

Report to Sellindge Parish Council 13/06/2023

One of the 300+ services funded through your Council tax is Kent Scientific Services (KSS) which provides the scientific and calibration work needed to support Kent Trading Standards (another service provided by KCC) to check that goods sold in Kent are safe and properly measured. KSS is one of the services that's not often seen but which keeps us safe and catches crooks.

On 05 June the Kent Scientific Services laboratory in Kings Hill, West Malling was visited by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to announce a nationwide crackdown on the marketing and sale of vapes to those under 18. It's illegal to sell vapes to children but unscrupulous retailers have been giving free samples to them to encourage them to become future customers. With their brightly coloured packaging and sweet like flavours, vapes can be attractive to children. The free sample loophole is being closed. More generally KSS has been testing vapes on sale in Kent for dangerous ingredients such as lead and Kent Trading Standards is undertaking targeted enforcement action. The public are asked to report illicit vapes, illegal tobacco or underage sales to Kent Trading Standards, contact the charity [Crimestoppers](#) 100% anonymously on 0800 555 111.

For many years now Visit Kent (another KCC supported service) has organised the Kent Big Weekend where Kent residents can apply for free tickets to visit a range of tourist attractions across Kent. This year's event is on 24/25 June. You can find out about which attractions are available and apply at www.kentbigweekend.co.uk

To coincide with this, KCC is using some of the Government grant we have been allocated to support bus travel to offer free bus travel in Kent for the same two days. There's no need to book (or take part in the Big Weekend events) just turn up and travel for free on any bus in Kent and Medway up to 8pm on 24

and 25 June. For more information about the Free Bus Weekend, visit www.kent.gov.uk/freebusweekend.

KCC plans to hold a number of public consultations over the next few months and the best way to take part is to register via letstalkkent.gov.uk We will be asking for views on the 2024/25 budget which may seem very early indeed but the intention is to have savings plans more fully developed by the time of the budget meeting in February 2024. Do please take part as this is the consultation to help us decide which services to prioritise.

Susan Carey

Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council