

Spring 2015

# inside Swale

Keeping you informed about your council services

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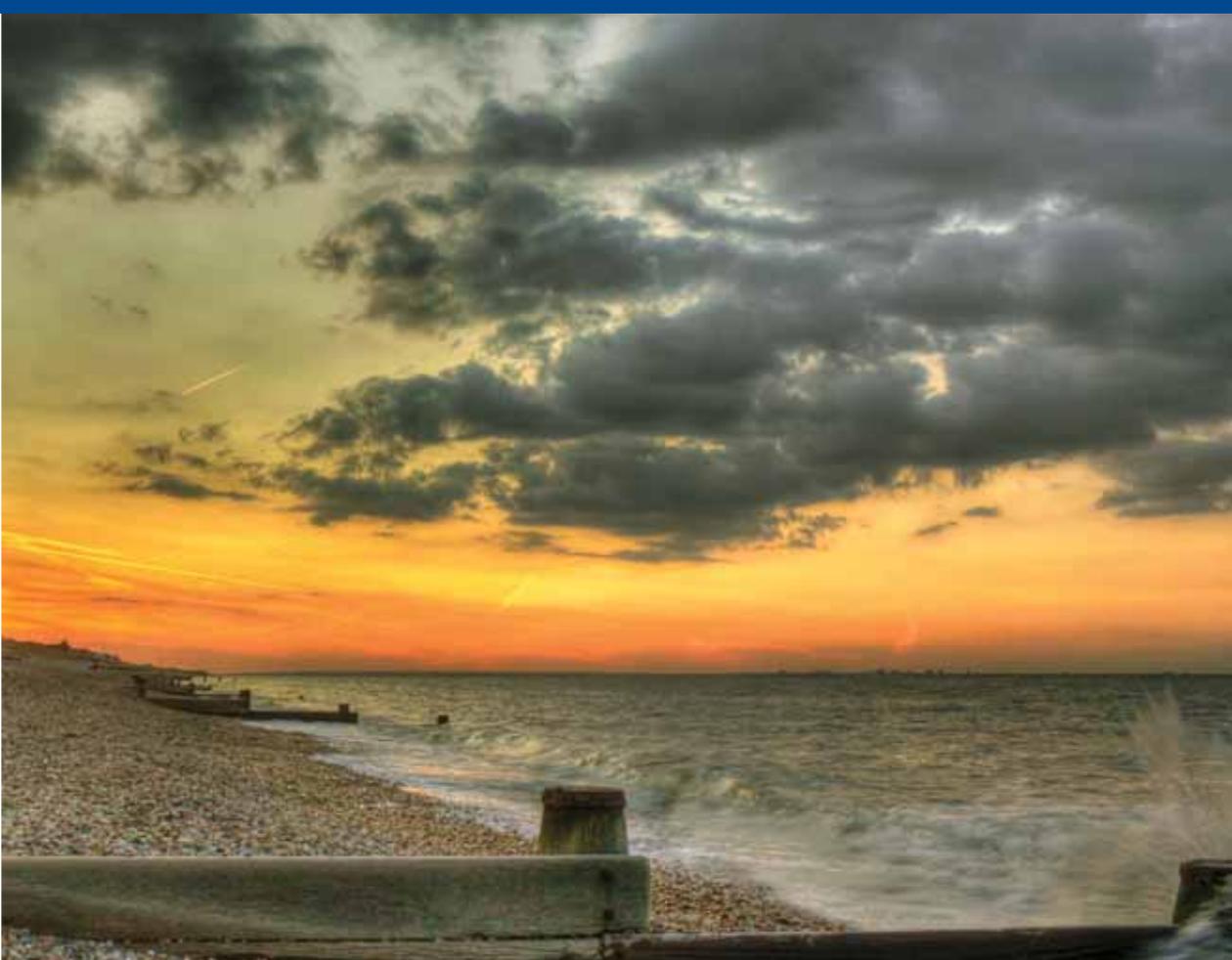
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# Welcome

## to the Spring edition of Inside Swale

A document on the economic impact of tourism has just come across my desk highlighting the increase in tourism

in Kent in the last year. The good news is Swale is attracting nearly five million visits a year, and so it was with a warm smile, I read my colleague Andy Booth's wonderful memories about taking holidays on the beach in Sheerness. And speaking of attracting tourists to the Borough, no event will be better publicised than the 800th Anniversary of Faversham's Magna Carta. For anyone yet to see it, may I highly recommend a visit to the Alexander Centre. Hopefully our double page spread on pages 6/7 will entice you to do so.

It won't have escaped your attention that we are in an election, year and

between now and 20 April we are actively helping as many residents as possible to make sure they are registered. History tells us Swale has a very high ratio of residents who are already on the list, and of course it goes without saying that I would encourage you all to exercise your democratic right and help choose your candidates for the Local, Parish and Parliamentary Elections when they come about on 7 May. Allied to this, we also have a piece about changes in ward boundaries, a map of which is illustrated on page 12.

And finally, we have an article on spending much needed funds on an issue close to my heart: rural locations. We are now actively looking for new members to join their respective Local Action Groups to make important decisions about funding of projects. If you are interested do please look at page 21 and register your details.

*Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader*

## Contact us

### Swale Borough Council

Swale House, East Street,

Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT

website: [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

email: [csc@swale.gov.uk](mailto:csc@swale.gov.uk)

phone: 01795 417 850

facebook: [Swale Borough Council](https://www.facebook.com/SwaleBoroughCouncil)

twitter: [@SwaleCouncil](https://twitter.com/SwaleCouncil)



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## Spirit of Sittingbourne still on track



*Artists impression of proposed new town square*

The Spirit of Sittingbourne have submitted a detailed planning application for the first phase of the scheme, which is due to be decided in the coming weeks. The group has also purchased 34 High Street, which it is currently being used by Recreate for a creative arts project. Site investigations, including borehole sampling, have taken place, which make up the first phase of the development, and the consortium have been providing supporting information to planners as part of the planning application.

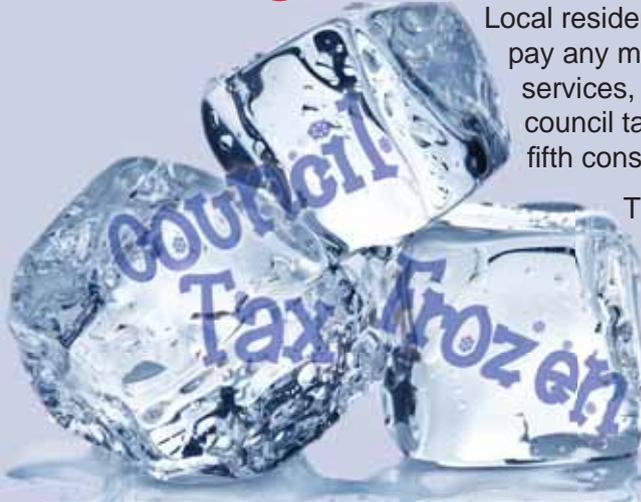
Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, sums up Spirit of Sittingbourne: "The Sittingbourne Regeneration is one of those rare opportunities where we as a Council are able to make a difference to an entire community. Look across England and see which towns give the most variety and pleasure to their residents, then ask yourself: what have they got in common? Great shopping, multiscreen cinemas, good parking, and a good mixture of shops, offices and in-town housing. But the biggest thing they all have above anything else is a buzz. So that's exactly what we are doing in Sittingbourne; bringing back the buzz with a seven screen cinema, new

shops and restaurants, and more homes to encourage evening activity. We estimate increasing the annual footfall by as much as 400,000 people.

"But like all good schemes, it has to have a good start through a proper planning application. Planning looks at housing, retail, transport and parking. Of course everyone has their own views about what they would like and what would be perfect. The reality is that we have got to change certain key areas, so we are swapping around existing car parks and changing roads. We are also changing the roadway around the railway station and Forum to make that more useable with new walkways and footpaths

"Of course the world we live in is nothing quite as perfect as we would all like, but the time, energy and expertise put into this huge project gives real confidence that it will regenerate a Town we all love, and give existing residents and traders real confidence about its future. We have asked the public for their views through our consultations, and they say "yes please, just get on with it". So that's our intention, and now we are getting on with the job."

# Council Tax frozen for fifth year in a row



Local residents will once again not be asked to pay any more money for Swale Borough Council services, after proposals to freeze its share of council tax bill were agreed by councillors for a fifth consecutive year.

This means that a typical Band D household in the borough will pay just less than £160 a year for Swale Borough Council services.

Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Finance said: “We decided a long time ago that it would be unfair to ask local people to pay more for our services when their own finances were being squeezed, so I am delighted we are once again freezing our share of the council tax bill.”

“Our first priority has always been the best interest of local people.”

The approved plans include details of savings worth £731,510 for 2015/16, in areas such as waste collection, reduced need for emergency homelessness accommodation, and savings from transferring assets to the local community.

Cllr Dewar-Whalley continued: “Whilst the scale of reductions in our funding from central Government has been unprecedented, we have – thanks to careful planning and hard work – been able to protect and improve vital services for local people.

“This has meant some tough decisions, and developing new, innovative ways of working, but our first priority has always been the best interests of local people.”

As well as cost savings, the other key area in balancing the budget is generating more income. The Council will benefit from a significant increase in the business rates it receives as a result of business growth in the Borough and higher planning fees from new house building. The Council has once again not increased parking charges.

Charges for Swale Borough Council services are only one part of the final council tax bill residents receive. There are also charges for Kent County Council, Kent Police and Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service which they set themselves, but are collected on their behalf by Swale.

For more information about council tax, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.swale.gov.uk/council-tax)

## Faversham Magna Carta 2015

Widely regarded as England's greatest export, it has brought freedom to people all over the world and was influential in America's Declaration of Independence.

Celebrations marking the 800th anniversary will be taking place throughout the UK and across the world, with national events including a commemoration at Runnymede, where Magna Carta was first sealed, a royal pageant on the River Thames in June, and six tourist trails including Kent and East Sussex.

Faversham can boast a special right to be part of this year's 800th commemorations as proud owners of an edition of Magna Carta dated 1300, the last reissue of the document, which features the seal of King Edward I.

Cllr Nigel Kay, Mayor of Faversham says: "2015 is a 'special' year for Faversham. The Town Council is delighted to be part of the national commemorations and celebrations, working closely with Visit Kent and other colleagues to deliver an exhibition and programme of events which will have widespread appeal.

"It is wonderful that the Faversham Magna Carta will take pride of place as the centrepiece of this touring exhibition, enabling public access to view a world treasure."



*Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment, inspects the Faversham Magna Carta with Cllr Nigel Kay, Mayor of Faversham.*

## Magna Carta exhibition

Faversham unveils its 'hidden treasure'. This rare document will be on display to the public from May 23, when it will form the centrepiece of 'Magna Carta Rediscovered', a major Kent touring exhibition which opens in the Alexander Centre in Faversham, and runs until 28 June.

Faversham's Magna Carta was issued because of its leading role as part of the ancient Cinque Ports. At the foot of the document in Latin it states that it is for the "Barons of the Port of Faversham (pro baronibus port(us) de Fauresh(a)m)."

The historical importance of the Faversham Magna Carta was initially overlooked in the Town's archive, which is not surprising as Faversham has one of the largest collections of municipal charters in the UK, dating back to 1252; these will also form part of the exhibition.

The document, fast approaching its 800th birthday, has survived in very good condition, and will leave the Town for the first time when, following a month in Faversham, it goes on tour to Canterbury's Beane Museum, The Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone, Maison Dieu in Dover, and finally Rochester Cathedral.

# Faversham celebrates 800 years of Magna Carta

## The 'Magna Carta Rediscovered' exhibition

The exhibition will feature audio-visual displays which will interpret the importance of the medieval Magna Carta to today's concepts of the freedom of the individual, democracy, and society.

With Magna Carta as the centrepiece, the exhibition will also feature the rest of the Faversham Charter Collection and the Town's civic regalia.

The interactive exhibition is being curated by Laura Samuels who has been involved in delivering heritage projects for more than ten years.

Opening Dates and Times:  
'Magna Carta Rediscovered' at the Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham, is open daily between 10am-4pm (7.30pm late opening Thursdays) 23 May-28 June 2015

## Special Event Listing

**Friday, 22 May**

BBC Radio 4 'Any Questions'

**Saturday, 23 May – Sunday, 28 June**

'Magna Carta Rediscovered'

**28 May – 25 June** (every Thursday evening)

Magna Carta Guest Lecture Series

**Saturday, 6 June**

Magna Carta Gala Concert

**Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 June**

Magna Carta Weekend

[www.faversham.org/events/faversham-magna-carta](http://www.faversham.org/events/faversham-magna-carta)

## Waterloo is celebrating its 200th Anniversary

Andrew Spiers, one of the Council's Planning Officers, has been a historical re-enactor for twenty-seven years. He currently has the honour of being the Colonel of the 79th Cameron Highlanders (1815), which is based at Fort Amherst In Chatham.

Andrew and his Unit will be present at Waterloo for the 200th Anniversary battle commemorations. Approximately ten thousand fully kitted out re-enactors will recreate parts of the battle over two days in June. Andrew is very happy to be going, as the commemorations were oversubscribed by 700%.

"It will be a fantastic event, certainly the largest I have ever attended, which must make it a logistical nightmare for the Belgian organising team. Re-enactors, who are all a bit 'eccentric' (I do include myself in that description!) are a tight-knit community, so I will look forward to meeting old friends.



## The Faversham War Memorial Project



Following initial work in 2008, a group was formed in 2014 to undertake the refurbishment of the War Memorial. It was originally constructed on the present site in 1923 after a wooden replica had been built. The adjoining garden was laid out at that time and the fencing erected, together with the gate that came from a demolished house.

The aim of the project is to restore the memorial, relocate it to the centre of the garden, and improve the fencing. A public consultation was undertaken, and the majority of those responding recommended a 'square on' cross together with the names of all service personnel killed since 1914. As commemorations for The Great War are planned, it has been agreed that the project should be completed in time for the 2018 Remembrance Sunday. This will enable the refurbishment

to be undertaken in stages so that the site is left in good order for each November. Compiling names of servicemen killed has been challenging. We are grateful that Peter Steven's booklet and Rev Simon Rowland's help in compiling an accurate number for The Great War has put this on a firm footing. A total of 624 servicemen were killed or died of wounds and serious illness during the conflict.

The group has many useful and hardworking members including Dorothy Percival, the British Legion, Cllrs Tom Gates, Anita Walker and David Simmons, and is supported by Faversham Town Council.

A number of local organisations have offered support, as has Sir Hugh Robertson MP, and we are hopeful of grant applications, including local councillors' grants, sponsorship, and some public subscription. If you have any information that may be helpful, or would like to offer support, please contact Cllr Mike Cosgrove at [mike\\_cos@hotmail.com](mailto:mike_cos@hotmail.com)

## Colour Me Purple at Milton Creek

The Friends of the Wisdom Hospice are holding a brand new event, at Milton Creek Country Park – "Colour Me Purple"

This is a colour fun run where participants will be covered in a shower of vibrant coloured paint whilst completing a 5km route. It will be the first event of its kind to be hosted in Swale.

Colour Me Purple takes place on Sunday, 22 March 2015, from 10am, with an 11am start. Entry costs £15 for adults, £7.50 for children under 16. To enter visit [www.friendsofthewisdomhospice.org.uk/GetInvolved/colouremepurple](http://www.friendsofthewisdomhospice.org.uk/GetInvolved/colouremepurple)

To find out more about events at Milton Creek Country Park visit [www.miltoncreek.co.uk/events](http://www.miltoncreek.co.uk/events)



## Mayor receives VC scroll



Lieut. Donald Dean was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1919 for his actions in repelling repeated attacks on the post he and his men had captured at Lens, France, the year before.

When he returned from Buckingham Palace with the VC presented to him by King George V in 1919, Sittingbourne and Milton Regis District Council made a special presentation of a scroll signed by all the Councillors celebrating this momentous occasion.

The original belongs to Donald Dean's eldest daughter, Mrs Susan Bavin, and she kindly presented a framed copy to Cllr George Bobbin, Mayor of Swale.

## WW1 Centenary Commemorative Activities



*Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council presents special commemorative badges to Deputy District Commissioner, Kathryn Shires and Sittingbourne and Milton District Scouts.*

In April 2014 Swale Borough Council launched the WW1 Centenary Project Localism Grant Scheme.

This scheme set aside £10,000 to encourage community organisations and voluntary groups to apply for grants of up to £750 to deliver activities and projects commemorating WW1 in the Borough.

The response from local people was overwhelming, and the scheme was oversubscribed, prompting the Council to make a further £5,000 available to meet the demand.

Cllr Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council said: "I am so pleased that as many as 30 different organisations have put their case to us and been successfully awarded these funds. So far we have helped a home front group, a summer camp, a theatre production company, a village hall, a working man's club....the list goes on! They are all worthy of being helped financially."

This year, significant centenaries include in May the explosion of the Princess Irene off Sheerness which killed 352 people, and in June the first bombs falling on Sittingbourne and Milton Regis.

The Council is keen for these, and other significant anniversaries, to be remembered, with more local groups being inspired to deliver local commemorative projects highlighting the significant local events, places and people during WW1.

For information on how to apply for a grant, and details of grants already awarded, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/ww1-centenary-localism-grant-2](http://www.swale.gov.uk/ww1-centenary-localism-grant-2).

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## More beach huts for Minster

Fifteen new beach huts have been installed at Minster Leas, after the original scheme proved such a success.



*Cllr Andy Booth at the beach huts in Minster (picture: John Westthrop/Sheerness Times Guardian).*

The council agreed the additional huts following positive response to a public consultation last year.

As with the original 20 huts that were installed in 2013, the mixture of privately owned and rented huts have been built by Quinneys of Herne Bay, before being brought to site for installation.

Swale Borough Council Seafront Officer, Ian Arnell comments: "The beach huts have proved a fantastic addition to a lovely area, and with more huts, the Seaside Award, the new Sweet Hut and the RNLI Lifeguards, Minster Leas is a great place to be."

If you wish to express an interest in owning/renting a beach hut, please contact the customer service centre on **01795 417 850** or email **[csc@swale.gov.uk](mailto:csc@swale.gov.uk)**

## Memories of holidays in Sheerness...

Cllr Andy Booth, has lived in Kent all his life and recalls the fun of his holidays there. "Memories of Summer Sundays, with Dad loading up the family car with blankets, windbreakers, buckets, spades and the

biggest hamper crammed full of sandwiches, mini fruit pies and bottles of Tizer. The journey...and the excitement!...echoes of 'are we there yet?' Pulling into the car park and making a beeline for the beach. Dad sets up the beach-home in the windiest spot going, my sister is already crying because she's got sand in her eyes and mum is performing some strange dance behind a wraparound beach towel.

"Then...it's peaceful. Our skin warmed by the sun beating down, the melodic sounds of distant water on pebbles and the air is salty and fresh. We dig holes to reach Australia, bury each other in sand. Hours are spent combing for hidden treasures through rock pools with our coloured fishing nets. Crabs, shrimps, mussels, limpets and many other exciting discoveries. When we'd collected our wealth of sea treasure in our bucket, we had to show them off! Carrying them back to mum and dad, we watched as they feigned delight in our catches.

"Shouts of excitement from the children fill our hearts with a satisfied happiness that, even today, no amount of video game playing could fulfil. The beach is the perfect place for creating those special family memories."

## Swale to have ward boundary changes

The ward boundaries in Swale have been reviewed by the Local Government Boundary Commission, to try to ensure that each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors. There will still be a total of 47 councillors as we have now; however, some of the wards have been changed, and there are now 24 wards instead of 25.

Each ward is represented by between one and three ward councillors, depending on the size of the ward, as set out below. So depending on where you live, when you go to vote in the elections on 7 May 2015 you may find that the 'ward' has changed.

This is particularly likely if you live in central Sittingbourne or on Sheppey.

You can read full details of the boundary review at [www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/kent/swale-electoral-review](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/kent/swale-electoral-review)

The review has also seen some changes to parish/town councils, specifically

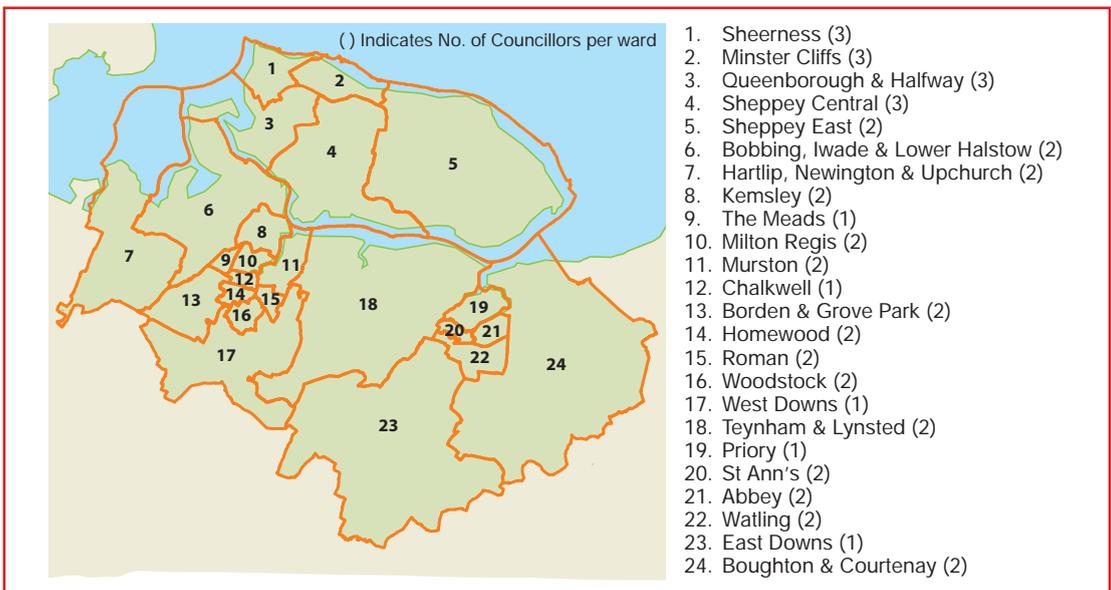
some minor changes to the Faversham Town area, and some new warding arrangements for Bobbing, Minster on Sea, and Tunstall Parish Councils.

The Council also undertook a review of the parish/town councils, and as a result voters will see an increase in the number of parish councillors on Iwade parish council; some minor changes to the parish boundaries of Bobbing and Borden Parish Councils, and a change to the boundary of Tunstall Parish Council.

You can read more details about these changes at [www.swale.gov.uk/CGR](http://www.swale.gov.uk/CGR)

There will be parliamentary and borough elections for everyone, and parish/town council elections if you also live in an area that has a parish/town council.

All electors will be sent a poll card which will give them details about the elections on 7 May, including information about where their polling station is, or details about when they can expect to receive their postal vote.



## Make sure your voice is heard



On 7 May, there will be borough, parish and Parliamentary elections across the Borough, and if you want to make sure your voice is heard, you need to be on the electoral register.

We have recently written to every household, advising who is currently registered at the address. If you are currently registered then you do not need to re-apply.

However, if you have recently moved house, or you are not already registered, then you will need to register. The easiest way to register is online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) or alternatively you can contact customer services who will be happy to help you, or arrange for a paper form to be sent to you. You will need your national insurance number to hand. We will write to advise you if we need any further information from you and/or to confirm that you have been added to the electoral register. You can find out more about registering to vote and ways to vote at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

The deadline to register to vote in the elections is 20 April, but please do not leave it to the last minute – apply now just in case we have any queries with your registration, as all applications are checked against government records.

The deadline for applying to vote by post, or cancelling an absent vote, is 5pm on 21 April, with the deadline for applying to vote by proxy being 5pm on 28 April.

You can find out more about the elections, including polling stations and who the candidates are after 10 April 2015 at [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

## The (Regis) Gates are open!

AmicusHorizon's fantastic new extra care scheme, Regis Gate, was officially opened by Paralympian and former Sheppey resident Steve Brown on 26 February 2015.



The homes for older residents in Milton Regis were completed at the end of last year when the first residents started to move in. Regis Gate has 51 high quality apartments that are specifically designed for older people. The scheme provides 24 hour care packages tailored to the needs of the residents, with carers onsite 24 hours a day.

The one and two bedroom apartments are fully accessible and equipped with the latest assistive technology.

Regis Gate has many facilities onsite including a hairdressing salon and a restaurant that's open to the public. Pop along and enjoy a two course lunch for just £6!

AmicusHorizon still has a few remaining apartments available for shared ownership sale. If you'd like more information call the Sales Team on **0800 121 60 60** or visit [www.amicushorizon.org.uk/regisgate](http://www.amicushorizon.org.uk/regisgate)

## Sittingbourne's very own museum

Nestled away on East Street, Sittingbourne Heritage Museum is home to a fascinating collection of artefacts from Sittingbourne and the surrounding areas.

The Museum has been running since 1999, and is split over two levels with several rooms displaying items donated or loaned by local residents and other museums.

As well as regularly updated displays, the Museum hosts permanent features such as "The Plough" cabinet of late medieval items rescued from the demolished public house that once stood opposite the Museum.

This year the Museum is overhauling its lower floor displays, so even if you have visited before, there will be a host of new, as yet unseen, items from the Museum's extensive collection.

As well as being open free to the public, visits from school parties are also a regular event, but there is more to the Museum than just displays.

Behind the scenes, researchers are peering into the town's past, and producing highly respected books on various topics. Their most recent publication was a new edition of our popular 'Inns and Pubs of Sittingbourne'.

New books are constantly being prepared and always worth the wait. These books and many more are available in the Museum's small shop, which forms an integral part of the Museum.

As well as welcoming visitors, people can join the Museum for an affordable annual membership fee. Members receive a newsletter and magazine with articles of local historical interest and reduced entry to talks and events

The Museum always need new researchers and volunteers so if you have an interest in local history or want more information, get in touch via [secretary@sittingbourne-museum.co.uk](mailto:secretary@sittingbourne-museum.co.uk) or **07472 268 388**.



## RNLI seeks local lifeguards from Swale community

RNLI lifeguards will resume patrols of Sheppey beaches for the third year running this summer, and the charity is looking for new recruits from across Swale to help save lives.

The RNLI, the charity that saves lives at sea, provides lifeguard patrols on Minster, Sheerness and Leysdown beaches on behalf of Swale Borough Council.

Last season, lifeguards on the Isle of Sheppey dealt with 103 incidents, gave first aid 87 times, and rescued four people across the three beaches. They also gave safety advice to beachgoers 13,451 times.

For its third season patrolling Sheppey's beaches, the RNLI is keen to employ lifeguards from the local community.

James Uren, RNLI Lifeguard Manager, said: "The lifeguard service we've provided on behalf of Swale Borough Council has been a big success and we're delighted to be heading into our third season helping people enjoy Sheppey's beautiful beaches safely.

"This year we're really keen to employ lifeguards from the local community to patrol on Sheppey.



In previous years we've needed to bring in lifeguards each day from Thanet as we haven't been able to recruit locally.

"Being a beach lifeguard really is Britain's Best Summer Job and I'm sure there must be people in Swale up for the challenge of patrolling their local beaches and keeping their community safe."

RNLI lifeguards are qualified in lifesaving and casualty care, highly trained, strong and fit. They need to be able to swim 400m in under seven and a half minutes and run 200m on sand in under 40 seconds.

However, a good lifeguard doesn't always get wet – 95 per cent of their work is preventative. The lifeguards monitor sea conditions and set up the appropriate flags, watch the people on the beach, and offer safety advice.

For more information about becoming a lifeguard in Swale and lifeguard taster sessions, contact Lifeguard Manager James Uren at [james\\_uren@rnli.org.uk](mailto:james_uren@rnli.org.uk). You can also visit [www.rnli.org/lifeguards](http://www.rnli.org/lifeguards).

## Young Artists Festival up and running

Local young artists got the chance to show off their talents in January, at The Young Artists' Festival (YAF) in Sheppey. YAF was funded by Ideas Test and Arts Council, and supported by Sheppey Matters.

The event encouraged young people to express their creativity by giving them a space to use for their artwork.

Budding singers or MCs were invited to perform on stage at a special Club Nite for 16-19 year olds at Sheerness County Youth Club, and Sheppey HLC and Sheppey Leisure Complex were turned into a pop up art gallery.



Sheppey Artist Beth Lanning  
photo by Kevin Ralph

After this the art works tours to Workshop 34 in Sittingbourne, then comes to Sheppey Gateway.

The event was organised and run by a group of young artists,

musicians, fashion designers, DJs and filmmakers on the core team.

Twenty-three-year old Beth Lanning, said: "For me it's about sharing my art with other people and helping them be creative. I ran a pottery workshop as part of the festival with a theme of 'self', where people could come in and create a clay head, which was then fired in a kiln and was theirs to keep."



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## Mill Project reaches £90k

Plans to redevelop a neglected Sittingbourne site with a new skate park are a step closer as community fundraising topped the £90,000 mark.

The Mill Project has raised the sum after less than a year of fundraising for a new multi-use skate park behind Pizza Hut and Halfords on the Mill Way Retail Park.



*Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism with Steve Wietetha, Deputy Manager of Halfords and Dave Green and Jordan Rogers of the Mill Project.*

The project is being supported by Swale Borough Council, who are contributing towards the target of £300,000 for the project, and outline planning permission for the park was granted in August.

Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism, Sport, Culture and Heritage, said: “This is a genuine grass roots project, where local people are taking it upon themselves to make a difference to their community, so I’m delighted to see them doing so well.

“There is still some way to go, but given the enthusiasm I’ve already seen, I’m confident they’ll be able to reach their target”.

Dave Green, from the Mill Project, said: “We’ve only begun serious fundraising in the last year, so to have reached this amount already is a fantastic achievement. We’re really seeing the momentum building, and as the amount raised grows it really shows other potential sources of funding that we’re committed to making this happen.

“It will be a fantastic resource for the Town - and the wider area – bringing in visitors and encouraging young people to get active.”

To find out more about the project visit [www.sittingbourneskate.co.uk](http://www.sittingbourneskate.co.uk)



## Bright future for Faversham Creek

Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration Project is a partnership made up of Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council, The Faversham Creek Consortium, and the Creek Trust.

The purpose of the project is to restore navigation to Faversham Creek Basin by funding a new swing bridge and restored sluice gates.

Feasibility works needs to be completed to ensure the basin can be dredged and at what cost. Swale Borough Council has provided funding in the region of £20,000 for these investigation and feasibility works which are currently underway. Future funding decisions will be subject to the outcome of these preliminary findings.



The main aims of the project are the creation of:

- Skills and jobs to sustain, conserve and enhance the special character of the area, with facilities for people to discover, understand and learn about its maritime heritage and therefore be committed to its future
- A strong, active community involved and interested in the Basin and its heritage
- An accessible heritage environment that attracts people and business

# Embracing localism



Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration said: “The Neighbourhood Plan is a very important part of our regeneration for that area. Swale Borough Council is considering investing a further £200,000 in the project and, as a long time Faversham resident, I would wish to see this process through to a successful conclusion.”

## Swale Safe with WH Smith



Photo shows PC Richard Nunn, Jenny Bravery of Swale Safe, Simon Weeks from WH Smith and PCSO Peter Mowat.

WH Smith is the 120th organisation to sign up for Swale Safe, the business crime reduction partnership between town retailers and other town centre businesses, Swale Borough Council and Kent Police.

Members have radio links to each other, local police and the Borough CCTV control centre, helping them share information on criminal activity.

The scheme has been running for several years, and retailers, publicans, and coffee shops have found it extremely helpful for reporting shop lifters and other crimes to the local police.

Jenny Bravery from Swale Safe said: "We are delighted WH Smith has signed up for the scheme and became the 120th outlet in the Borough to take part. The radio system works really effectively, with instant contact being made between both retailers and the local police as well as the CCTV control room. So far dozens of arrests have been made by the police."

Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health said: "I welcome the scheme and have seen it in action both in Sheerness High Street and the Medway Control Centre."

To find out more about the scheme, visit [www.swalesafe.co.uk](http://www.swalesafe.co.uk)

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## Help shape the future of your rural area

Local people are being urged to get involved in deciding how money is spent on rural issues. Kent Downs and Marshes Leader and the East Kent Leader are looking for new members to join their Local Action Groups (LAGs), and make local decisions on the funding of projects



Kent Downs and Marshes Leader has been in existence since 2007, delivering a £1.65m funding programme which ended in 2013. It is about to start a new funding Programme (subject to a successful bid to Defra) which will run up to 2020, and will be joined by the new East Kent Leader.

As a consequence the LAGs for both areas are looking to attract new members from business, social and environmental backgrounds (individuals or groups) to help deliver and shape the new programme, which will

be worth £3.28m collectively. It is due to start in mid 2015. This is a voluntary role with no liabilities on membership, and will include attendance at up to two meetings a year.

Cllr Andrew Bowles says: "Swale is keen to ensure that its rural communities have every opportunity to deliver projects that respond to very specific priorities for its local communities, and we will continue to work through the programmes to ensure we build on the success of previous programmes."

Funding for Leader comes from The Rural Development Programme for England 2014 - 2020 and is administered through Defra. Kent County Council is the accountable body for the Leader group.

If you feel you could help shape the new programme for your area by becoming a member of the Kent Downs and Marshes Leader, or want to learn more about getting involved, then please contact Huw Jarvis, Programme Manager, on **01622 696 940** or email [huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk](mailto:huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk)

## Business support at its best



Tom Kellett took advantage of the business support service provided by Swale Borough Council, and is keen to encourage other businesses to take advantage of this free service. Here, we ask him about his business, and how the support he received helped him.

### ***Briefly describe what your business does?***

TK Arts offer a wide range of circus, drama and street theatre workshops and projects for children and young people. We are available for children's parties, community centres, festivals/fêtes/fundays, schools and youth centres.



### ***What inspired you to start a business?***

Although TK Arts was started in January 2013, I'm a nationally qualified youth and community worker with more than 20 years' experience of working with children and young people in a wide range of settings.

I'm originally from Cardiff, and moved to Kent in December 2003 to work for Kent County Council as a youth arts worker based at Sittingbourne Community College. Through a mixture of term-time classes, cross-curricular projects, lunch clubs, extended day and holiday activities, I worked with, empowered and inspired many young people, helping them to develop their creative potential through innovative youth work.

In 2007 I won the Gold Award in the individual category of the KCC Quality Service Awards. In June 2011 I left the school due to funding cuts, and went on to manage Faversham Youth Centre before setting up TK Arts.

### ***What business support did you access?***

In October 2012, I saw a Swale Borough Council poster advertising free consultations for people wishing to set up a business. I contacted Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce to help me set up TK Arts and was invited to a one-to-one consultation with Alex Knight, Associate Business Adviser.

### ***How would you say this business support helped you to start or run your business?***

From information covering issues such as tax, NI and legal frameworks to discussions and ideas on marketing, publicity and websites, this free business support was invaluable in helping to establish TK Arts.

### ***What are your proudest moments so far in running a business?***

Although TK Arts is still a small and relatively new business, one of my proudest moments has simply been being my own boss. I've remained in Kent but have been able to work throughout the UK on projects that further my passion for youth arts work.

To find out more about TK Arts, visit [www.tkarts.co.uk](http://www.tkarts.co.uk)

To find out more about the business support and expert advice available to local businesses, email [edu@swale.gov.uk](mailto:edu@swale.gov.uk), call **01795 417 398** or visit [www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk](http://www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk).

## Local business provide their views

Swale is a great place to do business, and the Council is working hard to encourage growth which provides jobs for local people and boosts the local economy.

The Council offers a wide range of support to local businesses, and to help make sure this continues to be successful it carried out a survey of almost 300 local firms to better understand their concerns and the challenges they face in the future.

The Swale Business Survey was carried out between September and October last year, and the results are already helping shape Council services, so they continue to improve and make a positive impact on the local economy. It will also be a useful benchmark to measure future progress of the ambition for Swale to be a great place to invest and do business.

The large majority (76 per cent) of respondents were micro-businesses with 0-9 employees, and more than half expect their business to improve over the next 12 months. This reflects the generally upbeat tone of responses.

One of the key issues identified was broadband. Whilst more than two-thirds (69 per cent) feel their current broadband meets their needs. There remains 31 per cent that need an improved connection. The Council is working with Kent County Council to improve broadband throughout the Borough, and tackling this will be important to creating an 'Open for business' environment.

It was pleasing to see that more than a third of local businesses (39 per cent) provide time for unpaid work or volunteering, which encourages employees to positively contribute to the local community.

Thirty five respondents asked for further support from the Council for a range of business related issues, which the Council is working to resolve since they came to light.

The survey results have also revealed a number of opportunities to improve how the Council engages with businesses, which we are taking on board.

Full results will be published on [www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk](http://www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk)





# For some people there is no choice but A&E.

THINK! SAVE A&E FOR WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT



Find the right treatment in Medway and Swale. Search 'Health Help Now' in your app store.

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it's an emergency,  
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**when it's less  
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[www.medwayccg.nhs.uk](http://www.medwayccg.nhs.uk) #notjustAandE

## Think! Save A&E for when you really need it.

For some people, there really is no other choice but to go to A&E to get immediate treatment, but we can all play our part to keep these services for those that need them most. When it's urgent, but not an emergency, don't just go to A&E, call NHS 111. If NHS 111 advisers think you need an ambulance, they will immediately arrange for one to be sent to you.

For most common illnesses it's better to visit other health professionals like pharmacists, GPs and nurses, who are often best placed to help you with day-to-day health issues.

Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health said: 'Minor Injuries Units are staffed by trained nurse practitioners who are qualified to treat minor injuries and illnesses. Going to Sittingbourne, Faversham or Sheppey, you are more likely to be seen quicker than going to A & E and there are Z-ray facilities on site. Walk-in centres also have health professionals that will see you without an appointment.'

Download the free app now by searching 'Health Help Now' on your smartphone.

[www.swaleccg.nhs.uk](http://www.swaleccg.nhs.uk)

@NHSSwaleCCG

#notjustAandE

## Have your say on housing help

Swale Borough Council is asking for people's views on how it helps people manage short term housing expenses. The Council has powers to make Discretionary Housing Payments to people receiving housing benefit to help them cover a range of short term housing costs.



As well as a shortfall between rent and housing benefit, the payments can include situations such as the cost of a move when moving to a more affordable property, or short term support to help with the move back into work.

Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Finance at the Council, said: "There can be times when people need extra support to make a change that their benefits are unable to cover. Often, this can be when they are moving into affordable housing, but can be caught out by the costs of moving. In situations like this, we are able to offer support to help tide them over."

DHPs are made at the discretion of the Council and are not governed by the same rules as housing benefit. Before approving any application the Council will consider whether there is a need for a DHP, or if the amount can be met through the applicant's other income and savings. Payments are intended to be temporary to help people over particular circumstances, to enable them to adjust their costs or lifestyles to make their rent payments achievable.

The draft Discretionary Housing Payments Policy is available for comments at [www.swale.gov.uk/draft-discretionary-housing-payments](http://www.swale.gov.uk/draft-discretionary-housing-payments)

## Local councillor helps clear up Rec



When the Council were called to clear graffiti that had appeared on the changing rooms at Faversham Recreation Ground, Cllr Sue Gent, decided to roll up her sleeves and help with the clean-up.

Swale Borough Council removes graffiti reported by members of the public, and when they were called out to the Recreation Ground, Cllr Gent decided to offer her support.

Cllr Gent said: "I spent the day with the Environment Wardens to find out more about what they do, and we went to Faversham Rec to clean some graffiti. The machine is a good piece of equipment and very

effective, but it still took several hours to clean up the graffiti. It is a great shame we have to use it so often. The Environment Wardens are doing a great job, and it was good to spend some time with them."

To report graffiti to the Council, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/environment](http://www.swale.gov.uk/environment)



## Food Waste Collections

Swale Borough Council introduced a weekly food waste collection to 85 per cent of the Borough back in April 2014.

Already more than 2,000 tonnes of food waste has been collected and processed into compost, ready to go back on to the land - that's 2,000 tonnes of waste that would otherwise have been sent to landfill, at a cost of around £200,000!

Initiatives like this are helping keep the cost of council tax frozen and protecting the environment, so if you have a container please use it!

If you don't have a container, you can contact the Customer Services Centre on **01795 417 850** who will be able to arrange delivery.

## Garden Waste Collections

Did you know that the Council offers a subscription-based garden waste collection service?

For just £35 a year you will receive a 240 litre brown wheeled bin and a fortnightly collection of your garden waste.

As not every household in the Borough has a garden it would be unfair on those without to expect them to pay for those with.

Those who do subscribe to the service simply place their grass cuttings, prunings, weeds and spent plants in the brown bin and the Council does the rest.

Bins are emptied fortnightly before being taken to Church Marshes Waste Transfer Station in Sittingbourne from where it is sent off for composting. Once composted it is returned to the land as top covering for fields.



Get your garden waste collected for just £35 a year!

This approach can be copied on a smaller scale in your garden, as the preferred way of dealing with garden waste is home composting.

Compost is organic waste which has been broken down by bacteria. It is ideal to help garden plants grow healthily, saving you money on shop-bought fertilisers.

It's easy too as you can buy a composting bin or simply create a compost heap yourself. A simple heap needs a site that is at least one metre square, four posts, and some chicken wire.

Similarly, leaves can be gathered up in the autumn using black plastic bags. Simply punch some holes in the side of the sack seal the top and stack somewhere for around 12 months or more. The resulting rich mulch can be used to top off your beds and borders.





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- Independent Living Service

To find out more or access our services please call your local branch  
Open between 9am and 4pm

#### What our clients say about us:

*"They were really there when we needed them"*

*"They give the upmost respect and dignity"*

*"They've been fantastic, nothing is too little or too much for them to do"*

*"I don't know what I would have done without them"*

*"They have been tremendous from the minute I picked up the phone to call"*

#### Faversham

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#### Sittingbourne

Tel: 01795 477520  
Charity number: 1152234

#### Teynham

Tel: 01795 521052

# Environment Wardens celebrate ten years in Swale



Gel Chidley, Jeff Payne and Kim Robertson are all celebrating a milestone at Swale Borough Council this month. Exactly ten years ago, the Borough started its own Environment Warden Team, and these three stalwarts were amongst those recruited on day one.

Ten years on Gel reflects on the passage of time. She remembers the time very fondly: "I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was a really great team set up to cover everything from the cleaning of graffiti to removal of fly-tipping items. As well as the day-to-day tasks, over the years we have been involved in some quite unusual situations from rescuing injured foxes to shovelling snow.

"Cleaner streets is one of the most important areas. That's why we get a lot of praise every time we successfully prosecute offenders for littering, failing to clean up dogs' mess, or for fly-tipping. In ten years, we have brought over 100 cases to court and we have not lost one yet."

The Environment Wardens also inspect and repair the children's play areas, organise 'clean-up' days, deliver fancy dress educational campaigns when they hand out leaflets about the environment to local residents, and then of course there is the graffiti buster.

As Gel says: "The trouble is, everyone thinks they are a budding Banksy, whereas in fact they are just making a terrible mess and causing much heartache for law abiding residents. The buster has helped reduce graffiti around the borough, and our surveys certainly suggest that graffiti in Swale is no longer the problem that it once was."

## New Community Café Opens

The Sheppey Green Mill site is welcoming a new project onto the site. The Community Café has a healthy menu for visitors and prison staff whilst offering work and a high standard of training for offenders. The Café is currently extending the building to increase capacity and improve the training offered.

The official launch of the Café will be held on Friday 10 April, and the day will be packed with information about the work that is happening at the Green Mill site and other community projects, such as the Community Chef and the Green Doctors.

## Diabetic Cindy big success at Sheppey



Diabetic Cindy Joseph from Halfway in Sheerness had her moment of inspiration in December 2013.

As a sufferer of diabetes she was used to injecting herself or asking her partner to do it up to six times a day. At the time she weighed in at almost 17 stone, and at one of her regular visits to her doctor

she asked if it would help if she became more active and healthy and hopefully lose some weight. Her doctor immediately said yes and referred her to the Sheppey Leisure Complex.

Fast forward to a year later, and she has achieved the astonishing feat of losing five stone. This means no more injections and she is now on a course of tablets. Cindy says: "I started off with a personal trainer to help me through all the different types of cardio work I could do, and ended up doing three hour sessions up to five times a week. I was very lucky in getting Karen Dyson as a fitness instructor, she encouraged me so much and was really helpful. She introduced me to cross trainers, rowing machines, bikes, and even weights, all of which I still use today although I have cut down to just three times a week now."

While all this was going on, Cindy's partner Lester, who was also around 17 stone, decided he too was going to try the healthier lifestyle. By the end of a year he had lost over four stone.

Away from the gym, 47 year old Cindy has raised six children aged between 10 and 25 (and one grandchild) all of whom are extremely proud of her achievement. Not surprisingly, Cindy was also awarded Sheppey Leisure Centre Member of the Month.

Sindy's trainer, Karen Dyson said: "At Sheppey Leisure Complex, we always make sure our customers are catered for whatever their needs. We really strive to make sure members reach their goals through help and encouragement. We are delighted to provide different programmes for everyone that joins."

Find out more about your local leisure centres, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/leisure-centres](http://www.swale.gov.uk/leisure-centres)



## Swale takes the lead with car charging

Swale Borough Council is plugging green technology, by installing two electric car points at Swale House. The charging points will be available for both local



*Two Zoe's from the Council charge up one from Renault!*

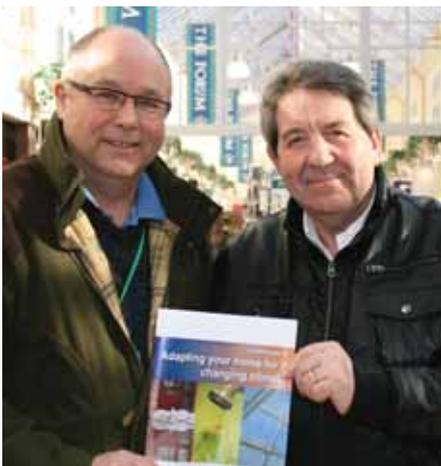
residents and Council staff, and means there are now six charge points for electric cars in Sittingbourne – with additional charging points expected to become available in Sheerness and Faversham this year.

Across the UK, there are now more than 7,500 charge points, making long distance journeys as simple as using petrol or diesel cars, but at a fraction of the cost. According to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, electric cars cost as little as two to three pence per mile to run.

Cllr David Simmons, Council Member for Environment said: “These new charging points are very good news for Swale. The Government funds 75 per cent of the cost of these points, and we hope to put further points in other parts of the Borough, including Faversham and Sheerness.

“Certainly, we as a nation are becoming much more aware of the benefits of electric cars, as their sales continue to rise. So far, more than 23,000 people have registered for the £5,000 government grant, and there will be 29 different models available in 2015.”

## Adapting your home for a changing climate



The Council has produced a guide for homeowners on how to cope with our ever changing climate. Recent years have seen many parts of the country, including Swale, having to deal with these changes.

Cllr John Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing, pictured (left) with Gordon Henderson MP, said: “These extremes of weather can have a huge impact on people’s lives, and experts predict these severe weather events will become more common over the years.

“We’ve produced this guide to provide households with information about how homes can be adapted to be more resilient to our changing climate.”

To find out more, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/adapting-your-home](http://www.swale.gov.uk/adapting-your-home)



Medway **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

## Looking back at 2014



### January

The Fetal Medicine Centre at Medway Maritime Hospital starting carrying out life-saving blood transfusions on babies – while they are still in the womb. The hospital became the first in Kent to offer this complex procedure called an intrauterine blood transfusion, which is necessary when a baby shows signs of anaemia.

### February

The Trust officially opened the new Bernard Unit – a dedicated unit for patients with dementia. The new Unit, located inside Milton Ward, has a dedicated doctor, occupational therapist and nurses to ensure patients receive tailored care. The new, eight bedded Unit, was another step to improve the care of patients with dementia.

### March

In March the Trust took part in Nutrition and Hydration Week. The week was used as an opportunity to reiterate the importance of nutrition and hydration to both staff and patients. This was the third annual Nutrition and Hydration Week to focus energy, activity and engagement on nutrition and hydration as an important part of patient safety improvement.

### April

A long-standing challenge for nurses in hospitals is how to prevent their patients suffering from pressure ulcers, particularly if they are frail or elderly. Now nurses at Medway have a powerful new high-tech tool to help them – state of the art cellular hybrid mattresses which can also be partially inflated. These mattresses are helping to reduce the incidence of pressure ulcers.

### May

The Trust officially opened a new MRI scanner costing £1.2 million – bringing a range of patient benefits. The scanner meets the needs of larger patients or those with claustrophobia, preventing the need for referrals to London which delayed MRI images and incurred costs to the Hospital.



## June

Just in time for National Falls Awareness Week, the Trust introduced 30 new ultra low hospital beds to reduce the risk of any patients being hurt by a fall. They are ideal for patients who might not be safe if a bedrail is used, especially if the patient is trying to climb over the rail. These new beds are colour-coded red at the end so staff are alerted that the patient is at high risk of falls.

## July

In July the Osteoporosis Unit celebrated its tenth anniversary and officially welcomed a brand new bone density scanner – vastly improving patient care and experience. The new £96k bone density scanner, which is like a bed, means that patients can lay flat while the scanner gets to work, circulating to capture the images it needs.

## August

The new Pre-Operative Care Unit opened to improve the experience of patients coming to hospital for planned surgery – an important step to improve patient care and experience. The new £800k Unit not only provides better facilities and a more relaxed and private environment, it is located even closer to theatres and improves patient dignity, respect and flow.

## September

Staff were pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Health, RT Hon Jeremy Hunt. The Health Minister met with the Trust's directors and took the opportunity to speak to a group of frontline staff, who work in various areas across the Hospital, to understand their personal experiences of working in the frontline, before doing a short shift on a ward himself.



## October

The Trust celebrated National Play in Hospital Week, led by the Hospital's play leaders on Dolphin Ward. The week is organised by the National Association of Hospital Play Staff and children's charity Starlight. It highlights the importance of play for children as a part of treatment.

## November

An awareness event was held to tie in with National HIV Testing Week to alert people to the benefits and importance of testing. This campaign led up to World AIDS Day on 1 December. The event, hosted by Medway's sexual health clinic staff, provided information on HIV and advice on sexual health related issues.

## December

The Trust was thrilled to have recruited a brand new dedicated Acute Cancer Team at Medway Maritime Hospital, to provide enhanced care for acute cancer patients. We are currently the only hospital in Kent to have a specialist acute oncology consultant in post, continuing our commitment to deliver the specialist care our patients need.

# Your Councillors

 Conservative  Independent Group

 Labour  UKIP

## Abbey



**Bryan Mulhern**  
01795 538 498  
bryanmulhern@btinternet.com



**Anita Walker**  
01795 531 192  
anitajwalker@yahoo.co.uk

## Borden



**Nicholas Hampshire**  
01795 477 560 (eve) or 07739 108 756  
nicholashampshire@hotmail.com

## Boughton & Courtenay



**George Bobbin**  
01227 751 388  
george.bobbin@btinternet.com



**Andrew Bowles**  
01227 752 840 or 07778 629 879  
leader@swale.gov.uk

## Chalkwell



**Roger Truelove**  
01795 425 445  
rtruelove12@gmail.com



**Ghlin Whelan**  
01795 475 629  
ghlinwhelan@gmail.com

## Davington Priory



**Mike Henderson**  
01795 534 368 or 07900 265 337  
mr.michaelhenderson@virgin.net

## East Downs



**Colin Prescott**  
01795 590 054  
colinprescott@swale.gov.uk

## Grove



**Duncan Dewar-Whalley**  
07889 808 871  
duncandewar-whalley@swale.gov.uk



**Gareth Randall**  
01795 474 802  
gareth.randall@virgin.net

## Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch



**Gerry Lewin**  
01634 366 113  
cllrlewin@swale.gov.uk



**John Wright**  
01795 842 852  
johnwright@swale.gov.uk

## Iwade & Lower Halstow



**Ben Stokes**  
01795 476 979  
benstokes@swale.gov.uk

## Kemsley



**Sue Gent**  
01795 430 768  
suegent@swale.gov.uk



**Mike Whiting**  
01795 842 631  
mikewhiting@swale.gov.uk

## Leysdown & Warden



**Patricia Sandle**  
01795 510 400  
patriciasandle@swale.gov.uk

## Milton Regis



**Adam Tolhurst**  
01795 475 888  
adamtolhurst@swale.gov.uk



**Tony Winckless**  
01795 425 987  
tonywinckless@swale.gov.uk

## Minster Cliffs



**Andy Booth**  
07912 464 213  
andybooth@swale.gov.uk



**Adrian Crowther**  
01795 874 418  
adrian.crowther@kent.gov.uk



**Kenneth Pugh**  
01795 871 388  
kenpugh@uwclub.net

## Murston



**Ed Gent**  
07955 111 981  
e.gent@sky.com

## Murston cont.



**Nick Williams**  
01795 479 835  
nick\_p\_williams@yahoo.co.uk

## Queenborough & Halfway



**Jackie Constable**  
01795 665 238  
jackieconstable57@gmail.com



**Mick Constable**  
01795 665 238



**Peter Marchington**  
01795 661 960 (eve) or 07767 607 456  
petermarchington@hotmail.co.uk

## Roman



Vacancy



**Martin McCusker**  
07403 006 997  
martinmccusker@swale.gov.uk

## Sheerness East



**Mark Ellen**  
01795 667 027  
cldr.markellen@yahoo.co.uk



**David Sargent**  
01795 664 914  
david.sargent@14cavour.freemove.co.uk

## Sheerness West



**Angela Harrison**  
01795 665 029  
angelaharrison@swale.gov.uk



**Steven Worrall**  
01795 665 589

## Sheppey Central



**Lesley Ingham**  
01795 881 123 or 07714 445 871  
lesleyingham@swale.gov.uk



**June Garrad**  
01795 227 592  
jvgarrad@aol.com



**David Jones**  
cldrjones@swale.gov.uk

## St Ann's



**Mike Cosgrove**  
01795 591 790  
cldr.cosgrove@swale.gov.uk



**John Coulter**  
01795 539 046  
johncoulter@swale.gov.uk

## St Michael's



**Derek Conway**  
01795 424 865 or 07789 072 677  
derekconway@swale.gov.uk



**Sylvia Bennett**  
01795 476 979  
sylviabennett@swale.gov.uk

## Teynham & Lynsted



**Richard Barnicott**  
01795 536 177  
rickbarnicott@swale.gov.uk



**Lloyd Bowen**  
01795 522 357  
lloydbowen@swale.gov.uk

## Watling



**David Simmons**  
01795 532 100  
davidsimmons@swale.gov.uk



**Ted Wilcox**  
01795 533 004  
tedwilcox@swale.gov.uk

## West Downs



**Monique Bonney**  
07973 443 527  
montybon1@aol.com

## Woodstock



**Alan Willicombe**  
07892 697 712  
alanwillicombe@swale.gov.uk



**Jean Willicombe**  
07892 697 759  
jeanwillicombe@swale.gov.uk

# Home Care Services

Large enough to cope. Small enough to care.



We offer a reliable and flexible service to support people to stay at home and maintain their independence – from 30 minutes to 24-hours a day.



The type of support we can offer you:

- Personal care
- Companionship and someone to talk to
- Assistance with your medication
- Preparation of your meals
- Care throughout the night-time
- Domestic and cleaning services
- Accompanied visits to appointments
- Days out and leisure visits
- Respite care for the people who look after you
- Dog walking and pet care



Become a part of the team:

We are looking for friendly, approachable and dedicated carers to join Scott Care. If you would like to join the team call **01795 508860** or e-mail [sittingbourne@scottcare.co.uk](mailto:sittingbourne@scottcare.co.uk)

Visit [www.scottcare.co.uk](http://www.scottcare.co.uk) to find out more about our services.

We are a Gold Provider for Medway Council and a Contracted Provider for Kent County Council

t. **01795 508860** [www.scottcare.co.uk](http://www.scottcare.co.uk)

On behalf of

