

Our Community— Our Responsibility

Spring Edition 2011

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
2011 Annual Parish Meeting**
Thursday 7th April 2011
7:30pm to 9:30pm
**At Cliffe Woods Primary School,
View Road, Cliffe Woods**

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Connected



In a previous Clarion we reported on the forgotten footpath connection between Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. The footpath connects Thatchers Lane and Chancery Road in Cliffe, via Footpaths RS84/84a, Wellpenn Road, under the railway to connect with Perry Hill. This footpath was often partially blocked by stinging nettles, especially at the Perry Hill end, and the surface rutted along a lot of the route. But as this provided an alternative to trying to walk along the busy B2000, the Parish Council asked Medway Council if action could be taken to improve it.



Medway Council planned a series of improvements and consulted with landowners along the route and have now completed the works.



A new solid surface has been constructed that will allow good access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders as well as people with more restricted mobility, wheelchairs and push chairs. This is a real practical, safer, alternative to the B2000. There is already a significant increase in usage and it is likely to be popular.

This footpath is designed for walkers, cyclists and horses and any access by motorised vehicles needs to be safe (slow and careful), – please report any dangerous activities to the Police and copy the Parish Council so that we can press for action to control it. There are also connections to other footpaths in the area.



CLIFFE AND CLIFFE WOODS PARISH COUNCIL

the Clarion

Chairman's Report

It has been a very difficult year for the Parish Council. At the time of last year's Annual Parish Meeting we were without a permanent Parish Clerk as Gavin Meeser's replacement had resigned during his 6 month probation period. We had hoped to fill the position from those who had been short listed previously but this was not possible. This meant that the councillor cover for the role extended from a few days to over two months. Cllr. Janet Keates helped out as the Clerk - Proper Officer (PO) and Cllr. Melinda Smith as the Responsible Finance Officer along with the Vice Chair Cllr Chris Fribbins. However Janet stood down as the interim clerk and subsequently resigned as a parish councillor. Melinda also stood down as a parish councillor leaving the RFO role uncovered as well. As this was the end of the financial year there were a number of legal requirements that had to be carried out, so Chris Fribbins stepped up to take on the temporary clerk role until it could be filled.

At the May meeting we appointed joint clerks for the first time to try and reduce the risk of not having cover in the future. Mrs Alex Jack was appointed as Clerk-PO and in addition a Clerk-RFO (both sharing the clerk's part time hours). The new RFO subsequently resigned and was replaced by Mrs Laura Farrelly in August. There has now been a period of settling down with the new way of working and providing support to Alex and Laura in their new roles. They have both now successfully completed their 6 month probation in the roles.

During the year two councillors resigned (Janet Keates and Melinda Smith) and one was removed for non-attendance (Les Wicks). We do however thank them all for their contribution to the Parish Council. Janet, in particular, did a lot of fund raising and was key to improvements to the allotments, the play areas in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods and the BMX/Skate Park with local youths. We have been joined by Samantha Collins in Cliffe and Sue McDermid & Ray Letheren in Cliffe Woods (Ray had been a Cliffe parish councillor previously). We welcome all three of them.

In May all seats on the Parish Council are up for election for a further four years. At the time of writing only one had indicated that he would not be standing—Jim Corrigan. A councillor since 2004, his advice on employment regulations has been a great help.

Recently Thelma Enticknap who had been a Parish Councillor for a number of years passed away after a long illness. She had continued as a councillor until poor health started to take a toll. She will be remembered.

Despite major upheaval we were able to keep running and looking back on the last 12 months we have been able to achieve a lot. We took the opportunity of changes in the clerk to install new computer support for the finances, allotments, payroll & planning. We also have a new computer printer that can print, copy and scan on both sides. We have upgraded our WEB site at www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk and are making extensive use of EMAIL to keep councillors informed between meetings and dealing with our residents and public bodies. We welcome any comments from residents about the type of content they would like to see on the WEB site.

Last year we had just opened the Cliffe Play Area and Medway Council had opened a play area in Cliffe Woods for elder children. After finding that Medway Council had not used the £5,000 we raised as a COMMA grant, we have been in discussions with them to provide some additional play equipment in the younger area and that should be done soon. The BMX/Skate Park has also been opened, although we are looking to provide an additional surface alongside the equipment. - over £50,000 was raised for this with contributions from the Youth Opportunities Fund, Veolia Environment Trust, EON Community Investment Fund and Medway Council's Rural Liaison Fund alongside the parish's contribution. With direct involvement in the fund raising and design of the park with local youth—in particular Toby Elliott.

In Cliffe Woods we have had several incidents with the Car Park Barriers in Parkside (one soon after a previous upgrade). We were eventually able to fix and replace them with sturdier steelwork. We are now looking to patch the surface in the next few weeks and then paint individual spaces as well as additional disabled parking bays. After I did a lot of chasing, permanent CCTV was finally installed to cover the shop and car park area. It will be monitored by Medway Council, the police also have access when required.

Kenneth Kentell, Chairman



Community News

Grow Your Own—Cliffe Allotments

Last year Lisa Mills and Julie Moss took over as the Parish Council's allotment committee and their first task was to try and allocate the vacant, but overgrown, plots and to reduce the waiting list. With the help of the caretaker and with the knowledge of some long standing allotment tenants they eventually managed to accomplish the task. Some plots which appeared to be unworkable have now got new tenants and are beginning to take shape. There is currently a waiting list of six people, none of whom have been waiting longer than a few months.

Now there are allotment holder's meetings every three months, although the winter one was somewhat delayed because of the inclement weather, and there was a newsletter produced after each of these meetings. The meetings are totally informal and allotment tenants are encouraged to discuss any issues they think are relevant.

The next big task is to review the rent for each allotment. Some of the plots differ in size to others by quite a substantial amount, so it is our intention is to measure the plots and charge a rental based on size; this seems to be a much fairer way to do this. Tenants will be notified of the reviewed rental charges in time for the April invoices.

Renting an allotment is a great way to experience the 'good life' and when we visit them we are always amazed at the plethora of vegetables and fruit that is grown. Last weekend we saw cabbages far bigger than any I have seen in the shops – how gratifying that must be to sit down at your own table eating the vegetables you have nurtured and picked yourself. We do know it is hard work and, at times, back breaking, the tenants have my utmost respect for the amount of effort they put into their plots.

If you think you might be interested then please contact the Parish Council Clerk for more information. We can always arrange for you to visit the allotments to have a look around.

Julie Moss



Cliffe Fort

Almost hidden away on the Thames riverside is a fort built in the 1860s as part of the defences to protect London and the River from invasion. It was one of three forts located nearby that provided a triangle of cover across the river. The other two forts are Coalhouse Fort on the Essex side at Tilbury (which has been restored and is a visitor attraction) and Shornemead Fort, largely demolished but with some walls remaining, further up river towards Gravesend.



The shell of Cliffe fort is largely intact, but the interior has been damaged, often floods and is unsafe. The Thames river side is overgrown and most of the fort is hidden. The western side is open but the southern and eastern sides are part of a very busy Bretts Aggregate Importation operation. As a Scheduled Monument the site is protected and has been identified as 'at risk'. Medway Council and English Heritage have looked at the site and spoken to the owners Bretts about the condition of the fort. An English Heritage comprehensive report on the Hoo Peninsula is due very soon and will include a full investigation into the fort (and the former ammunition works on Cliffe Marshes). The Parish Council meet Bretts on a regular basis as part of our business liaison and do discuss this.

Any plans to open up access to the fort are a long way off. There are safety issues and it would be very expensive to do. However we would hope that access around the outside could be improved if conflicts with Bretts operations can be overcome.

For more information about the fort goto Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cliffe_Fort where there are other links to information about the fort.

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

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Cliffe Woods, Rochester
Kent, ME3 8LB
Clerks

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Mrs Laura Farrelly (RFO)

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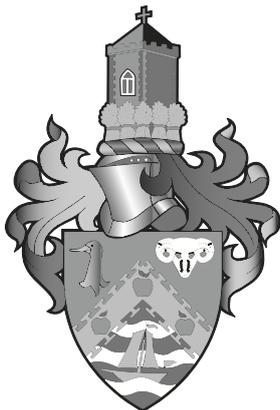
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Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

Cliffe Village Ward

Joan Darwell	220121
James Wenban	222620
Gill Moore	222205
Lynne Bush	222103
Julie Moss	222142
Lisa Mills	221442
Samantha Collins	221576

ONE Vacancy

Cliffe Woods Ward

Jim Corrigan	220373
Margaret Emblin	220904
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Robert Hunt	222042
Alan Taylor	220689
Sue McDermid	220864
Ray Letheren	222224

Cliffe Village Fayre 2011

The Cliffe Village Fayre returns on a Saturday 2nd July 12 noon till 4.30pm on the Buttway, Cliffe. It is organised by Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, Friends of the 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.

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, (email joan.darwell@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk) or Gill Moore on 01634 222205 (email gill.moore@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk) for details.

Lena Kennedy—Heritage Plaque

Local people are invited to the unveiling of a Heritage plaque placed by Cliffe and



Cliffe Woods Parish Council in commemoration of Lena Kennedy the author on Saturday 16th April at 2.30pm at The Shack (next to 29 View Road, Cliffe Woods) Light refreshments available.



Who we are and what we do

The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council has existed for over 100 years. We are a nationally recognised level, and most local level, of local government. There are 16 councillors, (8 from Cliffe Woods and 8 from Cliffe). The council meets monthly, alternately, in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. There are a small number of committees that also meet to discuss specific issues in more detail before making recommendations to the Parish Council. The Clerks manage 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 Medway Council, police and fire services—**this will raise £40,492 in 2011/2012**, and is only about 35p per household per week! We also raise funds from other sources for large schemes such as the Cliffe Ball Court, Cliffe Play Area, BMX/Skatepark and the allotments and have received 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 neither is currently operating, we would help anybody that wants to get them restarted. Funds are also available to support neighbourhood watch schemes, the grass cutting in the churchyard of St. Helen's Church, Cliffe (£1,000 a year) and to support our two village halls (£5,000 a year, each).

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). **Nominations need to be received by Medway Council by 12 noon on 4th April 2011.** 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. **Why not take an active part in the community and join us?**

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FOR. STEVE AND LISA MILLS HAVE BEEN
RUNNING THIS TYPICALLY TRADITIONAL
BRITISH PUB FOR FIFTEEN YEARS,
RUNNING DART, POOL AND BAT AND TRAP
TEAMS. NEW TEAMS ALWAYS WELCOME

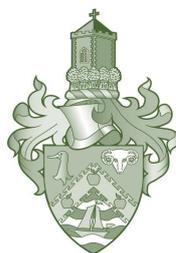
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FRI NOON TILL 1.30 AM
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SUN NOON TILL 12.30AM
(NO ADMISSION AFTER 11PM)

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- JUKE BOX
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- FAMILY FRIENDLY
- BEER GARDEN
- WIDE RANGE OF LAGERS AND ALES

CHURCH STREET
CLIFFE
ROCHESTER
KENT

TEL: 01634 221442



Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

17 Graveney Close,
Cliffe Woods
Rochester, Kent ME3 8LB

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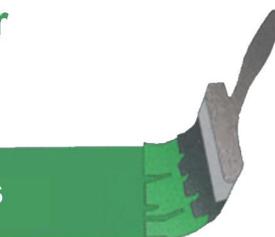
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