

Spring 2006

Twydall first

newsletter about improving Twydall Village

A little bit of pleasure in Twydall



Langton Park in Twydall was officially opened on 26 April by Cllr Stephen Kearney, Deputy Mayor of Medway.

Formerly part of the Langton Playing Fields, and open to the public since 1935, the park has been regenerated as part of an EU community-based project. The new facilities include benches, planted flower beds and dog bins, alongside the existing busy tarmac path. The improvements to the park have come as a result of community consultation and the Twydall Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Work on the park was made possible when Medway Council and Church in Society secured a grant, under the EU inter-regional POSEIDON project. A steering group of residents and officers was formed. The land to the north end of the park is designated for housing development, so improvements were agreed for the southern section. Partners were needed to do the work. Playground Installations put in the benches; Community Service Workers dug the flower beds and installed the sign; The Phoenix Explorer Scouts, members of the Twydall Village Garden Club and other residents planted bushes and flowers; Medway

Council provided dog bins and cleared rubbish from the park, and Cozenton Park nursery staff cared for the plants while the site was prepared.

A big thank you goes to all who helped to make this successful community environmental improvement one we can all share and enjoy for years to come.



Deputy Mayor Cllr deputy Stephen Kearney opens the community-improved park.

Tree thanks

In the last issue we omitted to thank our local funeral director Terry Allen for sponsoring the Twydall Christmas tree. Terry and his family are committed to supporting community events, and have sponsored the Christmas tree for the last three years. Thanks Terry!

In Business

Medway Council recently commissioned a survey through Business Link Kent to establish local business requirements and skills needs, which is in response to an action identified within the Twydall Neighbourhood Action Plan. There are 737 companies in and around the Twydall ward, of which 372 have 3 or more employees. Over 130 businesses answered a questionnaire which looked at reviewing skills and training requirements; the proportion of local employees employed; the benefits of employing local staff; recruiting staff with the right skills, and opportunities for work placements.



Results from the questionnaire highlighted:

- 1) Of 132 businesses who responded 35% have more than half of their employees living in the Twydall ward. Lack of local applicants, and lack of the right skills, were the main reasons for not employing local people
- 2) Main business activity is retail, followed by financial and manufacturing
- 3) Main skills issues facing local Twydall businesses are essential skills (41%), confidence skills (37%), practical management skills (29%), leadership skills (28%) and IT skills (27%). These are higher than the Kent averages
- 4) Main benefits of employing local staff were time keeping, attendance, no transport issues and knowledge of the business area
- 5) Two-thirds of local businesses said that they were very satisfied with employing Twydall residents
- 6) 18% of businesses currently have or are working towards the 'Investors in People' accreditation
- 7) Significant constraints to local business include consumer confidence; lack of spending; lack of government support; red tape/legislation; recruitment of staff; high rents and inflexible leasing arrangements

Business Link Kent can provide a 'Skills Relationship Manager' to undertake a detailed business training needs analysis and draw up an agreed action plan for any business.

The final report will influence the targeting of further funding resources to support the required education, training and skills development within the Twydall ward.

For further information please contact David Candlin, Economic Development Team, Medway Council on 01634 338123

Twydall Health Development

Twydall is clearly showing what many of us have known for years: that is, it's got the get up and go to make a difference.

The range of community services, number of volunteers and activities has all been on the increase, and the use of the church hall site has been crucial in this. However, one of the services that has been identified for investment, but as yet has not begun, is a new health facility provided by the Primary Care Trust.

Health Centre

The combination of a church site that is at the centre of much that is happening in the community, and a much-needed new health resource has been the focus of discussions between the Church, the Primary Care Trust and its developers. Whilst there is no timetable for the development, both the Church and the PCT are working hard to find a way to afford the new health and community resource. There is a firm commitment from the PCT to Twydall as a priority location for investment. The Church has already demonstrated commitment to Twydall and its community. Twydall residents will have a chance to shape any plans that come forward.

*Matthew Girt
Director of Regeneration
Church in society*

Cleaning up Twydall

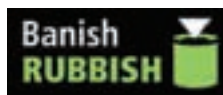
A major complaint I receive at Church in Society about Twydall is on the amount of fly-tipping. Much is dumped in alleyways and rear driveways. There is a municipal tip as close as the Gillingham Business Park!

Rubbish clearance is the responsibility of Medway Council, who are working hard to solve the problems. Here Gavin Goodwin, Environmental & Enforcement Campaigns Organiser, explains some of ways Medway Council tackle the problems.

Banish Rubbish campaign

The Banish Rubbish campaign promotes the need to recycle and give used items a new lease of life.

The campaign also aims to raise public awareness of the cost to the taxpayer and the environment as well as the dangers that arise from litter and fly tipping in Medway. Cigarette butts, bottles and snack food wrappers make up the bulk of the 5,000 tonnes of litter, costing £2.4 million.



Environmental Enforcement Team

The team deals with incidents of fly tipping, nuisance car repairs, illegal street trading, trade waste issues. They

investigate environmental crime and prosecute criminals.

Householders are now responsible for disposal of controlled waste and should use a registered carrier to remove it.

Litter Enforcement Officers

Litter Enforcement Officers can issue £50 fixed penalty fines to anyone seen littering, or placing their refuse out early. They also prosecute people who fly post.

For information and advice on waste call 01634 333333 on waste visit www.medway.gov.uk/banishrubbish on how we protect the environment visit:

www.medway.gov.uk/enforcement

To report an environmental crime, please call 01634 336699 (recorded line) or contact Kent Crime Stoppers anonymously with information about crime on 0800 555111

To check if a waste carrier is registered call the Environment Agency on 08708 506506 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/publicregister

*Gavin Goodwin
Environmental & Enforcement Campaigns Organiser*

Putting Twydall First

'Putting Twydall First' is the community development project managed by Church in Society. The aim is to improve the community at grass-roots level, by supporting existing clubs and societies, and helping to establish new ones.

Twydall is linked to the European 'Poseidon Project', which encourages the establishment of lasting cultural links.

International Cathedral Concert



Want to experience a brilliant night of musical entertainment? Do you want to hear the unique accapella sounds of northern Italy? Then come along to the International Concert at Rochester Cathedral on Friday 16 June, beginning at 7.30pm.

Three very popular local choirs, the Rainham Ladies Choir, the Gillingham Male

Voice Choir and the Medway Singers, will be the star attractions in a full mixed concert programme. The special guest choir is 'Coro Amici Della Montagna', a Mountain Male Voice Choir. The Scrivia Valley is north of Genova in Northern Italy. The choir include unique mountain songs in their repertoire. The choir sing everything accapella, in four parts,

and with some gusto! This finely tuned technique is a very special musical style and one not to be missed.

To order tickets

Tickets are £5 each. Tickets can be bought from the Cathedral Shop or the Medway Visitor Centre, 95 High Street, Rochester. To order, send a cheque payable to 'Church in Society', Holy Trinity Parish Office, Twydall Lane, Gillingham, Kent ME8 6JU. For more information, please telephone 01634 388433, or email churchinsocietytwydall@hotmail.co.uk

Singing is great fun, so why not try it?

To join: Rainham Ladies Choir, call **Joan Reynolds on 01634 672265**; Gillingham Male Voice Choir call **Jim Simmonds on 01634 360134**; Medway Singers call **Josie Ryder on 01634 300725**.

Are you from Northern Italy?

The members of the 'Coro Amici Della Montagna' speak very little English, and I am sure would welcome some Italians at the concert. If you would like to sponsor the choir in any way, please call Don McLaren on 01634 388433.

*Don McLaren
Community Development
Church in Society*

Lest we forget

On a visit to class 3SB of Primo Levi School in Borgo Fornari in the Scrivia Valley in the hills north of the seaport of Genoa, I listened to the war time memories of Italian grandparents, retold in English by teenage classmates Enrico Mariconti and Wilma Barani. This was an English lesson, a History lesson and a lesson in the real lives of real people.

Enrico explained that in Italy, WWII had two phases - before and after the Armistice on 8 September 1943. Up to that date, life was hard for the people of the Scrivia Valley, with rationing and depleted agricultural manpower. Local feelings ran high as young Italian men were drafted into the army against their wishes and German soldiers were billeted with families. They didn't have to face bombing, except on railway bridges.

After the Armistice, fascists took control. Local boys, afraid for their lives, joined the Resistance and had to hide away in the hills. Relations between local people were shattered and some were killed for no reason. Hard times also brought out great generosity and courage in the community.



Enrico Mariconti and Wilma Barani, who have written about World War Two in Northern Italy.

Local feelings

Wilma's grandmother had lived close to the front, at Monte Tono. Her story was filled with emotion, sadness and pride. Her grandmother, who spoke German, overheard soldiers planning to raid a Partisan meeting. While not a Partisan herself, she warned them of the trap. None were caught, and undoubtedly, lives were saved.

She was later arrested when the Germans found her name in a Partisan's notebook. Despite the danger of being shot, she was not afraid to tell the truth about what she had done. She had just wanted to save her friends. She impressed the Germans with her honesty but

was kept under house arrest until the end of the war.

I was impressed with the hard work these young people had done. Rainham Mark Grammar School has been invited to take part in a project with Primo Levi School to produce and publish a dual language book of oral war memories, preserving and sharing their grandparents' history. Funding has been offered by Neighbours4U, a project managed by Hope in the Community and funded through the Guide Neighbourhoods Programme run by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit.

Nigel Flisher

Nigel Flisher is a retired diplomat and a community regeneration consultant with Robert Hawkwood Limited. He has lived in Twydall since 1982.

Gently does it

A gentle exercise to music class is being held every Tuesday from 12.45 until 1.45 at the Holy Trinity Church Hall in Twydall. All age groups are welcome. So come along and join in the fun class, performing to music gentle movements that are designed to tone up your body, and exercise your heart and lungs.



Instructress Linda (front right in black)

A friendly atmosphere is guaranteed. Linda the instructor has vast experience in the fitness industry. All you need is to wear casual clothing with training shoes, and to bring along your own refreshments.

The class is just £3 a session with no joining fee. Just come along any Tuesday or ring Linda for more information on 01634 811895.

Grass Roots support for Twydall Garden Club

Over 50 people have now signed up for the Twydall Village Garden Club, launched in February.

Paul Clark MP, the guest speaker, talked on the importance of gardening, as well as the Government's commitment to the 'greening' of the Thames Gateway. Mr Clark then spent much time in talking with individual members, listening to their aspirations.

The Twydall Village Garden Club received a Community Champions grant from Kent Community Foundation. It has attracted a broad range of members, of all ages and abilities, novices and 'old hands'.

Future meetings

TVGC meet in the back room of the Nye Bevan Memorial Hall, Twydall Lane, on the second Thursday of the month, at 7.30pm.

8 June: Question time

13 July: flower arranging demonstration

10 August: plant propagation,

Sue Hartfree

14 September: Growing vegetables,

Dusty Miller

A trip to the RHS gardens at Wisley has been organised for Saturday 10 June.

Membership is only £5 a year. To join, please call membership secretary June Vause on 01634 374774.



Twydall Village Garden Club's Alf Rayfield with Paul Clark MP

Alf Rayfield

Nothing to Do?

Are you interested in meeting new friends and trying new things? Then why not join one of Twydall's Scout Groups.

The 11th Gillingham Scout Group meets at the Scout Hut, rear of 33 Broadway Gillingham (off Featherby Rd). All groups cater for boys and girls.

Beavers (6-8 years) Monday 6pm-7.15pm; Cubs (8-10½) Thursday 6.30pm-8pm; Scouts (10½-14) Tuesday 7.30pm-9.30pm; and the Phoenix Explorer group (14-18) Friday 7.30pm-9.30pm.

If you are down the other end of Twydall, why not check out the **18th Gillingham Scouts?** They are based in the Scout Hut in the children's playground off Goudhurst Road (via footpath by no.29). The Beavers (6-8 years) Monday 5pm-6pm; The Scouts (10½-14) Wednesday from 7pm-8.30pm.

For more information on 11th Gillingham Scouts call Geraldine Green on 01634 388161 or Duncan Page on 01634 311816 or 07840 593557 or email: dapage@blueyonder.co.uk

For more information on 18th Gillingham Scouts call Daniel Henrick, Cub Scout Leader on 01634 309574 or 07971 648421.

Black and white


I would like to celebrate with you the new crossing we have at the junction of Waltham Road and Sturry Way.

In September 2000 the campaign started. After an exchange of letters with Medway Council Traffic & Highways department, and with advice and support from ward Councillors Paul Harriott and Dorte Gilry, we conducted a survey of the roads in September 2002.

130 people crossed the road between 8.15am and 9.15am, while there were 400 vehicle movements; between 3pm and 4pm 153 people and 261 vehicles. A petition was organized by Neighbourhood Watch member Helen Ferris, which was accepted by Medway Council in February 2003. They then conducted their own survey. There was no money left in 2003. No money available in 2004. However there was success in 2005 with works carried out at the end of 2005.

It took from September 2000 to January 2006 for this to happen; with perseverance and patience the aim was achieved.

Dorothy Rayfield
Coordinator



Are you 13 to 18 years?
Bored cos you've got nothing to do?
Maybe a drama club's the thing for you.

Do you like fun?
Want to be creative?
Do you like singing, dancing or acting?

Want to put on shows for friends and family? We are a small theatre company who would like to run a drama club for teenagers in Twydall on Wednesdays.

Are you interested? Want more information?
Call Pauline on 01634 319791 or email holliewollie@hotmail.co.uk

Twydall First is produced by Church in Society as an independent community newsletter.
A financial contribution is made by Medway Council.