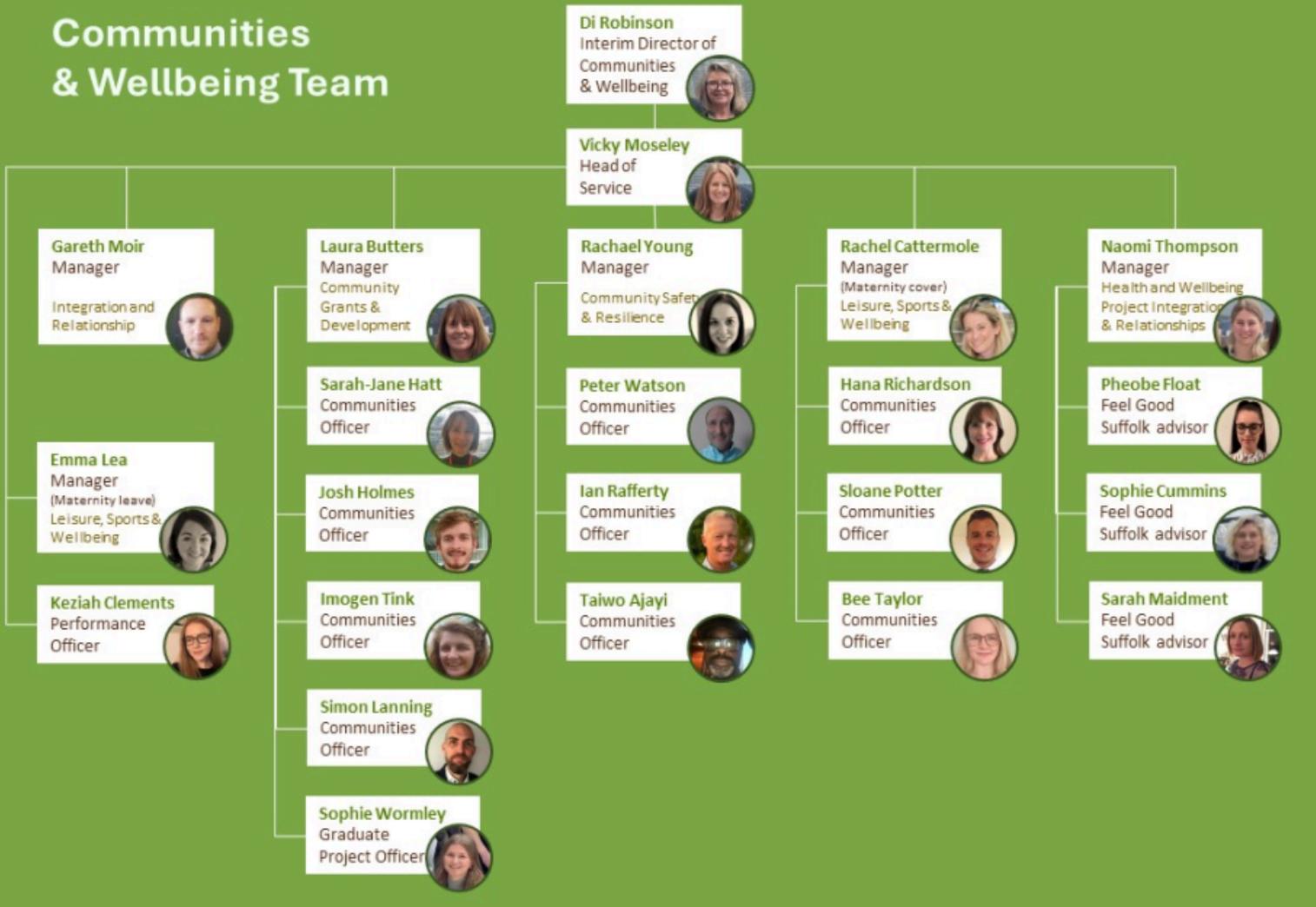
- New video added to the community grants webpages to provide tips and advice to those seeking funding.
- Launch of 3 new funding streams: Food Security Fund across Babergh & Mid Suffolk, Biodiversity Project Fund available to 5 parishes in Mid Suffolk (Bramford, Claydon, Barham, Gt Blakenham & Lt Blakenham), Progress Power Community Benefit Fund available within 5 Parishes in Mid Suffolk (Eye, Mellis, Yaxley, Thrandeston, Brome & Oakley).
- The Team is continuing to work proactively with parishes where there are larger amounts of Section 106 available to ensure these are accessed fairly and equitably amongst local organisations.
- The Team will be delivering funding surgeries across both districts to assist VCFSE groups to better understand the funds available within the Council and external funding organisations.

Community Safety:

- Look to prevent crime and intervene early: Offering advice and support to design out crime from the local areas, commissioning outreach programmes such as diversionary activities for young people.
- Delivery of the Safer Streets programme.
- Develop the action plan and activities against the priorities set from the Western Suffolk strategic assessment in collaboration with the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership.
- Work in partnership to tackle the root causes of crime and ASB.
- Respond quickly and effectively when incidents occur with partner services
- Provide support to victims - safeguarding, working closely with partners.

MEET THE TEAM

Communities & Wellbeing Team



CONTACT US



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<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/your-community>
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/your-community>