



O The Month of May, The Merry Month of May

I'm sad to say that this will be my last update before my friend and colleague, Ann Allen, becomes Chairman of the Council. That isn't to say that I have been winding down at all in the lead up to the annual Council meeting, but I am getting ahead of myself...

The remainder of February was particularly busy with visits to Nim's Fruit Crisps and Colin Batts Removals, who are [KEiBA](#) finalists or winners. Nim's Fruit Crisps were a runner up for Entrepreneur of the Year in 2018 for their innovative fruit and vegetable crisps range. Since starting in 2012 in a garden shed, Nim's Fruit Crisps have grown and grown. In 2015 they took over their first UK factory and in recent years have taken up agreements with the Co-Op, Ocado and Tesco.

Colin Batts removals won the Customer Service Award in 2018 for their 99% customer satisfaction rate. The business, which provides bespoke removals and storage solutions, was set up by Colin Batt in 1978 and offers a range of domestic, commercial and piano removals as well as a range of specialised storage options.



February also saw my Charity Dinner at The London Beach Hotel in Tenterden. It was a fantastic evening, with good food, great company, wonderful entertainment from Fiona Hosford (Harpist) and a marvellous after-dinner speech by Sir Keith Mills GBE DL, who spoke about his work with the Olympic bid.

The evening ended with a prize draw for a number of prizes, including two tickets to the Gulbenkian Theatre, a game of Bowling at Hollywood Bowl, and a selection of sweet treats, followed by an auction of a framed print of Graham Clarke's "All the World in London", which was won by the Mayor of Swanley. It really was the most enjoyable evening and we managed to raise just over £2,500 for Samaritans.



February also saw a visit to [Kent Film Office](#), where I was delighted to hear more about the work they do around Kent, which includes offering advice about filming in Kent, a database of filming locations (with the option to register your property) and advice on taking your first steps into the industry. You can also access an [interactive map](#) of filming and filming trails across Kent. This team works hard to promote Kent and generate interest in our beautiful county, and I am grateful to them for taking the time to speak with me.

March brought a visit to HMS Kent, which was briefly in port in Dover. The ship has been in drydock undergoing a refit and has only recently returned to active duty. The Captain and ship's company hosted a tour and reception onboard before putting to sea. I had a wonderful time onboard HMS Kent and seeing the new technology available to her and I am grateful to them for inviting me, for being such excellent hosts and for all that they do to protect and serve Britain's prosperity and success.





March also brought the Lord Lieutenant of Kent's Civic Service at All Saint's Church in Maidstone. The theme for the service was unity and representatives from all walks of life across the county gathered to celebrate and give thanks to those who help others, including volunteering. Speaking at the service the Lord Lieutenant said, "I am asking all of you to respect Her Majesty's wishes to ensure the people of Kent form a united front in the coming year to ensure we help each other whatever the future brings." I would like to join the Lord Lieutenant in that sentiment and hope that whatever the future holds for Kent we can face it united and working for the good of the County and the country.

In that spirit of unity, I have attended two Interfaith Gatherings organised by Kent Equality Cohesion Council and Gravesham Borough Council in the last two months. The first in remembrance of the victims of the Christchurch Attacks in New Zealand and the second in memory of the victims of the Sri Lanka attacks. Whilst I am saddened that these atrocities continue to take place across the world, I am given hope that representatives from a diverse range of faith and community organisations were able to come together to condemn these acts and remember the victims, their families and their communities.



I was able to present Samaritans with a cheque for the sums I have raised by the end of the financial year at a lunch on 11 April. The sum raised at the end of the financial year (including the total from the charity dinner) was £4,286.80 and there is already an additional £200 to add to this for the current financial year, so we are on target for a sum of nearly £4,500 for my year, which will go towards helping maintain the Samaritans services at all 6 branches across Kent.

During the last couple of months, I have also managed to fit in visits to several local businesses, including some of the young entrepreneurs supported by Kent Foundation. Other visits include Canterbury Oast Trust, Cantium Business Solutions, the Living Land show at the County Showground and the Kent Active Retirement Fellowship AGM, where I gave the welcome speech.

Now that my year is drawing to a close, I have to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chairman of the Council. It has afforded me so many great opportunities to see and do things I would not have ordinarily had the chance to see or do. I have also met some amazing people from across the County, who have done remarkable things for Kent and for their communities. I am proud to call Kent my home and honoured to have served as the Chairman of the Council for the past 12 months.

Thank you for having me...

Mike Angell
Chairman of Kent County Council