

Report to Romney Marsh Councils

From Cllr David Wimble, Kent County Council

To: New Romney Town Council, Lydd Town Council, St Mary's Bay, St Mary in the Marsh, Brookland, Brenzett, Ivychurch and Newchurch Parish Councils

Over the past two months, my workload has been extensive both across the Romney Marsh and within my Cabinet responsibilities for Kent County Council.

Local Matters on the Marsh

I have continued to deal with local issues, including the reporting and follow-up of fly-tipping and wider household waste concerns. These have increasingly become a burden on local residents, and I am pressing officers to ensure quicker enforcement and clearance where possible.

A key issue has been the future use of Peacock House, which has been scheduled to operate as a reception centre for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 16 from next spring. Understandably, this has been a highly sensitive and political subject. As with the situation at Napier Barracks in Cheriton, this decision was not driven by local authorities but imposed upon us, and I continue to push for the highest safeguarding standards and transparency as it progresses.

Nuclear and Energy Planning

My Cabinet work has become increasingly active, particularly regarding New Nuclear for Dungeness. I have held regular meetings with David Godfrey and am seeking representation on the NDA committees and NuLeaF to ensure Kent County Council has a voice in national planning.

We have attended several cross-party briefings at Westminster focusing on long-term UK energy resilience and the national strategy towards achieving Net Zero over the next 25 years. Dungeness remains strategically important, and I am ensuring that Romney Marsh remains firmly on the government's radar.

Reuse Centres & Waste Savings

You may have seen recent press and broadcast coverage of the opening of another KCC Reuse Centre. These sites divert usable items from incineration, saving the council approximately **£165 per tonne**. Our reuse shops have already generated around **£20,000** for local charitable causes, and it is our ambition to open a further five centres within the next 12 months.

In addition, I am heading up a major initiative to improve recycling rates and reduce cross-contamination in waste streams. In Folkestone & Hythe alone, a 5% improvement in household recycling would save the council **more than £2.8 million**. This remains a key financial priority.

Heritage & Geopark Status

I recently took part in the launch of the new Kent–France Geopark partnership at Dover Castle, which aims to unlock educational, environmental and tourism opportunities across the Channel region.

We are also working with community organisations to transition Kent County Council's eight historic windmills into a Kent-wide Windmill Trust. This will protect their future as public heritage assets while keeping them in the ownership of the people of Kent.

Agriculture & Rural Affairs

This summer I attended the Kent County Show and spoke at several seminars on the challenges facing farming communities, particularly the widening gap in government support.

On National Farming Day, I was invited onto BBC Radio 4 to speak about mental health and suicide in the farming sector, raising awareness of the support networks that are available. It's vital this issue continues to be discussed publicly.

Environmental Funding

I have helped secure **£39,557** to plant **6,000 new trees** across Kent, strengthening canopy cover and biodiversity. A further **£150,000** has also been granted to develop work with "Growing in Kent and Medway" on solar-powered propagators and improved composting systems.

Workload & Attendance

I am pleased to report that I still hold a **100% attendance record** for all Kent County Council meetings at Sessions House. My diary has involved extensive travel — approximately **700 miles per week** — attending meetings and representing Romney Marsh and Kent across the county and beyond.

Personal Note

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks for the many messages of congratulations I have received regarding my forthcoming wedding on **22 November**. I will be out of the office from that date until **13 December**, although urgent matters will continue to be monitored.

Should any council require supporting information on any of the above topics, I would be more than happy to provide it.

Kind regards,

Cllr David Wimble

Kent County Council – Romney Marsh Division