

COUNCIL UPDATE 6.2023

DEVOLUTION

Is this an option for Kent? Councillors discussed at a meeting on 1st June. The key point is having a directly elected mayor (or similar model) would allow additional funding for Kent without losing any powers currently with the County and Borough Council. Examples that have been seen with areas that have a directly elected mayor are:

- Funding from Homes England for affordable housing
- Finance for infrastructure to facilitate brownfield development
- New powers to achieve fully integrated public transport including rail
- A single block grant to grow the local economy, reducing inequalities and providing opportunities for all
- New opportunities for post 16 technical education
- Long term funding
- Right to retain 100% of business rate for 10 years
- Liz Truss' development zones have been abolished expect where the mayor model has been adopted.

It remains to be seen if there is a desire to take this forward for Kent and Medway.

FAVERSHAM ROAD SIGN

I reported to Highways the damaged street name at Penlee point to KCC (ref 725094). It had the potential to cause injury to pedestrians. KCC passed the request to ABC as the Borough Council are responsible for street signs. ABC removed the sign and have ordered a replacement.



ABC/KCC JOINT TRANSPORT BOARD

The Board met on 6th June. Key issues discussed included:

- Members had a presentation on how and where the DfT allows KCC to locate Pedestrian Crossings. This is illustrated by the new crossing on Somerset Road (where Edinburgh Road joins) where there was a proven need, crossing difficulty, average crossing time, carriageway capacity.



- Residents presented a petition on traffic speed and usage by HGVs along Hythe Road. Officers were asked to develop solutions for the next meeting in September.
- Roadwork schemes included:
 - Road renewal on Bybrook Road (A28 to Nine Acres) is scheduled for 9th August. The works will be undertaken using a process called concrete rehabilitation. The concrete rehabilitation process itself is very good for repairing and extending the lifecycle of concrete roads, but is a very capital intensive process and as such needs to be focused on the worst areas of Bybrook Road. At the current time, KCC have no plans for the section from Nine Acres to The Pasture, and no plans for The Pasture itself on our 5 year Forward Works Programme for either surface treatment or renewal works. I requested that ABC agrees to meet the cost of from Nine Acres towards Faversham Road as it did on the section of Elwick Road. The wording of the resolution was:
The Joint Transportation Board asks Cabinet to provide funding where action is needed on road surfacing schemes which are considered of sufficient importance.
 - The 20mph Bybrook Road scheme with raised table was completed in February 2023 and KCC's post completion works checks flagged up an issue with the construction of the raised table. Inconsistent levelling across the profile of the table (partly due to the camber of the existing road) has created a couple of high points at the top of the ramps. The table ramps have also

been constructed over a shorter length than proposed so the two combined is resulting in some vehicles from grounding while crossing the table (particularly if driven at higher speeds). The contractor was asked to rectify the defects – at their cost - and did so during the May half term.

- An upgrade to the traffic signals on A20 between Penlee Point and Simone Weil Ave is to be delivered by Quinn as part of the Conningbrook Park development east of Willesborough Road (application 19/00025/AS). The developer have agreed to implement the SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) traffic signal control to improve traffic flow through the junctions. The development will include junction upgrades to the signal equipment at the Bybrook Road / Canterbury Road junction and the Penlee Point signal junction but at the time of the meeting only the work at the Simone Weil Ave / A28 junction is at the design stage. KCC are anticipating a detailed design submission to their Agreements Team for the the other junctions later this year, but as this is driven by development they can't be certain on what is included until it is actually received. It is uncertain whether physical changes including a pedestrian crossing will be proposed for the Bybrook Road and Penlee Point junctions or if it is simply traffic signal equipment. I have been advised by Highways that if a pedestrian crossing is required it should be included in Kennington Community Council HIP.
- Access to Houchin Field (re new Aldi on A28) is in technical audit. When the planning application comes forward a pedestrian crossing at Bybrook Road should be requested if the Conningbrook Park scheme cannot deliver one.
- Road renewal of Church Road, Mersham programmed for the summer holidays.
- Surface dressing of Frith Road (Ashford Road to Priory Road) and Flood Street are programmed for July. The verges have been addressed:



Flood Street (near Stone Green)



Frith Road (junction with Ashford Road)

- No changes to parking restrictions were agreed apart from Tannery Lane. Work on this project is ongoing. This is because none of the new locations discussed show personal injuries where an engineering solution would reduce their number or severity. A further consideration can be where refuse collection vehicles or public transport access is problematic.
- It was noted that ABC will no longer help implement Traffic Regulation Orders and that these will now be promoted through Highway Improvement Plans delivered by Parish / Town / Community Councils. Areas without a Parish Council require a HIP from the County member (I have started mine) and restrictions can also be brought forward as part of the planning process.
- The pedestrian crossing on the A28 near the tank roundabout will be replaced by a toucan crossing as part of the new McDonalds being developed nearby.

INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP

The ICP met on 7th June in Chatham. Points to note included

- East Kent hospitals programme – East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) submitted an expression of interest to the government's new hospitals programme, seeking vital and long overdue investment of £460m in their hospitals (including the William Harvey) for the long term. The Trust have been told that they have not been successful in their bid. It is extremely disappointing that East Kent has been denied the critical investment it needs to create the modern hospital services local people need and have a right to expect. Every pound spent fixing aging buildings and equipment is better invested in improving standards for patients. The hospitals will now need to draw up a set of priorities for investment and continue to maximise future funding opportunities. In late 2021 the Trust calculated that at least £211m capital investment was needed to maintain safe services over

the next five years. This is a separate figure to the £460m. This included essential upgrades to their estate and equipment including, for example, approx £60 million required to expand and refurbish maternity units at QEQM and William Harvey hospitals. This is effectively the capital required to stand still, so does not support the transformation agenda as set out in the pre-consultation business cases that was approved by NHS England in 2021.

- Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells FT will seek funding to construct a new elective theatre complex at Maidstone Hospital.
- Kent and Canterbury Hospital became the county's specialist centre for inpatient vascular surgery in April 2023. This is because evidence shows that patients who need vascular treatment receive better care and have a better chance of survival when they are treated by a team of vascular surgeons, interventional radiologists, nurses and therapists, who treat large number of these patients. Outpatient appointments and diagnostic tests will continue at patients' local hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury, Margate, Maidstone, and Medway. Vascular patients will also benefit from the new interventional radiology suite that opened at Kent and Canterbury Hospital in May 2022, with a second suite opened April 2023, which provide minimally invasive image-guided procedures to treat patients with vascular and other diseases.
- Acute stroke services are being reconfigured. Hyper-acute stroke units (HASUs) and acute stroke units (ASUs), are built around a multidisciplinary team that is able to meet the collective needs of the patient. They will operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to care for all stroke patients across Kent and Medway. Three HASU/ASUs will be established at Darent Valley Hospital, Maidstone Hospital and William Harvey Hospital. The programme is to be delivered in two phases, with MTW and DGT going live in phase 1 and EKHUFT in phase 2. Works on phase 1 are due to start by July 2023 for completion in 2024.

A2070

National Highways have cut the grass on the turning into Church Road (east) following my report that it was becoming dangerous. It took them about 6 days to action.

Growth of grass has made it dangerous to do right hand turn from A2070 to Church Rd

Thank you for your report concerning tall grass on the A2070.

Our inspector will review this and will arrange any required work.

If you require any further update on this issue our Customer Contact Centre is available 24 hours a day at:

• 0300 123 5000

• info@nationalhighways.co.uk

Kind regards

National Highways



Growth of grass has made it dangerous to do right hand turn from A2070 to Church Rd

Growth of grass has made it dangerous to do right hand turn from A2070 to Church Rd



HGVs have knocked down the cycle / footpath sign on Church Road (east) again! I have reported to KCC under ref 725158. It was put back up but unfortunately was pointing in wrong direction which I reported under ref 703755. It was put right quickly.



Sign knocked down



Put up, but in wrong direction



Put right!

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

The new neighbourhood Policing model in Kent was launched on 7th June. The new model has three distinct strands – Beat Officer team, Neighbourhood Task Force and Child Centred Policing Team. All contact should be directed into the csu.ashford@kent.police.uk email box which will ensure Kent Police can continue to respond in the most effective way during the period of transition.

The key contacts for each strand of the policing model are:

- Beat Officer team (ward based engagement and problem solving) – Sergeant Richard Batten
- Neighbourhood Task Force (district problem solving and partnership work) – Sergeant Kim Cameron
- Child Centred Policing Team – Sergeant Katie Reed

Each ward across the district will now have a nominated beat officer and their primary role is to work within their local communities. The current list of beat officers and their ward(s) are:

PC 11565 James Murrell & PC 15978 Joseph Delargy-Vollans Town Centre (Victoria ward)

PC 13268 Adam Staughton Urban North (Godington, Repton, Bockhanger, Bybrook, Kennington and Furley wards)

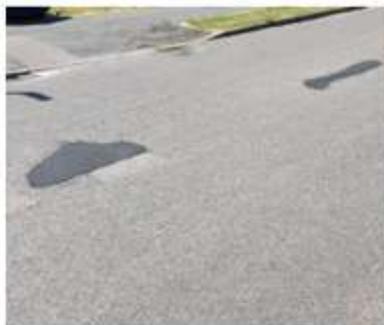
PC 15981 Natalie Faiers Rural North (Mersham Sevington South with Finberry ward)

QUANTOCK DRIVE

The potholes I reported in Qantock Drive (Malvern Road end, ref 726229) were repaired within 10 days and additional work has been marked up for action by Highways.



Potholes near Malvern Rd



Fixed in 10 days



and more marked up for action.

THE BEEHIVE

I attended an event celebrating the success of the café and second-hand women's clothing boutique on 9th June. It is a place of safety where women could be referred to receive clothing and support for free. They work with local services to give away clothing and support to women that need it. The unit (1-3 North Street) is open 10am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 10am to 2pm, Friday and Saturday. There is a meeting room which can be hired. Further details are available from 01233 421292, hello@beehiveashford.com or www.beehiveashford.com.

GREEN WEEK IN ASHFORD

KCC and ABC were manning a range of stalls in Park Mall and the High Street showcasing what the Councils are doing to enhance recycling and lower the carbon footprint in the town. Things I learnt included:

- There are over a dozen recycling streams at Cobbs Wood.
- At Cobbs Wood they are offering to split black bags of household waste to show how much could be recycled.
- Aspire are offering free wildflower seeds to promote biodiversity.

- In addition to the Repair Café at Singleton (on Wednesday, 1pm to 4pm) a sewing club operates on Mondays (10am to 12.30pm) which recycles old clothing etc to new useable products including bags.
- Walking and cycling maps of Ashford were distributed showing just how easy it is to get around the town without using the car.



BROAD OAK ROADSIDE DITCH

I have reported the roadside ditch is blocked at Board Oak. This follows reports of odour locally and possible may emanate from the accident in May. Its off there is so much water when it has been so dry recently (ref 726469).



KINGSFORD STREET

I re-reported the potholes in Kingsford Street as they had been marked up for action without any work being carried out (ref 726468). I was pleased to see that they were then done.



Before



After

ASB IN EAST KENT BABY MEMORIAL GARDEN

I held a handover meeting with Liz Wright (new Community Wellbeing and Safety member) in Ashford Memorial Park regarding ASB on 12th June. The following actions were passed on to Liz:

- Investigate access towards the college and whether this could be better positioned once the new extension is open. The Baby Memorial group would need access from the old gate from time to time for maintenance, assuming the old gate remained.
- Investigate if the CCTV camera could be positioned so it covered the memorial area.
- Ask that Aspire clean up the stained slabs.
- Ensure that ASB reporting is to Kent Police is communicated to ABC CSU.
- Investigate if the charity can benefit from reduced rent on garages rented from ABC for storage. The group are paying £67.60 for each of the two garages each month, a total of £1,622.40 a year (and it goes up every year). They have had council garages for ten years, so the Council has received the equivalent of £16k. This equates to four or five full days' fundraising every year our volunteers. Under a new policy of grant aid decisions on this would be made by the appropriate department (Housing, in the case of garages).



EAT WELL; SPEND LESS

ABC held another of their successful Eat Well Spend Less roadshow on Wednesday 14th June. They are free to attend and essential if you need extra support as a result of rising food prices. It included:

- Guidance on shopping, preparing and cooking healthy, nutritious meals
- Benefits and housing advice and advice on what support is available locally
- Information on where and how to access local food banks along with community venues who offer free, pay as you feel or very reasonably priced meals in a social setting.
- Advice from the NHS including pathways to One You services and vaccinations
- Health MOT's from Kent Community Health (NHS) Foundation Trust
- Mental Health advice – We Are With You & Talk it Out.
- Recipe bags with all ingredients to make a recipe along with instructions
- Fareshare Kent Family Food Bank offering food items including fresh fruit and vegetables
- The Hygiene Bank provided hygiene items
- Information and help to access a range of community, health and social care options
- Information on Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Ashford Children's Centre – including activities for children

There will be future events so keep an eye out for them.

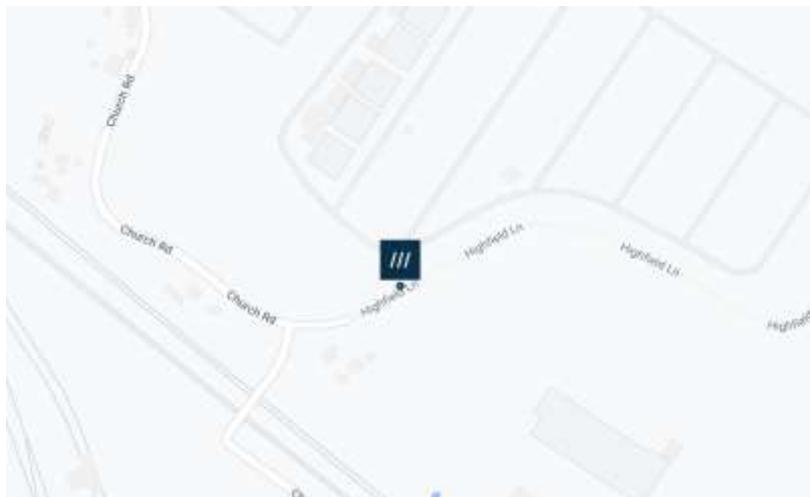
PIPER PRODUCTS

I reported to ABC housing that the hoardings to the rear (footpath side) of the Piper Products affordable housing site had fallen down. Also, there was water on site behind the garages, which is odd given the dry weather, and asked if there might be a leak somewhere? ABC were on the case within a week with new hoardings and advised the water is due to water table issues, not a leak.



IBF LITTERBIN

I have asked ABC to locate a bin where indicated to address the dog poo problem around the IBF



STONESTREET GREEN SOLAR

I attended the Community Liaison Panel on 15th June. The meeting was set up to discuss changes to the application following the first round of consultation. The second round of consultation ends on 17th July. The key changes are:

- Discussions are progressing with the Church Commissioners to provide a new cycle route between Mersham and Aldington.
- An access across Laws Lane will be provided to allow construction of the panels west of Laws Lane. This will ensure construction traffic does not need to use Bank Road.
- The developer has added trees within the new hedges to mitigate the view from Mersham. Overall there will be 30,000 new hedgerow plants and 16,000 new woodland shrubs and trees.
- Additional habitats are to be provided for skylark, yellowhammer and brown hare.
- Electrical infrastructure has been relocated to protect potential archaeological sites.
- Setbacks from residential properties has been increased to reduce visual impact.

- Concerns were expressed over visual impact on walkers and noise impact should the fences around the development be breached.
- I provided outline details of KCC's community energy scheme (see www.kentcommunityenergy.org) and explained that KCC would be in touch.

The most important information board at the exhibition held in the village hall on 24th June shows where assessments of the impact of the development on the view will be assessed from. If you have comments, you have until 17th July to email info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk.



FRITH ROAD/COOPERS LANE/PRIORY ROAD CROSSROAD

KCC have been asked to investigate improvements to this crossroads following a series of accidents. Nearby is a dilapidated BT phone box which is a candidate for adoption and revamp as a defibrillator.



COMMUNITY WARDENS

At the “Coffee and Chat” with your councillors on 19th June at Spearpoint, the KCC Community Warden was present explaining their service. They are out between 7.30am and 10pm every day in communities across Kent. Their aim is to improve community resilience, support the elderly and vulnerable, foster community cohesion and wellbeing and assist with navigating community services. Contact Adam McKinley on 07813 711942 or adam.mckinley2@kent.gov.uk if you need support. Some literature was distributed.

Handyperson service
We can carry out minor repairs and low cost jobs like putting up shelves, general DIY, minor plumbing and carpentry at a charge of £15.00 per hour (inc VAT).

We regard it as our duty to undertake work in connection with water, electricity or gas supplies.



Galvanised handrails
We can provide a quote to supply and fit galvanised handrails to make it safer and easier to access your home.

Keystroke services
A Keystroke provides convenient monitored access to shared care and is often used by clients with mobility issues who struggle to reach the door. We supply and fit leading brand keyfobs as follows:
The standard commonest keyfob suitable for like keys supplied and fitted for £65.00 (inc VAT).
The Sigma police approved CREST keyfob for target level, supplied and fitted for £75.00 (inc VAT).

*A subsidised hourly rate may apply in some areas, please enquire when calling.

All our staff are carefully vetted and checked with the Disclosure and Barring service for your peace of mind.

More information
For more information about the service or to book an appointment please contact us:
Telephone: 0800 028 3172
Email: caseworksupport@wobody.org.uk

Wobody.org.uk

Stranger at the door, remember the four!

- 1 Keep the chain on the door
- 2 Ask for their identity card
- 3 Check their identity online or in the phonebook
- 4 If you are not sure, do not let them in

If you feel afraid or threatened dial 999
For non-urgent calls to the POLICE dial 101

Remember if you buy something on the doorstep costing over £42, you have 14 days to change your mind and ask for your money back.

CITIZENS ADVICE CONSUMER SERVICE HELPLINE
03454 04 05 06 Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Report doorstep callers online at
kent.gov.uk/tradingstandards

For a Kent County Council Trading Standards approved trader go to checkatrade.com

Checkatrade.com
Where reputation matters

Citizens Advice Bureau

It's a sad fact but SCAMS are part of our everyday life

To STOP THE SCAMMERS you need to be more aware and able to spot a SCAM.
Scams are criminals who try to steal your money or personal information by making friends with you, pretending to be someone you know and making false promises.



Some of the most common postal scams are fake letters, prize draws or sweepstakes and charities. They will be personalised to you and will ask you to commission, buy and any money you will NEVER see any prize.

Online we are targeted by viruses sent by email, fake shopping websites and romance scams. Social media accounts are a great source of information for criminals, hackers and scammers so make sure your privacy settings are good and think about what you share online.

A common phone scam is someone pretending to be from your bank, asking you to confirm bank details. Never give out your bank details or PIN. Another phone scam is a caller saying your computer is slow or your anti-virus needs updating. NEVER allow access to your computer.

Doorstep criminals, also known as rogue traders or bogus callers, knock uninvited at your door to sell you unnecessary and expensive work. You can lose thousands of pounds. NEVER agree to work by unvetted callers, get three quotes and NEVER pay cash.

Be wary of unwanted phone calls, emails, text, doorstep callers or letters. You can protect yourself by regularly changing passwords, updating antivirus software and switching on security settings on social media accounts. Never give out bank account details, PIN or passwords.

Protect yourself and others.
kent.gov.uk/scams

Kent County Council

FINBERRY – CREST UPDATE

I spoke to Dan Wilson from Crest on 19th June.

- Finberry To Ashford Cycleway. Application ref 14/00536/AS has been undecided by ABC and seeks to change the s106 to take out the requirement that Crest should deliver a bridge over the Ashford / Hastings railway line to augment the existing routes to Ashford and provide something more direct from Finberry. Crest are working with TW (who are obliged to upgrade the footpath from Bridgefield east of the railway that is within their ownership) on an update to the s106 which will need the support from the Church Commissioners for England (CCE). The changes will need to be reviewed at the highest level of Crest and have been “in hand” since January 2020.
- The Community Centre. ABC and Crest met on 6th April to discuss a proposal of using the Finberry Community Centre for wider sports

provision and ongoing management. The project involves “conflicting views”.

- Extra Care unit. Is there no meaningful interest from any social housing provider. I explained to Dan the idea proposed for Repton (next to the community centre) and recommended this was explored. The idea incorporates social housing with a NHS link. Other ideas include an off-site affordable housing contribution (similar to Quarry View in Mersham).
- It was agreed that salt bins or winter gritting will now be provided by HML ahead of s38 adoption by KCC (*subsequent email to PC confirms this will be by gritting*).
- Stagecoach to be asked whether the idea of extending the G Line now the Finberry lights have been completed. This is instead of an extension to the B Line and avoid the need for enforcement of the Bridgefield Bus Link.
- The footpath to Waterbrook gets regularly waterlogged and is essential to be upgraded once the fast food and Aldi are developed (issue with CCE/GSE not Crest).
- The s106 obliges Crest to set up a "supervisory committee" with representative from residents with HML. No progress has been made.
- Crest are obliged to set up a management committee for Captains Wood. The s106 requires an updated ecology report which is in preparation. Once prepared a management plan for Captain Wood will be prepared and the management committee established.
- The road to Rutledge Ave be open to traffic in January 2024. This is based on the Bilham Farm development being built out by November so is dependent on sales proceeding as expected.
- A mammal crossing point has been built at the Captains Wood end of Swift Ave.
- Additional traffic calming has been requested by the PC on Brambling Ave. This has been designed and will be costed ahead of delivery.
- There is no desire from Crest to change the s106 to allow all traffic to use the bus link route to Waterbrook (at the end of Brambling Ave).
- Both bus links will require lighting ahead of adoption by KCC.

CHANGES TO B, C and G LINE

B	Stagecoach	Kennington to Ashford to Bridgefield	Reduced frequencies and withdrawal of late evening service after 2000.	13 August 2023
C	Stagecoach	Ashford to Willesborough to William Harvey Hospital	Reduced frequencies and withdrawal of late evening service after 2000.	13 August 2023
G	Stagecoach	Godinton Park to South Willesborough	Peak time journeys withdrawn.	13 August 2023

These changes are Stagecoach changes (not KCC) and are designed to bring the network in Ashford in line with actual use post pandemic, to reduce operating cost and improve the viability of the network. Stagecoach commissioned consultants to undertake a study of the current Ashford network, which identified the services that were used regularly, what the ideal frequency should be and if changes were required in the evenings/at weekends in light of post pandemic travel. A long term, sustainable bus network that serves the needs of the community, environment, economy and society is everybody's aim. This resetting of Stagecoach's service position will put them in a position to grow again,

KCC are reviewing the impact of these changes, focusing as a priority on school flows and then identifying communities left without a bus service and where KCC can, subject to funding and sustainability, will look to re-provide. This is most likely to apply to a lost school flow or where a community has lost its service in its entirety (but the service is socially necessary), rather than frequency reductions/re-routing.

KCC has received £18.9m of government funding to deliver enhanced bus services (Bus Service Improvement Plan "BSIP"). In addition to service levels the funding will include infrastructure, ticketing, innovation, vehicles accessibility and environmental considerations.

Stagecoach is in discussion with KCC, trying to get funding via the BSIP. BSIP funding does now allow "some discretion" on how this cash is spent. Long-term strategic funding that the BSIP will provide to help grow patronage.

Free travel to encourage use for the last weekend in June will hopefully have increased uptake of services.

Separately I met with Clear Chanel (with Chris Morley & Deborah Prior) on 28th June who reported on ongoing graffiti and damage at bus stops which is thought to put off people from using buses. We discussed deploying warning notices to discourage ASB and putting a QR code to link to the timing of buses

and reporting vandalism. BCIP funding can also be used to improve the experience of using buses which could include “real time” information etc.

A2070 “BELLAMY GURNER” SCHEME

I had a meeting with FM Conway, KCC, Crest & National Highways on 20th June to discuss feedback on the traffic lights work. This was in between the two weekends when Ashford was gridlocked. The issues discussed included:

1. Communication with KCC needs to be improved on road closures.
2. The reason for the delay in completion of works was the suspension of works when Operation Brock was in Place.
3. Temporary signage advising HGVs not to access Church Road has been put back on the carriageway. Permanent M20 signage has been designed by Mott McDonald and is with National Highways for sign off. A VMS advising users that the Waterbrook Truck Stop is full will be sited on the approach to the left-hand turn into Waterbrook; this will avoid queues in Waterbrook Ave / Arrowhead Road.
4. A significant amount of mature hedging has been removed and those areas are now being replanted, those plants that have died will be replaced. Bare soil will be seeded.
5. The large expanse of tarmac within the centre of the scheme is required to give maintenance vehicles a safe place to stop and enhance visibility.
6. Promised signs at the entrance to Finberry showing no lorry parking will be installed.
7. The cycleway west from the scheme ends abruptly and requires cyclists to join fast moving traffic. This has been noted by National Highways for future action.
8. There are no white lines by the offside and nearside kerbs on any new road surfaces of the A2070 and side roads due to width of the carriageways.

After 12 months a further safety audit will be undertaken. The traffic lights are now fully automatic and adjust for traffic flow. To be effective drivers must be close to the traffic lights to ensure the sensors note the car is waiting.

THE HIGH FIELD

I took this picture from the CTRL fencing of the High Field showing where the DfT have rotavated the ground where the archaeological work took place last year. The area is was seeded in April. Trees will not be planted until the autumn.



BOCKHAM LANE

I reported that the Give Way sign has been knocked down (at Hythe Road junction) on 19th June (ref 728769); KCC had fixed by 23rd June! The edge of the carriageway also needs attention and have been reported (ref 728923).

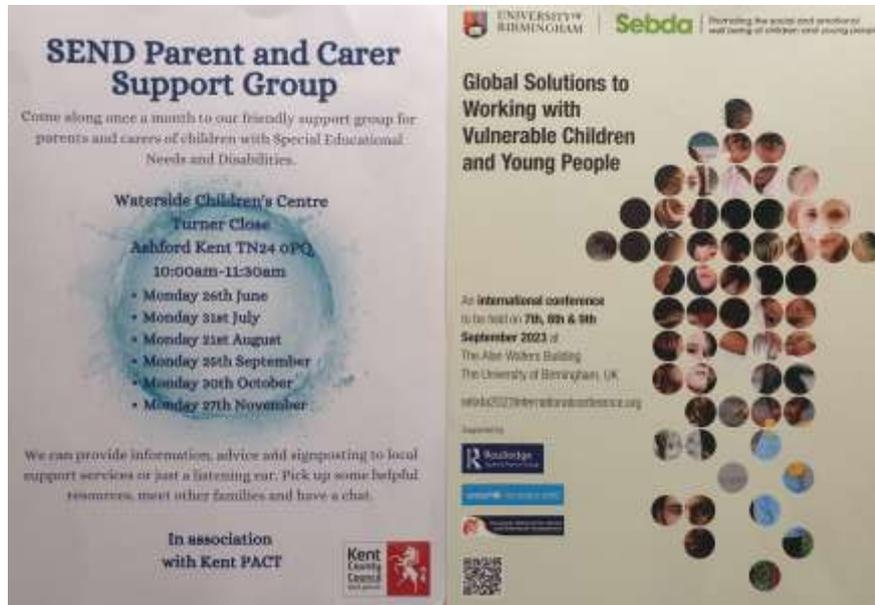


ASHFORD CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP CONVERSATION

I attended this on 22nd June. The following key issues were discussed:

- There is no outcome (as yet) from the consultation in closing the Tenterden and Hothfield Children's Centre. The consultation closed in March so clearly not a straightforward outcome.
- A new SEND drop in for parents and carers starts in June at the Waterside Centre in Turner Close at 10am on last Monday of each month (except August which is 21st due to the bank holiday).
- The new community shed (formerly "Men in Sheds") is close to completion in Stanhope (near the Hub).
- Drug and Alcohol support has noticed an increase in solvent abuse and has capacity to managed increased referrals.
- Kent based charity (SEBDA) are hosting a conference in Birmingham in September on how vulnerable children and young people can be

supported when they arrive in the UK
(www.sebda2023internationalconference.org).



COMMUNITY SAFETY

I attended the Community Safety Information Session on 26th June run by Insp James Ross & Sgt Jamie Edwards of Kent Police Strategic Prevention Command (formerly Central CSU). It covered the Neighbourhood Police Review.

- Recruitment will achieve target number of officers by Sept 2024.
- Each ward has an allocated Beat Officer supported by Child Centred Police Team (PCs & PCSOs) and Neighbourhood Task Team (PCs).
- Resources are allocated on crime statistics. Ashford gets 1 Sgt, 12 PCs in the Beat Team (plus a shared Sgt with Folkestone, 2 PCs and 2 PCSOs Child Centred Police Team
- Partnership working with ABC will be maintained based on “Threat, Harm or Risk”.
- Reducing offending will be supported by PSPO, closing orders and other ASB and licencing legislation. 6 specialist officers operate in each district.
- There will be a calendar of “Safer Campaigns” to deliver public health approach to support the prevention of crime.
- Reducing offending will be achieved by monitoring repeat offenders, substance misuse and mental health team.

FARESHARE KENT

I met with Emma White on 27th June to discuss their operations and need for volunteer drivers. Fareshare is a national charity established 25 years ago. The Fareshare Kent depot is based in Sevington in Foster Road and receives surplus food from retailers, food manufacturers and farmers when they have overstocked / produced or it is approaching a sale by date. Deliveries can be co-ordinated by Fareshare London, head office and involves major retailers and manufacturers. Fareshare Kent delivers to 150 charities in Kent including (in Ashford) Repton Connect, the Willow Centre, Pilgrims Hospice and Amber House. They also supply the family Foodbank in Carlton Road who then distribute further. In addition to food, Fareshare receive toiletries and pet food.

Usage was 1,500 families before the pandemic, peaked at 4,000 during COVID and then fell back. It is now near to returning the 4,000 level due to the cost of living crisis.

Fareshare are looking for volunteer drivers one (or more) shifts per week, month or just filling in when there are gaps. Routes around the county are planned out, normally starting at 8.30am and finishing early afternoon. Further details are at <https://faresharekent.org.uk/>

NEW ORTHOPAEDIC UNIT IN MAIDSTONE

I attended a consultation event on 27th June the proposed new orthopaedic treatment centre being set up in Maidstone. It is for all of Kent and Medway patients to use and will be standalone surgical hub for low complexity, high volume operations e.g. hip and knee replacements. It will operate 8am to 10pm and is designed to get a grip on the waiting list for these treatments. It is due to open on 4 March 2024 and building work is well under way. The event was designed to agree the information that needs to be provided to patients ahead of the hub opening. Issues include the fact that the surgeons will be specialists and concentrate on these type of operations only. Changes to the bus services were a concern as access to Maidstone hospital may become a challenge.

Paul Bartlett
Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward, ABC
Ashford Central Division, KCC
Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council

Sevington Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council

0773 929 3502

paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk or paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk