

## Report for Sellindge Parish Council 12March 2024

The KCC budget was agreed at a full day meeting of the County Council on 19 February. The papers for the meeting and a webcast of the debate are on the KCC website [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk). The Labour Group, Liberal Democrats, Greens and Independents all put forward amendments to make small changes to spending but their proposals also all involved a 5% increase. None of the amendments were accepted (one involved opening a bar in County Hall to make money!) The budget that was passed has increased spending on adult social care, children in care and home to school transport in line with demand.

KCC has stepped up its campaign for all those involved but particularly the Government to do more to help preparations for the proposed introduction of the new EU Entry Exit System (EES). From 06 October 2024 EES will replace stamping passports with an electronic system to register the dates of entry and exit by non-EU travellers. Following the evidence given to Parliament's EU Scrutiny Committee by KCC Leader, Roger Gough on 31 January, Roger has also visited Eurotunnel to see the preparations being made there to reduce the potential impact of the new checks. Eurotunnel has invested E80m to prepare their terminals for the change. Such work is reassuring but more facilities are needed particularly for freight traffic. A report on this issue went to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 07 March and you can read this and watch the debate on the KCC website [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Another current campaign is the one to restore the Kent stops for Eurostar services. There is a petition on this which has nearly reached 50,000 signatures. If you'd like to support it you can sign the [online petition](#). KCC has also surveyed Kent businesses and found strong support for the reintroduction of the Kent stops. I know Damian Green MP, Ashford Borough Council and KCC are all involved in the campaign to persuade Eurostar to restore the services.

KCC has launched a Biodiversity Net Gain Site Register for Kent. Since 12 February all developments with over ten houses are required to deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity. The aim is for this improvement to be delivered on the site itself but if this is impractical then the site register will provide a pipeline of suitable land to deliver this commitment. The Making Space for Nature Kent website has more details on this. Do please keep reporting potholes preferably on the KCC website or to 03000 41 81 81. Nearly 60,000 potholes were repaired on Kent's roads between April and December 2023 and the work continues. The Government has allocated Kent £135m of additional funding over the next 11 years for road repairs. £8.6m of this will be spent between March and October this year. This is on top of the £50m in KCC's own road and

footway maintenance budget. Reporting by residents ensures our local roads are added to the list for this spending.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council