

Report for Sellindge Parish Council 09 April 2024

KCC has launched another round of SolarTogether the collective buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage which is open to Kent homeowners and small businesses. A reverse price auction is held with pre-vetted installers and individual quotes then sent to those who have registered. Individuals benefit from the 'bulk buying' price and the installers have a guaranteed pipeline of work which benefits them. There's a link for registration via the KCC website and the district councils in Kent are promoting the scheme.

Consultations are currently being held on Early Years Education in Kent (universal, targeted and specialist) and on the school term dates for the next three years. You'll find these at letstalk.kent.gov.uk and if you register to take part, you'll be alerted to future KCC consultations. There are also continuing opportunities to get involved in 'Making Space for Nature' which is creating a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway. This is part of a nationwide effort to identify land that is important for biodiversity and how best to create wildlife corridors as well as reward landowners for their role in making space for nature.

KCC is currently very close to safe limits for the number of young people we have in our care. There is still only a voluntary system for transferring Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving in Kent to other local authorities to share the burden. The courts have ruled that the Government needs to put in place a better system, but they have also ruled that KCC must accept responsibility for the UASC that arrive in Kent and we cannot differentiate between care offered to them and our own citizen children. A series of homes are being set up around Kent to house the UASC and recruitment is taking place for more social workers. However, as I've reported before, the numbers involved are more than any one council can reasonably accommodate.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has declared a national incident following recent outbreaks of measles in the West Midlands and London. Measles is highly infectious and can make both children and adults seriously unwell. Two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine provides lifelong protection and people (whatever their age) are being urged to catch up on missed doses. The current UK vaccination rate is 83.3% - well below the 95% level that the World Health Organisation says is needed to prevent outbreaks of the disease. Information on symptoms is on the NHS website and anyone who thinks they may have measles should telephone their GP Surgery or the NHS 111.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council