



An 'Eventful' Year in the Parish

March 2003

Just 12 months ago, the Parish Council was looking forward with optimism. Investigations were underway to provide our own Community Transport Scheme and, after vandalism had wrecked the sports pavilion on the Cliffe Recreation Ground, we were looking to replace it with a better building with additional facilities.

At the time, ideas of a Cliffe International Airport was just a rumour in the Financial Times. Then in July 2002, the Department for Transport issued their consultation document *"The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East"* and the rumours turned into reality—and we found out that consultants had been busy for some time investigating many of the implications of a 5 runway airport more than twice the size of Heathrow on our marshes!

We had hoped that consultation would have been completed at the end of November 2002 and we would be waiting for a decision anytime now, but the consultation is being continued to 30 June 2003 following a legal challenge to include Gatwick as one of the options—**more details inside.**

At the same time plans to build a new sea wall and flood part of the marshes to create additional mudflats were published. In compensation for loss of mudflats and wildlife habitats on the Essex side of the Thames in a major container and industrial park at Shellhaven—**more details inside.**

Although a temporary replacement for the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground was put in place by one of our local football teams, the 'portacabin' was vandalised and eventually destroyed by fire and has to be removed. On a positive note progress is being made on a hard surfaced area —**more details inside.**

The Parish Council comes to the end of a second three year term on the 1st of May and nominations are required by noon on the 1st April for anybody who wants to be a Parish Councillor for the next 4 years. There are 8 vacancies in the Cliffe Village Ward and 8 in Cliffe Woods. If there are more nominations than places elections will take place on May 1st 2003 alongside the Medway Unitary Council elections— Nomination forms are available from Medway Council at the Civic Centre in Strood—**more details inside.**

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PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

7:30pm , Thursday, April 3rd, 2003
Cliffe Woods Primary School, View Road

Hear what is going on in the Parish from the Parish Council and most of the local groups in the area

Airport Consultation Continues

(A small number of residents have been concerned about a bias against the airport in the Clarion. We recognise that a minority of them do favour the Cliffe Airport, but after careful consideration the Parish Council feel the disadvantages far outweigh the benefits and with limited space and limited funds it is this line that The Clarion has followed over the last year.)

When the Department for Transport issued their consultation document “The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East” at the end of July 2002, responses were required by 30th November and it was hoped that a decision would be made sometime this spring on how the government wanted to take it forward.

Although Gatwick was mentioned in the text and some possible alternatives for that airport had been investigated, it was decided to exclude it as an option because of a planning agreement made with the local authority for no additional runways until at least 2019. Medway and Kent County Council (and some others) took the Department for Transport to the High Court, arguing that Gatwick should be included. The idea was that adding additional options would reduce the arguments in favour of a Cliffe airport. The court decided that Gatwick should be included and the Department for Transport agreed to carry out a further consultation with Gatwick included. This was launched in February with a deadline of 30th June 2003 for responses.

The campaign against Cliffe Airport was going well with most people agreeing with the arguments we were making on environmental impact, cost and direct impacts on our local and wider communities. In the Parish Council’s detailed response to the consultation we argued that more efficient use of current airport capacity should be considered before any new airport is built and that a Cliffe Airport would have major implications for the viability of other airports such as London City, Gatwick, Stansted and Heathrow itself (which supports a major economy west of London). Now that the consultation has been extended, we face more and longer uncertainty. It will be the end of this year, at the earliest, that we get a decision. Those in favour of an airport in the Thames Estuary have been given more time to put their case, although almost every scheme suggested has almost as much impact on our local Parish area as the Cliffe option (in some cases more!), so we cannot give up now and must keep up the pressure.

Writing Your Letters

The DfT have indicated that responses received to the original consultation will still be considered. You may want to update your response and send a new one. If you missed the opportunity the first time, now you can !! Remember :-

- Make it personal—It is your reply. More consideration will be given to individual letters, rather than mass-produced letters—even if signed.
- Ask Questions—If you feel there are gaps in the information supplied, ask. You should get a reply.

Send to :- Future Development of Air Transport in the UK —South East, Department for Transport, Zone 1/28C, FREEPOST LON 17806, London, SW1P 4YS
(you do not even need a stamp) by 30th June 2003

You can also reply by e-mail via the WEB site www.airconsult.gov.uk

Consider sending a copy of your response to :-

Medway MP—Mr Robert Marshall Andrews, QC MP,
Moat House, 1 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1QQ— Email marshallandrewsr@parliament.uk

Medway Today/ Messenger—Letters, FREEPOST, SEA0334, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4BR
Email: medwaytoday@thekmggroup.co.uk

Medway News/Standard—12 New Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6AT
Email: newsdesk.medway@kentregionalnewspapers.co.uk

LATEST STOP PRESS—London March Postponed

The April 5th London Protest March organised by the NoAirport@Cliffe Action Group has been postponed. Keep an eye on local media for details of any re-arranged dates. If you want to be kept informed and/or register your interest for any re-scheduled date ring the action group on 01634 271156 or 01634 271283 or
Email: joan.goddard27@btopenworld.com

Harbour Empowerment Order

There are proposals to build a new sea wall (inland) and flood part of the marshes near Egypt Bay to provide compensation for land that would be lost in Essex if a major new container port and industrial park is built at Shellhaven. The Parish Council have been keeping a close eye on these proposals which have gone through a number of changes in recent months.

The initial plan for construction was to compulsory purchase land at the bottom of Pond Hill in Cliffe and create a constructors compound. A temporary 'road' would be built to the construction site near Egypt Bay. Heavy plant, machinery and the workers would access the compound via the B2000, through Church Street (including the 'high street' area) and down Pond Hill. Because of the size of the lorries expected, parking for local residents in the 'high street' area and Pond Hill would have to be banned and parking spaces found in the compound for local residents. The traffic calming in Church Street would also need to be changed to allow larger lorries to pass (and probably allow cars to travel much faster as well!). After representations by the Parish Council, this part of the scheme was dropped and the construction site will now be served by helicopter and barge from Shellhaven if approved. Workers (and subsequent maintenance) would access the site via a private road near Cooling Castle.

There is still concern about flooding the area and other environmental works inland of the new sea wall. Much of this land has been managed by local farmers and land owners already and it has been restored to grazing marsh which has attracted unique flora and fauna. Significant amounts of Government grant have gone into improving the local land and farmers say they have put in even more themselves.

On the positive side, the footpath along the sea wall would be diverted onto the new wall and a connection made to a footpath from Cliffe which has stopped short of the sea wall, in the middle of nowhere. Also a new area of land that could qualify for Special Protection and RAMSAR status would be created. The right of access over the footpath/roadway by Cooling Castle will be required by the developer, both during and after construction, we will argue for public access along it (denied after a public hearing a few years ago),

A public meeting was held in Cliffe to discuss the proposals with P&O, the developers, and no further meetings are planned currently (although consideration has been given to supporting Cooling Parish Council if they wish to hold one). A Public Inquiry into the Shellhaven proposals (and proposals for our marshes) has already started and the Parish Council are scheduled to give evidence. The result of the Public Inquiry is unlikely to be announced before the end of this year. If approved, construction on our side of the river could take as little as six months.

Have You Seen the Stones ?

The large stone wheels near the boundary of Cliffe Woods and Cliffe were 'rescued' from Cliffe Marshes by the Parish Council. These were previously used as grinding stones in the cement industry in Cliffe. They have been engraved with the village name and will also have the Parish Crest added at a later date.

The stones had been dumped on the marshes many years ago and the weather conditions had to be right to lift them, high rainfall in previous years had made it very difficult.

From the embers of the Cliffe Pavilion—New Youth Facility

The destruction of the Cliffe Pavilion on the Recreation Ground (after many attacks of vandalism the pavilion was badly damaged by fire and had to be demolished) the Parish Council consulted with you (through the Clarion) to find a way forward.

An emergency portacabin was found to help the senior football club continue with their fixtures, but only temporary planning permission was granted. The temporary pavilion was also vandalised and destroyed by fire so had to be removed.

Following further investigation and an appeal from a group of Cliffe youngsters at a Parish Council meeting we have made progress in finding a location and funds for a multi-sport area on the recreation ground and unused allotments.

The site will be fenced with a hard-surfaced area for basketball, football and many other sports. Significant funds have been allocated by the Parish to the scheme and we have identified a number of likely grants that will raise the balance. It is hoped that a start can be made by this summer.

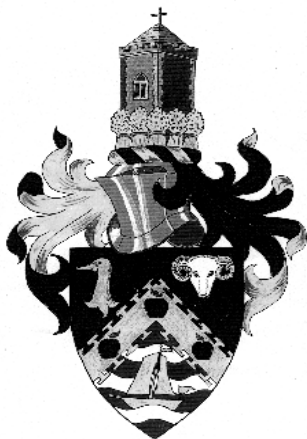
A permanent replacement for the pavilion is still being investigated. There are a number of possible grants that will help move the project forward over the next 12 months.

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

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Chatham
Kent
ME5 9JT

Phone:
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Email :
chris@mcloughlin9.freeserve.co.uk



Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors (To 1st May 2003)

Cliffe Village Ward

Thelma Enticknap	220487
Freda Frost	220687
Derek Green	220240
Keith Scarfe	221852
Bryan Mooney	222142
Ray Letheren	222224
Jasper Wright	220184
One Vacancy	

Cliffe Woods Ward

Rob Davis	221288
Dianne Foreman	221193
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Lesley Parker	220503
Margaret Emblin	220904
Two Vacancies	

Shine On

The Shine project was launched in October 2002 and is coming on in leaps and bounds. Its aim is to preserve the 850 year old St. Helen's Church in Cliffe and a second aim is to create a record of Cliffe in the 21st century by burying a time capsule at the church, which will be opened in 100 years time..

Since it was launched a number of major fund raising events have been held and significant grant aid has been agreed for major restoration work to St. Helens Church, but there is still a long way to go.

The project is working hard to raise further funds and although hard work for the organisers, everybody has enjoyed the social events.

For further details regarding the Shine Project and how you can help, contact Mr Robert Filmer on 01634 220368 or Email : robertfilmer1@btopenworld.com



Want to be a Parish Councillor ?

The Parish Council is the most local level of elected local government. It has a limited income of about £16,000 per year paid by the residents of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods through the local Council Tax. It owns and manages the Recreation Ground and Allotments in Cliffe and the Car Park in Cliffe Woods. It is consulted by many authorities regarding issues such as local planning applications and regional planning . It liaises with many bodies such as Medway Council, the Police and other Parish Councils to represent the local view.

There is one part-time paid officer 'The Clerk' and other part-time staff are used to help keep the Recreation Ground, The Buttway and Cliffe Woods Car Park tidy and to do other odd jobs around the Parish (volunteers for this work are always appreciated).

There are 16 councillors, 8 representing the Cliffe Village Ward and 8 representing Cliffe Woods. Elections are held (if there are more than 8 nominations for a ward) every 4 years – the next elections will be held on 1st May 2003 (alongside elections to the Medway Unitary Authority). Members will be elected for a four-year term, and vacancies that occur during the term are filled by bye election or co-option.

All we ask is that you take an active interest in the Parish and contribute your knowledge and experience.

The Parish Council meets once a month (normally the first Thursday) in Cliffe or Cliffe Woods and there are also Committees that meet to discuss specific issues during the month. Contact any of the Parish Councillors listed or the Parish Clerk for more information.

Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Groups

In the next edition of The Clarion we will be publishing a full directory of our local organisations. If you want your organisation listed we need to know :-

1. Name of organisation
2. What you do (40 words or less)
3. Meeting Address (if applicable)
4. Contact Details
Name, Address, Email and Phone

Send details to the Parish Clerk (details at top of page) or
Email chris@fribbins.cix.co.uk by 1st May 2003