

Spring 2005

Twydall first

newsletter about improving Twydall Village

Listening to you

Twydall is set to benefit this year from the development of a Neighbourhood Action Plan, supported by Medway Council. The Council, along with local residents, community organisations and other key local services in such as Church in Society and the North Kent Gateway Partnership, aim to improve many facets of Twydall. The Action Plan themes include:

transport; housing and environment; employment and education; health (including access to sport and leisure); and linking up with similar projects in Europe.

We also want to discover how we can support existing community activities so that they can continue to flourish.

The first four 'Community Futures Workshops' will be held in **Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane, Gillingham, from 7pm to 9.15pm. Every meeting will begin with food!** We are arranging for fish and chips for the first workshop. But you all have to work hard for your supper!

We particularly want to involve those who actively run one of the forty or so community groups that operate in Twydall. Whether it is badminton, brownies, line dancing or an after school club, we need you there.

The workshops will look at different aspects of life in Twydall. So we need you to come along to all of them.

Date	Workshop to look at:
Monday 6 June	How to improve the neighbourhood.
Tuesday 14 June	Identifying Key neighbourhood improvements and projects.
Tuesday 28 June	How Twydall can benefit from Gillingham town and Chatham Waterfront schemes.
Thursday 7 July	Where the money is coming from, and the timetable for delivery.

The venue: Holy Trinity Church Hall, Twydall Lane.

The time: 7pm-9.15pm (starting with free food).

To book places on workshops please call Don McLaren on 01634 388433

What happens then?

Once all the information has been gathered, there will be another workshop held in September. This will present the proposed action plan and agree on priority projects (date, time and venue to be confirmed).

To learn more about the workshops, please call Richard Dawson at the Medway Council Neighbourhood Renewals team on 01634 338156.

Twydall Skateboard Park



A brand new skateboard park was installed on Twydall Green in April 2004. The idea for the skateboard park came about by listening to young people's views and identifying with what their needs were for the area.

Did we get it right?

Although the skateboard park is popular among skateboarders and bikers, maybe we should have involved them in the design stage. Chatting recently with some bikers, some design faults were pointed out by them. The metal sheeting has no grip, making it difficult to use when damp, impossible when wet, whereas wooden ramps give grip. The solution from the kids is to pour cola on the slopes, making them sticky. The 'grind' bar is set too low (don't ask!). They would also like to see the ramps decorated by professional graffiti artists, to stop the 'graffers' writing on the equipment. For all that, the park is popular. The addition of a 'half-pipe' would make it complete though! All these issues can be resolved, but it demonstrates the value of proper consultation throughout the process.

Church in Society: working at the coalface

Project what project?

Some of you may remember the Twydall Community Project. The last community development worker left in May 2004, so things have been a little quiet. Recently 'Church in Society' have appointed a new community development worker, Don McLaren, to undertake the role of developing some new services in Twydall. So we have asked him the questions you might ask.

Ok then. What are you going to do first?

I am compiling an up to date list of useful local and strategic contacts, the people who are prepared to work with me to get things done, not just talk about getting things done. This list includes contacts in all local schools and churches; Medway Council officers in relevant departments; those in other agencies, such as the health service and the police; and other key people in grass roots organizations. I am already talking to some of these people.

Then what?

I am also finding out what activities and clubs already exist, and where they happen. This information has to be up to date, so that new groups do not duplicate something that is already happening. New activities need to be what you want, and also need to keep going (what is referred to as sustainability).



Didn't we fill in a questionnaire?

A type of questionnaire, something called a 'Social Audit', was carried out some time ago. Not all of the

questions that needed to be asked were asked, and not enough replies were received to make the answers reliable when using them to decide how to spend large amounts of money. So some more robust data needs to be collected. It would be crazy, for example, to start a major building programme somewhere if the new building then was not suitable for what everyone wanted.

What about the Council?

Medway Council are committed to helping to develop Twydall. So I will be working closely with the Neighbourhood renewal team as well as the North Kent Gateway Partnership. The other key agency is Medway Primary Care Trust, since any redevelopment will involve better health facilities.

Are businesses in Twydall Green under threat from the proposed expansion of the Tesco superstore? Come to the workshops and find out.



We can do these things. Twydall is an important area to the Council but real change comes from us working together. Church in Society works actively at grass roots level to improve communities. Don McLaren is based at Holy Trinity Parish Office, Twydall Lane. He can be contacted on 01634 388433.