

Dear colleagues,

This briefing provides an update on the work on Environment and Circular Economy by our own KCC teams and partners. We trust you find it of interest and will share it with your communities.

Susan Carey and Tony Hills
Cabinet Member and Deputy Member for Environment,
Kent County Council



Kent's first pop-up reuse shops

On Sunday 16 July, Kent's first pop-up reuse shop was hosted at Canterbury Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC). Residents had the opportunity to pick up a variety of preloved bargains at a fraction of the cost of buying new.

Over half a tonne of items were sold on the day including bikes, toys, furniture, garden items and homeware. The proceeds will help Pilgrims Hospices to continue providing care and support to those living with incurable illness in East Kent.



All the items for sale on the day were brought to Margate and Canterbury HWRCs by local residents, where they were diverted from disposal for reuse. Reuse is becoming more and more popular and by encouraging people to reuse rather than purchasing new, we are doing our bit to help the circular economy as well as having a positive impact on the environment.

Following the success of the first event, a second took place, this time at a hospice. The aim is to roll out reuse areas across many of Kent's HWRCs where there is space to do so safely. Containers are already available at Maidstone and Allington HWRCs, working in partnership with the charity Making a Difference to Maidstone.

New waste transfer station

A new waste transfer station is under construction in Sevenoaks. It's expected to take 18 months to build and when complete, Sevenoaks District Council will be able to recycle more kerbside waste.



A big 'Thank you' to staff at Canterbury and Herne Bay HWRCs

An industrial dispute between Canterbury City Council's waste contractor Canenco and the GMB Trade Union, which started on 5 July, looks set to end on 11 September.

During this time many residents sought to continue recycling through the HWRCs at Canterbury and Herne Bay. Visits to the two sites doubled during the dispute and extra capacity was made available for items that would normally be collected kerbside. HWRCs are designed to be complementary to kerbside collections, not replace them and we're grateful to our contractor, FCC Environment, for coping with this surge in use, which impacted the recycling of the usual waste brought to the sites.

Reuse of community care equipment at HWRCs

The partnership project between the Resource Management and Circular Economy Team, KCC Adult Social Care Services, NRS Healthcare and the NHS, is also accepting and repurposing unwanted community care equipment.

Residents can take items including walking sticks, frames, grab rails, raised toilet seats and crutches to Allington and Dover HWRCs (managed by FCC Environment) and Swanley and



The team with many items of care equipment being diverted for reuse

Tunbridge Wells HWRCs (managed by Commercial Services Group) so they can be reused or recycled.

All items will be cleaned and repaired ready to be reused in the community, or will be donated to PhysioNet, a charity run solely by volunteers helping people with disabilities overseas. Any items that cannot be reused will be recycled.

Recycling wood

On 27 July a small group of KCC Members and officers visited the Ridham Dock Biomass Power Plant, near Sittingbourne. The Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant at Ridham opened in 2015 and this is where the waste wood from HWRCs, which cannot be recycled, is brought to be turned into energy. This means waste wood produced in Kent, is also processed in Kent.

The MVV Energie site is just one of many excellent waste management facilities in Kent. There's more information about how household waste is processed including [a series of films on the KCC website](#) and more widely about waste collection by the districts on the [Kent Resource Partnership website](#).

Plan Tree secures more funding

For the third year running, the Plan Tree Team have successfully bid to the Local Authority Treescape Fund and this year the team secured the maximum funding available of £300,000. Over 2 years, this will fund replacement street trees, community orchards, trees emerging from hedgerows and 22,000 whips.



Over the summer, the Plan Tree Team weeded and mulched around the whips planted at school sites in the winter. There was a struggle to find volunteers for maintenance days, but luckily there were plenty of school children to pitch in!

Fortunately, the weather changed almost immediately after the announcement of the hosepipe ban, with weekly intermittent rainfall. As a result, the

success rate of the planting has been better than expected at most sites. Some public sites in Swale and Ashford have suffered from vandalism but otherwise the average survival rate is estimated to be over 85%.

The team are project planning for planting in six areas (with multiple sites) identified through the Members Trees Scheme, along with a further 37 sites from two rounds of Local Authority Treescapes funding for this year's planting season.

Bees' Needs Award

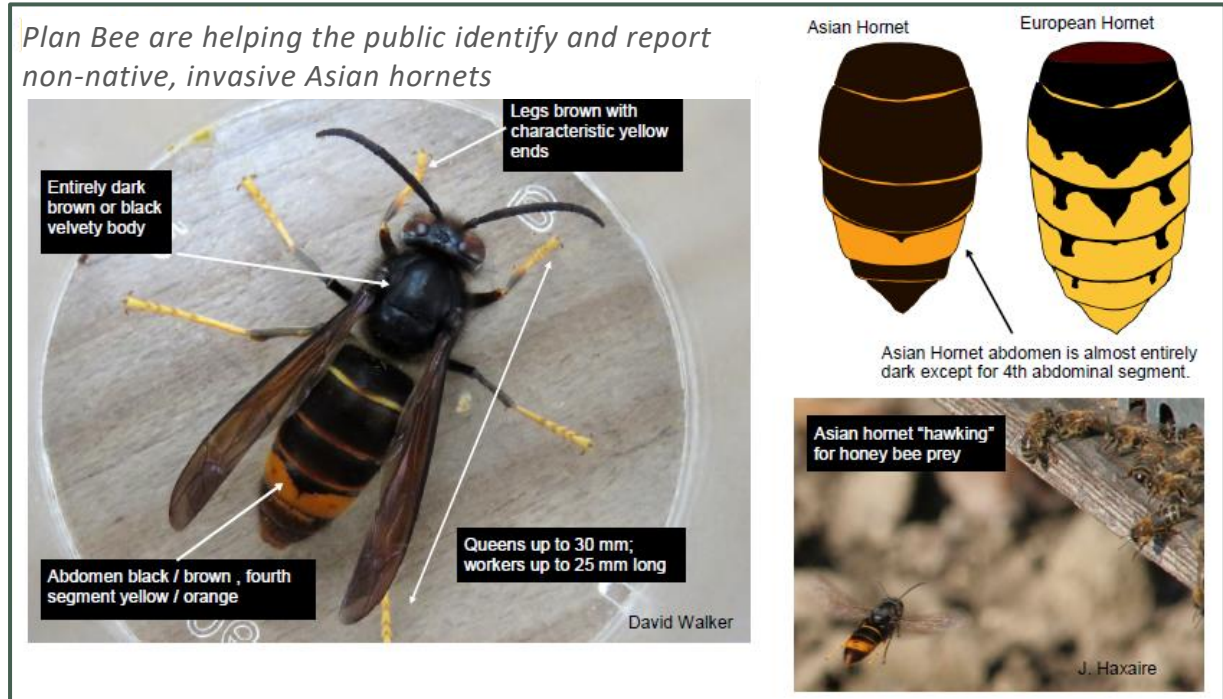
Kent's Plan Bee Team won national recognition as a Bees' Needs Champion for their exceptional work in supporting pollinators across Kent. The work undertaken by the team has seen the council adjust the way it cuts its hedgerows, urban, and rural vegetation to better support habitats. It has also influenced landowners and building developers to better support habitats and has been lauded as a 'blueprint' for other councils to follow by the CEO of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Gill Perkins.



Asian hornets in Kent

The Plan Bee Team is raising awareness of the threat posed to native pollinators by Asian hornets that have been spotted across Kent this summer.

Asian hornets are voracious predators and can hunt down and eat between 30- 50 honey bees a day. They are a serious threat and we're asking everyone to help in the efforts to stop them establishing themselves in the UK. You can find information on how to identify them and report them to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, on the [Plan Bee Facebook page](#).



Why is nature in Kent important to you?

The Making Space for Nature in Kent & Medway (MS4N) Team are creating a Local Nature Recovery Strategy that will shape the county's nature and landscape and establish wildlife-rich places for all to enjoy.

Government funding will support the creation of the strategy over the next two years and there will be several rounds of consultations as the strategy develops. There's an official launch on 5 October and you can find out more on the [Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway website](#).



The aim is to establish shared priorities for environmental improvements and to create a network of wildlife-rich places across the county. It's part of a nationwide project of 48 areas that cover the whole of England, with no gaps or overlaps, to deliver the government's commitment to ending the decline of nature and support nature recovery.

The project will work with those that own and manage the land; those that influence how biodiversity is protected and enhanced; those that use and depend on nature's services; and

those that inform and make decisions. The intention is to create a plan for joined-up action to recover our county's nature. Progress will be reported regularly and I encourage you all to [get involved](#).

Works to reduce local flooding

The Flood and Water Management (FWM) Team has successfully completed a culvert replacement scheme at Catts Place, Paddock Wood. The team secured £115,000 of funding from the Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid and Local Levy schemes to deliver the project which provided approximately £250,000 worth of benefits by protecting 11 properties from ongoing flood risk.

The main culvert successfully replaced in Paddock Wood



Between 2014 and 2021 residents experienced 20 incidents of surface water flooding which affected properties and the highway. The culvert replacement was completed in the spring, and additional work to clear the ditches and replace a smaller culvert downstream is now underway to further improve the flow of water.

Solar Together opens again

Solar Together is open for new registrations for the second time this year. Kent residents, small businesses and community groups can register their interest in the popular solar collective buying scheme. You can find out more via our Kent Green Action social media channels or [KCC's webpage](#). All district councils and Medway will also be promoting the scheme and a direct mail will be sent to 50,000 residents at the end of September.

Over 1,370 homeowners accepted their offer from the auction earlier this year and over 1,000 surveys and 580 installations had been completed by the end of August.



Solar Together Kent

Group-buying for solar panels and battery storage

Register for free and without obligation

#SolarTogetherKent

KCC's Environment & Transport Committee

Papers for the meeting on 15 September are now published, the meeting will also be webcast live and a recording will be made [available on KCC's website](#).

On the agenda is our usual Performance Dashboard which shows another big drop in our use of energy and carbon emissions. Our new solar park continues to make a big contribution to the 22% decrease but investment in energy efficiency in our buildings is also making an impact. We will also be looking at the annual update on our Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and there's an update on the public consultation on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Kent Minerals Sites Plan.