

Report for Sellindge Parish Meeting 12 November 2024

The new Government's Budget saw some welcome announcements on extra funding for Adult Social Care, children with Special Educational Needs, continued funding the Household Support Fund which helps the most vulnerable and extra money for road maintenance. Less welcome was the increase in the Employers' National Insurance Contributions and the National Living Wage as these will increase costs particularly for the companies and charities we use to deliver Social Care. The final settlement for Local Government will be confirmed in late December and we still expect we will need to make substantial savings to balance the KCC budget for 2025/26.

It was dismaying to see no changes in the Budget to eligibility levels to the Winter Fuel Allowance and KCC has a campaign to try to get more people to apply for Pension Credit so that they can still receive the Winter Fuel Allowance. The changes to Agricultural Property Relief are also alarming in their impact on family farms.

Current consultations include one on the use of pharmacies and another on KCC's Education strategy and you can take part at

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/> Matthew Scott, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, also has a survey for the public to help shape the new Police and Crime Plan. It takes around 5 minutes on the link below:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PoliceandCrimePlan2024/>

There was a paper about the preparations for the much postponed European Entry Exit System (EES) at last week's meeting of the Full Council at KCC. EES, which replaces passport stamping with a biometric system, was due to be implemented from today but most EU countries (including France) are not yet ready. I spoke in the debate to make the point that our communities face regular disruption to our roads whenever there are problems with cross Channel traffic quite apart from the potential of long delays as people register for EES. More needs to be done to enable people to register away from the ports and to manage the cross Channel traffic both tourist and freight so it doesn't blight Kent's roads. You can read the paper and see the full debate on the KCC website.

Susan Carey

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