**REPORT FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

**Christmas and New Year Message**

As I am composing this at the beginning of November this will, for most of you, appear in the December issue of your Parish Newsletters. Can I therefore wish you and yours a Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

By then we should have a new Government. I always strive to avoid Party Politics in my reports but I think we can all agree that we hope to emerge with a Government formed of a Party (or Parties) with a majority sufficient to deliver the Policies/Promises it is elected on.

I can only hope and implore that we have an election free of the threats and hatred which scarred the Local Elections in May. Too many good MP’s from both sides of the House, especially young female MP’s with families, have felt the need to step aside and not re-stand. We need a Parliament which reflects all of Society, not one which values threats and intimidation over reasoned debate. The Good Lord says we should love our enemies, not hate, threaten and revile them. We have just paid tribute to millions who gave their lives to defend our freedom, free speech and right to self-determination.

At Kent County Council we have a new Leader in Roger Gough from Sevenoaks. He will be known to many of you for his time responsible for Children and Education and prior to that for Economic Regeneration.

One impact of my no longer being Leader of Swale Borough Council is less evenings in Sittingbourne. This allows me to attend more Parish Councils, most weeks getting to three or four and regularly managing two in a single evening. Highways and Drainage are regular issues at Parish Meetings. I have recently Chaired a Meeting in Selling with the Deputy Cabinet Member (now the Cabinet Member) for Highways and the Director. Several results have already been achieved and others should follow soon. I also joined a ‘walkabout’ in Tunstall with the Parish Council and the local Highways Manager.

One sad fact is the number of funerals I seem to be attending of late. One I must mention is that of Vaughan Howland who gave over 50 years’ service to the Community at Dunkirk including 20 years as Parish Council Chairman. He was a good friend to myself and well as the Community and will be greatly missed.

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