

**T&M Parish Partnership  
21st February 2013  
Kent County Council Service Updates**

**1) Kent's Response to the Dilnot report**

KCC Leader Paul Carter is stepping up the pressure on the government to limit the care costs facing thousands of elderly people in Kent. He has launched a Downing Street petition demanding that the government implement a cap on the amount people pay for their care.

**The Dilnot Report** has identified a way to cap the amount families or individuals have to pay for care to £35,000 for any one individual. Under the proposals you would not have to pay a penny more.

Implementing Dilnot would cost the Government about £1.7billion a year – but we believe it is a price worth paying to cap the horrendous costs on some families/individuals of paying for care in their old age. Ministers have been considering this report, but no decision has been made. We believe it should be implemented by Government by 2015, thus reducing the financial impact for older people and ensuring a cap on costs for everybody. This is why we are asking for your help.

**We need 100,000 signatures to trigger a parliamentary debate**

Please sign the petition below and make your voice heard. Together we can put pressure on National Government to make sure Dilnot is implemented – ensuring you get a fair deal.

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/43330>

**2) Fault on Road or Pavement? Report it now**

You can now report or track a problem on a road or pavement anywhere in Kent on KCCs website. Any of the following issues can be easily reported online:

- potholes
- faulty street lights
- faulty traffic signals
- overgrown trees
- broken signs

Once you have reported the problem you can check on its progress using the reference number you will be given.

Following 2012's very wet weather, we are experiencing an increase in the number of potholes on Kent's roads. This is not usual at this time of year and dedicated staff are addressing the issue.

The majority of potholes are fairly small (less than 100mm in diameter) and can be reported using the online fault reporting tool. They will be repaired within of 28 days (In 2012 the average response was 14 days!).

To log a fault visit:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KHSFaultsGIS.Web.Sites.Public/>

Some potholes may pose additional hazards and may need to be treated as an emergency (Call 08458 247 800) and include:

- potholes over 15cm deep on a main road or heavy traffic flow
- potholes over 1 metre wide on a main road or heavy traffic flow
- potholes that have the potential to cause danger to people or property

### 3) Budget 2013/14 Confirmed - No Council Tax increase

Kent County Council has put forward its budget proposals for 2013/14 which confirm the planned Council Tax freeze and continue the commitment to education, highways and social care for 2013/14 – honouring its promise to fight for families and businesses in Kent.

Paul Carter, leader of the council, announced that there will be no increase in Council Tax bills for the third year running, despite further pressure being exerted in recent weeks by the government. The final government settlement was £13m short of the level expected after the estimated reduction. This additional shortfall necessitated further changes to the draft budget. The public consultation in autumn 2012 showed that, generally, Kent residents supported the view that Council Tax levels should be kept as low as possible.

The budget presented at County Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Feb places vulnerable people, the young and the Kent economy at the heart of the council's priorities for the year ahead.

### 4) Education Appeal Panels – Volunteers Needed!

KCC need volunteers to sit on education appeals panels in Kent.

Panel members independently review decisions of admission authorities that overlook parental preferences in the choice of schools. We would particularly like to hear from women, younger people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities so that we can reflect the range of people who live in Kent. If you have children at school, or some experience of school management this could be of interest to you.

#### **What do panel members do?**

They perform an essential role in providing an independent, impartial and informal hearing for parents who appeal against a decision not to give their child a place at their school of choice.

The panel members hear the case put forward by the parents and the case put forward by the Admission Authority. Having heard all the evidence, they then decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal.

#### **Who can apply?**

There is no age limit and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds. You'll need to be sensitive to the needs of parents, a good listener and prepared to make some difficult decisions. You must be able to travel to venues throughout the county.

#### **How often will I have to serve as a panel member?**

You can serve on the panel as few or as many times as you like. Appeals panels take place throughout the year. Between April and July are the busiest months when we may need panel members for up to 5 consecutive days a week.

#### **What do I get in return?**

We provide training each year and keep you up to date with changes in legislation and best practice. We also:

- provide free training
- give allowances for loss of earnings
- reimburse your travel and
- contribute towards your child or dependants' care costs.

**For more in formation or to fill in an application form visit**

[www.kent.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/working\\_and\\_volunteering/appeal\\_panel\\_volunteers.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/working_and_volunteering/appeal_panel_volunteers.aspx)

## **5) Young Passengers encouraged to Speak Up' and save lives**

The Kent Road Safety team has launched its annual campaign to encourage young passengers to find their voice and 'speak up'.

In the last three years, 210 young people aged 16 – 24 were killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads, which makes up 30% of the total number of all car occupant casualties. The reason for this increased risk is that many passengers are driven by young drivers. Young drivers are vulnerable to peer pressure and taking risks, that can lead to them driving too fast, over-estimating their driving ability and often using their mobile phone when driving. This leads to an increased likelihood of being involved in a crash possibly, even cutting lives short, either their own, their passengers, or other road users.

For more information visit: [www.kentroadsafety.info/](http://www.kentroadsafety.info/)

## **6) Ofsted finds significant improvement in children's safeguarding**

Children's safeguarding services in Kent have been turned around thanks to the hard work of staff and Members at Kent County Council. The welfare of children and young people in the county is the council's top priority.

Ofsted inspectors spent an intense eight days with staff, parents and children around Kent and found that the council's children safeguarding services have greatly improved and are now judged 'adequate'. The new, tougher Ofsted inspection framework means a third of local authorities judged under the new regime have been found to be 'inadequate'. Since the last Ofsted inspection in October 2010, there has been a massive effort by KCC staff and members and a significant investment over two years, to make the services provided for vulnerable children better.

Ofsted acknowledge the huge effort that has been made and in a meeting with staff, and inspectors recognised KCC had not 'sat back' but had been committed to dealing with weaknesses in safeguarding. During the inspection, a random sample of around 200 children found no children who were 'left at risk of, or suffering from, significant harm'. KCC welcomes all the findings of the report and acknowledges that more work needs to be done.

## **7) Local Healthwatch in Kent**

Helping people find their voice is crucial when it comes to health and social care.

From 1 April, a new organisation will be in place that will give people an opportunity to share their views about Kent's health and social care services to see where they are doing well and how they could improve.

And today, Kent County Council can announce that Local Healthwatch in the county will be run by a consortium of 'Kent and Medway Citizens Advice' (KAMCA), 'Voluntary Action within Kent' (VAWK) and 'Activmob'. The consortium will bring the three organisations' distinct strengths and expertise under one roof, to ensure Local Healthwatch Kent excels at providing advice and information to the public, supporting the voluntary sector, and engaging with the public in new and innovative ways.

Work is well underway to make sure that Local Healthwatch is ready to start work on 1 April.

Local Healthwatch will be the new consumer champion for health and social care and will play a vital role in empowering local people.

## 8) Kent Mineral Safeguarding Consultation

Mineral 'safeguarding' is the planning term used to describe the process of ensuring that natural mineral resources are not unnecessarily sterilised by other types of development, thereby leaving insufficient mineral supplies for future generations. We are inviting your views on a draft paper that focuses on the important subject of mineral safeguarding in Kent.

Tonbridge and Malling has the most quarries featured in the consultation:

- Ightham Quarry
- Borough Green Quarry
- Addington South Quarry
- Addington East Quarry
- Blaise Farm Quarry

Let us know your views by the 4<sup>th</sup> of March

[http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment\\_and\\_planning/planning\\_in\\_kent/minerals\\_and\\_waste/evidence\\_base/mineral\\_safeguarding.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_in_kent/minerals_and_waste/evidence_base/mineral_safeguarding.aspx)

For more information on any of these subjects please contact:

**James Harman**

KCC Community Engagement Manager (Tonbridge and Malling)

[james.harman@kent.gov.uk](mailto:james.harman@kent.gov.uk) or 01622 694195

