

Dartford *Borough News*

MARCH | APRIL 2005

The Newspaper of Dartford Borough Council

www.dartford.gov.uk

Home... ...is where the Darts is



**JUDO ON THE WAY,
STADIUM ON THE WAY,
DARTFORD'S CHANGING.
IT COULD BE A GREAT SUMMER!**

● COUNCIL TAX STAYS LOW ● DARTS STAR DISHES AWARDS ● BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILED ●

MY PATCH BRENT

THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF COUNCILLOR PROFILES



Nancy Wightman Councillor for Brent ward

What made you stand for election as a councillor?

I was elected as a councillor in 1999 to Stone Parish Council. I enjoyed the experience and found the role very interesting. The role of a Parish councillor is quite different from that of a Borough councillor. The Parish has a more 'hands on' approach. It was the ability to help and be involved in the work needed in the community that made me decide to offer my services as a councillor for Dartford Borough Elections in 2003.

What is the best thing about being a councillor?

My ward has various problems, which require many different solutions. I get a great deal of satisfaction trying to help solve these problems, whether it be vandals, graffiti, telephone masts or 'Fastrack'. Since being elected to Dartford

Borough Council I have helped Fleetdown Community Centre get some much needed cash for improvements, that has given me much pleasure.

What is the worst thing about being a councillor?

One of the worst things about being a councillor is reports from resident volunteers trying to run facilities for young people being constantly plagued by vandalism. Another is trying to help with a problem only to find legislation is not in place, and you cannot help. The area is surrounded by motorways, which when blocked, cause local traffic difficulties that need to be addressed. There is not an easy solution to this.

What is good and bad about your area?

One of the good things about the area is that most of the housing dates back to the 1950's and beyond so we do not have much of the over intensive housing that is taking place in other parts of Dartford Borough. Another good thing is that the area is in close proximity to the Bluewater shopping complex. A very bad thing is the devastation of so many mature trees to make way for 'Fastrack', it will take many years to restore these areas. Another bad thing is having two motorways so near the area which causes total gridlock when motorists use the local roads to try and avoid hold ups.

What are your pet projects at the moment?

I am delighted that two pet projects, namely the new football stadium at Princes Park and the Judo Centre at Stone Lodge are underway. I believe that both of these projects will be beneficial to their relative sports and to Dartford Borough as a whole. I applaud the Conservative administration for taking these schemes forward. I hope for Dartford Football Club that the new stadium brings back their supporters and the town gets behind the club.

What law would you introduce if you were Prime Minister?

I would introduce compulsory P.E. lessons into the school curriculum on a daily basis. This would ensure young people would be fitter in mind and body.

Sign Post

YOUR COUNCILLORS ARE:

BEAN & DARENTH

ARMITT Ian (Con) 01322 288396

BULL Simon (Con) 07764 488390

HAMMOCK David (Con) 01322 380058

BRENT

FICKLING Kenneth (Con) 020 8757 8128

KARAMUTH Sarah (Con) 07981 1614421

WIGHTMAN Nancy (Con) 01322 223586

EAST Sheila (Con) 01322 384677

CASTLE

GREENHITHE

BROADLEY Conrad (Con) 01474 364088

FITZPATRICK Brian (RA&I) 07966 310805

MURPHY Martin (RA&I) 01322 370559

HEATH

LEADBEATER Kenneth (Con) 01322 866375

SMITH Terence (Con) 01322 220342

THURLOW Mrs Patsy (Con) 01322 862060

JOYCE GREEN

MUCKLE Ann (Lab) 01322 403229

BRYANT Matthew (Lab) 01322 271517

JOYDENS WOOD

ALLEN Mrs Ann (Con) 01322 270325

PETERS Marilyn (Con) 01322 554373

RICKWOOD Mrs Jennifer (Con) 01322 522361

LITTLEBROOK

MUCKLE John (Lab) 01322 403229

TIBBY Michael (New England) 01322 279889

LONGFIELD NEW BARN AND SOUTHFLEET

BASSAM Bertie (Con) 01474 704241

DUNN Alex (Con) 07941 241893

KITE Jeremy (Con) 01474 707380

NEWTOWN

BAKER Dave (Lab) 01322 271434

BROOKER Austen (RA&I) 01322 228943

STEELE Graham (Lab) 01322 277394

PRINCES

MAY David (Lab) 01322 228003

STOCK Margaret (Lab) 01322 223181

STOCK Vic (Lab) 01322 223181

STONE

JONES Bryan (Lab) 01322 343234

JONES Ivor (Lab) 01322 383361

LAWSON Derek (Lab) 01322 276624

SUTTON-AT-HONE & HAWLEY

COLEMAN Patrick (Con) 01322 863730

MARTIN Anthony (Con) 01322 272996

SWANSCOMBE

BOBBY Leslie (RA&I) 01322 384243

HAYES John (RA&I) 01322 387452

READ Bryan (RA&I) 01322 383895

TOWN

APPADOO Ram (Lab) 01322 408308

ROGERS Trevor (Lab) 01322 290455

WEST HILL

BYRNE Francis (Lab) 01322 401810

PROUT Geoff (Lab) 01322 275145

WILMINGTON

STOATE Mrs Deborah (Lab) 01322 343234

HUNNISETT Derek (Con) 01322 288397

LAMPKIN Eddy (Con) 07889 736598

Conservative 21, Labour 16, RA&I 6, New England 1

**To report a pothole
from 1 April 2005 call
08458 247800**

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MAIN SWITCHBOARD	(01322) 343434	ARTS DEVELOPMENT	(01322) 343351
BENEFITS	(01322) 343705	MUSEUM	(01322) 224739
COUNCIL TAX	(01322) 343700	HALL BOOKINGS	(01322) 343079
HOUSING	(01322) 343624	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	(01322) 343524
ENV. HEALTH SERVICES	(01322) 343374	BUILDING CONTROL	(01322) 343238
REFUSE & RECYCLING	(01322) 343290	HIGHWAY REPAIRS	(08458) 247800
PLANNING	(01322) 343203	STREET LIGHTING	(08458) 247800
FLY TIPPING	(01322) 343290	DARTFORD POLICE	(01322) 280055
TRAVELLER SITES	(01322) 343684	CITIZENS ADVICE	(01322) 224686

VIEW FROM THE CABINET



Kenneth Leadbeater

Quality services can be good value for money

For the last two years the Council's priority, when it comes to finance and spending, has been to keep costs low and service standards high. This philosophy has worked well in practice with the Council delivering a wide range of new initiatives and improved services across the borough.

This year's budget reinforces the Council's focus on high quality, front-line services. We are putting significantly more money into recycling and waste collection and additional resources are being focussed onto graffiti, fly-tipping and similar anti-social behaviour.

These are particular issues that have been highlighted by our residents, various surveys and consultations.

These priorities are important to me, and to the Council, because they have a direct impact on the lives of the borough's 80,000 plus residents.

A Council's role is not just to deliver services such as street sweeping, parks maintenance and housing management. It must also take the lead in maintaining and improving the quality of life for its residents.

This role of the Council as a community leader, which I take very seriously, is the reason why we are developing the new community leisure facilities at Princes Park and Stone Lodge, as well as the new Town Council facilities in Swanscombe.

For too long the Council has received Council Tax income and then saved it for a rainy day rather than spend it on facilities and services that benefit the borough's taxpayers. Our policy of charging an affordable level of Council Tax, but delivering high quality services, will prevent the future build up of such a 'war chest' and allow residents and the Council to budget effectively without the need for hikes in Council Tax.

Of course, maintaining a low rate of tax will require changes to the way the Council operates. There is already an internal focus on reviewing and removing unnecessary and inefficient procedures and this will continue well beyond 2005.

In addition, a new Customer Contact Centre, which is already in planning for a 'going live' date in April 2006, will improve the way the Council delivers its services. It will also help to reduce some of the bureaucracy within the Council allowing it to become more streamlined and yet more focussed on the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Councillor Kenneth Leadbeater is Leader of Dartford Borough Council.



buys even better front-line services

Dartford's 37,000 households will continue to enjoy one of the lowest rates of Council Tax in Kent.

Twelve months after revealing one of the lowest tax rises in England, Council Leader Kenneth Leadbeater confirmed that this year's 4.9% increase underlined his Council's determination to remain a low-tax, high-achieving council. The increase equates to just 10 pence per week for a taxpayer living in an average Band C property.

However, Dartford could have achieved historically low tax levels if only the Government had not made so many unfunded promises forcing the local authorities to pick up the bills. This was Cllr Leadbeater's key message at the Council's main budget meeting last month.

The budget reinforces the Council's firm commitment to front-line services and sees new resources targeted to increase recycling, reduce graffiti and tackle anti-social behaviour. Communities will benefit from long-overdue

investment in new sporting, civic and leisure facilities. Concessionary Fares and the work of the Town Centre Warden are among the initiatives protected by increased Council funding.

Councillor Leadbeater said "Listening to local residents and delivering what they want allows us to improve our services and keep tax down to a level that makes other Kent Councils green with envy."

"Dartford Borough Council tax rose nearly 30% in the four years before we took control - a disaster for family budgets. So far, we have beaten down our tax rise to an average of just 3.75% per year and yet still been ranked as a 'Good' Council by CPA. The Government's independent inspectors confirmed that we are turning the Council around and I am proud of our staff and colleagues."

Fares fair for concessions

An important transport discount scheme for Dartford's senior citizens and disabled residents is to receive more funding so that it can continue to run.

Cabinet Member Ann Allen expressed delight that senior citizens in Dartford can continue to count on Concessionary Fares, even though neighbouring authorities are cutting services or withdrawing the scheme altogether.

"I know that some local councils, including our neighbours in Sevenoaks, have withdrawn part or all of their cheap fare subsidies causing a

lot of problems to senior citizens but here in Dartford we are actually improving our services to the elderly across the board. The Elderly Forum I launched has really taken off and puts our senior citizens right at the heart of policy making."

"We may not always shout it from the rooftops but one of the benefits of being a well-managed Council is that we look ahead and cut our cloth to suit our budget. The budget for Concessionary Fares has been increased for 2005 and I'm delighted about that."

Boxing boost for recycling

A huge funding boost for recycling and waste management will go towards protecting Dartford's environment. £750,000 of funding has been approved to focus on new schemes for recycling, garden waste and waste reduction.

The cash injection will help to meet global targets on the environment by reducing the amount of reusable items that are buried in landfill sites each year.

The key change to the recycling scheme will see clear sacks replaced with sturdy plastic boxes for dry recyclables - making recycling a quick and easy option for residents. The box will have a greater capacity and will avoid the problem of keen recyclers running out of sacks.

The box scheme will be rolled out throughout the borough during 2005. It will be easier to store than the clear sacks and have a lid - meaning it can be left outside come rain or shine.

Dartford currently recycles 14% of its waste, meeting the Government's Phase 1 target for 2003/2004. The Phase 2 target for recycling is 21% by the end of 2005/2006.

How your money is spent – every pound you pay is used like this

5p Kent Fire and Rescue

9p Kent Police Authority

11p Dartford Borough Council

75p Kent County Council



Carnival theme for Dartford Festival

Dartford Festival is set to bring Central Park to life with the flow of colour and music that will all be part of this year's 'Carnival' theme.

The Festival is to take place on the weekend of 16/17 July and is one of the largest in Kent attracting more than 25,000 people.

Local charities, businesses, schools and clubs are already jumping in on the action by preparing floats and stalls to help make this year's festival brighter and better than ever before.

Cllr Mrs Patsy Thurlow, Portfolio Member for Leisure, said, "This year's Festival will return to its community roots, with a wide range of activities on offer. There will be arts and crafts stalls, youth zone, sports zone, community stages and a fun fair, providing something for everyone."

For information on how to take part in this year's festival please contact Lisa Bullock 01322 343961 or lisa.bullock@dartford.gov.uk



Dartford Festival 2004

The Walking Bus comes to Dartford



Members of the Walking Bus at Gateway Primary School with Cllr Allen

The school run will now be easy and traffic free as children can safely walk to school on the Walking Bus.

Dartford Council has teamed up with KM Walking Bus Group to help reduce school run congestion, improve children's road safety skills and increase levels of fitness. Parents and schools will be given help and equipment to set up and operate their own walking buses.

The walking bus has an adult 'driver' and 'conductor' and the children wear reflective jackets and walk in between, collecting additional 'passengers' at specific 'bus stops' along the way.

Councillor Mrs Ann Allen, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, said:

"The Council is committed to making the journey to and from school safer and healthier for the children of the borough. The walking bus provides children with a pollution free transportation system to get them to and from school, while increasing their levels of physical activity and reducing the amount of school run traffic."

The project was launched at Gateway Primary School, which already operates a walking bus, and is set to lead the way as walking buses become commonplace in Dartford.

Go wild in your garden this summer

Gardeners looking to share their gardens with birds, butterflies, frogs and dormice can now look further than the Borough Council for tips and advice.

The Gardening for Wildlife (GfW) Scheme, an award scheme that rewards the best gardens and gardeners for their wildlife friendly designs, went live across the borough this week. The scheme covers all gardens within the Dartford area, from front to back and allotments— even concreted yards can be entered if care has been taken to provide an inviting environment for the Boroughs wild animals.

Cllr Alex Dunn, Portfolio Holder for Environment Issues, said, "I presented the Awards in 2004 and was amazed at the quality of entries and the effort that goes into gardening in the Borough. Any changes made to the garden to benefit wildlife will help. I'd like to encourage individuals, schools and community groups to obtain an information pack and take part in the Scheme this year."

An essential guide to wildlife friendly gardening, with heaps of advice for good garden design, is available as part of the Scheme, which is free to all Dartford residents.

The award scheme runs from March to June, with judging during the late summer. However the advice in the GfW pack covers the whole year, so gardens can also become hibernating heaven during the winter.

For more information about the Scheme contact Sandra Woodfall on 01322 343056 or visit www.dartford.gov.uk



Defective Street Light?
from 1 April
call
08458 247800

Dartford Entrepreneurs can now get Funding

Residents of Dartford previously unable to access funding for starting or growing their business can now turn to a company set up with the sole aim of helping the people of North Kent. Funded by the Phoenix Fund and URBAN II the Enterprise Loan Fund (ELF) is the only community development finance institution

specifically set up for the benefit of Kent.

If you would like more information on ELF email info@elfund.co.uk or call Deb or Chris on 01474 327350. For information on the Enterprise Agency of North Kent email info@businessnorthkent.co.uk or call Amanda or Alison on 01474 327118.

Bean's Spring Clean



Members of the Brent Force Green Gang

Bean Primary School and members of the Residents Association set the standard for the latest Deep Clean to hit Dartford by working together to spring clean the school playground.

They follow in the footsteps of the Brent Force Green Gang, from Brent Primary School

who swapped their shovels and spades for litter pickers and bags when the Newtown Deep Clean rolled into town at the beginning of the year.

The week-long scheme tackles areas by ward eliminating environmental eyesores such as graffiti, fly-tipping and overgrown vegetation.

VIEW FROM THE CABINET



Jeremy Kite

Dartford – the REAL Design Council?

Walking around Dartford Town Centre, it's hard to deny that the last thirty years have been unkind to the old town.

Architects and town planners of the sixties and seventies – particularly those delivering public buildings – seem to have taken the view that Dartford residents had few ambitions to improve the quality of design around them. Putting up with poor architecture is a slippery slope - even if it involves pretty mundane structures like toilets and footbridges - and once the first ropey buildings start to arrive its not long before more join them. Before long, whole neighbourhoods are blighted and the wonderful, thoughtful design of our predecessors is buried and obscured behind bland, soul-less monoliths.

That's why I'm not embarrassed that the Council threw back initial designs for a new pedestrian footbridge due to link the Railway Station with the town centre. Instead of a bog-standard concrete bridge – the sort spanning thousands of road everywhere - we can now look forward to something rather better. It's also why we have sought out and encouraged some of the world's best designers and architects to take a look at Dartford. Designers like former Red or Dead boss Wayne Hemingway and Ken (The Pen) Shuttleworth – who worked on London's distinctive Gherkin tower and City Hall – are now working among us – pushing forward new high-quality projects. They aren't working for big business or the rich – they are working on fantastic new public buildings and open-realm for all of us.

With the plans for Dartford Judo Club and a new Stadium for the Darts at Princes Park now in the public domain, the first examples of what Dartford can achieve if it sets its sights higher will soon be here. We've commissioned an iconic building for Judo and the Stadium will be one of the most ecologically-sensitive sports arenas in the world – setting new standard for sports architecture everywhere.

Often, the difference between good and bad design has almost nothing to do with money. Instead, it's a question of care, effort and going-the-extra-mile for quality.

Architects no longer look at our designs and say "it's good enough for Dartford." Today, we ask them a simple question .. "IS IT good enough for Dartford?"

I'm chuffed about that.

Councillor Jeremy Kite is Deputy Leader of Dartford Borough Council.

Stunning designs approved for Judo Club



Dartford Judo Club from the front

Construction of Dartford's stunning new Judo Centre will get underway within weeks after final plans were approved by the Council. The state-of-the-art centre, the first phase of a major leisure development at Stone Lodge, sets the design standard for other new buildings within the Borough.

The Olympic standard two-storey building is expected to be completed by December this year and will house one of Dartford's most successful sports clubs - Dartford Judokwai. The new home provides a purpose built facility for club members to train and compete at all levels; local, national and international.

The modern and futuristic style for the new centre, which incorporates a landscaped garden and chalk water feature, also includes significant energy efficiency benefits.

The architect behind the new centre, Matt White, is no stranger to high profile state of the art projects. As a partner in **make** architects, founded by world renowned Ken Shuttleworth, Matt has been involved in City Hall for the Mayor of London and a new stand at Newbury Racecourse.



The stunning Judo Club will be visible for miles around.

Judokwai

...r Jeremy Kite, Deputy Leader of Dartford Borough Council, said that securing a top class... was a Council priority. The design of the centre is outstanding. It's... taking example of how new buildings in... can really enhance the local environ-... and meet their operational needs. This... centre of excellence for Judo will set the... for other developments in the borough. Dartford deserves the best designs and we are... promising on this issue, so the value of... quality architects and project managers... be underestimated. We have been bold in... requirements and bold in our vision for... Lodge and the result will be plain to see... just a few months." The agreed plans also include landscaping... and the building, designed to blend the Judo... with the additional sports facilities. Alongside the new judo centre, in the second... of development, new community sports... ies will be developed. The facilities, for... including football, hockey and tennis, ... to the existing indoors bowls centre... side the new judo centre.

Darts homecoming a step closer



Breathtaking designs for the new Princes Park Stadium triggered a flood of emotion when they went on display to Dartford Football Club supporters hours before the team's match against Barking and East Ham on Saturday. Many loyal fans who have followed the Darts during a thirteen year exile from the town were openly overcome as they viewed a short presentation on the project by Deputy Council Leader Jeremy Kite, Senior Councillors and architects.

More than 300 supporters gathered at Gravesend & Northfleet FC's Stonebridge Road ground to hear Councillor Kite describe how new banqueting, social and sports facilities for the whole community would sit alongside traditional terraces, tea bars and stands at the new 1000 seater Stadium.

Architectural practice Alexander Sedgley has designed one of the most ecologically-sound football stadiums ever built and director Roger Sedgley spent nearly two hours chatting to fans and introducing both the Club and community facilities. The new

Stadium will provide banqueting facilities for 250 guests – ideal for weddings and celebrations – as well as community space for meetings, classes and children's parties.

Gregg Keatch, 37, of Sackville Road has been a lifelong fan. He said, "This is a momentous, massive and emotional day for the club and its supporters. The plans are fantastic and amazing and it's something to really look forward to. This is somewhere to socialise and play football."

After 13 traumatic years away from the town, the realisation that The Darts are really on their way home caused emotional scenes. One anonymous supporter pressed a note into Councillor Kite's hand praising the Council for creating a new sense of optimism in the town and giving local people a facility to be proud of.

Cllr Jeremy Kite, Deputy Leader of Dartford Borough Council, said the Council's vision for Princes Park was not just about football but was intended to deliver some of the benefits of the

Town's growth to local residents

"Developers, housebuilders and landowners have all done very well from Dartford in the last decade and it's about time that local people started to see a slice of the action. Great facilities and top quality design aren't just for big business or the rich. New facilities at Princes Park are just one of several projects designed to shake our town up and put local people back at the top of the pile. Princes Park isn't funded from Council Tax and we're still one of the lowest taxing Councils in Kent."

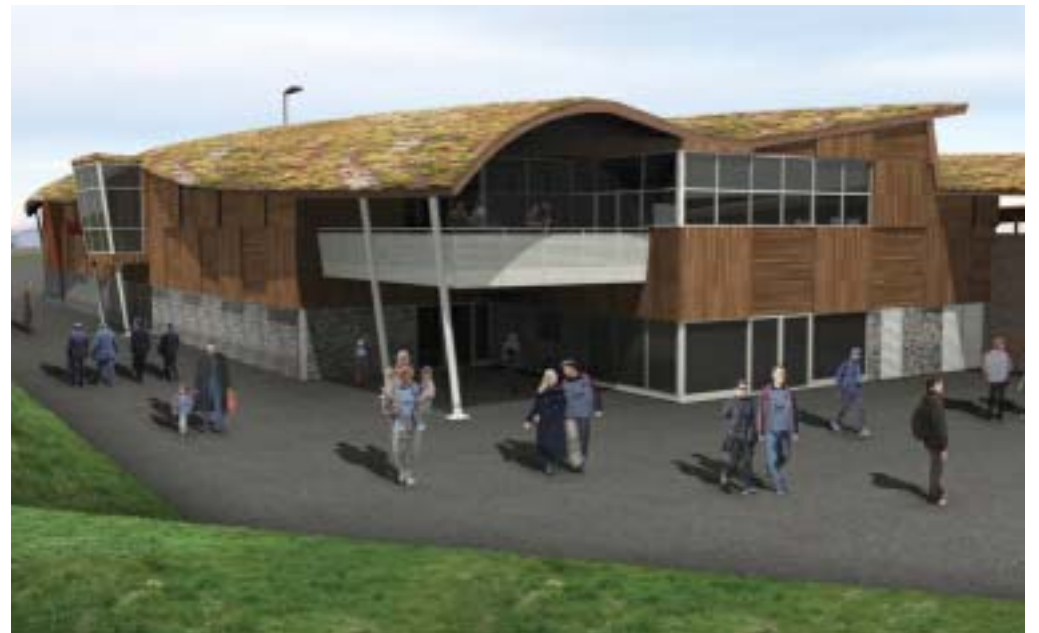
"The designs are magnificent and capture the spirit of Dartford. These are top quality sports and community facilities which reflect our town's natural heritage and meet the needs for the district," he said.

"Football is definitely coming home and Dartford people are on the winning side."

The Princes Park planning application is lodged this week and will be decided by the Council's planning committee within weeks.



The pedestrian plaza



The stadium is designed to blend with the local environment.



The fully enclosed stadium minimises light and noise pollution and is perfect for football and outdoor community events.

VIEW FROM THE CABINET



Patsy Thurlow

Dartford: Past, Present and Future

Dartford is a Borough of many hidden treasures. I am continually surprised by the history of the area and am awed by the fact that we have been at the 'cutting-edge' of technological development for over four centuries.

The blue plaque scheme has been designed so that we can celebrate and shout about our illustrious heritage. As a council we are determined to raise the profile of Dartford's past.

I am very proud to have been part of the first blue plaque unveiling in Dartford. Although it took a lot of hard work to get there, the ceremony was a complete success and puts us in a great position to get ready for the next plaque.

Madame Österberg is just one of the great names on a very long list containing inventors, historians, rock stars, athletes and pioneering companies that we hope to recognise and honour.

It is important that everyone in Dartford knows about their rich and varied heritage because without it we could live in a world without trains, printing machines, banknotes, tin cans, netball or miracle medicines.

It is amazing to think that all this and much more came from a small market town by the Thames. Although the area may have grown and changed over the years, I am glad to see that the people of Dartford are still as inventive, creative and forward thinking as ever.

Only last month Andrea Arnold, a born and bred Dartfordian, won the only British Oscar at this years Academy Awards. Her short film 'Wasp', was shot on the Temple Hill Estate and used Dartford residents as extras This just goes to show that our history is still developing and includes us all.

Pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline, which started out as Burroughs Wellcome and Co, has operated in Dartford for over a century and has been at the forefront of medical science for just as long. We want to ensure that this tradition continues and believe that our new developments will continue to attract top quality businesses and companies.

I am sure that we will continue to grow from strength to strength, building on our legacy and out-shining our past achievements. We are now working together to push Dartford forward into the 21st Century and are welcoming the forthcoming changes that will meet the growing needs of the Borough.

Councillor Patsy Thurlow is Portfolio Holder for the Arts, Sports and Town Centre at Dartford Borough Council.

Heritage Honoured



Iconic sportswoman Rachael Heyhoe Flint unveils the first ever Dartford Blue Plaque.

Dartford Council's first blue plaque was unveiled this month by Rachael Heyhoe Flint MBE DL to honour the life and work of one of the world's most important sporting pioneers Madame Österberg.

Madame Österberg moved to England from Sweden in the late nineteenth century and brought her world renowned school to Oakfield Lane, Dartford in 1895. The school trained young ladies to become physical education teachers and invented the international game of netball.

A series of blue plaques are set to pop up throughout the Borough to celebrate Dartford's rich and varied heritage.



Mme Bergman Österberg



Patsy Thurlow with Rachael Heyhoe Flint



Local teams play an exhibition match at the home of netball.

Broken Paving Slab?
from 1 April
call
08458 247800

More choice for housing allocations

A new choice-based lettings system for allocating council housing, being introduced from 4 April, will be fairer and quicker for Dartford residents. The new system, called dartford-homeseecker, allows housing applicants and existing tenants to apply for properties rather than accept a limited number of suggested homes from the Council.

The new system, which replaces the much maligned 'points' league table, uses bands to identify housing need and gives priority to those residents already living in the Borough.

The four bands, A to D, identify the level of need for applicants, with Band A used for applications with significant medical, physical or legal reasons for moving. By comparison Band D would include those applicants who have lesser need for a Council house or come from

outside the Borough.

As empty properties become available they are advertised publicly for all housing applicants. The successful applicant, from those who apply for a property, is decided first on the band, with A getting priority, and then on their length of wait on the housing register.

Cllr Kenneth Leadbeater, Leader of Dartford Council, said, "The lack of rented housing in the south east is well known and this causes significant distress for those who live in overcrowded conditions or have significant housing need.

Feedback from our tenants and housing applicants have led us to develop this system which deals with need first and then waiting time. This is a fairer system that has a simple philosophy; those who have been waiting longest, get re-housed quickest."

Russian delegation visits Dartford



Cllr Tony Martin, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Dr Gregory Rozhkov (Advisor to the Russia British Steering Committee on Trade and Investment), Cllr Kenneth Leadbeater, Leader of Dartford Council, Egor Lonsky (Head of International Co-operation Department for Mayor's Office), Rob Scott, Director of Regeneration



Maestro Aleksandr Kantorov at the Orchard

A team of senior Russian councillors and officers from St Petersburg have been in Dartford seeing for themselves the business opportunities arising from Europe's largest regeneration project the Thames Gateway.

The delegates spent four days in the town attending a series of presentations on the Thames Gateway and taking a guided tour of the area, including Stone Lodge, Crossways Business Park, Bluewater, Ebbsfleet International Station and Ingress Park.

Councillor Kenneth Leadbeater, Leader of Dartford Council, is delighted to be cultivating links with St Petersburg as it has some strong similarities to Dartford. He said, "City founder Peter the Great always understood that St Petersburg was the gateway from Europe to Russia and Dartford is similarly positioned as the gateway from continental Europe to the UK. With the emerging international trading position of Russia and the development opportunities arising in the Thames Gateway, there are significant prospects to develop important trading and educational links."

Gunn Road's planting success



Tony Coat, Jade Shephardhall and Rebecca Salt help with the planting.

Young people of the Gunn Road Estate, Swanscombe have been working hard to bring more colour to their community. Planting days have seen the local children ditch their mobile phones and computer games for picks and spades as they embarked on a quest to plant a variety of flowers and shrubs.

Overseen by landscaping experts from the Council, and older residents, the young people of the estate have been quick to take the lead in brightening up their environment.

The planting days continue the ongoing improvements to the estate. Work has already begun on the estate to open it up by demolish-

ing disused garages and building new storage areas for rubbish bins.

Cllr Jeremy Kite praised the project and said "local residents and the Council are working together to improve the quality of life in the Gunn Road Estate and this is the right approach for long-lasting success. In the future the young people of the estate will be able to point to the results of their hard work and feel proud that they are making a difference."

Dartford Borough Council provided half the money for the Gunn Road improvements and this was matched by a grant from the European Urban Fund.

Glentworth Club resolution dependent on negotiation

The Government has stepped in to clarify issues surrounding the ownership of the Glentworth Club's Lowfield Street premises just days after Dartford Borough Council's Development Control Board approved a planning application for the Club's new purpose built facility.

The Government has concluded that legal title to the estate rests with the Royal British Legion, not the Glentworth Club. The Club's existing social activities may not achieve the aims of the 1921 Trust Deed whose benefactors raised money to found the Club on condition that its land and buildings should be used for charitable patriotic services, primarily for serving and former servicemen.

The Government's top solicitor has suggested that 75% of any proceeds from the sale of the Lowfield Street premises should be applied for charitable purposes and the remainder pass to the Council. The Attorney General has expressed a hope that the Glentworth Club Committee will reach agreement with the Council on this proposal in order to prevent money being squandered on the cost of litigation.

Leader of Dartford Borough Council Cllr Kenneth Leadbeater said that "the advice from

the Government was an opportunity to move forward and ensure that the wishes of the founders of the Glentworth Club were respected. The Council has always been supportive of the Glentworth Club and has wanted nothing more than to see it continue to serve the needs of service personnel and commemorate all those who gave for their country and our liberty. It is unfortunate that its concerns appear to have become wrapped up in the wider issues and campaigns surrounding regeneration.

This has led to some fairly complex legal issues being passed to Government for resolution rather than settled locally and that may change the way the Club approaches some things in the future. Our aim is to respect the ordinary Members of the Club and the Glentworth founders."



Latest image showing how a new club could look

Young people highlight priorities for the future



Michael Horwood, Chairman of the DYC

A survey of more than a quarter of all young people in Dartford has revealed that crime and youth activities are top of the agenda.

The survey, the most extensive ever carried out in Dartford, also revealed that more police officers, and harsher punishments for criminals,

were seen as deterrents to crime in the Borough.

More than 2,200 young people responded to the survey, which was organised, distributed and analysed by members of the Dartford Youth Council (DYC), representing more than a quarter of those aged 12-18 in the Borough.

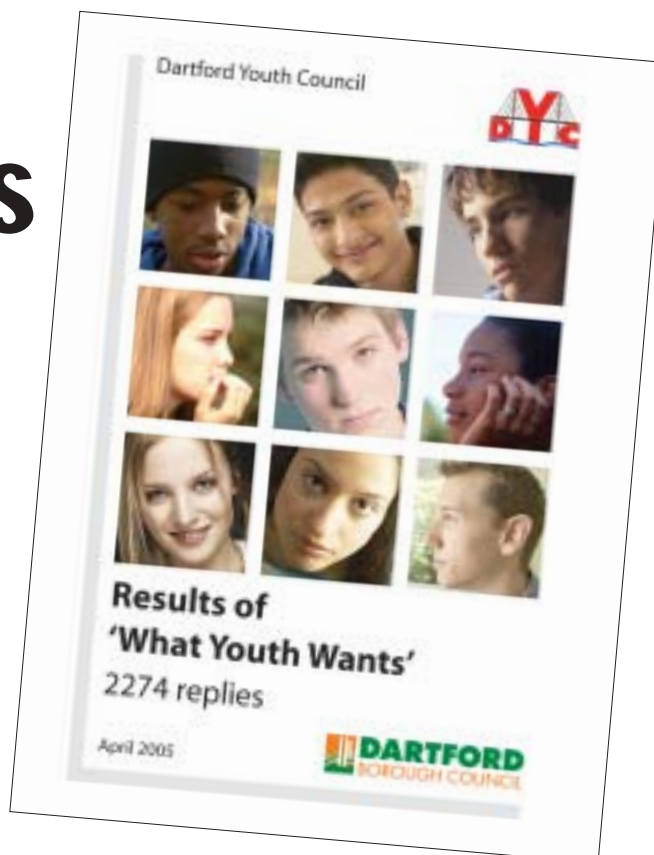
Michael Horwood, Chairman of the DYC, said the number of responses had been astonishing.

"I am extremely impressed by the vast number of replies we have received and would like to thank everyone who filled in and helped to distribute the surveys. This makes it the largest ever consultation of young people's views

in the Borough and highlights the priorities young people have across Dartford and the surrounding area," he said.

Dartford Youth Council, which has been operating for four years, has 47 members from Dartford's 9 secondary schools and youth groups. The Youth Council represents young people from across the Borough and is involved in the decision making process for the Borough Council.

The results of the survey will be used to formulate the DYC's manifesto, which will be sent to key politicians and decision-makers around the county.



Don't miss the deadline

Residents who want to vote by post or proxy must apply now to ensure that they do not miss the deadline for the Kent County Council elections on Thursday 5 May.

Registered voters can now have a postal vote, but they need to leave enough time to apply. Detail alterations to existing postal or proxy voters must be received by the Electoral Registration Officer by 19 April and new applications must be received before 26 April.

If the General Election is called for the same day as the Kent County Council elections, the same deadlines will apply.

For information and application forms please contact the Electoral Registration Officer at Dartford Borough Council on 01322 343426 or electoral.registration@dartford.gov.uk.

DBC praised for FOI

Dartford Borough Council has been singled out amongst Kent Councils for the efficiency and effectiveness of its Freedom of Information Scheme. A survey of all councils in the country by IDOX, a specialist information and knowledge management company, found that the Council was amongst the top seven in the country for meeting all nine criteria of a simple Freedom of Information enquiry.

Wartime Memories

To coincide with the 60th anniversary of VE day, Dartford Borough Museum will be opening its doors on the 30 April after its £20,000 refurbishment programme with an exhibition dedicated to World War II.

This is the perfect opportunity for the older residents of the Borough to take a step back in time and share their memories of life in Dartford during the war with the Museum.

Whether the memories are of the whistling

bombs, the sight of a doodlebug or the camaraderie of the town, Dartford Museum would like to hear and use them to develop its new exhibition, showing people what life in wartime Dartford was really like.

Please contact the Museum with World War II memories on 01322 224739, museum@dartford.gov.uk or Dartford Borough Museum, Market Street Dartford, Kent, DA1 1EU.



Do you have memories of barrage balloons and doodlebugs? Dartford Museum would like to hear from you.

New Contact for Highways

Following a review last year, Kent County Council decided that the highway service could be made more efficient and responsive if it was directly responsible for all aspects.

Since 1974, Dartford Borough Council and other district councils in Kent have worked with the County Council to deliver the service. Currently, staff within Dartford Borough Council's Highways Unit carry out most day-to-day road maintenance work, including street lighting and improvements such as resurfacing roads and pavements. The decision ends this, with the new arrangements commencing on 1 April 2005.

The County Council is setting up three divisional offices for Kent, including one in West Kent with responsibility for highway matters within this Borough. Staff will transfer from this Council to the divisional offices.

Dartford Borough Council intends to continue to have an active involvement in highways decisions through the Joint Transportation Board, a Committee made up of Borough and County Councillors. The Board operates at a strategic level to help the County Council decide its local priorities.

The responsibility for highways matters will be clearer for Kent residents, resting with County Councillors and their officers. A new Contact Centre has been established and after 1 April 2005, if you want to report a pothole, a defective streetlight or deal with any other highways issue, call 08458 247 800.

What's on

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Orchard Theatre 01322 220000
Mick Jagger Centre 01322 291100
Miskin Theatre 01322 629472

APRIL

FRI 1

UNSIGNED - Best of local bands
The Mick Jagger Centre

WED 6 -

SUN 10

CINDERELLA ON ICE - Featuring Russian Ice Stars
Orchard Theatre

MON 11

TUES 12

GO WEST
THE BOBBY DARIN SONG BOOK
Orchard Theatre
Jacqueline Wilson's 'MIDNIGHT'

THUR 14 -

SAT 16

FRI 15

UNSIGNED - Best of local bands
The Mick Jagger Centre

SAT 16

EDDI READER
The Mick Jagger Centre
DAOD'S 'SWEET CHARITY'

TUES 19 -

SAT 23

MON 25

THE MAGIC OF IRELAND
Orchard Theatre

TUES 26

THE BARRON KNIGHTS
Orchard Theatre

WEDS 27

ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS
Orchard Theatre

THUR 28

Verdi's **LA TRAVIATA**
Orchard Theatre

FRI 29

SHAKESPEARE 4 KIDZ
The Tempest
Orchard Theatre

FRI 29

CLEO LANE, JOHN DANKWORTH AND FRIENDS
The Mick Jagger Centre

SAT 30

BUZZCOCKS & SUPPORT
The Mick Jagger Centre

MAY 2005

SUN 1

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
The Mick Jagger Centre

WEDS 4

DERREN BROWN
Orchard Theatre

THUR 5

SING FOR VICTORY
Orchard Theatre

FRI 6

THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA
Orchard Theatre

FRI 6

DENNIS ROLLINS BAD BONE & CO
The Mick Jagger Centre

SAT 7

BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
Orchard Theatre

TUES 10 -

SAT 14

DANCING IN THE STREETS
spectacular celebration of music from the heart of the Motor City
Orchard Theatre

FRI 13

Kiki Dee and Carmelo Luggeri
The Mick Jagger Centre

TUES 17

GLITZ, BLITZ & 70S HITZ
SWEET, THE RUBETTES & SAILOR
Orchard Theatre

SAT 21

MIDGE URE
Orchard Theatre

TUES 24 -

SAT 4 June

DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Orchard Theatre

Academy of St Martin in the Fields – an opportunity to experience a world-class chamber orchestra

The third concert in the Orchard Theatre's popular Orchestras Live! series is on Wednesday 27 March when the Academy of St Martin in the Fields brings three wonderful pieces of music out to a local audience. This is the whole concept behind the Orchestras Live programme. It is a national scheme that aims to bring the very best UK orchestras out to regional venues so that keen concert-goers can see their favourites without a trip to London, and so that newcomers can experiment with an easily accessible concert.

They will be playing Haydn's Symphony No.44 in E minor (Trauersinfonie). This is

relatively unusual among Haydn's symphonies in general in being in a minor key. Minor keys are typical of the symphonies of the early 1770s, the part of Haydn's career known (after a more or less contemporary romantic movement in literature) as the Sturm und Drang or "storm and stress" period.

They follow with Turina's La Oración del Torero op.34. Turina was born in Seville and frequently sang that city's praises in his music. Bullfighting is, of course, popular in Seville, so this piece, The Bullfighter's Prayer, was a natural subject for the composer.

Finally, we have Mozart's Symphony No. 29 in A. This symphony was composed in Salzburg early in 1774 when Mozart was just 11 years old. Yet it is remarkably mature, inventive and appealing.

A special family fun concert by the English Sinfonia rounds off the Orchestras Live! series in June.

Full information is available from the Orchard Box Office on 01322 220000.



The Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Comments and suggestions welcome

If you have any comments you would like to make on Dartford Borough News please contact us at dbn@dartford.gov.uk or 01322 343888

DART sports

Big Star Dishes up the Awards



Darts supremo Andy Fordham with Cllr Patsy Thurlow

Celebrity Fit club star and former darts world champion, Andy Fordham, took a breather from his tough exercise schedule to present this year's Dartford Sports Awards to the talented sports stars of the Borough.

The larger than life star runs The Rose public house in Dartford and as well as being a formidable darts player, is working hard to shed the pounds and develop a healthy lifestyle.

This year's winners highlighted the amazing array of sporting talent that we have in the Borough, ranging from barefoot waterskiing to canoe polo to modern pentathlon not to mention the more conventional sports of football and athletics.

Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow, Portfolio Member for Sports and Leisure, was delighted that Andy Fordham presented this year's awards and looks forward to seeing him back at the very 'top' in darts very soon, she said.

"Andy Fordham is a world class champion in his chosen sport and is showing his commitment to fitness through his participation on Celebrity

Fit Club. This achievement and dedication shows the qualities needed to reach the top in sport, which Andy has, and I'm sure he made a big impression on those who won an Award."

Due to the huge number of top quality athletes a new category of 'highly commended' was introduced, these athletes were presented with a certificate to recognise their achievements.

Next year the awards are set to be bigger and better than ever before and will be held in the new Dartford Judo Club.



Andy with Chloe Quinton - U16 Winner

These are just some of the sporting achievements of Dartford's award winners.

Twelve year old **Ryan Gale** was just one of the lucky winners, he won the U13 category for barefoot waterskiing. He has only been barefoot skiing for two years and already he has been selected to train with the Great Britain Squad and came 2nd in the Barefoot National Championships 2004. His goal for 2005 is to represent Great Britain in the European Championships.

Bouncing success **Jenny Brockwell**, also went away with a trophy in the U21 category for trampoline gymnastics. She has been competing at a national level for just over a year and turned in the performance of a lifetime to win the National Grade 2 Trampoline Final. This year she has already qualified for the National Grade 1 Final and hopes to attend the prestigious trampoline centre in Gillingham.

Sophie Corbidge, a 13 year old

modern pentathlete was nominated for an award by her Dad, Richard, and even though he admits he's biased it is easy to see why. Throughout the year Sophie has been breaking records and picking up medals at every opportunity. In October she was selected to represent Great Britain in the World Biathlon Championships, an event which involves running and swimming, and even though she was one of the youngest competitors she managed to come home in 6th place.

Dartford Harriers sprinting sensation **Gavin Comber** received the award in the U21 category. After starting the year by winning the 200m at the Kent Championships and breaking the 24 year old county record with 21.61 seconds he went on to win the English Schools and was ranked UK No.1 in the 200m right up until October.



Andy with Alek Makuwicz U13 winner



Cheryl Cummings - highly commended U16, Gavin Comber - Winner U21, Sophie Corbidge - Winner U13.

Sports and Fitness Centres

FAIRFIELD POOL & LEISURE CENTRE

TELEPHONE: (01322) 224400

DARTFORD Borough's largest sport & leisure centre, Fairfield boasts a 2000 sq. ft. air conditioned fitness gym with state of the art equipment, 25m swimming pool plus teaching pool, spacious air conditioned dance studio, luxurious health suite featuring large sauna and steam rooms, refreshing jacuzzi complete with resident aromatherapist and beautician, squash courts.

PRINCES PARK

TELEPHONE: (01322) 276565

PRINCES PARK, the proposed new home for Dartford Football Club, is set in thirty acres of parkland, and offers a wide range of first class sporting facilities including a par three, nine hole golf course, football pitches, bowls, squash courts plus tennis courts.

BECKET SPORTS CENTRE

TELEPHONE: (01322) 280646

Shepherds Lane, Dartford. Please call for opening hours and charges.

Category	Winner	Sport
Male Under 21	Gavin Comber	Athletics
Female Under 21	Jenny Brockwell	Trampoline gymnastics
Male Under 16	Daniel Robson	Canoe Polo
Female Under 16	Chloe Quinton	Ice Skating
	Sophie Duffell	Judo
Male Under 13	Alek Makuwicz	Fencing
	Ryan Gale	Bare foot waterskier
Female Under 13	Sophie Corbidge	Modern Pentathlon
Club	Swanscombe Tigers	Football
Coach	Joy Staples	Netball