

Driving ban for landlady

THE LANDLADY the Old Coach and Horses pub, Harbledown, has been convicted of drink driving.

Canterbury Magistrates' Court heard Charlotte Whigham, 23, pictured, was almost twice the legal limit when police stopped her in Harbour Parade, Whitstable.

Whigham, who lives at the pub in Church Hill, admitted drink driving and was banned for 18 months, fined £400 and ordered to pay £60 costs plus a £15 surcharge.



JAN 29 2009

Homes planned in 'glorious' garden

by **Gerry Warren**
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A SCHEME to build two homes in the garden of a listed Georgian house in Bridge has prompted more than 50 villagers to complain to the city council.

The planning application which has sparked the controversy is a proposal to build a pair of four bedrooomed detached homes in the grounds of 24, High Street.

It is not the first controversy to surround the site, as last year plans for a triple garage and

annexe with accommodation at the address were approved by the city council despite objections.

Planning consultants for the applicant say the principle of developing the garden has already been established by the first planning approval and the new scheme 'would not harm the character of nearby listed buildings or the conservation area'.

But objectors say the garden is an important feature of the village with many mature trees. Environmental campaigner Emily Shirley, who lives in the

village, said: "When the first application was granted, this is exactly what everyone feared.

"We always suspected the aim was to create an access on to the land which would then lead to further a further application for housing development. Everyone, including the parish council is up in arms about it.

"The garden was one of the most cherished in Bridge, full of glorious trees, roses and wildlife but it is being destroyed. Even if some mature trees are retained on the plan, sooner or later peo-

ple living in these houses will complain about them damaging their properties and they will be cut down.

"All we can do is object and hope the city council does the right thing by throwing out these plans."

■ **What do you think? Write to the Kentish Gazette at Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE or email kentishgazette@thekmgroupp.co.uk**

Council must stand up to developers

IT IS pleasing that the problems we face over developments in this already overcrowded area of Bridge have been highlighted in your newspaper. (Homes Planned in 'Glorious' Garden, July 16). The fact is that this is part of a determined assault by developers over four years, as a result of which our lives have been blighted and our quality of life eroded.

We have had developments or the threat of them on all four sides of our cottage. Three houses were built to the rear, resulting in several months of noise and disturbance.

Traffic, congestion and parking problems have worsened in the narrow country lane. The original orchard contained much bird and other wildlife which has disappeared. Extra flooding problems for residents have occurred. Claims that our amenity would not be affected were nonsense.

Further attempts are being made to build on land adjacent to The Close, the original Bridge Poor Law Union. This building is unique in this part of England as a fine surviving example of the quadrangle system. Any building close by would be detrimental to the setting of this important listed building, not to mention the additional traffic and access problems.

The problems relating to 24 High Street have been ongoing for more than two years and were subject to a successful Judicial Review, as a result of which the City Council's decision to grant permission was quashed by the High Court.

The council should have recognised this as a wake-up call but instead claimed that mere technicalities were involved. Virtually the same plans were submitted and passed. The continuing strong objections of the local residents have once again been brushed aside, as well as the recommendations of the parish council.

Residents are constantly dismayed at the attitude of the council and feel their legitimate objections to unwanted and unnecessary development are being ignored.

As a result the character and tranquillity of the village is being undermined.

We can only hope that the council will at last give some respite to the long-suffering residents, who have endured continual stress and worry, and refuse this application. Only then will we begin to feel that the council's pledge to protect our quality of life is being upheld.



Residents fear village life is being eroded by development

Picture: Barry Goodwin PD1202311
23.7.2009

■ ■ WITH reference to the planning application for 24 High Street, Bridge: if it wasn't so sad it would be laughable.

A developer tries to sneak in a development by means of saying it's a garage with accommodation.

When that failed due to a campaign by concerned residents and Bridge Parish council, who helped to overturn a decision by Canterbury City Council to pass the plans, the developer puts in a new application within a few weeks of the last one.

This is an ideal opportunity for CCC to flex its muscles and show clarity and judgement and oppose this application.

The planning department has suffered lots of criticism and failure with recent events all over the area and now this must be the ideal opportunity to put things right and try to get the people they represent to believe in them again by saying a big NO!

An application of eight houses on a green field in Bridge is also being considered by development control.

This is also of doubtful need and is full of half-truths and CCC need to tread carefully to make sure there are no detrimental effects to the village with this application in Brickfield – a much-loved and cherished breathing space for all, including the wildlife which is enjoyed by children and adults alike.

There are brownfield sites now available if they must build more houses – so use those instead.

It's time Canterbury council's development control did what they are paid to do by the public and protect us from these unnecessary developments which are only a business to the developer who will be up and gone before the detrimental effects are felt by them.

Money is not everything

■ Bridge building

30.7.2009

Housing we need is made to wait

WITH the average house price in Bridge being at least six times the average salary in the area, there are many people brought up locally who cannot afford to buy a property there.

The latest housing survey identified more than enough local families to fill the affordable homes Southern Housing is proposing to build at Brickfield in the village.

Bridge Parish Council and many caring residents have supported the proposals.

As one of those who could afford to buy a home in the village recently (after the proposals for Brickfield were already known to all), it is sad to read Gary Harrison's comments.

Though Brickfield may be technically a "greenfield site", it has been used in the past for local industry, as is suggested by its name, and is only now being proposed for an exception site for low-cost affordable homes for people with bona fide local connections of long standing.

As a result of the interference of Mr Harrison, Emily Shirley and a few others, much needed affordable housing for eight local families cannot now be built until a consultant's report is written about suspected newts on the site.

Does the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural Bridge

put wildlife before local people?

Cllr Tony Austin, portfolio holder for housing, Canterbury City Council.

6.8.2009

■ Bridge housing row

Newcomers and NIMBYism

REGARDING the proposed affordable new housing scheme on Brickfield in Bridge (Housing We Need Is Made To Wait, Opinion, Gazette, July 30).

It is very likely that there are newts on the site, given its close proximity to the river, but the method of delay orchestrated by the fountainheads of the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural Bridge is a disgrace.

Desperate human beings, who in effect are being made homeless because they cannot afford to live in Bridge, are being kept waiting by do-gooding conservationists and objectors, who were most likely raised miles away from the location.

I am proud to say I was in Bridge village from the Forties onwards, but the village changed largely in the late Fifties and Sixties, and to a lesser degree in the Seventies, because of a massive intake of outsiders complete with ways which went totally against the grain of established residents.

At that time Bridge underwent a transformation which was to change its fabric forever, not through deeds akin to the few over the proposed development on Brickfield, but by a consortium of outsiders with a reverse objective.

In came the bulldozers and

In came the bulldozers and Laundry Lane (now called Conyngham Lane) was filled with houses throughout its length. Daddy Fagg's Field where we used to wait in excitement for the annual visit of Forrest's fair, then the village fete, followed by the flower show, was desecrated with the estate now known as Western Avenue.

The cornfield which lay between Meadow Close and Highland Court where we used to play as children was bulldozed to make way for Bridge Down.

Yet more building took place off Dering Road, beside Union Road, off Brewery Lane, and along and beside Patricbourne Road, and sporadic development followed on every available space of land within the bounds of the entire village.

Bridge's inhabitants came out of that dazed, scared, battered and bruised, and it was the end of the village as we knew it, and the end of the community and its spirit which had been the preserve of generation after generation of families

ION

6.8.2009

Kentish Gazette, July 16

Homes planned in 'glorious' garden

By Peter Brown

It is a glorious garden, the one that has been the pride of the village for so long. It is a garden that has been the envy of many a visitor to the village. It is a garden that has been the source of many a happy memory. It is a garden that has been the heart of the village for so long.

But now, it is to be built upon. A new development of homes is planned for the site. The developers claim that the homes will be of a high standard and will be a welcome addition to the village. They claim that the homes will be built in a way that will preserve the garden's character.

But the established residents of the village are not convinced. They feel that the garden is a precious asset and should be protected. They feel that the proposed development is a threat to the village's character and should be rejected.

The developers claim that the homes will be built in a way that will preserve the garden's character. They claim that the homes will be built in a way that will preserve the garden's character. They claim that the homes will be built in a way that will preserve the garden's character.



Reading: The choir sing to raise money for the hospital.

who were the backbone of the established residents.

Of course I do not want to see yet more green fields concreted over in the village and I join the objectors in that, but my gut feeling is that the people who have objected to the development on Brickfield are more concerned with self-interest rather than the violation of the green pastures.

Looking at the Bridge of today, there is a desperate need for affordable housing in the village, so overall, in my consideration, Brickfield is the best location for such a development, newts and all.

Bearing in mind that potential building land in Bridge has reached saturation point, why all the fuss over Brickfield in the first place?

It is the only parcel of land of substance left to provide the very thing that the village has been crying out for for years.

I have a feeling that the nub which prompted the ruffling of feathers and forced delay of the project has hinged on the rather tiresome oft used "not in my back yard" syndrome, because this course seems to be taken wherever and whenever an Englishman's castle is under threat, and that could well be the case here.

Brian A. Lewis, Church Walk, Pound Lane, Elham, Canterbury.

Village's views are completely ignored

THESE Canterbury planners go blindly and dictatorially on. Their latest aberration, the planned extension of the Dover Road park and ride as reported in the Kentish Gazette, July 9 2009, is but one instance.

Despite what seems to be overwhelming opposition by Canterbury council taxpayers, a fresh new blot and blight on the landscape looks likely to be nodded through, via a government minister.

Meanwhile, here in Bridge, since 2007, we have been threatened by a different kind of blot. And it's getting worse. It's on a smaller scale, but in the context of this cramped corner of the village, it's huge.

Remember the case reported in the Gazette last year?
Against strong opposition

6.8.2009

6.8.2009

from Bridge Parish Council and local residents, a developer has been engaged in planning applications to exploit the beautiful, sumptuously tree-ed garden of a fine Grade II listed building that he bought about three years ago in a conservation area.

He kicked off first with a plea for a modest garage building with granny flat over. Despite tremendous local opposition the application was passed.

Bridge Parish Council took the unusual step of taking the city council to court, and the court found in its favour because the city council had acted improperly on a number of crucial counts.

This did not stop them allowing the same plan to go through soon after.

Now, discarding his first proposal entirely, the same developer has made a new application for two substantial detached houses in the same garden. Off we go again.

One really has to hand it to this developer. His has been a masterly variation on the classic strategy, which is always ask for more than you want, then 'settle' for a 'compromise' – the nature of which is, of course, what you actually wanted, or expected to get, in the first place.

We may be fairly sure that this planning committee will ultimately cave in to this developer's demand, but may restrict him to one house, not two – and they'll feel smug because they'll think they've granted him merely half what he wanted!

The naivety is not only breathtaking but tragic because Canterbury City Council will have missed the point altogether.

Destroying this unique garden by filling it with garages or houses cannot conceivably protect the public interest, preserve the special characteristics of the said garden, or enhance the conservation area.

In the same way the proposed

Surgery gets go-ahead despite objections

PLANS for a new medical centre in Littlebourne have finally been given the go-ahead – seven years after the scheme was first proposed by doctors.

Canterbury city council this week granted planning permission for the building on farmland in Court Hill, despite the objections of some neighbours and environmentalists.

Members of the development control committee were told by planning officers on Tuesday that the proposed place was the most suitable and its benefit to the local community outweighed the policy to refrain from development in the countryside.

But the committee did receive a petition of 21 signatures against the scheme which objected to the land being built on and questioned the need for the new surgery.

Objectors also said it was too big and too far from the village centre and elderly people with mobility problems. There were also concerns about the destruction of wildlife habitats.

Finding a site for a new medical centre has been a long process and a previous scheme on land nearby, which included housing, was rejected by

planners last year. But practice premises manager for the Bridge and Littlebourne surgeries, John Rofe said the number of patients in Littlebourne had doubled to 3,000 and the existing surgery in Nargate Street was inadequate.

He added: "Littlebourne is in danger of becoming the poor relation to Bridge. We have been trying for seven years to find a site and have already looked at many other locations."

In favour

Parish council chairman Vivienne Spratt said that development in the countryside would normally be opposed by its members, but new services were so badly needed that they were supporting the application. She added that a public meeting of villagers had also voted overwhelmingly in favour of it.

The new centre will be a single storey building with a part grassed roof in a landscaped setting surrounded by trees and bushes. It will include two doctor's consulting rooms, two nurses consulting rooms and treatment and training rooms. There will also be parking for 29 cars.

KG 23/7/09

conservation area.

In the same way, the proposed extension of the park and ride will do little or nothing to reduce car use, and absolutely nothing to preserve prime farmland, or preserve biodiversity.

What is town and country planning for? Answer: To ensure that decisions are made for the public and environmental good. It's a key principle.

However misguided park and ride extension schemes can be, and in this case are, they do at least purport to be for the public good.

Proposals like this one in Bridge are totally for the benefit of one developer.

Canterbury planners have earned their present much-derided reputation. This time will it put its foot down firmly, keep to the spirit and genuine

6.8.2009

6.8.2009

www.kentishgazette.co.uk

to have your say



chapter and verse of the planning regulations, surprise the wearily cynical council tax-paying Bridge residents, refuse permission point blank for any houses in this garden, and keep to this decision when we reach the inevitable appeal?

I'm not holding my breath.

**Dr Peter Giles, Filmer Road,
Bridge, Canterbury.**

29 JAN 2009
No 34 HIGH ST - NEXT TO GARAGE

Brothel charges

A WOMAN has appeared in court charged with offences including managing a brothel, fraud, growing cannabis and money laundering.

Lynn Amos-Brown, 60, of High Street, Bridge, appeared before Canterbury magistrates accused of 13 offences.

She also faces charges of deception, possessing drugs and offences under the Proceeds of Crimes Act. Alongside her in the dock were three others.

Toby Amos-Brown, 38, of Ospringe Road, Faversham, is accused of six offences including fraud, obtaining money by deception and laundering money.

Sean Butler, 41, of Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, faces seven charges. They include fraud, managing a brothel, money laundering and deception.

Rachel Randall, 33, of Herne Avenue, Herne Bay, is charged with one fraud and two offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act. All four were released on bail.

IN BRIEF

School extension

AN EXTENSION costing £80,000 is to be built at Bridge and Bekesbourne primary school to cater for a pupil with special needs.

The county council has submitted a planning application to Canterbury city council for a chill-out room for the child who suffers with autism.

The 16 sq m extension would also be used for small group work by other children.

KCC cabinet member for education operations Mark Dance said: "The extension will primarily be used as a sanctuary to enable a child with particular needs to access a mainstream school."

Farewell to a 'larger than life' character

by Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

TRIBUTES have been paid to the influential and popular former local politician John Purchase, who has died at the age of 83.

A former Lord Mayor of Canterbury and chairman of Kent County Council, he served as a Liberal Democrat member for nearly 30 years.

He passed away in the Pilgrim's Hospice in Canterbury on Sunday, December 21 and leaves a widow, Anne, and two sons and three daughters.

Until recently, he and Anne, who celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary last year, lived at St Elisabeth House in Northgate.

John retired as a councillor in 2003 but his career in local politics was prompted by the high profile campaign he ran for a vil-

lage by-pass at Bridge with fellow villager and friend Brian Lewis in the 1970s. The pair even found themselves arrested for conspiracy after organising a sit-down protest in the Street.

Mr Lewis, who now lives in Elham, said: "He was a larger than life figure who commanded respect the instant he walked into a room or stood up to speak at a meeting.

Feature films

"He worked tirelessly for the city and his memory will linger on for all those who had the privilege to know him."

Born in Muswell Hill in north London, John worked at Standard Telephone and Cables before joining the Air Training Corps as an instructor in Morse during the Second World War and then later as a wireless engineer.

But his real love was the film



■ John Purchase, who has died aged 83. He was chairman of the Canterbury Commemoration Society, and is pictured with sculptor Stephen Melton at the statue of Queen Bertha PD792095

industry and after the war he worked for Samuelson Film Service for eight years, covering the Aberfan disaster and making documentaries, feature films and several television series.

He also worked as a sound engineer on programmes including *On the Buses* and *Bond* films.

When the film industry went into decline, he set up a printing business in Wincheap, which he ran for 18 years.

He was Lord Mayor of Canterbury in 1991 and as a county councillor served briefly as chairman of the KCC during 1994/95 when the Liberal Democrats and

Labour groups formed a controlling alliance.

More recently he was chairman of the Canterbury Commemoration Society, which led the project for the statues of King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha in Lady Wootton's Green.

He was involved in many organisations and was also a past governor of Canterbury High School and secretary of the Church of England Deanery Synod.

Cllr Alex Perkins, leader of the Liberal Democrats on Canterbury City Council, said: "He was a remarkable man and very much the father of our party

in the area. His election to the county council was a breakthrough for the Liberal Democrats."

He added: "He also spent a lot of time recording the war memories of local people, which have formed a valuable living history of their experiences."

His funeral service is at St Michael's Church, Harbledown, at 11.30am on Wednesday, January 7, where Cllr Martin Vye, a close associate and friend for many years, will read a eulogy.

He said: "I think, above all, John will be remembered for his integrity and moral purpose."

UNHAPPY: Parish angry at city councillor after committee vote

Jan 25
2009

CONTROVERSIAL SCHEME

The scheme to build a three-car garage with annexe in the back garden of 24 High Street, Bridge, prompted dozens of objections.

Protesters claimed the development would be detrimental in a conservation area, spoil a mature garden and breach new planning guidance.

It was initially approved by the development control committee but that decision was later quashed after the parish council took it to a judicial review.

That review found the decision notice was flawed as it did not include the reasons for granting permission or a summary of relevant planning policies. But the city council says they were 'technical issues' and the planning considerations for the resubmitted, identical scheme are the same. Committee members again approved it.

'We have no faith in our councillor'

by Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroup.co.uk

BRIDGE parish council is calling for a vote of no confidence in the village's city council representative.

The council and other residents are said to be angry and disappointed that Cllr John Anderson is not backing the parish over planning applications.

But he says village members do not understand the planning process and regulations and need to be educated.

The dispute followed a decision by the city council's development control committee to grant permission for a three bay garage and annexe in the garden of a listed house in the High Street.

The parish council and dozens of residents objected to the scheme and even managed to get an earlier



■ Cllr John Anderson - "they don't understand planning"

approval quashed through a judicial review.

They are angry that Cllr Anderson ignored overwhelming local opinion against the scheme when he voted for it when re-submitted plans were considered last week.

Now the parish council says it will consider passing a vote of no confidence

in Cllr Anderson when it meets next on February 12.

Vice-chairman John Hill said: "Both we and the public were very disappointed he didn't back us. He did speak on the application, but then voted for it. He should have at least supported us or even abstained.

"He knew people in the village were very unhappy about the application.

"There have been other schemes where John has either voted against us or sat on the fence."

He added: "It is sad it has come to this because John has done a lot for the village and is a friend to us."

But Cllr Anderson, who served as chairman of the parish council for many years, has hit back.

He said: "I am not the lackey of the parish council. The problem is they don't understand planning.

"The council is out of kil-

ter on this and wasting local taxpayers' money.

"I have asked someone from the planning and legal departments to give them some advice.

"As a member of the development control committee, I have to make my decision on the weight of planning evidence, not out of loyalty to the village."

He added: "I am consulting the city council's solicitor over this proposed vote of no confidence but I think it is just a symbolic thing.

"I'm not losing any sleep over it, but the parish council needs to consider carefully the money it is wasting."

■ What do you think? Write to the Kentish Gazette at Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE or e-mail kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk

Country club to be luxury hotel?

by Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroun.co.uk

A 17TH CENTURY mansion in Bridge could be converted into an upmarket hotel if the owner gets planning permission.

Businessman Peter Malkin has lived at Bridge Place Country Club – where he once ran a fashionable and popular nightclub – for 44 years.

He recently relaunched an evening venue for older customers which opens once a month on Saturdays.

But now he is applying for permission to make internal alterations to create a nine-bedroom hotel which he says will offer superb accommodation for guests.

Last year he put the house on the market but decided not to sell because he could not bear to part with it.

Now he says he is prepared to invest tens of thousands of pounds in creating

the luxury hotel where he believes guests will enjoy staying in the historic surroundings.

He said: “I really want it to be something special and everyone who knows me appreciates that I treat old buildings with great care and sympathy.”

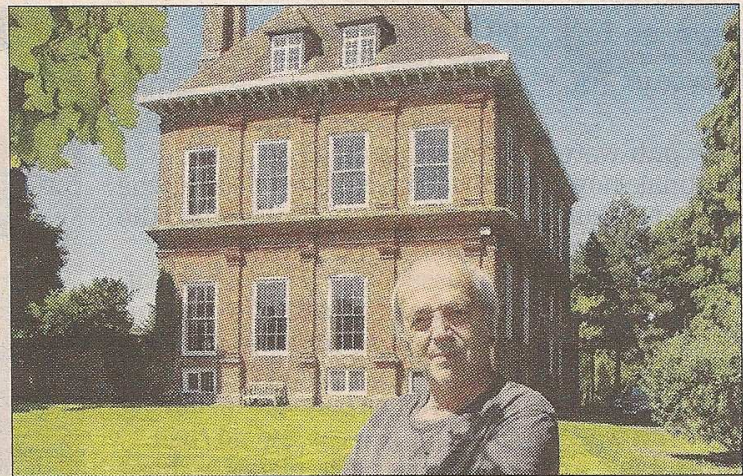
Nightclub

Mr Malkin ran into opposition when he wanted to relaunch the nightclub at the house but says residents have nothing to fear.

He explained: “The club only opens one Saturday a month at the moment and it’s an older crowd who come.

“I would like it to become weekly but I am not going to be doing anything that will disturb our guests.

“We will provide breakfast but are not opening a restaurant. There are many places in the village or in Canterbury where people can already eat very well.”



Bridge Country Club owner Peter Malkin

Picture: Barry Duffield PD1440438

Mr Malkin still owns Skip-pers restaurant in Bridge which he closed last year but has not yet been able to sell.

He said: “I am very excited about creating a hotel at Bridge Place, but I am not looking to make a fortune. I only need it to tick over and pay for itself.

“It will be nice for people to enjoy this wonderful old

house like I have over the years.”

One of his plans is to recreate one of the original staircases in oak which he say will look magnificent.

■ **What do you think of the proposal? Write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE or e-mail kentishgazette@thekmgroun.co.uk**

Village has no need for social housing

WHERE does Cllr Austen believe he is, in China? From his letter in the Kentish

Gazette last week you would think that it was a crime for people to protest about a development in their village that will destroy a lovely green field, an ancient hedge and wildlife. I live near Brickfields and have lived in Bridge virtually all my life.

I am not against affordable housing but only when it is really needed for local people (that means people from Bridge, not Canterbury) and as long as the housing is provided in the right place.

This proposal does neither. When we filled in the housing need survey four years ago, it was not stated where the housing would go and most of us thought that the housing would be "right-to-buy" housing, not social rental.

That is how the parish council advertised it.

I was not too happy to find out that Brickfields was chosen, especially as villagers made it clear in their replies to the survey that they did not want any development outside the village envelope and because there are a few brownfield sites in the village.

Even worse is that a Canterbury planning officer helped to choose the Brickfield site, so convenient when it is the only site owned by Canterbury City Council!

I was also furious to find out that the housing was to be social rental housing only.

I felt that I had been misled. Social rental housing is not needed in Bridge. There are plenty of properties for rent.

It is not likely that anyone in Bridge or connected to Bridge would be awarded enough points on the housing list to get anywhere near getting a social rental property anyway.

Usually, it is those who have real social problems who get the properties.

This development is the last thing Bridge needs or wants.

**Doug Harding, Mill Terrace,
Bridge**

House allowed despite protest

PLANNING permission has been granted to build a detached house on the edge of Bridge, despite objections from neighbours.

The two-storey, four bedroom property with a detached garage, will be built within the large garden of Mount Charles House.

A detached garage will be demolished to create an access road to the house at the foot of Mount Charles Walk, off Union Road.

Residents in The Close raised concerns over the height and character of the building, which lies within the Bridge conservation area.

At a meeting of the city council's development control committee, Bridge parish councillor Mark Esdale reminded councillors that previous applications for



An artist's impression of the detached home in Mount Charles House, Bridge

up to eight homes had been rejected as far back as 1982.

He said: "There is no need in the village for a large family house in this area.

"This character of property is not the affordable house for people who wish

to remain in the village with their families for decades to come."

■ **What do you think? Write to us at Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, Kent CT5 3SE.**

Keep up-to-date 24/7

www.kentishgazette.co.uk



27.8.2009

Flyposters? We are advertising village fireworks

EXCLUSIVE

by Gerry Warren

gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

OVER-ZEALOUS city council officials have been accused of blighting a charity fireworks display after they took down signs advertising the event.

The annual show at Bridge, organised by Bridge School PTA, takes place on Saturday and will also raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

But two days after the signs went up around the village and on the nearby A2, council workers were ordered to take them down.

The authority claims the signs are fly-posting and breach the Highways Act,

and offenders could be fined. But the PTA says it has been advertising the fireworks display the same way for years without any problems.

Four of the smaller signs were taken away by officials and two larger ones left on the ground.

The PTA fears that since the action three weeks ago, it has lost vital advertising time in promoting the event which could now suffer as a result.

School parent and PTA member Andrew DiBiase said: "The fireworks are enjoyed by families from all around the area and it relies solely on the goodwill of volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure its success.

"Having spent hours

putting the signs together and securing them at prominent sites to get maximum publicity, we were aghast to see they had all disappeared just two days later. We were amazed to see precious council funds used to target a harmless charity."

The city council emailed the parish council and school to tell them why the signs were removed.

Head of environment Tony Parker said: "The council's policy is not to allow fly-posting. If our officers see fly-posting, they take the signs down, and we do this consistently in order to be fair to everybody.

"If we didn't do this, the place would be overrun with fly-posting, and our priority is to keep the district tidy."



Members of Bridge School PTA with one of the offending signs

Now PTA chairman Simon Hopkins has negotiated the return of the signs and the withdrawal of the threat of the fine on the understanding the signs will only be put back up on private property.

He said: "It's a pity because no one has complained before and we hope it won't affect the number of visitors we get and therefore our takings."

Factfile

The gates open for the display in Church Meadow, Brewery Lane, at 5.30pm on Saturday. Family tickets cost £10

and are available at the entrance or in advance from village shops and the Old Gate Inn in Old Dover Road, Canterbury.

■ What do you think? Write to the Kentish Gazette at Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE, or email kentishgazette@thekmgroupp.co.uk

I don't drink an awful lot – about 15 pints a day

by Joe Walker

joewalker@thekmggroup.co.uk

AN ECCENTRIC pub landlord has been quizzed about his heavy drinking in a Channel 4 documentary.

Red Lion boss Robert Whigham was interviewed by filmmaker Sue Bourne during her 3,000 mile journey around the country to pubs of the same name.

The jovial 60-year-old, who has run the pub in Stodmarsh for 16 years, was described as “the archetypal, eccentric landlord, supping his beer around the clock” in the Cutting Edge programme.

He openly admitted drinking 15 pints of beer a day, with the first “sharpener” as early as 8am.

He told the programme, which was screened on Thursday night: “I’ve always been a lovable drinker. It’s not arduous, it is absolutely such fun.

“I’m happy making everybody else enjoy themselves.

“Being here when people are all laughing, it’s like taking not that

I’ve ever done it, but like taking marijuana twice a day.

“But my marijuana is the people who walk through the door, and a quick sharpener.”

Mrs Bourne said to Mr Whigham: “Quite a lot of pub owners and landlords we’ve met say they won’t drink when they’re working.

“This is obviously not a principle you’ve embraced?”

Explaining that he drank about 15 pints a day, he said: “You’re talking about one and a quarter pints an hour.”

The programme also revealed Mr Whigham suffered a collapsed lung in January, spending three weeks in hospital.

Mrs Bourne asked him: “Did it not make you stop and think, just for a minute, maybe I should drink less, smoke less?”

Mr Whigham replied: “Well I don’t drink an awful lot and I don’t smoke an awful lot, so it didn’t make me even think.”

When asked if he was possibly in denial, he said: “Avidly, avidly.”

‘It doesn’t affect my business’

Speaking about his TV appearance, Mr Whigham told the Gazette: “I thought it was a very good programme.

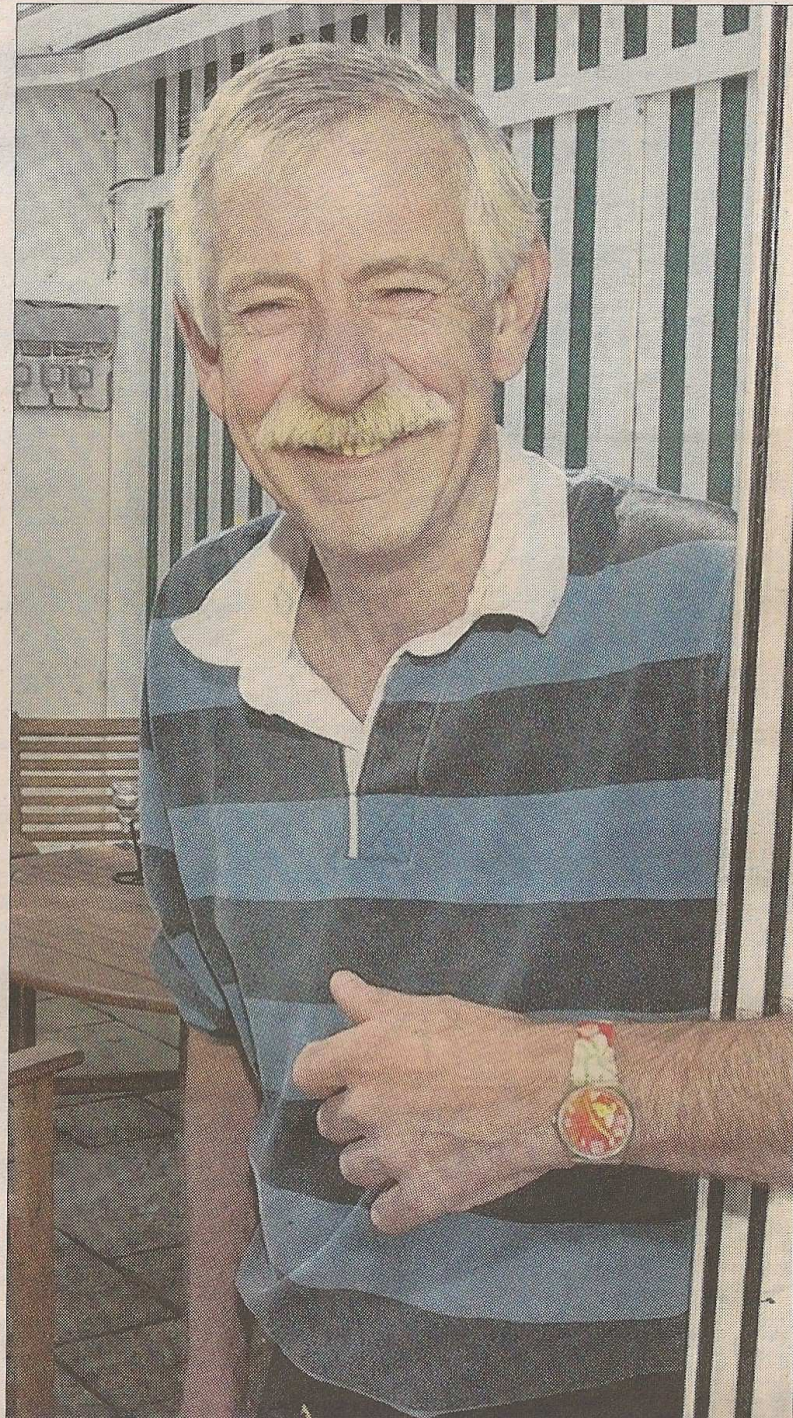
“They came in February and filmed for four days. Sue was very forthright so I had to be on my mettle.

“She insisted I had a beer in my hand at all times, but that wasn’t too arduous.

“Some people drink 20 cups of coffee a day, I have my 15 pints. It doesn’t affect my business or my health.

“We all fall off the shelf once in a while and I’m the worst culprit, but not too often.

“It is 15 pints over the whole day after all, which isn’t too bad. If I went out for a sharpener and had 15 pints, I’d be mullered.”



Robert Whigham, landlord of the Red Lion at Stodmarsh, in the pub garden

Picture: Chris Davey PD1067319

Post office picks up prize for its first-class service

22.10.2009



Roger Gale from the Post Office, Bridge team Mercia Powell, Karen Rumley and Sally Scott, and Fred Ferrier, also from the Post Office

THE village post office at Bridge has collected an award for its business success and the first-class service it is providing.

It has been given a "golden ticket" by the Post Office for being the best performing branch out of 450 in the South East. The accolade is a credit to manager Karen Rumley and assistant

managers Mercia Powell and Sally Scott who together have developed the business and concentrated on giving their customers the best possible service.

Ms Rumley said: "Some of the smaller branches have struggled and we have lost a few over the years so we have quite a wide catchment area and even

attract customers from Canterbury because we provide all the services of a main branch. We are in the pharmacy which is convenient for elderly people and means we can keep an eye out for them."

The staff were presented with a glass award, vouchers and chocolates.

Surgery gets go-ahead despite objections

PLANS for a new medical centre in Littlebourne have finally been given the go-ahead – seven years after the scheme was first proposed by doctors.

Canterbury city council this week granted planning permission for the building on farmland in Court Hill, despite the objections of some neighbours and environmentalists.

Members of the development control committee were told by planning officers on Tuesday that the proposed place was the most suitable and its benefit to the local community outweighed the policy to refrain from development in the countryside.

But the committee did receive a petition of 21 signatures against the scheme which objected to the land being built on and questioned the need for the new surgery.

Objectors also said it was too big and too far from the village centre and elderly people with mobility problems. There were also concerns about the destruction of wildlife habitats.

Finding a site for a new medical centre has been a long process and a previous scheme on land nearby, which included housing, was rejected by

planners last year. But practice premises manager for the Bridge and Littlebourne surgeries, John Rofe said the number of patients in Littlebourne had doubled to 3,000 and the existing surgery in Nargate Street was inadequate.

He added: "Littlebourne is in danger of becoming the poor relation to Bridge. We have been trying for seven years to find a site and have already looked at many other locations."

In favour

Parish council chairman Vivienne Spratt said that development in the countryside would normally be opposed by its members, but new services were so badly needed that they were supporting the application. She added that a public meeting of villagers had also voted overwhelmingly in favour of it.

The new centre will be a single storey building with a part grassed roof in a landscaped setting surrounded by trees and bushes. It will include two doctor's consulting rooms, two nurses consulting rooms and treatment and training rooms. There will also be parking for 29 cars.

KG 23/7/09