

Parish Council Annual Meeting

Purpose

Providing a proactive and visible presence in Kent's communities to improve residents' quality of life and promote stronger and safer communities.

Vision

To be a trusted community-based service that identifies and addresses local concerns by implementing preventative and early intervention measures. Collaborating with partners to deliver solutions which will allow Kent's residents and communities to thrive.

Objective 1

Strengthen community resilience (Stronger, Safer Communities)

Wardens will equip residents to prevent and recover from being victims to scams. They will address low level crime and antisocial behaviour through deterrence, prevention and partnership working. They will support communities in challenging times, from floods to pandemics.

Objective 2

Support the elderly and vulnerable

Wardens will work with those most vulnerable in their communities with the aim of improving wellbeing, supporting independent living and reducing social isolation and loneliness by facilitating access to care and services.

Objective 3

Foster community cohesion and wellbeing

Wardens will improve community wellbeing by working in a range of environments and across all age groups (as is appropriate for the location), setting up new groups and events where needed through community development projects.

Objective 4

Assist with navigating public services

Wardens will work closely with internal and external partners, maintaining knowledge in order to support residents. Wardens are a KCC front line service and will embody the 'one council' and no wrong door approach.



My work within the communities I cover has continued to be very varied.

I continue to work with a variety of stakeholders and agencies to foster a holistic approach to community matters.

Situations which involve peoples' welfare and safety change rapidly, so, being able to engage with the right people quickly has been vital.

I am committed to improving the lives of others and follow the Esther Philosophy throughout.

Some examples of me seeing a need and reacting to this are highlighted below.

Example

I am an active member of the local Dementia Friendly Community Group and in 2023 hosted an event in the community with Crossroads Care to promote Dementia Awareness.

I sourced a free venue, free refreshments and advertised to all local stake holders and community members who were living with Dementia.

I liaised with other agencies I work with locally to provide a Marketplace Event. Included in this event was the opportunity to take part in the Dementia Experience Bus to give an insight for attendees into the virtual simulated effects of Dementia felt by those living with the condition.

Example

On the 2nd June myself and volunteers launched a new initiative in New Ash Green for those living with social isolation and loneliness.

The event was hosted at the Pavilion a facility in New Ash Green with an area to purchase refreshments, play pool, darts and enjoy tabletop games.

The event had been planned for many months to ensure the target audience would be reached.

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This initiative has been attended by resident in all local villages.

In our roles as Community Wardens, we are often meeting community members who feel lonely due sometimes life events or being new to the area and not yet forming friendship groups.

One lady in attendance expressed the fact it was her first time of meeting people away from the home since experiencing loss and having the confidence to return to a social gathering of people was a huge step forward for her.

To see interactions with those attending with some not having met previously was testimony to the fact events like these are worth their weight in gold.

I recently had contact from the local Community Cupboard to refer a couple to me new to area who were looking for local support networks.

I made an appointment and visited the couple to look at what support was needed and how I could directly help and signpost to other agencies.

I conducted several home visits whereby we discussed their needs.

I managed to book an appointment for an optician to visit their home, an Imago assessment, assistance from their housing provider and details of local Days Out organised by the Cottage Community who offer a door-to-door service for those looking to visit places when they don't have their own transport.

On one of my visits, we discussed a mobility scooter for the gentleman with mobility needs to allow him to access local amenities, as since moving he has been unable to leave the house.

I explained I will keep my eye open for one as sometimes they are donated to the community.

During a subsequent visit to the Cupboard I was asked if I knew of anyone in need of a scooter which I explained I did.

It was a lovely surprise for the couple.

While with them I managed to contact a mobility servicing company who came to conduct a home visit to ensure the scooter was safe to use.

Hopefully this now allows for a greater level of independence to alleviate isolation and loneliness.

Example

On the 14th July I had the pleasure of being invited to Roundash Nursery Hartley to meet staff and children and deliver a Road Safety input to 25 children in attendance.

The session was pitched at raising awareness of staying safe near to and crossing roads, ensuring young people hold hands with an adult when out and about.

The session was well received, and the children took an active part in listening, singing and asking questions throughout.

I liaised with Hartley library before the visit to borrow an appropriate book to share a story.

The children also sang a Road Safety Song and were left colouring sheets as a reminder to hold hands and stay safe near to roads.

I used resources from Brake The Road Safety Charity who work with communities and organisations across the UK to stop the tragedy of road deaths and injuries, make streets and communities safe for everyone, and support people bereaved and seriously injured on roads.

All the variations of my work and the flexible approach I foster ensures I am willing to accept change and embrace the next chapter within the warden service.

I believe I can deal with changes as they manifest and continue to engage with and support the communities I represent.