Councillor Report for Hersden Parish Council (13/10/2026)

Councillors Harry McKenzie and Keji Moses

Network Rail Complaint

After several incidents in July where the level crossing failed in Sturry which held up residents and emergency services for hours. We wrote to Network Rail, raising complaints for residents and seeking clarity on actions to prevent this happening again. We will report back on the correspondence from them.

Biodiversity grant

We were approached by Canterbury District Swifts and asked whether we would endorse their application for one of the council's biodiversity grants to implement artificial nest cups in Sturry for House Martins as there is a colony attempting to breed here. This is a declining bird species that has reduced by 80% in the South East over the last 30 years and we voted to declare a biodiversity crisis in 2023, so we honoured that commitment and wrote to the grants panel to endorse this application. We are extremely pleased that their application was successful and they were granted £1,564.

Parking enforcement capacity

At the last Scrutiny Committee meeting, we were informed that issues with responding to parking contraventions has been largely due to understaffing. Now, the enforcement team is at full capacity and the number of PCNs distributed district-wide has doubled.

Crisis and Resilience Fund

The Crisis and Resilience Fund is a new scheme funded by the UK government to help support residents on a low-income who are experiencing financial shock and/or activity that builds financial resilience. The following support is available to residents living in the Canterbury district: Oil Heating Grants, Home Essentials Scheme to help with carpets, white goods, children's beds and second-hand furniture, or support for people facing money worries, including benefits, housing support and debt advice.

https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/get-help-crisis-and-resilience fund

Parish Capital Grants

Hersden Parish Council will have received contact from Canterbury City Council about this scheme. Applications are now open for capital grants schemes of up to £5000 for parish/town councils. Please consider applying for funding to make Hersden better.

Community Governance Review

Stage 2 of the Community Governance Review has started. Please respond to the consultation. There are no proposals affecting Hersden, including no parish mergers. Details of all the proposals district-wide can be found on the consultation link below:

https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations/community-governance-review-stage two-have-your-say-on-local representation/?fbclid=IwY2xjawUocwZleHRuA2FlbQIxMABwZG9mBWJyaWQRMGNiMDkybTFTQXd1TDY4bXpzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeNmfW8Yme0JqYhb0Kr4Ude8WNzm0-GmFhDTG0oPew xa_EyLsU2AObHllKjA_aem_MQO7kPo5cTCzn2cFHoTM1Q

Protecting Canterbury's city status

The Community Governance Review working group recommended putting the creation of a town council for Canterbury on hold for now and appointing a Charter Trustees instead to make sure we retain control of the city's destiny. A Charter Trustees, formed of already-elected councillors, would be there to protect city status and administer the work of the Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Canterbury. A small charge, or precept, of between 4p per week to 20p per week will be added to Council Tax bills in Canterbury to cover the costs. However, we can confirm this will only apply to households in the city area of Canterbury, not parished areas. At the last Full Council meeting, we voted with council colleagues to APPROVE these recommendations. We are open-minded about the idea of a Canterbury Town Council, but we believe we need to be pragmatic in how it is pursued and losing our city status would be far too high of a cost to pay for it. Our heritage must be protected.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government has now paused LGR, and the timetable has been pushed back by one year. This means that CCC elections will go ahead as normal in 2027 but on renewed boundaries that were agreed by the Local Government Boundary Commission in 2025. Fordwich will now be in a ward with Sturry and Broad Oak with two councillors but will no longer be paired with Hersden and Westbere which will be their own ward with one councillor. There is a lot of uncertainty around LGR now but will keep everyone updated as we are briefed on the situation, as of yet there are no further updates.

Wildfire PSPO

A consultation has now closed for a new PSPO requested by the government to manage fire risks following the wildfires over the summer. We will keep you all updated on this.

Bayeaux Tapestry

The Leader of Canterbury City Council has written to the British Museum to demand priority booking for residents in the Canterbury District, just as residents in Hastings and Rother have been offered, as it is long believed that the tapestry has links to Canterbury and it is not right that people here should be excluded from our heritage.

Canterbury Wastewater Treatment Plant

We have received an update from Southern Water regarding planned upgrade works at Canterbury Wastewater Treatment Works. Works are expected to begin from Monday 14th September 2026 and the dismantling phase is expected to take approximately 10 weeks. Southern Water advises that there may be a little more traffic from and to the site, although they do not expect the works to cause significant disruption to local traffic. Construction work will take place in 2027, with further updates to follow.

Great Southern Walk

Harry participated in the Great Southern Walk in which he hiked 15 miles through the south Canterbury countryside to raise money for the Rising Sun who support survivors of domestic abuse and the Prince of Wales Youth Club who help disadvantaged youth.

Free soft play services

Canterbury City Council is launching FREE soft play sessions for Canterbury District residents at Kingsmead Leisure Centre, starting on 7 October at 9.30am.

Cabinet Housing Advisory Committee

In the last Housing Committee meeting, Harry and council colleagues continued to provide a scrutiny and advisory function for officers as they continue work to improve our social housing quality and raise our rating with the Regulator of Social Housing. We are making huge progress now with more actions on the improvement plan completed than those not and outstanding actions are on course for delivery. You can read more here, if interested:

https://democracy.canterbury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=807&MId=14145

Southern Water fines

Southern Water has been fined £2.4 million for sewage pollution in Whitstable and Faversham between 2019-21. The Environment Agency led on this, but Canterbury City Council officers were pivotal in providing legal evidence and public warnings.

Streets Ahead Collective launch

We were honoured to be invited to the launch of the Streets Ahead Collective in Hersden. This brilliant organisation uses the creative arts to bring people together and spark positive change. They run free, inclusive workshops for people who face barriers, including homeless people, refugees, and older adults. These creative activities help participants build confidence, develop new skills, and form meaningful connections. It was hosted in Necessary Furniture who are also amazing because they provide recycled furniture for those on a low income, receiving benefits, single parents or who just need a helping hand. Their warehouse is so huge, you could easily get lost in there and it all goes to a great cause. Please support these causes, if you want to, here:

- https://www.zeffy.com/en-GB/donation-form/supporting-your community?fbclid=IwY2xjawUoe7NleHRuA2FlbQIxMABwZG9mBWJyaWQRMGNiMDky bTFTQXd1TDY4bXpzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeudNwKCoZxXbI KftRJ7YNGxbeQfQayhmsGnisaf93vFnZ3oUArV-1ra gHd4_aem_b190_m7eCxatAd9qAhDVtw
- https://www.necessaryfurniture.org.uk/