

February Newsletter

February seems to have been dominated locally by two issues, Covid and the Swale Local Plan. With Covid the vaccination programme is rolling out at great speed. As I write this over 15 million doses have been administered. The roll out is now extending to my age group. Hopefully as vaccination increase and cases continue to fall, we can look cautiously forward to a slow return to normality.

The Swale Borough Council Local Plan is now out for public consultation. The shortest allowed period has been chosen by the current administration of Swale Borough Council with responses needing to be submitted by 23rd March. Unfortunately, there will be no public meetings held by the Borough Council to inform residents. There are 12,000 extra housing units identified in the Plan with others expected to come forward as windfall sites or as part of the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan. Of the 12000 identified 5,400 are in Faversham and the villages of East Swale. Particularly badly impacted are the villages of Boughton, Teynham, Lynsted and Selling. It also has potentially major impacts on congestion and air quality for residents and communities close to , or reliant on the A2. At over 1000 pages the Plan is difficult to take in online. Paper copies can be obtained at £25 a piece.

Many Parish Councils have already scheduled Special Meetings to engage with their residents and consider a response. I am given to understand some 10 or 11 have already objected to the shortness of the consultation period and other, what they feel to be, weaknesses in the way the Plan has been arrived at and in the consultation process, especially at a time we are subject to so many restrictions due to Covid.

Having confirmed in my last newsletter that I would not be a candidate for KCC in May can I thank all those who have contacted me. Some of the responses have been embarrassingly kind. It has been an honour and mostly a great pleasure to serve you all.

Andrew Bowles
Swale East