

Spring 2016

# inside Swale

Keeping you informed about your council services

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*Cover photo: Orchard blossom at Brogdale.*

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## Welcome to the spring edition of Inside Swale



*Andrew Bowles,  
Leader, Swale  
Borough Council*

It's great news for Swale with the announcement of the Spirit of Sittingbourne cinema operator. We're excited to share the news that The Light Cinemas will join the regeneration project with an eight screen cinema. We have

more details and exclusive new images to share with you in our double page spread on page 16 and 17.

This is another important piece in both the £57m regeneration of Sittingbourne Town Centre and the economic development of Swale. Central to this continued development is our new Local Plan.

We've recently received the Planning Inspector's Interim Findings on our Plan. It says we must increase the annual housing target from 540 to 776 to make the Plan sound. While this means tough choices in identifying additional sites for more homes, an adopted local plan puts us in the strongest position possible to protect our vision for future development across the Borough.

Meanwhile, we are finally seeing some warmer weather arriving as we move into spring. Swale has lots to offer this spring from the quirky Faversham Hat Festival to Kent's newest parkrun in Milton Creek Country Park every Saturday morning. For these and other events see our bigger What's On section on pages 27-29, and for even more ideas see [visit-swale.co.uk](http://visit-swale.co.uk).

Enjoy your spring.

# ► Council tax frozen for sixth year

Swale has frozen its share of the council tax bill for the sixth year running. The decision was made at a meeting of the full council on 17 February, and means residents won't have to pay more for Swale Borough Council's services again this year. Under the plans a typical Band D household in the Borough will continue to pay £159.93 a year – just £3.08 a week - for Swale Borough Council services such as waste and recycling collection, street cleaning, parks and leisure facilities. The freeze means Swale's portion of the council tax remains at the same level as in 2010.

Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Cabinet Member for Finance at the Council, said: "Thanks to careful planning and tight controls on our spending, we have once again been able to propose a budget that does not ask local people to pay any more for the services we provide.

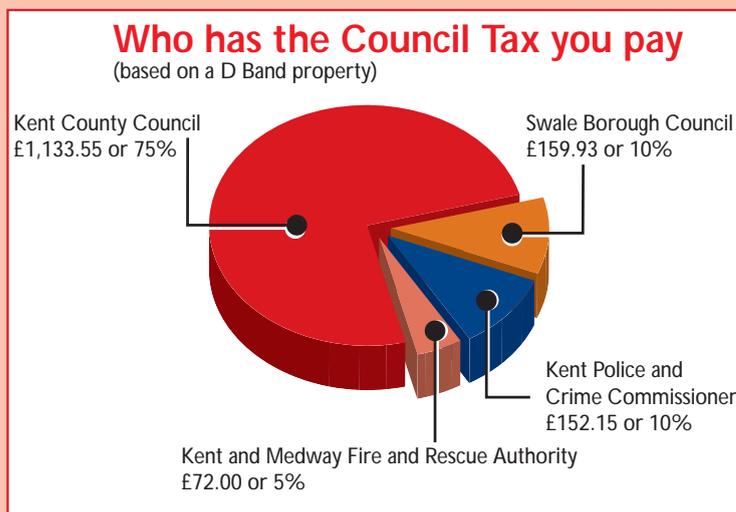
"Despite further reductions in our funding from central Government, we have been able to protect vital services, which cost local people just over £3 a week.

"We know we are only one element of the council tax bill you receive, and although others have increased, we did not want to add further pressure on people's pockets."

The proposals were discussed by the Council's cabinet on 3 February, and approved by full council on 17 February.

The budget includes savings worth £517,060 for 2016/17. These include savings from a more efficient waste contract, reduced need for emergency accommodation by providing a council-owned alternative, and savings from improved customer services processes.

As well as cost savings, the other key area in balancing the budget is generating more income. The Council will benefit from an increased take up of the garden waste collection service, increased planning fee income, and payments from neighbouring councils for the shared legal services team. This will generate £595,300 of additional income.



Charges for Swale Borough Council services are only one element of the final council tax bill residents receive. This also includes charges for Kent County Council, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service, and parish or town councils. These are set by the respective organisations and 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)

# ► How is your council tax spent?

	Gross Expenditure 2016/17 £000	Net Expenditure 2016/17 £000	Gross Expenditure 2015/16 £000	Net Expenditure 2015/16 £000
Corporate & Democratic Services	3,389	2,140	3,314	2,095
Local tax collection, elections, land charges, etc	1,907	1,128	1,706	937
Cultural, Environmental, Planning services	15,710	12,731	15,446	12,658
Highways, Roads and Transportation Services	1,444	-818	1,412	-723
Housing Services	61,319	2,047	61,481	1,981
Other Services		-3,058		-2,426
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>14,170</b>		<b>14,522</b>
Contributions to/ (from) funds		459		317
Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates		-7,599		-7,983
Council Tax Requirement		7,030		6,856



Your Services Booklet is available to view at:

[www.swale.gov.uk/your-services](http://www.swale.gov.uk/your-services)

## ► Ways to pay

Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay your council tax. It's simple, easy to set up and saves you time. You can complete a Direct Debit online form without registering or signing in on our website. The amount due will be payable in ten monthly instalments.

You can also pay by debit or credit card, PayPoint payment, cheque, or standing order.

You can call our 24 hour automated payment phone line **01795 417 766** or pay online at [www.swale.gov.uk/doitonline](http://www.swale.gov.uk/doitonline)

Please note that we cannot accept cash as payment at any council office. If you have problems paying your council tax, please get in touch with us.

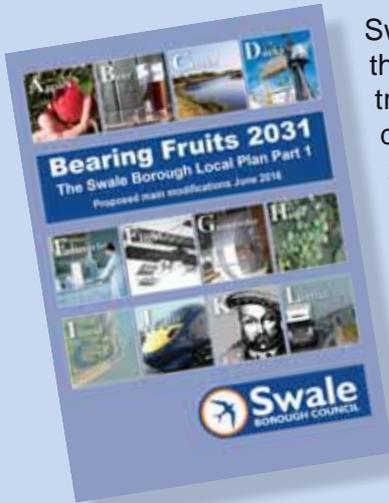
Visit [swale.gov.uk/ways-to-pay](http://swale.gov.uk/ways-to-pay) to set up a Direct Debit or to find out about other ways to pay.

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# ▶ Looking ahead - Bearing Fruits 2031

## The Swale Borough Local Plan

The first stage of a government examination on Swale Council's plans for future development across the Borough has now concluded.



Swale Council's Local Plan - *Bearing Fruits* - looks at the need for jobs, homes, schools, shops, open space, transport and other services, and how much and where development might take place to meet that need until 2031.

Last year we consulted on the final draft of the Plan, and submitted it to the Planning Inspectorate – the body responsible for approving the plans – for examination in public, to determine whether it complies with national planning policy and the regulatory process.

At that stage the inspector asked for more work to be carried out around the number of new homes we identified in the Plan. We proposed 540 new units be built every year, but the inspector considered that this was too low given the original housing need forecast of 740. The new research indicates that this is now raised to 776.

Following this work the examination in public took place over eight hearing days in November and December 2015, with strong representations from the development lobby, conservationists, and local residents.

The inspector has now issued headline interim findings on the housing supply, confirming that the Swale Local Plan will require modification to increase the housing target to 776 dwellings per annum before it can be adopted, she has also recommended that the council start work to allocate additional housing sites to meet this target.

There will undoubtedly be some difficult choices to be made in identifying further housing allocations – but Swale is not alone in facing these challenges – our neighbouring districts are being required to plan for even higher numbers. All suitable brownfield sites have already been allocated, but the new target we are required to meet inevitably means that additional green field sites will need to be considered.

There will be a six week public consultation on any modifications to the Plan during the summer, and any responses to the consultation will be sent to the Inspector.

The inspector's interim findings, plus all of the Local Plan documents and evidence, an indicative programme, and all the objectors' statements presented to the examination in public can be viewed [swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library](http://swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library)

We will continue to update our website with further information and details.

# Sheppey's beaches bathing in success



*Leysdown Beach, Isle of Sheppey*

**All of Sheppey's beaches have been given the top score for bathing water quality.**

The three beaches on the Island that are monitored – Leysdown, Minster Leas, and Sheerness – all received the 'excellent' standard by DEFRA,

making Swale one of only two Kent districts to achieve maximum scores for all its beaches.

These top scores mean Leysdown and Minster Leas can now be put forward for the prestigious Blue Flag Award for the quality of their beaches – which could bring a welcome tourism boost to the Island. Sheerness beach already flies the Blue Flag.

Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Rural Affairs, said: "I'm extremely proud that all our beaches now meet the highest levels for bathing quality.

"There has been a lot of hard work to keep the beaches clean and safe, and it's good to see it is paying off. It's not just the Council doing our part, but partner agencies, and the public making sure they clean up after themselves, and their dogs.

"This news means we are a step closer to achieving Blue Flags for Minster and Leysdown, which would be a wonderful boost for the local economy."

The ratings are available on the Environment Agency website.

To find out more about your local beaches, visit: [www.swale.gov.uk/seafront](http://www.swale.gov.uk/seafront)

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## ▶ Has your dog been chipped?



New laws mean all dogs over eight weeks old must be microchipped from 6 April.

Dogs that are microchipped are much more likely to be returned to you safely if they are lost or stolen. Currently it's a legal requirement that all dogs wear a collar and name tag, but these can easily come off or get lost. Microchips are more secure and can hold a

variety of information, including details of the legal owner.

Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Rural Affairs, said: "The Council uses a lot of resources dealing with the problems of stray dogs – many are not chipped or their chip details are out of date.

"Microchipping is an important part of responsible dog ownership. We encourage everyone to make sure their dog is chipped before 6 April 2016. It's a simple and effective tool in helping to reunite lost dogs with their owners more quickly."

After 6 April, the Council may take action against anyone found to be keeping a dog which is not microchipped, or has incorrect details on the chip.

From this date it is also compulsory for anyone who is selling or giving a dog away to ensure it's chipped, and the new owner updates the microchip details.

To find out more about your responsibilities as a dog owner and the Council's stray dog service visit [swale.gov.uk/stray-dogs](http://swale.gov.uk/stray-dogs)

## ▶ Swale CCTV – have your say

Swale Borough Council is asking communities to help make sure local CCTV cameras are fighting crime. There are currently 84 CCTV cameras used to fight crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB) and we have a legal duty to ensure they are effective.

Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, said: "We recently carried out a review of the effectiveness of our CCTV cameras and, while the vast majority are effective, many may no longer be useful in tackling crime and ASB. It could be that crime overall has fallen, or the issues they were put up to address no longer exist. Or they could still be needed as a deterrent for crime detection, or the camera might be more effective elsewhere."

We are consulting residents and businesses in 21 areas where evidence suggests cameras may not be effective, about the benefits these cameras may bring.

The consultation is open until Thursday 31 March 2016. You can fill it in online at [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/swalecctv](http://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/swalecctv)





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[www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org](http://www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org)



*“I am part of much more than just a school, I am part of a family”*

Year 7 Student

## ▶ BBC's Housing Enforcers returns to Swale



The latest series of the BBC One show *The Housing Enforcers* returned to Swale to feature the good work of local housing officers.

For the show consumer champion Matt Allwright joined the ranks of housing enforcers – the men and women on the front line in the relationship between landlords and tenants – as more and more people turn to the expanding rental market.

Viewers watched Matt follow our officers as they helped tenants and residents in need over the four week series which aired in January and February.

Cllr John Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing at the Council, said: “Having Matt working alongside our housing officers gives people a real insight into the kind of work they carry out every day.

“The range of problems they have to deal with is hard to imagine, but *Housing Enforcers* shows people the vital work done to support people struggling with housing issues.”

Matt worked shoulder to shoulder with officers in our *Staying Put* service who provide practical assistance to repair, adapt or improve their homes. He also worked with our housing environmental health and technical officers dealing with an absent owner who left a property in a filthy condition, and a landlord who failed to carry out repair work to a property they were letting out.

## ▶ Residents take over Iwade Barn

Residents in Iwade have taken over a Grade II listed barn which will now be used for the benefit of the community.

Trustees of **Iwade@TheBarn** has signed a 125 year lease with Swale Borough Council, which means they can now manage the building and grounds to support local activities.



Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism, Sport, Culture and Heritage, said: “I’m pleased we’ve been able to sign the lease with the trust, which gives them a wonderful resource in the heart of the community.”

Cllr James Hunt, Chair of Iwade Parish Council and Swale Councillor who is also a trustee, said: “Iwade residents have been given the opportunity to run this much needed facility, as well as ensuring that one of the Village’s heritage buildings is sustained for future generations to enjoy.”

The trust plan to open the barn in the near future as a general meeting place, along with a community cafe with internet facilities.

# Swale spruces up and 'Cleans for the Queen'



CLEAN FOR  
THE QUEEN

Swale got a spruce up as residents came out in force to Clean for the Queen.

Clean For The Queen is a campaign to clear up Britain in time for The Queen's 90th birthday - both at local events and on the national clean-up weekend. From beach cleans to litter picks in Faversham, Sittingbourne and the Island, residents, businesses, schools and other groups got together to blitz litter and help give Swale a makeover.

The first national anti-litter campaign was carried out in 1953, the year of The Queen's coronation.

Swale Borough Council supported Clean for the Queen as part of our usual 'Bitter about Litter' campaign clean ups, in partnership with our waste contractors Biffa, Faversham Town Council, Litter Angels, Amicus Horizon and local schools.

To find out more about what we do to tackle litter and keep Swale throughout the year visit [www.swale.gov.uk/litter](http://www.swale.gov.uk/litter)

## Let us pick up your garden waste

Now that spring has arrived why not give our garden waste collection a try? It's convenient and easy to use - all you need to do is put garden waste in your brown bin and we'll do the rest.

By signing up you can have your lawn clippings and plant and hedge prunings conveniently collected each fortnight, and their contents converted into compost.

All of the garden waste we collect is taken to Church Marshes Waste Transfer Station in Sittingbourne where it is sent off for composting. Once composted it is returned to the land as top covering for fields to help grow crops locally.

The £35\* annual subscription includes both the hire of a 240 litre brown wheeled bin and 26 garden waste collections a year.

The subscription-based service offers great value for money, working out as £1.35 a collection over the year. People with small gardens can also take part in the brown bin scheme by sharing the cost of the bin with neighbours.

To find out more visit [swale.gov.uk/brown-bin-garden-waste](http://swale.gov.uk/brown-bin-garden-waste)



# A birthday party fit for a Queen



Her Majesty the Queen is turning 90 and Swale is gearing up to celebrate. Why not mark the day and hold a party that's fit for a queen?

There are lots of opportunities for you to get involved and to celebrate in Swale. The Royal Household has asked Lord-Lieutenants to co-ordinate activity within their counties on Sunday June 12, bringing together local communities to celebrate The Queen's 90th Birthday.

The Queen became the longest reigning Monarch in British history in September. She will be 90 years old on 21 April, and on 12 June the Nation will celebrate the Queen's official birthday.

Swale residents are encouraged to celebrate on the Queen's official birthday on 12 June – it could be a street or village party or other event – the possibilities are endless.

To get you started there's lots of helpful information and advice on holding an event on Swale Borough Council's website.

It is not too late to get involved...check out our web page for up-to-the-minute information: [www.swale.gov.uk/Her-Majesty-The-Queens-90th-Birthday](http://www.swale.gov.uk/Her-Majesty-The-Queens-90th-Birthday)

## Event planning

If you are planning a celebration you will need to fill in an event notification form. The form and more information can be found on the Council's website at [www.swale.gov.uk/events](http://www.swale.gov.uk/events) or call on **01795 417 619** or email [events@swale.gov.uk](mailto:events@swale.gov.uk) for further advice.

## Road closure applications

Road closures for these types of celebrations are free of charge and will be processed by Swale Borough Council. Please use the event notification form to also tell us about your road closure and send it to [events@swale.gov.uk](mailto:events@swale.gov.uk)

## Marketing and promotion

We want to work with you to help promote events through our links to websites such as Visit Swale and Visit Kent.

Please contact [tourismsupport@swale.gov.uk](mailto:tourismsupport@swale.gov.uk) or telephone **01795 417 399** to find out how we can help.

## Funding

The Members' Localism Grant funding scheme is available to local groups to apply for funding from their local ward councillor.

Contact your local councillors to discuss and agree your project proposal; then contact Brooke Buttfeld at [brookebuttfeld@swale.gov.uk](mailto:brookebuttfeld@swale.gov.uk) or telephone **01795 417 155** for further information. Application forms can also be found at online [www.swale.gov.uk/members-localism-grants/](http://www.swale.gov.uk/members-localism-grants/)

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Medway **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

## Medway Maritime Hospital update



I wanted to make people in Swale aware of the challenges that lie ahead during 2016.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) report into our Trust was published in January.

Although the CQC found the hospital to be 'good' in terms of caring for patients, it continues to judge the hospital to be inadequate overall, and highlighted a number of areas for improvement.

The report was in line with our own assessment of the state of the hospital at the time the inspection took place in August.

We know we need to do more and there are a whole range of new steps that we are already taking.

These include modernising our emergency department; reducing the amount of time it takes for patients to be seen; enhancing care for cancer patients; and improving the experience that patients have in hospital by minimising the number of different doctors that they see during their stay. We are determined to meet the challenges set by the CQC and, with our excellent staff working together, I believe we will.

We have some departments in the hospital providing truly excellent care, while we are also at the forefront of some pioneering research - in our maternity department for example.

We presented the Trust's recovery plan to the CQC at the start of February, so the hard work has already started in earnest. We will keep you updated on how we're progressing.

Lesley Dwyer

Chief Executive – Medway NHS Foundation Trust

# Spirit of Sittin



# Sittingbourne brings Light to town centre



The Light Cinemas, one of the UK's fastest growing cinema operators, has joined the £57m Spirit of Sittingbourne regeneration project with plans for an eight screen cinema in Sittingbourne Town Centre.

The new 24,000 sq ft cinema is planned alongside six new family restaurants as the centrepiece of the new leisure quarter, which will sit between the High Street and Sittingbourne Railway Station.

The Light Cinemas provide a unique entertainment experience - a relaxed, friendly environment delivering state-of-the-art digital pictures and sound, and showing the latest in blockbusters, independent and international films, plus streaming the best live opera, ballet, theatre and pop concerts from around the globe.

Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council, said: "This deal will bring one of the most innovative cinema operators in the country to Sittingbourne.

"Light Cinemas offers something different from other chains, and the decision to make this their first investment in Kent shows their faith in our plans for Sittingbourne's regeneration.

"It gives us a cinema operator committed to working with the community to provide the high quality entertainment local people want."

Keith Pullinger, CEO of The Light Cinemas, said: "We are delighted to be part of this important town centre initiative and we look forward to working with Swale Council and U+I to deliver this eight screen cinema.

"The Light has a commitment to working with local communities to ensure that the cinema is seen as a valuable amenity in the Town."

Current plans anticipate construction of the cinema will start in October 2016, with completion set for early 2018.

Did you know that Age UK offers services to anyone over the age of 50 and that we have a wide range of services in your area?

Age UK Faversham and Sittingbourne provides a range of services offering good quality, consistent care, impartial or confidential support to help people remain safe and independent in their own homes.

- Friendship and fun
- Befriending
- Information, Advice and Advocacy. Our I + A service is quality assured. Age UK Faversham and Sittingbourne successfully completed Age UK's Information and Advice Quality Programme in November 2015
- Freshly cooked lunches delivered to you
- Day care (including transport)
- Specialist dementia support and COGs club
- Carer support for those looking after people living with dementia
- Care Navigator – to help you by talking through any problems/issues you might have and to support you to find solutions and access services if needed
- Personal care in your home – we are CQC registered
- Bathing at home or in our centres
- Chiropody and foot care
- Independent Living Service – help with housework, shopping, trips out etc

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

### What our clients say about us:

*"It feels that you have filled a massive void in my life. I have made lots of friends and feel happy and comfortable now with what life has to offer. I don't know what I would have done without their support".*

*"I am so glad that you come to pick me up otherwise I would be sat here on my own all day".*

*"I wouldn't have coped without this service. I don't know what I would have done".*

*"I really like coming to the Day Centre. The staff are always kind and helpful, and make time for us when we need someone to talk to. I am very glad I started attending".*

**Faversham**

Tel: 01795 532766

**Sittingbourne**

Tel: 01795 477520

Charity number: 1152234

**Teynham**

Tel: 01795 521052

# Celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday

## At Holywell Primary School, Upchurch

Open Air Concerts Friday & Saturday 10th & 11th June 2016



**Friday Night Jazz with the Mike Austin Quartet**

Tickets £15 & Children (under 15) £5

**Saturday Gala Night of the Proms by Kent Concert Orchestra**

Tickets £20 & Children (under 15) £5

Details & Tickets from [www.holywell.kent.sch.uk](http://www.holywell.kent.sch.uk)

## ► Keeping Swale clean

More than 1,300 fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for littering and dog fouling have been issued in the first year of a pilot project.

Swale Borough Council launched the pilot in March 2015 to tackle the problem. Wardens can issue FPNs of up to £80. If they are not paid the Council can take offenders to court where they could face a fine of up to £2,500.

To help keep Swale clean the Council has installed extra bins, given away pocket ashtrays, and organised community clean ups. We also run educational campaigns in schools and with residents. The latest was a 'Bag it, Bin it, Win it' campaign to reward dog owners for acting responsibly.

However, some people still refuse to put their litter in the bin or pick up after their dogs, and it costs hundreds of thousands of pounds each year to clean up the mess.

Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environmental and Rural Affairs said: "Most people take pride in our area, but a minority continue to drop litter and leave dog mess for others to step in. We are working harder than ever to make it easy for people to help keep Swale clean. That's why we have put in more bins, and given away pocket ashtrays and organised community clean ups to encourage people to take pride in their local area.

"Those few who continue to make a mess of our streets are risking paying a fine."

To find out more about what the Council does to tackle dog fouling, including how to report issues, visit [www.swale.gov.uk/dog-fouling](http://www.swale.gov.uk/dog-fouling)



## ► Are you paying for a waste collection?

If you pay someone to take your waste away...check that you know who they are, and that they are licensed to do so. Find out where they are taking it – because if it ends up being dumped, you may end up with a fine unless you can tell us who took the waste.

To find out more about what the council is doing to tackle litter and keep Swale clean visit [www.swale.gov.uk/litter](http://www.swale.gov.uk/litter)



# Recycling and Refuse Collection dates April 2016 - September 2016

If you are unsure of your collection week go to [www.swale.gov.uk/my-collection-day](http://www.swale.gov.uk/my-collection-day) and click the link 'Next Bin Collection' or call Customer Services on 01795 417 850.

 Blue Wheelie Bin Collection week     Green Wheelie Bin Collection week

**Don't forget, food waste recycling collections are collected weekly with both bins.**

## Week 1 collections

April 2016						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2016						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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## Week 2 collections

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August 2016						
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September 2016						
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# ▶ Local school strikes gold recycling food



Keen recyclers from a Swale primary school have won the Golden Ticket for food waste recycling.

Children from across the Borough turned their table scraps and vegetable peelings into £1,000 worth

*Cllr David Simmons presents the prize to winners, Eastchurch Church of England Primary School.*

of prizes for their school in a special food waste recycling competition.

They have been taking part in Swale Borough Council's 'Do your bit, recycle it' competition. Schools in areas where food recycling rates are lower than the rest of the Borough were chosen by the Council to take part. The school with the highest food recycling rate at the end of the eight week competition won.

The winning school was Eastchurch Church of England Primary School – All Saints site. The children were presented with the winning voucher by Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Rural Affairs, at Swale Borough Council.

Every time the children put their food waste out for its weekly collection and marked their food caddy with a special sticker they earned a Golden Ticket. Residents local to the schools were invited to take part as well.

Also participating were South Avenue Primary School, Murston Junior School, Eastchurch Church of England Primary School - St Clement site - which all won prizes worth £250 for taking part.

Weekly food waste collections were introduced to 85 per cent of Swale in 2014. Since then almost 5,000 tonnes of food waste has been collected and processed into compost, which is used by local farmers to grow more crops.

Food waste recycling has also saved council tax payers almost half a million pounds, as it costs about twice as much to send waste to landfill than to recycle it.

Cllr David Simmons, said: "Every school that took part helped to make a difference. I'd particularly like to congratulate the children for their golden efforts."

# Wild about gardens

Are you a wildlife friendly gardener or keen to become one?

You are invited to take part in Kent Wildlife Trust's wildlife friendly gardening awards.

The 2016 Wild about Gardens awards are open to anyone growing a wildlife friendly garden in Kent - however large or small.



The awards celebrate the success of those who garden in a wildlife-friendly way, and encourages and supports those just starting. Kent Wildlife Trust aims to make Kent the wildlife-friendly garden of England.

Any garden can be wildlife-friendly and provide the important stepping stones wildlife needs to be able to move around our increasingly busy county.

Creating spaces - from a simple window box, to an imaginatively planted vegetable plot - that attract wildlife is really easy and inexpensive.

Kent Wildlife Trust volunteers are happy to visit a work in progress, and can even offer help and advice.

The launch is 20 April and the closing date for entries is 30 June (31 May for schools). Winners will be announced in the autumn, and will be invited to Kent Wildlife Trust's big celebration event for the whole County in November.

For more information and to enter visit [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk), pick up an entry form from any Kent Wildlife Trust visitor centre, or telephone **01622 662 012**.

## Top tips

### Wildlife likes

- plenty of spaces to hide
- natural ponds
- patches of long grass and flowers
- multi-species of hedges
- mature trees – particularly nice juicy deciduous ones
- a variety of habitats – lawns, borders, flower or vegetable beds
- log piles, compost heaps
- flowers to provide pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects
- a mix of food – like sunflower hearts, fat balls, seeds - and water for birds all year round

### Wildlife doesn't like

- fish or ducks in wildlife ponds
- chemicals or slug pellets
- too much tidiness
- lots of hard surfaces, such as concrete, paving, decking

## ▶ Hidden History Community Dig



*How Rose Hill looked in 1938.*

Archaeologists, school children, and local people brought a chapter of Sittingbourne's history to life with a special Hidden History Community Dig.

The project to research the history of the woodlands at Rose Hill in Bobbing was led by the Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne (HRGS).

They were aware there was a demolished house there, and decided to take the opportunity to involve the local community in the project to understand more about the significance of the house.

The land was once the site of Rose Hill House, which stood from the late 18th century until it was demolished in the 1970s.

Over the course of the nine day dig more than 800 people visited the site – not only taking part in the excavation, but also providing the dig team with special living memory insight into the house and its occupants.



*Children from Grove Park Primary School taking part in the dig during the Summer of 2015.*

The project formed part of the Woodland Wildlife Hidden History being run by the Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership, with the support of Swale Borough Council and Heritage Lottery Fund.

Involvement in the lottery-funded Hidden History Project grew to include children from Grove Park Primary School, the Swale Borough Council's Open Spaces Team, Kent County Council archaeologists and heritage team, and local historian John Clancy. HRGS are planning a further visit to the site in 2016.

If you would like to be involved or to find out more details, contact [Richard@hrgs.co.uk](mailto:Richard@hrgs.co.uk)

# ▶ Great explosion remembered



The worst disaster in the history of the UK explosives industry will be remembered as part of Swale's centenary commemorations.

What started as a small fire in a pile of empty TNT sacks at the Explosives Loading Company works at Uplees, near Faversham, culminated in three successive explosions.

Despite a valiant attempt to put out the fire, when the factory manager eventually called for the evacuation of the site it was too late. The first major explosion occurred at 1.20pm, followed by two further explosions at 1.40pm and 2pm. A total of 108 men and boys were killed, including many members of the works' fire brigades.

Faversham Town Council will be marking the Centenary of the Great Explosion with a service at the site of the mass grave at Love Lane Cemetery, Faversham.

The service will be led by the Rev John Huggins on Saturday 2 April at 1pm.

A free exhibition covering the Great Explosion will be running at the Fleur de Lis Museum in Faversham, from Friday 1 April to Sunday 1 May.

This exhibition explores the circumstances which led up to this disaster, and relates it to other accidents which took place during the four hundred years of the munitions industry in the Faversham area. It also examines similar incidents which took place in Britain and Canada during WW1 which resulted in loss of life and severe damage to property.

Relatives of the deceased and of people who took part in the aftermath are invited to contact the Town Clerk on:

**01795 503 288** or email [louise.bareham@favershamtc.co.uk](mailto:louise.bareham@favershamtc.co.uk)

# Swale communities remember the First World War

A poetry and music celebration and a WWI heritage hub were among the community projects funded by Swale Borough Council to mark the centenary of the First World War. Since 2014, the Council has supported more than 50 projects so far commemorating the centenary, with £30,000 made available in small grants of up to £750.

Successful groups include the Aspirations Over 50s Group and The Sing Sure Community Group, were awarded funding toward an event at Sheerness Working Man's Club. The community was invited to join in and celebrate the music of WW1 and recite poetry to commemorate the war.



*Heritage Hub opening event.*

Significant WW1 commemorative events organised by Swale communities and supported by grants include the Great Explosion April 1916 in Faversham, and the explosion of the HMS Princess Irene in May 1915 off Sheerness. The ship completely disintegrated in this explosion, killing the entire crew and also many local dockyard workers who were aboard.

If you are planning an event or activity to mark the centenary you can complete a World War I Centenary Project Form and we will help you promote it and let you know what other help we can provide.

For further information about these grants, which it is proposed will be available until 2018, and how to apply visit [www.swale.gov.uk/ww1-centenary-localism-grant-2](http://www.swale.gov.uk/ww1-centenary-localism-grant-2) or email [firstworldwar@swale.gov.uk](mailto:firstworldwar@swale.gov.uk) or telephone **01795 417 399**.

The Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne was granted a contribution towards the cost of the Heritage Hub in the Forum, which features constantly evolving WW1 Centenary displays through until 2018.

We are committed to supporting local people who want to mark the centenary, and recognise those who played a part - from the outbreak of the war in 1914 and its end in November 1918.

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## Colour me purple and support Wisdom Hospice



The Friends of the Wisdom Hospice has a great solution for anyone wanting to get fit in 2016. Their Colour Me Purple 5km fun run on 17 April is set to brighten up Sittingbourne.

Join in and get covered in cascade of multi-coloured paint at sponsored colour stations. The family-friendly event is open to everyone regardless of age or ability, and participants are welcome to run, walk, dance or even hop their way around the route in Milton Creek Country Park.

The Friends' Chief Executive Martyn Reeves said; "We were overwhelmed with the support the Swale community gave us at last year's event. Their generosity totally exceeded our expectations, raising over £22,000 to support the wonderful work of the hospice.

"We want to make this year's event bigger, brighter and better as we are hoping to attract 1,000 runners. Colour Me Purple has become the biggest event in our fundraising history. I must also thank the team at Swale Borough Council and The Friends of Milton Creek Country Park for their encouragement and support. The park at Milton Creek is a hidden gem, and proved the perfect venue for us last year. Please come along and enjoy this year's event."

Early bird entry is only £10 for adults and £5 for children. So, why not join The Friends to get messy while raising money for a very worthy cause?

Visit [fowh.org.uk](http://fowh.org.uk) or call **01634 831 163** for more information or to reserve your place.



## The Wisdom Hospice

Wisdom Hospice has been providing care for Swale and Medway residents for over three decades. It was the vision of local resident, Molly Wisdom, who saw the need for a local hospice.

It has 15 beds and runs a day hospice at its Rochester site.

Covering Swale and Medway, which has over 380,000 residents, the hospice's Community Palliative Care Team also cares for over 400 patients in their own homes - more than 130 patients in Swale alone.

Molly began the fundraising by organising two coffee mornings, and successfully raised £2,000 - wildly exceeding her dream. From this start the charity The Friends of the Wisdom Hospice was born, and it went on to raise the £700,000 needed to build a hospice, which was named after Molly.

The hospice was officially opened by HM The Queen in October 1984. Currently, The Friends need to raise £2,000 each day to support the hospice with an annual grant of £600,000.



The launch of Sittingbourne parkrun was a huge success, with runners from across Swale and beyond turning out for the first challenge.

The free timed 5km run takes place on Saturdays in Milton Creek Country Park at 9am. It's open to runners, joggers and walkers of all abilities. After the run Holy Trinity Parish Hall will be open for refreshments.

Sittingbourne parkrun is one of 14 in Kent, and 800 nationally and internationally.

Sittingbourne parkrun Event Director Jackie Wells said: "I'm looking forward to participating in parkrun and for the Church to extend hospitality in the community of the parish.

"Milton Creek is beautiful, with plenty of wildlife and a play park for children, so you can bring all the family. Come along and enjoy."

To take part you need to register and print a free barcode - this unique identifier can be used at any parkrun. The event is timed and results are published online or sent by text.

Children over four are welcome to take part. Under 11s must be accompanied by an adult. Runners with dogs must keep them on short lead and start at the back. No buggies as the paths are narrow.

Sittingbourne parkrun would like to thank Swale Borough Council and Holy Trinity Church for their support.

For more information or to volunteer visit [facebook.com/sittingbourneparkrun](https://www.facebook.com/sittingbourneparkrun) or [www.parkrun.org.uk/Sittingbourne](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/Sittingbourne) or email [Sittingbourneoffice@parkrun.com](mailto:Sittingbourneoffice@parkrun.com)

## Sittingbourne's Green Heart

Milton Creek Country Park is Swale Borough Council's newest green space.

The 52 hectare park is an oasis for wildlife, and now has a children's adventure play park, picnic areas, an open-air performance area, ponds, a fishing lake, community events space, and extensive walkways leading through green open areas.

There are also wooded areas that have been extensively tree planted thanks to the Friends of Milton Creek. The Country Park crosses the Kemsley Light Railway at the Halt, and includes much of the historic Saxon Shore Way.

## Regular events in Milton Creek Country Park

**Tuesday Tidy up – volunteering with the Park Ranger**, 10am to 12.30pm every Tuesday. The Park Ranger, Kris Staples, is meeting with volunteers to carry out various tasks around the Park. So if you can spare an hour or two for some gentle exercise in the fresh air do come and join us. Tools, hot drinks, and biscuits are all provided.

**Third Sunday of every month – Green Team, volunteering with the Park Ranger**, 10am to 2pm

**Every Saturday – parkrun**, weekly running event (details left).

Further details on the park including directions and future events at [www.miltoncreek.co.uk](http://www.miltoncreek.co.uk)

# ▶ What's On

**Friday 25 March 2016 –  
Sunday 27 March**

## **Easter at Brogdale**



Easter Celebrations at Brogdale include range of family fun and children's craft activities from Easter egg hunt,

Easter bunny, lambs, chicks, rabbits, piglets and chickens, and daily falconry displays. [www.brogdalecollections](http://www.brogdalecollections)

## **Saturday 26 March Faversham Hat Festival**



The popular Hat Festival and Hat Parade are back for 2016. Make headwear, dress up a hat, or just

wear a well-loved favourite. [facebook.com/FavershamHatFestival](https://www.facebook.com/FavershamHatFestival) or contact the Hat Shop on **01795 227 071**.

## **Tuesday 5 April – Thursday 12 May Criterion Music Hall - All New Spring 2016 Show Season**



Chairman Mr Paul Harris plus his ensemble of talented professional entertainers with their brand new show for 2016.

Shows start at 2.30pm and include a cream tea during the interval.

[www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk](http://www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk)  
or the Box Office **01795 662 981**.

## **Thursday 7 April**

### **The Comedy Club**



The Old Brewery Store Comedy Club in Faversham provides a platform

for up-and-coming Comedians from Kent and the South-East. Each month, resident MC, Sam Wyatt, takes to the stage with six comedians

There is also an 'Introducing...' spot for newer comedians. Tickets are £5 from the Brewery Shop Court Street, Faversham, or from the Box Office on **01795 542 285**

## **Sunday 10 April 2016**

### **Pedal for a Purpose**



A new cycling fundraising event to raise funds for Demelza Hospice Care for Children. The ride starts and finishes at the Sittingbourne Greyhound Track, and is suited to all abilities. Choose between three different routes Start times from 6.30am from Sittingbourne Greyhounds, Eurolink, Sittingbourne.

[www.demelza.org.uk](http://www.demelza.org.uk)

## Sunday 17 April 2016

### Hanami Festival



A one day cultural celebration of traditional Japanese entertainment to enjoy while

picnicking under ornamental cherry blossom.

[www.brogdalecollections.co.uk](http://www.brogdalecollections.co.uk) or call **01795 536 250**. All of these events and more can be found on our website [www.visit-swale.gov.uk](http://www.visit-swale.gov.uk)

## Saturday 23 April

### Celebrate St George's Day



Sittingbourne High Street will once again host an extravaganza to celebrate St George's Day and his connection with other countries on Saturday 23 April 2016 from 11am to 4pm.

Organised by Sittingbourne Retail

Association, this family day includes classic cars and motorbikes, local radio road show, street performances, Morris Dancers, fun fair rides, tug-of-war, and shop window competition. There will be lots of food and drink, a real ale tent, and stalls selling crafts, cakes and much more. The Town Crier, St George and the Dragon will visit, and local Scouts and Brownies will reaffirm their vow after a High Street parade.

## Saturday 14 May

### Boughton Village Hall Open Day and Antique Valuations 11am – 4pm

Displays, dancing, model car racing, arts & crafts, refreshments, raffle, free parking, and much more. Free antiques

valuations from 11am to 2pm.

The hall is available to hire for other special events. Contact **07535 056 767** or email [bvhlettings@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bvhlettings@yahoo.co.uk)

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## Ongoing events

### CTC Swale



Swale Cycling Club is a member of the Cycle Touring Club, the largest organisation in the country for cyclists. The club provides a range of activities for cyclists of all abilities.

They hold monthly beginners rides of 5-10 miles at a slow pace, on quieter country roads with no hills. A Ride Leader will welcome you on every ride so you don't have to worry about navigating and can just enjoy the ride.

The next beginners rides are:

**Sunday 27 March** – 10am from Homebase, Mill Way, Sittingbourne

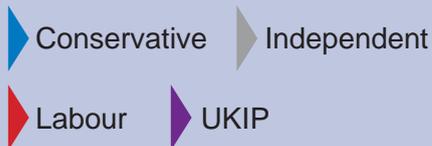
**Sunday 24 April** – 10am from King Georges Park, Park Avenue

**Sunday 22 May** – 10am from Homebase, Mill Way, Sittingbourne

**Sunday 26 June** – 10am from King Georges Park, Park Avenue

Contact [ctcswale@gmail.com](mailto:ctcswale@gmail.com) or visit [www.ctcswale.org.uk](http://www.ctcswale.org.uk), or find them on twitter or Facebook.

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