

Gary Cooke

Conservative Member for Maidstone South East Division



A year at County Hall. Serving Kent. Serving You.

Kent County Council has 84 Members representing every part of the County. Gary has been serving the community of Maidstone South East as a Member since 2009.

He was last elected in 2009 and, like all KCC Members, serves for a four year term of office. The next KCC elections take place on 2 May 2013.

About Gary

Gary was born in 1952 and raised in Hildenborough, where he attended the local C of E primary school, followed by St.Thomas's R.C. school in Sevenoaks and subsequently at what was then Tunbridge Wells Technical High School. Gary's involvement in politics started in his teens. He served as a member of the British Youth Council and was also a Sevenoaks District Councillor from 1979 to 1987. However, with a young family to support, Gary decided it was more important to focus on his career.

Gary was a specialist aviation insurer and worked for a number of years in Lloyds and the London insurance market before being headhunted to move overseas. He then spent a number of years living and working very successfully as a senior executive in Bermuda.

Gary took early retirement and with his family returned to the UK in 2002 settling in Hollingbourne. He was elected to KCC in 2009 representing Maidstone South East,

an area that covers the villages of Leeds, Otham and Downswood, together with the Shepway South and Park Wood areas of Maidstone. Following the election Gary was appointed Deputy Cabinet Member for Education. He is now also Chairman of both Kent's Education Cabinet Committee and of Maidstone's Joint Transportation Board.

Gary is passionate about education and building opportunity for young people. In addition to his other responsibilities he is Vice Chairman of Kent's Admissions Forum, a member of Kent's corporate parenting panel and serves on an area adoption panel. Adoption is something he feels particularly strongly about having adopted his daughter.

Gary is a school governor at New Line Learning, Cornwallis, and the Tiger School. He also served as a governor at Tree Tops helping lead the school to improved standards of achievement and towards Academy Status. At all of the schools within his electoral division he has annually sponsored literacy programmes.

Gary is also a Trustee of Fusion, working closely with the community in Park Wood and Shepway South to help maintain local services.

Work at County Hall

Attending meetings isn't all councillors do, in fact most of their time is spent out and about meeting people in their community, doing their best to help solve problems and finding out what matters most to them. However, when decisions are taken by the council, their job is to be there and put across the views of their constituents.

Gary has attended 8 out of 8 meetings of the Full Council.

Find out more about the meetings Gary has attended.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council.aspx

Contacting Your Councillor

Elected Members are here to help residents, organisations and businesses with enquiries about KCC services. They are probably a good starting point for other enquiries too.

To contact Gary:

By Post

9 Camomile Drive

Weaving

Maidstone

Kent

ME14 5FL

By Telephone

01622 632685

By email

gary.cooke@kent.gov.uk

Member's Community Grant KCC has found a great way to help fund local community groups and organisations without fuss or too much bureaucracy. Every year, each KCC Member may allocate £10,000 to worthwhile causes within their community.

Here's how Gary spent his last year:

Maidstone Association of Youth – Senacre Music Project - £500

Info-Zone – Parkwood Fusion Outreach Project - £500

Info-Zone – Parkwood Detached Project - £500

Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary School – Authors for Book Week (March 2012) - £450

Fusion Healthy Living Centre – Cookery Courses for Children and Parents - £2,250

Bell Wood Community Primary School – Literacy Project - £600

Tomorrow's People – Getting Families Ready for Work - £4,000

Molehill Copse CE Primary School – Literacy Project - £600

Senacre Wood Primary School – 'I am a Writer' Project - £450

Senacre Youth Club – Replacement Badminton Equipment - £150

The Maidstone South East Division also benefitted from funding from the KCC Members' Local Schemes and Small Community Capital Projects Grants, as follows:

Animate and Create – Olympic 2012 Animation Project - £3,000

Fusion Healthy Living Centre – Upgrading of Health Clinic - £1,000

Leeds and Broomfield PCC – Improved Toilet Facilities - £2,000

If you want to suggest a local group which could benefit from the Member's Community Grant then you'll find your local Councillor's contact details on the front page.

Allowances Each Member of KCC receives a basic allowance (salary) to compensate them for the time spent on their duties and to meet many of the day-to-day expenses of being a Councillor.

Some Members also receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) when they take on extra duties such as serving as a member of the Cabinet, Leader of the Opposition or Chairman of a committee.

County Councillors can only claim the usual expenses that most businesses would pay for.

These are for actual costs for example reimbursement for fuel and travel which they have incurred whilst carrying out their duties as County Councillor.

[View Members allowances and expenses](#)

Member's Highway Fund KCC recognises that local Members are well placed to decide which small transport and highways schemes would be most useful to their communities. That's why each Member is allocated £25,000 to spend on local schemes. It's called the Members Highway Fund and here's how it was spent last year...

Shropshire Terrace, Maidstone – 3 dropped kerbs - £400

Woolley Road, Maidstone – 2 new salt bins - £1,191.06

Leeds, Otham and Downswood – 2 week's worth of maintenance work - £6,000

Lower Road, Leeds – 1 new salt bin - £595.53

Willow Rise, Downswood - 3 new salt bins - £1,786.59

B2163, Leeds – new village gateways - £2,927

My achievements this year, and ambitions for next year

Gary works closely with all of his constituents by listening to their concerns and working hard to help. He works closely with Parish Councils attending as many meetings as he is able, residents associations, local schools, and other local representative associations covering all age groups. He uses his members grant and highway fund to benefit his local residents in a way that he hopes helps to improve local quality of life. He has worked closely with Tomorrow's People to help people in Park Wood find work and has supported the New Beacon Church in Shepway.

Gary has focused on supporting young people, families and helping to create employment opportunities. He was a driving force behind the development of the Maidstone Skills in Senacre and then ensured that the hall retained its local community hall. He has also been a strong advocate for improved standards of attainment in our primary schools and has been pleased by progress locally and right across Kent over the last two years.

Gary is always available to any constituent in need of help.



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