

FEBRUARY REPORT FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR

The first highlight of February was my annual “You Decide” event to allow residents to vote on the allocation of Member’s Grant monies.

A good crowd at Teynham Village saw 10 local organisations present their bids. 8 of the 10 shared £12,000 to deliver their projects.

Of those succeeding Hernhill Parish Council received the highest vote with their project to provide a defibrillator in Dargate. They applied for and received £600. Other “winners” included Teynham Book & Brunch Club tackling social isolation £1,564.50, Oare Parish Council for play area refurbishment £2000, Diversity House for young people’s workshops to help combat knife and gang crime, SATEEDA for a support worker and drop in and counselling services for victims of domestic abuse across Swale East, Sittingbourne over 55 Fellowship which organises community events for the elderly etc. Also, Swale CVS towards a Film Club with transport for the over 60’s. All applicants were limited to a maximum bid of £2,000 each.

Due to County Council Elections in May 2021 this year’s event must be held pre-Christmas 2020 to allow funds to be allocated and spent before the pre-Election period. The good news is that, led by pressure from rural Councillors, next year we shall have £20,000 to allocate to voluntary groups in our Divisions.

February is Budget month and this year Kent County Council has, for the first time in 10 years, received an increase in Central Government Grants.

Expenditure has gone up by £77 million (7.8%).

The largest increases are in Community and Residential care, essentially for the elderly and those with learning difficulties. Kent Highways has also received a significant increase in funding £88 million over 3 years. The cost per household should show an average increase of £44 depending on Council Tax Band plus, of course, any increase for Police, District (Borough) Council, Fire and Rescue, etc.

I was especially pleased to play a part in getting £400,000 to fund dedicated youth work for each District plus £100,000 for equipment etc. The rural areas have been disadvantaged for too long.

On another, personal, note I have just added membership of Kent County Council Planning Committee to my list of duties. Must be a glutton for punishment!

I am working together with Sheldwich, Badlesmere and Leaveland Parish Council together with Parish Council's in Challock and Boughton Aluph seeking to secure a review of traffic speeds and other highway dangers on the A251. Following my initial meeting with representatives from the three Parishes I have now facilitated a follow up meeting which Kent Highways Officers have agreed to attend.

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