

## Town / Parish Council Report – December 2025

Covering the communities of Appledore, Biddenden, Rolvenden, Rolvenden Layne, St Michaels, Wittersham, Kenardington, Newenden, High Halden, Stone-cum-Ebony and Tenterden

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### 1. Highways update

- Appledore Road, Tenterden: Awaiting UK Power Networks' connection of new streetlights before resurfacing can proceed, more information of dates and times to come.
- Biddenden: Patch and strip repairs continue across the parish. November's pothole programme has improved safety.
- Kenardington: Repairs on the Kenardington–Appledore Road have now been completed.
- Newenden: Damage to the A28 bridge has been reported to KCC Highways. Planned maintenance is scheduled for 2026/27.
- St Michaels: Works originally planned alongside St Michaels resurfacing were delayed but are now rescheduled.
- Tenterden High Street: Resurfacing between West Cross and Station Road was completed in October. Feedback has been positive.
- Wittersham: Highway works on Rye Road were carried out earlier this autumn. Verge cutting is scheduled as part of the Tier 3 conservation programme.

#### **For live updates on roadworks, closures, and repairs:**

- Kent County Council Highways: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel>
  - One.Network interactive map: <https://one.network>
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### 2. Local government reorganisation and devolution (LGR&D)

On 28 November 2025, Kent County Council submitted its Strategic Business Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway to Government. The preferred model is Option 1A – a single unitary authority, “Kent Council.”

- **Simplicity & clarity:** One council delivering all services, avoiding duplication and confusion.
- **Financial sustainability:** Independent analysis by KPMG indicates Option 1A could deliver over £460 million in savings across 10 years.
- **Better value for taxpayers:** Alternative multi-unitary models could add up to £40 million extra per year in costs.

- Stronger voice for Kent: A single council strengthens funding bids and regional influence.
- Community assemblies: Three local assemblies beneath the unitary to keep decisions close to communities.
- Service integration: Health, education, transport, and social care coordinated under one authority.
- Avoiding fragmentation: Prevents uneven provision and loss of economies of scale.

**Next steps:**

- Government review of submitted business cases
- Continued engagement with residents and stakeholders into early 2026
- KCC Leader Linden Kemkaran has emphasised Option 1A as the most viable and strategic choice

### 3. Community and Events

Last month and this month are full of opportunities to celebrate our communities and support local causes. From remembrance to festive markets, concerts, and charity fundraisers, every parish has played its part in bringing people together, there is much pleasure in attending these as well as many other events, I may see you at some of these.

- Remembrance Sunday: I was honoured to attend the service in Tenterden High Street on 9th November, laying a wreath on behalf of Kent County Council. The turnout was strong, with schools, uniformed groups, and veterans represented.
- Tenterden Christmas lights –  
The Christmas Lights in Tenterden High Street are switched now on and what a joy they are. Thank you to everyone involved in making this happen.
- The Tenterden Christmas Market:  
Now the Christmas Market has wrapped up for another year - Thank you to everyone who joined in, supported the event - but the celebrations aren't over yet! There are still plenty of festive events on the way - many featuring talented local artisan makers. Take a look at what's coming up below and keep the Christmas spirit going in Tenterden and surrounding villages
- Christmas Wreath-Making Workshop, St Michaels (Silcocks): Wed 3 Dec, 7–9pm; festive craft evening; proceeds to St Michaels School.
- Tenterden Lions Christmas Float: 1–17 Dec, multiple evenings; all day Sat 13 Dec in Tenterden High Street; Santa and the Lions tour local parishes; donations to the Lions Charitable Trust Fund.
- Experience the Magic of JOY – Rhythm of Life Choir Concert, St Mildred's Church: Sat 6 Dec, 7pm; uplifting Christmas music; supports The Dementia Experience charity.

- FLAIR FILM: Arthur Christmas (U), Biddenden Pop-Up Cinema: Sat 6 Dec, 6pm, Village Hall; organised by Biddenden Community Library; low-cost tickets support library and hall funds.
  - Musical Memories – Dementia-Friendly Singing, Highbury Hall: Tue 2 Dec, 10:45am; festive singalong for carers and those living with dementia.
  - Dementia Charity Night with Victoria Bass, Grapevine Jazz Bar: Fri 5 Dec, 8–11pm; live jazz fundraiser; proceeds to dementia charities.
  - Fringe Tenterden Christmas Markets & Big Wrap Craft Fair: Sat 13–Sun 14 Dec; artisan stalls and raffles at Woolpack Barn, East Cross, Highbury Hall; proceeds to The Big Wrap charity.
  - Wintersong 2025 – Heart of Kent Show Choir & TODS, St Mildred’s Church: Fri 12 & Sat 13 Dec, 7pm; magical evenings of music; proceeds to Rockits SEN CIC.
  - Wittersham Christmas Tree Festival: Sat 6 Dec, St John The Baptist Church; creative festive displays; proceeds to community projects.
  - Christmas Services, Zion Baptist Church, Tenterden: 13–28 Dec, various dates; inclusive programme including nativity, Christingle, midnight communion.
  - Tenterden Museum Christmas Cards Sale: Sat 13 Dec; funds for heritage projects.
  - Tenterden Town Carol Service, St Mildred’s Church: Wed 17 Dec, 7:30pm; civic service; donations to church and local charities.
  - Parkinson’s Café, EC30 Coffee Shop: Mon 15 Dec, 2:30pm; festive refreshments; supports local wellbeing.
  - Christmas Tractor Run – Rolvenden & Rolvenden Layne: Sat 20 Dec, from 5pm; illuminated tractor parade; BBQ and Santa’s grotto; proceeds to Rolvenden Pre-School & Primary School fundraising.
  - Community Carols, St Mildred’s Church, Tenterden: Sun 21 Dec, 6pm; donations to local food bank and outreach.
  - Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services (All Parishes): 24–25 Dec; traditional services; collections may support local causes.
  - Community Choir Performances (Various): Throughout December; including Tenterden Singers, Rhythm of Life Choir; supporting local charities and church funds.
  - Tenterden Memory Café – Dementia Support, St Andrews Hall: Recurring; festive activities; volunteer-run; supports dementia awareness and inclusion.
- Ongoing community support:
- Tenterden Social Hub: Outreach programmes for elderly and vulnerable residents continue through winter.
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## 4. Education & transport

- Homewood School and Tenterden Schools Trust (TST): Ongoing discussions with Town Council regarding plans to join a Multi-Academy Trust, ensuring community voices are heard and that proposals are assessed against community impact, school improvement capacity, and accountability.
  - Stone-to-Homewood School Bus Service: I am actively working with KCC Transport officers and local parents to explore all viable options to hopefully reinstate this service. This includes reviewing routes, capacity, and feasibility.
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## 5. Parish / town council meetings – December 2025

I intend to attend the following meetings this month (apologies if prior commitments prevent me being there):

- 1 Dec – Appledore Parish Council
  - 2 Dec – Biddenden Parish Council
  - 8 Dec – Tenterden Town Council
  - 9 Dec – Wittersham Parish Council
  - 18 Dec – Rolvenden Parish Council
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## 6. Contact details

You can always reach me at: [wayne.chapman@kent.gov.uk](mailto:wayne.chapman@kent.gov.uk)

For highways, street lighting, or footpath issues, please report online first via: Report a problem on the road or pavement: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement>

## Christmas & New Year Message 🎄 ✨

As 2025 draws to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all residents across Appledore, Biddenden, Rolvenden, Rolvenden Layne, St Michaels, Tenterden, Wittersham, Kenardington, Newenden, High Halden, and Stone-cum-Ebony.

This year has brought challenges and achievements, but above all it has shown the strength of our communities when we come together. From festivals and school events to parish meetings and local initiatives, your dedication and spirit make the Tenterden Division a truly special place to live.

I wish you and your families a joyful Christmas filled with peace and happiness, and a healthy, prosperous New Year. May 2026 bring continued progress, stronger communities, and many moments of celebration.