

Kent County Councillor Report for Parishes, 11 June 2026

New Library for Folkestone

KCC has opened its first new library in Kent for 14 years, at 14 Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone. This replaces the old library at Grace Hill which has been sold for £1 to Folkestone Town Council for it to explore and develop future community use. The new library is a hub for wider services including adult learning and local archives.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government has stressed that it wishes to keep to its timetable for new Unitary authorities to take the place of the district and County Council to come into being in April 2028. If there is an expected announcement from government on 16 July 2026, it would mean there would be elections for the 'shadow authorities' in Kent held in May 2027.

Consultation on Solar Farm Development for New Romney

The second phase of public consultation has commenced on South Brooks Solar Farm near Lydd. This is one of a number of major proposals for a solar farm and battery storage facility facing Romney Marsh. The scheme is backed by EDF Power Solutions UK and PS Renewables. Public views are welcomed and details can be found on the scheme website.

Solar Farm Development Policy Statement

KCC supports a mixed economy of energy provision in Kent. A policy statement has been produced which supports the development of nuclear, Hydrogen and renewables such as solar. However, the Council states that it does not want to see top grade agricultural land or highly valued landscapes covered by solar farms and battery storage facilities, nor does it favour excessively large solar developments. Rather, it will encourage developments to be sited on industrial land, brown field sites and existing buildings.

Member Community Grants

Small grants in the region of £250 to £500 are available for constituted non-profit making groups in Elham Valley for events and activities. Please contact Christopher Hesse by email at Christopher.hesse@kent.gov.uk in the first instance if you want a project to be considered for a grant.

Household Waste Sites

A new, speedier and simplified method for booking visits to household waste centres in Kent is being introduced from 17 June 2026. Please visit the pages on the KCC website for details.

Otterpool Consultation

Otterpool Park LLP, the master developer of Otterpool Park, is preparing to submit updated information to the local planning authority (Folkestone and Hythe District Council) on progress with the 8,500 homes development. It has organised a public exhibition to update on the Otterpool Park 'next steps'. This will be held at Sellindge Village Hall on Wednesday 24 June from 2.30pm to 8.00pm. Information from the exhibition will be available on the Otterpool website from Thursday 25 June for anyone unable to attend in person.

Chris Hesse

Kent County Councillor for Elham Valley, and Cabinet Member for Local Government Efficiency and Reorganisation