



Our Community— Our Responsibility

Cliffe Fire
Station Special
May 2011

Cliffe Fire Station Under Threat?

Wednesday 1st June 2011, 7:30pm

Cliffe Memorial Hall, Church Street, Cliffe

Support our Fire Station

Your chance to hear and question the
decision makers and let them know how
YOU feel about the service.

In the Winter Clarion (January/February 2011) we reported :

“The original Cliffe Fire Station was built by the Parish Council early in the 20th century, by public subscription. It is a facility that has been a valuable community asset over many years, but it has often come under threat of closure when remote administrations are looking to save money. With the national ‘comprehensive spending review’ and the pressure on the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service budget, there appear to be thoughts of cutting back or even closing our fire station. We all need to make sure they understand how important it is to us.”

Now the details of changes to the contracts of our retained fire fighters have emerged, there is real concern that this could lead to a closure, by stealth, of our fire station.

The majority of our fire fighters are ‘retained’, this means they have to live and work within a few minutes of a fire station in order to answer call-outs promptly. Operationally this is an issue for the Kent Fire and Rescue service (KFRS) as it is difficult to know how many retained officers will respond when there is a call and it makes planning more difficult. In practice the Cliffe Fire Station has an excellent record of responding when required. It has however been decided to change the contracts of the retained fire fighters to part time and they have to commit to specific hours of cover which is much less flexible for them and many will be unable to give that commitment and will leave the service. It is very likely that the fire station could be covered by other fire fighters from further afield, but this could mean time delays in responding. Locally we also have import and export of live explosives from the Alpha Jetty in Cliffe, so quick response is vital.

Although this is an operational and personnel issue for the KFRS, the concern is that the reduction in officers will make it more difficult to cover the Cliffe Fire Station and will mean that the fire station ceases to be viable and could close. There are a number of pressures on KFRS and fire services across the country, not only budgetary, but this is being handled in different ways across the country.

At the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Annual Parish Meeting in April (organised by the Parish Council, but strictly a resident’s meeting) the problems of the Cliffe Fire Station were discussed. A resolution was passed that stressed support for our service. This was referred to the Parish Council who agreed at the 12th May meeting to organise a public meeting for residents to discuss these issues and make the decision makers aware of our concerns.

Invitations to attend have gone out to the Chief Executive, Chairman and Vice Chairman of KFRS, the Rochester and Strood MP, Mark Reckless, local Medway Councillors and the fire fighter’s union.

Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Council

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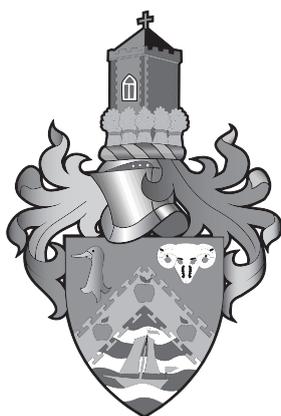
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Cliffe & Cliffe Woods Parish Councillors

Cliffe Village Ward

James Wenban	222620
Lynne Bush	222103
Julie Moss	222142
Lisa Mills	221442
Samantha Collins	221576
Colin Elliott	220877
Dave Green	221173
Steve Boosey	220597

Cliffe Woods Ward

Margaret Emblin	220904
Chris Fribbins	220932
Ken Kentell	221434
Robert Hunt	222042
Alan Taylor	220689
Sue McDermid	220864
Ray Letheren	222224
Ian Petrie	221862

Cliffe Fayre Reminder & Prettiest Garden/Hanging Basket Competition

The Cliffe Village Fayre is on Saturday 2nd July from 12 noon on the Buttway. It is organised by Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, Friends of the North Kent Marshes and St Helen's Church. **Why not enter the Cliffe & Cliffe Woods prettiest front garden or front hanging basket competition. Entries close 25th June. Cash prizes awarded for 1st 2nd & 3rd in each class. Pictures of the entries will be displayed at the fayre for people to vote on the 'Community Choice'. Would you like a stand or table at the Fayre or do you have any historic or recent pictures of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods for the Parish Collection?** Pictures will be on display as usual. For further details contact Joan Darwell on 01634 220121, (email joan.darwell@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk) or Gill Moore on 01634 222205 (email gill.moore@cliffeandcliffewoods-pc.gov.uk)

New Parish Council 2011-2015

We welcome Ian Petrie (Cliffe Woods), Steve Boosey, Colin Elliott and Dave Green (Cliffe) to the Parish Council along with most of the existing councillors, these were elected un-opposed. This is the first time for many years that we have had a complete set and have not needed to co-opt.

A very enthusiastic new Parish Council got down to business quickly and at the AGM on the 12th May appointed Chris Fribbins as the Chair, filled the committee places and created a new "Youth Liaison Committee" to improve links with Cliffe and Cliffe Woods' youth (we do budget £1,000 per year for youth projects and support and can raise more through various grants). We may even have a Youth Parish Council eventually.

At the AGM recognition and thanks were given to the commitment of former Chair Ken Kentell over 12 years in that role. Missing from the new councillors are Joan Darwell and Gill Moore. We know they will continue to work just as hard for the local community and the council will continue to work closely with them.

RS84/84A Spring Clarion Update

We have had a lot of feedback regarding concerns about the misuse of these upgraded footpaths by motor vehicles. We have passed these to the Medway Council Footpaths Officer Adam Taylor who has already carried out some changes and will welcome further feedback so he can do more. We will do what we can to support him.

Who we are and what we do

The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council has existed for over 100 years. We are a nationally recognised level, and most local level, of local government. There are 16 councillors, (8 from Cliffe Woods and 8 from Cliffe). The council meets monthly, alternately, in Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. There are a small number of committees that also meet to discuss specific issues in more detail before making recommendations to the Parish Council. The Clerks manage the parish on a day to day basis and the Caretaker looks after the recreation ground and play area in Cliffe and helps keep the Buttway and Cliffe Woods Car Park clear of litter.

The Parish is funded through the local council tax. Residents pay an extra amount on top of Medway Council, police and fire services—**this will raise £40,492 in 2011/2012**, and is only **about 35p per household per week!** We also raise funds from other sources for large schemes such as the Cliffe Ball Court, Cliffe Play Area, BMX/Skatepark and the allotments and receive a Rural Liaison Grant from Medway Council.

We are consulted on planning applications in our parish and local, regional or national issues affecting our area. We also take an active part in liaising with Medway Council, the police and the longer term strategic plans for our area.

We also help fund Youth Clubs in both Cliffe and Cliffe Woods—although neither is currently operating, **we would help anybody that wants to get them restarted.** Funds are also available to support neighbourhood watch schemes, the grass cutting in the churchyard of St. Helen's Church, Cliffe (£1,000 a year) and to support our two village halls (£5,000 a year, each).

We also welcome non-councillors on some of our committees (see WEB Site), why not take an active part in the community and join us?