



CLIFFE AND CLIFFE WOODS PARISH COUNCIL

the Clarion

Our Community— Our Responsibility

Spring Edition 2010

Annual Parish Meeting

Every year the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council organises the Annual Parish Meeting. This is **YOUR** meeting and is a chance to hear what is going on in the local area. As usual it is surprising how much does happen in our Parish with the dedication and support of local people— just like you. There are many unsung members of our local community who help provide and maintain facilities, organise functions and events to provide something for the youngest to the oldest in our community or help protect our environment for future generations. Often they wish they had just a little bit more support and help from the local community— **YOU!**

Your Meeting
You are invited to :-
**The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods
Annual Parish Meeting**
Thursday 15th April 2010
7:30pm to 9:30pm
**At Cliffe Memorial Hall (Small Hall),
Church Street, Cliffe**
Your chance to have your say about what is
right and wrong in the parish

Open For Business

By the time you read this we hope the new play areas in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods have been officially opened. The Parish Council is very pleased that its investment of £39,000 together with a Playbuilder Grant of £45,000 and a £1,500 contribution from the Cliffe Children's Committee has produced a play area in Church Street that is exciting with fresh and innovative ideas for encouraging imaginative play for all children and young people. The contract was managed by landscape architect Heather Marsh of Medway Council Green Spaces who produced something that is unique, reflecting the wishes of local children who helped shape the design. By using natural landscaping effects it has produced a play area for all ages and abilities and for all weathers. The Parish Council will be planting some native trees later in the spring to provide light shade and hope that everyone will join with us in saying a big thank you to Heather, Sutcliffe who provided the equipment and Duncan Robertson whose workmen toiled through the worst January and February weather for years to build this park. **WELL DONE and THANK YOU ALL.**



At Medway Council's Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground new play equipment has also been installed. This was funded by a Playbuilder Grant of £45,000 and a grant awarded to the Parish Council of £5,000 from the Comma Aggregates Fund. Also designed by Heather, this time built by Wickstead, this equipment reflects the wishes of the Cliffe Woods young people.



We ask everyone to help keep these play areas safe. If you see anything unusual or anyone behaving in a manner that could cause a nuisance to park users or damage please let our Clerk know. Contact details can be found on the back page. The Parish Council is aware that vandalism is something that causes a lot of inconvenience and distress, we want to address these concerns and we need your help. Recently a village boy reported damage to the ball court and prevented potentially serious injuries being caused. Remedial action was taken by the Parish that day to remove the broken panel.

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

Chairman's Report

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting in April 2009, three Parish Councillors have left, but four have been co-opted. We now have only one vacancy in Cliffe Woods, continuing the improvement of previous years. Leaving the Parish Council through health grounds was Terry Copsey who unfortunately died later that year. Also leaving was Debbie Cunningham who had not been a Parish Councillor long, but probably became the first councillor to give birth during her time on the parish, she had also taken on a lead role in the finances of the parish. She has promised to stay involved in Youth Issues and hopefully will be able to rejoin us in the future. Joining the Parish Council this year are Julie Moss and Lisa Mills in Cliffe and Robert Hunt and Alan Taylor in Cliffe Woods. We welcome them all and hope they enjoy their time on the council.

At the time of the last Annual Parish Meeting we reported that the Clerk Gavin Meeser had settled in quickly and was getting us better organised and prompting us to be more effective in the local community. Since then he has decided to retire and so we advertised for a replacement during the autumn 2009. Alan Parfett took over the role full time in December after three months working with Gavin. Alan however has decided that the work involved is too much and he has not been able to fit it in with his other work. **We have decided to return to the 2009 shortlisted candidates and appoint from those who were still available. We had hoped to appoint either one or two people to the clerk's position but it has not been possible so we are opening up the applications again.**

David Clark, our caretaker, is responsible for helping to maintain the Cliffe Recreation Ground, Play Area, Buttway and Cliffe Woods Car Park, keeping them clear of litter, weeding etc. which can be a thankless task at times, but we appreciate the work that he does.

Progress on resolving issues of large HGV movements on our roads has been very slow this year. Bretts finally submitted plans to increase their lorry movements, but only on their peak months. They were also prepared to pay for some traffic calming in the Cliffe Woods area however this was rejected by Medway councillors and is not likely to progress in the current economic climate. HGVs from the Thameside Terminal continued while the planning inquiry into their operations dragged on (see Pg 3).

Last year we were going to spend £39,000 on the Cliffe Play Area but were able to combine it with £45,000 from the Government's £2m Playbuilder Scheme granted to Medway Council and £1,500 raised by the Cliffe Children's Committee to get a lot more done. We were also able to get a £5,000 grant from the COMMA fund to help boost Medway Council's £45,000 Playbuilder budget for the Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground play equipment (their responsibility). Both schemes are making good progress and appear to be on course for a late March opening.

We were also approached by youths from Cliffe who wanted a BMX track. Although we were supportive from the start, this was on the basis that they did the work in preparing for grant applications and getting support for the scheme. With a little guidance from Cllr Janet Keates, they have been very successful in raising money and they have been able to improve on the early designs. A new BMX track at the far end of the Cliffe Recreation Ground now looks on course for later this year. We are hoping that this will lead to more youth involvement in the Parish in the future (and have considered creating a Youth Parish Council). Through the design and funding of the scheme we also expect it to be well looked after and protected.

We have now set our budget for 2010/2011 and have agreed to maintain the support for the Cliffe Woods Community Centre and the Cliffe Memorial Hall as they are key parts of our local community.

Last year we were hoping that people will come forward to help drive the replacement Pavilion project forward, as it had stalled. Cliffe Royals attended the Annual Parish Meeting last year and some progress has been made, but there is still a lot to do. Many grants are available to help local schemes so our money can often open the door to ones from local and national organisations as it shows matching funds, local support and involvement. Contact the Clerk for further information.

Kenneth Kentell, Chairman

Community News

Thameside Terminal—Terminal?

The history behind the Thameside Terminal development is long. The quarry was used as an Oil Supply Depot from the 1960s. Petrol was pumped from the Essex side of the river into storage tanks and then loaded onto tankers for delivery south of the river. This operation was not without critics and there were concerns about the size and volume of tanker traffic on the B2000. The terminal finally closed around 1999. The oil storage tanks still feature on Google Maps and other aerial photos. There are records in the Parish Council minutes that show that security guards were still onsite for a few more years.

Between the end of the operations at Cliffe that left the quarry and pools and the early 2000s the site was used as a dumping ground for cars that were burnt out, cable burning to remove the insulation so the copper could be sold, tyre dumping, fly tipping (domestic and industrial) and Travellers moved in (and out again). Despite this the area was becoming increasingly recognised as important, not just for wildlife and birds—development control plans at local, regional, national and international (RAMSAR) level and policies were put in hand to protect it. So the planning environment was very different to that when it was given permission as an Oil Depot in the 60s and when new operators moved in. Eventually when RSPB moved into Cliffe Pools and started to secure the site we gained a much cleaner area with a dramatic reduction in the previous problems.



Around 2003 we spotted a company move in to the former Conoco offices on the site and were assured by Medway Council that this was allowed, but soon we saw the appearance of bulldozers that cleared the oil storage containers and cleared the site down to bare chalk/rock. The cliff faces were also cleared and squared off and a new soil bund was created which separated the site from the rest of the old quarry and older industrial remains. Then a new road was constructed through the site with pavements and street lighting, the quarry was separated into individual plots and companies started to move in. Further from the site the impact of this development was becoming clear to people along the B2000 as the lorry number and sizes increased dramatically. **ALL WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION.**

After first raising concerns in 2003 it has taken until now for the enforcement actions to be issued and the appeals against them heard at a public Planning Inquiry. Many local residents attended at least part of the inquiry and a few managed to sit through all 20 odd days of legal and technical planning argument. The inspector will now have to assess the evidence and come to a decision about whether the site should be closed down and returned to nature or propose other possible uses. The evidence against the developers is very strong, but it is likely that even if the enforcement notices are upheld some of the operators may need up to two years to relocate—although some (Panther Platforms) have already found an alternative site in Kingsnorth. The Parish will keep an eye on developments and will try and keep you informed via the Clarion and our WEB site.

Rubbish

A Clean Up Cliffe group has been set-up on Facebook to share concerns about the amount of rubbish that gets dumped on our streets (in particular Church Street and roads to and from the school). There is often dog mess that owners do not poop and scoop. Instead of just complaining about it some of them have been involved in cleaning up some of this mess. Positive action can



really make a difference and hopefully shame those that create the litter in the best way possible.

We do have to remind ourselves that this rubbish and dogs mess is generally created by US—local residents of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. So don't dump it, bin it. The Parish are also taking the poor clean-up up with Medway Council whose responsibility it is to clean up and where possible enforce the litter laws.

The picture on the left is of some rubbish dumped at the end of Salt Lane on the RSPB reserve. Somebody went to the bother of putting cans and bottles into a Gravesham Recycling bag and then drove to Cliffe to dump it! Looks like they may have had a nice barbecue, but obviously brains were not on the menu!

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

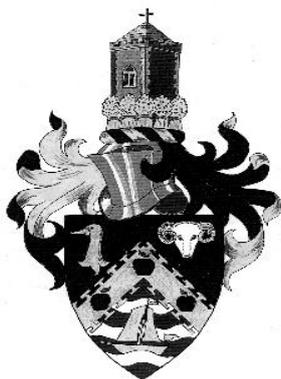
Clerk (Vacant) :
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Cliffe

Phone:
01634 222412
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Chair
Ken Kentell
52 Englefield Crescent
Rochester, Kent, ME3 8HD
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Vice-Chair
Chris Fribbins
5 Englefield Crescent,
Rochester, Kent, ME3 8HB
Email:
vicechair@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk



Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

Cliffe Village Ward

Joan Darwell	220121
James Wenban	222620
Leslie Wicks	220347
Gill Moore	222205
Janet Keates	222412
Lynne Bush	222103
Julie Moss	222142
Lisa Mills	221442

Cliffe Woods Ward

Jim Corrigan	220373
Margaret Emblin	220904
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Melinda Smith	07842 221974
Robert Hunt	222042
Alan Taylor	220689
ONE Vacancy	

Cliffe Village Fayre 2010

The Cliffe Village Fayre returns on a Saturday 17th July on the Buttway, Cliffe. It is organised by the Friends of North Kent Marshes and St Helen's Church. There will be stalls, craft sales, BBQ and teas with events in the church and on the Buttway. As usual the Parish Council collection of historic photographs will be on display.

The fayre will again be a part of The North Kent Walking Festival and there will be a number of walks down to the Cliffe Pools to see some of the historic industrial and natural environment.

Would you like a stand or table at the Fayre or do you have any pictures of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods? Even recent photos will become part of the local history (pictures can be loaned for the event or added to the Parish Council collection). Contact Joan Darwell on 01634 220121, or email joan.darwell@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk for details.

Thank You—From Dr. Grace

Having just retired after 35 years as a GP in the Higham and Cliffe surgeries I would like to thank all the patients for the many kind cards, gifts and sentiments expressed over the past few very emotional weeks.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all my patients over the years for making my life as a GP in this area so fulfilling and rewarding. I was also very fortunate in the colleagues I worked with, especially Dr Colin Smith whom many of you will remember and who looked very well when he came up last week to my retirement 'drop-in'. We've also had excellent staff over the years and I know I leave behind a Practice in very capable and caring hands.

But most of all it will be the patients I remember, seeing them grow, live and of course die and sharing with them huge extremes of joy and unbearable sadness, but also times of great humour. Perhaps someday I will get around to writing yet another 'doctor' book!

So thank you all!

Dr John Grace

jfgrace@talktalk.net

Who we are and what we do

The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council has existed for over 100 years. There is often confusion with the Churches' Parochial Parish Council, but we are a nationally recognised level of local government. Eight local residents represent Cliffe Woods and eight Cliffe. The council meets each month, alternately, in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. There are a small number of sub-committees that also meet to investigate and discuss specific issues in more detail before making recommendations to the Parish Council. The Clerk manages the parish on a day to day basis and the Caretaker looks after the recreation ground and play area in Cliffe and helps keep the Buttway and Cliffe Woods Car Park clear of litter.

The Parish is funded through the local council tax. Residents pay an extra amount on top of the Medway Council, police and fire services—this will raise £34,390 in 2010/2011, and is only about 33p per household per week! We also raise funds from other sources for large schemes such as the Cliffe Ball Court, Cliffe Play Area and the allotments and have receive a Rural Liaison Grant from Medway Council to spend on other improvements.

We are consulted on planning applications in our parish and local, regional or national issues affecting our area. We also take an active part in liaising with Medway Council, the police and the longer term strategic plans for our area.

We also help fund Youth Clubs in both Cliffe and Cliffe Woods—although the one in Cliffe is not currently operating, we would help anybody that wants to get it restarted. Regular funds are also available to support neighbourhood watch schemes in the Parish. We ensure the grass cutting in the churchyard of St. Helen's Church, Cliffe is carried out.

All members have to stand for election every four years, if there are more nominations than positions, polling takes place on the same day as the Medway Council elections. (May 2011 is the next date). In between elections any vacancies can be filled by a by-election, if sufficient local electors request it, but more commonly additional members are co-opted by the parish council. There is ONE vacancy in Cliffe Woods currently. **Why not be an even more active member of the community and join us?**

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

Following the resignation of the Parish Clerk, the Parish Council is looking for two people to share the job as soon as possible (a Clerk and Deputy) or one person as the Clerk.

The job involves :-

- Influencing the policy and organisation of the Parish Council
- Carrying out the instructions of the Parish Council
- Organising meetings
 - Location
 - Agendas
 - Minutes
- Communicating with others
 - Local councils,
 - Police
 - Local groups
 - Individuals
- Managing the finances of the Parish
 - Recording expenditure and income
 - Organising and monitoring payments
 - Keeping the Parish informed of its financial position
 - Preparing the annual return
 - PAYE and NI, VAT experience useful, but training can be given.
- Attending Meetings
 - Monthly Parish Council Meeting (Usually first Thursday of each month)
 - Finance and General Purposes Committee (Monthly)
 - Annual Parish Meeting (April each year)
 - Other committees on ad-hoc basis
 - Being the Full-Time Face of the Parish

The Job :-

- PART-TIME Position
- Approx, 16 hours per week (18 hours shared and arranged between 2 people)
- Paid hourly rate
- Work from Home
- Local person preferred
- Expenses paid
- Holiday Pay

We are looking for somebody who is :

- An experienced Administrator
- Well Organised and can help organise others
- Has Good Communication Skills
- PC Literate (Email/MS Word/EXCEL/WEB)
- Would probably have their own PC and Broadband connection (although this could be supplied if necessary)

Help with the job :-

- Will liaise closely with Chair, Vice-Chair and committee chairs who can help and advise
- Previous clerk will be available to help and advise
- Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)
- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- Training available
 - Role of Clerk/Financial Management
 - Possibility of formal training and qualification for job holder, but not mandatory

For More Information about Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council see The Clarion newsletter delivered to homes in the Parish area at least once a year

See our WEB site www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

For more information about the job, contact the Clerk, Chair or Vice-Chair (contact details on www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk)

To Apply :-

**Please provide a CV and covering letter explaining what you would bring to the job and send to :-
Chris Fribbins, Vice Chair Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council**

**5 Englefield Crescent
Cliffe Woods
Rochester
Kent
ME3 8HB**

Email : vicechair@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

By April 23rd 2010—Interviews early May