



Ridding the countryside of litter

Eager volunteers wielding bin bags and litter pickers have been out and about in Babergh clearing the district of discarded rubbish and litter.

More than 250 sacks of waste were collected by 16 different groups across the district, including those in Layham, pictured above, weighing in at 1,300kg – the equivalent weight of a baby elephant!

Babergh District Council kicked off the countywide Spring Clean Suffolk month with the start of its free Rust In Peace amnesty – a voluntary surrender scheme for unwanted cars. Unwanted cars can usually be collected by Babergh for an administration fee of £35 – but the charge was waived in a bid to stop them being illegally dumped or causing a nuisance to neighbours. Spring Clean Suffolk, which took place between March and April, aims to highlight the growing problem of litter in the countryside.

As it was so successful in previous

years - with four-and-a-half tonnes of rubbish being collected by volunteers in the Babergh district alone – all Suffolk councils have decided to take part again. This year the campaign was backed by the ‘Suffolk – creating the greenest county’ initiative and BBC Radio Suffolk.

Jo Hart, Babergh’s Environmental Protection Officer, said: “The Babergh district has 353 litter bins so there is no excuse for anyone to drop litter. The Council is also able to issue £80 on-the-spot fines for anyone caught in the act.”

“It was encouraging that so many groups continue to give up their free time to take part in the spring clean and it demonstrates that Babergh residents will not stand for littering.” Babergh’s Environmental Protection team supports litter picks throughout the year. Anyone interested in organising a litter pick can borrow equipment (pickers, sacks, gloves and high-visibility vests) from Babergh by calling (01473) 826622.

Festival for film lovers

Film lovers in Babergh had the chance to enjoy some of the world’s best films - thanks to a pilot film festival. The Wider Picture Project (Babergh International Film Festival) took place at eight venues around the district during April and May - and aimed to bring the best of international cinema to areas that do not have their own cinema.

The festival was launched at the beginning of April at Lavenham Village Hall where French film *The Chorus* (*Les Choristes*) was screened.

The aim of The Wider Picture Project is to increase the range of films available for the local communities, promote understanding of other cultures and lifestyles and to develop audiences for foreign language films in the venue’s catchment area.

Jill Barton, Babergh’s Arts and Community Development Officer said: “This was a fantastic opportunity for film lovers in Babergh to view some very different films which highlighted the diverse cultures across the world and also aided promotion of the numerous digital cinema venues across the district.” Venues that took part were Flix In the Stix, Lavenham, Polstead Village Hall, Polstead, Hartest Cinema, Hartest, Hollywood At Hadleigh, Hadleigh, The Quay Theatre, Sudbury, Screen At Sroughton, Sroughton, Peninsular Pix, Tattingstone and Glemsford Screen, Glemsford.

All of the venues are part of Suffolk Digital Cinema Network, a countywide organisation set up four years ago to assist groups to organise film shows in towns and villages in Suffolk without cinemas.

Influencing tomorrow’s world

“The Local Development Framework will have a major impact on the future of our area” explained Rich Cooke, Babergh’s Planning Policy Manager.

The Babergh Local Development Framework (LDF), which replaces the existing Local Plan, is due to become the planning blueprint which will guide future employment, housing, leisure and other developments and environmental protection in the district over the next 20 years. Babergh is about to start work to produce its draft core strategy - which sets out the general principles behind its LDF- in the next few weeks.

Some of the issues- such as the need to provide for over 5000 new homes or to increase the number of local jobs - have already been set by the Government. However, there is a great deal more that will need to reflect Babergh’s specific needs and unique character.

Although the core strategy will be posted up on Babergh’s website and will be available in hard copy format from Babergh’s Hadleigh headquarters, any individual or organisation is welcome to indicate their interest in being involved by emailing: ldff@babergh.gov.uk