

Winter 2005

# Twydall first

newsletter about improving Twydall Village

## Local projects flourish

Don McLaren, working for Church in Society, leads community development in Twydall. His task is to support and encourage existing community groups, and help to establish new clubs that will last. A couple of new projects have had early success. To find out what the customers thought, we asked some of them.

### After-School Korfball

Church in Society has teamed up with Invicta Sharks, the top club in the country (current National premier league champions) to provide an after-school club at Twydall Junior School. Only twenty children can be accommodated as the hall is small, but 88 children signed up for the club! The training is quite intensive, trying to teach all the basic skills over 8 weeks. It is hoped that some children will progress to regular club korfball. Three of the 'coaches' are under-16, -13 and -11 players, who are learning the skill of teaching others.

A grant from Sport Medway has helped in purchasing equipment for use in the school.



We have been doing korfball for six weeks now, and we have learnt how to pass and shoot. Don, Deb James, Robert and Ellie help us to learn.

Korfball is an interesting sport; it originated from a Dutch school where they did not have enough girls for a netball team or boys for a football team. So the teacher made up a game (each side has four boys and four girls), and that is how korfball was made. Korf is the Dutch for basket.

I am really enjoying korfball and would like to continue as long as I can!  
(Child aged 10).

### Twydall Luncheon Club

Wednesday 2 November saw the launch of the Twydall Luncheon Club, held at Twydall Infants School for those residents who admit to being over the age of 50. As one of those I am very pleased that I attended.

We were greeted at the door by the Headmistress, and made very welcome, all 24 of us! Each was given a name tag so at least we were able to refer to other diners by name. Before the meal there was a short space of time to have a chat, and some of the pupils were brought along to join in with this part of the proceedings.

We had roast chicken followed by apple crumble, rounded off with a nice cup of tea or coffee. Two of the ladies present were so impressed with the service they insisted on giving a tip to the waitresses – the headmistress and her deputy! This was accepted with good grace and added to the school funds.

I am sure everyone present enjoyed themselves – I know I did.

Marion Heather



### Luncheon Club spin-offs

The Lunch Club reduces the burden of isolation – 'it's good to eat in company'; there is an opportunity for those who want it to have computer lessons after lunch in the school; others have asked if they can help in classes, with reading and craft; the cross-generational working benefits the children too. The Club is self-financing so it is sustainable, although we may need to find some money for extra tables as we aimed to serve 20 people but this may have to be increased to 30, such is the popularity of the Luncheon Club with Twydall residents.



## Coping with the perils of pregnancy

It takes a strong person to accept a life changing challenge frowned upon by some members of society and it takes a brave person to share that challenge with others.

When looking at the priority projects to be addressed in Twydall, the high level of teenage pregnancy did not seem one that could easily be tackled. Until that is, we met Danielle. Danielle is 23, and has a 5 year old. She fell pregnant at 17, disrupting and impacting on her grammar school education, but with the help of supportive Christian parents, overcame the trauma all the problems a teenage pregnancy can bring.

Now Danielle is giving something back. She is speaking to classes of 12-15 year-olds at Chatham Grammar School for Girls about the downside of getting pregnant. Church in Society is supporting her by getting her some training and helping to get a 'community champion' award, funded by the Dfes via the Kent Community Fund. This will pay her expenses; allow her to produce some memorable literature, as well as to give her training on areas currently outside her expertise. Danielle may then be able to work in other local secondary schools. This project works because she is not a teacher or professional practitioner but has had to face these issues directly in real life. Time will tell if the message gets through.

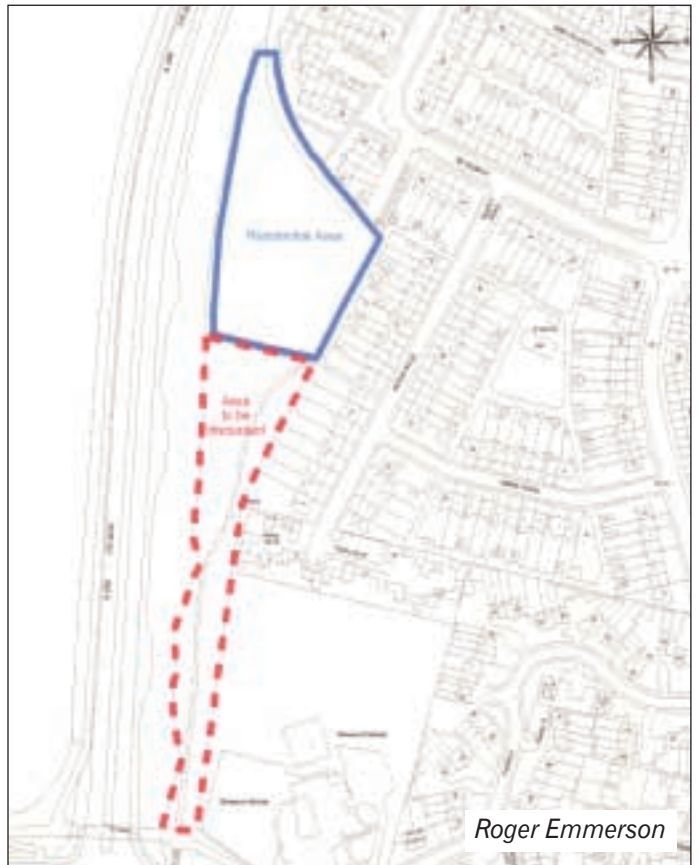


## Langton Park: finding the answers

Remember the overgrown green space featured in the last edition of 'Twydall First'? Some serious detective work has been undertaken since the last newsletter. It was discovered that Medway Council, through its adopted Local Development Plan, have identified the site for residential use.

However, consultation with local residents on a future improvements will continue, with the focus now moving south to the far side of the avenue of trees, where the Council already maintain the grass. This area is bounded by Ito Way / Broadway and Priory Road. (see map).

Early in the New Year we will talk to local residents, schools and others to hear and heed their ideas on what you want to see. Results of this survey will be published in the next "Twydall first" newsletter.



### Twydall lights

Local model Adele Nicholls switched on the Christmas tree lights. Adele attended Featherby schools and Rainham Girls, and is proud to live in Twydall.

## Medway Council: Supporting Twydall

Medway Council sees its social regeneration programme as a key priority, particularly local neighbourhood improvements. In Twydall the recent community consultation workshops (June to September 2005) identified the top priorities for neighbourhood improvement for residents and other partners. These form the Twydall Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Councillor Mrs Jane Chitty is the Medway Council Cabinet portfolio holder responsible for social regeneration. She is a strong supporter of the community workshops: "It is absolutely essential for our existing communities to benefit from Medway's regeneration programme. This is why we are taking the lead on engaging the local community in the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans". To comment or feedback please contact:

Councillor Mrs Jane Chitty, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development & Economic Growth, Medway Council, Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, ME2 4AU or e-mail: jane.chitty@medway.gov.uk

## Local councillors - working with the community

Twydall's elected councillors have been fully involved in the recent community workshops and continue to work for improvements to the area. In addition, they have a role in representing residents where they have a concern about the service that has been provided by Medway Council.

Councillor contact details:

Dorte Gilry - Tel: 233833 / email: dorte.gilry@medway.gov.uk

Glyn Griffiths - Tel: 352734 / email: glyn.griffiths@medway.gov.uk

Paul Harriott - Tel: 233833

### Councillors' surgeries:

Glyn holds a surgery on the 1st Saturday of the month, 10am to Noon at Twydall Library and Paul and Dorte hold a surgery on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10am to noon at Gillingham Labour Party HQ (rear of Twydall Labour Club, Twydall Lane)

Glyn Griffiths

# How can European Links with help us?

Twydall is linked to two European schemes that are designed to improve similar neighbourhoods. So what do these schemes do, and are they of any help to Twydall?

An EU programme called "Interreg IIIA" has provided funding support for the local 'Conrad project' (Co-Operative Neighbourhood Regeneration Against Deprivation). In the last two years, it has brought together communities in North Kent and from similar neighbourhoods within Dunkerque, Northern France. The aim is to directly exchange grass-roots experiences and deliver local projects to make neighbourhoods better places to live. In North Kent the project focuses on three neighbourhoods where local people are working together: Swanscombe near Dartford, All Saints in Chatham and Twydall.

In Twydall we are looking at projects for environmental improvement, community safety, and in addition to the possibility of producing an Oral History of Twydall. These projects are closely linked to the Twydall Neighbourhood Action Plan, drawn up over the summer by local community representatives following a programme of "Community Futures" Workshops. We are also sharing the knowledge gained from our recent local successes such as the luncheon club and the after-school sports club with those in Dunkerque.

In addition, a further programme of EU funding called "Interreg 3C" has provided financial support through the local 'Poseidon project', which involves six European partner areas in sharing experience and knowledge about

addressing the needs and the lack of opportunities in their local neighbourhoods. Poseidon aims to enable local neighbourhoods like Twydall to benefit from the best practice across Europe.

The European partner areas involved are Haringey (London), Vienna (Austria), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Stockholm (Sweden), Genoa (Italy), and North Kent. The North Kent part of the project is funded and supported by the North Kent Gateway Partnership.

The project has three themes; exploring different policies related to neighbourhoods in each country; how best to involve local people in neighbourhood activities; and sharing experience around local projects that have worked well.

We have discovered that many of the things we want to change in Twydall are also to be found in cities like Genoa and Dunkerque. These include: reducing loneliness and isolation, getting young and old to mix, improving health through sport, and supporting and maintaining small local businesses. Both projects have provided the opportunity to look at a situation from another point of view, which often helps to generate ideas for new actions to solve things more quickly.

For more information on the overall Poseidon project view the project's website on: [www.poseidon-partnership.net](http://www.poseidon-partnership.net). For local information on both Conrad and Poseidon please contact: [info@nkgp.org.uk](mailto:info@nkgp.org.uk) or telephone 01634 338137.

## A song for Europe

In Twydall our main project action involves two popular local choirs, the Rainham Ladies Choir and the Gillingham Male Voice Choir. It is hoped that these local choirs can form exchange links with choirs in the Scrivia Valley, northern Italy. We are also trying to arrange a concert in 2006 featuring choirs from the Poseidon European partnership at a prestigious Medway venue. We hope that this will encourage new members to join these choirs.

Recently, the combined voices of Gillingham Male Voice Choir and the Rainham Ladies Choir entertained nearly 600 visitors to Rochester Cathedral with a lunchtime concert during the Dickens weekend, as part of the Twydall Community Development programme. Singing is great fun, so why not try it?



If you want to join Rainham Ladies Choir please call **Joan Reynolds** on **01634 672265**; to join the Gillingham Male Voice Choir call **Jim Simmonds** on **01634 360134**.



## Helping local business

Medway Council through the Economic Development Team will over the coming months undertake and consult on a 'local skills audit' of businesses in and around Twydall, primarily to ascertain their skills needs and requirements. This project will cover local businesses around Twydall Green and Twydall Business Park. For further information please contact David Candlin on 01634 338123.

# Living in Twydall: are you sure?

The map in the last edition got the most reaction from local people. They ranged from 'Now I'm proud to live in Twydall' to 'I still think I live in Rainham Mark'.

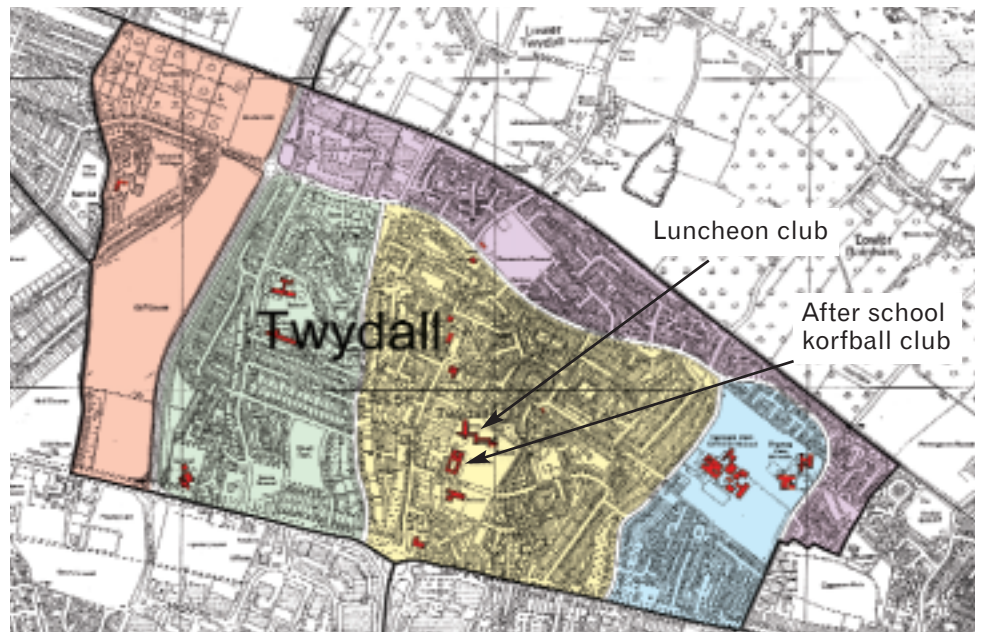
The boundaries to Twydall ward were last changed in the Medway Council shake-up in 2002. Within Twydall ward, as in many places, there are smaller local neighbourhoods normally shaped by major roads and the railway line. These local neighbourhoods often have very local problems, such as parking, vandalism, or lack of shops. These can only be solved if people living in the local neighbourhood get involved. The areas we have identified are (with the A2 to the south and the railway to the north): Woodlands (west of Ito Way); Featherby (Ito way to Eastcourt Lane); Twydall Green (Eastcourt Lane to Pump Lane); Rainham Mark (Pump Lane to eastern boundary) and Beechings (north of Beechings Way).

Within these local neighbourhoods are even smaller neighbourhoods, centred on streets or parts of streets.

So if you have a problem where you live, make sure we know about it, because others may not have the same problem

## Who to Contact:

For information about local projects, please contact the Don McLaren Church in Society's community development worker on 01634 388433 (Monday to Thursday). If you want to know more about Medway Council's neighbourhood regeneration action plan, call Richard Dawson on 01634 338156.



## Lifting your health

Martin Coombes has recently been appointed to the Medway LIFTCo team. The Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) is a programme that aims to attract money from the private sector to help provide GP surgeries, health centres and social care facilities.

One of Martin's many duties will include overseeing the development of a new community healthy living centre in Twydall. This will bring together a number of community health services under one roof, on land owned and used by a local practice, together with land owned by the Church. Martin is currently meeting with all key partners to discuss local requirements and familiarise himself with all work progressed to date.

Alongside this work the Medway Primary Care Trust (PCT) are looking at how much can be spent on all of the proposed building developments in Medway. All recommendations will be discussed at the PCT's Board meeting in January 2006.

Once this piece of work is completed, a date will be set for the 'Health Event' as discussed at the last Community Futures Workshop. This will give local people the chance to have their questions answered by the professionals involved in the development of the community healthy living centre. It is hoped that a range of 'taster' services and alternative therapies will also be available at the health event. More details will be available nearer the time.

Tracey Bishop

## Finding the money

Applications have been made for local funding to the Kent Community Foundation for the pregnancy outreach and the Twydall Gardening Club. This will help to make

these initiatives sustainable. In addition, further funding is being sought to sustain the continued work of the local Twydall Community Development Worker through the existing working partnership of Church in Society, Medway Council and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

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