

A couple of weeks ago it was local newspaper week, an opportunity to celebrate the importance of our local newspapers in our communities. Even the most committed reader of their local news can often underestimate the impact a story may have on others and the string of consequential actions it may start.

I witnessed a really good example of this at the weekend. I was invited to open a charity truck pull in Aylesford which many people, including my good friend Lloyd, were pulling trucks for issues and good causes such as Parkinsons, Alzheimers and the Heart of Kent Hospice. However one of the athletes (if that is the right term for these incredibly strong folks) had been inspired to pull a truck in order to raise funds for Rebecca Watts, a lady whose story has been featured in this very paper.

Rebecca unfortunately has cancer and she would like to take her two boys away for a special holiday so they can be blessed with good memories in the future. I had tried to find funding streams before Parliament dissolved for the election but unfortunately Rebecca falls into an age group where there is little support. So along comes Rocky, an ordinary member of the public who does not know Rebecca or her family but reads the story in the paper and is so inspired he decides to raise funds for her. He does this not just by pulling an 18 tonne truck in a harness like the others but by pulling a 20 tonne truck with his arms.

It was phenomenal, incredibly emotional and it was inspiring. And it was all done as a result of a local newspaper article. We can all love, hate, agree or disagree with what we read but the value of our community level papers should never be forgotten.