

Our Community— Our Responsibility

Winter Edition
2010/11

BMX/Skateboarding in the Snow

After a number of delays the BMX/Skateboard Park is complete. We are looking to hold an opening day (when the weather improves) with demonstrations and competitions.

The park cost c. £50,000, with a further £2,000 for maintenance in the coming years and has been funded by the Parish Council as well as the Youth Opportunities Fund (Big Lottery Fund),



the Veolia Environmental Trust, the E-on Community Investment Fund and Medway Council's Rural Liaison Fund. The idea for the park came from local youths themselves and they also made applications for some of these grants. The final design was chosen by them and it has been constructed at the far end of the Cliffe Recreation ground.

Libraries are for life, not just for Christmas!

When the Christmas tree has been put away for another year and we start to think about our new year resolutions 'must exercise more', 'eat less', learn new skills, gain a qualification, you know the sort of thing. Why not kick start your resolutions with a trip to your local library? If you haven't visited a library for a while, you may be surprised what your library can offer you. Whatever your interests there really is something for everyone.

Did you know it's free to join your library? Medway libraries have thousands of books including the latest titles and you can borrow up to 30 items. In our bigger branches you will find DVD's, Blu-ray discs, audio books, console games and coming soon E- books and e audio books.

On top of that there are computers with free Internet access in every library and regular events for all ages and interests, which are free to attend.

Libraries are for everyone; we offer a Home Library service for those who cannot get to the library and a postal service for visually impaired customers. The Mobile Library service visits Parkside in Cliffe Woods and Old School in Cliffe.

You can access electronic resources as well as reserve and renew books via our website www.medway.gov.uk/libraries or if you prefer you can borrow, return and renew items **at any branch**.

If you want to find out more, why not visit your main branch library at 32, Bryant Road, Strood. Telephone 01634 335890 for further information and opening times.

Or go online at www.medway.gov.uk/libraries, or become a friend of Medway Libraries on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/medwaylibraries

You can also pick up a copy of 'What? When? Where?' events leaflet at any library.

Your library is always keen to hear your comments or suggestions for improvements. So by joining the library you not only benefit from the wide selection of books and resources free of charge, but also have the opportunity to shape the library service for the future.

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

Cliffe Memorial Hall—Did you Know?

Cliffe Memorial Hall was opened in 1968 as a memorial to the servicemen and women of Cliffe who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. The idea was originally thought of in 1939, but with the outbreak of the second world war, the project was put on the back burner, and the fund raising money of £2,000 put in the bank for safe keeping. The project was re-introduced in 1962, and was initially only the large Hall the smaller addition being added in 1971/72.

The site for the hall in 1939 was at Norwood Corner, the Old Globe Cinema, but structural faults meant that project was moved to the current site. The land the Memorial Hall is built on is owned by the Parish and was leased to the hall committee for a peppercorn rent.



Today the Memorial Hall offers 2 kitchens; one in each of the halls with the larger one offering full cooking facilities, separate toilet facilities for each hall, including an easy access toilet, with the large hall offering a bar which can either be provided by local Licensees, the hall's own contacts or by the Hirer themselves.

New Year has long been an event to attend at the Hall, originally the New Year's Eve party was organised by the committee and was a formal dance, what a sight that would have been!! Now the hall is hired privately and tickets sold to the community at a very reasonable price.

The Memorial Hall is used to hosting events, Christmas Fairs, they used to host the Musical Fayre, the Summer Fete linked to the Carnival, Bingo, Derby and Joan Club, the Women's Institute and many more.... Where have all these traditions gone? There are several clubs who hire the halls on a regular basis, Guides, Play school, Dance Tap and Modern, Play Group, Mothers and Toddlers, the Parish Council also hold their monthly meeting, alternate months in the small hall on the 1st Thursday of each month. Do you remember the VE anniversary dance?

Anybody can hire the hall by telephoning Booking clerk Mrs Suzy Moore, tel: 07510676638, email: cliffememorial@hotmail.com many, people within the community and in the surrounding areas regularly hire the hall for wedding parties, birthday parties, club meetings, Christmas dinners, the list is endless, why not consider hiring the hall for a family event—that lunch when everyone's invited but no-one's got a dining room big enough to hold them all?

The hall is always looking for help when it comes to decorating or small repair jobs. Would you consider offering your help? Does anyone remember when the help was supplied by the in-mates from the Borstal? They were brought over by bus and helped with the painting, there were even a couple who absconded whilst here.

The hall is run by a committee of dedicated local people who give many hours of their time, unpaid, to keep the hall a viable proposition, could you give some of your time to join them? The Parish Council are also in the second year of funding the hall directly (£5,000 per year). The Parish is once again directly involved in the Management Committee and also consider any applications for grants for hall improvements.

Cliffe Fire Station—Our Fire Station

The original Cliffe Fire Station was built by the Parish Council early in the 20th century. It is a facility that has been a valuable community asset over many years, but it has often come under threat of closure when remote administrations are looking to save money. With the national 'comprehensive spending review' and the pressure on the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service coming under pressure, there are thoughts of cutting back or even closing our fire station. We all need to make sure they understand how important it is to us.. There is a public consultation on the future of our fire service—go to :

http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/about_us/have_your_say/public_consultation.aspx

The consultation finishes January 17th 2011—do it now!

Community News

Cliffe Woods Community Centre

Like the Cliffe Memorial Hall, the Community Centre was built by the local residents. There used to be a wooden hut on the site, which was transferred from the Parish Council, at 7-9 Tennyson Avenue (still the official address of the Community Centre). This hut was donated by the army and installed on-site. It served the community for a number of years, but with the Cliffe Woods village growing rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, it was clear that a better brick built one was needed.

The village hall committee set about raising the funds for the new building. The village hall committee and then the community association used to run regular fund raising events and were responsible for the Cliffe Woods 10K run in the early days (with a BBC micro recording the race times). This was handed over to the Cerebral Palsy Care centre who continue to run it each year. Several residents contributed through the buy a brick scheme.

In 1983 the new village hall opened (it cost about £125,000). It was hoped that the new hall could have had some more facilities but there was a limit to the funds available so it was planned that these could be added later. In order to raise funds a Social Club was formed to run the bar at a profit which would be passed back to the Community Association to add to the centre (the community association was a charity so could not run the bar).

There have been a number of plans to add a further smaller hall, committee room and offices, but there has not been the funds and drive to carry this out yet. The heating for the hall has had to be changed a couple of times as it was a struggle to heat the large hall and fuel bills were very high. This year a new efficient heating system was installed with the help of the Energy Savings Trust and the Lottery Fund.



The centre still hosts a Social Club, although this now runs as a company under guarantee. Membership of the Social Club is open to residents from a wider area than the Community Association. There are regular bookings most evenings in the Community Centre (another reason why additional capacity is required).

There is a small kitchen attached to the hall and an extension to the bar that can be used by the Social Club for events with prior arrangement.

The Community Association continues to maintain the Community Centre and is looking to improve the facilities provided. Additional management

committee members are always welcome. There is a monthly meeting and occasional working parties to decorate or carry out minor works.

The Parish Council were only indirectly involved in the Community Association through committee members that were also Parish Councillors, but the relationship has now been put on a firmer footing with a representative of the Parish Council on their committee. Like the Memorial Hall the Parish Council make a grant of £5,000 per annum towards the running of the hall.

Hall bookings can be made via the Social Club when they are open (address 7-9 Tennyson Ave, Cliffe Woods, ME3 8JF) and via the bookings secretary Mr Ian Downes 01474 824367, email cliffewoodshall@hotmail.co.uk Low week rates for local clubs & groups Max capacity 180, 120 Dancing. Special rates for Sunday afternoon children's parties from £30.

Adverts in The Clarion

The Parish Council have decided to allow advertising space in future editions of the Clarion. The newsletter is delivered to all homes in the Parish Council area (c. 2,200) at least once a year and hopefully more frequently if the additional cost can be offset by adverts. The next edition will be March 2011 in time for the Annual Parish Meeting in early April and just before the elections to the Parish Council (and Medway Council) in May.

We will be giving priority to local businesses and need to ensure any space covers the cost of the printing the additional material. Contact the Parish Clerk for more details.

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

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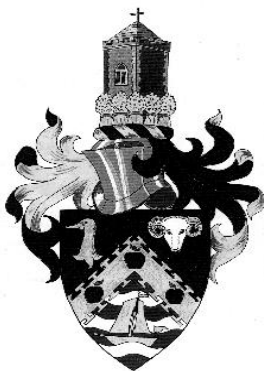
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Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

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

Weather

First the weather news ô Our Parish Council WEB site (www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk) now has a link to a weather station in Cliffe Woods provided by a local resident.

The snow hit the Parish area hard at the end of November and again in December. Although the B2000 was kept relatively clear (as it is the route for Medway Council's gritter lorries to the stocks held in Salt Lane), and they also gritted some local roads, the amount of snow was too much for them. In the past the old Rochester Council used to have contracts with local farmers who used to keep roads clear with a plough attached to their tractors, but like most things it went the way of budget cuts when the winters were warmer. We will be talking to Medway Council about the lessons to be learnt from this (it could easily occur again in the next few months). Medway Council are accountable for the highways, but we are already putting some salt/grit in the Cliffe Woods Car Park for icy conditions ô it was almost ready for the first snow, but not quite. The grit box is now in position.

Parish Council—New Faces

Since the last Clarion in March there have been a number of changes in personnel on the Parish Council. We have now appointed Joint Clerks, Mrs Alex Jack will be the main point of contact and carries out the role of 'Proper Officer', Mrs Laura Farrelly carries out the role of 'Responsible Finance Officer' although they will also cover for each other as well. They share the Clerk's hours between them. This is a new way of working and follows a number of clerk changes since December 2009 with Parish Councillors also having to fill in for those roles for a few months. We have had the resignation of two councillors—Janet Keates and Mel Smith, we had hoped to convince them to stay on. Mel was the Chair of the Finance Committee and Janet had stood in for the clerk for a while and was instrumental in getting a number of improvements done to the allotments as well as Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Play areas. We have co-opted Sue McDermid and Ray Letheren in the Cliffe Woods ward (Ray rejoins after a period as a Parish Councillor some years ago) and Samantha Collins in Cliffe. We had hoped that there would be no further vacancies until the elections next May, but one councillor in Cliffe has not attended a meeting for > 6 months so a vacancy now exists.

Who and what we are

The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council has existed for over 100 years. 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 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 the Medway Council, police and fire services ô this was raised to £34,390 in 2010/2011, but 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, the BMX Skateboard Park and the allotments and have receive an annual 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 operating currently, we would help anybody who wants to get them 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 currently. **Why not be an even more active member of the community and join us?**