

Kent County Council Report – Jenni Hawkins, Member for Hythe West

It was a privilege to be elected as the Kent County Council member for Hythe West on 2nd March this year, and I would like to thank the people of Hythe West for coming out to vote.

Since the 2nd of March I have been learning all about how things work at Kent County Council and have received a warm welcome from both officers and councillors.

It is clear from the high number of emails I receive, as well as my own observations, that there are several issues regarding highways, including potholes, drainage, and speeding. Unfortunately, potholes appear to be the result of years of underfunding, and in January this year KCC received a record number of reports regarding this. On a more positive note, I have met with two of the officers for highways in the area; they have been extremely helpful, and they are working really hard to try and provide the best service they can under the circumstances. There is also an update to the online reporting system currently being tested which should make the process of reporting problems easier.

Regarding speeding and road safety, I look forward to meeting with residents of Hythe and Dymchurch next month to discuss the problems and take this forward to the relevant team at KCC. With all the planned development in and around Hythe, I share the concerns of many about traffic management and parking and feel that it is important to try and address these problems as soon as possible.

As a new KCC councillor I have not yet spoken to many residents about children's services in Hythe, but I know that the backlog in Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) is a worry to a lot of parents. Tomorrow I am attending the Folkestone and Hythe Local Children's Partnership Group meeting at Hythe Youth Centre, and I intend to learn as much as I can so that I will be able to assist any residents who require help and information.

Finally, I have really enjoyed talking to people in Hythe West who have shared their ideas and concerns, as this is hugely helpful for me as a councillor. I hope to work closely with Hythe Town Council over the next two years, as well as some of the other fantastic groups in Hythe that care about the town.