FOCUS

On Chestfield ward

Liberal Democrats



From Lib Dem City councillors **Peter Old, James Flanagan,** Kent County councillor **Alex Ricketts** and the local team

Fighting for reliable water supply



Dealing with decaying pipework is causing many road closures like here on Radfall Road

Councillors James Flanagan and Peter Old have sought answers from South East Water over this summer's supply failures.

Creaking pipelines have repeatedly burst across Chestfield Ward, triggering dry taps and traffic tailbacks.

"Homes, particularly in Broomfield Gate and Radfall, suffered disruption or low pressure," said James. "For some homes in the area, this issue has been ongoing for over ten years. That's totally unacceptable."

Last month, James and Peter arranged a meeting between South East Water management and residents in Broomfield Gate and Radfall to address this problem.



James Flanagan speaking at the Whitstable public meeting with South East Water

The company explained its upgrade works at the Thanington storage tank to stabilise supply to the one connected at Radfall. This should help to avoid future disruption on the scale seen this summer. They are also installing backup batteries to prevent sudden power fluctuations from knocking out the pumps entirely.

"We will keep pressing the utility to ensure these upgrades are made," said Peter. "Nobody wants a repeat of what happened this summer – residents shouldn't have to worry if water will be there when they turn on their taps."

"Water companies should be statutory planning consultees" say Lib Dems

The Liberal Democrats are pushing for water companies to become required consultees on all planning applications.

At present, water companies have a legal requirement to connect new homes regardless of capacity. New housing developments frequently overwhelm local sewage networks.

Making water companies required 'statutory' consultees lets companies flag infrastructure risks to local councils before development can begin.

Lib Dem MPs introduced amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to secure this vital change – but the Labour government repeatedly turned down these proposals believing they will slow down house building.

"The government seems intent on higher housing targets for our area without asking water companies for their views," said James. "It's incredible that in 2026, with the amount of house-building proposed, water companies aren't statutory consultees. This just shows the government are driving through house-building without any consideration for infrastructure."

Chestfield Ward Liberal Democrats

Follow James, Peter and Alex on Facebook for up-to-the-minute information as well as monthly reports on what they have been doing for local people.

Did you know?

South East Water is looking at the water demand and supply situation for each of the 29 councils they cover. They plan to let the councils know the situation for each area.

"This is incredibly important as the Local Plan process continues," said Peter. "For proposed sites like Brooklands, water supply is a serious concern. We need to know if the water companies can actually meet future demand, let alone the needed upgrades to existing infrastructure."

Maydowns Road sewage stench

As an example of what could happen elsewhere, residents of Maydowns Road have been blighted by sewage smells from the development of 450 new homes at Oxenden Park in Greenhill.

Sewage is being pumped from the site, across 2km of pipeline into an antiquated 4" sewer pipe under Maydowns Road.

Protests by residents have led to the problem being solved – for now – but the problem has recurred several times since the sewer pipe was connected.



Working hard all year round - not just at election time

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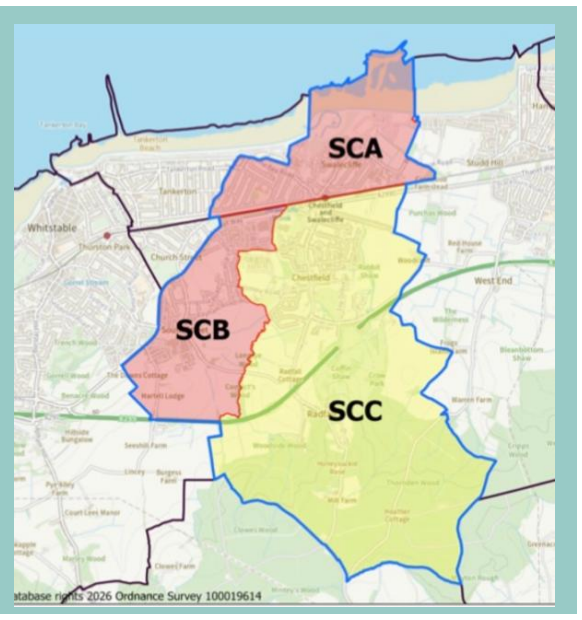
A bigger Parish Council for Chestfield?

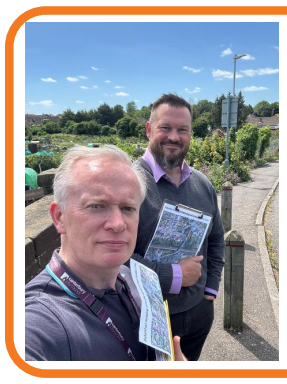
The City Council is consulting on new plans for parish and town councils.

The proposals include a large expansion to Chestfield Parish Council, which would include Swalecliffe and the non-parished part of Chestfield Ward south of the Thanet Way. South Tankerton, including the area around Ham Shades Lanes and Church Street, would join a new Tankerton Parish Council.

"We're very keen to hear the views of residents on these proposals," said Cllr Peter Old. "It's also important to let the Council know your views on this by writing to consultations@canterbury.gov.uk. You can also complete the consultation at www.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations-and-petitions. The deadline is 9am on Thursday 17th December 2026.

In the map (right), the area marked **SCC** is the current parish council area. **SCA** is Swalecliffe and **SCB** is the part of Chestfield ward south of the Thanet Way.



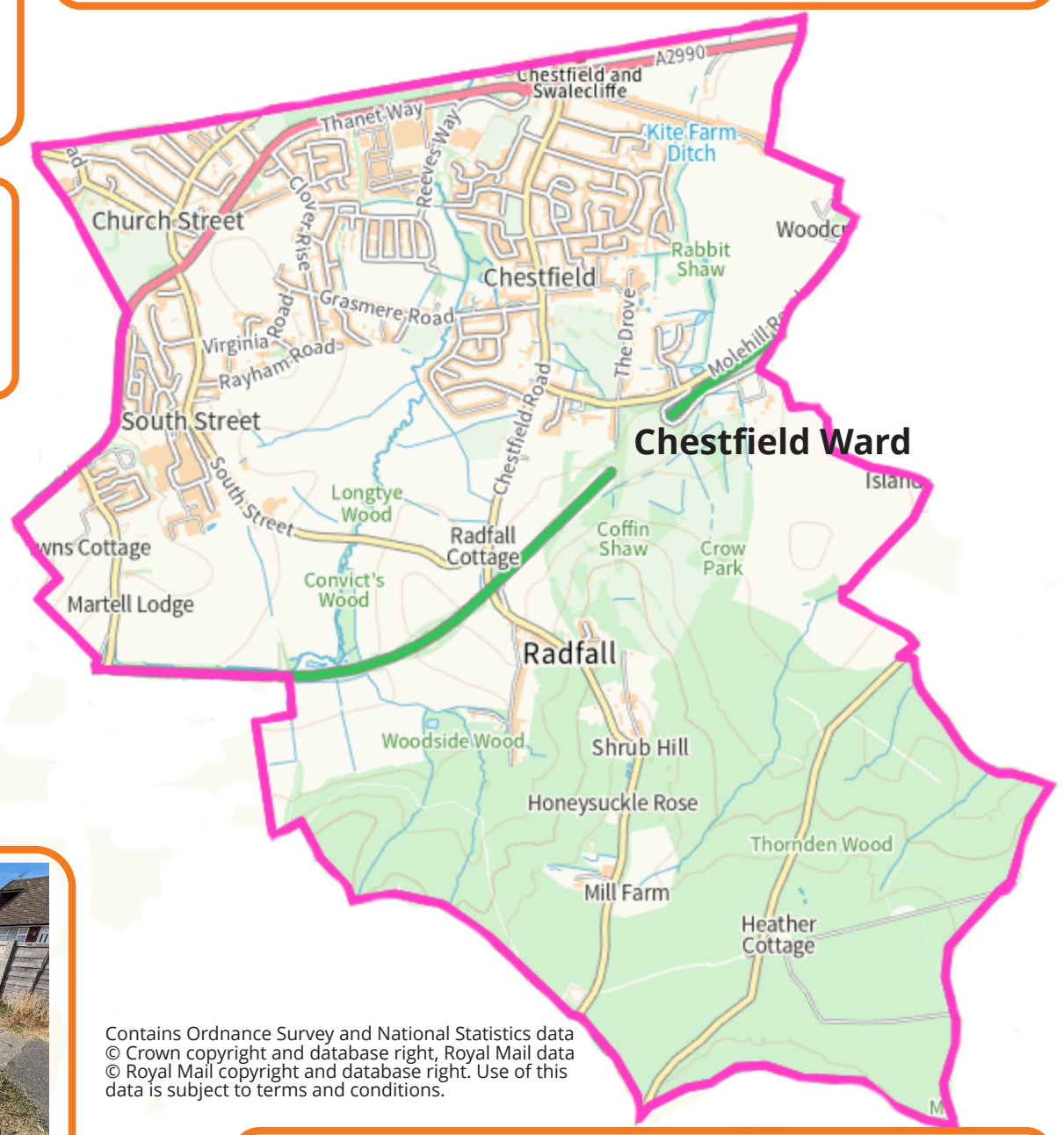


Ham Shades Lane
Alex Ricketts has been pressing for new signs in Ham Shades Lane, reminding drivers that pedestrians cross the railway bridge. Good news – the signs are due to be put up in October. Alex is still pressing KCC for a longer-term solution to the narrow path across the bridge.

Church Street Playing Fields
KCC is due to consider the Village Green application for Church Street Playing Fields. We are working closely with residents to find a solution that retains vital open space in the event KCC doesn't grant village green status.

Grasmere Gardens
James Flanagan is pressing Kitewood for the play area to be installed earlier at Grasmere Gardens. As part of the planning conditions, the play area isn't due to be built until the next stage of the development is complete. "With more families moving into the area we really need to see the play area brought forward," **said James**. "We've also written to Kitewood about the need for signs next to the ponds, dog poo bins, and streetlights to be connected before winter."

Brooklands Farm
We are keeping a close eye on when Brooklands Farm goes to the planning committee. **James and Peter** continue to fight against large sites in Chestfield and voted against the Local Plan (the blueprint for future development) and submitted a 17 page objection to the Brooklands planning application. You can read our objection at: https://www.canterburylibdems.org.uk/news/article/brooklands-farm-outline-planning-application"



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Roads and pavements
James Flanagan is reporting broken pavements and roads to KCC Highways – including pathways overgrown with weeds. KCC carry out their weed clearing work in September and October, but James is asking for some of the most seriously affected paths, like this one in Clover Rise, to have weeds dug out – not just sprayed.



Chestfield Road
The resurfacing of Chestfield Road between Willow Way and Molehill Road is welcome, but speeding is still a problem. We're pressing Kent Police for a greater presence, including a mobile speeding camera. County Councillor Alex Ricketts has requested a pedestrian crossing near to the play area on Chestfield Road as part of his 'Highways Improvement Plan'.



Flooding risk on Molehill Road
Alex Ricketts has asked for the gulleys between Birkdale Close and Molehill Road to be cleared. Alex has also asked for foliage around the nearby pond to be removed, as well as around the emergency route connecting both roads. "With heavy rain likely this autumn, it's important to get this area cleared to avoid flooding on Molehill Road," said Alex.

Community Day
Alex, James and Peter joined residents and the Parish Council at the Community Day in August. "It was great to see residents enjoying the Bank Holiday Monday," said James. "Our thanks to the Parish Council and Cricket Club for organising such a great day."



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