

District Councillor (DDC) Report for November 2021 (Cllr M Connolly):

Waste Collections: With special measures these have been back to normal for the last couple of weeks and garden waste collections resumed on October 11th. However underlying issues remain, these special measures are not sustainable in the long term and Veolia will be implementing some alterations to some communal collections and to hard-to-reach locations later this month. We are pressing Veolia to improve on their communications to residents after their failures earlier this year. While we know that residents will not welcome the following news, we have to report that a major review of rounds will be needed in the spring of next year.

Small Business Saturday December 4th: DDC will be supporting this event by offering free parking in council owned car parks. In addition, parking will be free between the 23rd and 28th of December and the 1st and 3rd of January.

Levelling Up fund: We have been very disappointed to learn that our bid for funds from this round of the Government's Levelling Up fund has not been successful. This means that our aspiration to create a Dame Vera Lynn Bowl on the Western Heights will almost certainly not go ahead. Before the next round we acknowledge that we have to learn the lessons of this and study why Thanet and particularly Ashford were successful in their bids.

White Cliffs Country: We were delighted to learn that Lonely Planet has placed the Kent Heritage Coast 4th in its list of the world's best regions to visit in 2022. It is the only UK destination to feature in this year's list. This is a major boost to DDC's Tourist and Visitor strategy.

Border issues: Although at the time of writing some of the heat seems to have gone out of the Anglo-French fishing dispute, we are working with KCC, Highways England and the police to prepare for any disruption to cross-Channel traffic. The objective will be to prevent the gridlock in Dover town that we saw when the French closed the border in December last year. We are still awaiting confirmation of where DEFRA will site their Inland Border Facility in Dover. The location is an open secret but cannot be publicly revealed until contracts have been signed, which we expect to see in the coming days.

Head of Planning: We were sorry to learn that our Head of Planning and Regeneration, Lois Jarett, has decided to retire for largely personal reasons and will be leaving in January. Plans for recruiting a successor are underway.

WISE: Starting last month we are now working with a company called Waste, Investigation, Support and Enforcement to carry out low-level enforcement activity work across the district, concentrating on littering and dog fouling. This will allow our own Environmental Enforcement team to concentrate on major breaches such as fly tipping.

Town Centre Events Grants: With funds from the Government's Additional Restrictions Grant, we are announcing a new scheme to support town centre businesses in our three towns and encourage free community events. Closing date for applications, which will cover events for the remainder of this year and all of 2022, is November 22nd.

From our own Community Grant Scheme's winter round, we have allocated £119K to 101 applicants. Combined with the summer round this means we have allocated nearly £199K to 184 applicants this year. Staple PCC received £824.