

Parish Council Update – November 2016

Local Democracy Week at Kent County Council

Primary School Debates in the Council Chamber

The Holy Family Primary School and Senacre Woods Primary School joined me at County Hall on 12 and 13 October for a tour of KCC to assist their understanding of local government and to participate in a debate in the council chamber on a topic of their choice. Holy Family debated “should school uniforms be abolished?” Utilising the council’s voting system, the votes were cast. Yes, abolish it – 40; No, we love it – 13, and there were two abstentions. Despite the roars and cheers from the children at the news school uniforms had been abolished, I had to as chairman break the news that the decision wasn’t binding. Second on the agenda was whether children should be allowed to use their mobile phones at break time. It proved to be another lively debate and the vote ended with 30 pupils voting it should be allowed with 21 against.

Holy Family Primary School – debating in action!



The next day, year six pupils from Senacre Wood debated the topics “should ratings be removed from video games and films?” and “should children under seven watch television?” Which were equally lively and entertaining.

Senacre Woods Primary School



I’m delighted to say that the feedback I received from the children and teachers has been extremely positive and I’m hoping more schools will want to be involved not just during Local Democracy Week, but throughout the year.

County Councillor Event

On Saturday 15 October, County Hall opened its doors to all those interested in becoming a County Councillor. At this event I led a group of between 70 and 80 people over a full Saturday giving an outline of what it means to be a County Councillor and the commitment required.

Leeds and Broomfield Primary School



Earlier in the month I visited Leeds and Broomfield Primary school and it was wonderful to see the excellent work they are doing. I also presented a check for £1,350 towards a skills and literacy project from my local member grant.

Member Grant Fund – “You Decide” event on Saturday 10th December 2016

The second opportunity to bid for funding is on **Saturday 10 December, 9.15am – 12.45pm at Downswood Community Hall, Chiltern Close, Maidstone**. Those interested in applying, please contact Allison Allan, Community Liaison Officer for Maidstone and Shepway at allison.allan@kent.gov.uk or 03000 415770. I am hoping this event will be as successful as the one we held in July. The funding from that event is already being put to good use within the local community.

Visit to Ashley Gardens Nursing Home, Sutton Road, Maidstone

On the 25 October I visited the Ashley Gardens nursing home which is situated within my division. I was delighted to see such a high standard of care and commitment. The home provides nursing care for frail older people and those with dementia and the majority of residents and their families are from the local area.

Sponsoring cross agency working to address health inequalities in Maidstone South East

As the member for Maidstone South East, I am acutely aware of the huge disparities that exist across my division regarding health and life expectancy. I recently met with one of the Public Health experts at KCC and have suggested the establishment of a cross agency working group involving all key agencies who can work together to address this.

Assisting the local community with access to jobs and training

I am working with Fusion and other agencies to assist the local community with accessing training opportunities and jobs. A series of events are being planned locally in the new year.

Spires Medical Centre, Downswood

A follow-up meeting is being held on the 4th November with Helen Whately and other key players to discuss what the transport options might be. I have been having discussions with the Parish Council and the local Tesco store to explore whether a local subsidised service can be provided or if an existing service can be redirected. I will let you know the outcome of my meeting on Friday.

Maidstone Local Plan Enquiry

I had asked to give evidence on the 17 November at the hearing session to emphasise the severity of congestion and the need for a relief road in Maidstone South East. I have however been advised that because I didn't formerly respond to the Regulation 19 consultation of the Local Plan I'm not eligible to participate. I will however be writing formerly an open letter to the inspector expressing my views and of those I am elected to represent which I will share with the press and media. Suffice to say there will be no surprises.