**Report for Lyminge Parish Council 29 November 2023**

Councils with Social Care responsibilities had hoped that the Government’s Autumn Statement would include extra funding to meet the demand and cost pressures faced by this part of local government. There was no such announcement and this leaves us all with a grave financial challenge. There’s better news on KCC’s judicial review of the Home Secretary about the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) arriving in large numbers in Kent. There is a mandatory dispersal system for families and for adults claiming asylum which shares the burden with other councils but the dispersal system for UASC is voluntary and other councils are reluctant to take more such young people at a time when every council has financial problems. We now expect full funding for proper reception centres and arrangements made to share care for UASCs with other local authorities.

There are several consultations under way at KCC. You will find them all at letstalkkent.gov.uk with hard copies on request or available at a library. I’d draw your attention to the one on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 34 and the information on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The Government has recently announced more £200m funding for road maintenance in addition to the extra funding allocated earlier this year (£500m in total). This is welcome but with a network of over 5,000 miles KCC could easily make use of the entire pot. Kent Highways will make sure that the funding we do get goes as far as possible. I recently saw a KCC report on the trials of new materials and methods of work and whilst not all of them lived up to their promise, Low Temperature Asphalt (LTA) did well and will be used more widely. LTA’s main benefits are in energy savings and reduced carbon emissions, but it also speeds up the work and therefore reduces the amount of time needed for road closures.

I’m sorry to report that Pentland have not yet responded to me, so I have asked the Street Works Team at Kent Highways to keep an especially close eye on their works at Broad Street. I know some residents are concerned about the quality of reinstatement of the road. The work will be inspected and if needed (as it was with the recent Pentland works in Hawkinge) remediation works will be required.

I was pleased to join the Christmas Light Switch On in Etchinghill. Etchinghill Residents Association were ahead of their time in using a living tree to decorate – it was less than my height when we planted it over ten years ago; it’s well over 20’ tall now and looks magnificent. Great Carol singing and Christmas Spirit.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley