

Our Community— Our Responsibility

**Summer
Edition
2009**

Lena Kennedy—1914-1986 Best Selling Novelist and Local Resident

Lena Kennedy was brought up in Hoxton, London, loved books admired the work of Charles Dickens and read many of his novels. Lena became a best selling author at the age of 64 when her first novel 'Maggie' was an overnight success. Lena wrote about London's east end and its colourful cockney characters but she also loved *this* area and used much of her knowledge of its history and locations (the marshes, the old rectory at Cliffe and Cooling Castle) in many of her historical novels, most notably 'The Inn on the Marsh' and 'Kate of Clyve Shore'.

Lena's autobiography, 'Away to the Woods' tells the story of her life, her fondness for her place in the woods, how she and her husband Fred purchased the land and put the ex-army shack up on a rainy day. It tells how sometimes she wrote by candlelight and how much she loved her garden. This old woodland community, where there were many shacks, had a special place in Lena's heart. This was how Cliffe Woods used to be before it became the large village that it is today and it is through the pages of Lena Kennedy's autobiography that we can revisit that part of our parish heritage. Lena used to recite poetry in the woodland: one such piece was this beautiful poem with words that encapsulate all that is so wonderful about this area of our parish.



*'If you stand very still in the heart of a wood
You may hear many wonderful things
The snap of a twig, the wind in the trees
And the whirl of invisible wings
If you stand very still and stick to your faith
And wait for a voice from within
You'll be led down the highways and byways of
life
From this mad world of chaos and din '*
Anonymous

We are privileged to have had one of the finest contemporary storytellers of her time in our midst and proud of the inspiration that our parish gave her. We hope to commemorate her life and writing here with a plaque on the site of the Cliffe Woods shack which still remains—an example of the many shacks that used to be located in the woods. If built, we have asked a developer to consider naming a new road off View Road 'Lena Kennedy Gardens'.

Cliffe in Bloom

The Parish would like to thank the organisers of the hanging baskets and tubs in Cliffe again this year - led by Cameron Ross. The Parish Council allocated £200 this year and funding from Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd added a further £200.

We are looking at the costs and how we can help in future years as well. We would also be willing to consider expansion into Cliffe Woods if volunteers could be found to run it.

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Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

Parish Clerk Vacancy

Following the planned retirement of the current Parish Clerk, Gavin Meeser, the Parish Council is looking for a new clerk to work alongside the current clerk from October and takeover in December

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

The Job :-

- PART-TIME Position
- Approx, 16 hours per week
- 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
- Current 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 our WEB site www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

**For more information about the job, contact the Clerk, Chair or Vice-Chair
(contact details on back page)**

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 (see contact details on back page)
By August 22nd 2009—Interviews in September**

Community News

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Play Areas Set for Major Works

The Parish Council own and maintain the children's play area in Cliffe (next to the Memorial Hall) and Medway Council own and maintain the play area at Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground.

The Parish have been looking to improve their own area and encourage Medway to improve theirs as well. Now the Government has allocated a large sum through the PlayBuilder project to improve play facilities for 8 - 13 year olds across Medway and both Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Play Areas will be amongst the first to be tackled.

Cliffe Parish Council and the Cliffe Children's Committee have joined with Medway Council to plan and carry out improvements—this will add extra facilities for the youngest as well. The Parish had budgeted £35,000 to improve the Cliffe Play Area and along with funds raised by the Cliffe Children's Committee will add to Medway's allocation of £45,000. In Cliffe Woods, the Parish have raised some additional funds through the Comma scheme (to be confirmed in October) to add to Medway's allocation of £45,000. Construction will start in December and both areas will be completed by next March.

East Thames Crossing

For many years there has been an ambition to provide another road, and possibly rail, crossing of the Thames downstream from Dartford. In recent years growing congestion at the crossing has increased the calls for extra capacity. The Department for Transport have commissioned a study and it has come up with some conclusions.

- A major contribution to the congestion are the toll booths on either side and they will investigate ways to make them more efficient. (we think it would be better to remove them!)
- Additional crossings—Provide another bridge at Dartford or A2 Bean/Bluewater, over the new Eastern Quarry housing development, through Swanscombe peninsula and across to the A1089 near Tilbury Docks. (discounted due to the problems of crossing the Eastern Quarry) or Thong/Shorne A2 down to the Shorne/Higham marshes and across to West Tilbury Marshes and on a new road to the A13 and across to the M25 (recommended for further investigation) and, **in our parish**, Wainscott Bypass/Higham A226 junction, across to the north of Cliffe Woods and then two options, north-east towards High Halstow and across to Canvey Island or north west across the Cliffe marshes and across the Thames. - **these options have been discounted.** A further crossing from Sheerness to east of Southend using the A249 has also been discounted.

There is no need for a rail crossing. We appear safe for now, but we can't guarantee this. The Parish Council will be keeping a close eye on the situation.

Parish Plan—YOUR plan for the Future

The Parish Council are in the early stages of initiating a Parish Plan Process for Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. This is an opportunity for the whole community to voice their opinion on what action they wish to see taken in their local area in the future. It's a survey of the community and involves everyone in the parish. It maps out services and facilities already available and looks at what issues and opportunities the community feel need addressing. This information then forms an action plan to look at how these issues can be tackled going forward.

If you are interested in taking an active role in shaping what our villages will be like in the future then please contact Debbie Cunningham on 221121.

Planning Update

Bretts have submitted their plans for increased lorry movements from their site in Salt Lane and a decision by Medway Council is expected soon. This would also include further traffic calming measures on the B2000 either side of Cliffe Woods - but only when the Thames Terminal site planning is resolved - (the reconvened public inquiry for that site has been delayed even further and is not expected until early 2010 now!). They have also submitted plans for filling in the lake on their site (Cliffe Lake). This is not protected like the other lakes - Cliffe Pools and Buckland Lake - there have been some concerns raised by the owners of Buckland Lake, so the application has been withdrawn and will be amended before resubmission in the autumn. They also plan to reorganise storage land on their site which is the subject of a third application.

A modified scheme to build 13 houses on the Courtshole Farm site has been submitted. This claims to improve the views to and from St Helens Church, which was a concern of the Parish.

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

www.cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk

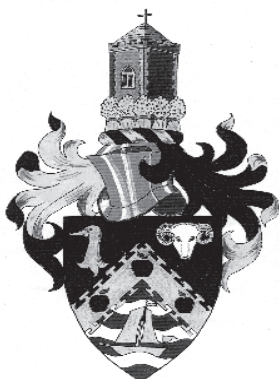
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Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

Cliffe Village Ward

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

ONE Vacancy

Cliffe Woods Ward

Jim Corrigan	220373
Margaret Emblin	220904
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Debbie Cunningham	221121
Melinda Smith	07842 221974
Robert Hunt	222042

ONE Vacancy

Support for OUR Parish Youth

The Parish Council have been pleased to support both the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Youth Clubs. The hall hire has been met by the Parish and there have also been grants for equipment and special events. We also know of other sources for other grants, so money should not be an issue.

However we always struggle to find adults to help run the clubs with the youths themselves. The Cliffe Youth Club folded some years ago and now the very successful Cliffe Woods Youth Club has also had to close - in both cases it was due to the lack of adult help.

If we could get a team of people together the commitment of time and effort could be spread and reduced. Please think how you could help and contact the Parish Council.

English Heritage—Historic Landscapes—Hoo Peninsula

English Heritage have launched a major new project to investigate and document the history of the Hoo Peninsula (also Higham and Shorne down to the A2 and across to Chalk). This will run for two years and will be looking, in particular, at the old ammunitions factory site on Cliffe Marshes, the industrial history of the industrial sites across the peninsula - including Cliffe Pools and Bretts and how the landscape has been changed by developments over thousands of years..

They will also be looking at the forts and castles around the peninsula. We have already approached Bretts to see if access around the outside of Cliffe Fort can be improved and managed to prevent safety problems when they are unloading aggregates from ships there. Access inside the fort is unsafe and it would take a lot of money and time to make it fully accessible.

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 £28,000 and is only about 24p per household per week (2009/2010 figures)! We also raise funds from other sources for large schemes such as the Cliffe Ball Court and receive a 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 liaison 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 these are currently not operating, we would help anybody that wants to get them restarted. Funds are also available to support neighbourhood watch schemes. We provide a large grant each year for the grass cutting in the churchyard of St. Helen's Church.

There are elections for councillors every four years, if there are more nominations than positions, polling takes place on the same day as the Medway Council . (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 selected by the parish council. There are two vacancies currently.

Why not be an even more active member of the community and join us.