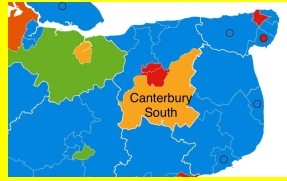


Mike Sole's Report

February 2025



Kent County Councillor -Canterbury South

Canterbury City Councillor – Nailbourne



The big news this month is that Kent was not selected by the government to be in the first wave of devolution. Whilst this means that we may have to wait a little longer before we elect a mayor for Kent, Local Government reorganisation continues, although over on a slightly longer timescale. We will soon know what the plans are for carving Kent up into three or four councils with the creation of an East Kent unitary council. This does mean that elections to Kent County Council (KCC) will take place on 1 May 2025.

I delighted to be invited to attend the unveiling of the Aphra Benn statue in Canterbury in the presence of HM Queen Camilla. The new statue outside The Beaney is a very fitting tribute to England's earliest professional female writer.

Both KCC and Canterbury City Council (CCC) agreed their budgets this month for 2025/26. I was very pleased to be able to deliver the CCC budget speech on behalf of the administration. Having worked hard all year to listen, consult and take views from across the council chamber and residents, my theme was that we are better working together. I was delighted that the budget was supported by the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative council groups, endorsing the open, transparent and inclusive approach that I have taken as cabinet member for finance.

I was most disturbed to hear that areas of public open space in St Augustine's, Chartham, had been offered for sale for a multitude of uses without disclosure of the restrictions attached to this land. I have been working with residents, the parish council and CCC, as well and contacting the current and previous owners of the land as it is so important that this land remains open, accessible and maintained. Work continues on this issue.

I have been in exploratory meetings with KCC and Cllr Lee Castle about improving youth provision in Littlebourne. I spent one morning cycling around and reporting over 100 potholes to KCC – I am carefully monitoring the progress on repairing these. I have attended parish council meetings in Chartham and Womenswold, and a meeting of the Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority.



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