

A Message from your County Councillor - September 2018

As ever, Local Government's quietest month August was followed by the busiest September. Thank goodness for two full days at the Hop Festival joined this year, for the first time, by my eldest grandson on day one.

Local meetings and issues have dominated this month. These have included further meetings with residents together with Kent Highways to discuss flooding in Lynsted, Doddington and Bapchild. Some works have already been undertaken, a lot more are in the pipeline if you will excuse the pun.

I have continued to visit Parish Councils to discuss the update to Swale's Corporate Plan. This month we have debated with Parish Councillors and residents at Ospringe, Rodmersham, Hartlip, Dunkirk and Minster on Sheppey. In addition to these I have made my regular visits to Tunstall, Eastling, Sheldwich, Badlesmere and Leaveland, Selling and Stalisfield Parish Councils. I also tried to get to Bapchild Parish Council after the meeting at Minster on the Isle of Sheppey only to find they had finished! I did though arrive in time for a "catch up" with both the Chairman and the Clerk in the Village Hall car park. Also, in a localist vein I attended a meeting of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Kent Association of Local Councils and later in the month a Saturday morning Executive Meeting of the same body. There has also been a Swale Joint Transport Board and a Swale Rural Policing meeting with Swale Police and the National Farmers Union to Chair.

I have had two trips to London in September, one for the National Executive Board of District Councils and one for the Executive of South East England Councils. I have represented Swale this month at a review meeting of the South East Local Economic Partnerships Economic Plan and a meeting of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership. Both the above and two meetings of Kent Council Leaders held during the month were focussed on the National Review of Local Economic Partnership Boundaries and Board Membership plus Kent's application to retain Business Rates Revenue for local use.

All the above on top of my regular Committee commitments such as Formal and Informal meetings of Swale Borough Council's Cabinet, all day Home to School Transport Appeal Hearings at County Hall, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership where I represent Swale Borough Council, Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Board representing Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council's Transformation Board and Kent County Council's Commissioning Board and the County's Member Development Group, both of which I Chair.

Having spent one morning Chairing Kent County Council's Regulation Committee at County Hall I then Chaired a site meeting and a well-attended, by the public, Panel meeting of the same Committee in Whitstable to discuss the proposed closure of a Pedestrian Railway Crossing which was part of the route of a Public Footpath. Due to the large number of Public both attending and wishing to speak this led to me driving straight to Sittingbourne to Chair Swale Borough Council's Cabinet before returning to attend Hernhill's Parish Council.

For a change of emphasis, I then departed for the Party Conference in Birmingham on the last day of September. More on this and Rural Housing Proposals next month!

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