

## Our Community— Our Responsibility

October/  
November  
Edition 2004

### Chairman 's Report

Another year of petty vandalism in the parish that has cost the community more than just money. We have seen the destruction of the equipment store on the recreation ground and a series of mindless damage to the Cliffe Memorial Hall, among many incidents. The insurance claims do not meet the full cost of repairs and often result in much higher premiums or refusal to cover them in future. It also means a lot of extra work for the volunteers that look after the hall and are a significant drain on Parish Council limited funds. The result of this is often demoralised residents who wonder why they put their time and effort into trying to provide something of value to their community.

There is also a feeling that it is a waste of time reporting problems to the police as they don't do anything—so I have been following up this with Medway Council and the police. With the parish clerk and the vice-chair, I met with the police, Medway officers and councillors to discuss the problems and see what is being and what can be done. Medway have a number of Community Safety staff who work with local communities to address these problems and the police are supplemented by Medway Council Wardens who patrol the area and work with the community and police.

In April chairs of Medway Parish Councils met with the police to discuss Operation Bantam—an intensive operation to catch fly tippers, untaxed motor vehicles, drunk drivers through road blocks and walking the streets. This led to a 33% reduction in crime and 45% reduction in criminal damage. It is planned to carry this out again. There have been two more meetings with the police and every three months parish councils and neighbourhood watch coordinators meet with them to discuss current issues.

We need your help. You can report non-urgent issues direct to the police on Medway 884185 or 827055, if officers are on patrol a message can be left and they will get back to you. More Neighbourhood Watch schemes are needed in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods—the Parish Council have helped current local schemes by covering their running costs.

Kent Police are also looking to appoint Parish Special Constables—contact Freephone 0500 787700 for details. It involves special training and a commitment of about 16 hours a month. Anybody aged 18-55 can apply as long as you do not have a criminal record.

**IT IS UP TO YOU!**

*Ken Kentell,*

Chairman—Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

### Carnival Days

It has been several weeks since the carnival and to most people it was just another day out, but as for the carnival committee, we are planning for next year, having had our first meeting already. As usual, our main issue is finance and without the Parish Council, Bretts and other sponsors the day could simply not go ahead. Once our major arena events have been decided and booked we concentrate on the field layout, which goes where, who is doing what and the parade.

We are asked why we do it, because it is a lot of hard work and come late on that Saturday afternoon when all we would like is to rest our swollen feet, we ask ourselves the same question! The only answer is because we enjoy what we do. For me personally, moments such as when the parade leaves the Buttway to the sound of the marching

band, hearing how people have met up with old friends they have not seen since last year and seeing everybody enjoying themselves makes it all worthwhile.

This year someone videoed the day because we miss so much and it is nice to be able to look back, as I do at the cine films that Derek Green, my Dad, took thirty years ago when he organised the carnivals.

We often wonder who will take over from us as a committee and hopefully, when that time comes, we will be able to relax and enjoy a great day out at the Cliffe Carnival just as we hope you do. **The 2005 Carnival will be on Saturday 18th June.**

*Lesley Parker,* Parish Councillor, Carnival Committee

# Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

## RSPB Cliffe Pools



As we head into autumn/winter we can look back on a busy 9 months at Cliffe Pools RSPB.

The first big project came in the spring with the serving of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the reserves eastern and central byways. This order allowed us to erect strong gates at either end of the eastern byway which prevent vehicle access along here, effectively putting an end to the fly-tipping and illegal trial-biking that has blighted the area for so many years.

This track was also cleared of invasive buddleias in January and is now open and attractive with a fine display of summer flowers along the trackside.

The TRO work also means that we have been able to make good progress with clearing up the remaining rubbish on-site. Volunteer work parties in June removed over half of this and we hope to finish the job this coming winter.

The other main project of the year so far has been the clear up of the copper contaminated land next to Cliffe creek. This work is almost complete and the area will be landscaped to encourage native wildflowers important for the reserves rare bumble-bee population.

Other work has seen our Pinnacle viewpoint landscaped and fenced, signs and notice boards erected, and fly-tipping removed from Pickles Way, all making the reserve safer and more pleasant for reserve visitors and it has been good to see more and more local people enjoying the reserve, be it for bird-watching, walking or cycling.



Further work this year will include creating a secured area for cattle grazing (which is crucial in managing the reserves grasslands for both insects and birds) clearing away the remaining cars and rubbish, making some new viewing areas and improving the reserves trails.

**Michael Ellison.** Warden Cliffe Pools RSPB.

### Cliffe's Industrial Past

To accompany the BBC's new series, 'The British Isles: A Natural History', the RSPB are putting on a series of free guided wildlife walks on the Hoo Peninsula.

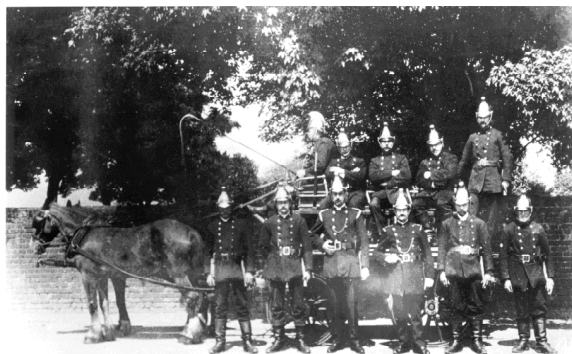
- Sunday 31 Oct Island Britain Walk at Yantlet Creek 1.30-3.30
- Sunday 7 Nov Taming the Wild Marshes at Bromhey Farm on the RSPB Northward Hill reserve 1.30-3.30
- Sunday 14 Nov Cliffe's Industrial Past, 1.30-3.30

This final event, organised with the help of the Friends of the North Kent Marshes and SHINE, will be a gentle walk down from St Helen's Church to Cliffe Pools, exploring the industrial history that has helped make the site so special today. We will then come back to St Helen's at 3.30 for a chat over tea and cakes and displays of old photos of Cliffe. We would love to have the company of anyone who has memories of the past to share - you have far more to tell us than we can tell you! And if you would prefer just to come along for the cuppa at the end of the walk, - that is fine too. Refreshments by and in aid of SHINE.

And do make sure you watch the BBC programme on Weds 3 Nov, 9pm, when Cliffe Pools will feature prominently! For more information on any of the events, please call the RSPB North Kent Marshes Team on 01634 222480/ 01634 222489, or log into [www.northkentmarshes.org.uk](http://www.northkentmarshes.org.uk)

# Community

## 100 years service to Cliffe



One hundred years ago, in 1904, the Cliffe Parish Council paid out over £200 for a state-of-the-art Merryweather pump (equivalent to many £1,000s today) to help form the Cliffe Fire Brigade. Since then they have attended thousands of calls in the local area and beyond. As a part-time station, it is manned by local volunteers who respond to a 'bleep' in emergencies although for many years a siren at the station alerted them. They became part of the Kent Fire Brigade and support other part-time and full-time fire-fighters at incidents across the county. Although a vital part of the local community, it was almost closed as part of a Kent wide cost cutting review in the early 1990s—however local residents campaigned with

the local station to convince local politicians and the Kent County Fire Brigade that it was still wanted and could continue to provide a cost-effective and needed local service.

The Cliffe Fire Brigade was formed by local community leaders, including the Parish Council, in response to an earlier tragedy in July 1901 when a fire in a wood-framed semi-detached cottage near the Six Bells Inn cost the lives of the father Mr Kenknight and two of his daughters—although the mother, five other children and a young friend were saved, the mother died in St Barts Hospital of her burns the next day. While a hose from the Co-operative Society was located, but found to be too short, a local resident cycled to Rochester Fire Station for help. Although the bike suffered a puncture and the journey had to be completed on foot, by the time they arrived just two charred chimney breasts remained standing. The family suffered further tragedy when the youngest daughter died in a lunatic asylum and the eldest son died three years after the fire in an explosion at a gunpowder factory in Cliffe.



Today, the station responds to about 150 calls a year in the local area and beyond. They respond to a wide range of incidents from children who get their fingers stuck in video recorders to major fires and road accidents.

With many more local residents working away from the area it has been difficult to recruit new fire-fighters, but they are still interested in hearing from potential local volunteers.

They are very much part of the local community and apart from their fire-fighting duties raise funds for local charities. They joined with the carnival committee to put on a major two-day event a few years ago.

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council have contributed towards a plaque to celebrate 100 years of



our local fire-station which will be mounted at the station.

Cliffe Fire Brigade remind you that they may be able to fit a Smoke Alarm in your house, free of charge—contact the Station on Medway 221647 for details. Fitting a Smoke Alarm could save you and your family's lives—but remember to test it on a regular basis—the batteries do not last forever.

Prank calls cost lives—the night this picture was taken, they had been called out to a car fire in Rectory Road and when they arrived there was nothing there—but a real call could have been received and they could have been delayed responding.





# Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/cliffeandcliffewoods

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## Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

### Cliffe Village Ward

Joan Darwell	220487
Thelma Enticknap	220487
Derek Green	220240
Lesley Parker	220503
James Wenban	222620
Leslie Wicks	220374
Jasper Wright	220184
One Vacancy	

### Cliffe Woods Ward

Jim Corrigan	220373
Margaret Emblin	220904
Dianne Foreman	221193
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Bryan Mooney	222143
Gill Moore	222205
One Vacancy	

## Parish News

After their widely recognised involvement in the “NO AIRPORT AT CLIFFE” Campaign and now the follow-on organisation “Friends of North Kent Marshes” we were pleased that Gill Moore and Joan Darwell have now joined the Parish Council.

Work to progress the Youth Play Area at the Cliffe Recreation Ground is continuing. We have applied for grants to complete the financing and final plans are being drawn up for a full planning application. The survey of local residents backed the plans and we still hope to have everything in place for summer 2005.

The parish is keen to develop a Parish Plan for the area, but will not be able to without the active involvement of the community. We want to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the area and to identify what needs to be protected, what needs to be protected against and what new services are required—Please contact the parish if you want to be a part of this. A Public Meeting will be arranged in the next month or two to kick start the project.

Following the vandalism that resulted in the destruction of the equipment store at the Cliffe Recreation Ground (including the lawnmower, tools, equipment and goal posts owned by local football teams) we have replaced it with a steel container. It has been granted temporary planning permission by Medway Council, and we will have to see if it needs to be replaced in two years time or if further planning permission will be sought.

We are monitoring plans for a major housing development at Chattenden. The current local and structure plan indicate a possible 2,000 houses on the ‘brown field’ site occupied by the Royal Engineers, but at a recent examination in public of the new Kent and Medway Structure Plan, a developer floated the idea of a 7,000 house ‘Chattenden Town’.

There are still vacancies on the Parish Council—why not join us, there is much to do.

*Chris Fribbins*, Vice-Chair

## PING PONG

Clubs currently competing in the Medway Towns Table Tennis League come from a mix of backgrounds ranging from specialist table tennis clubs to the traditional “firm’s teams”. Cliffe Woods Table Tennis Club represents the villages of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods but the concern of present club members is that not too many other local residents are aware of this!

Having operated with four teams in the Medway League for a number of years, the club recently cut back to three because of dropping membership. In an effort to reverse this trend and to offer opportunities to new players, the club is on the lookout for new members.

A club member said “ Ideally we would also like to encourage new young players to join. Unfortunately we do not have the facilities or the membership to offer coaching which means we have to target the more experienced player. However, if any youngsters contact us we would try to work out some way of introducing them to the competitive side of the game.”

Anyone who is interested in becoming part of this successful local club that competes in the first and second divisions of the Medway League can telephone Allister Kay on 01634 220588.

## Remembrance Sunday

Each year Cliffe and Cliffe Woods pay respect to local residents who gave their lives in the two world wars at the War Memorial at St. Helen’s in Cliffe. Local scouts, guides and the fire brigade parade and lay poppy wreaths along with the church, parish council and others. Remembrance Sunday is 14th November this year.