FOCUS
On Canterbury South

Including Little Stour & Adisham, Nailbourne, Wincheap (part) and Chartham & Stone Street (part) wards



From Lib Dem Councillors **Mike Sole, Lee Castle** and the local team

Improving our roads



Cllrs Mike Sole and Lee Castle are working hard to improve local roads and reduce traffic speeds

KCC Councillor **Mike Sole** has been working with KCC and parish councils to support and lobby for highway improvements.

These have included:

- 20mph limits in Littlebourne, Patrixbourne and Barham.
- Bus stop accessibility improvements in Breach (Barham).
- Additional signage to warn of pedestrians in roadways.

Additional schemes underway include:

- 20mph limits in Bridge.
- New white village gateways at Lower Hardres and near Stoneway Park on Stone Street.

Mike said, "It's often an uphill battle that can take well over a year to progress such schemes. I'm delighted that these projects which will make a huge difference to road safety, have been achieved.
"Whilst sometimes parish councils have had to contribute towards project costs, I have through active engagement with KCC often agreed that these have been fully funded by other sources".

Lee Castle, who is also a Littlebourne Parish Councillor and Speedwatch volunteer added, "It's great to see the hard work that the parish councils have put into these projects materialise. Already residents are noticing a reduction in traffic speeds around the village."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

In July the government will announce the geographical boundaries of new unitary councils across Kent. In 2027 elections will be held to those councils, and in 2028, after an initial shadow role, the unitary councils will take control of local government services in Kent and both Kent County Council and Canterbury City Council will be abolished.

Canterbury City Councillor Lee Castle said, "These changes are huge. They are being implemented by the Labour government with very little meaningful consultation at a local level. However, we are determined leave Canterbury district in the best possible state when the unitary council takes over. This includes carrying out a community governance review of all of the unparished areas in the district to see if there is an appetite for additional parish and town councils."

Wincheap Park & Ride proposals

A new slip road off the A2 is being built by National Highways to direct traffic from the London direction through the existing park and ride site. Alternative park and ride facilities have been proposed to replace the lost spaces and deal with future growth.

Mike Sole said, "Whilst it had been important to look at their merits, costs and environmental impact of all options, Liberal Democrat councillors have said that they will not support any proposal that either builds on Thanington recreation ground or the earlier Conservative plans to build on the water meadows."



Lee Castle added, "We had been considering the construction of a multi-storey car park, but the preferred option of Liberal Democrats is now to move Canenco from its base behind Morrisons and provide additional spaces in an overflow car park. There would be a modest extension of the existing site, but not beyond existing building lines.

"We believe that this option will be cheaper and less environmentally damaging. It would also avoid the need for a potentially ugly and unwelcome multi-storey car park."

Working hard all year round - not just at election time

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Grants Update

Mike Sole has been using grant funding from KCC to support local community projects.

In the last year these have included funding towards:

- Womenswold phone box restoration.
- Chairs in Kingston Village Hall.
- Bridge sports facilities.
- Wincheap Primary School Outdoor Play Scheme.
- Ickham Village Hall dishwasher.

Mike said, “These grants can make a huge difference to local community facilities. I have an annual budget of £3,600 that I can access that covers both community and highway projects. Please get in touch if I can help.”



Joe Eilers (left), Chair of Kingston Barn, shows some of their new chairs to Cllr Mike Sole

Lib Dems say “Abolish the Treasury to promote growth”. Find out more at https://bit.ly/4kM6sJ2

KCC Chaos continues

Since taking control of Kent County Council last year, Reform have found themselves embroiled in chaos.

Councillor Mike Sole said, “In less than a year, 10 out of 57 Reform councillors elected last May, have either joined other parties or sit as independents. It’s been chaotic with regular changes to committees, infighting and expulsions.”

Despite these distractions the Liberal Democrat group, as the official opposition, continue to hold the administration to account.



The 12 strong Lib Dem group at County Hall

Mike added, “Reform’s experiment in Kent has failed. They promised lower taxes but their efficiency teams haven’t found any substantial savings. We’ve seen Reform remove the Ukraine flag from KCC and refuse to fly the Pride flag. We’ve seen them recruit political advisors whilst freezing the recruitment of front line staff. We’ve seen them indefinitely postpone building the proposed new primary school in Thanington, but what have they done for us?"

“The condition of our roads is worse than ever. Council tax is increasing, school bus pass prices are increasing. The only thing going down is the number of Reform councillors at KCC”, added Mike.

Follow Mike and Lee on Facebook for up-to-the-minute information as well as monthly reports on what they have been doing for local people.

Keep children safe on-line

Tech companies have for far too long treated children as data to be mined rather than young people to be protected. They have let harmful content roam free on their sites from perpetuating negative body image to amplifying extreme and violent content. They have built addictive algorithms designed to keep children endlessly doom-scrolling at the expense of their mental health.



Liberal Democrats are proposing a world-first film-style age-rating for online platforms, including social media. This is an approach supported by children’s charities like the NSPCC.

This would mean platforms would be required to age-gate content at an appropriate level according to a new Ofcom framework looking at the addictiveness of their platform design, the impact on children’s mental health, and the harmfulness of the content they host.

Find out more about our proposals and sign our petition go to **https://bit.ly/46lZ8Of**

Protecting our chalk streams

England’s chalk streams are a national treasure – and a global rarity. Around 85% of the world’s chalk streams are found in southern England. These rivers, filtered naturally through chalk aquifers, create pristine habitats for brown trout, kingfishers, water voles and a dazzling array of invertebrates. They are our rainforest equivalent – fragile, unique and irreplaceable.



Here in Kent, we are proud to be home to jewels like the Nailbourne, Little Stour and Great Stour.

Mike Sole, Councillor for Nailbourne said “The Nailbourne, a winterbourne that flows with the seasons, is a striking reminder of the delicate balance between rainfall and groundwater."

Lee Castle, councillor for Little Stour & Adisham, said “The Little Stour winds through villages and countryside, sustaining wildlife and communities alike. Yet both face mounting environmental pressures”

Liberal Democrats are leading the fight to protect them. Lib Dem MP Pippa Heylings has introduced legislation pushing for UNESCO World Heritage status for the UK’s chalk streams – a bold step that would recognise their global significance and strengthen their protection.

Mike added “Chalk streams are not expendable waterways. They are part of our natural identity. The Liberal Democrats are clear: clean water, protected habitats and proper accountability for polluters are not optional. They are essential.”

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