Write: Room B119 Canterbury College, New Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3AJ
Email: kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk **300 words max please to be submitted by 5pm Monday**

compensated and all genuine expenses are covered by the council. The official car is always available when required. It's probably practical to consider these roles to be taken by councillors who have retired from major earnings.

I am personally sad that from time to time the Lord Mayoralty is not shared with many of the excellent councillors from other parties. After all the Lord Mayor is totally non-political for his or her year.

I can confirm that 'ordinary people' as described by one councillor last week are genuinely interested in what goes on in the Guildhall. The connections of the relevant Lord Mayor and Sheriff and their partners with people all over the whole district and beyond is a powerful link holding us together and representing a greater good than political ideology.

My wife Lillian and I attended some 500-600 events and had a wonderful and I hope useful year, meeting so many very special people who give so much to the community. Apart from buying little things at sales and making our own modest voluntary contributions we coped perfectly well on the generous, additional Lord Mayor's allowance of about £5,000.

George Metcalfe, Lord Mayor of Canterbury (2016-2017)
Ashford Road, Canterbury

We must think small and local

I am glad to hear that the plans for Canterbury include the planting of trees.

Not many people could question that.

But in the meantime Canterbury High Street remains a dying space and in some rural public spaces rubbish is not collected on any regular basis.

I wonder if the plans for Canterbury might include less enthusiasm for a fantasy of Canterbury as a metropolitan centre and more attention to existing needs.

An indoor market/community centre in the old Nasons building could, for example, bring life to the city centre and provide accessible space for an in-town food bank, advice centre, as well as an indoor market and those independent cafes and shops at present unable to pay high rents.

Thinking small and local might bring that 'vibrancy' which is so often invoked.

Mary Evans
Patrixbourne

Photo of the week

Colin Savage snapped this rainbow over Canterbury from his front room window in St Thomas Hill

Why pay to keep foreign inmates?

I write in response to your article 'Thieves not welcome here' [Gazette, May 19], in which a judge criticised a group of thieves who targeted a demolition firm shortly after arriving in the UK from Romania.

I read, with great sadness and some anger, the above article. Given the crass attitude of these people I believe we should deport them and refuse future access to this country. Why should taxpayers who are already finding it difficult to live (increase in cost of living, food banks, etc) keep people like these on short sentences which our laws prescribe, in the liberal prison system in this country?

The offenders are, probably, far happier to be in an English prison than any Eastern European prison. Australia deports and refuses access to those who commit crimes within a year of living in the country.

Given that this country, amongst others, is trying to help those who are in desperate need of a life without war or persecution, people such as those described in the article should be sent to places like Rwanda which may give them a chance to create a new life in a country which is not so tolerant and requires people to work for a living.

Brian Butler
New House Close, Canterbury

Glory to county of Canterbury

In the recent local government elections in England, almost one-in-four of the Conservative councillors standing for re-election lost their seats, with proportionately more losses occurring in Southern England.

A similar outcome in the Canterbury District Council elections next year would result in six Conservative councillors losing their seats, three more than would need to lose their seats for the Conservative Party to cease to retain majority control of the council.

The reason the City of Canterbury did not have a town council in 1974, unlike the Cinque ports and other towns, was that it was likely to be Labour-controlled, as the county borough was, unlike Conservative-controlled Herne Bay and Whitstable Urban District Councils and Bridge-Blean Rural District Council, all superseded by the new enveloping Canterbury District Council.

The Friday, November 4, 1966 edition of the Kentish Gazette reported the proposed invasion from Maidstone under the headline "Canterbury's status to go by the board, It cannot be isolated". The article began: "Canterbury will lose the right to look after its own affairs if Kent County Council has its way."

"Our proposals are for the county as a whole and Canterbury has been included," Alderman Robin Leigh-Pemberton, Chairman of Kent County Council's Local Government Committee, told the Kentish Gazette at Maidstone, where the Council was debating the report that would be put to the Royal Commission on Local Government Reform.

"I am aware that in the past the County Council has said it would not object to Canterbury retaining its county borough status and has said that it would support Canterbury in its claims.

"But with this new report, with its important decisions on general policy, all previous decisions of this kind must go by the board. We cannot envisage Canterbury as an isolated and independent authority in the middle of a county which has been reorganised so that the present anomalies will be done away with."

At the entrance to the Westgate Gardens next to the Westgate Towers there is a clue to the historical importance of the original City of Canterbury. The signboard serves as a reminder of the importance of the county status.

Glory to the embattled County of the City of Canterbury, whose country men and women bravely struggle on alone, without any support from NATO!

Richard West, The Chaucer Education Project
Tudor Road, Canterbury

Ed McConnell

The KM Group columnist with his own look at the world

By Ed McConnell
emcconnell@thekmgroup.co.uk

Disturbing side to politicians on social media

If you're on TikTok the chances are you won't be reading this.

This column appears in a thing called a newspaper with words printed with ink on a piece of paper which is then sold for money to people in a shop or sometimes delivered by a teenager on a bicycle.

If you're the teenager on the bike you might be on TikTok but you probably have better things to do than read this.

If you're a TikToker who has been tricked into reading this you won't have got this far because it will have taken too long.

These lazy stereotypes are no longer true - but they should be.

Ever since TikTok began taking over the world I've resisted its siren song.

Pushing 30 and with less hair by the day, I feel uncomfortable spending time on a platform marketed at teenagers.

But adults do log on and create content in their droves.

This can be acceptable. After all, children's TV is run and presented by adults.

But when the adults creating the TikToks are the government, everything seems more, well, sinister.

Perhaps politicians using social media is little different to holding a surgery at the local library.

But watching Rishi Sunak and Boris Johnson star in Downing Street's first TikTok was disturbing.

'Do kids need to see the culture secretary rhyming legislation with generation as they try to relax?'

Then Nadine Dorries performed a TikTok rap about the Online Safety Bill.

On one hand it's not the worst thing she's done, but I can't help but think it's out of place.

Do kids need to see the culture secretary rhyming legislation with generation as they try to relax?

You can vote at 18 but almost a quarter of TikTokers are below that age.

Perhaps part of the Online Safety Bill should stress the importance of not politicising children?

"If you enjoyed Kung Fu Panda, You should be protected from propaganda."

ipso Regulated

Corrections & clarifications

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