

FAVERSHAM EYE

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THE NEWSPAPER FOR AND ABOUT FAVERSHAM

AUTUMN 2022 EDITION

WELCOME to issue 15 of Faversham Eye., we had hoped to publish this issue over the Summer, but various factors, including illness, delayed things.

In the light of the latest attempt by our Town Council to revitalise the upper reaches of Faversham Creek, we have made it the main theme of this issue. We have attempted to produce a brief history of the past thirty years of steady deterioration of our waterway, recounting some of the utter failures of our County, Borough and Town Councils to make any progress towards the regeneration of what has to be part of the Town's psyche and one of its greatest potential assets.

Elsewhere in the paper we

highlight some of the many positive endeavours and activities that help make our Town still somewhere special to live.

We feature the Kentish Sail Association, Alan Thorne and Simon Grillet who are helping to keep alive the maritime heritage of Faversham.

The Faversham Society, first formed in 1962, who have helped preserve some of the more historic parts of the town, notably, Abbey Street which was at one time threatened with wholesale demolition by the more extreme town planning policies of the 60s and 70s, as well as the creation of the Fleur de Lis museum.

Plus, the usual range of other articles including a review of the Spice Lounge restaurant which has

successfully integrated into our local society and an Obituary of Simon Foster, a man who was certainly unknown by most of the population but made an important contribution to the town.

Finally, we send condolences to our local MP, Helen Whately, who recently left her government post as Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury after Rishi Sunak's resignation as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Fortunately, she is still able to claim her £40,000 housing allowance to help her manage without the ministerial addition to her miserly MP's salary of £84,000.

Ironically, despite her manifest inadequacies, compared to those currently in Government, she would look like a political colossus.

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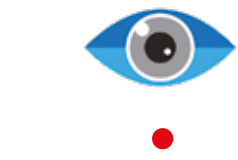
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View from the bridge - silt, mud and dumped rubbish block the lock gates and clog up the basin.



The creek bridge has cost more per metre not to build than the construction costs per metre of the QE Bridge crossing Thames (even allowing for inflation)

The cover illustration of the bid, comically, displayed a picture of Sittingbourne's Milton Creek rather than Faversham Creek

Possibly the biggest previous failure to achieve any positive result for the Creek, basin and bridge was that of the Faversham Creek Consortium

The final version largely ignored the preferences of most of those consulted, made little reference to the actual creek and recommended flats and houses on nearly all remaining Creekside sites

Sites reserved for traditional marine activity were barely mentioned

Faversham residents were warned that failure to approve its recommendations would result in Swale Borough Council withholding its £200,000 contribution to the bridge fund



Right: There have been many proposals and visualisations for the future of Faversham Creek. This one from 2019 shows the extent of Faversham's amazing creek as it winds from the town centre to the sea.

FAVERSHAM CREEK BRIDGE AND BASIN

A locked harbour basin at the head of a tidal creek in the centre of a mediaeval town, whose past wealth, commercial development, architecture and history was hugely dependent on that waterway which connected the town to the rest of the country and beyond to the world.

In most towns and cities in Europe, the local municipality would have grabbed the opportunity to restore and enjoy the social and economic benefits such an asset would bring to the local community. Not in good old Faversham though, where the technical difficulties in maintaining an opening bridge required to span the vast distance of nearly 24 feet has proved to be insurmountable since the original was last used in 1987.

This is despite hundreds of thousands of pounds being spent on consultants commissioned by our councils and untold hours of voluntary work undertaken by local people and groups, notably the Faversham Creek Trust, passionately committed to saving the creek and basin from dereliction. In fact, the creek bridge has cost more per metre not to build than the construction costs per metre of the QE Bridge crossing Thames (even allowing for inflation).

Readers may well have seen stories in the press and triumphant council announcements over the past two decades declaring the start of yet another scheme to revitalise the creek.

While not wishing to depress our readers by recounting the whole sad story, the following notable failures deserve mentioning.

THE SWALE STAB

In 1998/9 Swale made an application for a Millennium Grant for Faversham Creek regeneration. The bid was put together in a last-minute rush and was at best muddled and poorly presented. The cover illustration, comically, displayed a picture of Sittingbourne's Milton Creek rather than Faversham Creek. Apparently, a suitable illustration of the right waterway was unavailable. The application was inexplicably rejected.

THE CREEK CONSORTIUM

Possibly the biggest previous failure to achieve any positive result for the Creek, basin and bridge was that of the Faversham Creek Consortium led by the then councillor Mike Cosgrove and assisted amongst others by ex-town mayor Andrew Osbourne. This was set up at a packed public meeting in 2006, to genuine acclaim. The protracted

process undertaken by the consortium over the next ten years to produce a feasible plan for the regeneration of the creek and basin, including the expensive commissioning of a frankly inadequate, simplistic and expensive report by consultants Urban Initiatives sapped the enthusiasm of many in the town.

This was followed by the introduction of a Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan whose production was under the control of a town council steering group again led by Cosgrove and Osbourne plus others including Nigel Kay (see earlier editions of Fav Eye online). The final version largely ignored the preferences of most of those consulted, made little reference to the actual creek and recommended flats and houses on nearly all remaining Creekside sites in the plan's area. Sites reserved for traditional marine activity were barely mentioned.

When this draft plan went out to referendum Mr Cosgrove warned the residents of Faversham that failure to approve its recommendations would result in Swale Borough Council withholding its £200,000 contribution to the bridge fund. This was particularly ironic given that the creek bridge was explicitly omitted from the proposed neighbourhood plan.

THE KCC INITIATIVE

Hope was raised again four years ago when the KCC took the initiative. Exactly 3 years ago we wrote in Faversham Eye the following:

CREEK UPDATE OCTOBER 2019

Faversham's creek bridge will be lifted out by crane before Christmas for inspection by engineers. "Our plan is to carry out a detailed inspection in the next six to eight weeks which will involve a weekend road closure to enable the existing bridge to be lifted off," says Kent County Leader Paul Carter. The 40-ton bridge will be removed to check the condition of its deck, supporting structures and moving parts. "When this information is to hand we will be able to assess whether restoration is the best option or commissioning a new bridge," says Carter.

The existing bridge was built to support trucks towing half-built ships to the former Pollock's shipyard on the Front Brents and is massively over-engineered for ordinary road traffic. But restoring it might be simpler and quicker than obtaining consents required for an all-new structure.

On the other hand, a new, lighter, modern Dutch-style bridge would be more efficient and possibly more reliable and KCC is pursuing both options. "I am pleased to report that we now have soil analysis information available to us and will start the design and supplier engagement phases," reports Carter who says the project 'is continuing to build momentum'.

The whole project – including the cost of sluice gates and dredging- is likely to cost between £2.5 and £3 million according to latest estimates. A total of £1.54 million has been pledged already (see column on the right) and KCC will pursue Peel Ports, the company responsible for keeping the creek navigable, for a substantial contribution.

As for the creek basin, "wharf-side regeneration will be delivered by others, subject to satisfying

all the necessary planning requirements", says Carter, who adds: "negotiations are progressing with adjoining landowners."

This is hugely positive news for the many Faversham people demanding urgent action on the bridge. Almost a year ago, Carter told Faversham he was "on a mission" to solve the problem of its swing bridge. "By hook or by crook I'm going to do my very, very best to make it happen while I remain leader of Kent County Council," he told 500 people at a public meeting in St Mary's church, adding "Hopefully I won't go anywhere until we've found a solution."

So the recent news that Carter was stepping down as KCC leader on October 17 was met with dismay by many of those fighting to restore the creek as a functioning waterway. And yet it does appear that, at long last, real progress is being made, albeit slightly behind schedule. Paul Carter will remain a county councillor and, as former leader, is likely to retain considerable clout within Conservative-controlled KCC.

Although he is optimistic, some serious problems need tackling. "It is clear that if we are to achieve our objective of seeing vessels navigating the creek and mooring in the basin, there are many more obstacles to overcome than just providing a bridge that opens and closes," he says.

Those challenges include:

SILT

Accumulated silt in the creek at the bridge has buried the 'cill' – the ledge in front of the lock gates- under 5 feet of mud. This must be removed before the gates can be repaired or replaced. Unfortunately, this means dredging the creek for nearly two miles downstream to prevent the mud returning.

If silting problems are not dealt with urgently, the upper reaches of the creek will soon no longer be navigable by vessels of any reasonable size, making a working creek pointless.

Making the creek welcoming and useable for visiting boats will bring obvious economic benefits.

THE BRIDGE AND LOCK GATES

The existing bridge needs to be either repaired and improved to provide a safe pedestrian walkway or replaced completely. The new or repaired lock gates will need an effective sluicing mechanism to keep the dredged creek navigable.

THE BASIN

Not only does the basin need dredging but substantial moorings and boat repair facilities must be provided for visiting craft. This will generate substantial income and become a lively public attraction. Space should also be made available for small boat activities.

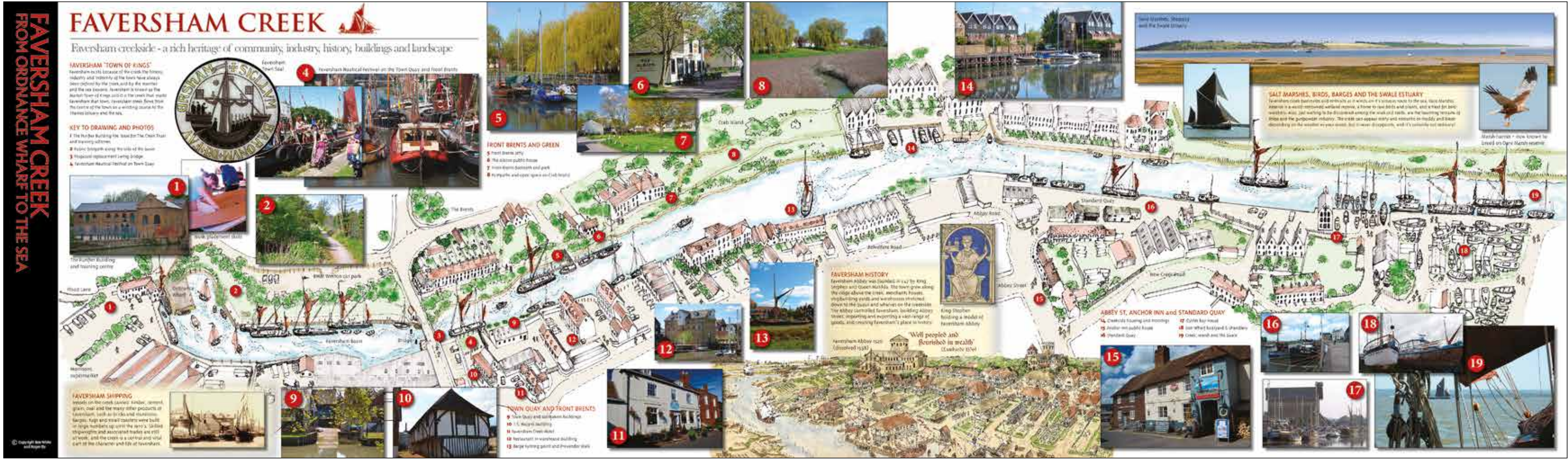
The cooperation of the two major landowners around the basin, BMM Weston and Shepherd Neame, will be necessary but with the imaginative use of the planning system, it should be possible to optimise both public and private benefit.

OUR VIEW

With substantial funding now in place, it should not be impossible to raise the £1 million financial shortfall, Peel Ports, which is responsible for keeping the creek navigable and the gates operable, should be pressed to provide funds. The long term economic and social gains to the town of creating a major visitor attraction, new employment opportunities, training and water-based youth facilities, will make the short-term cost seem insignificant. We will also have returned our Creek to its former prominence, retaining Faversham's historic links and unique character for the foreseeable future. Local people have demonstrated their strong desire to achieve these aims and we hope all our representative get behind councillor Carter to make sure we succeed.

THERE ALMOST CERTAINLY WON'T BE A BETTER - OR EVEN ANOTHER- CHANCE IN THE FUTURE.

At the time of writing the above the pledged money was:	
KCC	£850,000
Swale Borough Council	£200,000
Faversham Town Council	£170,000
Faversham Creek Trust through the community	£125,000
Philanthropic donation	£200,000
Total	£1.54 million



The long term economic and social gains to the town of creating a major visitor attraction, new employment opportunities, training and water-based youth facilities, will make the short-term cost seem insignificant





The huge sense of disappointment and frustration felt by thousands of local people to see nothing positive come of all their efforts to help revitalise the creek



Three years on the situation is even worse after yet again no progress. We have:

A heavily silted creek which is inevitably at its worst in the basin which is at the top end of the tidal flow, where an estimated average of over 2 metres of mud has built up.

In its present state, even with an opening bridge, the basin can only be used by dinghies and then only for limited periods of time around high water.

Lock gates which are no longer operable and stuck open, allowing an ever increasing amount of silt to build up.

A 'temporary' fixed replacement

road and foot bridge which is being leased at around £50,000 a year has already cost the cash-strapped KCC over £350,000 to install.

Extremely unpleasant smelling wastewater runoff from the Shepherd Neame brewery. Local residents, shoppers and businesses will be well aware of the stink as it regularly permeates the surrounding area.

What little water we now get in the creek is often polluted with partially treated, or even worse, raw sewage. (Swimming in the Faversham waters is not recommended).

At the Ordnance Wharf site in the basin and Swan Quay just below the bridge, the owner/developers have

fenced off their sites from any use as they hold out for permission to build more expensive houses and flats. In the case of Swan Quay, the inability to moor alongside has severely limited the space available for the annual

Photos anticlockwise from above: Over two metres of mud in the creek basin.

The lock gates partly submerged in silt and debris.

The £50,000 a year bridge.

The narrow channel of water flowing from Davington Ponds alongside Ordnance Wharf.

Where's Our Bridge poster, and we are still waiting.

The fence alongside the creek at Swan Quay.

Creek Festival on the adjacent Town Quay to accommodate visiting boats and sailing barges. Withholding permission to allow temporary use of the quayside by the owners of Swan Quay could be seen as a petty act of spite for their failing to secure permission for a change of use from commercial to residential use.

Of equal importance is the huge sense of disappointment and frustration felt by thousands of local people to see nothing positive come of all their efforts to help revitalise the creek.

It was an extraordinary effort by the townspeople to raise over £125,000 in a few months to help fund a working opening bridge.

A NEW INITIATIVE BY FAVERSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Our relatively recently elected Faversham Town Council has finally taken the initiative to act. Initially with an attempt to tackle Peel Ports and get them to realise their legal responsibilities for the need to keep the creek in a "commodious condition" and maintain the bridge, lock gates and sluices or reach some kind of financial settlement and allow others to take control and subsequently to move forward with a revitalisation project

The Faversham Eye wholeheartedly supports the Town Council in their endeavours and hopes they can avoid the pitfalls that have bedevilled previous efforts. Probably it really is the last chance.

We also emphasise that all the comments we made three years ago still apply, along with the inevitable

increase in construction costs and even more silt removal required

We have little hope that our local MP Helen Whately's involvement will result in anything more than a photo opportunity for her.

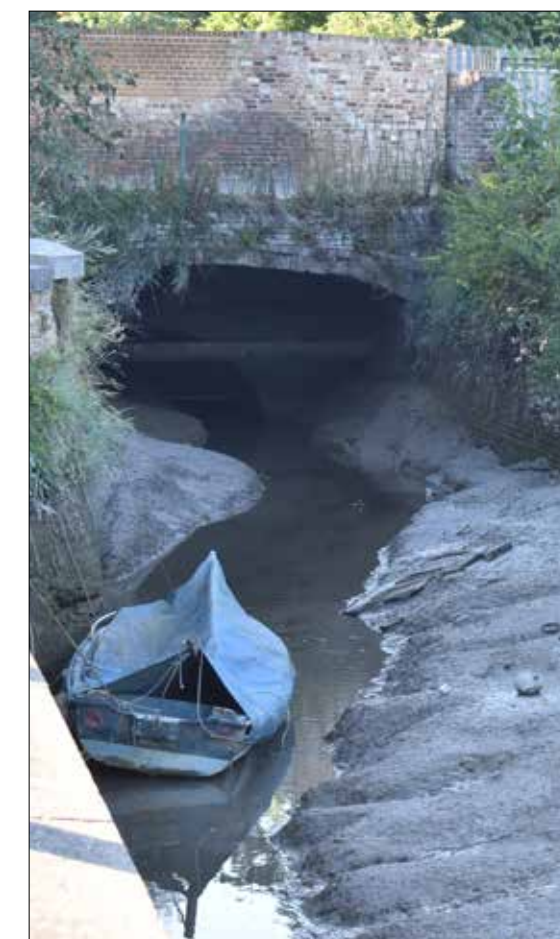
IN CONCLUSION

In 1994 when our late Conservative MP Sir Roger Moate (who genuinely cared for Faversham) headed an ad hoc committee formed to try to address the deterioration of the creek, the then Medway Ports Harbour Master, Captain White, said that, in his view, the best way forward for the basin would be to fill it in and turn it

into a car park.

Perhaps if the latest initiative fails, we should take his advice. It could be called the OSCO MEMORIAL CAR PARK in honour of the heroic failure our ex-councillors notably A Osbourne and M Cosgrove to achieve any concrete success, despite their many years of dictating the progress and direction of plans to revitalise our waterway.

Perhaps it could include a monumental headstone of a similar design to that in Stone Street which was largely funded by the local Bensted Charities (trustees include a Mr Osbourne and Cosgrove).



WATER: THE LIFEBLOOD OF FAVERSHAM



Public outrage at the discharges of raw and partially-treated sewage by Southern Water into Faversham Creek and Cooksditch

People seizing opportunities, taking the initiative, and engaging politically can and do make a difference

On a rising tide, discharges from the CSOs and Faversham sewage works are washed up to Standard Quay and beyond into the tidal basin

Chalk streams are of global importance because of their rarity, and a top conservation priority for the British government, the Environment Agency and private water companies

A high priority is to stop the deliberate discharge by Southern Water, under storm conditions, of raw sewage into Cooksditch and Thorn Creek next to the sewage works



The character, landscape and history of Faversham have been influenced more by water and the town's location at the convergence of fresh- and saltwater ecosystems than perhaps any other factor. The reliable flow of freshwater from the springs along this section of the north Kent coast was one of the reasons why early settlers made their homes here; proximity to the sea gave easy access to coastal and continental trade routes and bountiful supplies of fish and other seafood; and the streams drove watermills that were a source of food, employment, wealth, and – over the years – thousands of tons of gunpowder. The Faversham Oyster Fishery Company is one of the oldest companies in the world, and in the early 1700s the port was the most important in England for the export of wool to continental Europe.

Over the past century, that immediate economic dependence of the town on water has declined to the point where most of us take it for granted. That is changing now, however, in part thanks to public outrage at the discharges of raw and partially-treated sewage by Southern Water into Faversham Creek and Cooksditch, and dwindling water levels in the Westbrook and other local streams as the result of low rainfall over the winter and decades of over-extraction from the chalk formations of the North Downs. Water levels this summer are lower than they've been for years.

Whether it is that outrage that is driving action, or simply an outpouring of volunteerism in the community, the articles that follow all show that people seizing opportunities, taking the initiative, and engaging politically can and do make a difference.

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

One of the areas where there's scope for further action lies in using the law to challenge the status quo. A case in point is the

ruling on nutrient neutrality by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 2018, upheld by the High Court in 2021, concerning the protection of conservation areas designated before the UK left the European Union. The Borough of Swale is one of 74 local planning authorities in England where designated protected areas are threatened by the excessive nutrients introduced to them by human activities. In protected areas where environmental quality has been identified as a problem by Natural England, new developments are only permitted to go ahead if they will cause "no likely significant adverse effect" on natural habitats

CHALK STREAMS

The same chalk aquifer that provides a steady supply of ready-filtered drinking water for Faversham also feeds the dozens of springs that occur all along the north Kent coast between Seasalter and Sittingbourne. The fact that they flow from chalk means that they are categorised as chalk streams – of which there are officially less than 250 in the world, and 80 percent of them in England. Chalk streams are of global importance because of their rarity, and a top conservation priority for the British government, the Environment Agency and private water companies as they try to reduce the negative environmental impacts of both water supply and wastewater treatment.

Today even the Westbrook – whose original source was near Painter's Forstal until its upper



Clapgate Spring east of Faversham feeds one of the many chalk streams along the north Kent coast. It is threatened by proposed housing development on nearby Abbey Fields. Photo: Matthew Hatchwell.

and wild fauna and flora. Otherwise, a mitigation plan is required, for example the introduction of nature-based solutions to reduce the levels of nutrients (in particular nitrates and phosphates) in water.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, so far Natural England has not identified water quality in the Swale Special Protection Area (SPA) as being a problem that would trigger nutrient neutrality measures. The particular threat to the Swale SPA is an excess of nutrients carried into it from nearby wastewater treatment works and other sources including run-off from agricultural land. Excessive levels of nutrients in watercourses and waterbodies can be just as damaging to the environment as high levels of pesticides and other toxins, leading to eutrophication which is highly damaging to natural ecosystems. One of the main sources of nutrient overload is partially treated sewage from Combined Sewage Outfalls (CSOs) and treatment works like the one on Faversham Creek. On a rising tide, discharges from the CSOs and Faversham sewage works are washed up to Standard Quay and beyond into the tidal basin, and flushed out only

slowly into the Swale leaving unsightly and foul-smelling residues in their wake.

Once in the Swale, excessive nutrients in the water smother native sea grass beds, leave shellfish inedible by humans, reduce oxygen levels in the water so that fewer fish can survive, prevent native oysters from re-establishing themselves, and discourage recreational use of coastal waters for swimming, boating, and other watersports.

Contrary to popular belief, responsibility for the release of partially treated wastewater into England's inland and coastal waterways does not lie solely with private water companies like Southern Water. Much of the time they are simply complying with rules set and occasionally enforced by the Environment Agency as the regulatory agency acting on behalf of DEFRA. Between 2010 and 2021, the EA's budget was cut by nearly two-thirds, along with its capacity to enforce all but the most blatant and extreme cases of pollution. Water companies are actively discouraged by the government's water services watchdog, Ofwat, from investing to improve the quality of their discharges above the standards set for them by DEFRA and the EA.

Questions must now be asked

SILT AND STONEBRIDGE POND

One of the results of the lower flow of water in the Westbrook since the 1950s, and other changes that have taken place along the stream over the past 100 years, is that the sediment that has accumulated in Stonebridge Pond and the channels that run through the nearby allotments is in danger of clogging several of the channels altogether. In places, water that was originally 2.5-3m deep is now just a few centimetres deep and kept flowing thanks only to the hard work of volunteers. "The Duckpond" as it is known to most local children is a much-loved feature of the town so discussions are underway about how it can be preserved in more or less its present state for the enjoyment of future generations. Removing all the accumulated silt would be very expensive, so expert advice is being sought about ways to maintain the pond and restore the flow of the Westbrook by other means. The process is being led by a group of partners including Faversham Town Council, Swale Borough Council, the South East Rivers Trust, the Friends of the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond, the Faversham Society, Stonebridge Allotment Association, and the Environment Agency.

NOTE FOR CHILDREN: next time you feed the ducks at the Duckpond, please tell your parents to use the special duck food provided, or to buy their own, instead of using processed white bread which is bad for the ducks' health! Thanks!



Above: The three gauge boards installed along the Westbrook last winter provide important information for maintaining water levels in our valuable chalk streams. Photo: Matthew Hatchwell.



NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE WESTBROOK AND STONEBRIDGE POND

Another reason to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on June 2nd was the announcement that the Friends of the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond has been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The QAVS is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

The Friends of the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond was formed in 2013 with the aim of bringing a neglected urban stream back to life for the benefit of the community and wildlife. Work has included clearing fly-tipping and litter, enhancing habitats, ecological surveying, water monitoring, improving eel passage, installing bird and bat boxes, planting trees, bulbs and wildflower seeds, improving signage, fundraising, publicity and publication of a historic walking-tour of the area. The Friends also take part in consultations, including on local green spaces, water resources and quality, and work with others to promote the value of urban green spaces like the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond, and the importance of volunteering for individuals and the community.

Anna Stonor, who helped set the group up in 2013 explained, "I'm over the moon that the Friends have received the Queen's Award and it's all thanks to our incredible and dedicated volunteers and the partners we work with. I have got so much out of my involvement in the group – an understanding of the heritage and ecology of the area, an appreciation of the

value of water and green space and the benefits they bring to communities, an increased confidence in the power of volunteering as well as lots of new friends. I'm particularly proud that we managed to carry on with our work during the Covid pandemic as that was a time when the Westbrook's value as a space for local people to enjoy really came to the fore. We are a very informal group and always welcome new members whatever their age or skills and whatever the time they have to give.



Above: Friends of the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond volunteers meet monthly to keep the stream flowing and litter-free. Sign-up details at <https://friendsofthewestbrook.wordpress.com>. Photo: Matthew Hatchwell.



Contrary to popular belief, responsibility for the release of partially treated wastewater into England's inland and coastal waterways does not lie solely with private water companies like Southern Water

Water companies are actively discouraged by the government's water services watchdog, Ofwat, from investing to improve the quality of their discharges above the standards set for them by DEFRA and the EA



of Natural England as well, as to why new housing developments are being permitted around Faversham despite leading to increased nutrient loads being carried into the Swale SPA. Inevitably, the construction of new houses results in an increase in the volume of wastewater to be treated by the Faversham sewage works, whose impacts on the SPA should be limited either by reducing the number of new

houses built, improving the quality of discharges, or a combination of the two. Taking the 2018 and 2021 ECJ and High Court rulings at face value, new developments in Swale should only be permitted if they do not increase the load of waterborne nutrients discharged into the Swale above 2018 levels.

You don't need to be a cynic to suspect that the recent announcement

by Secretary of State for the Environment, George Eustice, that the government wants to amend the Habitats Directive that underlies the ECJ and High Court decisions, is motivated by the desire not to improve the conservation status of UK protected areas but to remove potential obstacles to the activities of the Conservative Party's housing developer buddies and donors.

EEL MONITORING ON FAVERSHAM CREEK

European eels are the only Critically Endangered species that lives and thrives around Faversham. They are also the most trafficked animal species in the world, with millions of illegally-caught glass eels smuggled every year from Europe to the Far East.

If you're a regular walker on the marshes outside Faversham, around low tide in recent weeks you may have seen pairs of intrepid volunteers up to their elbows in water, mud and eel monitoring paraphernalia. They are all part of a three-month programme led and

funded by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to study the arrival of young European eels from their hatching grounds thousands of miles away in the Sargasso Sea. The purpose of the monitoring is to understand the long-term trend in glass eel and elver arrivals in Europe, which fell by 95% or more between the 1980s and 2000s but may now be recovering slightly. ZSL also hopes to collect information on the ability of young eels to pass barriers that have been put in place to control coastal flooding but which, in some cases, have the unwanted side-effect

of blocking the migration of eels to and from their breeding grounds.

An unexpected bonus of the eel monitoring is that volunteers report hearing both turtle doves and nightingales – two bird species whose UK populations have plummeted in recent decades – along the Creek. Like European eels, their presence within the parish is significant and to be celebrated.

The eel monitoring study will continue until the end of July and is a great example of how citizen science can contribute to wildlife conservation.



Left: The glass eels that arrive in the freshwater streams and ponds of north Kent every year have swum 4000 miles from the Sargasso Sea. Photo: Sarah Cuttle.



Right: A team of volunteers has been monitoring the passage of glass eels through outfalls on Faversham Creek since May.



A three-month programme led and funded by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to study the arrival of young European eels from their hatching grounds thousands of miles away in the Sargasso Sea

The transformation of Cooksditch from an overgrown and clogged drainage ditch full of discarded rubbish into a free-flowing stream with lovingly tended banks



REASON TO BE CHEERFUL

A much-needed good news story in Faversham over the past two years has been the transformation of Cooksditch from an overgrown and clogged drainage ditch full of discarded rubbish into a free-flowing stream with lovingly-tended banks and attractive to wildlife including eels and kingfishers. Like the Westbrook and other local chalk streams, the water level in Cooksditch has suffered as the result of an unusually dry winter and spring, so reaching agreement with South East Water and other users to reduce long-term abstraction from the underlying chalk aquifer is vital. Just as urgent is for Southern Water to redesign the Combined Sewer Outflow that spews untreated raw sewage from the pumping station on Cyprus Road into Cooksditch every time the drains are overwhelmed after heavy rain.

The outstanding work done by the Cooksditch Stream volunteers, led by Lesley Seager, was recognised earlier this year in the form of an award by the Mayor of Faversham for contributions to the community.



Above: Thanks to a team of dedicated volunteers, Cookditch has been transformed over the past two years from a clogged rubbish dump (Left) into the setting for a vibrant community garde (Right). Photos: Matthew Hatchwell and Hollie Brennan.



THE WILDEST TOWN IN KENT?

On May 7th, outgoing Mayor Alison Reynolds accepted Kent Wildlife Trust's first ever Wilder Town Award on behalf of Faversham. Presenting the award, KWT Head of Engagement Keeley Atkinson cited several examples of work being done in and around the town by a wide range of local groups:

- The declaration by Faversham Town Council in 2019 of an Environmental, Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency. Faversham is one of the few communities to be giving biodiversity the same level of priority as the climate emergency.
- Following the 2019 announcement, the Town Council voted to become a carbon-neutral town by 2030 – by installing more electric vehicle charging points, scaling up tree planting, encouraging people to switch to walking and cycling instead of using their cars, installing more planters to enhance our streets at the same time as reducing vehicle speed, and other measures.
- Working with Pesticide Action Network, the town has also adopted a 3-year plan to eradicate pesticides in Faversham by 2023, phasing out the use of pesticides in local authority contracts and working with businesses, schools, housing associations and residents to reduce pesticide use.
- During the winter of 2020/2021, Faversham residents planted over 1000 trees in their gardens and many others were planted in public spaces. More Town Council-sponsored tree-planting is planned for this coming winter.

- Faversham was named 'Neighbourhood with the Best Buzz' in 2020 by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust.

Just as important alongside these achievements, the KWT citation commended the wide range of volunteer initiatives – some of them mentioned elsewhere in this issue of the Eye – taking place in and around the town, working against all odds to reduce the impact of massive unwanted housing developments, improve water quality in Faversham Creek, and maintain the connections between people and nature that help make Faversham what it is.



Above: Faversham's Wilder Town award from Kent Wildlife Trust was the result of work by a wide range of groups and people around the town. Photo: Matthew Hatchwell.

ST MARY OF CHARITY CHURCHYARD

The combined area of the 19,000+ churchyards owned by the Church of England is larger than Exmoor National Park. Because – bizarrely – biodiversity conservation is a relatively low priority for most British national parks, there is almost certainly greater biodiversity in the country's churchyards than there is in any one of those formally protected areas. Organisations such as Caring for God's Acre and A. Rocha International have been set up to support nature protection in churchyards, including through the development of management plans, action to protect diverse wildlife habitats in British churchyards, and "Count on Nature" surveys to catalogue that wildlife. On June 11th, the Friends of St Mary of Charity Parish Church and partners including the Kent Tree and Pond Wardens and experts from the Faversham Natural History Group organised a bioblitz to get a first idea of the range of plants, birds, insects and mammals present in the rambling churchyard.

Kent Tree Warden David Carey says that "the best bird observed was the grey wagtail that seems to have adopted the churchyard; the best plant was possibly the abundant stone parsley or the tiny maidenhair fern; the best insect was the Ferdinandea hoverfly; the best tree was the huge lime in the northeast corner or one of the veteran ashes; and the least expected finding was of hedgehog dung, which was surprising because they need such large foraging areas to wander around at night." The next step will be to work with Church of England officials and parishioners at St Mary of Charity to develop and implement a plan to protect and maintain that rich biodiversity.



Above: A tree walk in St Mary of Charity churchyard last year, led by Kent Tree Warden David Carey, attracted over 70 people. Photo: Matthew Hatchwell.



Faversham is one of the few communities to be giving biodiversity the same level of priority as the climate emergency

During the winter of 2020/2021, Faversham residents planted over 1000 trees in their gardens and many others were planted in public spaces

The Friends of St Mary of Charity Parish Church and partners including the Kent Tree and Pond Wardens and experts from the Faversham Natural History Group organised a bioblitz

The least expected finding was of hedgehog dung





Since privatisation, the UK water companies have extracted over 72 billion pounds in value in the form of dividends and profits

In two days in 2021 the Mogden sewage works on the upper Thames discharged over Two Billion litres into the river



CREEK POLLUTION

The discharge of sewage into our rivers and seas has at long last become a national scandal. Increasing pressure is being put on the privatised water companies to take immediate action to reduce spillage incidents and not just complacently pay the inadequate fines for offences committed, as

that is cheaper than undertaking expensive capital expenditure which would reduce their profits.

Since privatisation, the UK water companies have extracted over 72 billion pounds in value in the form of dividends and profits. Essentially these are public funds not being spent on vitally needed investment.

Southern water is owned by the notoriously rapacious Australian bank, Macquarie. They had previously controlled Thames Water, where they extracted billions in profits leaving the water company with huge debts.

In two days alone in 2021 the Mogden sewage works on the upper Thames discharged over Two Billion litres into the river.

The Faversham works is only capable of primary sewage treatment and has seriously inadequate capacity to cope with the Town's recent new housing developments. This results in vast quantities of partially treated sewage being regularly discharged into the creek.

But in the panel below we report on a particular local issue.

SEWAGE DISCHARGES FROM HOUSEBOATS ON FAVERSHAM CREEK

Whilst the recent focus has been on Southern Water and their Combined Sewage Overflows that discharge diluted sewage into the Creek during sever rainfall, to relieve the pressure on the sewage system, another source of sewage pollution in the Creek has been highlighted.

There are around 30 houseboats and live-aboard seaworthy vessels that are permanently moored on the upper reaches Faversham Creek.

These vessels are usually able to discharge their sewage directly into the Creek. That constitutes a significant potential source of raw pollution, probably in the region of 1200 litres every day. See Appendix B.

It is certainly not the case that these discharges are restricted to the ebb tide, that would help the sewage to go downstream into the Swale, or at least ensure that the vessels are afloat during discharge.

The common solution is to install adequate Holding Tanks that can be regularly pumped out by visiting tankers; these small tankers are used for mobile toilets and other small installations. At present there is scant evidence that this method of disposal is practised on the creek.

However, there are also limited on-site toilets, public or by exclusive access to vessels available on two sites; the extent of their usage is unknown.

There are neither national legislation nor local byelaws that control this situation, apart from the Port of London Authority who introduced their Byelaw 49, to reduce sewage in the Thames.

Peel Ports, the Statutory Harbour Authority, does not have similar legislation to use in the Medway or Swale, and has no intention of pursuing the matter, stating that it is a national issue that must be legislated for by government.

It is feasible that a local Byelaw could be raised to restrict vessels from pumping sewage into the Creeks, based on the PLA Byelaw 49. A model is attached as Appendix A. That would require the support of FTC and SBC.

There is a more serious issue in the Medway at the Hoo Houseboat 'village' with around 100 vessels, mostly real static houseboats. The EA and the Medway Council are monitoring the situation but there is no practical progress to date.

HOME PORT CRAFT

This is a contentious issue for fully seagoing vessels, especially smaller active seagoing boats, as the lack of space onboard and installation costs of Black Tanks, will make it very difficult to enforce.

However, this is a national problem that is already being addressed in Marinas and even some permanent Houseboat communities. We cannot continue to pump raw sewage into our rivers and creeks, and we all have to take some responsibility for the problem and agree to the solutions.

It makes sense because as more vessels are permanently moored alongside quays, it is inevitable that the level of pollution will increase to unacceptable levels as it has at Hoo where it affects the rest of local river users including users of the launching slip.

Many years ago, public outcry at the stench emanating from Faversham Creek, resulted in the ban on discharging domestic sewage into the Creek, and the building a sewage works to process it. That meant that pipes had to be laid to carry it to the works.

At that time, as was normal practice, it was mixed with ground drainage water to help the flow. That is the reason behind the CSOs that are the subject of controversy now, which due to increasing rainfall, discharge more sewage [diluted] more frequently that envisaged, back into the Creek again.

APPENDIX A MODEL BYELAW TO PREVENT DISCHARGE OF SEWAGE INTO FAVERSHAM CREEK, BASED ON PLA 39.

Guidance to Boat Owners on Compliance with Swale Borough Council [or Faversham Town Council] Byelaw XX – Prohibiting Discharge of Sewage into Faversham Creek

INTRODUCTION

This [SBC or FTC] Byelaw XX comes into force on Day Month Year. The Byelaw prevents the discharge of sewage into the Creek from specified vessels, consistent with the continuing improvement of the Creek environment, particularly in conjunction with measures to be undertaken by Southern Water

to stop the discharge of untreated sewage into the river, and brings the Faversham Creek into line with a number of other UK harbours and inland waterways.

For the purposes of this byelaw, sewage refers to faeces and urine plus any water associated with them.

The full text of the [SBC or FTC] Byelaw XX is reproduced below:

DISCHARGE OF SEWAGE INTO THE FAVERSHAM CREEK

XX.1 The owner of a houseboat must, from Day Month Year, ensure that no sewage is discharged into the Faversham Creek, or any tributaries to or from Faversham Creek

XX.2 In this byelaw "houseboat" means any vessel (other than a ship registered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 or any vessel usually used for navigation) which is used primarily as a place of habitation, or as a place for accommodating or receiving persons for the purposes of shelter, recreation, entertainment or refreshment, or as club premises or offices, while it is moored.

XX.3 This byelaw shall not apply to –
(a) a vessel which is navigated, worked or moored only occasionally in Faversham Creek; and for the purpose of this subsection, a vessel is navigated, worked or moored only occasionally in Faversham Creek if –
(1) it is navigated, worked or moored within that area not more than six times in any period of 12 months; and (2) on each such occasion it is navigated, worked or moored within the Faversham Creek area for no more than 96 hours.

Note: In other words, a vessel that is not a temporary visitor, and remains in Faversham Creek for periods longer than the limits stated, has to comply with this Byelaw. The PLA also publish a larger document showing owners options for complying with PLA 49.

APPENDIX B ESTIMATE OF SEWAGE DISCHARGES

The volume of sewage discharged is around 5 litres per flush x 4 times per day x 2 people per vessel = 40 litres per vessel, x 30 vessels = 1200 litres per day. This excludes all other discharges from kitchens and washing machines.

FLOODING IN FAVERSHAM

By Brian Pain

Occupying Creekside houses in Faversham comes with the inevitable risk of experiencing flooding. This occurs when the highest spring tides coincide with particularly adverse weather conditions and consequential surge tides. This has the effect of pushing extra water up Faversham Creek resulting in exceptional water levels.

Such events will only become more frequent in the future as a result of rising sea levels and climate change.

The recently built houses adjacent to Standard Quay, which are now up for sale, suffered such a fate in February this year during their construction. This did not deter the builders, however, who showed remarkable ingenuity to enable them to continue work despite the water lapping around their knees. It is to be hoped that the insulation boards and blockwork have now dried out.



The flood images were taken in February 2022, the houses are now up for sale.





"At its heart, the planning system relies on trust"

Swale has seen its funding from central government decimated



Above: Cllr Mike Baldock (Swale Independent Alliance)

CHANGES AT SWALE

Cllr Mike Baldock (Swale Independent Alliance) has succeeded Cllr Roger Truelove (Labour) as leader of Swale Borough Council and the Cabinet System has been abandoned in favour of a committee system.

Under the committee system, individual councillors no longer have executive powers and cannot make decisions outside of the cross-party committees. From Faversham Cllr Ben J Martin (Lib Dem) chairs Housing and Health; Cllr Julian Saunders (Labour) chairs Environment, Cllr Tim Valentine (Green) is his deputy and Cllr Denise Knights (Independent) chairs the Eastern Area Committee and Julian Saunders is vice-chair. Cllrs Mike Baldock and Monique Bonney (Deputy Council Leader, Independent group) are chair and vice-chair of Policy and Finance & Urgent Decisions. Cllr Hannah Perkin (Lib Dem) chairs the Standards Committee.

It remains to be seen what changes in practice the new committee system brings. It is likely that there will be

more transparency and perhaps more cross-party working. On the other hand between committee meetings, officers will make more of the day to day decisions.

James Freeman and Graham Thomas have retired from the senior posts in Swale Planning. Flo Churchill is the new interim Head of Planning Services. Most recently Flo was Interim Service Director – Development and Regulation at West Berkshire Council. She is also Planning Advisor to various Associations of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils. We can expect change.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

The Planning Advisory Service in "A Stitch in Time" published in 2008 sought to challenge the "traditional perception of enforcement services as an inessential, non-statutory and reactive service towards enforcement being a key component in an effective development management service." More recently (2020) the

Royal Town Planning Institute has pointed out that: "At its heart, the planning system relies on trust and our enforcers provide the backbone of this trust – trust that those who flout our planning laws (and often other laws at the same time) will be brought to account; trust that those who strive for high quality will not be undermined by those who would deliver ill-planned and ill-designed development; and trust that the high-quality schemes that achieve planning permission will be delivered with that same quality – that planning will deliver what is promised."

Planning enforcement has been weak in Swale, it is a non-statutory service; the local authority does not have to provide the service. Given that Swale has seen its funding from central government decimated, with its revenue support grant reducing from £4.17 million in 2014/15 to just £119,000 in 2022/23 it, along with other discretionary services could be vulnerable to cuts.

MAGNA CARTA REVISITED



On a recent visit to the Magna Carta exhibition in the newly refurbished old shoe shop now reborn as our Town Hall, we were impressed by the professionally presented display.

However, there seems to be a very small numbers of visitors and suspect that they are unlikely to significantly increase in the future.

Contrast this with ex councillor Nigel Kay's statement when attempting to justify the saddling of Faversham Town Council with a fifty-year debt of around £2.6 million in order to buy and convert 12 Market Place as

council offices, 'heritage hub' and home for the Magna Carta.

"We really hope we can put Faversham on the map – similar to the pull of Dover Castle"

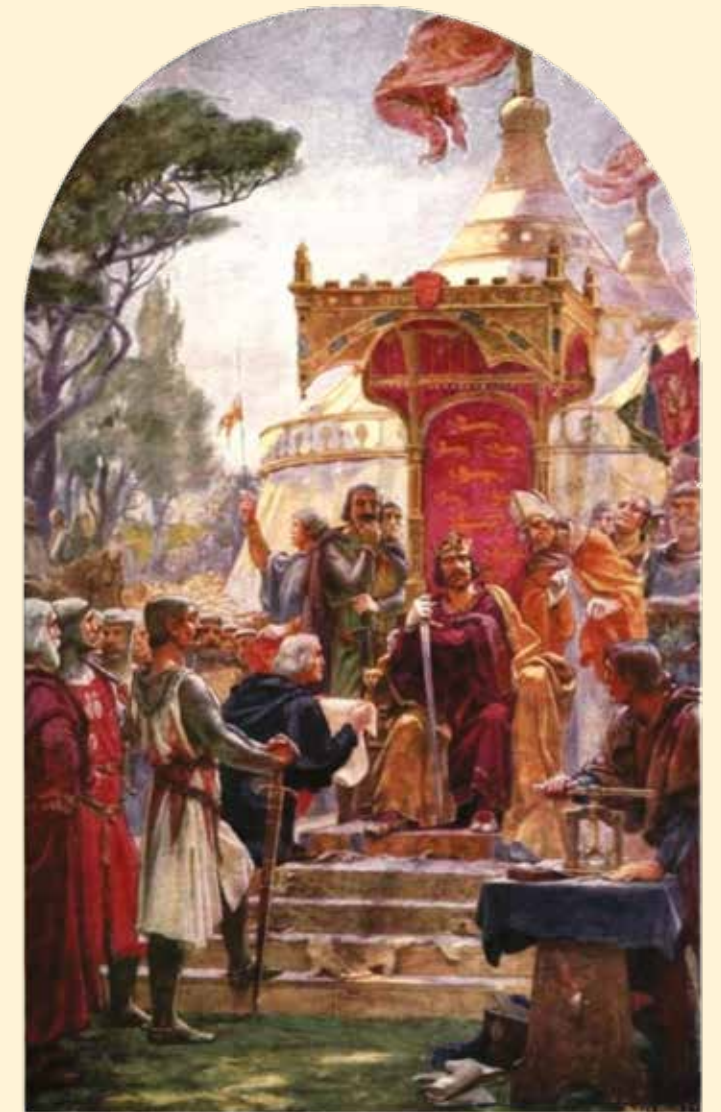
See Eye's 1 and 2 available online.

The great mystery is why the Alexander Centre, once owned by Faversham Borough Council as its municipal offices and later by Swale Borough Council, was handed over to the current occupants, the Alexander Centre CIC, in a government asset transfer.

This would have provided a perfect base for the Town Council in a

landmark building with suitable space for the 'heritage hub' next door the Fleur de Lis Centre, home to the Faversham Society. Also, there would have been extra spaces that could have produced a significant income for the Council. Surely the cost of repairs to the building would have been less than that incurred in purchasing and converting the much smaller ex shoe shop.

However, I am sure that Conservative ex-councillors Nigel Kay and Michael Cosgrove could explain the economic logic involved in the transactions.



FOCUS ON PHOTOGRAPHY

LALO BORJA

Lalo Borja is a Colombian photographer. He currently resides in Whitstable and taught photography in Canterbury College for 18 years.

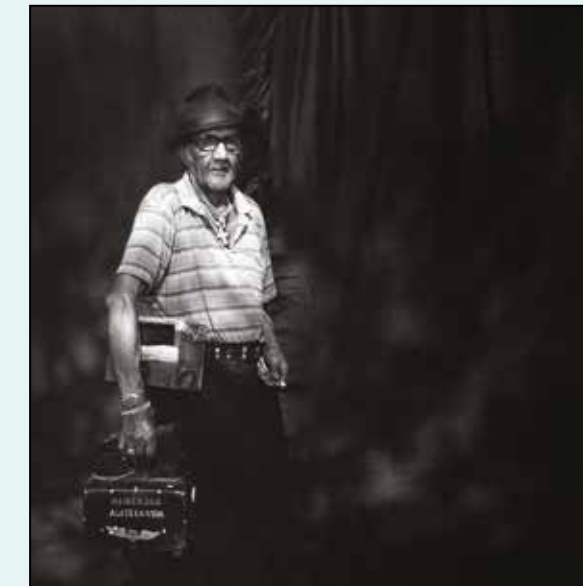
"The series "Street Vendors, Cali, Colombia 1995" is the end result of repeatedly photographing these heterogeneous subjects. They have congregated for many years in a particular park in the south of the city of Cali. They include children, grandmothers, young men, old men and

women, who have to work very hard in order to eke out a living by selling the most varied selection of elements. They sell individual cigarettes, small match boxes, chewing gum, bread and water, anything that can bring a few cents will be sold.

I spent nearly three months, every Sunday afternoon between January and April of 1995, in order to have enough photographic material to create a reasonable collection of subjects to validate the project. The project demonstrates the vulnerability of people, young and old, in a country where social services and care for the elderly are nearly non-existing.

Some mothers drag their children all day long trying to make ends meet. Some young children go out in pairs, brothers and sisters, to walk long days under the sun as they try to sell whatever they have been provided with for their survival."

More of his work can be viewed at <https://laloborja-gmail.blogspot.com/> He currently resides in Whitstable.



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY



It is one of the UK's oldest civic organisations, which exists to celebrate and protect the town's rich heritage and vibrant community

The Society's mission: To cherish the past, adorn the present, and create the future of the town



Anyone who has spent even five minutes chatting with Harold Goodwin, Chair of the Faversham Society, around town, will know that it is his greatest source of pride that this small but prolific heritage charity is staffed and managed entirely by a small army of dedicated volunteers.

2022 marks 60 years since the Society's creation. It is one of the UK's oldest civic organisations, which exists to celebrate and protect the town's rich heritage and vibrant community. In the first of a number of planned events to mark the anniversary, the Society's president hosted a private event at his home at Doddington Place to thank the Society's volunteers for their commitment and hard work.

Those attending enjoyed free range of the beautiful gardens at Doddington, followed by afternoon tea in the glorious spring sunshine.

Since it was founded those sixty years, the growth and change in the town has required evolution of the Society into a complex organisation, which undertakes a diverse range of activities. Volunteers not only run the Fleur De Lis Museum and Heritage Centre on Preston Street, Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place, and the much-loved Fleur Bookshop, but also engage in all aspects of preserving the town's heritage and culture. Society volunteers are actively engaged in work regarding the Swale Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, and efforts to preserve prized heritage

assets such as TS Hazard and the Town Quay and the Engine Sheds, as well as efforts to conserve the natural heritage of the town and its environs.

All of these activities are undertaken with the objective of delivering on the Society's mission: To cherish the past, adorn the present, and create the future of the town.

There will be more opportunities to celebrate Faversham's remarkable heritage with the Society over the remaining months of the year, including exhibitions, talks and events. On 24th and 25th October, and celebratory, free-of-charge exhibition will be hosted at the Alexander Centre, where Society members, residents of the town, and visitors alike will be welcome to drop in and learn more about the Society's long history and current work. An evening reception for members of the Society will be held on 24th October. Please look out for further information about these events and other events in the coming months.

You may have noticed people wandering the streets of Faversham on the last Sunday in June visiting some of the 30 gardens which took part in this year's Open Gardens. The Open Gardens with the themed market event has not run during Covid. It has bounced back with increased demand for tickets to enter the gardens.

GET INVOLVED!

There are so many ways to support the work of the Faversham Society in protecting and preserving the heritage of our town. From supporting the Society with annual membership, to exploring the vast volunteering opportunities, there's something that to suit everyone.

Members of the Society received a highly informative monthly newsletter, free access to the museum,

library and archives, and free or discounted access to events. Members are also invited to attend meetings organised by the Society on issues affecting our town.

If you are interested in joining the Society, please fill in a membership form and pop it into the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place or join online at: www.membership.favershamsociety.org

If you are interested in volunteering for the Society, the time commitment need not be onerous and existing and new members who have time to volunteer, even for just a few hours each week, are always welcome in any of the following areas of the Society's activity:

- Working in the Visitor Information Centre or Museum
- Working in the Fleur Charity Bookshop
- Participating in the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group - working on digs, including administrative work
- Joining the Society's Environment Committee to campaign on issues affecting our town
- Being a Guide for the Town Heritage Walks
- Writing contributions for the Newsletter
- Assisting with social media and marketing
- Assisting at the Chart Gunpowder Mills
- Cataloguing and reviewing (i.e. curating) the museum collections and libraries

If you would like to learn more about volunteering, please pop into the VIC at 12 Market Place or contact membership@favershamsociety.org

ARTHUR PERCIVAL'S LEGACY

The Faversham Society was co-founded by Faversham resident Arthur Percival in 1962. He was the honorary editor of the Society's Faversham Papers from 1964 until his death in 2014. Arthur taught adult education classes on the history and architecture of the town for the Worker's Educational Association. He also played a fundamental role in campaigns to save the town's health services, preventing developers from ruining the town's architecture, and had a prolonged and passionate love for Faversham.

THE FAVERSHAM PAPERS

Since 1962, the Faversham Society has built up an extensive catalogue of Faversham Papers that have been produced by Arthur Percival

and many other enthusiastic and knowledgeable members. This work is part of the Faversham Society's commitment to education and maintaining a passion for the history of this beautiful town.

The papers cover the history of Faversham and many surrounding villages. From Beowulf to Hop Picking and just about everything in-between. There should be something of interest for everyone!

Subjects covered include the royal abbey, historic churches and even local people's memories of individual streets and the people who lived in them. Two popular areas detailed by multiple Faversham Papers are the local gunpowder industry and the sailing barges and coasters which used the Creek.

The Society also holds papers valuable to family historians, some of which contain information which may not be available elsewhere. As well as the 1841 and 1871 census returns, there are papers dedicated to the explosives personnel from 1573 onwards, ships and seamen of the 15th century and a biographical register from 1100 to 1650. Many papers also cover both the world wars and its impact on the town and its people. There prove valuable research sources for those looking for the details of their ancestors who lived locally.

All of these papers are available to view the Visitor Information Centre at 12 Market Place and a full list is available at www.favershamsociety.org/publications



For everyone who cares about Faversham

Faversham is one of a kind. A friendly, fascinating town with a colourful and surprisingly significant history, which over the years has fought successfully to retain its distinctive character.

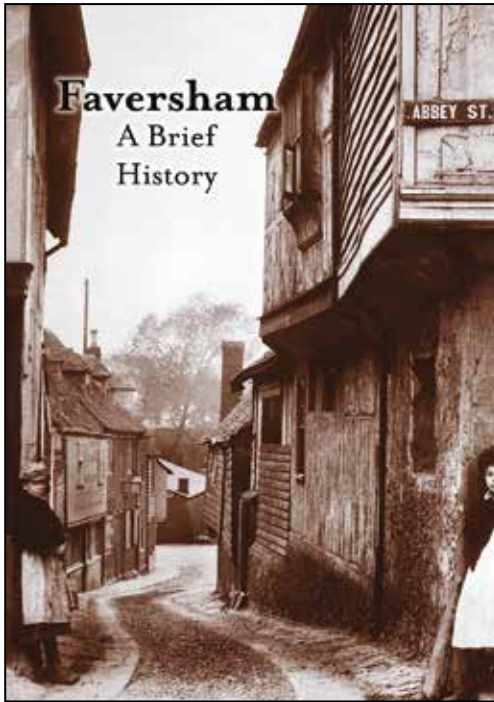
Leading that fight for over half a century has been the Faversham Society – one of Britain's very first civic societies and one of the most enduring, with what we believe to be the largest membership per head of population. People who know Faversham care about Faversham. If you're one of them, please join us.

The Faversham Society continues to campaign to sustain its unique character and heritage and carry it forward for future generations. We celebrate our heritage with a Heritage Centre, now an accredited museum, a visitor information centre with local gifts, a second-hand bookshop where you will find some gems, talks and walks and a range of year-round events. Independent and apolitical, the Society is run by an enthusiastic band of volunteers, and every penny raised goes to fund its work for Faversham. We have no paid staff.

There are perks, too. As a member, you get a lively and highly informative monthly newsletter (emailed to you every month or you can collect a printed copy from the VIC or have one posted to you), free access to our museum, library and archives, and free or discounted access to events.

Come and join us! The more members we have, the stronger we can be.

You can be as involved as you wish to be: simply support the Society with your membership; make your voice heard in the debate about the future of Faversham; join our history or archaeology groups; or become a volunteer – it's up to you.



Above: The welcome page to the Faversham Society membership form.

Left: Want to know more? Available from the society shop: A Brief History of Faversham from the earliest times.



If you would like to learn more about volunteering, please pop into the VIC at 12 Market Place

The Faversham Society was co-founded by Faversham resident Arthur Percival in 1962

The Society holds papers valuable to family historians, some of which contain information which may not be available elsewhere



Left: Arthur Percival, co-founder in 1962 of the Faversham Society. Saviour of much of Abbey Street and many other landmark buildings and locations.





The archive includes many photographs of the town over the years and a very large collection of Glass Plate Negatives

A fascinating insight into the history of Faversham, it's inhabitants and Arthur Percival himself



Two images from the E.A. Harrison archive of workers at the Seager Foundry in Faversham.



Another example is a photograph from W. Evernden - a photographer who had a shop in the 1930s in West Street. Entitled 'The Modern Camper', it shows camping at Dymchurch understood to be during the late 1920s to early 1930s with 'a light car

THE ARTHUR PERCIVAL ARCHIVE

Upon his death, Arthur left a very significant archive of materials – comprising over 40,000 items - relating to the town's history and heritage to the Society. The archive includes many photographs of the town over the years and a very large collection of Glass Plate Negatives showing images of the Faversham across the decades. In recent years, a small team of dedicated volunteers have been working to digitise Arthur's collection to make it accessible to the curators at the Fleur De Lis museum, and eventually to the general public, so that anyone who is interested in learning more about the history and heritage of the town can readily access the archive.

In addition, Arthur also left a vast amount of correspondence, cuttings, research material and articles of interest. He corresponded with people all around the world searching for their family roots in the Faversham area. The Society has also found unique material sent to him by Faversham residents of the past. An example is the 'Memories of inter-wars Seager Foundries' by E. A. Harrison. This is a handwritten account of working at the Seager Foundry on the Brents. It includes descriptions of the working conditions and processes employed at that time, together with hand drawn diagrams and photographs.



Above: Image from the W. Evernden archive entitled 'The Modern Camper'.

and Wireless.' It is annotated 'A small 2 or 3 valve set is easily carried on a light car and good results can be got with a 50-foot aerial only 8 to 10 feet high, so although being 'far from the madding crowd' one can keep in touch with all that is going on.'

One of the attractions of working on the Archive is that we never know what we will find next. It gives a fascinating insight into the history of Faversham, it's inhabitants and Arthur himself.

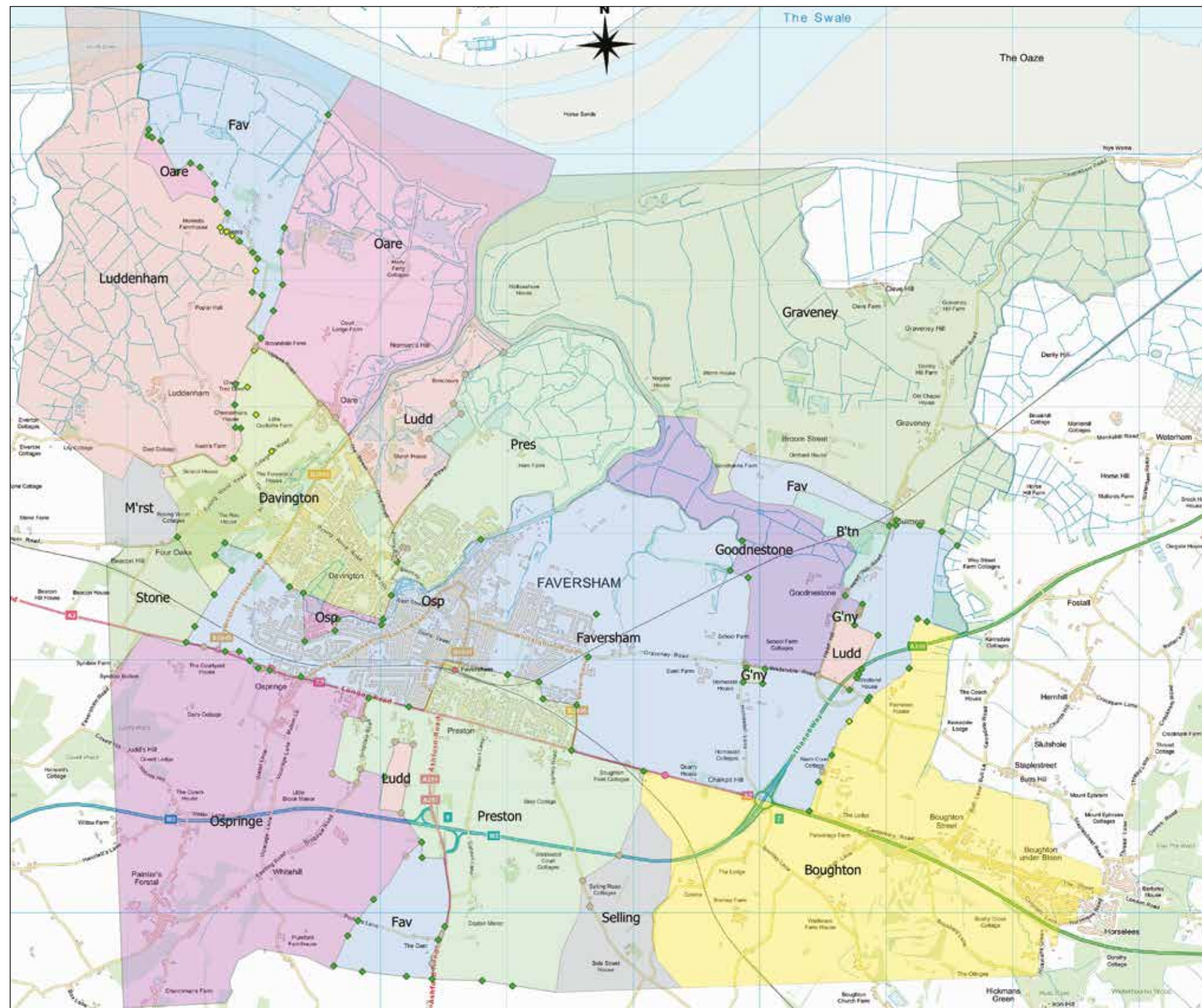
While some of this material has been sorted, to learn more about this work, you can visit www.arthurpercivalarchive.co.uk

THE IMPORTANCE OF BOUNDARIES

These important but much-neglected markers give fascinating insight into the town's expansion over nearly two centuries. Arthur Percival, founder of the Faversham Society, had this to say about the stones:

"In 1846 when the bounds of the parish of Faversham were painstakingly "beaten" by the vicar, churchwardens and overseers of the poor, they were marked mainly by boundary stones – in a few cases only by wooden markers.

"In the detached portion of the parish in the Uplees area there were 17 stones and in another detached portion near Selgrove there were 12. Such were the intricacies of the boundaries of the main parish that



Above: The Boundary Stone map showing the original Boundary Stone positions. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022, licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0:

it mustered a total of no fewer than 64 stones.

"It was then long and narrow, extending west to east from near Judd Folly Hill in the west to near the railway bridge in Graveney, but "pinched" in the middle by the two halves of Preston."

Faversham had two distinct boundaries, one being the Parish and the other the Town and Liberty. The Town and Liberty is smaller and mostly within the parish boundary. The Parish stones are marked on different sides with an F for Faversham, P for Preston, D for Davington, O for Ospringe etc, whereas the Town and Liberty of Faversham stones were marked T&L. Other stones can also be seen for property boundaries – including W.H. for William Hall gunpowder works. The known Boundary stone positions of Faversham Parish and can be seen on this map of the 1865/1877 Boundaries overlaid on the Ordnance Survey District Map.

POSING THE QUESTION

The question that the Faversham Society is now asking is: how many of this total of 93 stones still survive in situ? Perhaps you might be able to help? Ones at present known to survive are those outside Mall House - buried by successive layers of asphalt, in the private car park off Solomons Lane, between Newton Road and St Mary's Road, by Chart Mills, and on the Rec near the footbridge by the pavilion. There is still a stone on the seawall opposite the Oyster Bay Warehouse, marking the old boundary between North Preston and Faversham that followed the centreline of the creek before it was straightened. We need to ensure that it does not slip into the creek.

Surely more must survive? Maybe there's one half-buried at the back of your garden? Maybe you've tripped over one while out for a walk?

The Faversham Society is asking for help in order to develop its

project to fully map the historic boundary stones. The Society is also keen to explore how it might draw on this little bit of history to create new heritage assets that will allow future generations to understand how the town has evolved. The new housing developments planned for the town will extend Faversham's boundaries once again. It would be fitting if these new boundaries were not only drawn, but perhaps even honoured with new boundary stones that will serve as heritage assets for the future.

If you can help locate Faversham's boundary stones or are interested in getting involved in our work to understand Faversham's new boundaries, please drop a line to Harold Goodwin at chair@Favershamsociety.info. If you have photos of any boundary stones that happen to be on your property, or you have come across them on your travels around town, then even better!



The new housing developments planned for the town will extend Faversham's boundaries once again



ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

By Matthew Hatchwell

The combined area of the 19,000+ churchyards owned by the Church of England is larger than Exmoor National Park. Because – bizarrely – biodiversity conservation is a relatively low priority for most British national parks, there is almost certainly greater biodiversity in the country's churchyards than there is in any one of those formally protected areas. Organisations such as Caring for God's Acre and A. Rocha International have been set up to support nature protection in churchyards, including through the development of management plans, action to protect diverse wildlife habitats in British churchyards, and "Count on Nature" surveys to catalogue that wildlife. On June 11th, the Friends of St Mary of Charity Parish Church and partners including the Kent Tree and Pond Wardens and experts from the Faversham

Natural History Group organised a bioblitz to get a first idea of the range of plants, birds, insects and mammals present in the rambling churchyard.

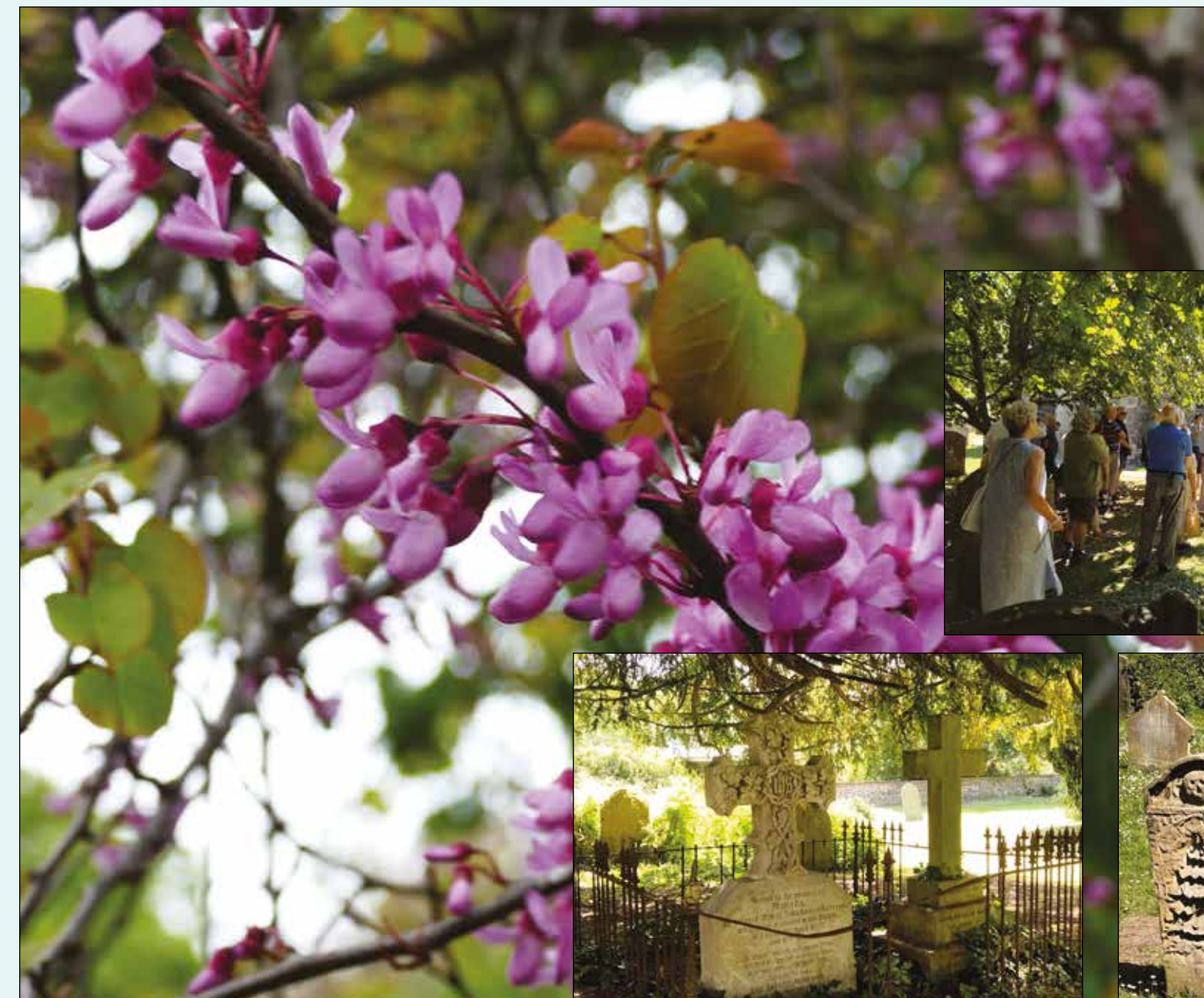
Kent Tree Warden David Carey says that "the best bird observed was the grey wagtail that seems to have adopted the churchyard; the best plant was possibly the abundant stone parsley or the tiny maidenhair fern; the best insect was the Ferdinandeia hoverfly; the best tree was the huge lime in the northeast corner or one of the veteran ashes; and the least expected finding was of hedgehog dung, which was surprising because they need such large foraging areas to wander around at night." The next step will be to work with Church of England officials and parishioners at St Mary's to develop and implement a plan to protect and maintain that rich biodiversity.



The collection of small photos show St Mary's churchyard this spring and summer, and its extraordinary collection of gravestones.



Big photo below: The Judas trees in the churchyard at St Mary's of Charity are bright highlights when they flower in late Spring.



FAVERSHAM CHARTERS AND FAVERSHAM'S MAGNA CARTA

By Harold Goodwin, Chair of the Faversham Society

For a town of its size, the charter collection of Faversham is one of the finest anywhere in England. The earliest surviving Faversham charter dates from the reign of Henry III in 1252, followed by eighteen more granted by 1685. For the first time, they are exhibited in a permanent display in the Town Hall, enter through the Faversham Society VIC & shop.

There is not space to display all of Faversham's charters, the exhibits will change over time. On display at the moment are Faversham's earliest common seal from 1295; the Magna Carta from 1300; Henry IV's illuminated charter, 1408; Henry VIII's charter; the Custumal Book (The First Town-Book of Faversham) dating to the end of the fourteenth century and the Common Horn, made of leaded bronze with traces of nickel, arsenic, iron and zinc and used to summon the townspeople.

The Oyster Fishery Maps were drawn by hand in pen and ink on parchment and are coloured with watercolour around 1620, made at the time of an enquiry into

the boundaries of Faversham manor and hundred. The maps were made to show the extent of the oyster fishery and other fishing grounds, so the shoreline and the various mud and shingle banks are very accurately shown. Notice also the fish 'weares' or traps on the right (East) on the shores of Sheppey and Whitstable. Artificial embankments and sea walls are shown as bold red lines.

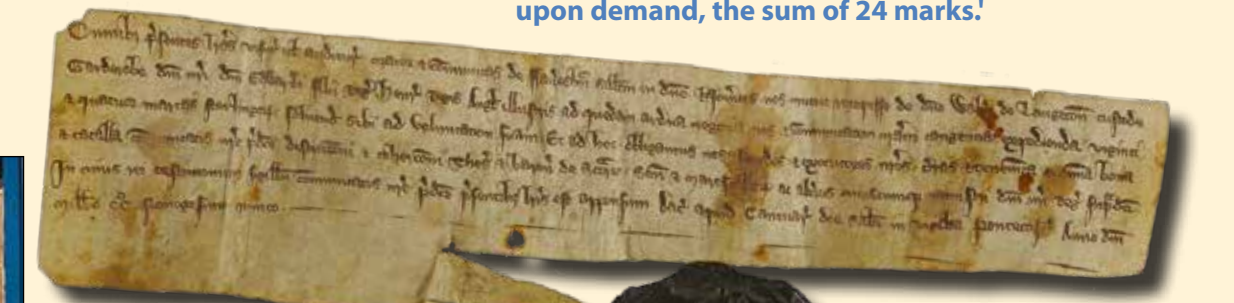
An oyster fishery was probably established in Faversham in Roman times. Edward Jacob writing in 1774 tells us that "the only staple commodity of this town being the oysters taken within the fishing grounds belonging to the manor of Faversham, by which not less than one hundred and ten families are principally supported, and the whole town much benefited." The tradition lives on with Bluey at Hollowshore Fisheries harvesting oysters for sale in Faversham and London.



Top: The Oyster Fishery map, Hand drawn and coloured in 1620.

Above: Faversham's Magna Carta. At the foot of this copy it is stated in Latin that it is for the barons of the Port of Faversham. Originally granted by King John 1215, Faversham's version is a confirmation of the re-issue of 1225.

Below: A bond dated 1295 'By the Mayor and Corporation of Faversham are to repay Sir Walter de Langton, Keeper of the Wardrobe of King Edward I, upon demand, the sum of 24 marks.'



Left: The Exhibition Room at the back of the Faversham Society shop at 12 Market Place.



For opening times, images and some history of the charters see www.favershamcharters.org



A three/four-bed semi on Perry Court was being rented out for a staggering £1,800 per month

We have many hidden homeless in Faversham

If you are reading this and you need a home please register with Swale

Swale planners struggle to get developers to deliver affordable homes

In the last decade house prices have increased by 82% and entry-level homes by 75%



Right: This chart shows the startling cost of renting or buying a house in Faversham. NEED CAPTION INFORMATION

FAVERSHAM HAS HIDDEN HOMELESS

The Faversham Times (June 30th) carried a front-page story “Families ‘being driven out’ as investors snap up new-builds”. The paper reported that buy-to-let landlords are letting properties on the new estates “at sky-high” rents. The Faversham Times reported that a three/four-bed semi on Perry Court was being rented out for a staggering £1,800 per month. That is £21,600 per year. Hannah Perkin spoke out branding the situation as disgraceful and demanding that more social housing be built.

HIDDEN HOMELESS

We have many hidden homeless in Faversham - very few people bother to register because they know that social housing, council housing, is a thing of the past. The Swale Housing list has 1300 households registered for genuinely affordable homes across the borough. This figure grossly understates homelessness. The Arc4 Faversham Housing Needs survey

revealed that in 2019 there were 721 hidden homeless in Faversham alone, the details are on our website. <https://fclt.org.uk> Many of the homeless do not bother to register as they correctly gauge that they will not accrue sufficient points to be allocated an affordable home when competing with those appraised on the points system as having greater priority. If you are reading this and you need a home please register with Swale, by doing so you help us make the case for more affordable housing for local people.

The AECOM report for the Town Council on housing market assessment, found that 811 affordable rented homes are needed for those who are homeless, living in overcrowded accommodations or unable to start to live independently or start a family. There are undesirable social consequences when young people are forced to continue to live at home unable to transition to adulthood in their own homes, unable

to start a family until they are in their forties or when families are compelled to move away from Faversham and the support of their wider family.

BUILDING TO MEET DEMAND NOT NEED

The government’s National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) contains a formula that local authorities are required to use to determine how many houses they must ensure are built. Housing targets are set by central government and do not reflect local needs, particularly for locally affordable housing for families. Central government housing targets determine the number of units to be built in Swale, developers seek the highest possible profit on developments and the margins are higher on their /four-bedroom houses. Swale planners negotiate on the housing mix but the developers are in the stronger bargaining position.

Swale is required to deliver a five-year land supply – this means granting

sufficient planning permissions for developers to build sufficient homes to meet the central government-determined target. Local authorities are able to build very few houses, Swale intends to build a few, but it is the market demand for homes which determines how many are built. Trapped between the housing land supply and delivery tests, Swale planners struggle to get developers to deliver affordable homes.

THE PLANNING LOOPHOLE

As Shelter has pointed out councils “with a high housing target to meet and a limited supply of land could be forced to accept a less ambitious affordable housing policy to get landowner buy-in for their plan.” Central government’s Housing Delivery Test requiring their housing targets to be met strengthens the hands of developers and landowners in their negotiations with local planners about the mix of housing.

The average operating margin made by developers in 2019 was 13.2%, the top performers made over 30%. Housemark regularly analyses the financial results of Housing Associations, in November last year they reported that the average overall operating margin for UK housing associations improved in last financial year to 24.4%.

133 for affordable rent (80% of market rent), 12 for other rent and 25 as affordable home ownership products.

In the last decade house prices have increased by 82% and entry-level homes by 75%. Local people are priced out of the housing market. AECOM calculates that household incomes above £40,000 per year are required to rent in Faversham and over £60,000 per year to take a mortgage. AECOM’s figures starkly reveal the problem and as the Faversham Times reported recently semi-detached houses in Faversham are now being rented for over £20,000 per year. Many Faversham people cannot afford homes in Faversham.

HOUSING MIX

In the last edition of the Faversham Eye, we reported on the Faversham Community Land Trust’s campaign to encourage the volume housebuilders building in the town to provide a more balanced housing mix. We are delighted to say that we have been successful! Crest were persuaded to resubmit their scheme at Lady Dane and reduced the number of 4 bed homes by 50%, replacing them with 2- and 3-bedroom homes. A Crest spokesman commenting on the amended layout said, “we decided to add more smaller homes to the project after consultations with FCLT



KILN COURT & OSBORNE COURT

Kent County Council owns the land at Kiln Court and Osborne Court. Originally Faversham’s Workhouse was located there. From 1948 the buildings were used by KCC as an old people’s home with some 200 residents, a hospital and an ambulance station run by the NHS. KCC closed the old people’s home and the NHS closed the hospital in 1984. KCC is now selling the land. We have sought, without success, to get assurances that given the original uses of the land, a significant number of social rent properties should be built there.



THE ENGINE SHEDS

The Faversham Community Land Trust is concerned both with locally affordable housing and with the development and conservation of buildings that have community value. We aspire to promote the regeneration of the Engine Sheds, adding to Faversham’s remarkable collection of repurposed railway heritage buildings, providing community buildings to the east of the town where they are sorely lacking and creating a pedestrian, mobility, buggy and cycle route into town from the new developments to the east. There is more about this initiative in Faversham’s Heritage Matters on page 40.

seeking to find land to build 21st-century almshouses, homes available at social rents and held in perpetuity for the benefit of Faversham residents. There is very little land available for housing within the parish boundary. Please join us in campaigning for more locally affordable homes in Faversham.

The Town Council’s emerging Neighbourhood Plan is asserting that residential schemes should include a mix of accommodation to meet local housing need, including accommodation suitable for families (3 bedrooms) as a predominant part of the mix, smaller accommodation (2 bedrooms or less) suitable for first-time buyers or renters or those seeking to downsize; and accommodation suitable for older people and those with limited mobility. The policy also favours affordable housing provision that remains available in perpetuity, including First Homes and community-led housing.



Many Faversham people cannot afford homes in Faversham

The AECOM report concludes that two-thirds of the affordable housing built in Faversham should be for social rent



Table 4-3: Affordability thresholds in Faversham (Income required, £)						
Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes £45,400	Affordable with earnings of £15,957	Affordable with two people earning £31,914
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£270,000	-	£77,143	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£330,705	-	£94,487	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£212,400	-	£60,686	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£12,312	£41,040	Yes	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£12,024	£40,080	Yes	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£244,125	-	£69,750	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£209,250	-	£59,786	No	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£174,375	-	£49,821	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£135,000	£3,750	£51,071	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£67,500	£5,625	£38,036	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£27,000	£6,750	£30,214	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£6,612	£22,017	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£5,207	£17,340	Yes	No	Yes

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN FAVERSHAM

There is a bewildering range of affordable housing, generally it means housing which is available at 80% or less of the market price or rent. For many Faversham people, a discount of one-fifth is not enough to make housing affordable for them. As the AECOM report reveals between 2010-11 and 2020-21, out of a total of 883 dwellings built 172 were affordable, or 19.5% of the total against a policy target of 35%. Of the affordable dwellings only two were for social rent, let at circa 50% of market rent,

and a meeting with Swale Council”. Claire Martin the Chair of FCLT commented “the Trust are delighted that Crest responded positively to our planning representations and we are hopeful this will set a precedent for the introduction of a balanced mix for the 3,500 homes to be allocated in Faversham under the emerging Local Plan”.

21ST CENTURY ALMS HOUSES

The AECOM report concludes that two-thirds of the affordable housing built in Faversham should be for social rent. The Community Land Trust is





The pollution of Faversham Creek cannot be allowed to continue and there is probably only limited scope for increasing the capacity of the existing works by conventional means

This continuous discharge is an ecological disaster, but there may be an ecological solution

In Faversham the outfall even discharges during incoming tides so pollution is carried upstream to the town



Pollution of rivers is a widespread problem and in turn it leads to pollution of the sea

Reed beds would not only clean up sewage outfalls and return the water to the aquifer; they would also act as a carbon sink



COULD REED BEDS REDUCE SEWAGE POLLUTION IN FAVERSHAM CREEK?

The sewage works treating Faversham's sewage was already overloaded prior to the recent construction of large new housing estates and nothing has been done to increase capacity to cope with even more sewage. This has resulted in the continuous discharge of only partially treated sewage into Faversham Creek via an outfall that is only supposed to be used during very wet weather and on falling tides only.

This pollution of Faversham Creek cannot be allowed to continue and there is probably only limited scope

for increasing the capacity of the existing works by conventional means. This continuous discharge is an ecological disaster, but there may be an ecological solution.

The land to the North-East of the sewage works, beyond Clapgate Stream is low lying and relatively flat. If this was converted into reed beds the outfall could be diverted from the creek into the new reed beds. This form of secondary treatment of the partially treated sewage would also create an ecologically rich nature reserve for invertebrates, birds and even some small mammals. This



could be made into an attraction for birdwatchers if a short board walk leading to a hide was constructed.

At the northern and eastern ends of the reed beds a system of soakaways would permit the already much more purified outflow to percolate down to the aquifer, receiving more purification by soil bacteria on the way. This would top-up the aquifer and thereby help to relieve the Increasing problem of water shortages in Kent. An overflow discharge pipe from the northernmost corner of the reed beds could discharge storm surges into Faversham Creek, but these surges will have benefitted from some secondary treatment in the reed beds en route to the creek.

Admittedly this would lead to the

Left: The problem; continuous uninterrupted sewage discharge into Faversham Creek from sewage works.

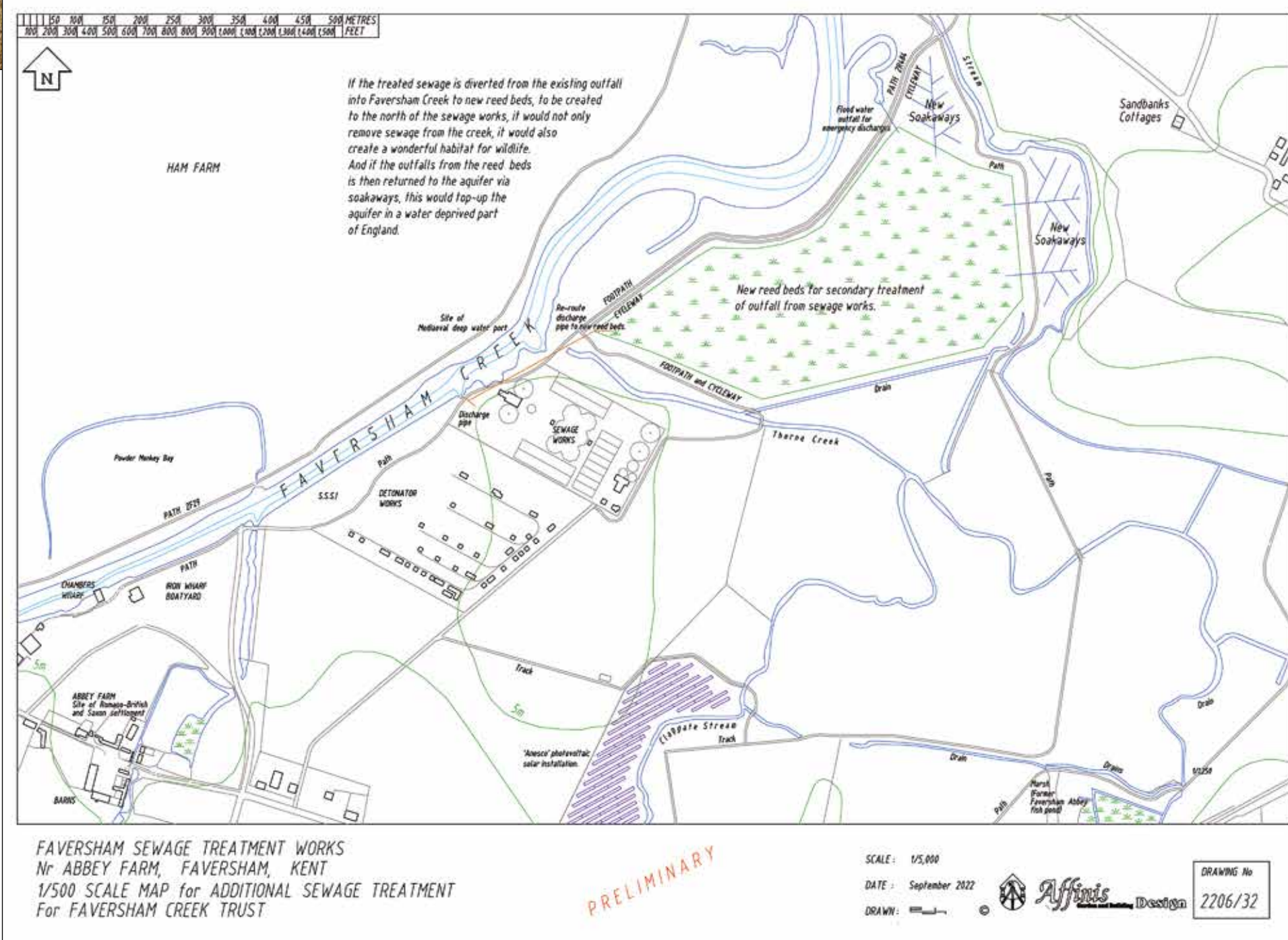
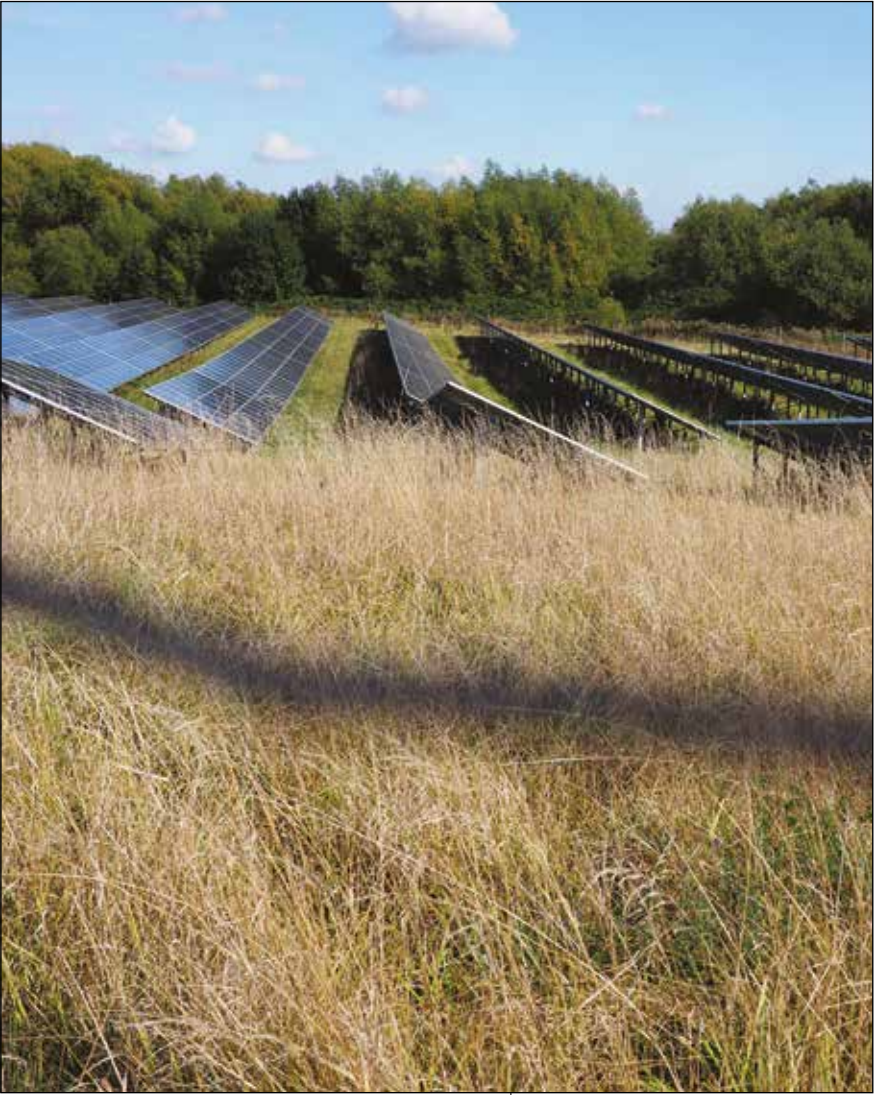
loss of some low grade agricultural land, but a precedent has already been set by the construction of the 'Anesco' photovoltaic solar generating site further up Clapgate Stream about 600 metres to the South of the proposed reed beds. Why not have two entirely different 'green' solutions to our problems in close proximity to each other?

In Faversham the outfall even discharges during incoming tides so pollution is carried upstream to the town. Pollution of rivers is a widespread problem and in turn it leads to pollution of the sea. It is in urgent need of solution and no

one method will apply everywhere. But if this reed bed supplementary treatment of sewage proves successful it could also be applied to other problematic sewage works elsewhere in Kent and beyond. This could be anywhere where there is suitable fairly level land next to an overburdened sewage treatment works; and there are certainly more than enough candidates throughout the South East of England; and beyond. These reed beds would not only clean up sewage outfalls and return the water to the aquifer; they would also act as a carbon sink and help in the fight against global warming.

Left: The low lying land North of Clapgate Stream where the reed beds could be sited.

Right: The 'Anesco' solar generating installation



Above: A preliminary drawing showing the proposal for reed beds acting as an additional sewage treatment plant.



There seems to be growing evidence that suggests that though the NHS may not be terminally ill, it is pretty poorly!

The politicians' knee-jerk response to all this has been to blame Covid

There can be little doubt that the NHS is in desperate need of an intensive makeover to reshape and modernise its services

It looks as if the people we clapped for at the start of the first lockdown are now feeling pretty clapped out!



Below: Newton Place Surgery, Newton Road, Faversham.



IF OUR NHS IS SICK- WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

HOW WELL IS THE NHS?

Having both worked in and around the NHS for ages, we are lost in admiration for the people who provide its services – especially after all they have been through in coping with the pandemic.

Even so, there seems to be growing evidence that suggests that though the NHS may not be terminally ill, it is pretty poorly!

We hear some wonderful personal accounts about how well the NHS has looked after people but almost daily we see 'bad news' stories about how it has failed. The headlines are usually about:

- the lengthening waiting lists and times for routine clinical procedures
- our difficulty in getting GP appointments and the (related) shortage of clinical staff in practices
- the unavailability of NHS dental care – particularly for pensioners
- ambulances forced to wait for hours outside hospitals waiting to transfer patients into A&E departments

- acute hospitals being half-full of patients that could be much better cared for at home or in the community
 - the lack of services – particularly those people with mental health issues
- There can be very few of us who have not been affected by these and similar failings.

WHAT IS GOING WRONG?

The politicians' knee-jerk response to all this has been to blame Covid. This was (and may well be again) hugely disruptive but the inference is that if it were not for the pandemic, everything in the NHS

would be all right. However, most people suspect that there are a raft of longer standing and perhaps more

significant issues.

Most often identified as the cause of the NHS' problems is money – or the lack of it. The NHS has been subject to the strictures of austerity since 2010 and although international comparisons are difficult to make, it certainly looks as if we have been lagging behind our European counterparts in health investment and health outcomes for some time. Although there have been some increases in funding, an ageing population and expensive new drugs and technologies will continue to drive up health costs. If the NHS is not to fail us it will need more and not – as has been hinted at by successive health ministers - less funding.

IS IT THE WAY WE DO IT?

Less often reported is a much more significant efficiency question. That is whether the way our health care services are currently provided give us the best possible value for money. To improve patient outcomes and make services more efficient, experts have long been clear about the kind of changes that are required. These include:

- bringing together specialised clinical services to consolidate expertise and improve quality and outcomes
- providing more diagnostic and outpatient services into local settings
- fully integrating social care with the NHS to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and to make sure patients can be discharged back home in a timely way
- properly funding public health and then using all the levers available to health and local authorities to help people stay healthy
- ensuring that the NHS fully exploits developments in clinical and information technology to make the service easier for patients to access and improve the quality of care.

There can be little doubt that the NHS is in desperate need of an intensive makeover to reshape and

modernise its services – and quickly – especially as the parlous state of public finances will almost inevitably push the Government to seek 'efficiencies'. However, successive Ministers have seemed unwilling to contemplate this, perhaps because whenever the NHS tries to modernise its services, it faces strong local resistance. We can be aggressively over-protective of what we already have! In the future we will have to learn to campaign for the type of efficiencies that deliver more and better for less if we are not to fall victim to mindless cuts.

WHAT ABOUT THE WORKFORCE?

Another frequently cited problem for the NHS is significant staff shortages, particularly of GPs, other doctors and nurses. *The Independent* reported that since Brexit, the NHS has lost over 20,000 EU employees and this has prompted heroic efforts to recruit from other overseas countries even though there are ethical issues about us poaching clinicians from poorer countries who desperately need them. There have also been attempts to boost the number of places in our medical and nursing schools. However, the lead time to produce qualified clinicians ranges from three years for nurses and at least twice that for doctors. So, it looks as if demand for staff – particularly clinical staff - will increasingly outstrip supply.

Recruiting enough staff is tricky but retaining them is equally, if not more, problematic. Because nearly 20% of the NHS workforce is over 55 years old, retirement rates are soaring. This is compounded by staff not feeling sufficiently rewarded for their contribution. The latest data shows that 35,000 NHS workers resigned voluntarily in the first quarter of this year (almost twice the number for 2020) citing work life balance and poor rewards as the reasons. So, it looks as if the people we clapped for at the start of the first lockdown are now feeling pretty clapped out! It is not surprising that those trying to provide services are highly critical of successive Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care (and there have been four since last summer) for not publishing a full workforce plan for the NHS.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE LATEST NHS REORGANISATION?

That takes us to an issue that is just beginning to emerge into the public domain. With the passing of the *Health and Social Care Act 2022* the NHS is undergoing one of the biggest shake-ups since 1948. Below, we have tried to describe the new structures as clearly as possible – this was not an easy task and you might have to be patient as you work your way through the acronym soup!

The changes have been in the pipeline for a decade or more and the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS Executive have devoted considerable effort and energy to agree how best the structure of the NHS should be reformed. They have now created 42 *Integrated Care Systems* (ICSs) across England as the new legal entities responsible for planning and organising our health services. It is worth noting that because these are big organisations - each responsible for between one and three million people – there are many who fear that their creation will enable progressive government centralisation of the NHS.

Below ICSs there are to be a number of ICPs (*Integrated Care Partnerships*) - groupings of hospital and community care providers serving around half a million people. The Government's original thinking was that ICPs would 'generate an integrated care strategy to improve health and care outcomes and experiences for their populations, for which all partners will be accountable' but the governance and accountability arrangements to enable all this have remained a little hazy.

Further down the new organisational charts can be found a number of ill-defined elements like 'place' and 'community' and 'neighbourhood'. However 'Primary Care Networks' (PCNs) are better described as being 'to bring GP practices, community, mental health, pharmacy, hospital, social services and voluntary services together at a local level'. Although intensive effort is being made in every ICSs to sort out how all these local agencies can collaborate – it is still very complicated 'work-in-progress'.

HOW HAS THIS ALL WORKED OUT FOR OUR PART OF KENT?

The eight NHS commissioning organisations (CCGs) we used to have in Kent were merged into one and then abolished. For Faversham, it is the somewhat remote *Kent and Medway Integrated Care System* (ICS)

that is now responsible for planning how our health and care needs. Advising them there is an *Integrated Care Board* with wider representation – especially of local government - and so the acronym 'ICB' is being used more frequently now to describe this regional entity.

Beneath the ICS/ICB are four *Health and Care Partnerships* (HCPs). We are in the East Kent HCP which covers Faversham, Ashford, Dungeness, Folkestone, Dover and Margate. In it 720,000 people are cared for by thirteen separate care provider organisations each with their own management arrangements and budgets. Not what you would call 'local'. As for the *Primary Care Networks*, our two GP practices were initially going to form one for Faversham. This would have provided a useful local focus but as it would have been one of the smallest PCNs in the country, it is not surprising that the GPs have now chosen to be part of a much larger mid-Kent grouping. Again, not really local.

So, although the K&M ICS people are working really hard to set up the new structures, in amongst all the acronyms, there is no bit of the system marked 'Faversham'.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR US?

This lack of a local focus creates a particular problem for Faversham since the new housing estates that are starting to spring up around the town will have a major impact on the demand for healthcare services. Although there will be a well-developed Neighbourhood Plan for Faversham that clearly identifies the new 'infrastructure' required as the town develops, it is not easy to use the same plan for healthcare. New houses, schools, roads, public transport, cycle paths, water treatment, green spaces and the like all have an obvious physical presence, but effective health care relies on a complex network of highly skilled clinical staff from different providers, using sophisticated technology, working together with lots of local agencies. Just popping a space marked 'Health Centre' or onto the plan of a new housing development does not help much!

So, to support our Neighbourhood Plan the town urgently needs a way of assessing future healthcare needs and being clear about 'who needs to invest in what' to ensure they are met. But as yet - and despite the best efforts of the K&M ICS - there is no fully functioning local agency to help us do it. We are stuck!

A WAY FORWARD?

But things may be about to change. The Patient Participation Group (PPG) of the Newton Place Practice invited colleagues from Faversham Medical Practice PPG to talk about the effect of the town's expected growth on the demand for healthcare services. They wanted to find a way of getting people together to understand what Faversham's future needs might be and then to support – even push – the authorities to make plans to meet them. The 'Faversham Healthy Futures' group was created as a first step but it soon realised that it would need access to a great deal of quantitative data and to expert health care analysts.

They talked to a unit at the University of Kent's *Centre for Health Service Studies* whose research mission is focussed on involving local people in healthcare planning. Their response to what was being contemplated in Faversham was extremely positive. They are now working with the Health Futures Group on the design of a project that will help a representative group of local people understand the dynamics of health system and make decisive and informed contributions to the planning process. Recently the Healthy Futures Group met with the Community Committee of Faversham Town Council and they were enthusiastic about supporting the project.

So maybe - just maybe – Faversham could find a way of involving a small community like ours in delivering to the PCN, the planners at Kent and Medway ICS and the policy makers at Kent County and Swale Borough Councils, a clear and unambiguous guide to the development of services that will meet the future healthcare needs of the town. If that happens, we might have gone some way to answering the 'what can we do about it?' question we posed in the title!



42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across England are the new legal entities responsible for planning and organising our health services

Although the K&M ICS people are working really hard to set up the new structures, in amongst all the acronyms, there is no bit of the system marked 'Faversham'

Effective health care relies on a complex network of highly skilled clinical staff from different providers, using sophisticated technology

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) of the Newton Place Practice invited colleagues from Faversham Medical Practice PPG to talk about the effect of the town's expected growth on the demand for healthcare services



Below: Faversham Medical Practice, Faversham Health Centre, Bank Street, Faversham.



FOCUS ON CRAFTSMANSHIP

SIMON JEWELL

Simon Jewell lives in Faversham where he makes unique decorative boxes using hand cut marquetry and innovative inlay techniques. He also makes bespoke fine furniture of all kinds, clocks, wall hangings, dishes and other decorative items, all executed to the highest standards using carefully selected combinations of woods for maximum decorative effect.

Simon grew up in Portsmouth and came to Kent to study physics with astrophysics in Canterbury between 1986 and 1989. In 1993, he completed a PhD in X-ray astronomy and high energy astrophysics in Birmingham. He then decided on a career change, came back to Kent and ended up helping an architect friend with building work. Having access to his workshop allowed him to play around with leftover wood. He enjoyed the joinery work so much that he started making furniture as a hobby. The creation of an item that can be used daily gave him a great deal of satisfaction so he continued and never stopped.

Simon says about his creative process: "It's really just a case that I like making things, and the natural variation in wood means that I never run out of possibilities. I have no formal design training so I have no fixed process when I am making. It can be an idea from a glimpse of a picture, something that pops into my head fully formed, or just arising from seeing what I can make with a particular plank of beautiful timber or bundle of exquisite veneer.

I've always got ideas to get around to, with some particularly ambitious boxes on the cards, using new decorative techniques I'm playing with at the moment, based on Japanese lacquer work.

I am concentrating more and more on boxes and smaller furniture and really enjoying the demands that makes on me as a designer."

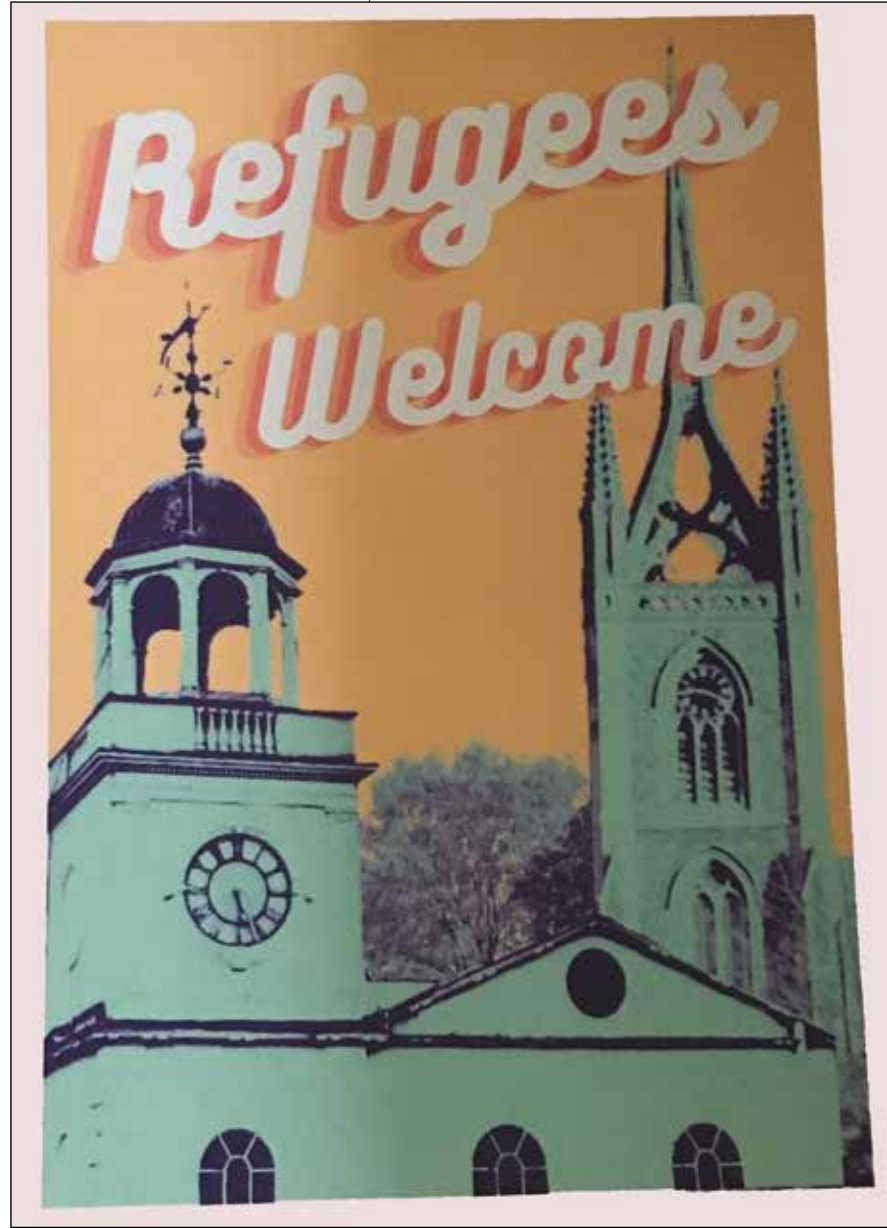
www.sjdesigns.co.uk

By Nathalie Banaigs, Kent Creative



UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

FAVERSHAM RESPONDS



can bring about practical action. The Faversham and Villages Refugee Solidarity Group have been active since October 2015 and, recently, their sponsorship group raised the £9,000 required to bring a destitute Syrian family to Faversham. They arrived in spring, after extensive research and planning. The group continues with sensitive but significant support as the family begin their new life.

We have been haunted by images of migrant desperation on our beaches and balked at the numbers involved. In 2020 The White Cliffs was the perfect place to display Syrian filmmaker Hassan Akkad's succinct and effective appeal for compassion for asylum seekers. A larger public responded with appropriate emotion to campaigns to raise awareness. Little Amal, the giant child puppet walking gently across borders, captivated audiences who wanted to welcome her. We use the term refugee with careful consideration and a kinder understanding now.

FVRSG naturally support the Ukrainian crisis but the wider response from the town as a whole has been astounding. The Faversham for Ukraine Facebook page provides information relating to this crisis

specifically and managing it alone looks like a hefty responsibility. Host families are welcoming new guests as I write. No one seems sure of the exact number of Ukrainian refugees who are temporarily housed in Faversham, but it is surprising. And while we think we appreciate the generosity of offering this very real security, we are unaware of the staggering amount of dedication essential in each case.

How do you offer a Ukrainian family a home? You can register your interest with the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the first place, but it is easy to feel lost from this point. Next, it appears most effective to approach potential guests yourself: finding them through charities, NGOs and on unofficial Facebook pages. But it's all confusingly vague, unnecessarily laborious and many must have become discouraged.

Those who do manage to find guests and establish a trust, must then apply for sponsorship visas. This often falls to the host, but language barriers still

Below: Refugees from Ukraine on the border with Slovakia (checkpoint "Uzhgorod-Vyshne Nemeckoe") in the Zakarpatya regions. Photo by Fotoreserg. The Say No to War image collection



Left: Kyiv ,Ukraine: 24th February, 2022. People hiding in one of the cities metro stations. Photo by Fotoreserg. The Say No to War image collection

Below: The wonderfully peaceful Abbey Physic Garden accommodates weekly meetings of Ukrainian families.



provide obstacles. The website has annoying limitations and the process seems to require constant monitoring. A cynic might say it was all designed to be as difficult as possible. Several people I spoke to felt the need to approach Helen Whately to move things on.

There are many stories of failed sponsorship attempts- links forged and applications made- which seem simply to completely disappear. Potential hosts are not always informed. We hear reports of Ukrainian families, beginning their hopeful journey to Britain, redirected to more receptive nations following a paperwork catastrophe.

It is at least frustrating and more often traumatic. Hosts that succeed in securing sponsorship visas must then ensure safe and adequate domestic provision. Rooms offered are subject to inspection of course, but often so stringent as to seem pedantic; DBS checks can be inexplicably slow to process; furniture, equipment and clothes must all be gathered to provide the beginnings of a home for a family arriving with nothing. And those committed enough to this obviously want to provide something more too: appropriate toys and personal possessions, access to support networks, companions, perhaps even job opportunities.

A couple I spoke to, who clearly provide an affectionate, supportive and respectful set up for their family, reflected that sponsoring had proved an almost full time job and were grateful to be retired. Money promised to hosts to help cover costs does not appear easily, individual interim payments for guests are delayed

and applications for Universal Credit need constant chasing. The Faversham community has offered a heartening contrast to Government failings. Hosts commended the wonderful support of individuals and companies, who have rallied to provide goods, materials and service, free and often at very short notice.

A national picture seems to indicate better support from local Government and, over the past weeks, this is becoming more purposeful. KCC and SBC both provide advisors to support guests and their host families. But, again, it is the community that seems to provide more tangible support. The Abbey Physic Garden accommodates weekly meetings of Ukrainian families, translator available; Faversham Pools have donated free vouchers, pubs have provided free entertainment; free access to bicycles and computers is now available; gym classes for children are possible in the future and barbeques and picnics are planned for the summer months. Anyone involved in providing the myriad of support for Ukrainian families here in Faversham is working very hard indeed.


The significant efforts involved in providing safe shelter are really just the beginning

Hosts I spoke to feel deeply concerned for the emotional wellbeing of their guests. Escaping into an unknown, they have put all faith in the mercy of strangers. They have lasting sadness: if they haven't lost husbands and fathers to the fighting, they feel the guilt of having left them behind. Limited government support strategies do

nothing to consider this. Hosts can't always accommodate an extended family, members of whom can often be placed in distant towns. This adds another layer of misery, one which could surely be avoided. Why not facilitate group sponsorship for a number of refugees who could arrive together and settle in the same area? Children could attend the same school, appropriate teachers providing support; adequate medical and dental services could be more easily available. It would allow, at least, some reassuring reminder of a community they were forced to leave behind

Several hosts I talked to mentioned relatively recent moves to Faversham. I imagine how welcome they must have been made to feel, enough to extend their own to Ukrainian refugees. Some very recent newcomers, weeks after moving to Faversham and knowing no one, are welcoming their own Ukrainian guests! Perhaps understanding the chaos of domestic impermanence makes people more inclined to offer sanctuary? An obstinately immobile, deliberately blind and self-serving government could learn a thing or two.




The Faversham for Ukraine Facebook page provides information relating to this crisis specifically and managing it alone looks like a hefty responsibility. Host families are welcoming new guests as I write



Ukrainian flags are flying and support continues to grow in our small town

The Faversham and Villages Refugee Solidarity Group have been active since October 2015


FAVERSHAM EYE
PAGE 28 ISSUE FIFTEEN

SIMON FOSTER

BORN 1/9/1939 DIED 6/6/2022

OBITUARY

Simon was born in Calcutta, educated at Shrewsbury and Cambridge where he represented the University in the Pentathlon. He joined the Dunlop tyre company and was sent on an elite management in the US. Overseas postings followed in Indonesia, Malaysia and Zambia, where, as managing director, he restructured the company ensuring Africans were promoted to the top positions along with Europeans who had previously dominated the top management positions.

His next posting was to Dunlop France, which at the time was hemorrhaging money and on life support. He had to deal with hostile unions protected by the government's rigid labour laws and new Japanese owners who wanted to completely restructure the company. When he eventually returned to the UK, he left a Dunlop France that still competes profitably in a difficult, technically advanced market.

He then became the director of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Trades with a brief to steer the UK motor industry into the European single market.

Simon's last email was sent to his family and friends on the 3rd June saying that he had been diagnosed with cancer and expected to have only several months left. Four days later we received the news that he had died peacefully on the 6th at his home Symnells in Aldington.

KENTISH LIFE By Shamus Foster

My father would often introduce himself by saying "I'm a Bengali".

A statement that certainly displayed my father's characteristic enjoyment of dropping arresting statements into conversation – often with strangers or first acquaintances I might add – who would naturally be startled to learn that Simon, outwardly the quintessential Englishman saw himself as a Bengali.

And, yes, he was born in Calcutta but there was much more to it.

Bengalis have a justified reputation as writers, poets, musicians but also astronomers. In the popular imagination, they are seen as dreamers - creative, versatile, often with expansive characters and always opinionated. So, his claim was also a genuine statement of character, and he was proud to call himself a Bengali.

Which begs the question, having been born in a wider world and demonstrated his adaptability in many countries, why Kent?

To understand this, you must know that this place was his ancestral homeland and Aldington, the family village.



When, as a family, we lived abroad in the Far East or Zambia, this was the place that we sped back to on the long vacations, our oak tree, and from where he set out again into the world strengthened and spiritually renewed.

My father's attachment to Kent was profound but occasionally comical. When he would collect us from boarding school, we developed a collective ritual whereby, as we crossed the boundary between Sussex and Kent on the M20, we would inhale deeply and sagely agree how much better the Kentish air was.

In my case the appreciation was tinged with relief at putting some distance between myself and my boarding school, but I think

that my father really believed the air was better in Kent.

Later, on a more serious occasion, when visiting from Australia I commented to him on the sheer pleasure that he gained from his life here – to which my father replied in all sincerity that for him to be in Kent and at Symnells really was an earthly form of paradise.

It meant that when the opportunity presented itself, he planted himself here properly and threw himself into the life of the place, both as a servant of Kent and a man of the village.

Despite his claims that he was just 'mucking about on the water' or his oft-quoted Kentish phrase "Once a man, twice

a boy" Simon's passion for preserving and improving the unique culture and circumstances of Kent was hard to ignore.

The causes that mattered to him literally across the county ranged from the Faversham Creek Trust to preventing a new detention centre being planned for the village. No doubt he would have handled the latest housing development battle on his very doorstep with characteristic deftness but, reluctantly, has had to leave it to others to take up arms on his behalf.

Throughout it all, it was my father's energetic concern for people and the places he loved that animated him.

Colleagues and friends know how kind he could be beneath the confident exterior. As a family, we were the beneficiaries of his love and attention, although at times his energy and his convictions could be maddening.

But above all, he was loving and loveable and he loved the land where we have gathered. So whenever you find yourself in the area next, take a deep breath of the good Kentish air and remember that Simon will be enjoying it here with you.



A PERSONAL REFLECTION By Brian Pain

I first came across Simon when we were still operating Standard Quay as a proper working boatyard.

He turned up on the deck of the dry dock whilst I was crawling under the bottom of a barge in mud and tar in the murky depths of the dock. He shouted down to me in what seemed at the time a somewhat imperious voice asking what I was doing. (A question I've often asked myself over the years).

I soon got to know him well and he became more and more interested in the Creek.

Partially galvanised by the impending loss of Standard Quay and also by seeing an opportunity to "compete" with the very impressive voluntary achievements of his wife Phillippa who worked with the South Georgia Heritage Trust and other Antarctic organisations, he was one of the founder members of The Faversham Creek Trust in 2011.

Because of the contacts made during his previous life as a high-powered business executive, he was uniquely positioned to negotiate a 30 year lease on the Purifier Building at a peppercorn rent from Morrisons supermarkets.

Over the next two years an enthusiastic group of volunteers worked hard to secure funds and rehabilitate the building from the roof down.

Simon is particularly remembered during this time for his impressive labour in the removal of several feet of pigeon droppings which covered most of the ground floor. All transported away from Faversham in his long-suffering trailer to another lucky part of Kent.

He also secured a half size replica of the Graveney Boat and exhibited it at many schools around Kent explaining its part in the history of Faversham Creek

He remained Vice Chairman until the end of 2017 but had become increasingly disillusioned, I think, by the fact that the creek bridge and basin regeneration had become bogged down in local politics.

After Simon's home and family, his biggest love was his Dutch sailing barge "Hoop" which he kept in Oare Creek.

One of the many pieces of wisdom Simon imparted to me was: "never write more than that which fits on one side of an A4 sheet of paper if you want people to read it".

So it would be best to stop h.....

GOING, GOING

I thought it would last my time -
The sense that, beyond the town,
There would always be fields and farms,
Where the village louts could climb
Such trees as were not cut down;
I knew there'd be false alarms

In the papers about old streets
And split level shopping, but some
Have always been left so far;
And when the old part retreats
As the bleak high-risers come
We can always escape in the car.

Things are tougher than we are, just
As earth will always respond
However we mess it about;
Chuck filth in the sea, if you must:
The tides will be clean beyond.
- But what do I feel now? Doubt?

Or age, simply? The crowd
Is young in the M1 cafe;
Their kids are screaming for more -
More houses, more parking allowed,
More caravan sites, more pay.
On the Business Page, a score

Of spectaclad grins approve
Some takeover bid that entails
Five per cent profit (and ten
Per cent more in the estuaries): move
Your works to the unspoilt dales
(Grey area grants)! And when

You try to get near the sea
In summer . . .
It seems, just now,
To be happening so very fast;
Despite all the land left free
For the first time I feel somehow
That it isn't going to last,

That before I snuff it, the whole
Boiling will be bricked in
Except for the tourist parts -
First slum of Europe: a role
It won't be hard to win,
With a cast of crooks and tarts.

And that will be England gone,
The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,
The guildhalls, the carved choirs.
There'll be books; it will linger on
In galleries; but all that remains
For us will be concrete and tyres.

Most things are never meant.
This won't be, most likely; but greeds
And garbage are too thick-strewn
To be swept up now, or invent
Excuses that make them all needs.
I just think it will happen, soon.

Philip Larkin (1922-1985)

By Harold Goodwin, writing
in a personal capacity

PLANNING

In the past few weeks our chaotic Government has said that it intends to scrap the centrally determined housing requirements in a shake up of the planning system.

Swale has therefore paused the next stage of the Local Plan Review Consultation.

They have said "With mounting uncertainty around the government's direction of travel for the planning system, any consultation now will likely have to be repeated in the future to take into account the Council's response to those changes."

Could it be that the damage that is being inflicted on Faversham by the imposition of huge estates of expensive, poorly designed houses could cease to be a statutory requirement and allow for future house-building to reflect local needs?

I'm sure that no changes are being made merely to save Conservative seats in the next General Election.

THE SWALE PLAN

When Margaret Thatcher abandoned regional policy 40 years ago the UK's centre of gravity shifted towards the southeast. For example, the Office for National Statistics projects a reduction in the formation of new households by 24.7% in Barrow-in-Furness. According to the 2021 census the population of Swale has increased by 11.7% since 2011. By contrast, the population of Gateshead has declined by 2%. Over time the "levelling-up" agenda may counter the shift of population from north to south but for now, Swale is under pressure from central government to increase the supply of houses.

Despite successive governments talking about the importance of local people having a say over development, in reality we effectively have very little. Most recently proposals for "street votes" to give a vote to neighbours on whether planning permission is granted for developments on their street. It is not clear how this could apply to one of the new greenfield developments which pose such a threat to the character of Faversham.

Housing targets are set by Westminster and do not reflect local needs, particularly for locally affordable housing for families. Swale has to apply the government's 'standard method' for calculating the number of houses it must provide

planning permission for. The Faversham Society wrote back in January to Michael Gove asking if any local authority had provided planning permission for fewer houses without penalty. The Society has not received a reply, we know of none. If Swale fails to demonstrate to the central government that it has a five-year land supply for sufficient housing to meet the target set through the government's over simplistic formula developers can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and permission will often be granted. Abbey Fields is presently very vulnerable to housing under this scenario. The Society has for the first time employed a barrister to make the case for refusing development, the argument is presented in great detail on the Society's website.

Applying the government's standard method results in Swale having to grant planning permission for 1,048 houses per year. There is now a tiny amount of brownfield land left in Swale and with an AONB and large amounts of designated protected land and flood-prone marsh, development land is a rare commodity. Sea level rise caused by climate change poses a major threat to Swale and Faversham, published scientific analysis identifies Swale as the local authority facing the third-highest risk in the UK.

Understandably, many in Faversham want just to scream No, and refuse. But we've been there before. At Brogdale Road, where Shepherd Neame was offered planning permission for 63 homes after it went to an appeal, costing the council thousands of pounds when the Planning Inspectorate determined that there was insufficient land supply and found that south of the A2 should not be protected. Perry Court was developed, despite massive local opposition, for similar reasons. The Planning Inspectorate's role is to enforce Central Government's planning policy.

Swale is struggling to deliver the number of houses that central government is demanding, so making Faversham vulnerable again to unwanted development at, for example, Abbey Fields. Swale managed to get 2,110 houses built by developers in the three years to March 2021 just doing enough to avoid sanctions which were applied by central government to five other councils in Kent including Medway and Canterbury

The Swale Local Plan is now not expected to come out for public consultation until around November this year. At this point we, the public, will be able to give our views as to what green field site we would least hate to be covered with more inappropriate and expensive badly built houses before the plan is submitted to the Secretary of State.

THE FAVERSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Faversham Town Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of the town, defined by the parish boundary, in order to ensure that further development within the boundary meets a variety of local needs and enhances what is special about our town.

Our Faversham Plan has to fit within the strategy adopted by Swale and central government's National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF). The NPPF quite closely limits what we and Swale can plan to do. There has been much talk of localism since the 2011 Localism Act and local authorities are required to consult and co-operate with other bodies in the planning process. Section 110(7) requires that local and neighbourhood planners must "have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State." Our Faversham Plan is constrained by the requirement to comply with the Swale Plan and central government's National Policy Planning Framework.

We anticipate that the Faversham Plan will be ready for a public consultation process in the first week of Jan and for the referendum in May. Before the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan can be published Swale has to check that our plan complies with the existing Swale Plan and the Planning Inspectorate will ensure that it complies with the NPPF and hear objections from developers and others. To come into force the Faversham Plan needs to be supported by a majority of Faversham residents at the referendum. If passed in May, it is likely that the Faversham Plan will be in force before the new Swale Plan.

It was unfortunate that the town turned its back on the creek in the 1970s. If supported by residents in the referendum the new Faversham Plan will replace the Creek Neighbourhood Plan linking the regeneration of the creek to the wider town. The aims of the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan have emerged from consultations with residents, youth and businesses. There are seven aims:

1. To promote the vitality and viability of Faversham Town Centre, as a resource for local people and visitors.
2. To support sustainable housing growth to meet the diverse needs of the local community.
3. To create more sustainable live-work patterns, based on neighbourhoods with residential, employment and community facilities in easy walking distance.
4. To promote sustainable transport, cycling and walking.

5. To protect Faversham's green spaces and natural environments and ensure environmental quality.
6. To promote sustainable design, to complement Faversham's locally distinctiveness and sense of place.
7. To preserve or enhance Faversham's heritage and promote heritage-led economic development.

HOUSING

The plan is required by Swale and the NPPF to allocate land for 219 new homes, all of which, within the parish boundary, are on brownfield land. The plan encourages the re-use of vacant buildings, through sensitive refurbishment or upper floors. There is strong support for Community-Led housing initiatives, self-build and affordable rental accommodation.

The Faversham Plan seeks to protect the green and blue infrastructure through Local Green Space designations and addresses air quality and flooding, so far as is possible within the constraints of the NPPF. The plan strongly supports the existing network of paths and greenways within the parish and the extension of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. The aim has been to create sustainable mixed-use neighbourhoods, with local facilities and good connections, including for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Faversham Plan has specific policies on the issues which residents care about. All designed to make Faversham a better place to live and work in and to bring up children. Working to develop the plan we have been very aware of the limits placed on neighbourhood plans by national, country and district governments and that we cannot address health service provision (NHS), schools and education (KCC) and roads policy. The Faversham Plan contains a comprehensive set of policies. In each policy area, we have pushed for as much as possible within the constraints imposed on neighbourhood planning. Being part of the Town Council's Steering Group for the Faversham Plan has provided a crash course in England's planning system, at times very frustrating.

When the plan has been screened by Swale and is finally published everyone will be able to see the final version which contains:

- FAV1: Faversham Town Centre
- FAV2: Housing Development
- FAV3: Residential Mix and Standards
- FAV4: Mobility and Sustainable Transport
- FAV5: Critical Road Junctions
- FAV6: Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways
- FAV7: Natural Environment and Landscape
- FAV8: Flooding and Surface Water
- FAV9: Air Quality
- FAV10: Sustainable Design and Character

- FAV11: Heritage
- FAV12: Health, Recreation and Community
- FAV13: Local Green Space
- FAV14: Local Renewable Energy Schemes
- FAV15: Faversham Creek – Special Policy Area
- FAV16: Maritime Gateway Heritage Regeneration Area

The town centre policy contains an explicit requirement to "assure access for those with disabilities" and Fav3 calls for "accommodation suitable for older people and those with limited mobility." The emerging Faversham Plan calls for accommodation suitable for families, first-time buyers, renters and those wishing to downsize and for the affordable housing provision to be two-thirds rent and one-third ownership.

The plan supports heritage-led regeneration and the adaptation and reuse of historic buildings will be supported, providing such works preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas and preserve listed buildings and their setting. It requires that development takes account of views towards St Mary's Church and Davington Priory and must have no adverse impact on "the rural setting of Faversham Town Centre and Syndale, Ospringe, Preston-next-Faversham, and Faversham Conservation Areas, including the open land between the Ham marshes and Bysingwood.

The new Faversham Plan strongly supports the regeneration of the creek through "uses that enhance the economic, leisure, maritime or recreational use of the Creek, including visitor facilities" and "development must have no adverse impact on public access to the waterfront and should take opportunities to improve access, link to existing footpaths and provide moorings." Creekside residential development will be supported, only where it is part of a mixed-use scheme which includes predominantly the use, reuse and refurbishment of historic buildings and development to provide hospitality, leisure, assembly, recreation, tourism and visitor and community-related uses, including those relating to maritime and brewing activities.

When the plan is finally published and out for consultation early in 2023, there will be a range of opportunities to comment on and debate the merits of the new Faversham Plan. Inevitably in developing a plan of this kind, no one gets everything they want. Compromise is inevitable. We hope that it will secure the support of the majority of those who vote in the referendum and believe that it should.



Applying the government's standard method results in Swale having to grant planning permission for 1,048 houses per year

Understandably, many in Faversham want just to scream No!

Swale is struggling to deliver the number of houses that central government is demanding, so making Faversham vulnerable again to unwanted development

Our Faversham Plan is constrained by the requirement to comply with the Swale Plan

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The Faversham Plan has specific policies on the issues which residents care about

The plan supports heritage-led regeneration and the adaptation and reuse of historic buildings



A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY FOR THE SWALE SMACK AND THAMES BARGE MATCH

Back in 1972, a few keen traditional boat sailors from north Kent organised a race for Essex smacks and Thames barges in the river Swale; fifty years on the event prospers and is now one of the largest annual gatherings of traditional boats on the East Coast. Last Saturday witnessed some thirty-five craft racing out of the Swale in a brisk sou'westerly to compete in the 22-mile race off the north Kent shore; the brown sails, set against the eastern horizon, made for a fine sight and a great day's racing was enjoyed in the calm waters of a weather shore.

It had been blowing pretty hard the day before and that had deterred a few of the smaller boats from heading south from the Essex rivers for the race. But the engineless Thames barge *Edme* arrived in the Swale for the first time since 2019, and the smack *Hyacinth* and bawley *Gladys* made it down from Pin Mill. The *ADC* was another smack that had been absent for a number of years so her arrival was much to be welcomed.

Edme went on to win the bowsprit class and the BMM Western trophy for the fastest elapsed time around the course, while *ADC* was the first smack home. The Faversham-based *Repertor* won the staysail class and *Centaur* the restricted staysail class. *Nightfall* was first home of the gaffers over 25 feet, and *Fifi* sailed home alone to take line honours in the gaffers under 25 ft, the rest of that class having retired in the teeth of the squally conditions. It's always good to welcome a small fleet of Dutch barges, and this year *Johanna*, *Nooit Volmaakt* and *Albatros* sailed a shortened course and added a touch of stately elegance to the affair.

Fifty years on from that first Swale match it's clear that the traditional boat scene thrives. Despite the rising costs, the declining interest in our maritime history and the inevitable toll of the years on old wooden boats, an active and enthusiastic core of owners, crew, shipwrights and skilled craftsmen keep a remarkable fleet of traditional craft alive and active around our coasts. The Swale Smack & Sailing Barge Match is just one of many races and events that take place each year but it's certainly one of the most significant on East Coast and it looks set for another fifty years.

Photos by
Seamus Masters





THE KENTISH SAIL ASSOCIATION

The Kentish Sail Association was formed in 1972, so 2022 will be their 50th anniversary. Those founder members who are no longer with us - Hugh Perks, Lena Reekie and Lawrie Tester-would be delighted the race still prospering and the KSA alive and well.

The north Kent coast is home to a fine collection of Thames barges and other traditional craft and there are few creeks around the Medway and Swale that are not home to a few of them.

The KSA, through organising the Swale Smack and Sailing Barge Match each year and offering opportunities to youngsters to experience days afloat on these beautiful vessels, plays a part in promoting traditional sail in Kent.

If you would like to find out more about the KSA and the traditional craft of Kent, email them at kentishsail@gmail.com and request a copy their impressive chart with details about the association and its aims.

This year the KSA has produced a beautiful calendar depicting some of the craft that took part in the 2021 Match. Copies are available for only £5.00 from the Fleur de Lis in Preston Street, Tales on Market Street bookshop in the main square and Creek Creative in Abbey Street. Proceeds go towards the costs of running the annual event. More details can be found at www.kentishsail.org

THE TASTES OF FAVERSHAM

SPICE LOUNGE

In 2007, the date coinciding exactly with the birth of the owner's first child, a new Indian restaurant opened on Preston Street, commanding immediate attention with bright walls and waterfall panels, coloured lights and youthful nightclub vibe. Bold, brave and out of sync with Faversham, it was intriguing. Children wondered at the lively interior and parents, forced to peel them from the window, simply had to peer in themselves. The food was exciting from the start. This seemed to be a menu that offered several dishes most of us had never heard of, let alone attempted to recreate at home. I visited as soon as I could and found myself impressed by the food and charmed by the wonderfully courteous and dynamic service.

That was a while ago of course, but Spice Lounge still manages to seem new and exciting. With an ever-growing client base, it continues to offer a rather special night out for those important occasions. I asked owner Rokib Ali what made a London-based restaurateur decide to take a chance on a small town in Kent, which already offered two well-established Indian restaurants.

At that time he had three other establishments and domestic ties to London. 76 Preston Street (previously Flair Fashions) is a beautiful listed building, parts of which date from the fifteenth century. It had obvious potential as a dwelling, but some instinct made him decide to try the restaurant. It was obviously meant to be. Business immediately took off and now staff occupy the accommodation above. The experiment proved so successful that Rokib now concentrates all his efforts on Faversham's Spice Lounge and still travels down from London to oversee proceedings. It sounds exhausting for a family man, but enthusiasm clearly fuels his energy.

Admitting to my own curiosity as the restaurant opened, I asked him why he thought the gamble had worked so well. What makes the Spice Lounge experience unique? He described meticulous preparation of the food by an insightful team and service of the highest quality. And it's true. It's impossible not to appreciate the effect of freshly ground spices and careful crafting from a talented and truly committed chef. Service is perfect - intelligent, always attentive but never overdone. Spice Lounge immediately won awards and Rokib is unashamedly proud of its continuing reputation.

A complete end to all that made life enjoyable in March 2020 sent immediate panic into us and into all businesses. Spice Lounge were worried too, but continued with takeaway and delivery services as soon as Rokib had reassured himself his staff felt happy to do so. We all thought a lot about food at that time and those of us browsing their Facebook page welcomed a communication probably much needed at the time. They posted wonderful photos, offered their own "spoonful of medicine also known as curry", reminding us throughout that their top priority was the health and well being of their customers and staff. Rokib saw take away sales increase and soar during this time and somehow still managed, in April 2020, to work alongside charities supplying food to 1,000 NHS heroes. Lockdown continued, but so did their communication. Spice Lounge told us repeatedly that they were longing to welcome their clientele back and made use of this time to completely refurbish the restaurant.

Already glamorous, you might wonder about the need for a makeover, but it was surely a wise move. It's always worth refreshing the magic. Food excites the palette, imaginative decor pleases the eye. And



a refurb is clever marketing, demonstrating confidence in its product and giving back to the loyal clients who have made its success.

Rokib says he enjoys being part of the town and over the years clients have become friends. I had to ask what made Faversham special enough to trade here alone. He explained the appeal of a small town where everyone knows everyone and the very real sense of community. Spice Lounge has shown its appreciation from the start; Rokib sees it as natural to donate to local events and fundraising efforts, not least a generous contribution to the Swing Bridge Appeal.

Being immersed in the community can prove useful too. Rokib was instrumental in reuniting a valued customer with his beloved bicycle, snatched from outside the shop in the moments it took to collect a takeaway. A short time after the theft, a local hopeful visited Rokib at the restaurant, claiming he knew the whereabouts of the bicycle and asking a sum for its safe return. Rokib oversaw the collection of the bike, accompanying the chancer as he returned it, cash on delivery, to the owner. Allowing myself a smile at this story of non-violent, small community, resolvable crime, I imagined the rather rueful equivalent for the bike's owner.

We treated ourselves to a family meal at Spice Lounge because, frankly, writing about it had made me hungry. It's been ages since we've eaten in the restaurant. I've glanced at the new decor when collecting take away but a lengthier visit gave us time to relax into the atmosphere, appreciate the colourfully-lit carved panels and muse on the process that must have created the textured wall cladding. The staff were charming and helpful. Really hot plates always delight me and these arrived, wiped as they were laid, at the exact same time as all the food we'd ordered. And somehow, despite the almost daunting array of dishes which seemed to completely fill the

table, we managed to eat in comfort.

We were all, rather competitively, delighted with our own choices. My vegetable dansak was sweet and delicious, with pronounced individual flavours and a complementary heat. I'd greedily added Bakara Begun, the dish which has always defined Spice Lounge for me. My partner was extremely impressed with his choice of Lamb Mufas, enjoying it more, the more he ate. Two of my children chose fairly mild chicken and lamb dishes, very much enjoying the depth of flavour in the sauces and reminding themselves that curries don't necessarily have to be hot. My son, making a concerted effort to increase his chilli tolerance, polished off a spicier chicken dish with gusto and admirable speed, surely a skill possessed only by the young. We contented ourselves with just a tiny amount of perfectly cooked rice, deciding breads would be better accompaniments. Both the garlic and plain nans we ordered were luxurious, somehow as light as they were filling; the keema nans were better than anyone had ever tried before: a revelation, actually filled with delicious minced lamb. And I urge you to try the modestly described cheese nan, memorable particularly for the fresh coriander and hot green chilli. Over the years I've wasted significant hours in my own attempts to create the definitive bouncy nan. I certainly won't be bothering again.

All this and sufficient Cobra let us relax into indulgent parenting and the teenagers finished their meal with a variety of gratifying ice cream desserts that nobody needed. We had a lovely time and it had actually proved a bit special. Restaurant experiences are not necessarily enjoyable and tensions can often disrupt the flow of an evening. Significantly good food and considerate service are supposed to allow you to completely wind down. Spice Lounge quite simply provides that experience.

By Claudia Heywood



MAYHI A PHOENIX RISES

The original Mayhi was a wooden estuary sailing boat, with a characteristic shallow draft and with broad beam enabling a large sail area. It was launched around 1910. By 2010 it had sadly reached a state of dereliction where a simple restoration was no longer possible. The new Mayhi is a

beautiful reconstruction with exquisite detailing displaying fine shipwright skills. It is hoped that sea trials will begin in October.

Simon Grillet had initiated a shipwright training course at Standard Quay when it was still a working shipyard. Apprentices from the scheme



gained real practical experience working a variety of repair and restoration projects, including the National Lottery funded £1.4 million rebuild of the sailing barge Cambria (the last barge to trade entirely under sail, taking her last cargo in 1970) at the Quay.

When the lease of the Quay was not renewed, the Faversham Creek Trust generously provided a large internal space in the Purifier Building where Simon had the opportunity to recommence shipwright training. After several setbacks, including a disastrous fire which destroyed most of Simon's tools which he had collected over his working life, as well as all the expensive carefully selected wood sourced from round the world, the reconstruction of the Mayhi was the result.

Great credit is due to 'Bert' (Wayne) Pengelly who survived five years of instruction under Simon and has emerged with a fine set of woodworking skills. Bert was responsible for much of the completed boat.



SIMON'S STORY

The Mayhi had for some years been moored at Standard Quay before being hauled out when she lost the structural integrity to stay afloat. When starting the apprentice training scheme at the Purifier Building, I needed a restoration project on which to base the training. The Mayhi, 27 ft long, was the right size and both interesting and with a pretty enough hull to justify the effort. She was however not only extremely decayed, but her shape had distorted to the extent that a full reconstruction would be required to bring her back to life (with the aid of three thousand hand tapped rivets).

She has been traditionally reconstructed using Spruce, Cedar and Iroko and is now as close as I can get to

the shape she was originally intended to be. The only thing known about her origins was that she was built in Ramsgate before the First World War by an unknown builder or designer. Her measurements would suggest that she was a racing boat built to the 10 Rater rule* of the 1890's.

*a rule prescribed by the Royal Yachting Association which defined dimensions and sail area for racing yachts.

This lack of pedigree allowed me to slightly alter some aspects of the boat, such as building the cabin roof from cedar plank sheathed fibreglass, a modern boatbuilding technique which I felt the apprentices would benefit from learning.

We are looking forward to finding out if she sails as good as she looks.





FAVERSHAM'S SKIFFS

FAVERSHAM SKIFFIE FEST 2022

This three-day event powerfully demonstrated the pleasure and thrill of racing boats in Faversham Creek. 13 teams from the town plus one team from Herne Bay competed in time trials from Faversham Bridge to Crab Island and back, a distance of just under half a mile. The buzz and excitement were reminiscent of Faversham Raft Race but without the eggs and flour! 300 watched and cheered from both sides of the Creek. Some of the rowers had never rowed before. Others had been rowing for most of their lives. Their joy is evident on the faces.

ALAN THORNE

Despite the fact that the Creek Trust cannot exploit the potential of the location of its organisation at the side of the creek basin, which completely scuppered any chances of realistically doing any real boat repair or restoration work alongside the Purifier building, commendably, boat builder Alan Thorne, based in the building, has persevered and achieved considerable success.

He has shown commendable initiative with his training scheme to teach a wide range of people how to build rowing skiffs and also encourage greater interest in the potential of the creek by staging rowing races.

By Brian Pain



COMMUNITY BOAT BUILD

Elegant, graceful, traditional styled, wooden rowing skiffs are being hand-crafted by Faversham's children and adults. They're aged 12 to 87 years! Our workshop is in The Purifier Building at the head of Faversham Creek, next to The Basin. You're very welcome to drop in to take a look, smell the wood, the glue, the varnish and the paint. Join the construction of the next skiff for a couple of hours per week. No prior experience is needed as all sessions are instructor-led and guided. Use hand tools,

learn skills and help create a beautiful five-man skiff to be proud of. The camaraderie is wonderful between all ages and backgrounds.

COMMUNITY ROWING

A growing number of rowers are discovering the joy of rowing on Faversham Creek. These St Ayles skiffs are capable of coastal rowing. Famous boat designer, Iain Oughtred, followed the lines of the Fair Isle skiff, so they are extremely stable and seaworthy craft. Experienced rowers and complete novices love rowing our two skiffs, Avocet and Findlay

Skiffie Festival 22

Race in our 5-man boats on Faversham Creek!
August Bank Holiday Weekend



Saturday 27th 1.00pm: Teams Practice
Sunday 28th 1.30pm: Time-Trial Heats
Bank Holiday Monday 29th 2.00pm: The Finals
Timed races will start and finish near Faversham Bridge. The Start and Finish Line will be next to the Town Quay. The course will be to Crab Island and back, about 500 metres. All equipment supplied.
Entry Fees: £20 per team, £20 Clubs, £100 Corporates.
Categories: Men, Women, Men 50+, Women 50+, Mixed, Boys 12-16, Girls 12-16
All proceeds in support of Faversham Community Boat Build
To pre-register, T: 07865091155 E: Alan@cinqueportsrowing.org

By Alan Thorne



Macdonald. It was the late Findlay who suggested we build one for each of the four wards of our town. Skiff number three will be launched at 2.00pm, next to the bridge, on Saturday October 29th. Don't miss it! You can also come for a taster row that afternoon in one of our three skiffs!

THE BASIN AND CREEK

The sea flows into the heart of Faversham. It once carried important trade in and out. Ships, large and small, were built here. Time passed and it appeared that the creek had served its purpose. The creek began to silt up with mud and so a vicious cycle began: fewer ships

could navigate to the head of the creek which led to more silting. The sluice gates become defunct. The swing bridge no longer swung to allow vessels to enter the basin. Now the once vibrant basin looks no more than a duck pond.

The basin is a neglected treasure, right in the heart of Faversham! Admittedly, it's buried by a load of mud. But, as we all know, treasure is worth digging up. There's huge potential for this stretch of water. It can be both beautiful and of great value to the people of Faversham once again. It doesn't take much imagination or a great vision but with conviction and determination, the heart of Faversham can be transformed. The benefits would be enormous

and Faversham's Basin would be a destination for locals, tourists and sailors alike.

COMMUNITY IS KEY

Isolation due to Covid, obsession with TV, "smart" phones and gaming is not healthy. Humans need real interaction and, maybe, the financial crisis will encourage us to socialise again.

The St Ayles skiff boat building communities throughout Scotland and N Ireland have had an extremely positive impact upon towns and villages, bringing together disparate groups in remarkable and moving ways. We're seeing the fruits of this with our own community boat building and rowing project.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

Training, exercise, team building, youth programmes, social rowing and preparing for the World Skiffie Championships are all on the agenda! A community of helpers and leaders is also beginning to grow.

We want to introduce Adaptive Rowing to enable people with disabilities to participate in rowing our skiffs (some already engage in building the boats). We need floating pontoons to enable easy embarkation. These pontoons would also allow us to dry-store the skiffs in the basin for ready access when the tide is up.

Let's push for the sluice gates to be repaired. Then rowing and dinghy sailing can take place whatever the state of tide.



A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NORTH PRESTON & BRENTS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (NPBCA)



NPBCA has really punched above its weight in getting things done for the community

Hilary Whelan, Brenda Chester and Angie Simmonds had the right combination of skills to start an effective pressure group

In December 2013 an unexpected tidal surge caused the 'worst floods since 1953, 60 years' before, bringing devastation to Faversham; Front Brents

In 2017, after much dogged prodding and perseverance, the Front Brents Bund was constructed and has proved itself watertight at a recent surge



FAVERSHAM EYE
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There is no doubt that in its short life the NPBCA has helped to change the face of Faversham. There have been several major achievements: firstly, working closely with the Faversham Creek Trust, we obtained significant changes to the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan before its approval by the Referendum in 2018. Secondly, we have massively influenced the building of the new flood alleviation bund along Front Brents in 2015. We've also raised the money to build a community gym and provided benches at the Reedland Crescent Recreation Ground.

NPBCA has really punched above its weight in getting things done for the community; so how did this come about in what is one of the most deprived wards in Kent? The first catalyst was the far-sighted decision by Faversham Town Council in 2013 to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Faversham Creek – FTC recognised that the creek is at the heart of Faversham and was in need of a strategy of how it was developed. FTC embarked on a process involving consultation of interested parties; unfortunately, only the landowners of the south side of the creek were drawn in closely, so the residents of the Brents felt their views were not being heard.

BCA FORMATION

Incensed by this situation, three doughty residents got together to form Brents Community Association to demand that the community be heard. Hilary Whelan, Brenda Chester and Angie Simmonds had the right combination of skills to start an effective pressure group for the situation: Hilary as researcher and communicator (with an amazing eye for detail gained at Reuters), Brenda with immense experience in the by-ways of local government, and Angie with her finger on the local pulse as landlady of Brents Tavern. In September 2013 BCA was formed with a constitution defining a small Management Team (that



included elected local councillors) and Members, who were defined as anyone who participated in the public meetings.

CREEK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Once formed, BCA demanded to be allowed to attend Neighbourhood Plan meetings and soon made its presence felt in spite of some antediluvian rules applied by FTC. The main sources of conflicting views were the future of Swan Quay, Ordnance Wharf and the basin above the Bridge – a situation that remains unresolved even now in 2022.

In June 2014 the BCA and the Creek Trust together became so frustrated by the councillors' approach that they hired the Alexander Centre to put on an alternative exhibition showing some different ideas. This exhibition gained more visitors and feedback than the Council's own exhibition. The Council then took the extraordinary step of expelling both BCA and Creek Trust from meetings. Eventually things calmed down, Hilary re-wrote large sections of the Plan and it was submitted for scrutiny by the examiner in 2016, who in turn made a number of amendments proposed by BCA/FC Trust.

FRONT BRENTS FLOOD ALLEVIATION

In December 2013 an unexpected tidal surge caused the 'worst floods since 1953, 60 years' before, bringing devastation to Faversham; Front Brents and other areas around the creek were badly affected and many houses were flooded with people forced to move out of their homes. It seemed that Faversham was a long way down the priority list for the Environment Agency to take flood alleviation action. While having to camp in another home, Hilary recognised there was no effective coordination, so she swept into action, gained support from Swale and FTC, organised a public meeting to achieve multi-agency support to heap pressure on all relevant agencies to produce options to alleviate the flooding risks. So commenced a long struggle to get the EA, KCC, SBC and Southern Water to tackle their responsibilities. In 2017, after much dogged prodding and perseverance, the Front Brents Bund was constructed and has proved itself watertight at a recent surge. A major win for the Brents facilitated by BCA's pressure! Tragically Hilary died suddenly in November 2017 so didn't

see her work properly in action. Mike Ellsmore continues Hilary's work in keeping the KCC, Southern Water and EA and other agents up-to-scratch on our behalf.

CREEK LEARNING PROJECT

In 2015 BCA developed a short programme designed to help long-term unemployed people to gain confidence and learn new skills. We ran three successful week-long programmes which were financed by the Department of Work and Pensions, but unfortunately funding ran out and they have not been repeated.

COMMUNITY GYM

In 2016 we took the initiative to try to increase membership and provide what people wanted. We canvassed local residents, particularly younger ones. From this consultation the idea of an outdoor gym emerged as a possibility, if we could raise the funds. After researching the market, to our amazement and delight we raised over £30,000 from a multitude of sources including £12,000 from Tesco within 12 months. A triumph for BCA – but we still need more people to use this facility. We also raised funds for two benches by the playground area for use by parents watching their children play.

SWING THE BRIDGE

Combining with the Faversham Society and Faversham Creek Trust from the start we have assisted in raising funds for the replacement of the fixed bridge with one that opens so as to give access for barges and boats to the upper basin. We still await progress with this project now that KCC Highways and Peel Ports are still at loggerheads as to the responsibilities for raising the money.



NAUTICAL FESTIVAL

We have organised activities on the Green at each of the annual festivals in recent years, working with Faversham Creek Trust to raise money for the NPBCA and the Creek Trust. Sadly, the creek bed is becoming too high to allow vessels to moor up at Town Quay, making the Festival impossible to hold until we have a new opening bridge and dredging restores the creek to its true boating potential.

LOCAL COMMUNITY ISSUES

The whole point of the North Preston & Brents Community Association – renamed in 2019 to reflect a wider catchment area – has been to act as a focus for, and to speak up for the many local issues which affect our collective lives. This includes anti-social behaviours like dog fouling, discouraging speeding motorists and parking issues on Upper Brents;

on a more positive note, we've organised litter-picking around the creek and Crab Island and bulb/tree planting around the open spaces and on the bund. We also successfully campaigned to protect the open space adjacent to The Albion. Brenda, who regrettably died after a long illness in March 2019, felt that it is important that these smaller problems continue to be attended to.

WHERE NEXT FOR NPBCA?

Covid 19 effectively killed any activity from our Association in March 2020; when it struck, we were simply not in a position to offer any services or help to people. With no money or skills in these areas we decided to leave these activities to those who knew what they were doing. Now we have a chance to restart and re-gear up for the next phase under new leadership. But to be successful NPBCA needs to gain more committed volunteers from all sections of society. This has always been a challenge for us.

A BRENTS COMMUNITY CENTRE?

The management team has had a vision in the back of its mind of building a Brents Community Centre - West Faversham has one, but we have nothing. Mike Henderson, for so many years our Priory Ward Councillor, spotted an opportunity when the new Faversham Lakes development was first muted to apply for money via an S106 agreement. The Lakes development will soon be completed if all goes well, so money will become available.

Can NPBCA capitalise on this and support this initiative? It would be our biggest project yet.




In 2015 BCA developed a short programme designed to help long-term unemployed people

Combining with the Faversham Society and Faversham Creek Trust from the start we have assisted in raising funds for the replacement of the fixed bridge with one that opens

To be successful NPBCA needs to gain more committed volunteers from all sections of society



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 The development called Faversham Reach was built in 1987 on part of what was once Pollock's Shipyard. Waterside was constructed in the early 2000s.

•

Attempts to reroute the currently used ZF42 and ZF1, (see map) to that of ZF43

•

Currently running at over £100,000, this scandalous waste of money shows how past and present local government officials can continue to pursue their own agendas



CREEK FOOTPATH UPDATED UPDATE

In the last issue of the Faversham Eye, we reported on the continuing attempt to divert the existing footpath going around the houses at Faversham Reach and Waterside Close to one along the Creekside in front of the estate.

To briefly recap, the development called Faversham Reach was built in 1987 on part of what was once Pollock's Shipyard. Waterside was constructed in the early 2000s.

Ex Faversham mayor Andrew Osbourne has been the leading protagonist in association with The Faversham Footpaths Group in attempts to reroute the currently used ZF42 and ZF1, (see map) to that of ZF43. A route along the Creekside

which he claims was in pre-existence before the construction of the houses. The claims are somewhat dubious since the Shipyard had occupied the site since the early 1900s.

The Faversham Eye understands the reasons why both attempts to provide a creekside public path and concern of the householders of Faversham Reach, who had no knowledge of any possible right of way through their properties when they purchased them, are difficult to resolve.

Our concern is the huge cost to the public purse. Currently running at over £100,000, this scandalous waste of money shows how past and present local government officials can continue to pursue their own agendas

irrespective of the hit to desperately limited financial resources.

Below we print a timeline of how this conflict has evolved plus letters from the Faversham Labour Party objecting to our previous coverage and a response from the author of that article.

TIMELINE

LABOUR LETTER INTRODUCTION

After the article titled Creek Footpath Update which appeared in our last edition, we received the letter reproduced on page 48, criticising the perceived bias in our reporting. It started:

"I am writing on behalf of the Faversham and Swale East Labour Party following the Creek Footpath Update article you published in your Winter 2022 edition. The article

criticised local Labour Party members for supporting the routing of the new ZF43 footpath by the side of the Creek, in front of Faversham Reach and Waterside Close estates, and suggesting that the Labour Party is prepared to 'play fast and loose with public money'."

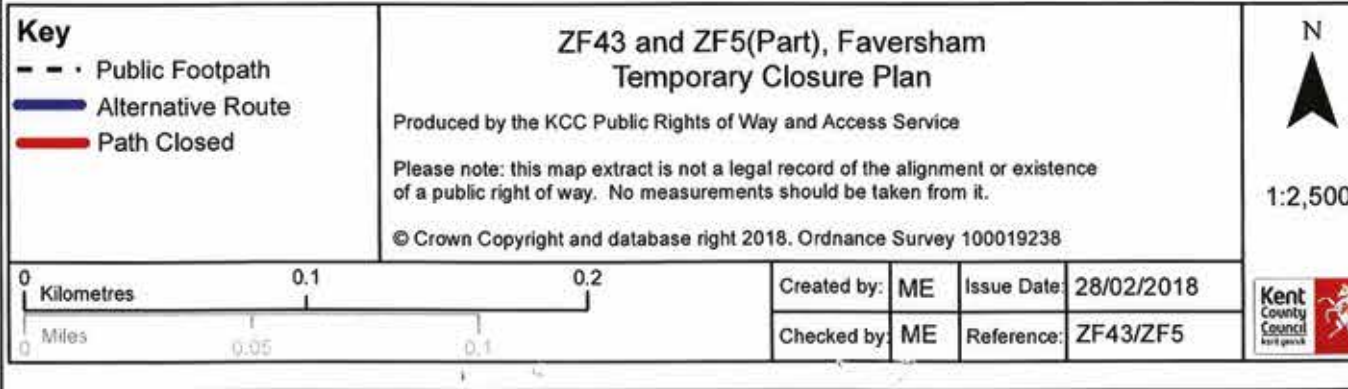
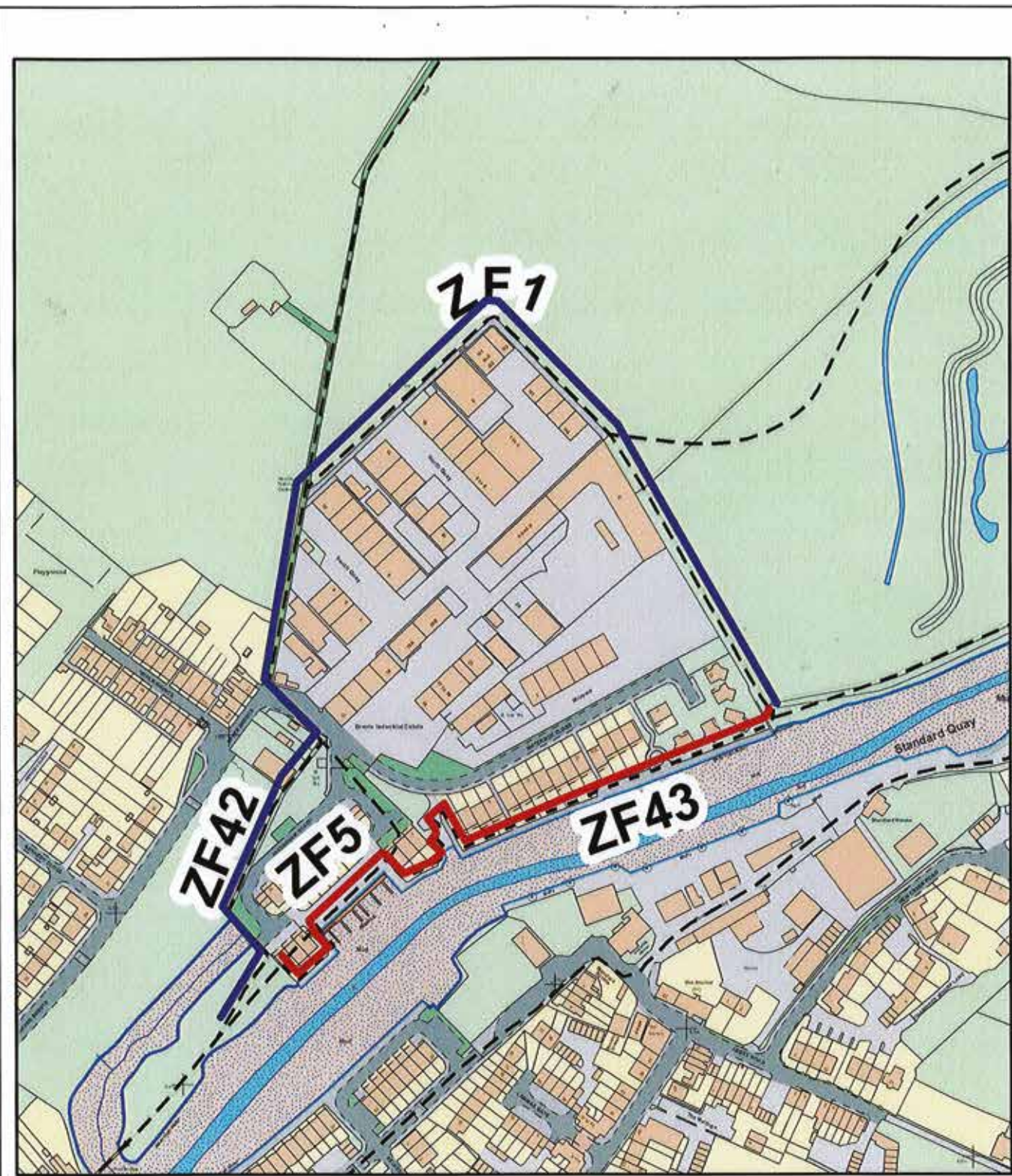
It concluded by requesting a right of reply, which we are only too happy to print below.


WELLARD RESPONSE


I would like to confirm that you accurately pointed out in your letter that the problem was initiated by the incompetence of the former Tory council's regime.

What you fail to point out is the inconvenient truth that two of the Tory individuals that the Labour party have aligned themselves to are the very people who created the situation in the first place – namely ex-councillor Cosgrove and former Mayor Osbourne who are now members of the Footpaths Group.

I will also emphasise that all the points I raised in my article were based on hundreds of hours of trawling through documents provided under the FOI Act by the KCC, SBC and FTC are not figments of my imagination and that Mr Osbourne's claim that there had been 'an understanding' between FTC and the developers to provide a



 All the points I raised in my article were based on hundreds of hours of trawling through documents provided under the FOI Act





A CREEKSID PATH FOR EVERYONE

Thank you for giving a Labour Party member the opportunity to reply to the Creek Footpath Update article in Issue 14 written by John Wellard. The article criticised local Labour Party members including myself for supporting the routing of the new ZF43 footpath by the side of the Creek, in front of the Faversham Reach and Waterside Close estates. It also suggested that the Labour Party is prepared to 'play fast and loose with public money'. There is not space in this reply to rebut the inaccuracies and omissions in the Update, so I will focus on why I think Labour Party members are right in supporting the implementation of ZF43.

As Mr Wellard has admitted, the problems in routing what was formerly the ZF5 footpath are the result of mistakes made by previous Tory administrations running Kent County Council (KCC) and Swale Borough Council (SBC). In particular allowing the Faversham Reach estate to be built over the route of an existing footpath and failing to implement a Section 106 planning agreement requiring the developer to create public access along the front of the Waterside Close estate.

Thankfully inspectors at the two public inquiries held in 2014 and 2018 confirmed the footpath must be retained and that the best route for it is along the front of the two estates giving the public access to the water side and some fine views across the Creek. This decision allows the S106 agreement to be implemented and resolves the problem of the footpath being blocked by houses. It is appropriate that KCC and SBC are picking up most of the costs of implementing the new route as some of these could have been avoided if KCC had not proposed to extinguish the footpath in the first place and if SBC had succeeded in making the developer open the path along the front of Faversham Reach.

Having lost the argument for visitors and residents to be able to walk along the creek, Mr Wellard has resorted to two tactics to hinder the construction of the path. One is to claim that it is massively expensive and a waste of public money. The other is to claim that because the path has been supported by a number of former Tory local councillors it is necessarily bad. In order to sustain this argument he has now had to suggest that more progressive voices who support the footpath are somehow in collusion with these former councillors.

The construction costs of the work required to create the creekside footpath route were clearly stated in the 2018 public inquiry report along with the funding made available to support the work. The other costs have almost all been incurred now and largely relate to giving the public the chance to participate in the decision making process through the public inquiries.

While support for the creekside route exists across the political spectrum, opening up public access to the creekside for all residents and visitors to Faversham and preventing any further private development without public creek side access seem to me an obvious part of a progressive agenda promoting the idea that the town's natural assets should be available to us all, regardless of property ownership.

Opponents at the public inquiries were almost exclusively residents of the two impacted estates concerned about their privacy. Ironically implementing this route will relieve residents whose houses are on the original route of ZF5 of 'planning blight' and if Natural England can be persuaded to divert the line of the England Coast Path onto ZF43 this would protect the privacy of all residents of both estates by limiting the public right to roam to the actual line of the footpath.

Labour candidates in the 2019 local elections stood on a platform of maximising public access to the Creek. Similarly the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan, which was supported by 88% of local residents had 'opening up pedestrian connections to adjacent marshland landscapes by creating a creek-edge route' as one of its main objectives and the last public exhibition for the emerging Faversham Neighbourhood Plan identified public access and pedestrian permeability as key requirements for future development by the Creek.

Supporting the implementation of a creekside route for ZF43 is very much in line with these objectives and I would encourage Faversham residents to keep the pressure on KCC to complete the footpath works as soon as possible, so that the public can start to benefit from the new route.

Councillor Julian Saunders

footpath along the waterside, are not supported by any documentary evidence.

Claims made by them that Faversham residents had blocked the alleged footpath by erecting railings were also untrue as it was the developer with the Council's blessing who was responsible.

I challenge your assertion that the Neighbourhood Plan gave overwhelming endorsement to the footpath, as a subsequent survey did not consider footpaths to be of vital importance and remind you that voters were warned that if they didn't support the plan there would be no SBC funding for the Creek Bridge which was their over-riding concern.

I will also reiterate that the vast sum of money that the KCC has been obliged to cough up so far and will almost certainly need to double to see any completed path through the estates, seem an irresponsible use of public money whilst councils are having to cut expenditure on vital social services.

CONCERNS OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL BENSTED CHARITY

What has come to light in researching this subject has been the seemingly cavalier manner in which the local Bensted Charity and previously the Faversham Municipal Charities pledged £22,000 and £24,000 respectively to the creation of the footpath without the expected due diligence and without any professional costings of the project.

When attempting to investigate how such large funds for relatively small local charities were awarded, we were met with no response other than that no records existed.

In an earlier issue of the Faversham Eye we reported on a similar sum being awarded to the War Memorial in Stone Street and again there seems to be insufficient accountability as to how such a sum was allocated.

The situation is worrying, as in both cases the same individuals were Trustees of the charities making the awards and members of the recipient organisations or the councils involved in the projects.

Over the same time period, the total amount awarded to all other causes was dwarfed by the charity's beneficence in respect of these two projects.

It is to be hoped that the new Liberal Democrat councillors appointed as trustees will not only ensure future probity but also not attempt to bury any possible previous irregular activity.

TELECOM MAST A POSSIBLE SOLUTION?

The temporary planning permission granted to EE for the telecom tower that has graced our central carpark for the past couple of years has run out and the operators are in a bit of a fix.

The month they have submitted an appeal against the decision of Swale Borough Council to "refuse Prior Approval for the installation of an 18m high monopole supporting six antenna apertures and two transmission dishes, along with the installation of seven ground based equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto on land at Central Carpark".

Basically, they want to leave the mast where it is permanently.

Faversham Town Council has opposed the application and it is certainly true that it is currently an

eyesore in the setting of Faversham's historic town centre.

Just down Abbey Street from the Market Place stands St Mary of Faversham with its 46m open crown spire built in about 1795.

A possible solution to EE's problem which would also raise much needed funds for the church would be to house the transmitting and receiving equipment in the unused open part of the spire. The ground-based equipment cabinets could comfortably be accommodated in the adjacent graveyard by simply moving a few graves.

What a wonderful example the town would be setting in the words of The Faversham Society we would be:

"Cherishing the Past, Adorning the Present and Creating for the Future"



LITTER WE ASK A QUESTION

A Faversham Italian Wine bar owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, was recently fined £150 for dropping a cigarette butt down a drain outside his premises by a private company operative contracted by Swale Borough Council.

As this seemed rather exorbitant, we contacted the Council to ask how much of the revenue was retained by the contractor and how much went to Swale.

We wrote to Swale: "We understand that the litter warden service is being provided by a private company and wanted to have some information about how penalty payments are split between The Council and the private company."

Their reply:

"Under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 a public authority is exempt from the duty to communicate where the disclosure of the requested information would, or be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it)."

Quite a get out clause. While we completely agree with all efforts to reduce the incidents of fly tipping in the borough and other unsightly piles of rubbish that occasionally disfigure Faversham's streets, the overzealous enforcement of punitive penalties for such minor offences for private financial gain seem rather worrying.



UPCOMING EVENTS
IN AND AROUND
FAVERSHAM

FEATURES

Faversham Fringe
Tuesday, October 25th – Sunday, October 30th, 2022
Faversham Fringe is a festival featuring all genres of the performing arts including theatre, comedy, magic, mentalism, dance, poetry, spoken word, storytelling, improv and hypnotism.
Here's what you can see at this year's festival — a whopping 72 shows to choose from! See the full programme at Faversham Fringe 2022 Programme. [@favershamfringe](#)
Secret Treasures
An exhibition of curious collections to celebrate 60 years of the Faversham Society (see flyer for details).



Kent Creative Show
A Podcast roaming the fields of creativity in Kent and recording stories told by interesting people engaging with arts and culture. The show offers honest conversations with great creatives who share their experiences, journeys and creative work. Each show gives an insight into the people and how they work. <https://soundcloud.com/kentcreative>

ARTS

Creek Creative <http://creek-creative.org/>
'The Friday Afternoon Tea Parties' Exhibition
Lamoon & Lamoon #JointShow. 52 weeks of **Lockdown Tea Parties** (Photographs, Costumes, Props & Artifacts)

Corresponding Narratives
(25 Oct – 6 Nov)
Christmas Emporium (29 Nov – 23 Dec)



COMEDY

Alfie Moore 7:30pm on 30 Oct at The Alexander Centre
Join BBC Radio 4's cop-turned-comedian Alfie Moore for his latest stand-up tour show.
Fair Cop Unleashed is based on a dramatic real-life incident from Alfie's police casebook. Relive with him the thrilling ups and downs of the night a mysterious clown came to town and more than one life ended up in the balance. It was no laughing matter – but this show certainly is! Enjoy Alfie's unique brand of humour hilariously woven together with his personal insights into his life on the front line of the police force. £17.50
Comedy Lock-in 6pm on 13 Nov and 11 Dec at The Alexander Centre
Fair Cop Unleashed is based on a dramatic real-life incident from Alfie's police casebook. Relive with him the thrilling ups and downs of the night a mysterious clown came to town and more than one life ended up in the balance. It was no laughing matter – but this show certainly is! Enjoy Alfie's unique brand of humour hilariously woven together with his personal insights into his life on the front line of the police force. £17.50
Comedy Lock-in – 6pm on 13 Nov and 11 Dec at The Alexander Centre
Faversham's monthly night of stand-up comedy from the best new and up-and-coming acts on the UK comedy circuit comes to The Alex on the second Sunday of each month.
Andy Parsons - Work in Progress – 8pm on 30 Nov at The Alexander Centre.
Join Andy Parsons as he warms up for another national tour with this intimate airing of a brand new show. Age guidance 14+ £12.50

FAMILY

Halloween Spooktacular
26 & 27 Oct at The Alexander Centre
The Alex Santa's Grotto & Festive Fun
17 & 18 Dec at The Alexander Centre

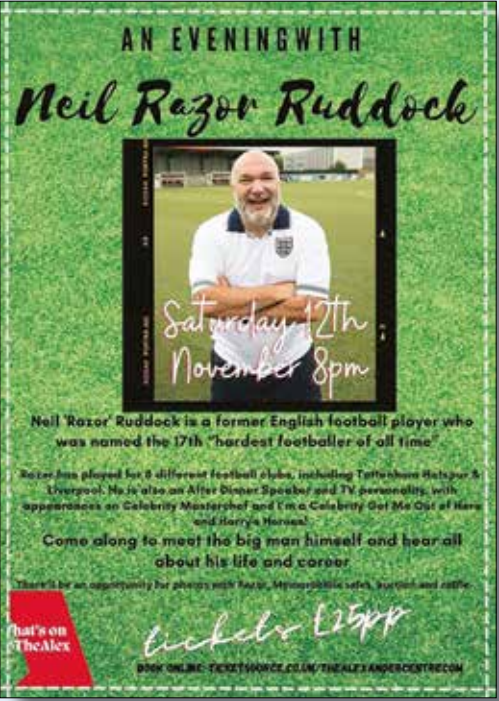
MARKETS, FAIRS & JUMBLE

Faversham Charter Market <https://favershammarket.org/> every Tuesday, Friday & Saturday, in and around the Market Place
Best of Faversham Market
1st and 3rd Sat of every month on Preston Street
Antiques & Vintage Market
1st Sunday of every month in the Market Square
Artisan Craft and Gift Fairs
5, 26 & 27 Nov and 4 Dec at the Alexander Centre
St Catherine's Church Victorian Christmas Fayre
27 Nov at the Alexander Centre
Christmas Craft Fair
10am – 3pm on 3 Dec at the Alexander Centre
Christmas Bazaar
10am – 3pm on 10 Dec at the Alexander Centre
Christmas Market
10am – 3pm on 17 Dec at the Alexander Centre

MUSIC

Orbi Playa Big Band directed by Steve Waterman.
8pm on 5 Nov at The Alexander Centre £12.00
Swing music
Betty Baker and The Swingtones
2pm on 6 Nov at The Alexander Centre £12.00. Betty Baker and her band The Swingtones join forces with the Swaggerjacks to create an afternoon of energetic Rock 'n' Roll, Jive and Swing. Betty Baker and the Swingtones are a five-piece swing and jive band playing songs from the post-war era, as well as adding a swing twist to recent pop tunes.
Nearly Elton – The Ultimate Tribute Show to Elton John
8pm on 18 Nov at The Alexander Centre £21.50
Abba Chique – ABBA Tribute Band
8pm on 25 Nov at The Alexander Centre £15
Curb Pilots and Gumboots Reggae Band
8pm on 3 Dec at The Alexander Centre £15
DS:UK - in tribute to Dire Straits
7:30pm on 10 Dec at The Alexander Centre £20.90

Christmas Jazz at the Alex
8pm on 16 Dec at The Alexander Centre £16.26
OTHER
Autumn Wreath Making 7.00pm on Weds 2, 30 Nov, 7 Dec at The Alexander Centre
In this workshop, we will be making a stunning autumnal wreath. Learn how to create your very own unique wreath with dried flowers and autumnal flora. Tutoring is provided by Kim Barnicott of Bee Street Flowers. Experience a fun and creative class suitable for all skill levels with expert tuition and guidance. All materials and light refreshments are provided. Tickets £45
An Evening With Philip Neame MBE
7.00pm on Fri 4 Nov at The Alexander Centre £5
An Evening With Neil "Razor" Ruddock
8.00pm on 12 Nov at The Alexander Centre £25



Memoir Writing Course
7.00pm on 21 Nov at The Alexander Centre £16
Psychic Evening with Tracey May
7.00pm on 1 Dec at The Alexander Centre £15
An Evening With John H Stracey
8.00pm on 2 Dec at The Alexander Centre £20
Handprinted Christmas wrapping paper workshop
10.00am on 3 Dec at The Alexander Centre £30
Animate Arts Christmas wreath making workshop
10.00am on 10 Dec at The Alexander Centre.
Join this festive workshop from Animate Arts to make a beautiful, traditional Christmas wreath for your front door, from crafting the willow base to decorating it with wintery foliage.
This environmentally friendly workshop is led by willow sculptor Sharon Potter. Sharon is a whizz at all things willow and she loves creating beautiful things from natural materials. With all the materials provided, this workshop is close enough to Christmas to ensure that you have a super fresh, vibrant door wreath to impress your visitors. This is such a Christmassy workshop with the smell of evergreen, Christmas vibes and maybe even a mince pie to fuel the creativity! £30

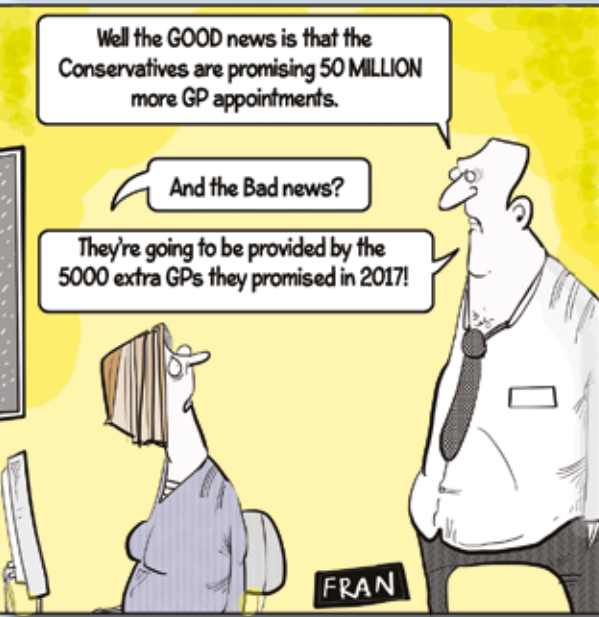


INCOMING
MAIL

Letter from Oz
Dear Editor,
G'day. Some years back before the Pandie bugged everything, I made a pilgrimage to the hub of Anglicanism - good old Canty Cath. During my visit, friends recommended I visit Faversham's Shep's Brewery to sample their famous amber nectar. However, I only got within 200 yards of the place when I was hit by a pong stronger than that of an outback goldminers's dunnee so I never got to swallow a Bishop's.
Recently, I returned to your neck of the woods and my Pommie mates assured me that Sheps had cleaned up their act. They lied, mate. I hadn't even gotten within sight of the bloody place when the same ordurial miasma hit my olfactory senses and damn well nearly killed them dead! So, no swallowing a Bishop's yet again! You Faversham Pommies seem a pretty bloody subservient lot to put up with all that. Good luck and g'day.
Yours sincerely,
The Reverend Beryl O'Toole, St Bruces Congregational, Woonamarra Queensland Australia



Dear Faversham Eye
Good article re house building, surely it must now be apparent that the government is using house building using private financing to kick start the economy after the downturn caused by Brexit. What exactly is affordable housing? Developers won't allow prime positions to become affordable and who monitors their pricing? How many of the recent developments are fully sold and how many of the plots are being purchased by property companies for rental income.



As stated developers are not interested in whether infrastructure is capable of sustaining population increases. An economy built on property ownership is doomed to failure.
Bob Hawes



Dear Faversham Eye
Yet again I enjoyed reading the Faversham Eye, thankyou, it's great to have it back again! However, I'm disappointed with its coverage of the Creek footpath at Faversham Reach/ Waterside Close.
Although I can imagine that it must have been a real shock for the said close inhabitants to find retrospectively that their houses/ gardens were built across footpaths, to allow this not to be rectified could set a precedent to other (perhaps unscrupulous, at least neglectful) developers. Unfortunately, the council have missed a trick by not enforcing a footpath along the whole of the creek in the first place the opposite side of the creek to Waterside close is practically a gated community like many other modern properties built along waterways. I agree that it's a shocking amount to be spent on the whole business and you are left wondering how a footpath could have been 'missed' off the initial plans 30 years ago! Hopefully lessons will be learnt, and councils will be more vigilant at the planning stage. It's a shame that the developer (developers always seem to get away with things these days) isn't expected to foot the bill for their part of the mistake.
All the best,
Naomi Blunt



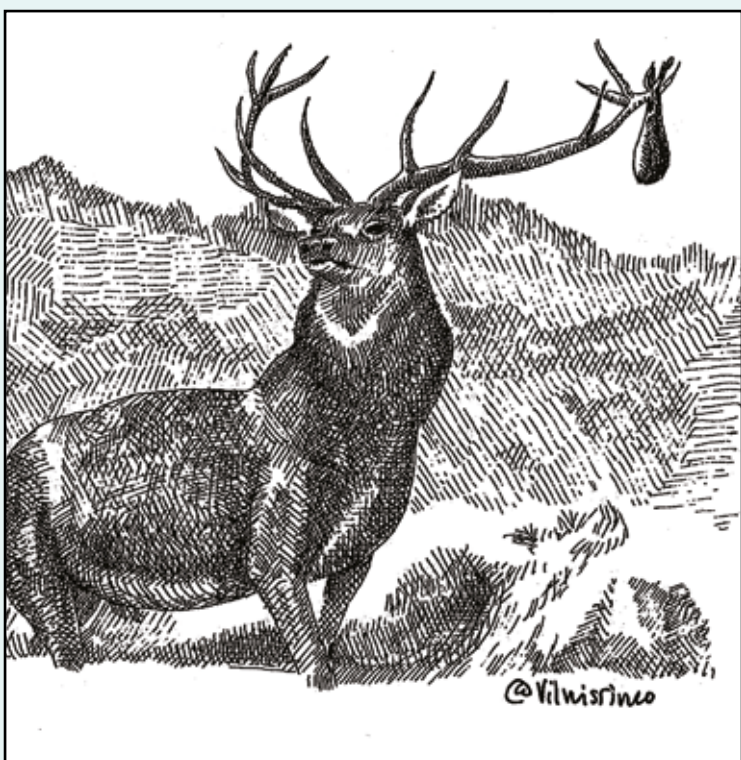
INCOMING
MAIL

CRIME IN FAVERSHAM

The Town Council recently commissioned Dr Barry Blackburn a criminologist to analyse crime in Faversham and make recommendations for what the council and community can do to make our town safer.

Councillor Antony Hook has said: "I can preview the report by saying Dr Blackburn has found that most crime in Faversham falls into three categories, violence (including domestic violence), theft and criminal damage".

I suppose that we should be relieved that incidents of piracy, cock-fighting and witchcraft are no longer of great concern but think that a return of a decent police presence in the town would be the most effective solution to the problem.



DOG OWNERS PLEASE TAKE NOTE

FAVERSHAM CELEBRATES ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOP FESTIVAL



ALL THE FACTS

Where to find
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The Hobby Shop
Preston Street

Railway Cutting Barber,
St Mary's Road

Macknade Fine Foods,
Selling Road

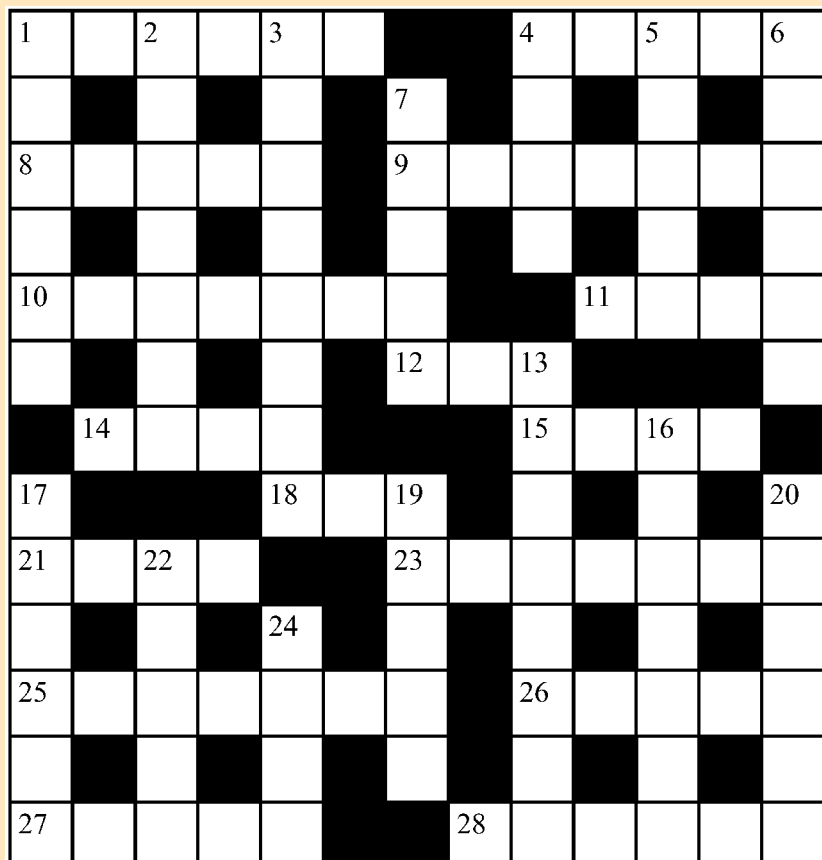
Sondes Tea House, Selling

Fleur de Lis, Preston Street



CROSSWORD

COMPILED BY R. GREGORY



ACROSS

- 1&4. Plant a border as an alternative (6,5)
4. See 1a
8. Author maybe runs in two directions (5)
9. It's fishy and cooked in spice (7)
10. Boris would have once chosen this pudding? (7)
11. Called back to snarl (4)
12. Reported discharge from cyst (3)
14. Attached from all sides (4)
15. Yell - "obesity hides dangly part" (4)
18. Wellbeing of cockney with big ears (3)
21. Fixed at a rate of knots (4)
23. Rock singer (7)
25. Greed for cooked caviare (7)
26. I complain about her (5)
27. Woman raised in oriental island (5)
28. Remained sober apparently (6)

DOWN

- 1&17. A stroll in the park in a part of Dundee? (1,5,2,4)
2. Right in sight, not very funny (7)
- 3&24. Three refusals heard from Einstein possibly means an emergency (4,4,4)
- 4&13. Brainless act breaking wind maybe (4,8)
5. A very good article about fliers (5)
6. Uneventful day at back yard (6)
7. Brushes footwear (5)
13. See 4d
16. Gallery has large study in alcove (7)
17. See 1d
19. Flying boats? (5)
20. Bound to get good show of sympathy (6)
22. Scraps mostly few and far between (5)
24. See 3

For solution email rinfav@sky.com

1st Prize: 1 copy of the latest Spire book

2nd Prize: 2 copies of the latest Spire book

SOLUTION EYE 14

Across

1. thingamajig
7. smee
8. felicity
9. turtle soup
11. Stubbs
13. fat cat
14. applicants
18. Quisling
19. tack
20. free radical

Down

1. Timbuktu
2. inert
3. gaffers
4. Malmo
5. jackpot
6. gate
10. nautical
12. brassie
13. fringed
15. prior
16. antic
17. ruff

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