

summer 2014

inside Swale

Keeping you informed about your council services

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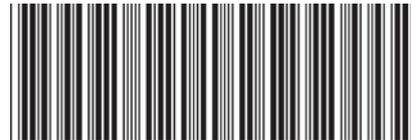
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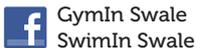


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Sheppey Leisure Complex

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Tel: **01795 668 061**



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SwimIn Swale



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@SwimInSwale

*T&Cs apply. The 10-Day Activity Pass includes gym sessions or workout classes for 10 consecutive days from day 1 of activation at Reception. One Pass per person, adults only. Pass valid until 31st August 2014 and excludes swimming and summer holiday family activities. Workout Classes strictly subject to availability. ** Price relates to off-peak gym membership at Sheppey Leisure Complex. Membership from £19.95 at Swallows Leisure Centre. Price quoted applies to a 12 month direct debit gym contract. Other membership options are available. Speak to a Customer Advisor today or find out more online. *Free unlimited swimming applies to one child on a direct debit 12-month swimming lesson membership at Swallows or Sheppey Leisure Centres. T&Cs apply and other memberships are available.

the asa





Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader

Welcome

to the summer edition of Inside Swale

Fantastic news for Swale over recent months. We have been successful in being included in the Government's final Assisted Area Status map for 2014-2020. This will bring huge benefits to Swale. The success of this bid is down to the officers, councillors, businesses, and other partners who supported the case. This achievement would not have been possible had everyone not worked together.

Our Regeneration Conference – 'Putting Swale on the Map' was attended by over 200 delegates. The day was rounded up by keynote speakers, Lord Digby Jones, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP and Richard Upton, and has generated really positive feedback from local businesses and investors alike. You can find a great deal of

information on our website on how we can help businesses develop and you will see some of the conference highlights on pages 16 & 17.

As our frontline services remain as important as ever, we continue to make them as accessible as possible and this can be seen with some significant developments with our website. This will continue over the coming year as you begin to see an improved website which we hope you will help us to shape. See page 4 for details on how to become involved and page 6 on how you can already access some services online.

Putting business aside for the moment, do not forget to check out www.visit-swale.co.uk for events across the Borough to enjoy over the summer. There is so much to enjoy, I'm confident there is something for everyone. I hope to see many of you there.

Contact us

Swale Borough Council

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Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT
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facebook: **Swale Borough Council**
twitter: **@SwaleCouncil**



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Do you have difficulty in understanding this magazine? Do you need it in Braille, large print or on audio CD? For translations or interpretations contact us and we will do our best to help.

Tel: 01795 417 850
Email: csc@swale.gov.uk

Inside Swale is written and designed by Swale Borough Council's Communications and Marketing Team and distributed to 58,000+ homes.

For advertising or editorial
email: insideswale@swale.gov.uk
phone: 01795 417 149

Cover photo: Artist impression of the new cinema for Sittingbourne.

Voting in the elections?



Changes are on the way.

Don't lose your right to vote.

The way that people register to vote is changing with a move to Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

IER means that each person will be responsible for making their own application to register. The changes will be made over the next few months. Most people who are already registered to vote will be registered automatically under the new system. We will write to tell you if you need to anything.

To find out more go to www.gov.uk/yourvotematters



Death of Cllr John Morris

Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of the Council says; "I was very sad to hear of the sad loss of Cllr John Morris on Friday, 30

May. John was a close friend and a highly respected colleague. During his two spells on the Council, John had fulfilled many roles, notably as a Member of the Cabinet and Mayor.

"As Mayor, John was an outstanding First Citizen, so much so, that he was asked to stand for a second year. In this role John brought to bear those major facets of his character, his good humour, his fairness and his commitment to the dignity of the role.

"Throughout his life, John had the strong and sure support of his beloved late wife Ann. Our thoughts at this time must be with his surviving family. John was very much a family man, our only consolation is our belief that he and Ann are now reunited."



Our website is changing...

What do you want from your council's website? Over the next three months www.swale.gov.uk will be given a new look and we want you to be involved.

We are creating a group of local residents to test our online services to ensure that they work for our residents. The feedback you give can help shape the look and design of how digital services are presented in future.

If you would like to be involved, we will be holding our first focus group in June, and then every six months. Contact lindsayoldfield@swale.gov.uk for further details.

Mayor in the making



Above: Cllr Sue Gent.

For the last year, Mayor of Swale Cllr Sue Gent has been welcomed at a range of events celebrating and commemorating our community achievements and traditions. Speaking about her experiences as Swale's official First Citizen, Cllr Gent said: "I have had a thoroughly enjoyable year and had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful people. It has been a great opportunity to be able to raise money for my chosen charities,

Help for Heroes and the local branch of The Royal British Legion."



Right: Cllr George Bobbin presents a bouquet to outgoing Mayor, Cllr Sue Gent.

Cllr Gent has passed the mayoral baton on to Cllr George Bobbin. Local councillor for Boughton and Courtenay, Cllr Bobbin has lived in the area

since 1978 and was elected to Swale Borough Council in 2002. He has also served as Deputy Mayor for the past year.

Following the Mayor Making ceremony in May, Cllr Bobbin said: "I am honoured to be elected as Mayor for this civic year and look forward to carrying out my duties, attending events and raising funds for my chosen charities, the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research."



Cllr George Bobbin and Mrs Brenda Bobbin, Mayor and Mayoress of Swale 2014-2015.



Cllr Anita Walker will step into his shoes as Deputy Mayor for this civic year. Cllr Walker was born in Faversham (in what is now Abbey Ward) and has lived and worked in Abbey Ward all her life. She has been a member of Faversham Town Council since 2000; and a member of Swale Borough Council since 2004.

Cllr Anita Walker, Deputy Mayoress of Swale 2014-2015 presented with a bouquet by Abdool Kara, Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council.

A self service

The Revenues and Benefits Service now has a self-serve section available, allowing you to view your council account information online.

Register online at www.swale.gov.uk to view information on council tax payments, business rates, benefit payments, and information for landlords.

Council Tax:

- The amounts due to be paid and the instalment dates
- Any balances outstanding and related timeframe
- How your bill is made up, including any discounts/exemptions
- Correspondence sent to you
- Option to sign up for Direct Debit
- The band your property falls in

Benefits:

- Your award details for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support if applicable
- Payments issued to you or on behalf of you
- Invoices issued to you and the amounts outstanding
- Correspondence sent to you
- Your next payment amount and when it is due to be paid
- Your household summary including members of your household and income/capital details held
- Your rent and Council Tax liability summary

Business Rates:

- The amounts due to be paid and the instalment dates
- Any balances outstanding and the periods they represent
- How your bill is made up, including reliefs
- Your rateable value
- Correspondence sent to you
- Option to sign up for Direct Debit
- Option to go to the VOA website

Landlords:

- Payments to you and related tenants, the period the payments cover and the amounts for individual tenants
- The option to export payment details to Excel or CSV
- Invoices issued to you and balances outstanding
- Correspondence sent to you over a selected period, as well as looking at an individual tenant's claim to view correspondence relating to them
- Option to view individual tenant's claims regarding award details, amount next due to you, the period it will cover, and payment date
- Option to view suspended claims and search for an individual tenant (NB only where that tenant's payments are sent direct to you).

Swale Borough Council says NO to Thames Estuary airport



Swale's Cabinet Members objected to plans to build a new airport within the Thames Estuary at a meeting in April, following a discussion about the Government's Airport Commission Interim Report.

Cllr Gerry Lewin, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning said: "The decision to object these proposals has not been made lightly. A report was commissioned in order to ascertain all of the facts and possibilities about building a new airport.

"The findings from the report, such as the need for new housing and the environmental impacts, left us with no alternative but to object to the proposal from the evidence attained and to support Medway Council's opposition to the proposals."



FAVERSHAM 2014 HOP FESTIVAL



Make the 30 and 31 August a date in your diary and help us celebrate our 25th anniversary. We have live music all weekend across our three stages and the Shepherd Neame stage, complemented by the vibrant pub music scene.

Morris Sides and entertainers intertwine with the large and varied selection of stalls, with official Hop Festival merchandising on sale for visitor souvenirs.

The "Harry the Hop" family fun area is back offering entertainment and rides for our younger visitors and there are exhibitions and activities to celebrate 800 years of hopping in the area. Camping and parking is available at our Festival Village in the grounds of the Abbey School, where on Saturday night we feature a Hoppers Dance.

Check www.favershamhopfestival.org for more details.

First World War Centenary – Take part in this global commemoration

This year marks 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War. National plans for commemorating the centenary are progressing fast and so far include state occasions, new exhibitions, and cultural activities, as well as academic debates. The official start of the centenary falls on 4 August, although events have already begun across Swale.

In April, the Mayor of Swale, Cllr Sue Gent, led the annual civic service conducted by Rev. James Pettit in St. Michael's Church, Sittingbourne, by paying tribute to those who fought on the front line, including those who made the ultimate sacrifice and their families left behind.

The Service acknowledged the church's War Memorial Window dating from 1920, which was dedicated to the mothers and wives of those from the Parish who gave their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918. The Service also included a presentation and dedication of an Interpretation Panel for the War Memorial Window by the Mayor on behalf of the Council.



Cllr Sue Gent, Mayor of Swale and the Rev James Pettit with the Interpretation Panel.

Football and Peace

The National Children's Football Alliance saw representative schools from across Kent come together, alongside a school from Germany, to take part in Peace Day Sports as well as a Football and Peace Forum in April. Local schools who took part included Borden Grammar School and the Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey. Helen Grant MP, Minister for Sport, took time out to meet and talk to those who had contributed to the Peace Day.

Further details can be seen at www.childrensfootballalliance.com.

'No Limits'

A partnership between the Diocese of Canterbury, Swale Borough Council and the Oasis Academy on the Isle of Sheppey, has been working on a European project between Leipzig (German), Sarajevo (Bosnia) and Swale reflecting upon the Great War.

With the support of a French choreographer, a Greek composer and a German film maker, students created music and dance, culminating in a moving performance to their fellow students, teachers, parents, and supporters. All those involved saw this performance as the first building blocks in developing further partnership working across Europe.

04 AUGUST 2014, 10 – 11PM



LIGHTS OUT

At 11pm on 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany, ushering in one of the darkest periods in our history.

We will be joining hundreds of others in a nationwide LIGHTS OUT event to mark this occasion. The initiative invites everyone in the UK to turn off their lights from 10pm until 11pm on 4 August, leaving a single light shining for this shared moment of reflection.

LIGHTS OUT is commissioned by 14-18 NOW, WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. You can find more details at www.1418NOW.org.uk.

Are You Planning an event or project?

We are committed to supporting and providing guidance to anyone across Swale planning an event or project to mark the centenary of the First World War. Visit www.swale.gov.uk/centenary-ww1 for more details.



**SUMMER OPEN EVENING
& BBQ**

For Year 5 students starting secondary school in September 2015

Since opening in January, there's been a huge transformation at Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey and we have many exciting plans for the future.

Come and see for yourselves! Meet our staff, talk to our students and find out what it means to be part of our Family.

We look forward to welcoming you

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2014

5pm—7pm,

Executive Principal's Presentation 6pm

WEST SITE: Marine Parade, Sheerness, Kent ME12 2BE

www.oasisacademyisleofsheppey.org



Brightening Swale to commemorate the First World War



Part of the First World War Centenary is a unique national campaign to plant real poppies, and we want YOU to become involved.

Bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) will be planted by thousands of people all across the nation, Swale included, this August. We would like to see Swale covered in real Flanders poppies during August. Just imagine - thousands upon thousands of bright red poppies growing alongside motorways, hundreds in every garden, hedgerows, fields, and window boxes. A breathtaking image to start the Borough's commemorative events.

The project will be led by Swale's In Bloom coordinator. It is hoped up to 100 sites across Swale will be planted over the next four years. Some sites have already started sowing their poppy seeds – Bartons Point Coastal Park is planning to line the entrance way to the park with poppies and has encouraged volunteers to help them create their commemorative feature.

To get information about poppy sowing events across Swale, to organise your own, or for general help and advice, email on swaleinbloom@swale.gov.uk.



Planting poppies in the Abbey Physic Community Garden in Faversham

IDEAS TEST

Help to turn that idea into an experiment, that project into a success and that success into a triumph!

Creative People and Places: Swale & Medway is a community based programme developed by individuals from grass roots local organisations. Their aim is to find new routes into creativity and the arts, embedded with, and led by, local people. They are a place to experiment with new ways of doing things, try out ideas and take risks, and will work with professional, amateur groups and individuals inside and outside the arts community.

Grants range from £2k to £30k dependent on category, whether small experiment, community catalyst, or out of the ordinary. To find out more about **IDEAS TEST**, who can apply, discuss your ideas, and get advice contact:

Nicole@creativepeopleplaces.info

Their aim is to make the grants accessible to all, and they also offer advice on how to make a good proposal.

Information is available at <http://creativepeopleplace.info/>



WELCOME HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

We offer a range of help
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- Personal Care
- Domestic Support
- Help to get to appointments
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Making an asset part of the community



Faversham Gym Club

Giving residents more control of what happens in their local community has led to a number of asset transfers taking place across the Borough this year.

Under Swale's Asset Transfer Policy, Queenborough Harbour Trust now has a 125 year lease to operate from the quayside to manage recreational mooring services there. The Harbour Controller's Office, Dinghy Storage Area and Causeway are also included. In addition, the council is about to approve a loan for some outstanding repairs.

Kemsley Hall a large multi-functional recreational building has also been transferred back to the community and is now successfully being used on more than 300 days a year by various sports and community groups.

A new 25 year lease has just been signed between the Friends of Milton Regis Court Hall and the Council which will enable them to develop a local history museum.



Milton Regis Court Hall

Faversham Gym Club has also had Council approval for its lease to be extended over a much longer period and although the Council still owns the building, it ultimately means handing it back to the community.

Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism, says that: "These transfers are incredibly important in supporting local communities. They are another example of how we are trying to put assets in the management of local communities and give residents the chance to become more involved in local projects."



Football club scores first

Old Oak Football club got the right result when they became the first organisation to successfully secure funding from the Swale Local Fund.

The club borrowed over £6,000 over a two year period to help pay for a new 150 seat spectator stand that was needed to meet League requirements.

Cllr Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Localism, said: "I would implore any other organisation to use this fund to help make improvements like this, which will benefit the wider community."

To find out more details about applying for funding through the Local Loan Fund please visit www.swale.gov.uk/swale-local-loan-fund/.



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Play order for the day



Above: Cllr Sue Gent, Mayor of Swale with children from Kemsley Academy Primary School opens the play area.

Below: Cllr Sue Gent with Dean Tweedy and Jaime Richards of Marvellous Murals.

A play area in Kemsley is now being enjoyed by local children who were involved in its design.

Premier Way Play Area was opened by the Mayor of Swale, Sue Gent in May and was joined by pupils from Kemsley Primary Academy School who met with designers earlier in the project to share their ideas. A mural of a racing car was also painted by local firm 'Marvellous Murals' which has transformed a previously dull wall into a fantastic feature.

Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs said: "Thanks must go to the primary school children, Marvellous Murals, local councillors who helped contribute funds, and of course the local residents who have helped shape the play area into what the community needs, including equipment for a disabled boy who will now be able to join other children in enjoying the area."

The play area has been designed to suit all age ranges and abilities. Funding was made possible thanks to developer contributions and Councillor Ward funds.

A second play area is due to open in Samuel Drive, Kemsley, later this year.



Michael Fallon MP and Lord Digby Jones make keynote speeches at first Swale Regeneration Conference

Swale was firmly put on the map thanks to such illustrious names as Michael Fallon MP and Lord Digby Jones speaking at our first Swale Regeneration Conference. Over 200 delegates attended the Conference on Wednesday 4 June.



Hosted at the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, the conference was a great success and provided a focus on ensuring business owners, property developers, investors and other key stakeholders from inside and outside of the Borough were made aware of what a great offer Swale is as a location to do business.

Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, Minister of State for Business & Enterprise said he was “fundamentally happy” to devolve power from central government and directly hand it to local communities such as Swale through Local Enterprise Partnerships. Mr Fallon, MP for Sevenoaks since 1997, and a member of the Cabinet under three consecutive Conservative Prime Ministers made it clear that Swale offers a superb location to do business.

Lord Digby Jones, a former Minister of State for Trade and Investment, and Director General of the CBI also praised Swale for the way it works closely with national and local businesses to bring about investment into the area. He went onto to use everyday examples of how to successfully do business, and he had the audience in stitches telling them how he recently had to apply for a passport!

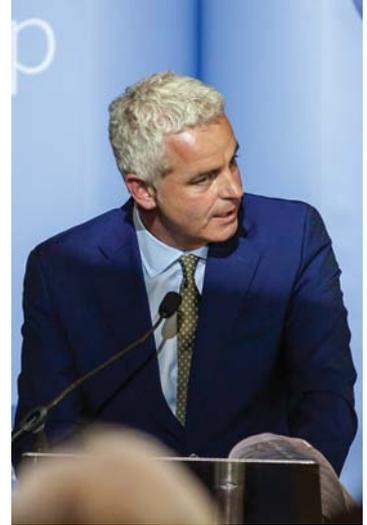


Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP



Lord Digby Jones at the Swale Regeneration Conference

We had the opportunity to unveil the new Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration plans, presented by Richard Upton, Chief Executive of Cathedral Group. The consortium behind the delivery of the project is called the Spirit of Sittingbourne, We also received an update on the Queenborough and Rushenden development on the Isle of Sheppey.



Richard Upton unveils the Town Centre plans

A local produce stand 'Made in Swale' gave the opportunity for a few of our food and drink producers from Faversham and other parts of the Borough an opportunity to test their goods on some very willing participants too. In addition to this we had many exhibitors from key commercial sites in Swale who were able to showcase the Borough's great connectivity capability with the rest of the UK and Europe, as well as demonstrate what great value we can provide for business.



Above: Dave Rungay MD of LMR Gear-Tech and TIGER Fund recipient meets Lord Digby Jones.

Right: The 'Made in Swale' stand receives a visit from Lord Digby Jones.



Assisted Area Success!

Swale has been successful in ensuring that the western part of the Borough, along with the eastern part of Medway, have been included in the Government's final Assisted Area Status map for 2014-2020.

Assisted Area status allows businesses in areas of local economic need to benefit from extra Government financial support. This is given to encourage business to grow, innovate and thrive, benefitting the community.

Assisted Area Status will deliver some immediate benefits, including tax breaks for bringing unused business premises back into use. Levels of financial support that can be offered directly to business through existing schemes, such as the TIGER Loan fund will also be extended. This ability to provide greater levels of support to business will also apply to any future government support.

Check www.ukassistedareamap.com for more details.



Supporting business in Swale

Our business support programme is designed to help entrepreneurs in the Borough to realise their potential. If you are a new or existing business, or are thinking of going into business for yourself, but have yet to take the plunge, our Business Support Programme can help.

It can help in many ways. Perhaps you need a business base? The Borough has a range of commercial land and property available, from retail to industrial and office space.

Or you are looking for funding to get your business idea off the ground or need to expand your workforce? Our programme can help you achieve this too.

Call us today to see how we can help you **01795 417 398**
or email edu@swale.gov.uk.

Our business support programme really works. Call us now.

Building blocks for Sittingbourne transformation are on their way

The regeneration of Sittingbourne has been boosted with the news a third partner joining the Spirit of Sittingbourne consortium.

Cathedral Group Holdings is delighted to announce the appointment of Quinn Estates as joint venture partners and Guy Hollaway Architects as lead architects who are committed to boosting Swale and shaping the Borough.

Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale Borough Council, said he was delighted the Cabinet had given the green light for regeneration plans for Sittingbourne to move forward.

He said: “Our reactivation of Sittingbourne Town Centre will create a magnet for future development and prosperity that could spread economic growth throughout the rest of Swale.”



Mark Quinn (left) with Richard Upton (Centre) and Lord Digby Jones (right)

Mark Quinn, MD of Quinn Estates, commented: “This is a unique opportunity to drive a regeneration project that will transform Sittingbourne. We are really pleased to be working with Swale and our other JV partners especially Cathedral Group.”

Spirit of Sittingbourne and council officers have been working hard to make further progress with a view to submitting a planning application for phase one later this year.

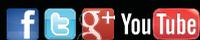


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Sheerness Town Team

The aim of Sheerness Town Team is to make Sheerness the centre for retail, services and leisure, and to make the Town an attractive and welcoming destination for the local community and visitors alike.

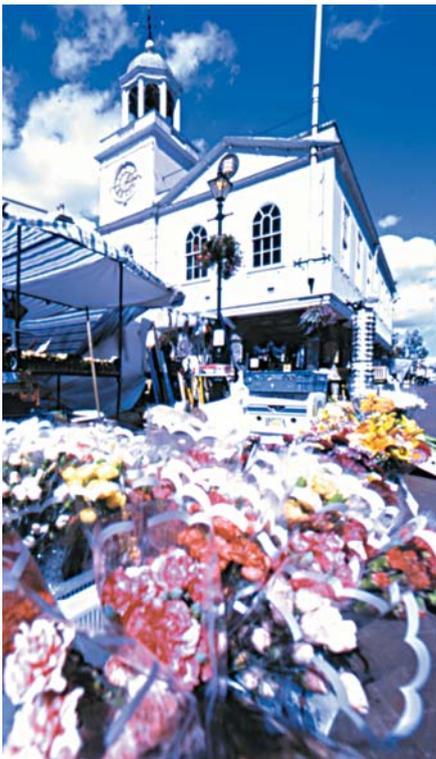
The Town Team has developed a strategy to deliver a number of proposals to improve the vibrancy and economy of Sheerness Town Centre, including plans for a calendar of events and public realm improvements.

Other groups have joined efforts to transform the Town with clean-up operations involving volunteers from across Sheppey.

The Town Team is keen for everyone to be involved in helping make Sheerness a thriving community. Plans are ongoing, and if you want to get involved call Andrew Deeley on **07718 478 357** or find the Town Team on [Facebook/sheernesstownteam](https://www.facebook.com/sheernesstownteam)



Best of Faversham - Happy Traders



Market Place, Faversham

People from across Kent have been flocking to Faversham Market to see what the specialist traders have got to offer, and have not been disappointed according to one trader.

Katy Cox has a stall on the Arts, Crafts and Food Market at Faversham, as well as being one of the market organisers, and believes the addition of specialist traders has only had a positive effect, she said: "Faversham Market is one of the oldest markets in Kent, and the addition of the specialist traders has encouraged others to visit this historic market."

Having been trading for over two years Miss Cox added: "From what I have seen the market brings people together, and everyone enjoys seeing such a range of items and produce to buy. Its popularity has even led to visitors coming from all across Kent, which can only be a good thing for tourism in the area."

Faversham market is open from 8.30am to 4pm around the Guildhall Market Place, and in Court Street on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.



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"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

A fine mess to get into



Four people who failed to ensure that their rubbish was properly disposed of racked up over £1,800 in fines after being found guilty at Maidstone Magistrates Court.

A Whitstable man was fined after his waste was found dumped at Selling Road, Faversham. He failed to ensure the person who collected his waste was correctly licensed.

A man from Rochester paid the price for not paying a £80 fixed penalty notice for dropping a cigarette butt in Sittingbourne High Street. After repeatedly failing to pay the fine and not attending court, he was fined £440.



A third man was also fined after failing to ensure his waste was properly disposed of after items of his property were found dumped in Crown Quay Lane in Sittingbourne. A fourth man guilty of a similar offence was fined after items of his waste was found dumped at Old Ferry Road at Iwade.

Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs, said: "A lot of money is spent on keeping our Borough clean and it is essential that people are aware of their responsibilities when it comes to disposing of waste. We always try and catch the person who actually dumped the waste, but we can only catch them if the producer of the waste can tell us who they gave it to. This is why it is essential that people know who they pay to take their waste away, and ensure they are correctly licensed."

You can report fly tipping online at www.swale.gov.uk or call **01795 417 850**.

COULD YOUR PET FIND ITS WAY HOME?



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AND your contact details kept up to date

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Are you Bitter about Litter?

A truck full of litter was put on display in a school playground to demonstrate how much waste people drop in Swale's public places every day.

While most people are careful and think of others by placing their litter in a bin or taking it home with them, there are some people that continue to litter, which is inconsiderate to others.

So Swale Borough Council joined forces with pupils from The Westland's School to highlight the issue and to launch the Big Tidy Up.



Cllr David Simmons and Head Master Simon Cox with members of the Environment Team and Westland pupils

The Big Tidy Up formed part of Keep Britain Tidy's - 'Love where you live campaign', which aimed to get everyone thinking about the area they live in, while encouraging them to take action to reduce litter.

Cllr David Simmons, the Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "I know most people want to live in a nice clean area, and for that reason they ensure they throw their litter in a bin or take it home with them.

"But there are people who think it is acceptable to just throw their rubbish in the street, or in parks or other public places. It is not, and doing so shows a lack of consideration for others.

"We hope this campaign sent a clear message that people expect the area where they live to be kept tidy.

"We would like to thank The Westland's School pupils for showing such initiative and for taking part."

Who you gonna call!

The Graffiti Buster has been back in action again helping to ensure Swale remains one of the cleanest boroughs in Kent. The high powered cleaner is regularly used by the Environment Wardens to prevent graffiti becoming a problem.

Alister Andrews, Environment Response Manager said:

"The Graffiti Buster has been a great success for both the Council and the police. We have been working closely with our colleagues in the police to tackle this issue both quickly and efficiently. We are very keen to react to any graffiti or other forms of vandalism as speedily as possible.

"Graffiti is an offence which can ultimately lead to prosecutions. And even if the offenders who are caught are under age, again working with the police we have often used them to help clean up the actual graffiti they caused."

Are you WILD about your garden?

Gardens can be wonderful places for wildlife. It really is easy and inexpensive to create a mosaic of wildlife-rich areas, from a simple window box, to an imaginatively planted vegetable plot.

Once again, Kent Wildlife Trust will be celebrating all things wildlife with their 'Wild about Gardens' Awards scheme. The scheme is free to enter for anyone who gardens in Kent, however large or small their plot.

Kent Wildlife Trust's volunteer gardening advisors will recommend gardens for bronze, silver, or gold certificates. Gold winners will also receive one of the Trust's coveted 'Wild About Gardens' Blue Plaques, and may be put forward for a special award for gardens of particular merit. Winners will be notified by the end of September and invited to an illustrious awards presentation in November.

For more information on the scheme and the winners, visit www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk



Below: Cllr Sue Gent, Mayor of Swale helps launch the scheme.



Growing a sustainable Sheppey



Sustainable Sheppey, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is now well into its second year. There are currently seven projects under the Sustainable Sheppey umbrella, including Oilwaste, Green Doctor, Green Skills, Sustainable Schools and Coastal Communities 2150.

Oilworks is collecting waste cooking oil from businesses and schools across the Island and turning it into bio-diesel. They are hoping to include more collection points soon.

The Green Doctor service has another doctor on board and is able to make a home visit to talk you through energy and water saving while helping you to save money. To book an appointment call **01795 434 222**.

The Sustainable Schools project has run workshops and visits to environmental projects with primary school children. The children have been exploring the environmental impacts of the food they eat, and designing low-carbon recipe books and environmentally friendly packaging. More visits are planned.

The Green Skills project has set young people on the road to employment and further education, giving them new green skills. For more info call Ross Bell on **01795 434 246**.

The first phase of Coastal Communities 2150 is now complete, with a toolkit and action plan developed to help Sheppey residents to adapt to long-term coastal climate change. The community will now be taking this forward through a series of community meetings over the summer. Contact Swale CVS for more information on **01795 473 828**.

A series of workshops have been held on community renewable energy. A report and feasibility study have been published and the project is now looking for funding to take community energy forward.

The Community Allotments continue to thrive, giving Islanders access to allotment plots, guidance on growing, and of course the friendship of like-minded people. Children and adults are enjoying the facilities.



Gordon Henderson MP at the Community Allotments

We are looking forward to another successful year. If you are interested in any of the projects or would like more information please visit **www.sustainablesheppey.org.uk**.



Medway **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

Downward trend in C.diff – among best in the country



Clostridium Difficile (C.diff) is one of the many bacteria found in the bowel and is a major cause of antibiotic associated diarrhoea and colitis.

At Medway NHS Foundation Trust we operate an extremely strict approach to infections like C.diff. That's why we are pleased that in the year up to 31 March, we saw our lowest ever number of C.diff cases.

Linda Dempster, Assistant Chief Nurse, who heads up the infection prevention and control team, said: "We are really pleased to have achieved this downward trend and our performance now is among the best in the country. This is down to the resources we have put into infection prevention and control, and the hard work of all our staff across the hospital."

C. diff bacteria can spread very easily. Despite this, it can usually be prevented by practicing good hygiene. The risk of spreading infection can be reduced by washing hands regularly and cleaning surfaces using products containing bleach. Alcohol hand gel is not effective against C. diff spores, so the use of soap and water is essential.

Enhancing mealtime experiences

The Trust participated in the third annual Nutrition and Hydration Week in April – a collaboration between Patient Safety First, Hospital Caterers Association and the National Association of Care Catering. The aim of the week is to remind everyone of the importance of adequate nutrition and hydration. The Trust used the week as an opportunity to reiterate the importance of nutrition and hydration to both staff and patients.



Glyn Scott, Nutrition Nurse Specialist at Medway NHS Trust said: “This should not be seen as anything new, but a reminder about the importance of nutrition and hydration and the impact this can have on patient care and recovery. We have done lots of work to ensure specialist menu and dietary needs are met. Every ward now has a box of supportive tools to meet every patients’ needs – for example adaptive cutlery and red mats which identify those patients who require assistance at mealtimes. We won’t stop there; we are really committed to ensuring every patient in our care can receive a meal that not only meets their nutritional needs, but is one they can really enjoy.”

Do you have a few hours to spare?

The voluntary services department is looking for volunteers to support ward staff, seven days a week. You could be making teas and coffees, talking to patients, or helping guide visitors around the hospital.

If you think you would be able to spare a minimum of four hours per week, please contact our voluntary services manager on **01634 825 246** or email **zgoodman@nhs.net**. Our volunteers do a marvellous job supporting our staff and we would love to welcome you to the team.

Stay in touch with your hospital

Did you know that Medway Maritime Hospital is part of a foundation trust? Foundation trust status allows you to become a member and stay more closely in touch with your hospital. Membership is free and you will be invited to a range of events or sent relevant, hospital-related information – you can choose to be involved as much or as little as you like.

Contact **members@medway.nhs.uk** or call **01634 825 292** for further details.

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