

Report from the Office of Craig Mackinlay MP

- Sandwich Town Council Meeting -

17 September 2018

Dentistry Update

Several months ago, Craig had sent a letter to NHS England and East Kent University Foundation Trust (EKUFT) to request an update and to warn them to not make the same mistakes which led to the closure of Church Hill Dental Practice in Ramsgate, and to work with him to ensure New Street Dental Practice remains open for business.

In their responses, they both mentioned that there was an ongoing 'needs assessment' that was being conducted in order to finalise areas across Kent will operate NHS dental practices. NHS England did confirm that they were looking to procure some new dental contracts. They could not give any definite answer regarding the future of New Street, and maintained that a practice only needs to notify its patients 3 months in advance of closing down.

We have not received any update on the needs assessment being carried out, and so Craig has recently sent another letter to NHS England to demand an update, stressing the extent of the fallout following the closure of Church Hill. Craig also warned that he would raise this issue again on the floor of the House of Commons if there is no movement. The previous meeting Craig had with them provided nothing illuminating on their side, but another meeting may be arranged following a response. We will of course be sure to inform you of the contents of their letter once we receive it.

Sandwich Platform Extension & The Open Championship 2020

Since May 2017, Craig has played a central role in the negotiations to lobby the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, to secure a permanent extension to Sandwich Railway Station's platform. This would entail extending the platform to allow 12 carriage High Speed rail services and a further footbridge for passengers and help to facilitate the logistics for The Open Championship at Royal St George's Golf Club in 2020.



Up until now, as Sandwich Station has only been able to cater for eight carriages, longer trains would block the nearby level crossing and cause delays to traffic as happened when The Open was last held at Sandwich in 2011. The Open is estimated to bring in around 200,000 spectators and £100m in trade and spend to East Kent and the local area for each event.

Welcoming Sandwich WI to Parliament

Before the Summer Recess, Sandwich Women's Institute (WI) visited Parliament for a tour organised by Craig, who also held a Q&A session with them. They discussed topics such as plastic pollution, mental health, Brexit, electoral boundary changes and the status of the House of Lords.

Sandwich WI meet in The Centre for the Retired in the Cattlemarket, Sandwich, on the second Tuesday of the month. They hold a variety of talks, demonstrations and outings throughout the year and are always looking for new members. Please feel free to mention Sandwich WI to people you know or represent. You can get further details from their President, Pat Jones on 01304 619485 or Carol on 01304 813831.



Discovery Park

Visit to Pfizer

Craig recently visited Pfizer's Research and Development Site at Discovery Park to discuss how they can work together to foster the future of life sciences in the local area. He toured the company's Continuous Mixing Technology facility which opened last year and represents the development of advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing at Sandwich.

The company's team of 700 scientists, technicians, regulatory professionals and business experts all work towards creating potentially life-saving medicines for patients, and the site

is home to Pfizer's only automated 'pilot plant' that manufactures medicines for use in clinical trials worldwide and is able to perform every step in the complex process of producing a new medicine. Pfizer has played an important role in the development of Sandwich as a growing life sciences hub and has established the South East of England as a global centre of excellence in supplying medicines to clinical trials.

Craig looks forward to working with Pfizer and Discovery Park in the future to further develop Sandwich as a Life Science Hub.



£160m opening of CHP biomass plant

Following a £160m investment by Estover Energy Ltd., a new Combined Heat & Power (CHP) biomass plant will soon be opening at Discovery Park. This provides a significant boost to the local economy, providing further high-skilled jobs and business for local wood producers.

I cannot stress enough how important and beneficial this project will be for the whole of East Kent, thanks to the investment of Estover Energy Ltd. The plant will be able to produce power corresponding to the power consumption of 50,000 households and will deliver CO2 savings of approximately 100,000 tonnes every year, in addition to the jobs and economic benefits it will provide.

Craig will be leading the launch of the biomass plant on 28 September and is delighted that we can attract this level of investment. It is a good example of the competitive edge the UK has.

Listed Properties

Craig, as the Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Listed Properties, has been fighting within Parliament to raise awareness for the plight of listed property owners across the country. Sandwich contains the highest number of listed buildings per head of population in the country, with around 450 in the town.

Petition to reduce VAT on listed building alterations/repairs

The challenge listed property owners face goes back to 2012 when the Government removed the 0% VAT concession on authorised alterations to listed buildings. Without the incentive of a zero rating the number of owners and being forced to go through a gruelling and complicated process of approval, the number of repairs conducted has fallen dramatically by 8.42% since the introduction of VAT at the standard rate. Repairs are usually more costly to listed properties in any event due to specialist materials and bespoke construction being required.

Craig has launched a national petition to call for this reduction in VAT, which has already received 5,000 signatures, with the hope to reach 10,000 in advance of the Chancellor's Autumn Budget. You can find the petition here:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/223075>

Please do promote this to people you know in the local area, as this would provide an invaluable relief for many Sandwich residents.

Event in Parliament for listed property owners

Craig recently hosted an event with cross-party MPs and listed property owners from around the country (including from Sandwich) in attendance to discuss and raise awareness of the complex issues which face listed property owners when trying to maintain their homes. With 500,000 listed buildings across the country – 98% of which are privately owned – this has become an issue of national significance.

Discussions were centred on the scale and inconsistency of regulations in place which make it difficult for listed property owners to obtain planning approval to repair or improve their home with a variety of interpretations for the same project noted from delegates from across the country. VAT and the high costs associated with owning a listed building were also highlighted as an unbearable burden for owners – many of whom are not the wealthy people they are widely believed to be.

The event was highly successful and it was positive to see that this issue is gaining ground, with many other MPs in support for the changes Craig is calling for.



Listed Property Forum – 13 October 2018

Craig will be hosting a Listed Property Forum in The Guildhall, Sandwich, for owners across the constituency on Saturday, 13 October from 10am-2pm. This will be held in conjunction with the Listed Property Owners' Club, who are the largest provider of expert advice on all listed building issues in the UK, in order to discuss their issues. Trying to find advice for owning a listed building is extremely difficult, and from the APPG's experiences, conservation officers have often been providing infrequent and inconsistent services.

Please feel free to attend the event if you wanted to learn more about the difficulties that many listed property owners face when trying to maintain their home.