



**TONY VAUGHAN KC MP**

YOUR MP FOR FOLKESTONE, HYTHE AND ROMNEY MARSH

Dear Reader,

**It has been an immense privilege for me to be your MP for another year.**

**I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

**Season's Greetings,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Vaughan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'T' and a long, sweeping 'V'.

**Tony Vaughan KC MP**

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### **GOOD NEWS!**

For years, Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh has lost out from local government funding rules. In areas like ours, things like higher disability rates, longer travel time, and more rural poverty all make services more costly to deliver here. This was unfair.

That's why I've spent months pressuring government to overhaul the funding rules. And now, we've got some good news. **The Local Government Minister, Steve Reed, announced this month that funding for local public services will now be increased by millions of pounds – to spend money where its really needed.**

Kent County Council delivers around 80% of our local services—like social care, roads, and schools. Their funding will be increased by £459 million. Folkestone and Hythe’s share of this boost is over £32 million, based on our population. The total pot of money for services in our area is now bigger and fairer than before. Resources serving our community are now up by 32% over this Parliament—far outstripping the meagre 9% rises seen under the last decade.

**Kent County Council now has the funds for the next three years. It is now on them to deliver for the people of Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh:** to improve bus services; re-open Grace Hill library; fix and re-open the Road of Remembrance in Folkestone; provide proper care for the elderly and vulnerable in their homes; create social care beds for patients discharged from William Harvey Hospital to free up space at the “front door” of A&E; comply with SEND duties for school children; fill potholes; and keep children safe. This is just the tip of the iceberg of what KCC have to do – but do it they must.

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## FILL IN MY BUS SURVEY

I want to know how you think Kent County Council should spend the £42 million extra bus funding given to them by the Government. Fill in the survey here: <https://www.tonyvaughan.co.uk/bus-services-questionnaire/>. The more information I get, the more ammunition I have to pressure KCC to follow the most popular ideas!





## LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

**I recently I saw how the building work on the new unit for same day emergency care at William Harvey Hospital is coming along.** William Harvey has been facing increasing strain and challenge for many years - especially its A&E department. To help take the pressure off, the Government has given £29 million to East Kent Hospitals Trust to expand emergency care. The new same day emergency care unit at William Harvey will hopefully be open next summer and take pressure off other areas of A&E - which, as I saw during my visit, is struggling to keep up with demand. I saw patients still being treated in corridors - which is obviously totally unacceptable. This new unit cannot open soon enough.

In Folkestone, I continue to work hard to support efforts to build a new medical centre in the old Debenhams building, known as “FOLCA 2”. Lease negotiations between Folkestone and Hythe District Council and the NHS Integrated Care Board had been stalling. So, in October I intervened to help get a deal over the line. I will keep you updated with developments.

I have also been actively engaged in exploring possibilities for upgrading medical services in Romney Marsh and have recently met with medical building specialists, the NHS, New Romney Town Council and local GP surgeries to find a way forward. These discussions are all at a very early stage but rem

I have met with GP practices in the District who are working on the Government’s Neighbourhood Health Teams pilot project to “join up” community health services and keep people out of hospital. The work being done here really is cutting edge and I am proud we are pioneering it!



### **IMPROVING WATER QUALITY**

**I was shocked to read that a failure in Southern Water’s filtration system at its Eastbourne Wastewater Treatment Works meant that millions of bio-beads were washed up across our coastline.** I am deeply concerned about the impact on local wildlife and I have been in regular communication with them to ensure they clean up their mess.

I recently attended a meeting with the Environment Agency, Southern Water, the District Council and local residents at the Varne Sailing Club in Greatstone. This followed confirmation that both Dymchurch and Littlestone beaches would retain their “poor” water quality rating for the coming year. I was very frustrated that the Environment Agency could not say *when* they would identify the root cause of the water pollution at those bathing areas. This is completely unacceptable. Unless they know what is causing the pollution, there can be no meaningful plan to eliminate it. I shall be taking steps to ramp up the pressure on all concerned to identify the root cause of the pollution and draw up a proper plan to combat it urgently.

Following the commitment I secured from Southern Water to provide community water testing, Southern Water have told me that they are aiming to roll this out from the 1 February 2026. This is good news. The extra data gained will help us to better understand the causes of water pollution locally.



## FOLKESTONE FRIDGE

It was great to meet Frankie and the other volunteers at the Folkestone Community Fridge in Wood Avenue Library.

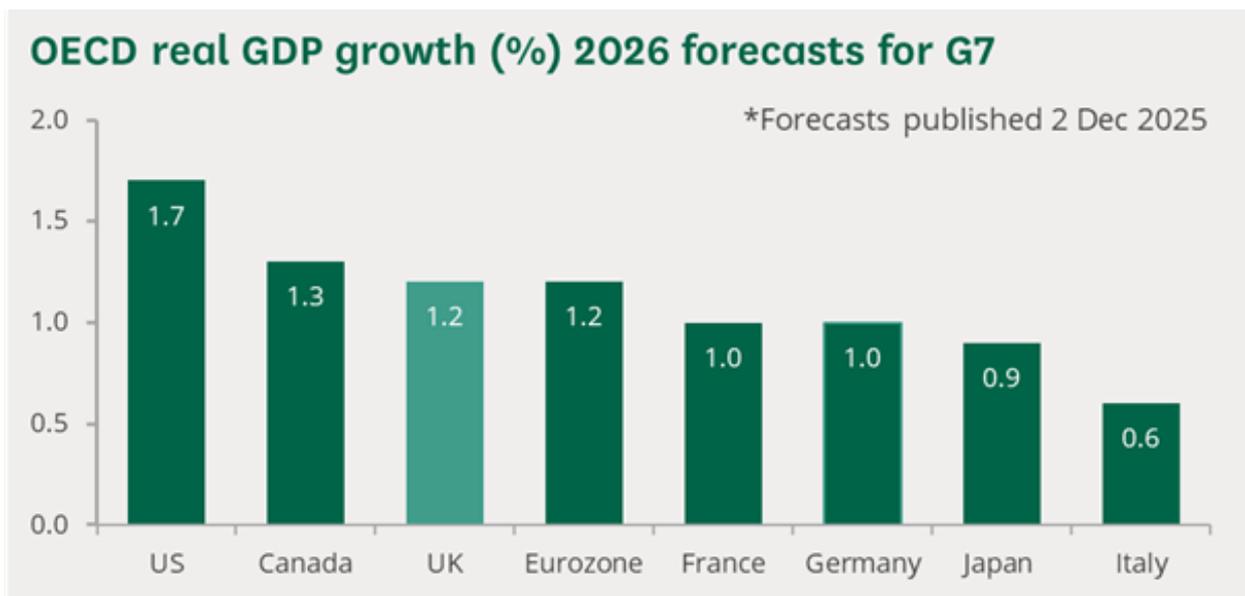
Their initiative takes donations from supermarkets and local businesses and gives them to the local community. Leftovers are sent to Ashford Animal Sanctuary and used for compost in local allotments. So far, they've saved 148.8 tonnes of food from going to waste. Thank you to all the hardworking volunteers who will now be moving on to the new location on Dover Road! See how you can help with their fundraiser here:

[www.folkestonecommunityfridge.org](http://www.folkestonecommunityfridge.org)

**THE DANNY GALLIVAN  
TRUST - LOCAL HEROES**



The Danny Gullivan Trust is a charity founded by Kerry Gullivan. Their small team fundraise and make hot dinners for homeless veterans across the constituency, providing toiletries and other necessities right out of their van. It was inspiring meeting Kerry, whose father was also a veteran, as she was handing out hot meals to service users. The team show incredible initiative and dedication. Find out how you get involved here: [www.dgtrust.org.uk](http://www.dgtrust.org.uk).



Data from the House of Commons Library

#### MY VERDICT ON THE BUDGET

**This Budget was about helping people with the cost of living, tackling poverty, and creating a fairer tax system.** I know that people in Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh will particularly benefit from the freeze on fuel duty, rail fares, prescription charges and £150 is being cut on average from household energy bills. I also support the lifting of the two-child benefit cap, which will support 2,100 children in our community.

Our tax system is now fairer with unearned income from wealth taxed more like income from work; with new charges on houses over £2m; and restricting generous tax reliefs used by the most wealthy. The revenues are badly needed to fund our public services and to make our country work again.

I know that many people want the Government to deliver more change, more quickly; and I agree with that view. But the Budget was a much needed step firmly in the right direction.



**OPENING DOORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**I was delighted to co-host an event with Folkestone College where local businesses filled out cards pledging to provide opportunities such as mentoring and work experience to students at the College.** It was great to see so many of our local businesses engaging with students and offering their help to the next generation. I've offered to provide work experience programme for young people in Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh in the New Year. Work experience builds character, connections and confidence for young people – we need more opportunities for young people!

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### **REMEMBRANCE - WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

**In November, I was honoured to attend the Gurkha memorial service in London.** I also laid a wreath at the Folkestone War Memorial and Gurkha Memorial Statute to remember those who gave their lives for our country and our way of life. It was touching to see the community come together to honour our fallen servicemen and women.

We must remember that if we want to face down our adversaries, unity is strength. The Government has bought back 251 military homes in Folkestone and Hythe from a private company, so the housing stock can be radically improved. The Government rightly has reversed the failed 1996 privatisation of military accommodation and is working on upgrading 90% of our military homes to ensure these homes are fit for heroes. We are building more

affordable homes on surplus Ministry of Defence land, with the potential for over 100,000 new homes for civilian and military families over the next 4 years.



### **THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT**

**It can be difficult to talk about divisive topics, but I was proud to host an event where we did just that.** Earlier this month, I held a Community Cohesion Event to discuss immigration, flags and what it truly means to be a patriot in response to the many emails my office received from concerned constituents about the current political climate - from all sides of the political spectrum. Attendees were sat in deliberately politically diverse groups and we

discussed not only their differences but their similarities too. It's great to know that even if we can't see eye-to-eye on everything, we can still sit down and have a healthy discussion. Our diversity is a strength and with Christmas upon us, this community spirit is exactly what we should celebrate.



## VISIT TO THE MALHOUSE

It's critical for me to understand the challenges facing our local high streets, so it was great to visit retail businesses in the Malthouse in Hythe.

If you need to do some last-minute Christmas shopping, head to the Malthouse.



## THE GOVERNMENT IS BACKING NEW NUCLEAR

New nuclear at Dungeness came a step closer with the Prime Minister personally endorsing the Nuclear Regulatory Taskforce's recommendations to help develop new nuclear technology more quickly. This is a positive step forward for my campaign to secure the future of Dungeness by strengthening the case for new nuclear developers to choose the site. I will continue to fly the flag for Dungeness!

## GOVERNMENT WINS

### EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT

Strengthens rights over eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and unfair

### RENTERS RIGHTS ACT

Abolishes fixed-term assured and assured shorthold tenancies and

### FREEZING RAIL FEES

The Government is freezing rail fares until March 2027 in response to the rising cost of living, meaning regular

dismissals from 6 months as well as clamping down on exploitative zero-hour contracts.

imposes new obligations on landlords and providers of temporary and supported accommodation, including timeframes on fixing mould and the elimination of Section 21 no fault evictions.

commuters will save hundreds of pounds on season tickets and off peak/ on peak returns. This is the first rail freeze in 30 years!

Read articles I have written here: <https://www.tonyvaughan.co.uk/articles/>

You can read my Parliamentary contributions here: <https://members.parliament.uk/member/5067/contributions>

### MEET YOUR MP

I hold [surgeries](#) every week to discuss personal matters on which you need assistance from me:

**Folkestone:** 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month at 3pm

**Romney Marsh:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month at 3pm

**Sandgate/Cheriton:** One Saturday every other month

**Hythe:** 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month at 3pm

