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Raising a glass to county's pubs



Landlord John Leeming pulls a pint at the newly refurbished Red Lion, Bridge, in 2001

Pubs have changed noticeably over the years but also stayed the same in many ways.

The people behind the bar and the customers look a bit different, reflecting changing fashions as time passes. And the choice of drinks in many of our photos might not be familiar, unless you have a very good memory.

Thankfully there are still plenty of good, old-fashioned boozers in the county and there is more variety if you're finding somewhere for a pint (or a cocktail) in the 21st century. And you won't enter a room full of smokers, after the ban in 2007.

Above all, our photos show that fun and good company have never been far away when you walk through a pub door.



Actress Diana Dors met regulars at the Queen Maidstone during a visit in 1982



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Attack in bedroom left victim unconscious

Burglar strangled woman in her home

by Lydia Chantler-Hicks

lchantlerhicks@thekmgroupp.co.uk
@lydiaKM

A burglar who strangled a woman into unconsciousness to prevent her from raising the alarm after she found him laying on her bed has been jailed for six years.

The attack, which left the victim and her family "absolutely terrified", took place in the High Street, Bridge, last June.

Finbar Shirley, 24, of Meadow Close in the village, had climbed in through an open window.

He went into the bedroom, removed his shoes and sat down on the bed.

But when his victim went upstairs to use the bathroom in the early hours, she spotted his legs hanging off the end of her bed.

Shirley then strangled her, "without hesitation" until she passed out.



Finbar Shirley climbed through an open window

It was only when the victim's husband came upstairs and saw her lying on the floor that Shirley calmly walked down the stairs and out of the house.

He was arrested on the same

day of the attack, Sunday, June 4, after police were called. Shirley told police he liked to see how other people lived.

He appeared on Friday before Canterbury Crown Court where he admitted burglarly and assault charges.

Investigating officer Detective Constable Steve Day said: "This is a particularly disturbing case that left the victim and her family absolutely terrified."

"Shirley had taken an unhealthy interest in the house and then calmly attacked the woman without hesitation when he thought he would get caught."

"Luckily her husband found her in time, otherwise the outcome could have been a lot worse."

"Shirley is clearly a significant risk to the public, and the victim and her family will no doubt suffer the emotional effects of his attack for some time. He'll now serve time in prison for his behaviour."

Ukip leader's ex angry

Post Office move

The Shalmsford Street Post Office in Chatham will close on February 22 - and then reopen the following day at the NK Minimart Premier Express store in Godfrey Gardens.

The new branch, just over a mile away, will be open seven days a week.

Their word is law

A team of student negotiators from the Kent Law School at the University of Kent has won the final of an international negotiation competition, beating 24 teams from around the world at the event in Goa, India.

Students Jade Levin and Summer Prior scooped the best negotiating team award in the final of the Lex Infinitum 2018 competition against Government Law College in Mumbai.

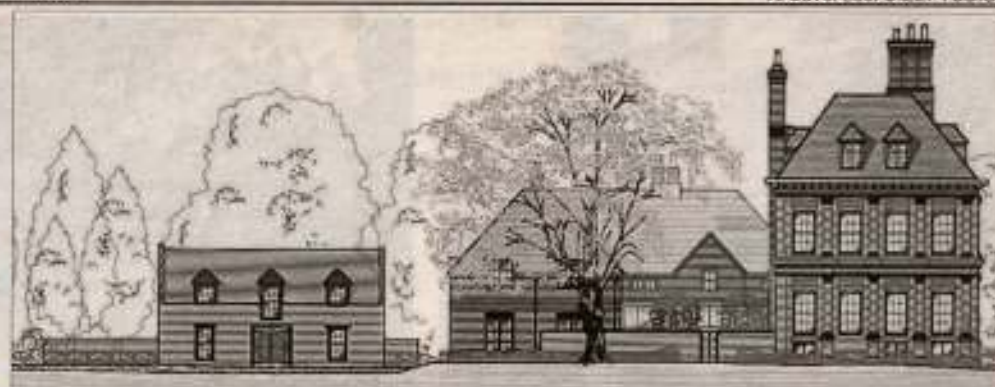
Together with Andreas Malekos, the three final-year law students were the only team from the UK taking part.

Bridge art show

An art exhibition in Bridge is calling on entries from anyone who lives, works or studies in the village, or in a rural parish within five miles.

Up to three exhibits are invited for display at the Art in Bridge show which will take place over the weekend of May 5-6.

To obtain an entry form and more details, visit www.artinbridge.org.uk or call John Corfield on 01227 830976.



Bridge Place Manor as it looks today and an artist's impression of how the new extensions could look

Pictures: Robin Hutson/Barry Duffield FM3870939

£5.5 million project to turn manor into boutique hotel



Present owners Robin and Judy Hutson

by Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmggroup.co.uk
@Gerry_Warren

A multi-million pound refurbishment of the historic Bridge Place Manor is under way - transforming it into an upmarket hotel.

The Grade I-listed Jacobean mansion in Brewery Lane, Bridge, has been bought by the Home Grown Hotels chain, which operates the popular Pig Hotels brand.

It has won planning permission to allow work to begin on what will become known as The Pig at



'We will give it the same personal love and attention we give all our hotels'

feature a conservatory restaurant with open kitchen and views on to the kitchen gardens. An existing barn will be converted into a kitchen larder.

It is hoped the property's gardens will grow much of the produce used in the kitchens, with



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The sale of the property, put on the market by long-time owner Peter Malkin for £2.5 million, was dependent on the planning permission being secured.

Now work on transforming the site is under way, with the hotel chain expecting to plough some £5.5 million into the project.

Among the major changes will be the creation of a new linked coach house boasting 10 bedrooms and seven 'hop pickers' huts, made from reclaimed material from an island within the grounds.

In addition, there will be a restored gate house offering another two bedrooms.

Together with seven newly refurbished bedrooms in the main house, it means there will be 26 rooms altogether.

Home Grown Hotels boss Robin Hutson said: "We are delighted to get permission and have started the soft-strip-out of things like old bathrooms.

Past owner Peter Malkin

"We will give it the same personal love and attention we give all our hotels to create our unique brand of effortless, laid-back chic, which our customers love."

Mr Hutson says he was attracted to Bridge Place because of its setting and wealth of historic interior features.

The project also fits in with the company's ethos of restoring and converting historic buildings into hotels.

Together with a further two recent acquisitions in Cornwall and West Sussex, it will bring the company's portfolio to eight hotels.

The new coach house will also

the rest being sourced from producers within a 25-mile radius.

The interior look and feel of the accommodation will be overseen by Robin's wife, Judy Hutson, an acclaimed interior designer.

Mr Hutson said: "We will give it the same love as our own home."

Mr Hutson said he hoped to open The Pig at Bridge Place by the end of the year if everything went to plan.

The venue, owned by Peter Malkin for more than 50 years, had previously attracted interest from Queen guitarist Brian May, who was apparently interested in it as a family home.

During its heyday, the venue played host to a string of legendary music acts, among them Led Zeppelin, The Kinks, The Yardbirds and the Moody Blues.

➤ What do you think? Email kentishgazette@thekingroup.co.uk or write to: Gazette House, Room B119, New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3AJ

Polytunnel plan awaits approval

Plans for a 15-acre field of polytunnels in Chartham have been recommended for approval by officers ahead of a planning committee meeting next week.

Councillors are set to discuss the proposals for Swallow Field, part of FW Mansfields' complex at Nickle Farm, on Tuesday.

Neighbours had lodged objections to the proposals, citing concerns relating to overdevelopment, the visual impact of the tunnels and the number of additional staff that will be employed as a result.

But FW Mansfield, which four years ago invested £10 million

in the site, says the use of the polytunnels is essential to fulfil a year-round demand for soft fruit.

The tunnels would spread across the 6.37 hectares (15 acres) field and be primarily used for strawberries.

Planning officers say while the proposals would have some impact on the landscape it was not considered "significantly harmful" to the character of the wider landscape.

As a consequence, they are recommending the proposals are given the nod by the committee, subject to certain conditions.



Appeal has been made for 15 acres of polytunnels

Vicar puts church at the heart of her new community



by Jack Dyson
 jdyson@thekmgroup.co.uk
 @jackydys

Parishioners have been welcoming the new priest for the villages of Bridge, Bekesbourne, Patricbourne, Lower Hardres and Nackington.

Estella Last was installed as the vicar for what's known as the Bridge Benefice last Tuesday.

It encompasses five rural church congregations under three parishes: Bekesbourne, Patricbourne with Bridge and Nackington with Lower Hardres.

No stranger to the area, Ms Last served as curate at St Martin's Church in Herne since 2014.

And she's been spending her time since taking over meeting her parishioners.

Ms Last said: "My role involves looking after the congregations in those churches and all of the folk in those communities as they seek to deepen their spiritual life and walk with God.

"The main thing I need to do is get out and about and get to



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The Rev Estella Last is the new vicar for the Bridge Benefice

Picture: Paul Anas FM506884

know everybody, find out who does what and the needs of each of the places I'll be serving."

She believes her experiences so far will leave her in good stead for her new role.

Speaking to the Gazette, she added: "We have the church school here in Bridge and I've done a lot with the one in Herne so, hopefully, some of that experience will be transferrable.

"I'm sure the Bridge Benefice will be friendly and forgiving along the way and we will learn and grow together."

She is looking to support many of the events and the activities each of the churches are involved with, like coffee mornings and concerts.

And Ms Last has been encouraged by what she has seen.

"My first impression is that they are lovely places, very beautiful, the people here are very friendly and welcoming," she said.

"The villages have also placed great value in the churches because they act as centres of community, particularly in where there's no longer a pub or post office."

Could you clean-up with £3.5m?

A contract worth £3.5 million to clear shrubs from Kent roadsides is up for grabs after a gardening firm went into administration.

Cleartrack (EVL), a company in Milton Keynes, signed a five-year contract last March but fell into trouble six months' later.

Now Kent County Council is looking for its replacement to take on the job for up to seven years.

The winning bidder will be paid around £350,000 per year to weed, trim hedges and cut grass.

The gardeners would be hired to clear the roads in Maidstone, Dartford, Canterbury and Thanet from April.

However, under the terms of the contract, grass verges in Kent will be cut two times fewer than previous years.

Cllr Ian Chittenden, at the environment and transport cabinet meeting on January 31, said: "I am worried about this because I know we are cutting down from eight to six this year.

"I was thinking that we just about held the line last year and we can't guarantee with all this rain that it won't sprout up very quickly and April will be quite late to start the cutting."

There's something I need to tell you...



KM

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IN BRIEF

Housing plight

A leading homelessness charity says female rough sleepers are less likely to get help than men.

A new report by Canterbury-based Porchlight shows Kent has one of the highest rates of women sleeping rough in the UK, and they often live in fear of being exploited, attacked or worse.

It says chances to help women on the streets are being missed, partly because homeless support services are predominantly designed for men.

One in five of the people Porchlight worked with on the streets last year was female.

Ideas wanted

Bright young minds are encouraged to come up with new inventions to make life easier or more productive. Secondary school pupils are invited to develop ideas for gadgets or devices for this year's Innovation Competition, organised by the Rotary Club of Canterbury. Now in its sixth year, the contest is run in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University. The rules can be found at www.rotarycanterbury.org.uk. The closing date is March 31 and entries should be sent to innovationcompetition@canterbury.ac.uk and headed Innovation Competition 2019.



The Pig at Bridge Place hotel director Guy Freedman, left, and hotel group chief executive Robin Hutson

Rush of bookings as new hotel's launch date nears

A new boutique hotel on the site of a former manor house has already booked 1,500 stays - despite not opening for another seven weeks.

The Pig Hotel group has transformed the old Bridge Country Club as part of an £8 million development to create its seventh UK destination.

Despite the scale and detail of the work, the company's chief

executive, Robin Hutson, says he has not been daunted.

"I've spent 25 years working on listed buildings and working closely with English Heritage," he said. "We know what we are doing and have the people with the skills for the job."

The 29-bed hotel will be known as The Pig at Bridge Place and has already recruited 80 new staff, from chefs and waiters to

housekeepers and beauty therapists, after 750 applications.

A team of up to 100 craftsmen and tradesmen are working flat out to complete the work in time for the hotel's expected opening in the first week of May.

As well as the renovation of the main house, which will reflect its past "rock and roll vibe", there is an extension offering further rooms and a conservatory 'gar-

den' restaurant.

A lodge house will be converted into two, family-friendly units, while there are a further seven rustic-looking Kentish 'hop-picker' huts, and The Barn, which will offer a two-storey hideaway in the former stables.

Cottage gardens are a trademark of the group, and one is being planted at Bridge to provide produce for the restaurant.



A close-up of the stone cross

Sculpture in memory of Armenians

A two-metre stone cross has been loaned to Canterbury Cathedral to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

Weighing half a ton, the sculpture is cut out of volcanic stone from Armenia and is the work of Brigadier John Meardon, who was formerly receiver general at the Cathedral, and electronics engineer Vartan Moskofian.

Mr Meardon said the stone, which has been placed in the Cathedral's Memorial Garden, had been created to "mark the centenary of the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians and to act as a symbol for reconciliation between peoples."

"It seemed a good fit for Canterbury as Archbishop Randall Davidson was very public in fighting the Armenian cause at the end of the First World War and not only is he buried in the Cloister but also has a memorial inside the Cathedral," he said.

HOTELIER AND WIFE'S 'LABOUR OF LOVE'

From manor house to £8m boutique hotel

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmggroup.co.uk

The opening of a new hotel which had 1,500 stays booked in advance took place on Tuesday after the £8 million refurbishment of an historic manor house.

The former Bridge Country Club near Canterbury has been transformed into 'The Pig at Bridge Place'.

It is one of a growing number of boutique hotels being created in the south by the brand, which specialises in converting historic buildings into fabulously-styled hotels, renowned for their trademark cosy furnishings and fittings, decor and "homegrown" food.

But the project in Bridge has proved the most personal for hotelier Robin Hutson and his interior designer wife Judy, whose parents lived in the village. The pair were married at the church just a few hundreds yards from their new hotel.

"It really has been a labour of love for us and we have put our



A look inside the new conservatory

heart and soul into it," said Mr Hutson.

"It's just a great feeling to see it all finished and the building given a new lease of life."

Mr Hutson said he was also excited by the focus on food in Kent adding: "We have not found a location with such an abundance of small suppliers who we are looking forward to working with, including the county's wine-growers."

The new hotel has 29 bedrooms - seven in the main house, 12 in

the coach house, two family lodges and a rustic two-storey hideaway in the old stables.

There are also seven Kentish hop pickers' huts on stilts which sit alongside the river in the grounds and feature double-bedrooms with fitted bathrooms and wood burning stoves.

Sitting in several acres of countryside, Bridge Country Club was owned for more than 50 years by Peter Malkin and in its hey-day in the 70s attracted big name bands, including Led Zeppelin, The

Kinks, The Yardbirds and the Moody Blues as well as numerous and celebrities.

And some of that 'rock and roll vibe' is reflected in the conversion of the 17th century grade one listed property.

The manor house was bought 18 months ago by Mr Hutson's Limewood Group whose team set about the transformation with the signature decor by Judy.

But careful attention has been paid to retaining and incorporating the building's many historic features, including its magnificent staircase, fireplaces and wood panelling.

Such is the interest in the new hotel that there were 750 applications for the 80 jobs, and 1,500 stays booked in advance, says hotel director Guy Freedman.

The Pig at Bridge is the company's sixth hotel with others in Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire.

To mark the opening, the hotel held a special launch night on Saturday which was attended by hundreds of specially-invited guests, including celebrity chefs Rick Stein and Angela Hartnett.



Robin and Judy Hutson have transformed the former Bridge County Club into a luxury hotel



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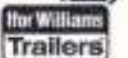
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Far left, Quinn Estates managing director Mark Quinn and left, Highland Court Investments managing director Gary Walters

Football and rugby clubs seek new grounds

Canterbury City Football Club has been stuck in the doldrums ever since it had to vacate its Kingsmead home in 1999.

It has been forced to groundshare and seen its league status slump and fanbase dwindle to about 100 regular supporters on match day.

But chairman Tim Clark says being given eight acres of land at Highland Court to develop a stadium and pitches would offer a hugely exciting new future for the club.

"It really is a make-or-break opportunity and the chance to establish us as a leading club in the south east in the future, which Canterbury deserves," he said.

"We will develop a community football hub and work with Canterbury Christ Church University, which is keen on developing a football academy degree course."

The club has about £1.6 million in the pot in compensation for giving up its former Kingsmead site and in other council grants to put towards the project.

The potential move of Canterbury Rugby Club's to Highland Court is also being welcomed by its commercial manager, Giles Hilton.

Founded in 1929, the club moved to Merton Lane North just after the war, but its success means it is now outgrowing the site.

"We are bursting at the seams and, although we are only at the early stages of any potential relocation, it does present a very exciting opportunity to move the club up to another level," said Mr Hilton.

"It would secure the club long into the future and draw more talent and allow us to apply for sporting grants," he said.

If approved, it is anticipated that a planning application would be forthcoming for new homes on the existing rugby fields.

The new facilities at Highland Court would include a 4,000 sq ft clubhouse, four rugby pitches, three junior pitches and a 200-space car park.

Hunt for hit-and-run driver who struck disabled man at crossing

Fire at firm after ram-raid

Police are investigating a suspected arson attack on a private ambulance firm just a day-and-a-half after its city warehouse was ram-raided. Officers were first called to the Chislehurst Business Park last Tues-

£250M HIGHLAND COURT SCHEME**for protected countryside site****Exclusive**by **Gerry Warren**gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk
@Gerry_Warren

Three hundred acres of highly protected countryside near Canterbury could change forever if an ambitious but controversial tourism development gets the go-ahead.

A detailed masterplan of the £250 million scheme is unveiled for the first time today (Thursday) for the land at Highland Court Farm in Bridge.

Within it are 300 luxury holiday homes, a 150-unit retirement village, a business centre, sports facilities and a restaurant and artisan market – all in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The scheme is a joint venture between the Whigham family, which owns the farmland, and developer Quinn Estates, with both believing the location is "ideal" for holiday industry use.

Also planned are new clubhouses and pitches for Canterbury football and rugby clubs and an equestrian, walking and cycling centre.

The masterplan is now being put out to public consultation.

Developer Mark Quinn claims it will provide "massive social, economic, and sporting benefits" while keeping the environment

CPRE CRITICISM

The scheme has drawn criticism from the Kent branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Hilary Newport, pictured, who is director of Protect Kent, said: "These proposals particularly concern us because of the scale of what is being proposed in the Kent Downs AONB.

"CPRE campaigns for a thriving, vibrant countryside, but this project represents an intense urbanisation of a protected area.

"The designation of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty does not mean that nothing can ever be built there.

"But to pass the threshold

**Vision of the type of luxury holiday home that could be built**

local wildlife and environment so more people could enjoy it.

"Just because it's an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, shouldn't mean you can't do anything with it."

Canterbury Rugby Club says it is "outgrowing" its current site in Merton Lane North and the city's football club has been without its own ground for two decades and currently plays in Deal.

Both have been in discussions with Mr Quinn and have signed

a major contribution to local wildlife."

The plans go on show at Bridge village hall today (Thursday)

between 5.30pm and 7.30pm and at Bekesbourne village hall on Saturday, between 9am and 11am.

Party 'unclear' on grammars

The fate of Kent's grammar schools under a future Labour government remains unclear after Angela Rayner, the party's shadow education secretary, failed to mention them in her keynote conference speech.

The party's views on the country's remaining grammars and whether they would survive under Labour rule were expected to feature in the address.

But in the event there was no mention of them at all.

Ms Rayner herself had indicated she would be saying something on Labour's views on selection and the 11-plus.

At a conference fringe meeting two days ago, she had said the party would move to help parents who didn't want their children to go into a selective school system but had no choice in the matter because of "how the system works".

"We want to change that," she told the event organised by the National Education Union.

"We want to make a system that works for everybody, and hopefully in my speech on Tuesday, we will set out much more of that."

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He said: "I know some people will have concerns about it but I believe that Canterbury can have its cake and eat it, with tourism and economic growth, but with hardly any pain."

Mr Quinn also predicts the scheme will create 1,500 jobs while "enhancing" the sensitive landscape location, encouraging more visitors.

But as well as being designated an AONB, the site is not earmarked in the Local Plan for development and Mr Quinn admits he faces a battle to convince town planners to give it the go-ahead.

He said: "We know a lot of work will be needed to create the evidence to support it, but we hope to submit a planning application by the end of the year."

When the proposal was first

the applicants have to demonstrate that it is in the national interest, that there are no alternative sites other than the AONB and that everything possible has been done to limit harm to the landscape.

"It is hard to see how these proposals pass any of those tests."

made public in February this year, Gary Walters, managing director of the Highland Investments Company, which is behind the project, said: "We are very aware of the AONB status of the land, but its very special quality makes it desirable for tourism.

"We would manage with sensitivity and aim to enhance the

up for the move.

Mr Quinn is also in discussions with Kent Wildlife Trust, Produced in Kent, Visit Kent and Canterbury College, and is working with luxury holiday home specialists Yoo and retirement home providers Pegasus Life.

He said: "I believe this is the perfect location to deliver an exemplar scheme that can bring significant benefits to the villages, local area and the city itself.

"The site is adjacent to a junction on the A2 and is massively under-used with in excess of 90% spare capacity.

"Through working with key stakeholders, we are placing the environment at the core of what we are doing and taking a heavily intensive commercial farm and turning it into land that makes



Impression of how Canterbury Rugby Club's new home could look

Picture: Mark Gane

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Ambitious plan to turn historic house into boutique hotel

Exclusive

by Gerry Warren

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@Gerry_Warren

A leading boutique hotel chain is poised to spend £8 million buying a historic country house near Canterbury and turning it into a luxury 28-bed venue.

Home Grown Hotels is in "advanced negotiations" with the owner of the 17th century Bridge Place - but the sale is dependent on the company securing planning permission for an extension to the mansion.

The company is owned by Robin Hutson, who founded Hotel De Vin, and Jim Ratcliffe, the billionaire chemicals entrepreneur-turned-hoteller.

Together they have five hotels under their Pig Hotel brand.

They have submitted a proposal for a new wing following lengthy consultations with heritage architects and organisations such as Historic England.

The house, which sits in five acres, was built by Dutchman Sir Arnold Bruems - the first man-

ager of Dover Harbour Board - and named Bridge Place in about 1650.

It has been owned for 50 years by 78-year-old businessman Peter Malkin, who created a renowned nightspot in the swinging Sixties, attracting stars from the music industry.

Over the decades, he has lovingly restored the Grade II*-listed mansion and last year had ambitions himself to open it as a hotel, but later abandoned the idea and put it on the market in May for £2.5 million.

"To be honest, it's too big a place to have as a private home and I've always thought it would make a fabulous hotel because it's a wonderful building in a superb setting," he said.

"Although I'm still fit as a flea for my age, I just don't have the energy and drive to do it.

"The people behind Home Grown Hotels are really nice and I know they share my empathy for the building and would be great custodians of it.

"I think their design for the new wing looks fabulous and has been done with great care and

sympathy for the house."

The plans involve demolishing an existing flat-roofed extension which was built in the 1960s.

The new wing would house 12 bedrooms, a restaurant and a kitchen. The main house will offer seven beds and a guest bar and lounge.

Seven further rooms would be created in the hop pickers' huts and a further two guest suites in the former coach house.

The new owners would also develop a kitchen garden to grow produce for the restaurant and landscape the grounds.

Mr Malkin said: "We are in advanced negotiations and I hope it goes ahead because it would give the old place a new lease of life and allow the house to be appreciated by far more people."

Bridge Parish Council is due to consider the scheme at its meeting tonight (Thursday) in the village hall and give its opinion to the city council's planning committee.

Mr Malkin says that if the sale goes through, he will continue to live nearby in the Lodge House in Brewery Lane, which he owns.

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Peter Malkin has owned the historic country house for 50 years; one of the company's other luxury hotels - The Pig on the Beach Hotel in Studland; side elevation of proposed Bridge Place



CLOSE TIES TO VILLAGE

If the ambitious scheme gets the go-ahead, it will be like a homecoming for hotelier Robin Hutson and his wife Judy.

They already have close ties to Bridge because Judy grew up in the village and is an ex-Simon Langton girl.

The couple's wedding was blessed 34 years ago in the church in the shadow of Bridge Place and her parents are buried in the cemetery.

They now live in Winchester but say they are looking forward to creating a new future for the magnificent mansion in the style of the other historic country properties they have transformed into successful hotels.

Robin, 60, said: "For the project to work and be viable as a hotel business, we need the extra bedrooms and the purchase of the building is conditional on getting planning permission.

"A huge amount of pre-planning and discussions with

organisations like Historic England has already taken place, which I hope will satisfy the listed building authorities.

"In particular, we believe demolishing the existing single-storey extension, built in the 60s and not very sympathetic to the building, and replacing it, will enhance the house."

Robin and Judy, 64, do all their own interior design work, "down to the last stick of furniture".

"Judy is keen to work on this one, perhaps more than any other property we have done, because Bridge is personal to her," Robin said.

"Peter is a lovely character and has already done some very good work and really taken care of the place using the best artisans. But if we get permission, I guess it will take about a year to get the house how we want it."



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Avid hospital campaigner dies aged 84



A retired consultant who passionately campaigned for the Kent and Canterbury to become a major health hub has died aged 84.

Dr Michael Goggin trained as a GP but went on to specialise in renal medicine. He founded the dialysis unit at the K&C following the donation of the first machine. Although he retired 20 years ago, he continued an active role in medicine, serving on committees and speaking out in support of the K&C.

His wife Cyn said: "He was a very kind, dedicated man who was passionate about the hospital and we have been overwhelmed by the kind messages we have received, many from past patients." Dr Goggin died of bladder cancer in the Pilgrim's Hospice on November 15. His funeral is at St Thomas's Catholic Church in Burgate at midday on Tuesday.

Grandmother was active member of village Celebrating the life of community stalwart Elizabeth

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A grandmother who was an active member of the Bridge community for many years will be remembered "with great affection" following her death.

Elizabeth Stewart died unexpectedly in hospital on Friday aged 77 after suffering a sudden lung infection.

Born in Faversham, her mother ran Child's department store and her father ran the haulage contractors and coal merchants Francis Davis - the premises of which were later sold to Shepherd Neame.

She moved to Bridge in 1962 following her marriage to chartered accountant Michael Stewart, who subsequently became a partner in Reeves and Neylan.

The tragic cot death of their son Tom in 1974 - to be commemo-



Elizabeth Stewart

rated next year in a stained-glass window in Bridge Church - prompted her to start a support and fundraising group for the Foundation of the Study of Infant Deaths, now called the Lullaby Trust.

Since 1992, she has been chairman of the Nailbourne Group of

the League of Friends of the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

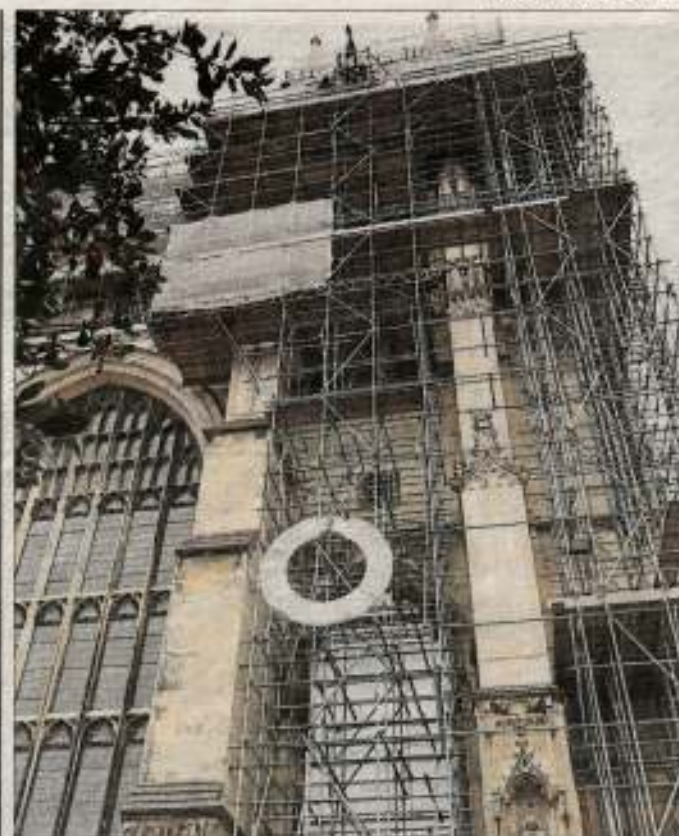
She was a regular volunteer for the Bridge Fish Scheme and a flower arranger at St Peter's Church in Bridge.

She also had a passion for needlework and beading and was well known for her culinary contributions at local events.

Elizabeth is survived by husband Michael and their four children, Ian, Heather, David and Alison, as well as her five grandchildren and brother, Richard.

Funeral arrangements are still being made but a service in celebration of her life is being planned at St Peter's Church at 2pm on Friday, December 7. Friends are asked to wear something purple.

Family flowers only, or donations to St Peter's Church, Bridge general fund, cheques payable to PCC Patrisbourne with Bridge c/o CW Lyons & Sons Ltd, 70 Military Road, Canterbury CT1 1ND.



The cathedral clock face is gently lowered 120ft to the ground

Clock gets a facelift

The eight-foot diameter clock face on one of Canterbury Cathedral's iconic towers has been carefully removed for the first time in almost a century.

It is being transported for a major makeover by specialists who will clean and repaint the faded dial and

and regild the hands.

It is 90 years since its last overhaul, so Cathedral bosses took advantage of the current scaffolding to bring it down.

The clock mechanism is joining the dial on the journey to restoration by The Canterbury



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Building work at Bridge Place is well underway ahead of the luxury hotel's opening in May

More than 500 vie for jobs at country retreat
Rush of applicants
as £5.5m boutique
hotel takes shape

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By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmggroup.co.uk

Up to 100 jobs will be created through the opening of a £5.5 million boutique hotel on the edge of Canterbury.

The Home Grown Hotels group, which bought the historic Bridge Place a year ago, has been busy transforming and extending the Jacobean mansion and gardens.

And now, it is gearing up for its opening in May by putting together a new staffing team.

Hotel chain boss Robin Hutson says it will include roles in every area of the business, from chefs, waiters, bar staff and receptionists to gardeners and massage therapists.

He added: "We tend to employ a mixture of people with both previous experience and some with none, so long as they are prepared to work hard and have the right attitude. Then, perhaps, they might join one of our apprenticeship schemes."

Mr Hutson says the job adverts



Robin and Judy Hutson are leading the project

have sparked a huge response, with more than 500 applications.

Bridge Place is a Grade I-listed 17th century mansion, which sits in five acres and was built by Dutchman Sir Arnold Braems – the first manager of Dover Harbour Board.

Home Grown Hotels, which operates under the Pig Hotels brand, bought the property from its long-time owner Peter Malkin, who lived there for more than 50 years and ran it as Bridge Country Club.

Mr Hutson says he was attracted to the country house

because of its setting and wealth of historic interior features, many carefully preserved by Mr Malkin.

It will be known as The Pig at Bridge and will have 29 beds, including 12 accommodated in a new linked coach house which will also have a restaurant and conservatory.

Further accommodation is being provided in new 'hop pickers' huts, made from reclaimed material from an island within the grounds.

In addition, there will be a restored gate house offering another two bedrooms.

Mr Hutson said: "It's both an exciting and slightly nerve-racking time, because we have set a date to be open and have a team of up to 80 tradesmen and women on-site working flat-out."

There is an open day for job applicants at the Westgate Hall in Canterbury on Tuesday, February 5.

More information about the vacancies is available at www.thepighotel.com.

Burglar breaks in and demands cash

A woman was left shaken after being forced to hand over cash by a burglar who broke into her city centre home.

The intruder got into the property in Best Lane shortly after 1pm on Sunday.

But when he came face to face with the woman, who is in her 50s, he threatened her.

Detective Constable Rob

Goodban said: "We believe the intruder probably thought the house was empty, but when he realised someone was home he forced the occupant to hand over cash. He left a few minutes later.

"The occupant was understandably shaken and we are keen to trace the offender."

The suspect is white, in his 30s or early 40s, 5ft 8in to 5ft 10in and

of thin build.

He had blonde or sandy-coloured hair and a beard, and was wearing a black knitted beanie hat and baggy jeans. He spoke with a local accent.

Anyone with information is urged to call police on 01843 222289, quoting reference 46/12926/19, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.



CGI of Canterbury City Football Club's proposed new stadium Pic: Quinn Estates



The holiday village has taken inspiration from Silverlake in Dorset

Fears of club 'collapse' as £125m project damned in council report

By Joe Wright
jwright@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A controversial plan to build a £125 million holiday village and sports complex on protected countryside has failed to win



lic estate of second homes in the style of the Cotswolds' Yoo Lakes and Silverlake in Dorset.

Having gained a host of objections, including from Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust, Dover District Council and a number of parish councils, the development has long-proved

look at it and use their common sense."

In stark contrast, Barham Downs Action Group chairman David Howe is hoping the recommendation is followed through.

"I'm very happy with it," he said.

"It really is a damning report,

as that before.

"The chances the application will be refused are very high, I believe.

"Though, you can never say never - it's not over until the fat lady sings."

Councillors will vote on the development on Tuesday night

IN BRIEF

Most wanted

Police are hunting a man who allegedly stabbed a woman in Canterbury 21 years ago. Yasser Abdelkader is wanted in connection with the serious assault on July 16, 1998.

He was charged with grievous bodily harm with intent after the alleged attack.

The 54-year-old failed to show up for a crown court hearing and officers have not been able to find him since. Anyone with information as to his whereabouts is asked to call 101, quoting Most Wanted and reference 46/FZ/7592/98, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Ballot BID vote

City traders will go to the ballot box in the summer to cast their votes on whether the Canterbury Connected Business Improvement District (BID) deserves a second term.

On Thursday, councillors agreed to authorise the ballot voting system - meaning traders will have the opportunity to either vote 'Yes' or 'No' for another five-year spell.

Funded by a levy paid by businesses, BID - which aims to safeguard tenancy rates and boost footfall - has been operating since 2014.

See pages 28 and 29 for our special report.

For a year-and-a-half, Quinn Estates has been working on proposals to transform an area of outstanding natural beauty at Highland Court Farm, near Bridge, into a "game-changing" centre for sporting excellence - including delivering a new stadium for Canterbury City FC.

However, as the club gears up for its biggest game since reforming in 2007, a damning officer's report has listed 12 grounds for recommending the divisive application be rejected by councillors next week.

The planning committee will decide the fate of the development on Tuesday night, three days after Canterbury City attempt to reach the quarter-finals of the FA Vase.

At the meeting will be chairman of the nomadic football club, Tim Clark, who says he is ready to fight hard to convince councillors to vote the scheme through.

"I intend to look them straight in the eyes and tell them it's time for justice and a 'Yes' vote," he said.

"We have no plan B and a 'No'



Managing director of Quinn Estates, Mark Quinn

vote will see the club collapse for the second time in 20 years. It's as stark a choice as that.

"The city council has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to vote for a sporting legacy that will serve generations to come."

Along with a new home for the football club, which currently ground-shares with Faversham, the scheme includes six new pitches and a clubhouse for Canterbury Rugby Club.

The 300-acre project would also create a luxury 175-holiday home complex, artisan food and drink outlets, an extension to Canterbury Business Park and 'innovation centre' for start-up businesses.

It is a joint venture between Quinn Estates and the Highland Investment Company, which owns the farm, and aims to attract wealthy visitors to the county by creating an idyl-

lic scene. That controversy has been recognised by authority planning officer Steve Musk, who cites adverse traffic problems, harm to the protected landscape, a lack of affordable housing, loss of agricultural land and a lack of community infrastructure as reasons behind his recommendation to refuse the project.

The report has angered Mark Quinn, CEO of Quinn Estates, who adamantly believes the development can bring a significant economic boost to Canterbury.

He said: "The report definitely doesn't give a fair or balanced appraisal of the plans. They have chosen to ignore significant elements of evidence we have supplied and hardly touched on the great praise we got. We're extremely disappointed by it."

With the decision by no means being set in stone until the planning committee meeting, Mr Quinn hopes the tide can still turn in his favour.

He added: "We would be amazed if councillors refuse it. I am very hopeful that they will

A dozen reasons for plan refusal

A council planning officer's report on the Highland Court development highlights 12 key reasons on why it has been recommended for refusal.

Despite acknowledging the support it would provide for leisure activities and sport clubs, Steve Musk questions its proposed location in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

His report says: "The proposed development would represent an unsustainable, sporadic and visually harmful form of devel-

opment detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the area... no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to override the identified harm to the designated landscape."

Apparent failures to address the "adverse impact on air quality" were also cited in the report along with regret over the loss of the "best and most versatile" agricultural land.

It continues: "Together with the significant levels of traffic generated by the development,

the application is therefore considered to cause harm to highway safety."

The fact the proposed 300 acres are not included in the city council's Local Plan blueprint is another factor against Mr Quinn's plans.

The report also cites failures to secure necessary community infrastructure, not offering an appropriate housing market mix and a lack of sufficient archaeological assessments as more reasons behind the refusal.



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Pupils 'forced to cross busy road' after transport fails to stop Parents' anger as children left stranded at bus stops

By Marijke Hall

mhall@thekmgroup.co.uk

Furious parents paying hundreds of pounds for bus passes say their children are being left stranded at stops with no choice but to walk along busy main roads to get to school.

Some claim they receive phone calls from their children worried about being late after being turned away from packed buses travelling on route 17 from Bridge to schools in Canterbury.

They argue they should not be paying large amounts for a bus pass when they end up having to drive them into the city themselves or they have to walk.

A young person's annual travel pass is £290 and £400 for 16+.

Parish councillor Steve Fawke, who often has to drive his son to school, is taking the matter up with bus operator Stagecoach.

"The trouble is the bus travels from Folkestone through Elham, Barham and Kingston before reaching Bridge - we're at the end of the line and the buses are full when they get here," he said.

"We're seeing more single



Steve Fawke is complaining about overcrowded buses

decker buses so the kids can't fit on. Parents are having to round them up and drive them in."

He says "gaggles of kids" are also often seen crossing the busy A2060 after being left stranded.

Reverend Estella Last, from Bridge, pays £190 each for six-month passes for two children.

She says while she appreciates

their children leave the house, notwithstanding the occasional incident, they can travel safely into Canterbury.

"When this doesn't happen, anxiety is raised for the children and the parents who have to keep an eye open for any messages or phone calls in case they haven't got on the bus. You don't get that peace of mind when they leave the house for school.

"I think there is a lack of robustness in the system so if just one or two things go wrong it has a knock on effect."

Stagecoach spokesman Rebecca Day says the company knows of no issues on route 17 in the mornings.

"Three double decker buses are used on this route in the morning," she said.

"We will however arrange some additional loading checks in Bridge, keeping an even closer eye on the capacity."

Thom Morris, spokesman for KCC, which issues travel passes, added: "We are sorry to hear parents and their children are having a problem with accessing bus services in Bridge and we will raise this with Stagecoach."

Free parking rolled out for the disabled

Blue badge holders can now park for free for up to three hours at Canterbury City Council's new off-street ANPR car parks.

The authority, which is rolling out its automatic number plate reading software, is urging those eligible to sign up for an online account and then register a badge.

The first off-street car parks covered by the discount scheme are St Radigund's and Miller's Field in Canterbury, which now both offer the modernised system. Once signed up, the car registration of a blue badge holder will be recognised by cameras upon entry to the car parks.

When they leave, the motorist drives to the barrier. If they have stayed longer than three hours, the additional charge is debited direct from their bank account.

The next car parks to be fitted with the ANPR system will be Middle Wall and Gorrell Tank in Whitstable and William Street and the Neptune's in Herne Bay. Others lined up to get the technology are Longport, Castle Row, Watling Street and Queningate.

Register online at canterbury.gov.uk/bluebadge.

The cool hotel guide

The Pig at Bridge Place, Kent

In a nutshell

A fascinating past accompanies the latest in the Pig group's litter: Bridge Place started life as a 17th-century mansion, then in the Sixties became a rock club, where Led Zeppelin and the Kinks played. The deliciously quirky style reflects that history. Original oak fireplaces, wood panelling and small stairways leading to heavenly snugs rub shoulders with a bar done out in deepest burgundy — even the ornate ceiling — while posters in the loos advertise the rock performances of old. It's shabby chic with a twist. At the heart of the 29-room hotel, in pretty countryside ten minutes from Canterbury, is the greenhouse restaurant, with its open kitchen serving Pignificent food.

What are the rooms like?

Every one's a winner, some with beams, four-posters, gold scalloped cornicing and mezzanine bathrooms. The most spacious are in the modern Coach House (which blends perfectly with the original building). Our room, No14, had fern-green panelling, a wood floor and a bath in an alcove, with details including a Bakelite phone and Roberts radio.



Which is the best room?

Tiny No-4, with its impressive oak four-poster, is great value from £110. The tin-roofed, wooden Hop Pickers' Huts, along a boardwalk, combine outdoors space with rustic-chic interior (from £245).

What's the food like?

Good Piggie fodder, including the usual crackling snacks (£3.95), delicious aged sirloin (£28) from Ireland — one of the few ingredients that comes from outside the Pig's usual 25-mile food-sourcing radius — with veg from the kitchen

garden and Kent wine. We loved the chorizo wood-fired flatbreads served in the Garden Oven.

Who goes there?

Foodies, Londoners and Pigophiles; weekends are booked up until October.

The highs, the low, the verdict

Nine out of ten

It's practically perfect, but some rooms have open bathrooms, meaning your only privacy is in the loo.

Jane Knight



Need to know

Jane Knight was a guest of the Pig at Bridge Place (0345 2259494, thepighotel.com), which has room-only doubles from £110 midweek or £145 at weekends. No single-occupancy discount; two wheelchair-accessible rooms; no dogs

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COVER STORY

Address: Barberrry Cottage,
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near Canterbury

Price: £725,000

Agent: Charles Bainbridge

You could think about extending this detached three-bedroom village home, or you could enjoy it exactly as it is.

Beautifully presented Barberrry Cottage, at Patricxbourne Road, Bridge, near Canterbury is priced at £725,000 with Charles Bainbridge.

It has a garage and the back garden is prettily landscaped, with lawns, small trees and a summerhouse.

A spacious reception hall leads to a large dining room with window to the front and a large sitting room with doors opening to the garden.

Sliding doors create open-plan access to the kitchen/family room,



which has underfloor heating. The kitchen has granite worktops and integrated appliances and doors lead to the garden.

There is also a utility room and downstairs cloakroom.

On the first floor is an impressive master bedroom suite with dressing area and en suite.



There are two further double bedrooms, one with fitted wardrobes and a family bathroom.

The agent, Charles Bainbridge, says: "Barberrry Cottage is a substantial detached village house in an enviable setting enjoying a large garden to the rear, with further potential for extension, subject to all necessary consents.

"The property provides beautifully presented accommodation fitted to impressive standards.

"Set in an enviable position in the heart of the village of Bridge, Barberrry Cottage is convenient for the local facilities."

For information ring the agent on **01227 780227**



The luxury homes will be modelled on Dorset's Silverlake resort



Highland Court Farm at Patricxbourne

'Huge amount of work' ahead to analyse all the responses

The city council's planning department now has the weighty task of reading and assessing all the comments and consultee views before preparing its own report, based on planning regulations, for the planning committee.

Spokesman Rob Davies said: "It would be fair to say we have had a large response with views expressed in support and against, both online and in writing.

"While we understand people are interested in the numbers, we should stress it's not a numbers game.

"It will be important to look at the comments in detail and particularly how they relate to national and local planning policies.

"Clearly there will be huge amount of work to do to analyse everything that has come in, from individuals and from statutory consultees.

"As a result, we are not yet able to say when this application will be determined."

Mr Quinn says he doubts the application will come before the planning committee before the local elections in May, adding: "There's too much to go through and it will more likely be later next year."

Hundreds have say on bid for controversial holiday village

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Controversial plans to build holiday homes, sports facilities and a business hub on farmland near Canterbury have attracted an unprecedented response.

This week, there were almost 1,550 public and statutory consultee comments on the application for land at Highland Court

Farm at Bridge.

The formal consultation is due to close on Monday, but such is the level of interest, the council says it will accommodate late representations.

Developer Mark Quinn and the land owners have teamed up to produce an ambitious scheme for 175 holiday homes, new facilities for Canterbury City Football Club and Canterbury Rugby Club and a food and business hub.

But its planned location in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has sparked a huge backlash from many villagers trying to protect the countryside.

The scheme does, however, have significant backing from the football and rugby clubs' supporters who believe it will enhance their futures and increase sporting involvement.

Among the objectors is the Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, which

says that to overcome the AONB status, the scheme needs to be of "national significance".

Kent Highways has also lodged a "holding objection" over concerns about elements of traffic and transport management which it wants answers to and more information about.

Mr Quinn claims the majority of the comments are in favour of the development with only a "very small but vocal group" against it.

"The vast majority of hard working people in Canterbury want to see this built," he said. "It will be incredibly good and create over 1,000 jobs, making good use of what is an under-utilised piece of infrastructure."

But David Howe of the Barham Downs Action Group, which is against the development, rubbished Mr Quinn's assessment of support, claiming that most of the 'for' comments were simply orchestrated duplicates.



The Red Lion team ready for the start of their epic bike ride

Pub team saddles up for epic journey

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A pub cycling team is the toast of the Pilgrims Hospice after riding from Land's End to John O'Groats and raising almost £16,000 for the charity.

The landlord of the Red Lion at Bridge, Rene Renault, was joined by friends and patrons

Chris Pilcock, Andy Gladin, Justin Lee and Jonno Stevens for the epic 1,077 mile challenge, during which they averaged between 85 to 100 miles a day.

Rene said: "My business partner, Chris Pilcock, and I regularly ride together and have spent the last few summers taking a fortnight's cycling holiday in France.

"We decided to put our hobby towards a good cause and raise

money for charity in a sponsored bike ride. Although we were well trained, nothing could have prepared us for the terrible weather.

"We were even forced to stop one day but, in general, were hugely spurred on by the support of the public."

The team were sponsored by Quinn Estates, which supported fundraising events and paid for accommodation along the route for all the riders.

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Saxon Lodge Care Home in Bridge has been heavily criticised by inspectors

Filthy care home where carpet sticks to your feet

...just weeks prior to the visit. ...els, residents not having ... off their feet".

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Need to

By Marijke Hall
mhall@thekmggroup.co.uk

A filthy care home where residents were found with unexplained injuries has been put into special measures.

A damning report by the Care Quality Commission exposed multiple failings at Saxon Lodge in Bridge, including broken toilet seats, foul-smelling furniture and unhygienic facilities.

Inspectors, who made an unannounced visit to the home in August, found carpets in a bedroom and hallway were so filthy, they stuck to people's feet as they walked on them.

They also saw tiles had fallen off a wall, sharp pieces of plaster protruding off the walls and a stained and dirty wash basin, although bosses had stated no improvements needed to be made in an audit

On an inspection of four wheelchairs, one was found with no working brakes.

In their report, inspectors also highlight "serious shortfalls" in safeguarding people from the risk of abuse after records revealed two people had sustained unexplained injuries on five occasions between May and August.

"Indeed, one of the entries described the person as having sustained 'multiple bruises'," it reads.

"We asked the registered persons what action had been taken to notify the local safeguarding authority about these injuries.

"We were very concerned to learn that neither of the registered persons were aware that the injuries had occurred and as a result they had not made any enquiries to establish what may have caused them."

Inspectors also raised concerns about low staffing lev-

els, not enough to drink, risk of infection, and numerous defects in the home, including broken blinds, stained wallpaper and no light shades in bathrooms.

Five members of staff were asked about their experience working at the home in Western Avenue, which cares for 23 older people, some with dementia.

One said: "The morale in the staff team is desperately low, largely because there simply aren't enough care staff on duty on most days and that's the case even with the manager working flat out.

"Also, just look around and see how run-down it is.

"The residents can't even have decent flannels - only rags.

"This could and should be a lovely home to work in, but it's not."

Despite residents stating they felt it was a caring place, one admitted staff "are rushed

enough to drink, risk of infection, and numerous defects in the home, including broken blinds, stained wallpaper and no light shades in bathrooms. A CQC spokesman said as a result of the continuing breaches of regulations, the overall rating for the service is inadequate, putting the home in special measures.

If not enough improvement is made within six months and there is an inadequate rating in any area, enforcement proceedings will begin to prevent the manager and director of the home from operating the service.

Saxon Lodge manager Christine McArthur said: "Whilst we were disappointed in the report from the CQC, we are working closely with the CQC, the local authority and an outside consultant to move the home forward.

"We continue to be committed to improving standards and to providing a safe and caring home for our residents."

What do you think? Email kentishgazette@thekmggroup.co.uk.

Old school Conservatives launch club to promote lively and spirited debate

A new club of 'old school' Conservatives has been formed in Canterbury aimed at reviving a lively party spirit as an antidote to the "achingly dull" Prime Minister Theresa May.

It is called the Burkean Club after 18th century politician and philosopher Edmund Burke, who is considered by many as the father of modern Conservative thinking.

It is open to anyone ideally over the age of 50 who lives in the CT postcode and has right of centre views. Among its new members is English



Historian Dr David Starkey has joined the new club

constitutional historian and radio and television presenter Dr David Starkey.

"It's difficult when the party is led by the achingly dull Mrs May to remember it as spirited, lively and fun, as all the best Conservative leaders such as Churchill, Disraeli and Pitt were," said founder, economist Jack Wales.

"It will promote intelligent debate and discourse among believers in individual freedom, personal responsibility, the rule of law, and coherent social values.

"It also follows Burke in doing so in convivial surroundings with fine wines, good food

and stimulating company. Its intention is to create a bedrock of intelligent support for fundamental and unchanging Conservative values, while having plenty of fun - in itself one of the fundamental Conservative virtues."

The next event is an early evening party at Charlton Place, Bishopscourne, on Friday, December 14.

Anyone interested in joining the club or learning more about it should email secretary Terry Hodges at terry.hodges@rickardlazenby.com.

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VILLAGE LANE TO SHUT FOR MONTHS

A2 closures for 'vital' bridge works

By Chantal Weller

cweller@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Overnight closures and lane restrictions on a dual carriageway will be implemented while "critical safety work" takes place on a bridge.

National Highways will be completing the repairs on the structure along the A2 at Bridge near Canterbury.

The country road it passes over is also set to shut for several months.

Patricxbourne Road will be out of action for about four months from Monday until the work is completed in the spring.

Some 24 bearings will be replaced on the bridge which carries the dual carriageway over the lane.

A National Highways spokesperson said the essential maintenance work will replace the joints that attach the road deck to the supports below.

They added: "We know that living, working, and travelling in the area while we make these vital safety improvements won't be easy, so we are grateful for the patience and understanding shown."

Ahead of the start of the vital maintenance work National Highways project man-



The bridge which carries the A2 over Patricxbourne Road in Bridge, Canterbury is to have 24 bearings replaced in essential maintenance work

Picture: Google

ager, Nicola Thorp, said: "It's vital that structures on National Highways' motorways and major A-roads are kept in good condition to make sure they remain safe, reliable, and keep traffic moving.

"Like any bridge, it requires regular maintenance to ensure it remains safe and reliable for the thousands of motorists who use it daily. This upcoming scheme is part of our ongoing efforts and investment in keep-

ing key routes in the south east in good condition."

A diversion will be in place via Patricxbourne Road, The Street, Bifrons Hill, Bekesbourne Road, Town Hill and High



The A2 will have lanes narrowed and speed restrictions as well as overnight closures during the works

Picture: Google

Street.

For the safety of the workforce, narrow lanes and a reduced speed limit will be in place on the A2 where it passes over Patricxbourne Road while work is done.

This means the A2 coast-bound will be closed between Harbledown (A2050) and Coldharbour Lane on Saturday, November 4 and Sunday, November 5, between 8pm and 8am.

The A2 towards London will also be shut between Bonny

Bush Hill and Roman Road (A2050) on Saturday, November 18 and Sunday, November 19 between 8pm and 8am.

Finally, the A2 will also be out of action in both directions from 8pm on Saturday, December 9 until 8am Sunday, December 10.

During the closures, a 35-mile signed diversion will be in place via the A299 Thanet Way and A256 to the Whitfield roundabout from Brenley Corner adding an extra 14 miles on to the journey.

Copper's family touched by clock work

Take a drive through Bridge and it is almost impossible to miss the village clock hanging proudly in the High Street.

The eye-catching timepiece, which was bought with public donations in the late 1950s, was erected in honour of faithful village bobby Sergeant Fred Blee.

But it made headlines for the wrong reasons recently when mindless vandals used an airgun to shoot at it, damaging the glass and clockface.

Now, however, Sgt Blee's family are keen to help with the finishing touches of its repair, and have offered an interesting insight into their father's life.

"We were disappointed to hear about the damage, but were not entirely surprised because these things happen," Sgt Blee's son, Mike, said.

"What was nice to hear, though, was how the village has got together and gone to such great lengths to get it going again.

"It was very touching and if we can help get it back to how it should be, we would be very happy to."

Sgt Blee, who had four children, was born in Sheerness in April 1908. Following the death of his father, one of 352 men killed when HMS

The history of a public clock put up in memory of a popular village policeman stretches back more than 60 years. Reporter **Dan Wright** traces the story



Left, Sgt Fred Blee; Mark Esdale with the airgun pellet that damaged the clock above Bridge village hall, now repaired and behind bulletproof glass

Princess Irene exploded off Sheerness in 1915, he started work in the dockyard aged 14.

Joining the police in 1929, Sgt Blee was stationed at Sevenoaks, Chatham and Deal, where he served for seven years as a detective constable.

Promoted to sergeant in 1939, he served briefly in Herne Bay before moving to Bridge just as war was declared.

"In Bridge he took over the largest rural patch in Kent," added Mike, 72, who now lives in Rutland, near Lincolnshire.

"They were difficult years through

the war but he got stuck in and whenever there were any problems or damage he was there helping and had quite a sense of humour.

"With lots of bomb damage and many crashed aircraft, he worked closely with the emergency services and became quite skilled at bomb disposal himself."

Sgt Blee - who had a keen interest in first aid - also became chairman of the Bridge and District Horticultural Society.

It was a position he held until his sudden death from a heart attack in 1966, aged just 48.

The clock was erected the following year, but suffered damage from

the airgun shot in March last year.

Now, village hall secretary Mark Esdale has fitted a bulletproof surface to the clock, protecting it with Plexiglas.

"It can sometimes cost more to mend these things than buy a replacement, but we want to help Mark fix it," said Mike, a retired farmer.

"I was only 11 when dad died so I don't have many memories, but he was very well-known.

"I can remember that it always seemed to snow every winter, so



every child in the village had a toboggan and I remember dad, in his uniform, towing a whole string of us up Union Road behind his car on our way to Collards fields. He was very popular in the village."



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Long-serving Lib Dem Martin Vye at a council election with Helen Clark and Janet Horsley

'Politics is about

The 4,000-home Mountfield Park development is "the worst planning decision in the history of Canterbury".

It is perhaps ironic that the man who came to this withering conclusion in a letter to the Kentish Gazette about the development to the south of the city is not remaining in frontline politics to do something about it.

But the fact is that Lib Dem Martin Vye has served 28 years on the county council and has finally opted for retirement by not standing for re-election on May 4. He leaves politics fear-

As he prepares to depart from politics, Liberal Democrat county councillor Martin Vye looks back on his 28-year career.

ing the impact on Canterbury of Mountfield Park. He said "Our roads are already full but by sticking 4,000 homes to the south of the city, this will only become worse. I do recognise that greenfield land will have to be built

upon, but what I would have preferred is for something like a new town to be built at Aylesham and thereby create a really vibrant community out there."

Mr Vye says he is calling it a day for no other reason than that



At Canterbury Festival opening parade and as Lord Mayor meeting youngster Alex Burrows

'mobilising people'

he has reached 80. His 28 years in politics also saw him serve 16 years on the city council between 1985 and 2011, representing the rural Barham Downs and a stint as Lord Mayor of Canterbury from in 2004-5.

He also twice stood for parliament - in 1992 and 1997 - finishing second and third respectively.

The home he shares with his wife Jennifer in Patrxbourne Road in Bridge is named The Dacha, after the Russian word for a summer or holiday house.

And it was languages which brought him to Canterbury in



Simply Stunning Surroundings

1969 when he was offered a job teaching Russian and German at the King's School.

Ten years later, he joined the Liberal Party as it then was. "It was something Mrs Thatcher, who became Prime Minister that year, said which made me join," he said. "It was her statement that 'there is no such thing as society' when I felt very much that there is such a thing as a society and it needs mobilising."

In 1989, Mr Vye won the Canterbury City South division at the county council elections. He became the city councillor for the rural Barham ward.

His political career has been defined by his focus on voluntary organisations and a belief in civil society.

"I'm a Lib Dem because the party places a great emphasis on mobilising people," he said. "I'm also against the idea that the state or government or the council knows best."

"Politics is not just about capturing seats, it's about mobilising people to do things that they ought to be doing."

Mr Vye counts being involved in the community centres at Military Road for the Northgate ward and the Resource Centre in Thanington as among his important achievements.

In 2004 he became Lord Mayor of Canterbury. His wife had just retired as head teacher of Siberts-wold Primary School in Shepherds-well.

Mr Vye said: "While I was at King's, we had been involved in an international youth parliament and then we decided we wanted to do one linked to the council."

"So we had a youth parliament in the Guildhall. It was very good and included our own youngsters



Martin Vye is stepping down from politics after 28 years

plus delegates from Russia, Italy, Hungary and Denmark."

With his background in teaching, Mr Vye has always had a profound interest in educational and youth projects and it was on a cultural exchange to Russia in 2008 that one of the most bizarre moments of his career happened.

Mr Vye had travelled to the city of Vladimir, which is linked to Canterbury as part of the Three Cities Association with Whitstable youth worker Jason Robinson.

The pair were arrested separately in a complication over visas and taken to a building where they were interrogated for three hours.

"I obviously spoke fluent Russian, but it was still alarming, and I was concerned for Jason who wouldn't understand what was going on. Immigration officers said the orders had come from Moscow, no doubt prompted by the increased tensions between the West and Russia." The pair were eventually each fined 2,500

roubles, about £55, and issued with temporary visas for the rest of their six-day stay.

Mr Vye's impending retirement saw the visit to Canterbury of former Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown, a man he knows well not least for the fact Mr Vye's daughter was his personal assistant for five years in the 1990s.

Mr Vye said: "He is a highly intelligent man and is able to master issues quickly and speak with a forthrightness, probably as a result of his background as a military man."

Is there anything to regret from his 28 years?

"I just wish it had been possible to have been in the administration leading the council for more often. That's why you stand for council - so that you can get things done."

Some might say that with 28 years in local politics and through his involvement in numerous projects and schemes, Mr Vye has achieved much for the district and for the county.



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Travel doctor



Q A friend and I would like to visit Hawaii with a small-group tour in the spring. Is this a good time? We'd prefer to visit as many of the islands as possible, but most tours seem to lose several days flying between them; can we go by ferry? Accommodation should be comfortable and as "local" as possible, and we'd like to spend a day at Pearl Harbor, go whale-watching and experience a reasonably authentic luau.
Jennifer Nash, via email

A The whale-watching season in Hawaii is late December to early May, so a spring trip sounds perfect. Unfortunately, you won't be able to go island-hopping by ferry because there is a very limited service, so you will have to resign yourself to the flights (sign up to Hawaiian Airlines's loyalty programme to get discounts on baggage costs). Intrepid Travel (intrepidtravel.com) uses comfortable local accommodation on its tours and has a ten-day small-group trip in March that takes in Oahu, Kauai, the Big Island and Maui, includes all the activities on your wish list, plus one dinner and two breakfasts, and costs £3,055pp. Flights are extra and cost from about £1,000 with Virgin Atlantic, British Airways or Air Canada, giving you the option of stopovers in Seattle, Los Angeles or Vancouver. American Sky (01342 889505, americansky.co.uk) also has an island-hopping adventure visiting Oahu, the Big Island and Maui, but it's more active, including biking and hiking. This ten-day small-group tour departs April 24 and starts at £3,299pp, based on two sharing on a room-only basis, including flights with United.

Q I'd really like to drive with my dogs from London to a ski destination in less than eight or nine hours. Where can you suggest?
Vivek Bhatt, via email

A If you can't face driving for more than nine hours with the pooches, your options are limited. Your best bet is Gérardmer, in the Vosges in northeast France, which is a little under nine hours from London. It's not a large ski area, but a friendly resort that's great for a weekend. Stay at the pet-friendly apartment Chez Léa et Lolo, which costs £110 a night in February (booking.com) or the family-run Hostellerie Les Bas-Rupts (bas-rupts.com), where chalet-style rooms have wood panelling and there's a pool and spa as well as an excellent restaurant. Doubles cost from about £155. If Gérardmer doesn't appeal, resorts in France's northern Alps, such as Flaine, Morzine and La Clusaz, are eight hours from Calais, so about eleven and a half hours from London.

Q My siblings and I are planning a weekend away to celebrate our

mother's 90th birthday in February. There will be 22 adults and 4 children. We hope to go to a hotel not too far from south London and would like a few activities and a nice restaurant. Our budget is mid-range.
Caroline Johns, via email

A Stay at the latest addition to the Pig litter, three miles south of Canterbury. The Pig at Bridge Place (thepighotel.com) is a listed Jacobean house in the countryside that was Kent's hottest rock club in the Sixties (there are framed set lists in the loos), and the decor is suitably vintage and velvety. It's within an easy drive of Howletts Wild Animal Park and Leeds Castle, as well as several vineyards, including Chapel Down and Biddenden, where the adults can have tours and tastings. Rooms cost from £139 a night and there are also family-friendly lodges sleeping up to four, hop-picker huts with wood-burning stoves and a barn sleeping two. Eat in its cosy, shabby-chic restaurant and work off the chargrilled Brogdale pork tomahawk with a stroll across the hotel's five acres of parkland.

Don't put up with this Avis charged me for unwanted extras

I booked a car in Malaga and chose a package with Avis including collision damage waiver, so I knew that there would be no additional charges, apart from a deposit for the excess insurance. At the hire desk I was asked if I wanted to upgrade, but I declined. I was not asked if I wanted any more cover. I signed the agreement, which was in Spanish. After my return I received an invoice from Avis and discovered that windscreen cover, super-cover and roadside assistance had been added. As a result one week's car hire cost me £549 – £377 more than the original price. I have tried to claim this back from Avis to no avail.
Katherine Gough, via email

I've had many complaints of a similar nature about Avis, which says that its

customers agree to extras at the desk. After my intervention, however, it has finally decided to give you a partial refund of £187 as a gesture of goodwill. A spokesman said that the rental agreement was signed in the language of the rental country for "compliance purposes", but a copy in English can be "generated upon request". I suggest that you always ask for this document in future.

Julia Brookes is the Travel Doctor

Contact us ...

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Do not send us original documents. Unfortunately we cannot reply to every inquiry.



The Pig at Bridge Place, Canterbury, only opened six months ago

Hotel best in south east - but city offering scarce

By Lydia Chantler-Hicks
lchantlerhicks@thekmggroup.co.uk

A luxury hotel on the outskirts of Canterbury has been named the best in the south east - just six months after opening.



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with

22 December

Lonely at
Christmas

declared the regional winner in The Sunday Times' Best Place to Stay list - a prestigious guide to the UK's top 100 hotels.

Robin Hutson (above right) with Guy Freedman



But the author highlighted an "inexplicable dearth of decent hotels" in Canterbury.

The Pig in Bridge is the sixth in the group, which has "restaurants with rooms" across five counties.

Hotel director Guy Freedman says he is "overwhelmed and delighted" with the accolade.

"We are relatively new in town but have had nothing but support and kindness from the local community for what we have done with the building," he said.

"The award from the Sunday Times is also a credit to the team here who have bonded very quickly and strive to give the best service."

Mr Freedman says such has been the interest in The Pig

that people living in surrounding villages have even booked to stay.

The hotel opened at the end of April following the £8 million refurbishment of a 17th century manor house, the former Bridge Country Club.

Sitting in several acres of countryside, the building had been owned for more than 50 years by Peter Malkin and in its heyday in the 70s attracted big-name bands including Led Zeppelin, The Kinks, and the Moody Blues.

In an article published in the Sunday Times at the weekend, reporter Susan D'Arcy writes: "The Pig group's collection of shabby-chic hotels loves nothing more than rescuing a big old hulk of a country house

from a sorry state of dereliction and masterminding a spectacular resurrection; and with this, its sixth, it has done a particularly splendid job.

"The building is every inch the bucolic bolthole: an elegant Grade II-listed Jacobean mansion with dainty proportions wrapped up in 10 acres of Turner-evoking water meadows, just a 10-minute drive from Canterbury (which has an inexplicable dearth of decent hotels).

"But what really sold the place to the group's CEO, Robin Hutson, is its architectural quirkiness.

"Downstairs, there's a rabbit warren of misshapen rooms with bashed brick and beams, cosy fires, hangover-friendly

lighting and an ambience reminiscent of a naughty private members' club."

Mrs D'Arcy praises the staff, who "ensure that dinner sizzles like the salt-aged sirloin steak and triple-cooked chips", as well as the "simple, gutsy" dishes served up at the restaurant, which incorporate a wealth of local ingredients.

The manor house was bought by Mr Hutson's Lime-wood Group, whose team set about the transformation with the signature decor by his interior designer wife Judy.

The project has been the most personal for Mr Hutson and Judy, whose parents lived in the village and were married at the church just a few hundred yards from the hotel.

'Industry needs joined-up approach'

The fact local hotels are often full to capacity is an "an indicator there are not enough quality hotels", says the city council.

Caroline Hicks, the authority's head of property and regeneration, said: "Of course it is not in our gift to resolve this - only the industry can decide where and when it wants to invest.

"There is positive news in that The Hilton Group is bringing 131 rooms to the Slatters site in St Margaret's Street and we know other operators are looking at the moment."

Despite four pages of Canterbury hotels

listed on booking site Trivago, a Gazette poll of more than 190 people found 58% of respondents agree the city is lacking "decent hotels".

Yet the 2017 Cambridge Model Economic Impact Study identifies the Canterbury district as the lead destination in Kent and Medway for "business bed nights" each year. The city also leads for recreational stays, with over 1.4m holiday nights annually.

But Sandie de Rougemont, owner of niche Wincheap hotel The House of Agnes, has revealed some of the issues affecting the hotel trade locally.

She said: "At weekends we have no problem filling rooms - Canterbury is a great place for short breaks. But there's often a problem filling rooms mid-week.

"Smaller independent hotels and bed-and-breakfasts suffer somewhat because of online travel agents. People think they're getting a better deal through them, but usually they aren't."

She also highlighted the rise of companies such as Airbnb, which "have had an impact" on the hotel scene locally.

"We need a more joined-up approach between hotels and the tourist board to helping the industry locally," she said.

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TRIBUTES TO ROBERT WHIGHAM



Robert Whigham, a 'true character and bon viveur', ran the Red Lion at Stodmarsh for 17 years. He is pictured here at the pub, with the late comedian Dave Lee, with the phone box he campaigned to save and with his daughter Charlotte and a statue of TinTin

Farewell to the landlord who loved making people happy

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colourful and popular local...
He was best known for running the Red Lion in Stodmarsh near Canterbury for 17 years, even appearing in a documentary about pubs of that name, the most popular in Britain.

His other work included agriculture and running a successful wine merchants.

He died at his home in Coldharbour Lane, Bridge, on Saturday, having suffered from illness in the later years of his life.

Robert Kennedy Whigham was born in Canterbury on September 23, 1949. He lived at Cobham Court in Bekesbourne and went to school in Hampshire.

He counted a famous relative in Ethel Margaret Whigham, a second cousin whom he referred to as an aunt and who became the Duchess of Argyll on marrying the 11th Duke Ian Douglas Campbell in 1951.

After school, Robert returned to Kent to study agriculture at Hadlow College near Tonbridge, equipping him to go into the family farming business that operated at Highland Court in Bridge.

Shades of his mischievous, fun-loving personality were already emerging. He once appeared for work on the farm dressed in his dinner suit from the night before.

There were stints in Australia and Belgium, where he became fluent in French.

Robert met Hetty, the woman who would become his wife, at the Three Horseshoes pub in Lower Hardres in 1983.

Hetty had been sitting at the bar talking to a man. Sensing he was boring her, Robert picked up her and her chair and carried them away to another part of the



Robert Whigham: 'such fun'

pub, where they would become acquainted.

Robert moved from agriculture into wine, setting up Whicklar Wines in Mill Lane, Bridge. He was joined by his older brother Ian and together they imported the Penfolds brand of wine from Australia.

This was the mid-1980s and the brothers supplied the new wine bars appearing across the UK.

Whicklar was bought out and the brothers set up Whigham Wines in Hollow Lane, Wincheap.

But when the freehouse of the Red Lion at Stodmarsh became available in 1994, Robert snapped it up and quickly made it his own.

His unique charm and personality soon made it a popular destination despite its remote location in the heart of the east Kent countryside.

Robert's philosophy was a simple one: make people happy. He was loved by regulars and villagers as well as tourists from abroad, particularly Americans.

Every week he would ensure that the binmen who collected his rubbish were given breakfast.

He was at the centre of life in the tiny hamlet, once campaigning to rescue the postbus that transported mail as well as people. Another

...to the 2014 publication in the village to stop it being removed by BT.
In 2002 the Red Lion was awarded Les Routiers Dining Pub of the Year for South and South East England. The 15th-century pub was also nominated in The Times Magazine as one of the 50 best places to have breakfast in the UK.

Seven years later, Robert was in a Channel 4 documentary about pubs called Red Lion, the most popular name for them in Britain.

He told film-maker Sue Bourne that he regularly drank 15 pints of beer a day, often starting with one early in the morning.

He said: "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."

Asked if he was in denial over his drinking, he replied: "Avidly, avidly."

His health, however, deteriorated and he handed the pub over to his daughter Charlotte in 2011.

Away from work he enjoyed food and drink, travelling to France and skiing.

Robert had been diagnosed with cancer, although his family have not yet received confirmation of what caused his death.

He leaves behind his brother Ian, sisters Elizabeth and Alexandra, wife Hetty, 61, daughter Charlotte, 31, son-in-law Justin, 45, and grandsons Harry, five, and Louis, four.

A private funeral family will be arranged, although a memorial service may also be held.

Raise a glass... or two or three

Robert Whigham ran "one of the finest pubs in Britain", according to a friend.

Brian Thompson's tribute was one of the many to have followed Robert's death

He said: "Robert will be sadly missed. He was a true friend and the perfect gentleman, whose catchphrase was 'tip-top'.

"His bubbly personality only added to the fabulous atmosphere in what had to be one of Britain's finest pubs."

Daughter Charlotte announced his death via Facebook on Sunday.

She said: "Very sad to say that my father passed away at home yesterday afternoon. Feeling absolutely gutted, shocked and so sad to have lost my absolute hero.

"I hope everyone raises a glass or two or three for him this evening!"

Canterbury City Council chief executive Colin Carmichael was among those to raise a glass in Robert's direction: "I have a bottle of Margaux and will open it in his honour."

Matt Hudson, who knew Robert from the pub, said: "So sad. What a fantastic man and funny man, so many happy times at the Red Lion with him."

Craig White added: "A true character and bon viveur. There are not enough of them left. Will be missed by so many he touched."

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Carp worth £8,000 taken from lakes

Illegal anglers have stolen fish worth £8,000 from private fishing lakes in Chartham.

Police investigating the theft of the mirror carp are warning anglers not to fish on private land unless they have permission.

The theft took place between 7pm and 8.30pm on Monday, August 8, and the stolen fish are worth £8,000, say police.

Sgt Paul Barrell said: "If anyone saw anything suspicious around that time, I would ask them to contact us.

"The owners of the grounds believe this is not the first time this has occurred so I would like to remind anglers that it is an offence to fish without the proper licence, and it can be considered theft if you try to remove fish from privately-owned water without permission.

You should expect to pay a fee to fish on private waters and you should abide by the rules, do not overfish and many fishing pools have strict rules about catch and release afterwards." Anyone with information about this incident should contact police on 101 or dialling ZY27465/16.



Police speak to the two men who were suspected of taking pictures of children after the alarm was raised by mum-of-four Louise Green



Mum sparks alarm over pictures

by Gerry Warren

gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

@Gerry_Warren

Police were called to a village play park after a worried parent reported two men taking pictures of her children.

It happened at the site in Patricxbourne Road, Bridge, shortly before 1pm on Sunday after mum-of-four Louise Green

raised the alarm. She said: "I had three of my children with me and noticed the men sitting on a bench who were quite blatantly photographing the younger ones.

"I didn't want to confront them directly so quickly gathered the children up and left, telling others playing there that they should leave too.

"I called the police and then went back to the park to make sure no other children went in

there. Initially, a police community support officer was sent out but an experienced off-duty policeman came along and appeared to take charge in getting some other officers on the scene.

But police spokesman Sally Smith said an investigation revealed no offences had been committed. She said: "Police were called to Bridge at 12.43pm on Sunday following a report

that two men were photographing children in a play area.

"A patrol attended and located the men. Their phones were checked. No images of children were found.

"It transpired they were having an ice cream in the park on their lunch break. They had taken a few scenic photos, none of which contained any children and no offences were disclosed."

But Mrs Green, 40, a company

trainer who lives in the village, posted her concerns and a warning on the Canterbury Residents Group Facebook page which was shared 6,500 times.

Parents praised her for calling the police and alerting other children nearby.

Others were dismayed to learn that it is not an offence in itself for strangers to take photographs of children in a public place without permission.

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I am also a
Carer.'

Mountfield Park South Canterbury Illustrative masterplan

- Residential
- Residential
- Business/community
- Elderly/residential
- Schools
- Open space



The new suburbia:

Exclusive
by Chris Pragnell
cpragnell@thekmgroupp.co.uk
@ChrisPragnellKM

Developers have now lodged Canterbury's largest planning application in history – a vast "garden suburb" of 4,000 homes.

Dubbed Mountfield Park, the scheme in south Canterbury would see the city expand by an area four times the size of the historic centre.

Corinthian Land's proposals – now submitted to the city council – show a huge residential community on what is currently 560 acres of green space.

If granted permission, the scheme would stretch from Canterbury's southern edge as far as the village of Bridge.

Images released exclusively to this newspaper show how the future development could look.

A civic square, flanked by three and four-storey buildings, can be pinpointed on Corinthian's latest masterplan, also revealed today.

Alongside thousands of contemporary homes, Mountfield Park would offer shops, office

THE NUMBERS

Estimates suggest some 9,400 people will live at Mountfield Park.

That equates to the populations of Bridge, Littlebourne, Wingham, Barham, Bekesbourne, Kingston, Bishopsbourne, Wickhambreaux, Fordwich and Adisham combined.

Developers propose 4,000 properties on the south Canterbury site, and work on an estimate of 2.35 people living in each.



space, sports pitches, two primary schools and a potential new site for Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

New public squares and green spaces are to be created, and a new road system.

A new park and ride scheme would provide access to the city centre, and the entire development offers direct access to the A2 via a new interchange.

John Trotter, development director for Corinthian Land,

said: "This will not be a housing estate, but a vibrant and well-supported community that will be developed gradually as the demand dictates.

"We hope it will become a well-integrated part of the city."

Planned along "garden city" principles, Mountfield Park would deliver 1,200 affordable homes, 70,000 sq m of business space, parkland and woodland, doctors' surgeries, and community meeting spaces.



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We thought you liked new home, carpenfer told

by Alex Claridge

alexclaridge@thekmgroupp.co.uk

'Dumped among the oldies'

Assault claim leads to arrest
A man was found with a serious leg injury after an alleged assault in Canterbury. Police were called to Starke Close, off Sturry Road, at about 8.15pm on Sunday night. Four people were arrested in connection with the incident. Two men, aged 21 and 26, and a 19-year-old woman, all from Canterbury, were later released without charge. A 21-year-old man arrested on Monday night has been bailed until June 26 while enquiries

CHANGING THE CITY



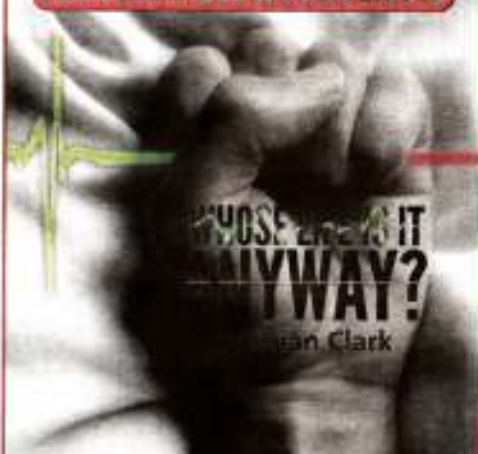
Above, the entire site will be around four times the size of the historic centre; below, proposed housing along North Downs Way

Picture: Corstriban Land Ltd



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4,000 homes plan unveiled



Almost seven hectares will be given to playing fields

Picture: Corinthian Land Ltd

and a park and ride.

Bisected by the New Dover Road, it begins from the Barton housing area, spreading south as far as the A2 and west to Nackington Road.

Canterbury City Council has earmarked sites across the district to accommodate 16,000 new homes over the next 15 years, of which Mountfield Park will be by far the largest.

Should planning permission be granted, the developer aims to begin initial site work in January 2017, with the first 100 homes completed by March 2018.

The council says it is processing the application and letters are being sent to around 250 neighbours, there will be extensive site notices and a public notice in the Gazette on March 31. Comments are welcome from people across the city, not just those who would be directly affected by the proposals.

➔ What do you think? Email kentishgazette@thekmgroun.co.uk or write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Wraik Hill, Whitstable, CT5 3SE.



A community hub will straddle New Dover Road

Picture: Corinthian Land Ltd

SIX WEEKS TO GET YOUR COMMENTS IN

Canterbury City Council's Local Plan - its blueprint for development until 2031 - earmarks 16,000 new homes for the district.

By far the largest site is south Canterbury, which is to accommodate 4,000 homes, business space, public squares, schools and shops.

Developer Corinthian Land has now submitted an application to build the scheme, with details due to be published

on the council's website shortly, under the reference CA/16/00600.

The public will have six weeks in which to view and comment on the proposals.

Canterbury City Council's planning committee is likely to make a decision on the plan in autumn this year.

Corinthian says that if permission is granted, preliminary work would start shortly afterwards and would be completed in phases over 15 years.

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St George's - medieval style
A St George's Day festival will be held by a medieval reenactment society in Blean. The Free Men of Blean group is organising the event on the Memorial Field and Nature Reserve on Saturday, April 23. It will be free, but donation will be gratefully received and



Some of the immigrants found in the back of a lorry at Bridge

Picture: Barry Goodwin FM4269473

Boss urges tighter border action after 26 migrants found

by Alex Claridge
aclaridge@thekmgroun.co.uk
@claridgealex

The boss of a food importer who found 26 migrants concealed in a delivery lorry is demanding that the government invests in



woman in the truck.
The woman was taken to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital when she collapsed after coming out of the lorry.
It had been travelling to the UK from Spain, but it is not clear where or when the immigrants – who were of Middle Eastern or

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higher border controls.

Jim Parmenter, managing director of Bridge-based Gomez Ltd, lost a stock of Spanish peppers worth £25,000 after the stowaways were found in a Romanian-registered HGV at 11.30am on Wednesday.

He said: "There are not enough checks taking place on either the French or the UK side of the Channel.

"The problem is one of resources. We will never have enough border staff to check the volume of lorries that come through the ports on a daily basis.

"It's got to be down to technology to sort this out. There needs to be some major investment in detection technology to stop this problem.

"If anybody else climbed onto the back of a lorry and damaged



Jim Parmenter

it, they would be charged. But in cases such as the ones we have to endure, this doesn't happen."

It is the third time in a less than a month that the firm has had to dispose of contaminated stock, pushing its losses to £80,000.

Police, paramedics and the Kent Air Ambulance all attended Gomez's distribution centre in Coldharbour Lane after the discovery of 24 men, a child and a

north African appearance - got on board.

Mr Parmenter added: "This is the third incident this month. We've had over 30 illegals now in three vehicles.

"We've lost £80,000 worth of stock. It's costing the country millions.

"Our politicians are telling us things are getting better, but they're not, they're getting worse."

The migrants were taken away by the Home Office's immigration enforcement division.

Do you agree that investment in border checks is needed? Email kentishgazette@thekmgroupp.co.uk or write to Gazette House, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE.



Officers deal with the immigrants found at Gomez Ltd



Pictures: Barry Goodwin FM426944/FM4269354

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Garden suburb planners say clusters will create a community feel 'Farmyard courts' are the model for 4,000-homes plan

by Chris Pragnell

cpragnell@thekmggroup.co.uk
@ChrisPragnellKM

A detailed snapshot of the vast "garden suburb" of 4,000 homes earmarked for Canterbury's outskirts can now be revealed.

New housing is to be built in "residential clusters" echoing traditional farmyard courts, planning documents suggest.

Most homes are to be built over two and three floors - but larger apartment blocks could rise up to six storeys.

Last week the Gazette reported how developers had submitted the city's biggest planning application of all time.

Dubbed Mountfield Park, the scheme in south Canterbury would see the city expand by an area four times the size of the historic centre.

Developer Corinthian Land seeks outline planning consent for its overall scheme of 4,000 homes, shops, office space, sports pitches and two primary schools.

But within the application Corinthian also seeks detailed approval for its first phase of 140 homes.

The developer says that if approved, the first phase



Detailed plans for 140 homes offer a snapshot of the 4,000-home development; inset, our front page last week



Chance to have your say

Canterbury City Council's Local Plan - its blueprint for development until 2031 - earmarks 16,000 new homes for the district.

By far the largest site is south Canterbury. Developer

Corinthian's plan can be seen on the council's website, under the reference CA/16/00600.

Members of the public have five weeks left to view and comment on the proposals.

Corinthian has confirmed it met with members of the Canterbury Society, local parish councils and locals residents' associations early in March.

It says it intends

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"will set a standard that will be reflected, if not copied, in future adjacent phases".

Award-winning architects Proctor and Matthews have drawn up plans for 66 two, three, four and five-bedroom houses.

They have also designed 74 one, two and three-bedroom apartments for the first phase.

According to Corinthian's design and access statement, the design "is informed by the local contextual precedents of courtyard farms and rural institutions".

It states: "The proposed residential clusters are configured as a series of courts made up of inter-connected 'courtyard houses' with an orchard landscape focus at the heart of each grouping, and separated by formal shelterbelts of trees proposed for the areas between each court.

"In this way each cluster can develop its own character and identity and hopefully nurture a sense of community."

If approved, Corinthian's



overall scheme will cover 560 acres, from the Barton housing area, spreading south as far as the A2 and west to Nackington Road.

Detailed planning consent is sought for a plot to the north-east of the overall site, offering six "residential clusters" fronting New Dover Road.

Corinthian's statement says: "A red brick wall forms the outer edge of all dwellings and courtyard gardens and incorporates gables, chimneys and brickwork bonded panels.

"This echoes and makes reference to enclosing walls of typical Kent village street-

scapes, and provides a distinctive profile and silhouette to each residential cluster."

While the majority of the 140 homes will be accommodated in two and three-storey buildings, taller blocks will serve as "wayfinding markers" within the new development.

John Trotter, development director for Corinthian Land, said of the overall scheme last week: "This will not be a housing estate, but a vibrant and well-supported community that will be developed gradually as the demand dictates."

He added that the application was not "speculative" and that

it represented eight years of detailed work.

"We have invested heavily to ensure that this proposal is the best option for Canterbury," he said.

If permission is granted, the developer aims to begin initial site work in January next year, with the first 100 homes completed by March 2018.

A spokesman for Corinthian said: "The first detailed phase is exceptional both in its concept and architectural form and if approved will set a standard that will be reflected, if not copied, in future adjacent phases."

to hold a community workshop during the consultation period, to allow residents' representatives to help coordinate the views of the public.

A spokesman said: "We hope that by working in collaboration with local representatives we will be able to access and respond to local concerns and ideas in an organised way, and we welcome the enthusiasm and interest local groups have shown."

Canterbury City Council's planning committee is likely to make a decision on the plans in autumn this year.

What do you think? Email kentishgazette@thekmgroupp.co.uk or write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Wraik Hill, Whitstable, CT5 3SE.

Cricket club retirement flats plan approved

Kent County Cricket Club's scaled down plans for a complex of retirement flats overlooking the famous St Lawrence ground have been unanimously approved.

Proposals for 60 apartments were granted by Canterbury City Council's planning committee last year despite officers recommending refusal.

Minutes before, club chairman George Kennedy had suggested the club would have to leave the city if the application was turned down.

But despite last year's approval, developer McCarthy & Stone had submitted a fresh application for a smaller complex of 54 apartments.

It will feature eight one-bed-

room and 46 two-bedroom flats in a four-storey building.

The new block will be on the Old Dover Road side of the ground, with access from The Drive next to the Sainsbury's convenience store.

Four people aired concerns over the density of the development, its visual impact and its effect on the conserva-

tion area. But planning officers had recommended approval with the condition that some units be designated "affordable housing".

Their report said: "The scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of its built form and design."

Committee members voted the application through without debate.

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New licensees of the Plough and Harrow at Bridge, Kirsty and Nick Jarrett

A happy return to village for new licensees at pub

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and Harrow in Bridge are carrying on a long family tradition.

Husband and wife team Nick and Kirsty Jarrett, who took over the pub this month, both have extensive links to the village and its pubs.

Kirsty moved to Bridge when she was a teenager and her parents Brenda and Jim Southgate ran the White Horse and then the Red Lion.

Nick grew up in the village and several generations of Jarretts have lived in Bridge, including his paternal grandmother, who worked behind the bar of the Plough and Harrow during the Second World War.

Nick, 45, said: "Bridge is very special to us as I met Kirsty at the White Horse when we were teenagers and we married at St Peter's Church in the village.

'We liked the idea of running a business as a family'

"Kirsty and I had been living in Herne Bay, but my parents still live in Bridge and when the Plough and Harrow became available, it seemed the perfect opportunity for us."

Before taking on the Shepherd Neame pub, Kirsty was working as a hairdresser and Nick as a general manager in the car industry. They have three children, Charlotte, 12, Lucy, 18, and nine-year-old Max.

Kirsty, 42, said: "We haven't run a pub before, but I was brought up in pubs so I have lots

Nick started his working life at The Duck at Pett Bottom.

"We liked the idea of running a business as a family, and both really enjoyed our time working in pubs.

"My mum has also been offering lots of advice from her years as a licensee, and Shepherd Neame provided all the courses we needed."

The pub is open from 4pm on Monday, 2pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and from noon on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It does not serve food, but the couple hope to introduce a menu of traditional snacks and main meals once they have settled in.

■ For more information visit www.shepherdneame.co.uk/pubs/canterbury/plough-and-harrow or call 01227 504641.

Fun night out won't break the bank

Pinching the pennies but still longing for a great Friday night? Then look no further than the Canterbury heat of the KM Big Charity Quiz.

At less than £7 a head, it provides one of the most affordable nights out in the county's capital.

Tickets are available now, but time is running out to secure your team's place for the challenge event tomorrow (Friday) at the University of Kent sports hall.

Teams will enjoy table wine, a complimentary drink upon arrival and a selection of delicious treats.

There is also the opportunity to win some fantastic individual prizes throughout the night, including a pair of Eurostar tickets, P&O Ferries vouchers, and a

variety of raffle items.

Key partners Shepherd Neame will provide a charity bar, while Barclays bank will double all cash raised for good causes, including the Kentish Gazette's charity of the year, Pilgrims Hospices.

Teams of eight are required to take part and tables are priced at £65 per team. A £10 discount is available with the code CANT18 when booking online.

Dominic Comins, events manager at the KM Charity Team, said: "The Canterbury quiz promises to be a fantastic evening out for all involved and, at such a small cost, it is a luxury many can justify.

"End your hard working week with a bang and join us this Friday."



■ To secure your table, book at www.kmbigquiz.co.uk.

Pint and pigeons anyone? Pub sets up own racing club

Ray Kennett with Plough and Harrow landlords Nick and Kirsty Jarrett and their birds




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...the Peasants' Revolt and the blitz of the Second World War. It also tells the story of the first

They were burned at the stake, with the site now marked by a memorial in a side street close to Canterbury East Station.


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by **Alex Claridge**
aclaridge@thekmggroup.co.uk
@claridgealex

The landlords of the Plough and Harrow in Bridge have celebrated their first year behind the bar by forming a pigeon fanciers club.

Nick and Kirsty Jarrett joined together with regulars at the High Street pub to acquire two birds which they will race later in the year.

The pigeons – called Plough and Harrow – are only six weeks old and paid their first visit to the pub on Easter Sunday. They will make their debut race later in the year.

Club member Dick Mellor, 60, said: "There's actually quite a bit of pigeon fancying round here and we thought it would be nice for the pub to start a club.

"Pigeons are amazing. They're

actually the most medalled animals from what they did during the wars, carrying messages between trenches.

"We'll fly them in August and then they'll make way their way back to Bridge. It is one of the great mysteries how they can get back to their loft."

How pigeons are able to navigate remains a source of interest to animal behaviour experts. One theory is that the birds have a magnetic compass which directs them and that they can make use of the position of the sun.

An Oxford University study in 2004 found that pigeons who flew the same routes switched to relying on physical features such as roads to get home and even made right or left turns at junctions.

In August, the Plough and Harrow birds will be taken 100 miles away to Portsmouth and released.

The pair are expected to arrive

back in Bridge in less than two hours later.

Their home is a pigeon loft at Ray Kennett's house in Brewery Lane. The 66-year-old, who has been racing pigeons since 1964, said: "I caught the bug when I first did it and have been racing them ever since.

"You watch the birds develop from little yellow balls of fluff and then start preparing them for racing. They'll always fly back here to their loft. They are quite amazing and can live up to 20 years."

Nick and Kirsty say they are delighted by the addition of the pigeon club and have even had special pink shirts made for members.

"We just thought it would be a nice thing to do for the pub and the village," Nick, 46, said.

Kirsty, 42, added: "We've had a brilliant first year and this just tops it off."

Thinking caps on for the big quiz

A battle of the brains will begin tomorrow (Friday) at the KM Canterbury Big Charity Quiz – but will The Unicorn Inn once again claim victory?

Teams will compete from 7pm at Kent Sport for the Big Quiz trophy and a place in the county finals.

Among them will be The Unicorn Inn, who last year beat Medway's Supernova by two points to secure the top spot.

Organised by the KM Charity Team, the Big Quiz will feature a raffle, with Hornby collectables among the prizes up for grabs.

One quiz-goer will be selected to answer an on-the-spot quiz question to win two Eurostar tickets.

The popular Spitfire charity bar with stock supplied by Shepherd



Clive Hudson from the Motor Neurone Disease Association appeals for Gazette readers to book tables at the KM Big Charity Quiz

Neame will be manned by Barclays staff. The bank will match all money raised on the night to ensure a huge cash windfall for charity.

Funds will be divided between the Gazette's charity of the year, Motor Neurone Disease Associ-

ation East Kent, Kent and Canterbury Hospital's League of Friends, and road safety and literacy services for children.

Book a team today at kmbigquiz.co.uk using the £10 discount code KMNEWS17. Visit www.kmcharityteam.co.uk.

Vacancy: If you would like to be Correspondent for Oaten Hill, Canterbury, please contact Deb Edwards, email: deb@thebuckmystep.com

OATEN HILL, CANTERBURY

and noon.
 mas is a must between 10.30am
 coffee. A visit to Father Christ-
 down with mulled wine or tea and
 scrummy mince pies washed
 and children and a raffle. Enjoy
 pies and cakes, tombola for adults
 cards, decorations, fresh vegeta-
 gils, jewellery, crafts, Christmas
 items. Many stalls with Christmas
 fairy lights and winter decora-
 occasion with the hall decked in
 10am-1pm. A wonderful festive
 on Saturday December 5 from
 munity Centre, Military Road
 held at The Northgate Ward Com-
 Christmas Fair. The fair will be

the Christmas
 Bourne Barr on Sunday Novem-
 ber 29, 11am-4pm. There will be
 lots of stalls selling goods, gifts,
 decorations etc and, of course,
 refreshments will be on sale. For
 inquiries contact Jackie on 01227
 731716 or Wendy on 721632.

Last remaining tickets: Don't miss
 out on your chance to see the
 acclaimed tribute act The Michael
 Bible Experience at the war me-
 morial hall on Saturday Novem-
 ber 28 at 8pm. Tickets are free to
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 and 55 for non-members. Book by
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LOWER HARDRES/
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Correspondent: Verty Howard
verty.a.howard@btinternet.com
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Nov 2015
 Newsdesk: 01227 475985

COMMUNITY NEWS

Contact your local correspondent...

recorded their first ever victory in the event.

Book a table: The Christmas market will be held at the village hall on Sunday, November 29. Anyone wishing to book a table at a cost of 25 should phone Linda on 01227 751225. They can also be paid for on the day at no extra charge.

Queen's Head music: The Leigh Highwood Band entertain on Sunday, November 29 from 4pm. Admission free.

Children in Need: The village school's activities raising funds for Children in Need raised an excellent £209. Thanks go to everyone who contributed.

Police visit: The mobile police station will be in the village hall car park on Wednesday, December 2, from 4pm-5pm. No appointment required - just turn up to discuss policing issues and concerns.



The KM Kent Cooks: The Profe

Students co

A student chef from Canterbury has been commended at a new challenge to find the best up-and-coming professional cook in the county.
 Joe Doody, 19, of Canterbury College...

BRAMLING

Correspondent: Kim Tatman, Apple-tree Cottage, Bramling, Canterbury, CT3 1NB Tel: 01227 722912 kim.tatman@btinternet.com

BRIDGE/PATRIXBOURNE

Correspondent: Alan Atkinson, Pheasantcroft, Patricxbourne Road, Bridge, CT4 5BL Tel: 01227 830629 pheasantcroft@btinternet.com

Christmas Carol Concert: The Salvation Army And Bridge School Choir Carol Concert is on Thursday, December 3 at 7.30pm in Bridge School hall. Entrance £3

pay on the door (school children free). Refreshments will be served after the concert. Join in for an evening singing carols. All money raised will go to the Salvation Army Fund.

PARISH COUNCIL: Abbreviated minutes of Bridge Parish Council meeting on November 12. Full minutes on www.bridgevillage.co.uk

Report from city Cllr Simon Cook: A thorough review of the conservation areas in the district will be undertaken over the next two to three years. He encouraged Bridge residents to be fully involved in the consultation which will form part of this review. The water table appears to be about four metres lower than the equivalent time last year.

County Cllr Michael Northey: Villagers might consider the role of foster parenting? There is a great shortage in Kent. Go to Thanington Resource Centre on Tuesday December 1 at 7pm to find out more. Also ECC website.

Recreation ground: Cllr Moon thanked the parish council for allowing the recreation grounds to be used for the firework display.

Members were reminded that the parish council's role is to consult with the village on the whole suite of the Cantley proposals and not to focus just on the proposed housing development on Conyngnam Lane. The council agreed to set up a working group to consider how to canvass the opinions of the whole parish in respect of the Cantley proposals as phrased. The last scheduled public consultation event is on November 28 in the village hall from 9.30-11am.

Proposed housing development on the Brickfield site and the proposed relocation of the post office. Cllr Cook spoke about the importance of the ownership of the land by Canterbury City Council. Canterbury would therefore control the scope and scale of the development. It would be of an appropriate size for a village such as Bridge and would take into account comments made by villagers once the formal eight-week consultation opened on November 25.

Letters were to be sent by the parish council to the owners of the chemist shop and to the Post Office asking for the reasoning behind the impending closure of the post office.

Future status and management of the Mill Centre: The broad outlines of the lease to be granted to the parish council had been discussed and would be developed further on December 10.

Bridge needs a new footpath warden-contact the Clerk if

interested. was narrowly pipped to the top spot for the KM Kent Cook Professionals contest. The judges prize his main course of venison on a bed

interested.

To consider the report from ECC and decide on next steps for the Green Court area. (Cllr Atkinson)

A consultation document on possible options for improvement to the area for completion by residents of the Western Avenue development will be drawn up.

Christmas trees will be put up on Saturday, December 5 starting at 9.30am in the village hall. Volunteers are welcome.

Bridge Parish Council next meets Thursday, December 10 at 7pm in Bridge Village Hall.

Bridge Village Butcher: As you may be aware, Laurie Wakeham, who has been in Bridge for the past 25 years, has decided it is time to hang up his meat cleaver, retire and sell the business. If you think it is important to preserve a butcher's shop in Bridge, would you be willing to invest in a Community-owned Enterprise that would purchase the premises, hire a butcher and also become a shareholder in an integral part of the Community? If you are interested to find out more, email bridgecommunitybutcher@gmail.com or phone 831740.

Village Christmas lights: The tradition of Christmas trees in the High Street will continue this year. Help needed... Anyone who would like to help put them up, or carry trees around, or put lights on them, please report to the village hall at 9.30am Saturday, December 5. It will be cold, so wrap up warmly. The more people who can get to put the trees up, the faster we'll get the job done.

Christmas Fair: Artisan Christmas fair at the night yard, Highland Court Farm, Bridge on Sunday, November 29 from 10am-4pm. Free entry. Children's crafts, bespoke presents, unique and memorable presents from local independent traders, local food goodies, Christmas decorations, refreshments including Kent mulled cider and Prosecco with a Christmas twist. Contact 832806 for details.

BROAD OAK

Correspondent: Heather Taylor, 18 McCarthy Avenue, Sturry, Canterbury, CT2 6PE Tel: 01227 719134 tragedy@aol.com

Craft and produce: Village hall committee will be holding their Annual Christmas Craft And Produce Market On Saturday, November 28 from 9.30am-12.30pm.

Teens give their time for others

Teenagers from Canterbury on the National Citizen Service programme have just held their NCS action week.

The 15 to 17-year-olds took part in activities including cooking for rough sleepers at homelessness charity Catching Lives in the city and visiting the Gulbenkian Theatre with a view to making a topical film later in the year. Programme director Chris Bates said: "Our city is filled with young people who are willing to give their time freely to good causes."

Pots of interest

Paint firm Dulux opened its decorator centre on the Broad Oak Road trading estate in Canterbury on Monday. Lord Mayor of Canterbury Cllr George Metcalfe and his wife Lillian will officially open the store next Thursday, April 6.

New tough surface after airgun attack on historic timepiece Village clock gets timely protection from vandals

by Dan Wright
dwright@thekmgroup.co.uk
@Dan_WrightKM

A village clock has been protected with a bulletproof surface after it was shot by vandals.

The timepiece in Bridge was bought with public donations about 60 years ago to honour a local policeman called Sgt Blee. But villagers have been forced to cover it with Plexiglas after the airgun incident last year.

"The new glass means it will not get broken if shot at," village hall secretary Mark Esdale said.

"It's bulletproof. We were determined to get it fixed because it is an important asset to Bridge."

"The clock is very popular in the village and lots of people appreciate it when they are out and about or waiting at the bus stop."

Father-of-two Mr Esdale, 58, works as an electronic engineering lecturer at the University of Kent.

He found a .177 pellet in the clock following the vandalism in March last year and thinks it was fired from a passing bus.



Mark Esdale with the airgun pellet that hit the clock, inset, in Bridge

"The new glass is a lot lighter and cheaper, as well as bulletproof," Mr Esdale added.

"I am disappointed the police were not interested in investigating it at all as it is dedicated to a police sergeant."

"But I want it looking good as many people commented on

how sad they were to see it damaged."

Mr Esdale, who lives in Bridge High Street, says he still needs to fix the clockface, which was broken by the pellet.

"The clock is working but it has a temporary face at the moment," he added.

"It needs a professional job to get the face sorted, so will stay as it is for now, but people hardly notice."

■ **What do you think?** Email kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk or write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Wraik Hill, Whitstable, CT5 3SE.

IN BRIEF

Quarter of firms baffled by Brexit

Research by the University of Kent found one in four companies in the county still have little understanding of the impact of Brexit.

Dr Fragkiskos Filippaios, reader in international business at Kent Business School, says this is not unexpected given the uncertainty of the post-Brexit trade relationship with the EU market.

His study found that while Kent businesses are looking increasingly to trade overseas they still lack access to international partners, have low in-house expertise and limited knowledge of available government funds to support international trade.



QUESTION 8

Which three locations can be seen on the side of Del Boy's van in *Only Fools and Horses*?

Answer on page 35



QUESTION 9

When women got the vote in Britain in 1918, how old did they have to be?

Answer on page 35

PRE SEASON OFFERS IN STORE NOW

COMMUNITY NEWS

Contact your local

ASH

Correspondent: Jean Ryan, Old Barn Cottage, Hoaden, Ash, Canterbury, CT3 2LG Tel: 01304 812148
jeanryan42@gmail.com

WI: Members meet on Thursday, December 8 at the village hall from 7.30pm, when after a short business session, there will be a Potted Panto followed by a buffet supper. The competition is for a Christmas table decoration. Note this meeting is the last chance for members to book for the EKFWI annual council meeting at Margate on Wednesday, March 22, when the main speaker will be Terry Waite.

The Wingham Group Carols are on Thursday, December 15; contact the president, Lindy Bateman on 01304 341774 for travel arrangements if you are not attending on December 8.

Good Companions: The social group for the over 60s meets on Tuesday, December 13 from 2-4pm at the village hall, when instead of playing bingo, whist, or Scrabble, members will hold their annual Christmas tea party. Contact Jackie Hinkes on 01304 812532.

Carol singing: On Thursday, December 15, a group will be singing car-

ols at 9am. On Boxing Day and New Year's Day, when the shop is closed, Geoff will sell newspapers from his house at Merioneth, Old Valley Road from 8-10am.

Church services: There will be two services on Sunday December 11. Holy Communion at 9.30am and an Informal Service at 6.30pm.

Carols on Green: There will be carols around the Christmas tree on the village green on Saturday December 17 at 5pm. All are welcome.

Church bazaar: The Christmas Bazaar last Saturday was well supported and provided lots of opportunities for Christmas shopping as well as hot and cold refreshments. Around £1,600 was raised by the event and this will go towards St John's Church funds. Thanks are due to all those who helped on the day, contributed goods for the stalls or just spent money, all in a good cause. The Lyminge Bell Ringers added to the Christmas atmosphere during the afternoon.

Craft fair: The fair at the vineyard on the outskirts of Barham attracted a large crowd last weekend and was honoured by a visit from the Lord Mayor, Cllr George Metcalfe, and the Lady Mayoress. There were displays of art work, photographs

Correspondent's Picture



The village of Bridge is looking festive once again with Christmas trees lining the windows along the High Street. This tradition has been continued for many years and a huge thank you to Mark Esdale and his team of volunteers who make the village so beautiful during this season

Kiran Dhalwal, the new Bridge/Patrixbourne correspondent

GARDEN CITY VOTE



Picture: Corinthian Land Ltd

'Scheme passed stringent tests'

The Mountfield Park scheme now granted by the city council includes detailed permission for the first phase of 140 homes adjacent to the existing Barton estate.

The two estates would be separated by trees, but there are still reservations by some council members about the height of a block of flats which council officers will discuss with the developer.

Outline permission was also granted for the garden city of 3,600 homes stretching down to Bridge, which includes 190 acres of open space, two primary schools, business accommodation, shops, a 1,000-space bus park and ride, site for a potential new Kent and Canterbury Hospital and a replacement three-way junction off the A2 near Bridge.

Speaking for development designers, Joanne Cave said the housing scheme would be "beautiful", delivering jobs and homes together and not simply a housing estate

HARRY BELL

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(Word Press and Broadcast Awards)



TAKING A SIDEWAYS LOOK AT CITY LIFE

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So Mountfield Park is a goer. Ever since the plan to build 4,000 houses on rich arable land to the south of Canterbury I've been saying it will happen.

Well, what did you think would happen with a government which continues to import hundreds of thousands of people a year in the name of making England as un-English as possible?

What did you think would happen if the door is always open to unskilled workers from the wheezing economies of an ever-expanding European Union to settle in urban centres now pock-marked by coffee bars and chain restaurants?

You didn't think they'd dump 4,000 homes on south Canterbury and hundreds more at Thanington? Oh, come on now.

Canterbury is special, yes. Very special. To us it's the greatest place in the world. Moreover, to us it's home. Home.

But to a functionary in the government it's just a dot on a map marked by a string of 10



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She insisted it had passed "stringent" tests for sustainable development, and air quality assessments had been undertaken using advanced computer modelling.

"The scheme will be capital-intensive at its start, including a new A2 junction and substantial investment in sustainable travel. Only a large scale comprehensive scheme can deliver such important changes in today's economic climate," she said.

She added statutory consultees have confirmed it would cause "less than substantial harm" and the traffic impact would be "far from severe".

Following the granting of planning permission, Corinthian said it would not be commenting at this stage.

housing and views across the historic city had been resolved.

Chairman of Bridge Parish Council Alan Atkinson feared the village would bear the brunt of traffic being back up by the development.

He accused the transport modelling of being flawed.

He called for a four-way junction off the A2 as opposed to the three-way currently proposed.

But property expert Tim Mitford Slade said the council should back the application. In particular, he said the high quality business accommodation the scheme offered was urgently needed and the development could be the equivalent of West Malling's Kings Hill.

letters.

The "independent" planning inspector who upped the city council's original Local Plan estimate of 15,600 new houses to 16,000 sees just figures in an equation which must cohere with the government's calculations.

■ Indeed, the only person I have ever heard talking about the subject of our soaring population with any honesty is Hugh Lanning, the union bruiser chosen to stand for Labour in Canterbury at the general election in 2015.

Hugh was giving a speech at Canterbury Christ Church University just before the vote explaining that anyone concerned about immigration is a racist. He believes it is wrong to worry about population numbers because most of the country is countryside and therefore ripe for housing development.

There's loads of it - just concrete over it was the message of that day.

There is loads of it to south of Canterbury - just concrete over it is the message of this week.

That decision in the Guildhall isn't the end. This isn't closure. They'll go on concreting over it.

What do you expect if we keep allowing the population to grow by a city the size of Leicester every year?

We have a Conservative government proving unable to extricate the country from the monstrosity that is the European Union and so terrified of appearing uncaring that it refuses to tackle the issue of illegal immigration.

Meanwhile, those already in our capital are working out that unless you have oodles of money enabling you to live somewhere like Hampstead or Kensington, living in London has very little going for it.

The Rastenders left for Essex after their home was turned into a gigantic council estate.

The towns of the Home Counties are festooned with housing estates populated by people who see the merit of working in the capital but not living there.

Many of my friends are returning to Kent. Without the cash to pay for private education (which they despise anyway),



they have realised they do not want to send their kids to schools where barely any of the children speak English.

And now the bill for all this flight from the urban centre is being passed to Canterbury.

■ The way to properly understand the decision of Tuesday night and in fact the whole Local Plan for the district is to see it as a solution to a problem.

That problem is a population rising at speed, rising at speed because of the reluctance to tackle immigration and EU membership which entails free movement of people.

In other words, the politicians and bureaucrats are having to solve problems of their own making. They always do. This has been the case now for decades.

The great irony - at least in Canterbury - is that the people arguing most vehemently against Mountfield Park are those in the city most likely to oppose Brexit and who want to keep the nation's door wide open to just about anyone who wants to settle here regardless of the consequences.

Well, Mountfield Park is the consequence. There will be others, too, for Canterbury. Worsening congestion, schools bursting at the seams and a health service unable to cope.

Most important of all, we face the irreversible loss of countryside, not just around Canterbury, not just in Kent, but across England.

When asked to imagine England in its ideal state, our thoughts naturally turn to images of countryside - the hedgerows, the hillocks and woods, the sheep and cattle grazing in their pasture, the village church which once served a tiny isolated community.

They are images of home. Home. Another piece of it gone forever.

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se

Major overhaul for village inn after former boss convicted of sex offences

Michelin-starred couple vow to restore pub's tarnished image

By Joe Wright

jwright@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Pictures reveal the rapid transformation of a village pub taken on by new Michelin-starred owners hoping to reverse the tarnished reputation left by its previous boss.

Now called the Bridge Arms, the former White Horse in Bridge is in the hands of award-winning couple Dan and Tasha Smith, who are ready to open on April 12.

The pair - who also run the critically-acclaimed Fordwich Arms - were only given the keys in November, a month after disgraced former boss Christian Diamant was convicted of hoarding child sex abuse images on his phone.

But they've worked at full speed to transform the pub, and hope a fresh start under new owners will help quickly repair its image.

They have fully refurbished



Dan and Natasha Smith



A CCTV image of Jason Pitt on the day of the burglary

Drone thief snared by CCTV clip

A man has been jailed for six years after breaking into a home and stealing a drone - while out of prison on licence.

The victims left their home in Sturry on the morning of January 20, and returned in the afternoon to find a rear window had been smashed by Jason Pitt.

Property had been disturbed and the drone swiped.

CCTV footage taken that day captured 47-year-old Pitt approaching the home during the afternoon, and walking around the garden before leaving with a bag in his hands.

Following a police investigation, he was identified from the footage and arrested six days later.

Pitt, of no fixed address, admitted burglary at Canterbury Crown Court last Monday and was jailed the following day.

The court was told he had been out of prison on licence at the time of the offence.

the high street inn and crafted a new menu inspired by the Basque cuisine of the Spanish city of San Sebastián.

The couple, who live just 10 doors down from their new business, are confident they can bring about quick success.

Rather than opt to follow in the footsteps of their Michelin-starred operation in Fordwich, they are going down a different route.

"It will be much more family orientated," Dan said.

"It'll be very accessible. We're not trying to replicate what we have at Fordwich as there's no point in doing that.

"One of the main things is that it is still a pub where you can just come in and have a drink. I've seen people questioning if that will be the case - and yes, it will remain a drinking pub where you can come and socialise.

"We'll be selling soft ice cream in the garden and potentially having live music on Sunday afternoons.

"The menu is charcoal focused as we've got a charcoal grill oven. That's how all the meat will be cooked so it'll have more smoky barbecue flavour."

Following Diamant's convictions, the White Horse quickly closed and was targeted by van-

'We can put what happened behind us and start afresh - the name change was controversial but it felt like it was necessary'

The new bar area



The White Horse is now The Bridge Arms

dals, who smashed a window at the inn.

Employees were even reportedly abused by villagers for being associated with the pub.

A number of staff who worked there under its previous ownership have been retained by the Smiths, but a new team has mostly been formed.

A few chef and front-of-house positions are still up for grabs, but much of the refurbishment has already been completed and the venue is ready to launch next month.

"We can't wait to open as the interest has been really good and we've got a lot of reservations already," Dan added.

"There's never a perfect time to open for the first time, but people will want to go out and see what's on offer after being stuck at home for months.

"We were interested in the pub even before it was available as we know it's got such great potential. It's got one of the big-

The pub has been kitted out with new furniture as part of its refurbishment

gest outside spaces around and is in a great location.

"It's had a bad history recently so people are excited for a new chapter. We can put what happened behind us and start afresh - the name change was controversial but it felt like it was necessary.

"This pub has changed a few times in recent years but we will be staying.

"The project has cost us a lot but that proves we're here for the long run. We're not going to just be here for a few years and then move."

Dan and Tasha hope to further expand their presence in Canterbury by taking on more venues in the future.

"The food scene around here, and in Kent in general, is one the most exciting in the country," Dan added.

"There are a few other things in the pipeline but the focus at the moment is getting Bridge started."

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Folc co-founder Elisha Rai hopes to target highly-paid professionals, and right, Defined Wine's base in Bridge, near Canterbury

Craft wine seller to target rich clientele from new village base

By Jack Dyson
jdyson@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Thousands of bottles of locally produced vegan rosé could soon be sold to wine aficionados across the country.

Retailer Folc has launched a bid to start distributing the Canterbury-made beverage from

the base of its manufacturer, Defined Wine, in Coldharbour Lane, Bridge.

The firm, which trades exclusively online, wants to start shipping its pale rosé from the village site straight to customers' doors from May.

Business owner Elisha Rai said: "It's for people who like English wine already and those

wanting to broaden their horizons by trying local products.

"We are targeting highly paid 35 to 65-year-olds, but we're also looking at younger customers because they're more focused on buying locally and sustainably from female producers."

The website sells one type of pale rosé, at £14.99 per bottle.

The firm also wants to stock

local shops, high-end bars, pubs and restaurants.

Folc has submitted a licensing application to the city council to distribute its rosé in large quantities from the Bridge site.

Ms Rai hopes it will act as the springboard to becoming "much bigger", after spending the first year of the business' existence testing the market.

The application reads: "We will sell online direct to the consumer and we will specifically target a premium subset of our potential audience highly paid... professionals [aged] 35 to 65 in the UK. These individuals will be mindful of where the wine is produced and have an interest in locally sourced, sustainably conscious brands."

Preparing to get back out on the water

Watersports centres are preparing to reopen next week.

They include Canoe Wild in Canterbury, which will begin welcoming back customers for the 2021 season from Monday - just in time for the Easter school holidays.

Everything from canoes to kayaks are available to take out onto the River Stour from the company's base in Grove Ferry, while there are also options to 'bring your own' for enthusiasts keen to get back out on the water.

Bookings are now open via www.canoewild.co.uk.

Elsewhere in Kent, courses, tuition and general hire will be available at Mote Park in Maidstone from Monday.

And the online booking system is now open for St Andrews Watersports at St Andrews Lakes in Halling, to enable families to make plans.

Some hire arrangements such as for paddleboards must be done nearer the time to ensure adequate water and weather conditions.

Advanced booking for hire at St Andrews is essential and visitors won't be allowed access to the lake and its facilities without a confirmed reservation.

'There was a sense of camaraderie... we knew what we were doing was important'

Bletchley Park code-breakers were crucial in the fight to win the Second World War. Here, 100-year-old Dorothy King tells reporter Gerry Warren of her role working for the top secret coding centre...



Dorothy King in her WAAF's uniform

One of Dorothy King's most-prized mementoes is a faded picture of her proudly wearing a Women's Auxilliary Air Force uniform.

It was among a box of photographs she was browsing through as she marked her milestone 100th birthday last month.

Looking at the image took her back to 1942 and one of the most memorable times of her life as she supported



"My headmistress thought I should study classics at Oxford but we just didn't have the money as a family and I ended up joining an engineering firm as an office girl."

From there, she joined the civil service as a typist, but when the war effort ramped up in 1938 she became a Red Cross volunteer.

"Birmingham was getting bombed quite badly because it was an industrial centre and I saw some terrible sights of bodies in the rubble and



the war effort at HQ 92, which was an outstation of the code-cracking base of Bletchley Park.

"I was so excited to become a WAAF and do what I could because we were all trying to defeat Hitler and stop him invading," she said.

"There was a great sense of camaraderie among us and we knew what we were doing was important."

Dorothy was involved in relaying coded messages to the code-crackers.

"Around D-Day they were coming in so thick and fast that the teleprinter couldn't keep up and we had to use dispatch riders," she said.

Dorothy was an only child who grew up near Birmingham. She knew all about the horrors of war as a child having seen the effect it had on her father.

Still speaking with a Brummie lilt from her home in Bridge, where she has lived for more than 30 years, she said: "Having got malaria, he never



Dorothy King with her 100th birthday card from the Queen

fully recovered and I watched him suffer for years.

"It often made him delirious which I found quite frightening as a child."

Dorothy's own career could have taken a different direction, if finances had allowed.

badly injured people in hospital," she said.

"When I saw a recruitment drive for the WAAF, like a lot of girls, I decided to sign up and I remember how proud I felt putting that uniform on.

"But it was all quite hush hush and we were not allowed to say anything about what we were doing."

It was while she was a WAAF that she met her future husband, Charlie, who was stationed at HQ Bomber Command and then posted to RAF Winslow.

The couple were married in 1944 but hopes of a honeymoon in the Isles of Scilly were dashed by the war, although the Lake District proved a good second choice.

After being demobbed, the couple returned to civvy street. Dorothy worked for the General Post Office and Charlie returned to his trade as a newspaper printer. They also had a son, Roger, who is now 71 and lives in Deal.

The family then moved to Hastings, where she recalls living in a small flat until they could get a house, and money being very tight.

"There was no holding out your hand back then, you just had to get out and find work and I had various clerical jobs," she said.

She recalls 1980 being her worst year when she lost Charlie, aged just 61, to a heart attack, as well as her mum and aunt.

That was when her son suggested she moved nearer him in east Kent and she made a new home for herself in Bridge.

"I didn't know a soul, so joined everything, especially the Women's Institute and St Peter's Church.

It was there that her talent for playing the piano caught the vicar's ear who asked her to be the church



Dorothy King on her wedding day with husband Charlie

organist.

She also played at nursing homes and other events and became a quiz master.

"I wish I'd have learned about using computers a few years ago," she said, "but I think I'm a bit too old now."

She celebrated her 100th birthday on September 10 and her friends from the WI held a tea party on her front lawn.

"Unfortunately, because of Covid, I had to stay indoors and not mingle and just wave and talk through the window, which wasn't ideal," she said.

Speaking of her longevity, she added: "I have just kept active, both physically and mentally, although I find it frustrating not to be as mobile as I once was."



Dorothy King was also a Red Cross volunteer



Dorothy King in her WAAF uniform in an aircraft

Ex-royal footman also avoids unpaid work so business not 'upset'

Pub owner spared prison after child sex videos found on phone

By Joe Wright

jwright@thekmgroup.co.uk

A pub owner and former footman to the Queen found with a stash of child sex images has avoided community service to ensure his village boozier can continue to operate.

Christian Diamant, who owns the White Horse Inn in Bridge, near Canterbury, was spared unpaid work by a judge who said he had "no desire to upset his business".

The 51-year-old, who previously served the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, appeared for sentencing at the city's crown court on Friday having admitted having indecent pictures and videos of children on his iPhone.

He was found in possession of 28 indecent images and three videos when arrested by police in January.

He admitted to having an addiction to chatting with gay men on Grindr and sometimes having video calls and chats online to discuss and watch child sex abuse.

But his defence solicitor



Pub landlord Christian Diamant has been convicted of possessing indecent images of children

No panto? Oh yes there is!

A Covid-secure pantomime will be showing in Canterbury this Christmas despite the Marlowe axing its festive show.

A socially-distanced production of *Beauty and the Beast* will enjoy a limited run at the Malthouse Theatre from December 11.

There will be one-way systems and regular cleaning to ensure audience safety, and refunds will be given if performances are unable to take place.

The show will feature a host of West End stars, such as panto dame Paul Tate, Sinead Kenny, who starred in Disney's *Aladdin*, and Jonathan Carlton, who appeared in *Kinky Boots*.

Organisers say it will boast "dazzling sets and costumes, side splitting comedy and catchy songs".

Performances will have no intermission and last for about one hour and 15 minutes.

Prices start from £33.50 for two people - with only 130 available for each performance.

Call the box office on 01227 287234.

The Marlowe Theatre was forced to postpone its production of *Jack and the Beanstalk* until 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

stressed that Diamant "did not have a sexual interest in children" and never shared the content with others.

Diamant was made the subject of a two-year community rehabilitation order with a condition that he attends a sex offenders programme.

The judge, Recorder Stuart Trimmer QC, said Diamant's offending was something he "slipped into", but that he shows desire to get back on track.

"You have shown you are deeply ashamed and desperate to address the causes of your offending," he said.

"You've demonstrated steps to address offending and accepted what you have done. This sentence is to ensure you escape this and do not fall again."

Recorder Trimmer said he had "no desire" to order Diamant carry out unpaid work as it would upset his current business at the White Horse.

Diamant was an under-butler for the Queen, serving at state



The White Horse Inn in Bridge

visits and the wedding of Prince Edward and Sophie, Countess of Wessex.

He took over the White Horse last year, describing himself as a "fun, flamboyant" pub owner.

Approached by the Gazette after his conviction, he said: "The judge made his judgement and was sympathetic to me trying to move forward and to protect jobs."

Arrests after late-night robbery

A teenage boy and two men have been arrested after robbing and punching a man before stealing his belongings during a late-night attack.

The incident happened at 11.30pm in Station Road East, Canterbury, on Friday, September 18.

It followed two other offences in the city centre on the same night.

During the first, at about 10.30pm, a woman was approached by a number of men in Dane John Gardens demand-



Dane John Gardens at night

ing cigarettes.

"When the victim replied she had none they became abusive,"

a police spokesman said.

"At 10.33pm a man and a woman were approached by a number of men in Castle Street.

"One of them demanded the woman's watch. She refused to hand it over and they left the area."

A 15-year-old boy and two men, aged 18 and 20, were arrested on the same day and have been bailed pending further enquiries.

Witnesses are urged to call police on 01843 222289, quoting reference 46/167488/20.



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Windows smashed and staff abused following former tenant's conviction

Village pub targeted by vandals days after sex offender boss left

By Joe Wright
jwright@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Pub vandalised after boss found with child abuse videos

A pub boss convicted of having child sex abuse videos on his iPhone left the village inn days before it was targeted by vandals, it has emerged.

Christian Diamant - who ran the White Horse in Bridge - was sentenced last Monday after admitting having the indecent material on his iPhone.

A judge spared him an unpaid community work order so as not to "upset his business", ordering him to attend a sex offenders programme as part of a two-year community rehabilitation order.

But the Gazette understands the 51-year-old left the pub before news of his conviction was made public on Thursday.



Windows have been boarded up following the vandalism at the White Horse Inn in Bridge

IN BRIEF

Drink driving

A 31-year-old drink driver has been banned from the road for 23 months.

Jasper Weyland was almost three times the legal limit when he was stopped in a Peugeot 206 in Old Dover Road, Canterbury, on August 22.

Tests showed he had 92 microgrammes of alcohol in 100ml of his breath - the limit is 35.

Weyland, who admitted drink driving when he appeared before city magistrates, was also ordered to do 100 hours of unpaid community work.

On curfew

A man who assaulted two police officers in Canterbury has been electronically tagged for four months.

Jamie Lee, 35, of the city's Vauxhall Avenue, has admitted assaulting the two officers on March 28.

Magistrates ordered him to stay at home between 7pm and 7am each day.

Brief thief

A man who admitted stealing socks, boxers and men's thermals from Primark has been fined £100.

Fatjon Lata, 21, swiped the underwear from the city store on November 9.

Enterprise Inns, which owns the White Horse, has confirmed Diamant is no longer the tenant and the search for a successor has already begun.

The new person in charge will be tasked with quickly restoring the reputation of the pub, which has been damaged by the connection to Diamant's crimes.

On Friday night it had its windows smashed by vandals branded "small-minded idiots" by villagers.

It is understood former staff at the pub - unconnected in any way to Diamant's crimes - have also suffered verbal abuse, with one employee forced to give up his accommodation at the White Horse.

Police have launched an investigation into the vandalism, which has been condemned by local residents.

One commenter on the Bridge Village Facebook page said: "These small-minded idiots obviously do not realise that



Christian Diamant had child sex abuse images and videos on his phone

the 'offender' is not actually there, and that they are doing nothing more than terrorising the innocent people that worked for him!"

Another added: "How sad that

the building is being attacked. Neither the building, nor the resident staff are responsible for the crimes of the landlord."

The pub's windows were reportedly smashed at about

River search after serious crash

Police spent hours scouring a river after a woman was badly injured in a suspected drug-drive crash.

A red Subaru collided with a white Vauxhall in Ashford Road, Thanington shortly after midnight last Thursday.

A nearby police patrol arrived at the scene and the female driver of the Vauxhall was taken to a London hospital in a serious condition, where she remains.

The driver of the Subaru - a man in his 20s - reportedly left the scene, but was arrested a



Police are investigating

short time later on suspicion of drug-driving.

He was then taken to a local

hospital with leg injuries.

He has since been released under investigation.

Officers searched the nearby River Stour as part of their inquiries into the crash, which happened at 12.20am.

Anyone with information or who has dashcam footage of either vehicle is asked to contact police.

Witnesses can call the serious collision investigation unit on 01622 798538, or email sciu.td@kent.police.uk, quoting reference 01-4019.

THREE INTRIGUING THRILLERS SET IN CANTERBURY



Could this man from six thousand miles away be guilty of a gruesome murder?

It reminds us of terrible crimes that have gone unpunished - Marina Litvinenko

Mysterious events start happening, baffling the local police force.

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Families fear controversial road will impact quality of life on quiet estate

'We moved to be by peaceful fields - not a noisy bypass!'

By Gerry Warren

gwarren@thekmggroup.co.uk

Like many of his neighbours, Ryan Singh chose his new home largely because of the tranquility of its location beside a picturesque golf course.

But he and others on the Royal Parade estate in Canterbury have been left horrified to discover the route of a planned eastern bypass around the city could pass just yards from their properties.

They fear the new road will shatter their peace and quiet, cause pollution and devalue their properties.

The proposed bypass, which would run from Sturry to the A2 at Bridge, could cut through the Old Park and Chequer's Wood.

The city council believes the new road will significantly cut traffic congestion in the centre of Canterbury.

But dad-of-two Mr Singh, who works as a telecommunications engineer, says he and his neighbours in Realmwood Close will be on the front-line of the busy road.

"With all the noise, pollution



Ryan Singh and neighbour Mathew Jose with the golf course behind



Do you recognise him?

Man suffers brain bleed after attack

A man was taken to hospital with a bleed on the brain and a broken jaw after being attacked in a taxi rank.

Police have released an image of a man they want to speak to following the serious assault outside Canterbury West railway station.

The victim was attacked by another man in the queue at the station's taxi rank.

He was taken to hospital for treatment to a broken jaw, bleed on the brain and a large cut on his forehead.

The incident happened shortly before 12.30am last Sunday, November 14.

Transport police believe the man in the image may have information which could help their investigation.

Anyone who recognises him is urged to contact BTP by texting 61016 or calling 0800 40 50 40, quoting reference 2100086906 of 14/11/21.

and lighting at all hours, it would devastate the quality of life of everyone here," he said. "I don't know how they could even consider building a bypass in such close proximity to our houses."

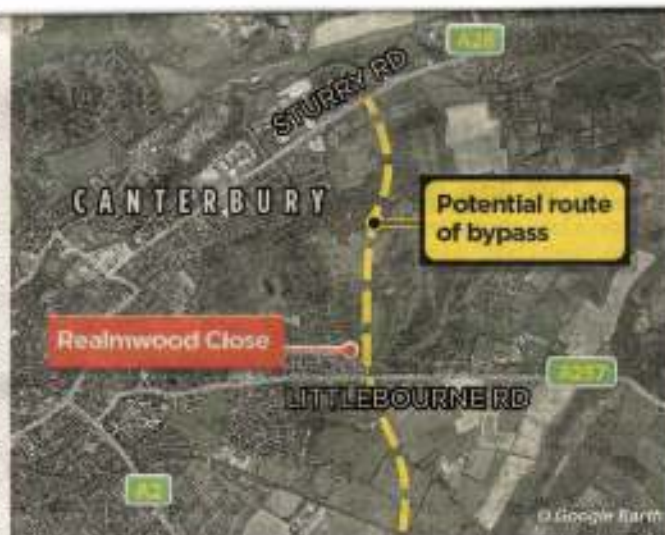
Mr Singh and his wife Nora moved to Canterbury with their children from north Kent, choosing their location because it was peaceful and away from main roads.

"This would be our last move up the property ladder and we intended to stay here for the foreseeable," he said.

"I have even gone to the extent of having planning permission granted just recently to extend my property to cater for working from home.

"But when I heard about the recent proposal for the eastern bypass running a stone's through from my house I was totally outraged, as are other residents in my development.

"An estate agent has already told me the prospect of the road will significantly devalue our homes.



The potential route of an eastern bypass

"But if it looks like it will happen, I am prepared to take the financial hit and sell up because I couldn't put up with it.

"As it is, I have put a planned extension to my property on hold because of this threat hanging over us."

Mr Singh's fears are shared by neighbour Mathew Jose, who works at a nurse at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

A dad to three young girls, he says he too bought his home because of its tranquil and private location.

"It's a lovely spot and great for the children," he said, "but that would all change if we have traffic whizzing past our windows at all hours, with all the noise and pollution.

"Obviously, we're very worried about it. There's been no consultation so now it's just hanging over us and blighting our properties."

Mr Singh believes there is an alternative route for the bypass that could be created by widening Stodmarsh Road.

He added: "Aside from the impact on our homes, the loss of this valuable green space, which many local families enjoy, would be a tragedy."



The view from Ryan Singh's home, looking out on where the bypass could be built

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BUSINESS NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY

Housebuilder scoops gold at national awards

Quinn Homes scooped two top awards at a prestigious national event.

The firm, based in Bridge, near Canterbury, triumphed at the WhatHouse? Awards.

Presented at a gala event in a top London hotel, the company - a spin-off of Quinn Estates - was awarded Gold in the Best Small Housebuilder category, while its Eddington Park project in Herne Bay won Bronze in the Best Apartment Scheme category.

The awards were presented by Olympic cyclist Sir Chris Hoy and broadcaster Clare Balding.

The judges report stated: "Quinn Homes was born out of enterprising mixed-use specialist Quinn Estates and this Kent-based housebuilder is proving quite the progeny. Quinn does bespoke homes; it does restoration and con-



Quinn Homes boss Mark Quinn, second left, collects his award from Clare Balding, far left at the WhatHouse? Awards in London

version of historic buildings, but above all it is wedded to and engrained in its county community. Design is bold

and daring, technology sustainable and meaningful, while Quinn's local immersion extends to working with Kent colleges, supporting training and creating jobs. A worthy gold."

Mark Quinn, CEO and chairman of Quinn Homes, added: "We are delighted to have won Best Small Housebuilder of the Year, especially as a new brand against such tough competition.

"To be acknowledged for our ambition, innovation and design, as well as for supporting the communities in which we build is a huge honour.

"We also feel extremely proud to be awarded Bronze in the Best Apartment Scheme category in recognition of the high-quality design and legacy of our Eddington Park project.

"It truly is an honour."

Power firm relocates 200 staff to park



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PLANS FOR 50 HOMES PROVE DIVISIVE

'Housing would provide village hall and parking'

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroupp.co.uk

Building almost 50 new homes in a beauty spot would help provide a new village hall and car park to ease school run congestion, a parish council claims.

The authority wants the controversial scheme on land between the recreation ground and the A2 in Bridge to be included in its 'neighbourhood plan'.

The document sets out future housing requirements and other needs in the village and invites developers to suggest sites.

Councillors have been discussing the plans with Cantley Ltd, which owns the land but leases it to the parish council.

The company now wants to build on part of it, including farmland.

One of the councillors' main concerns is that the lease expires next year and the landowner may well create new conditions, including increasing the current 'peppercorn' rent to a more commercial one.

The deal for housing, they say, would include the gift of land so the council would own part of the recreation park.

Chairman Alan Atkinson says the views of villagers have been canvassed "to get a sense of whether the housing element of the plan was acceptable".

A survey revealed 240 residents were in favour of the housing with 106 against it, largely because of its location in an area of outstanding natural beauty, known as an AONB.

"Even given a huge leafleting campaign against it, that's still two to one in favour," he said.

The benefits in return for planning permission eventually being granted, says the parish council, is land to build a new village hall, a financial donation towards it and an 84-space car park, which would relieve traffic congestion on the school run.

Cllr Atkinson believes another objection about traffic safety outside the school has now been addressed by the developer in its revised plans, which include a new access road.

Another key advantage, he

says, is that around eight acres of undeveloped land would be gifted to the council by the owner as part of the agreement.

"We appreciate the difficulty is the AONB, but that designation surrounds Bridge, so the village either just sits there or you build on some of it," he said.

"There are really no alternative sites for new housing provision. It seems nobody wants any houses built anywhere in the south east but I think what we are proposing to include in our plan is quite modest.

"They should have adjusted the designation when they built the A2 flyover because this parcel of land is tucked in and not exactly pristine any more."

Cllr Atkinson believes a new village hall would be a big asset to the community as the existing one in the High Street is a former library reading room and limited in its scope.

"A village like Bridge should have a proper village hall, where residents can hold activities and functions," he said.

"The cost would be around £1 million. We have some funding

set aside but would borrow the rest at cheap government rates and we should get revenue from a new hall."

But Nick Cramer, of Patricbourne Road, says he and many other residents are concerned about the scale of the development and the "significant harm" it would cause.

"The recreation ground is not under threat," he said.

"The lease can be extended and the landowners have now stated that they would support a lease extension.

"The requirement for building houses can now be considered by the village on its own planning merits without any implied threat of the loss of the recreation ground.

"Housing, if required and its location, should be fully considered by the village residents separately to any suggestions from developers or landowners.

"A new village hall, what its purpose would be, who would use it and where it should be, has yet to be debated and agreed by the village."



A map showing housing plans for Bridge near Canterbury

TOP ACCOLADE FOR VILLAGE BOOZER

Michelin star for unassuming pub taking the foodie world by storm



Dan and Tasha Smith, the couple behind The Bridge Arms

By Lydia Chantler-Hicks



A village pub has scooped its first Michelin star just 10 months after it was taken over by new owners.

The Bridge Arms near Canterbury - which was recently overhauled by the couple behind Michelin-starred gastropub The Fordwich Arms - has gained the restaurant industry's top accolade.

Husband-and-wife owners Dan and Tasha Smith have welcomed the news as "an incredible achievement", and paid tribute to the hard work of their staff.

The Grade II-listed pub in Bridge was formerly a village inn named The White Horse.

But it was left empty in 2020 when its former boss was convicted of hoarding child sex abuse images.

It was soon taken over by Dan and Tasha, who had already achieved Michelin success with their first restaurant The Fordwich Arms.

They rebranded The White Horse as The Bridge Arms and worked at full speed to transform the pub, refurbishing it and crafting a new menu inspired by the Basque cuisine of the Spanish city of San Sebastián, before officially opening last April.

Dan, who cut his teeth at London's Michelin-starred Clove Club, said at the time: "We want to disassociate it with the reputation it had. It's just a new chapter in its life."

News it has been given its first Michelin star is proof the young couple have succeeded



The Bridge Arms has been praised for its 'skilfully-executed dishes' and characterful setting, complete with low beams and fireplaces

in reversing the pub's tarnished reputation.

Dan told the Gazette: "It was completely unexpected. We've only been open for 10 months - it's an incredible achievement.

"We've got The Fordwich Arms too, which won its star after only 10 months too - and that was also unexpected.

"It's a testament to the staff's hard work."

When launching the pub, Dan, now 30, and Tasha, now 29, said that rather than replicating their operation at Fordwich and striving for another Michelin star, they would be taking a different route, making The Bridge Arms "much more family oriented".

Speaking this week, Dan said: "We're still absolutely family oriented. There's this

misconception that you can't be a Michelin-starred restaurant and a family oriented restaurant. But the stars are purely based on the quality of the food."

The Bridge Arms' menu is

It was completely unexpected. We've only been open for 10 months - it's an incredible achievement. It's a testament to the staff's hard work...

centred around locally-sourced meat and fish, much of which is cooked on local charcoal.

"It's based on what the day's boats catch," said Dan. "So a lot of our menu is decided by our suppliers."

Dan says there has been little time for him and Tasha to take in the news of their latest win, since they were informed by a Michelin Guide chief last week.

"It's been a bit of a whirlwind," he said. "But I'm sure

have built. He says The Bridge Arms has already seen a surge in bookings since the Michelin news.

"I imagine the phone is going to go off the hook," he laughed.

The Michelin Guide says Dan and Natasha "appear to have another hit on their hands".

It says the 16th century pub has "plenty of character", complete with fireplaces and low beams.

On the food, it says: "The kitchen knows to keep things simple when it's called for - such as the fish cooked on the grill - but there's plenty of imagination evident in the snacks and other skilfully executed dishes which deliver sophistication and refinement.

"Whatever you choose you'll find the food immeasurably sat-

isfying, comforting and nourishing.

"Service comes with a touch of formality but that's tempered by the friendly and personable manner of the team."

The win has further cemented the Canterbury area as something of a foodie hotspot.

It makes three Michelin-starred restaurants, alongside The Fordwich Arms and The Sportsman at Seasalter.

Margate restaurant Sargasso has also been honoured in this year's Michelin awards with a Bib Gourmand.

The Michelin Guide says the seaside eatery beside the harbour wall "comes with some great views", and offers "an almost daily-changing selection of 12 to 15 well-priced, wide-ranging seasonal dishes".

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The wild-born cubs have been doing well

Picture: Aspinall Foundation

Released cheetah now a dad

A cheetah raised at Howletts is now the proud parent of four wild-born cubs.

Nairo was relocated to South Africa two years ago as part of a rewilding project fronted by the Aspinall Foundation.

The big cat's brother, Saba, sadly died at the end of last year after being pierced

through the heart by the horn of what is thought to have been an antelope.

But the devastation of Saba's untimely death has been followed by the joyful announcement of Nairo's newborns.

The four-year-old is a father to four cubs after he became

a mate to fellow captive-born cheetah, Ava.

An Aspinall Foundation spokesman said: "The project has emphatically proved that two captive-born cheetahs can breed successfully in the wild and increase much-needed genetic diversity in wild populations."

Claims area has enough drinking holes

Will... does not

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Village does not need new wine bar'

By Joe Wright

jwright@thekmggroup.co.uk

Residents say opening a wine restaurant in a village already home to three pubs is a "ludicrous" idea.

They fear Bridge will simply become a place "known for drinkers" if plans to turn the former Skippers site in the high street into a new venue are approved.

But the firm behind the scheme, Woodchurch Investments Ltd, says the Wine Rooms will attract a wide range of clientele and be a benefit to the area.

It is confident the redevelopment of the restaurant will "complement" the existing premises in operation in the area - including the Bridge Arms, Red Lion, and Plough and Harrow.

However, a number of Bridge residents have hit out at the proposals, including Kiran Dhaliwal, who said: "I think the idea of a wine bar in this village is quite a ludicrous notion when there are already four places to drink in this village."

"I think it should be considered what kind of crowd Bridge is looking to attract, adding in a drinking place definitely sends a message that this village is to be known for drinkers."

"This is a small village with



The redundant site in Bridge high street

many elderly residents, I don't think a wine bar is something we need."

A local pub worker - who did not want to be named - also questions the need for a wine bar and says the village currently has a "nice balance to it".

They also raised concerns about the lack of available parking in the high street - a worry shared by a number of villagers.

Jane Callow said: "Parking in the high street is already a major problem for residents. Unfortunately, once you move from your parking spot it is highly unlikely you will be able to park in the same place when you return."

"I can only imagine this situation is going to worsen with more people visiting the area."

If approved, the old Skippers site, which is a Grade II-listed property, would offer both indoor and outdoor seating. It would serve up wines and food - and applicants say it will "not harm the character" of the village.

Speaking to the Gazette, David Taplin, director of Woodchurch, said: "It isn't going to be a loud wine bar will be very different from Alberry's in Canterbury. This won't be a late-night bar with music and people spilling into the streets in the early hours. I can categorically say that as the doors will be shut way before."

"We know there are number of places to eat in Bridge, but we think this will be different. We're looking for a more tapas style with small bites of food. It'll be quite funky in terms of design, and a fun place to go to."

"We wouldn't be doing it if we didn't think it'll sit well. Bridge is definitely becoming quite a place to come to. Our plan is to be casual, so you don't have to go in for two or three-course meals."

"This poor old building has been in a sad state for years. It doesn't have a car ark but there are lots of place one can park, and it's on a bus route."

Planning documents suggest the restaurant's opening hours will be until 1am, but Mr Taplin has confirmed that will not be the case.

IN BRIEF

Courts plans

A boarding school has launched a bid to build three new tennis courts within its grounds.

Bosses from Kent College in Canterbury have unveiled the plans for the facilities this week.

Papers show the courts - which will also be used for netball - will be located next to Whitstable Road.

Headmaster Mark Turnbull said: "We are a thriving community of 600 students from 42 different nationalities.

"While we enjoy some grassed areas there are currently no fixed hard courts on our campus.

"We are a boarding community and the addition of three courts provides us with recreational opportunities to support their wellbeing."

To view the plans, visit pa.canterbury.gov.uk.

Road closure

A route is set for overnight closures as rail workers carry out important work near a level crossing.

St Stephen's Road in Canterbury will be shut each night between May 27 and early on May 30.

A traffic notice says: "It allows for Network Rail maintenance and associated works. The road will be closed at the level crossing."

Villagers had objected to 'ludicrous' plans 'Classy' wine bar gets green light

By Joe Wright
jwright@thekmggroup.co.uk

Plans for a wine restaurant in a village already home to three pubs have been given the go-ahead.

Residents in Bridge were divided over proposals from Woodchurch Investments Ltd to open a new "high-class" venue in the high street.

Concerned neighbours shared fears the village would simply become a place "known for drinkers" if plans to turn the former Skippers site were rubber-stamped by Canterbury City Council.

But developers, who are confident the restaurant will "complement" the existing premises in the area, have now been given the green light to convert the redundant site.

The old Skippers eatery, opposite the Plough and Harrow Inn, has been empty for years.

It will now be called the Wine Rooms, with the neighbouring garage also being converted into a dining space.



The former Skippers in Bridge will be converted

Speaking to the Gazette prior to getting planning permission, David Taplin, director of Woodchurch, said he was confident the venture would be a success.

"We know there are a number of places to eat in Bridge, but we think this will be different," he said.

"We're looking for a more tapas style with small bites of food. It'll be quite funky in terms of design, and a fun place to go to.

"We wouldn't be doing it if we didn't think it'll sit well. Bridge is definitely becoming quite a place to come to. Our plan is to be casual, so you don't have to go

in for two or three-course meals.

"This poor old building has been in a sad state for years. It doesn't have a car park but there are lots of places one can park, and it's on a bus route."

Mr Taplin hopes to attract a "wide range of clientele", which he believes would be of great benefit to the area.

Unimpressed villagers labelled the vision "ludicrous", with a number stressing how the elderly population of Bridge does not require another drinking establishment.

The scheme also sparked fears it will exacerbate parking problems, but planning officers said: "The proposed development provides no off-street parking.

"However, a parking survey has been provided to which KCC Highways raises no objection.

"This is on the basis that there would be sufficient on street parking available at peak times and as such the proposal would not have any unacceptable high-ways safety impact."

The restaurant is set to close at 11.30pm six days a week, and at 10.30pm on Sundays.



The postbox is out of action

Picture: Jerice Robinson

Chick's in the post

A postbox is out of action after opportunistic birds set up home inside it.

Villagers in Breach, near Elham, have been warned not to use the Royal Mail receptacle, so as to avoid disturbing the nesting birds.

The nest was discovered by a postman last month.

A photo he shared on social media showed birds had filled the postbox with soft sphagnum moss.

The Royal Mail says that while

it is rare, birds have been known to nest in postboxes.

A spokesperson added: "The postbox has been out of service since April 8, and we are very sorry for any inconvenience caused.

"We cannot say at this point when the postbox will be brought back into service, as we have a legal responsibility never to disturb nesting birds."

The nearest postbox is at Barham Post Office, at Barham Village Hall.

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'I DID NOT HIDE FILES'
PAGE 9

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10 times

PAGE 2



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NICE, BEAVERS

■ by MEG JORSH

RIVERS which are home to magnificent beavers are less likely to dry up, say boffins from the National Trust.

Full story: Pages 4-5

As reservoirs and rivers run dry, boffins reveal these furry favourites could be the answer to our problems

children, Stella and Giles, and four grandchildren Sidney, William, Felicia and Isabella.
 Ken's teaching career began in Knighton Secondary School in Radnorshire, Wales and continued until his retirement in 1990 at St Peter's Methodist School, Canterbury. He always showed a keen interest in politics and was elected as City Councillor for Canterbury in 1995, a position to which he was re-elected many times. He became the Liberal Democratic Local Party Chairman in 2012 and in 2017 was appointed as Honorary Alderman of the City of Canterbury in recognition of his service to the local district as a City Councillor for 16 years. Alongside his work Ken was active with many associations including the Canterbury Welsh Society, East Kent Ramblers Association, Whitstable French Circle, Churches Together Herne Bay, Herne Bay Twinning Association, Canterbury 3 Cities Association, Herne Bay United Church and the Veterans in Europe Association. Charitable work was always important to Ken and he actively supported Herne Bay's Abbeyfield Care Home and Christian Aid. In recognition of his public service, in 2021 Ken was the proud recipient of his own Coat of Arms issued by the Royal College of Arms, London. He loved gardening, walking and the history of genealogy. His research traced back the Hando family history over 500 years. He had a wonderful sense of humour and was infamous for his practical jokes. He was a friend and companion to many and frequently enjoyed a game of Rummikub. One's met, never forgotten, always remembered.

Service to be held at Thanet Crematorium on Friday 21st October at 12:15pm.

HOBBS

**Robert Edward
'Eddie'**

Beloved Husband of Helen.
 Passed away on 28th September 2022.
 Funeral to take place at Barham Crematorium on Tuesday 18th October at 3.20pm.
 All enquiries to A Welch & Sons Ltd,
 94 Station Road, Herne Bay, CT6 5QB
 Tel 01227 374995

HUGHES

Edward (Eddie)

Passed away peacefully at Whitstable & Tankerton Hospital on 28th September 2022 aged 81 years.
 Much loved Husband of Moira,
 a loving Father to Paul and Annette and Grandad to Sophie and Isobel.
 He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.
 Funeral service will take place at Barham Crematorium on Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 1.20pm.
 Family flowers only by request but donations if desired made payable to the League of Friends at Whitstable and Tankerton Hospital may be sent c/o Beltinge & District Funeral Service Ltd., 132 Reculver Road, Beltinge, Herne Bay, Kent. CT6 6PL Tel: 01227 363300.

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kmclassifieds.co.uk **KM**

MOWBRAY

John William
 Sadly died on 21st September 2022, aged 72 years.

Funeral service to be held at Barham Crematorium on Friday 21st October at 4pm.
 Family flowers only please, donations if desired to be sent directly to Medecins San Frontieres (MSF.org).
 All enquiries c/o Hogben & Partis Ltd, 37 Stone Street, Faversham, ME13 8PH.
 Telephone 01795 532319.

OVENDEN

Michael (Micky) Ivan

Aged 84 years
 Husband to Doreen.
 Dearly loved brother to Juanita Wendy (Mimi) and Gillian, brother in law to Para comrade Albert, much loved uncle to Julie, Paul and Kitt and great uncle to Josie and Isabella.
 You will be sorely missed.
 May your journey to your spiritual home be a peaceful and happy one.

Michael Ovenden

*Remember what I told you brother dear,
 When your time left on earth was very near,
 Mum, Dad and loved ones who have gone before,
 Will be there to meet you at God's spiritual door.
 Till we meet again
 "Michaelmas Daisy"
 Mimi xxx*

PRINS

Doreen

Passed away at home on 28th September 2022 aged 88 years.
 Widow of her beloved Jack.
 Dearly loved Sister of Rita and Peter.
 She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.
 Funeral service will take place at Thanet Crematorium on Monday 24th October 2022 at 1.45pm.
 Family flowers only by request but donations if desired made payable to Demelza Childrens Hospice may be sent c/o Beltinge & District Funeral Service Ltd., 132 Reculver Road, Beltinge, Herne Bay, Kent. CT6 6PL Tel: 01227 363300.

SCHOFIELD

Margaret (Betty)

Peacefully on 20th September 2022 aged 91 years.
 A much loved Aunt to her Nieces and Nephews.
 Funeral service to take place at Barham Crematorium on Wednesday 26th October 2022 at 11.20am.
 Family flowers only.
 Donations to KSS Air Ambulance c/o C.W. Lyons, 70 Military Road, Canterbury, CT1 1ND.

SHIRLEY

Ann Margaret

(Nom de plume - Ann Savours)
 Passed away peacefully at the age of 94, on 8th October 2022.
 Much loved and will be sorely missed by all her extensive family and friends.
 Please contact C. W. Lyons & Son Ltd., Canterbury (01227 463508) for funeral details.

93/10/2022

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KENT'S THIEVING

'Shoplifting at my store is on the rise - and I fear it'll only happen more'

Gazette findings reveal 50% of thieves are not even identified

By Ruth Cassidy
rcassidy@thekmgroun.
co.uk

A Canterbury shopkeeper believes his store is being targeted more frequently by thieves - as

Shoplifting hotspots in Kent

Cases per location

1 Co-op High Street, Sheerness



TSPOTS REVEALED



“ You don't see many bobbies on the beat anymore and sometimes you get PCSOs - but to be honest I haven't even

Gazette findings reveal 50% of thieves are not even identified

By Ruth Cassidy
rcassidy@thekmgroun.co.uk

A Canterbury shopkeeper believes his store is being targeted more frequently by thieves - as figures show more than 80% of offenders are never brought before a court.

Ranjit Dhaliwal, who runs a business in Bridge, says he often does not even ring the police following incidents, as he has been told they are "tied up with loads of other things".

This comes as analysis carried out by the Gazette reveals almost half of shoplifters across Kent were not even identified last year.

Our findings have sparked concerns thieves are being allowed to get away with the crime.

Mr Dhaliwal, who owns Bridgeway Stores, said: "People are struggling to make ends meet, so we are getting more shoplifters at the moment.

"The police are tied up with loads of other things, so we often don't bother calling them.

"We've just been giving the thieves a telling off and telling them not to come back again.

"If we know who they are, we will tell their parents.

"You don't see many bobbies on the beat anymore.

"Sometimes you get PCSOs, but to be honest

Shoplifting hotspots in Kent

Cases per location



1	Co-op High Street, Sheerness	95
2	Tesco Superstore Bridge Road, Sheerness	83
3	Iceland High Street, Ashford	79
4	Iceland High Street, Dartford	79
5	M&S Simply Food Canterbury Rd, Margate	75
6	Tesco Extra Courteney Road, Gillingham	63
7	Tesco Superstore Cuxton Road, Strood	59
8	M&S Simply Food Maidstone Rd, Chatham	59
9	Iceland King Street, Ramsgate	58
10	Sainsbury's Bouverie Road, Folkestone	57

Source: Kent Police - data from November 2021 to October 2022

I haven't even seen one of them for six months."

Mr Dhaliwal fears the number of cases will increase as the cost-of-living crisis worsens.

Latest police figures also show two shops located just half a mile apart from each other are targeted by shoplifters more than anywhere else in the county.

The Sheerness branches of Co-op in High Street and Tesco in Bridge Road had items stolen from their shelves 178 times in just 12 months.


The Iceland in the centre of Ashford was the next most

hit - but the incidents account for just a fraction of the 1,000 reports made to the force each month.

The rest of the top 10 most-targeted shops was made up of big-name brands.

Two more Iceland branches - in High Street, Dartford, and King Street, Ramsgate - ranked fourth and ninth, respectively.

M&S Simply Food stores in Canterbury Road, Margate, and Maidstone Road, Chatham, took fifth and eighth, while the Tescos in Courteney Road, Gillingham, and Cuxton Road, Strood, came sixth and seventh.



“ You don't see many bobbies on the beat anymore and sometimes you get PCSOs - but to be honest I haven't even seen one of them for six months... **”**

Despite Sheerness having Kent's most-thieved-from shops, town team chairman Phil Crowder believes it is no "worse than any other place in that respect".

"It's a national problem," he explained.

"Perhaps people here are more likely to report shoplifting - that may well be why it seems like it is more common in the town.

"The problem is criminals see shoplifting as a victimless crime - they think the big corporations like Tesco and Co-op can afford it.

"That is people's attitude, but for some of the smaller traders it impacts on them greatly."

Among those to have snatched items from Sheerness businesses was Carlene Ripley, who was locked up for 10 months in May for swiping a vacuum cleaner and bottles of alcohol from the Tesco supermarket.

Then in July, a man was jailed for 20 weeks for stealing £2,000 worth of ink cartridges from the same

store. Another Sheerness supermarket, Aldi in Pepys Avenue, responded to the rise in shoplifting by introducing bag searches - which left shoppers wrongly accused of thieving in tears.

A Co-op spokesman insists the chain has implemented a "wide range of measures including body-worn cameras, product alarms and the latest interactive CCTV to deter crime" from its branches.

In all, there were 12,173 shoplifting incidents across Kent reported to police between November 2021 and October last year.

On almost 6,000 occasions no suspect was ever identified. Detectives were unable to prosecute anyone in more than 2,000 cases.

Despite this, Supt Pete Steenhuis stresses the county's force is committed to tackling the issue.

"We have dedicated officers who proactively target criminals and disrupt crime against retailers," he said.

"All reports of shoplifting

are dealt with in a proportionate way.

"Sometimes officers attend incidents and make arrests - other times shopkeepers will notice stock missing and report it to the police at a later time.

"Whatever the circumstances, all crimes will be fully investigated and recorded in order to seek a positive outcome."

Supt Steenhuis also says criminal charges are not always the best resolution to shoplifting incidents.

"Sometimes people may be stealing because they have found themselves in financial hardship," he added.

"This is why partnership working is important.

"It is sometimes more appropriate to resolve incidents through community resolution, when the person responsible apologises and pays.

"Other times offenders may be put before the courts."

Tesco, Iceland and M&S did not respond to requests for comment.

Bid to draw 4,000 to high-end festival

By James Pallant

jpallant@thekmggroup.co.uk

A bid has been launched to boost the capacity of a food and music festival in the grounds of a luxury hotel by 1,000 people.

Bosses from The Pig in Bridge, near Canterbury, expect to sell a bumper number of tickets for this summer's Smoked and Uncut event on Saturday, August 12.

The venue welcomed 3,000 punters in August to see rock band Supergrass, which had been secured as its main act.

But organisers have lodged plans with the city council to increase the number of festival-goers by a third as they anticipate a surge in demand from fans of this year's headliner, Razorlight.

Publicist Emma Cripwell told the Gazette: "We have the capacity for more people, and we want to be able to welcome as many Kent locals as possible.

"With Razorlight headlining, we think that it will be a great lure, so we suspect we will need all of those extra tickets.

"We wouldn't even think of increasing the capacity if we thought it would upset the vil-



Publicist Emma Cripwell

lagers.

"There aren't that many music festivals that happen in Kent, and so all the lovely locals seem to really love it."

Smoked and Uncut began in 2013 as a small guitar sing-along in the hotel's gardens.

It drew 2,000 people to The Pig in 2021, with Jools Holland named as that year's main star.

If the local authority gives the proposals the green light, the festival will have 14 food stalls, a pop-up restaurant, 13 bars and 17 other vendors serving non-alcoholic drinks.

Papers show organisers intend

on doubling the number of two-person glamping tents it will erect from 40 to 80.

A weekend's stay in the accommodation will set festival-goers back £1,250.

"The event won't be much different to last year except that, if the council approves our request to increase the capacity of the event, we will be able to have more tents," Mr Cipwell added.

"We're hoping for good weather and for our teams to be able to showcase the best of food and drink in Kent."

To mark the event's 10-year anniversary, Razorlight, best known for UK number-one single America, will entertain the biggest crowd Smoked and Uncut has ever hosted in Bridge.

The stalls will supply burgers, veggie and vegan hot bites and stone-baked pizzas, while Shepherd Neame's Beer Bar and a double-decker Hambleton Vineyard bus will supply brews and wines.

Attendees will also be able to eat from a four-course feasting menu with Michelin-star chef Angela Hartnett for £60 per person.

Tickets for the event start from £67.50. They can be purchased from www.smokedanduncut.com.



Supergrass headlined last summer's event at The Pig in Bridge



Razorlight's Johnny Borrell will take to the stage at The Pig

Pic: Gerard Gilronan



Hugh Cornwell performing at the Smoked and Uncut festival in Bridge last year

Lane and the St John's Lane business-user car park.

Selling the spots is hoped to raise funds for the city council - as it bids to "balance expenditure" by jettisoning "under-performing" assets.

But the hard-up local authority has not revealed how much they are being bought for, or any further details about who the buyers are.

for sale last March, but senior councillors ultimately revoked the decision to dispose of part of the Longport site near St Augustine's Abbey, as it was deemed important and well-used.

When the plots were put on the market, it was anticipated there would be significant interest and this seems to have been the case as it has been confirmed the authority received multiple bids.

24 hours."

But as a Gazette investigation revealed last month, the new car park - which cost £9.1 million to build - sits half-empty most of the time.

The 380-space site has been branded a white elephant by critics, after responses to a Freedom of Information request found it was used on 207 times per day in 2022.

Lorry blocks village high street after getting stuck

A high street was blocked by a lorry which got stuck down a narrow lane - leaving residents questioning how it would get out.

The HGV became trapped in Bridge, near Canterbury, on Tuesday morning.

An image taken showed the lorry caught between Union Road and the High Street, where it was stuck for about an hour-and-a-half.

It is unclear how the driver became stuck, but it is thought he may have tried to turn around by reversing down the street.

An eyewitness said: "I drive artic lorries and I would never have attempted that - he was never going to get out of there.

"To be honest, I'm surprised he



The stuck lorry in Bridge on Tuesday

Picture: Debbie Pearson

got as far as he did but I've not got a clue how he's supposed to get out."

A number of social media users echoed the sentiment, with one adding: "It almost looks like his sat-nav has sent

him in the wrong direction."

The vehicle was reversed down Union Street to clear the High Street.

A witness said: "It caused absolute chaos while it was here - it looked like the driver didn't have the expertise to get out of the situation. In the end, another driver - I'm guessing from the same company, as they knew each other - reversed it down the side street and away."

It was the second lorry-based issue to occur on the same day.

Another HGV caused chaos in the city after breaking down under the railway bridge in Wincheap.

Police were called to divert traffic safely with queues reportedly back to Chartham.

23/3/23



BOSSES BLAME RISING COSTS

Michelin Guide pub shuts suddenly

by Brad Harper
bharper@thekmgroupp.co.uk

A Michelin Guide restaurant and pub with links to James Bond has shut its doors "with immediate effect".

The bosses of the Duck Inn in Pett Bottom, near Canterbury, say they have been forced to close due to the impact of rising costs.

Based in the Kent Downs, the scenic pub was previously recognised for its culinary efforts, having been included in the Michelin Guide and ranked in the Estrelle Damm Top 50 Gastropubs Awards.

But a notice on the restaurant's website states: "We are very sorry to say that due to the impact of rising costs, we have reluctantly taken the decision to close the Duck with immediate effect."

"Thank you for all of your support over the last five and a half years."

The building dates back to 1623 and sold its first beer in 1849. It was previously called the Woodman's Arms, before later becoming the Duck Inn.

James Bond creator Ian Fleming was a regular at the pub and wrote *You Only Live Twice* there in 1964, with the venue also featuring in the novel.



The Duck Inn, known for its links to James Bond, has closed

Visit Kent's website says: "The Duck Inn was one of Fleming's favourite 'locals' - find his preferred seat, marked with a plaque, in the picturesque gardens."

"In *You Only Live Twice* it is revealed that James Bond spent his early years, under the guardianship of an aunt, in a small cottage beside 'the attractive Duck Inn' at the

'quaintly named hamlet of Pett Bottom.'

"That very cottage is now part of the pub."

In *You Only Live Twice*, the fictional secret agent is said to have lived there with his aunt after he was orphaned.

Bond's boss, M, sent a death notice to *The Times* newspaper, which reads: "When [James] was 11 years of age,

both his parents were killed in a climbing accident in the Aiguilles Rouges above Chamonix, and the youth came under the guardianship of an aunt, since deceased, Miss Charmian Bond, and went to live with her at the quaintly-named hamlet of Pett Bottom near Canterbury in Kent.

"There, in a small cottage hard by the attractive Duck



A blue plaque at the pub recognising Ian Fleming

Inn, his aunt, who must have been a most erudite and accomplished lady, completed his education for an English public school, and, at the age of twelve or thereabouts, he passed satisfactorily into Eton, for which College he had been entered at his birth by his father."

The novel was the last James Bond installment to be published in the author's lifetime.

After suffering a heart attack in 1961, Fleming had a second shortly after returning from the Royal St George's Golf Club, where he had dined with friends, to a hotel in Canterbury.

He did not recover and died at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on August 12, 1964 - the date of his son Casper's 12th birthday.

CANTERBURY'S COOKING



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September 28 - October 4, 2023 Trusted News 9



The Plough and Harrow in Bridge, near Canterbury, could be set for a new lease of life

Opinion split on plans for takeaway shop

Kebab shop bid for former pub divides villagers



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Divisive villagers

by Max Chesson

mchesson@thekmgroup.co.uk

Divisive plans to overhaul an old Grade-II listed village pub into a takeaway have been unveiled.

The Plough and Harrow in Bridge, near Canterbury, could be set for a new lease of life as kebab shop bosses eye up the former Shepherd Neame inn.

But fresh blueprints detailing how the 18th-century building in High Street could be transformed – including the removal of walls – have triggered a mixed reaction.

In a bid to the city council, architect Hollaway Studio says: "The proposals seek to reconfigure the existing bar space within the front of the ground floor of the building into a takeaway shop. This would include [the] removal of walls and the introduction of a kitchen/food counter.

"Proposals would also include commercial extraction; but this would be taken horizontally beneath the ceiling of the ground floor, in order to not affect the existing fabric of the building. This would result in minimal impact to the listed building."

If successful, it is proposed the new takeaway would operate from midday to 10pm seven days a week while employing three full-time staff alongside a couple of part-time roles.

The proposals come from Rustem Aykac, who owns Kebab Fish Knight in Marden, Tonbridge.

The Plough and Harrow, which closed last December, dates back to as early as 1839.

Reaction to the news has been



Cllr Mike Sole is concerned

mixed so far, with residents of the area taking to Facebook to air their views about the scheme.

"The Plough hasn't worked for landlords over the last 14 years, so let's hope it works for another business," remarked Tara Pidcock, who was more sympathetic to the plans.

Another hoping to see change in the area, Michelle Hollingsbee, said: "Yes please. It would be nice to have a takeaway in the village."

However, those more critical of the scheme have cited potential issues with smell, anti-social behaviour and the alterations required to a listed building to get the project off the ground.

David Wales said: "No thank you. The building is a listed building. The village does not need a kebab takeaway."

Both the parish council leader Alan Atkinson and city councillor Mike Sole took issue with the plans, with the latter saying he has "significant concerns".

"Firstly, the additional traffic

it would cause – I don't believe Bridge is a large enough community to support a takeaway on its own," began Cllr Sole.

"There would be a significant amount of traffic coming into the village. The village always had difficult parking issues. There will be additional noise from the fan and traffic and the potential for additional litter.

"This is a listed, historic building and the application is asking for walls to be removed inside.

"I'm not really sure this is an appropriate building for such an establishment to be in."

Alan Atkinson, Bridge parish council's head, said: "The members of the public present, and the councillors present on the planning committee in Bridge on Thursday night, were quite concerned about a number of matters regarding the Plough and Harrow building.

"They mentioned the loss of a community space, and in exchange for yet another good outlet, it was not thought a beneficial exchange.

"Added to this were the concerns regarding litter, the lack of parking at what is already a problematic junction and the potential for noise and smell – the planning committee probably had no good option but to object to the proposal."

At the time of its unexpected closure last year the pub enjoyed a 4.5/5 TripAdvisor and Google review rating. It appeared on the market for sale alongside three other Kent taverns in June.

Hollaway Studio was contacted for a comment but did not respond.

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Abandoned farm set for new homes

By James Pallant

j.pallant@thekmggroup.co.uk

An abandoned farm could soon be demolished to make way for a housing estate with barn-style homes.

Developers hope to overhaul the derelict site in a conservation area near Canterbury into 13 properties.

Although recent proposals to develop the site in Pett Hill, Bridge have received a mixed bag of reaction, Kent Downs AONB has thrown its support behind the scheme.

Faversham architects OSG Architecture says developers hope to demolish Great Pett Farm's existing buildings but maintain the agricultural aesthetic, with ecology disruption kept to a minimum.

Yet some residents remain unconvinced the buildings will fit in and worry about traffic problems that may come of the project, which is being considered by Canterbury City Council.

"The proposal aims to recreate the appearance of barn structures to match the typologies of Kent farmsteads," read the application papers.

Home designers say they will

integrate a "modern touch" into the traditional barn look with glazing, red brickwork and black weatherboarding.

Three of the homes will be 'affordable housing' while each one will have access to a private garden.

Computer-generated images of what the site could look like show houses of various sizes, both detached and semi-detached.

Official papers from Kent Downs AONB say: "[The site] comprises an existing modern farmstead with large agricultural buildings that is relatively well contained within the landscape and a sensitively designed residential scheme here would provide an opportunity to enhance the immediate surroundings. As such, the AONB Unit raised no objection in principle."

While some residents are critical of the plan because of possible traffic problems, others are excited at the prospect of affordable homes in the area.

Neighbour Jayne Steadman worries the small country lane that services the development will struggle to cope with extra drivers.

"This is a narrow, pot-holed

lane with no passing places and a tricky junction," said Ms Steadman.

"Thirteen homes is probably 26 more cars, then factor in delivery vehicles, visitors, etc., and that is a lot."

But reacting to news of the prospective scheme on Facebook, other locals responded with more optimism.

"The farm has not been a working farm for a number of years now," commented one social media user.

"Sad, I know, but it is going to ruin down there now - such a waste, but if the land is potential for development then why not - hopefully will be affordable housing for youngsters."

Another user added: "Got to admit, they do look better than a lot of the new builds elsewhere."

The two-and-a-half acre site sits beside a Grade II-listed farmhouse.

But, in the planning application's cover letter, Rosie Dennis says the building project would benefit and protect the historic setting.

"The proposal offers the opportunity to provide ecological enhancements to the site," said Ms Dennis.



Three out of the 13 houses would be "affordable homes" on the former farm site in Pett Hill, Bridge

Picture: OSG Architecture



The development would be located in an area of natural beauty

Picture: OSG Architecture



Computer-generated images show the barn-style buildings proposed

Notices

LICENCE APPLICATIONS

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Bill Cordes trading as Cordes Horticultural Ltd of 201 Ramsgate Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 4EX is applying to change an existing licence as follows: to add an operating centre to keep 1 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at Cordes Horticultural Ltd, Chaucer Farm, Home Bay Road, Sturry, Canterbury CT3 4NG. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hiltone House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representations must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Rob Mills
kmfm
Drivetime

with the
Leeds Agency



PUBLIC NOTICES



NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council gives notice that it has received the following applications which it is required to advertise under Town and Country Planning, and Wildlife and Countryside legislation

Notice is hereby given that application(s) have been made to the Dover District Council for consent to carry out the following proposal(s):

23/00361	37 The Street Ash CT3 2HH	Change of use to single residential dwelling	Affects Right of Way
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The applications can be viewed on the Council's website, www.dover.gov.uk and/or the Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover CT16 3PL

Representations on the applications can be made via the Council's website. This is the Council's preferred method as it is the speediest way to log your views into our electronic system. Alternatively, representations can be emailed to developmentcontrol@dover.gov.uk or sent by letter to the Development Management Section at the White Cliffs Business Park address.

Representations should be made within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice and should quote the application reference number. Any representations received will be available for public inspection. Representations will not be acknowledged but those making representations will be informed of the Council's decision.

Please note that this is not a full list of applications recently received by the Council. The full list can be viewed on the Council's website

Swale Borough Council
Notice of Applications

23/503266/FULL - 60 FIRST FLOOR HIGH STREET SITTINGBOURNE KENT ME10 4PB - Insertion of 2no. replacement external flues including raising height of existing chimney (retrospective). **Reasons: 1,4**

23/503805/SUB - LAND AT CLEVE HILL GRAVENEY KENT ME13 9EE - Submission of Details to Discharge Requirement 15 - Operational Noise, Phase 2 **Reason: 7**

23/503812/SUB - LAND AT CLEVE HILL GRAVENEY KENT ME13 9EE - Submission of Details to Discharge condition 3 - Battery Safety, Phase 2 **Reason: 7**

23/503809/SUB - LAND AT CLEVE HILL GRAVENEY KENT ME13 9EE - Submission of Details to Discharge conditions 2 and 8 - Detailed Design and Fencing, Phase 2 **Reason: 7**

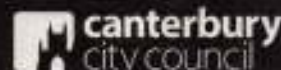
23/503527/FULL - THE HOLLIES CHESTNUT WOOD LANE BORDEN SITTINGBOURNE KENT ME9 8DH - Erection of a single storey rear lobby extension including internal alterations to create a wetroom. **Reason: 4**

23/503267/LBC - 60 FIRST FLOOR HIGH STREET SITTINGBOURNE KENT ME10 4PB - Listed Building Consent for insertion of 2no. replacement external flues including raising height of existing chimney (works completed). **Reason: 4**

23/503256/FULL - LAND ADJACENT TO BROADOAK FARM BROADOAK ROAD MILSTEAD SITTINGBOURNE KENT ME9 0RS - Change of use of agricultural land to private equestrian. **Reason: 5**

23/503719/FULL - STRODE CRESCENT BAPTIST CHURCH STRODE CRESCENT

Planning applications



Notice under Article 13 of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
Notice under Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995
Notice under Section 67 and/or Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Notice under Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
Notice under Regulation 2 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2015

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the council:

CA/23/01544: 30 West Beach, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1EG. First-floor side extension, replacement second floor extension insertion of side bay window, rooflights to front and rear and solar panels to side and rear, removal of side chimney together with replacement of all doors and windows from timber to upvc and replacement external staircase and handrails. **Applicant: Mr Philip Guy** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01562: Little Bridge Place, Mill Lane, Bridge, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 5LG. Replacement porch to front elevation, replacement windows and doors from timber to timber, use of garage as ancillary accommodation together with erection of two single-storey detached outbuildings for use as workshop and chalet. **Applicant: Mr and Mrs Shirley** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.

CA/23/01582: 52 King Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2AR. Variation of condition 2 (drawing) of planning permission CA/22/02580/FUL for the two-storey detached dwelling with cycle and refuse stores following demolition of existing shed: to allow increased length of first floor, increased width of ground and first floor and increase in ridge height. **Applicant: Mr Paul Roberts** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01583: 15 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2AS. Application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations including formation of door opening in party wall to 14 The Friars and subdivision of first floor bathroom. **Applicant: Mr P Turner** Reason: Work to a listed building.

CA/23/01585: Orchard House, Manns Hill, Bossingham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 6ED. One and a half storey outbuilding for use as garden room and ancillary accommodation following demolition of existing outbuilding. **Applicant: Mr and Mrs Chris and Melanie Rowley** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01532: The Peter Cushing, 16-18 Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1DD. Replacement of part of timber fence to east elevation with brick pillars and laminated glass. **Applicant: Mr B Lawrence** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01530: The Peter Cushing, 16-18 Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1DD. Installation of three UPVC windows in south elevation. **Applicant: Mr B Lawrence** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01570: 18 Nunnery Fields, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3JN. Replacement of five windows from timber to timber to front and rear elevation. **Applicant: Mr I Eason** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01568: Oxenleigh, Oxenden Square, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 8TW. Single-storey side extension following demolition of existing garage. **Applicant: Mr and Mrs Keary** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01616: 25 Chestfield Road, Chestfield, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 3LF. Retrospective application for single storey detached building. **Applicant: Mr Sabu Poulou** Reason: Conservation area.

CA/23/01620: 33 Northgate, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1BL. Change of use from a shop to a flat. **Applicant: Mr David Orchard** Reason: Setting of listed building in conservation area.

Controversial £32m project to relocate Chapel Down to Canterbury narrowly approved



The site of the planned construction of the new winery



How the winery is expected to look

Bid for huge winery voted through

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroun.co.uk

Plans for a huge new winery in the Kent countryside have narrowly been given the go-ahead in a controversial decision.

Councillors said there were



significant economic benefits, including creating 400 jobs, outweighed the "limited harm" to the landscape.

Cllr Mark Dance agreed, saying he was "fully supportive" of the application because of the economic benefits it would bring to Canterbury.

ing money in the local community," he said.

"I welcome anyone with concerns to come and talk to us, which, so far, they haven't taken the opportunity to.

"We are ideally located here, with an underused junction and

employees are not clogging up Canterbury to get to work."

The original proposals for the business park had also included a rural employment hub with further building, which were dropped from the planning application

But Mr Walters says it remains his long-term ambition to create further accommodation and opportunities for rural and artisan businesses at the park.

There is no current timeframe for when work will start on the new buildings.

"exceptional" reasons for granting the bid by Chapel Down for an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) near Canterbury.

The £32 million project will see the UK's biggest English sparkling wine producer relocate its production facilities from Tenterden to farmland at Canterbury Business Park, off the A2 near Bridge.

The city council's planning committee approved the scheme at a meeting on Tuesday evening, despite objections from countryside campaigners and watchdogs.

The pros and cons of the application at Highland Court Farm, submitted by business park bosses, divided councillors - with permission eventually being granted seven votes to five after a near hour-long debate.

The proposal is for a 120m x 100m, 42ft high production building for Chapel Down and two further smaller storage warehouses, including one for bespoke wine producer Defined Wine, which already operates from the site.

Chapel Down chief executive Andrew Carter told councillors the company was on a mission "to change the way the world thinks about English wines forever".

He said his ambition was to more than double production to at least six million bottles a year by 2032.

The site proposed for Canterbury Business Park, he said, offered a unique opportunity to put its operations under one roof in a location that offered excellent transport links.

It would also boost the local economy and jobs, he argued, with land at Highland Court



Canterbury Business Park boss Gary Walters

also being assessed for the planting of vines.

"Canterbury is in the perfect position to become the wine capital of England," he added.

But Katie Miller who campaigns for Kent Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty said the test of "exceptional" reasons for developing in the AONB had not been met.

"These are substantial industrial buildings which we say landscaping cannot mitigate," she said.

"AONBs are afforded the same protection as our national parks and this scheme is not in the public interest, only that of the applicant.

"We do not believe there are compelling reasons for such a large-scale and harmful development."

Local campaigners from Conserve Adisham's Rural Environment also objected, claiming the application was "anti-local economy", would damage the countryside and lead to traffic congestion and pollution in the surrounding country lanes.

Opinion in the council chamber in Canterbury was divided after planning officers opened the debate by recommending the scheme be approved.

They agreed great weight had to be given to the impact on the AONB, but believed screening with trees was sufficient mitigation and "on balance" the

But Cllr Jean Stockley feared there would be potential for the development to grow in the future and could not support it.

Cllr Nick Eden-Green also shared his concerns, saying he believed any economic benefits were "trumped" by the harm to the landscape.

But Cllr David Thomas said the employment opportunities it would create meant it would get his vote.

After the meeting the boss of the award-winning Chapel Down said he was "delighted" councillors had voted in favour of the plans.

"This development will have a significant positive impact, creating jobs, increasing local spending and placing Canterbury at the heart of the country's burgeoning wine industry," he predicted.

"Following this successful planning outcome, we look forward to working with all of our stakeholders to deliver the next stage of this project, which will underpin our long-term growth plans."

The company's operations director and head winemaker, Josh Donaghay-Spire, added: "Twinned with Rheims, we believe that the creation of this state-of-the-art hub for wine production will further burnish Canterbury's credentials as England's own sparkling wine capital, and Chapel Down's status as England's leading and largest winemaker."

Gary Walters, chief executive of Highland Investments Company - which runs Canterbury Business Park - said he too was delighted by the decision.

"We see it as a boost to the local economy with spin-off jobs in the future and people spend-



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Locals 'cheesed off' amid string of power outages

Frustration after 40 cuts in three months

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmggroup.co.uk

Villagers plagued by an "unacceptable" number of power cuts are demanding compensation from grid bosses.

Homes and businesses in Bridge, near Canterbury, have suffered more than 40 outages in the last three months.

This has prompted the parish council to complain to UK Power Networks, in a bid to put an end to the problem.

Some residents have even taken to buying back-up power supplies for their computers, while others have been forced to call out engineers to fix boilers and reset heating systems.

Parish council clerk Jennifer Heap says the village cannot be



Simon Cook

expected to continue putting up with the outages.

In an email to UK Power Networks, she says: "Not only is it inconvenient, but it has cost residents and business owners time and money.

"We would like to know when the problem will be resolved and how the village can be compensated for the inconvenience."

Many residents have posted on the village Facebook page about the inconveniences the power cuts have caused them.

Among them was retired nurse Peggy Pryer, who told the Gazette: "I'm getting extremely angry now.

"There was recently another short power cut that puts my central heating controls up the creek every time.

"Why is this happening time and time again?"

"A lot of people are really cheesed off about it, even having to light candles.

"It's not much fun to wake up at 7am on a freezing cold morning and find your central heating hasn't come on because the



Bridge village has suffered dozens of power cuts in the last three months

timer is out of sync."

Some residents claim the outages have even affected electrical components in their boilers, which not be fixed until technicians were called.

Among the many others to complain is former city council leader Simon Cook, who works from home as an analyst for the Spectator magazine.

"A lot of people work on computers from home and it's been hugely frustrating to keep losing power, albeit briefly," he said.

"You have to reboot everything and then it happens again.

"But UK Power Networks say they will not offer any compensation because the power cuts only usually last a few seconds."

A UK Power Networks spokesman says the firm is sorry for the interruptions.

She claims the issues have been caused by a "transient fault" on the electricity network.

"On January 18, we found a fault on a piece of substation equipment, which has been removed," she said.

"This had triggered our automatic switches to operate and proved complex to locate.

"While we aren't aware of any further interruptions since, we'll continue to monitor the network and take any further action to ensure reliable supplies.

"Our patrols initially pointed to the underlying cause being tree branches coming into contact with the overhead line, so we have already carried out trimming in the area, with further sessions being arranged."

The spokesman says the outages - due to their length - do not meet the criteria set by regulator Ofgem to oblige UK Power Networks to pay compensation.