

ST MARY'S ISLAND

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

November 2012

The St. Mary's Island Residents' Association Ltd. (SMIRA) is run by unpaid volunteers who work, on behalf of the residents, with various agencies and entities which have an influence on life on the Island. Membership of SMIRA is free to all Island residents (see page 4 on how to become a member). We currently have 671 members and our membership strengthens our effectiveness when dealing with outside agencies in order to get our views across.

Chairman's Voice:

Since the last annual SMIRA Newsletter and the AGM that followed, where many residents made it very clear to the Environment Agency representative that the wood chip processing and storage operation in the adjacent Chatham Docks was completely unacceptable, that operation has now been closed down. I think this adequately shows that strength in numbers is an important factor in resolving difficult issues and I am sure that this will not be the last time that we will need the collective representation that membership of SMIRA provides to satisfactorily maintain, develop and secure our pleasant and valued environment and way of life on our Island.

I know that currently many residents are very anxious to see the reinstatement of the pedestrian walkway over the caisson under the HMS Chatham Bridge. Unfortunately, this is a complicated issue and one that I think will still take a while to resolve. Thankfully, Chatham Maritime Trust, as a major stakeholder in Chatham Maritime, are championing this on behalf of the residents and I am hopeful that their efforts and strengths, along with continuing pressure from SMIRA and our Councillors, will produce a satisfactory conclusion.

During the past year SMIRA have been active in:

- Delivering the adoption of our ring road which should be completed by the end of this year. The construction and resurfacing works that have recently taken place are to bring the existing road and pavements up to an adoptable standard and are paid for by the developer, Countryside Maritime Ltd. (CML), as part of the adoption process. We are continuing to meet with the Council to move forward the adoption of the secondary roads, which will of course include the involvement, in addition to Countryside, of both Redrow and Barratt.
- Working with CML on an enhanced maintenance regime for our verge landscaping. I hope you will agree that, on the ring road and those secondary roads that CML are responsible for, this is much improved and consistently maintained to a good standard. Some new planting is planned for the void areas and SMIRA will continue to lobby the Council to ensure that this same standard is delivered on both the Redrow and Barratt developments which are currently under review.

Whilst reporting to you on the maintenance of the landscaping and the 'street scene' on our Island, I would like to make an appeal to

those residents who, in purchasing their property, agreed to take responsibility, both as the owner and under the SMI Covenants, to maintain not just their immediate gardens but other areas between their house and the pavement to an acceptable and pleasant standard. As you will appreciate it is difficult to press the developers to deliver on a commitment to good maintenance of our roadside landscaping when residents, who should be equally committed, do not deliver and, in so-doing, leave areas of landscaping in the public realm blighted and extremely unsightly. If you are unsure whether you have such a responsibility linked to your property the Trust will be able to advise you and if you do, can I appeal to you to please keep these areas well maintained so that other responsible residents are able to enjoy the 'street scene' into which they buy.

- A regular ongoing dialogue with ARRIVA to maintain and improve the service that they provide. We know that it is not perfect but it is generally reasonable and runs to time. SMIRA Directors have a meeting scheduled in the near future to resolve a small number of issues, such as where the buses 'lay over' in order to maintain their schedule and the timing of commuter services to better coincide with the departure and arrival of London trains at Chatham station.
- SMIRA, as of right, nominate two Directors to sit as Trustees on the Board of Chatham Maritime Trust. Our Trustees play an active role in the business of the Trust but, even though they are SMIRA nominees, they have an overriding responsibility for the operation of the Trust and its long term objectives. This past year has seen the Trust take over from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), previously SEEDA, responsibility for the Community Centre, Doctor's Surgery and both Shark Park and Starfish play areas. The SMIRA nominees have played their part in these negotiations as well as having a strong involvement in the review of the Covenant Implementation Policy which remains robust.
- We have continued to put pressure on the operators of the Marina, (MDL) to reopen the pedestrian access over the riverside lock gates so that residents and others can cross the lock whilst the road bridge is up. We have been advised that this access will be reopened very soon.

Some thank yous:

I would like to thank Medway Council and its Officers for positively responding to our needs when requested, our Councillors and in particular Andrew Mackness, who has not just stood beside us as no other previous councillor but initiated and proactively driven some of our causes and concerns both currently and for the future. I would also like to thank the Chatham Maritime Trust for its recent 'Can Do' approach in taking on new responsibilities and pushing the necessary buttons in helping SMIRA to achieve many of its objectives and overcome many of its concerns and, finally, I would like to thank the Directors for their hard work and support, thus enabling SMIRA to play a firm but constructive part in the resolving of issues and the continuing development of our lovely Island, which I hope we will never take for granted.

David Taylor
Chairman



Introducing three new faces:

We would like to introduce three new people who will have an impact on island life: Kerry Rudge (CMT Residential Services Officer), Yusuf Çinar (Community Safety Officer) and Sue Kemsley our new PCSO.

Kerry Rudge (CMT Residential Services Officer)

Chatham Maritime Trust has created the new role of residential services officer for the residents of St. Mary's Island to have a direct point of contact within the Trust. I deal with covenant enforcement and providing certificates of consent to enable the land registry to register new property owners. I also issue consent certificates for those residents wishing to make alterations to their property and it is one of my initial objectives to ensure that residents are adhering to covenant requirements in this respect. It is therefore important that you contact me should you be considering making any additions or alterations to your property or garden as, although there is a fee for us providing consent, this is doubled if consent is applied for retrospectively. Another aspect of my role is to oversee the running of St. Mary's Island Community Centre and another of my objectives is to improve our service to hirers and to encourage more residents to utilise the centre. Please feel free to contact me by phone, 01634 891888, or email, kerryrudge@cmtrust.co.uk, with any queries, comments or complaints as I will be happy to help.



Yusuf Çinar (Medway Council Community Officer)

I am the new Medway Council Community Officer for River Ward covering Chatham and Rochester High Street, Brompton and St. Mary's Island.

My duties include working closely with other agencies, including the police, to resolve complaints and community safety issues. In your area I will be dealing with:

- locking and unlocking of parks;
- stray or dangerous dogs;
- fly-tipping;
- fly-posting;
- graffiti;
- street cleansing issues;
- problems with refuse left out too early;
- illegal skips on the highway;
- abandoned/nuisance vehicles;
- illegal vehicles for sale on the highway;
- highway obstructions;
- fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling;
- removal of syringes and condoms from public areas;
- neighbourhood meetings and public engagement.

Recently, in partnership with PCSO Sue Kemsley, we have tackled parking issues surrounding the school, making sure that the roads

are not blocked by parked cars and that your children can make their way home safely. I've also resolved an issue with two cans of diesel, along with a number of fly-tipped refuse sacks found on the island. I arranged for the diesel to be removed and took the remaining waste to the Civil Amenity site, leaving the area clear and free of a fire hazard.

I work on a structured three-week shift rota, which includes a day shift (8:30am – 4:30pm) and a late shift (2:00pm – 10:00pm), along with working one weekend in three. My timetable is very flexible and I am happy to change my working hours for the needs of the ward. I am excited about my new role as community officer for River Ward and look forward to meeting you and continuing to help keep the ward clean, safe and a much more enjoyable place to live.

I am very proactive and like to tackle issues before they become a major problem. It is a big help if you can report any issues as soon as possible. So please feel free to email me at yusuf.cinar@medway.gov.uk, log a report with Customer First on 01634 33333 or phone me direct on 01634 338163. If I am out of the office, please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Sue Kemsley (PCSO)

Hello, I am Sue Kemsley and have recently taken over as your Police Community Support Officer from Tony Bartholomew.

I am aware of the huge task to take over from a much loved and admired predecessor and I will endeavour to be as proactive as Tony. I feel it an honour and a privilege to be your new PCSO and have received a much appreciated warm welcome.

Please may I remind you with the Christmas festive season approaching a few do's and don'ts to remember:

- Don't leave presents in full view on the back seat when out shopping. These can be tempting to thieves. Lock them away out of sight in the boot;
- Always lock your car and make sure windows are closed, even if you're away from your vehicle for just a few minutes. Use a steering lock if possible;
- Never leave your keys in the ignition whilst your vehicle is unattended, even for a few minutes. Opportunistic thieves will often steal cars that have been left with the engine running to defrost the windows;
- Don't leave any valuables in the glove compartment. Take bank cards, mobile phones and satellite navigation systems with you. These items are on a car thief's shopping list;
- Make sure you park in a well-lit area or in an attended car park;

It looks as if we're in for another cold icy winter so don't forget to clear your windscreens and side windows before driving off and make sure you're fully tooled up with de-icer, scraper and of course gloves!

Please may drivers be aware that the Road Traffic Laws regarding drink driving still apply to the Island and are enforceable. Be aware of your limits and drive safe.



SMI Youth Club 'Castaways':

Our Island Youth Club is now in its fourth year and meets weekly at the Community Centre on Friday evenings between 7:00 and 9:00p.m. Children entering Year 6 at SMI Junior School are recruited annually and join existing members in a relaxed and active environment which includes table tennis, snooker, football, Wii, computers, craft and, whenever possible, some structured activities. The ages of the members range between 10 and 14 years and new members of this age range or older are welcome to join.

The Club is run entirely by unpaid volunteers and, due to attendance numbers, we need a minimum of four volunteers at any evening to stay safe. Many of our volunteers are parents of our members and we are always looking to increase our volunteer numbers. If you feel that you could give some of your time, say two hours every third Friday, we would very much like to hear from you. Please call David Taylor on 01634 893447 or call in on one of our Friday evenings to view the Club and see what is involved. Without volunteers we cannot survive!

SMI Active Retirement Association 'Saintara':

Saintara is now enjoying its fifth year and remains a great social focus for residents over fifty years of age who are retired or semi-retired. There are regular monthly meetings at the Community Centre every third Wednesday of the month as well as many other social and active events which members can 'cherry pick' to suit their needs and availability.

Current membership exceeds 180 and, if you would like to know more, please call Saintara Membership Secretary, Barbara Drysdale on 01634 714640

Residents' New Year's Eve Party:

After last year's resounding success residents will be pleased to know that the New Year's Eve Party at the Island Community Centre open to all residents, their family and friends is on again with all profits being donated to Island worthy causes.

Subject to numbers, residents can again enjoy a great night of dancing and celebration to welcome in 2013. Bring your own food and drink and tickets, available from the 30th November and limited by number, cost £6.00 for adults and £2.50 for children over two years. Call Martine on 07976 575914 or Cara on 07885 410313.

St Mary's Island's Revolting Residents:

Headlines can be misleading; the above actually refers to a revolt by prison inmates imprisoned here on St. Mary's Island in 1861.

Did you know that . . .

A prison was built on the island in 1856 to house prisoners previously detained on the old hulks moored in the Medway; the prisoners were used in the construction and expansion of Chatham Dockyard in Victorian times. The prison was in use from 1856 until 1897 housing in excess of 1000 prisoners. After the expansion of the dockyard was completed the number of inmates fell and eventually the prison was closed, the few remaining prisoners being transferred to Dartmoor.

In around 1902 the building was demolished and a new naval barracks built and named HMS Pembroke.

Would you like to know more or even get involved?

St. Mary's Island and the Chatham docks have a fascinating history, and we are hoping to form a history group to undertake research of our Island. Research sources are all around us; the Historic Dockyard, Royal Engineers, the Archive Department at Strood and many other institutions all providing a rich and varied source of material.

We are grateful for some modest start-up funding from the Chatham Maritime Trust Community fund and just a few of the key aspects that we would like to research are:

- St. Mary's Island before the development of the dockyard.
- The island as part of the dockyard, servicing, building and repairing Royal Navy ships.
- The island from 1984 and the ground work for the Island as we see it today.

Our aim would be to collect and provide information from existing archives, old photos and other sources, hold exhibitions and provide a platform for speakers.

There are many former workers of the dockyard and locals who will have memories and stories to tell.

Come to our Inaugural Meeting:

We need a title for the group and one suggestion is St. Mary's Island Community History Group. This is, of course, open to discussion at our inaugural meeting which we will be holding in the Small Hall at the SMI Community Centre on Friday 22nd February 2013 at 7:00p.m. We will want to form a working party to establish the Group and plan research projects and future speakers. We will be presenting the information gathered so far and so, if you are interested or feel that you would like to convey your existing knowledge, or are simply interested in finding out more about our quite unique island, please come along and help us get underway.

All members and researchers will be unpaid volunteers but to make it a success we need your help and we feel sure you will find it interesting. For further information please e-mail admin@smira.info with your contact details and we will get back to you or just come along to the meeting.

Nature Around Our Island - 2012:

Despite total disruption to the island after the dockyard closed in 1984 nature has shown she is quite determined in her efforts to re-establish and expand.

We are fortunate in having the best of all worlds on St. Mary's Island - we benefit from estuary wild life, woodland birds from Hoo and Upnor and visiting garden birds.

Specific nature changes noted this year have been:

- The lack of bee orchids on the bund and fewer butterflies and moths (probably due to the very wet spring)
- An increase in the number of seals venturing further up the Medway near to the island
- Sightings of less usual garden visitors such as the willow warbler, redwings and redstarts
- An unusual temporary winter resident on the basin - a long-tailed duck
- The large numbers of swans visiting Basin One



- A few horse chestnuts succumbing to the fungal disease, and
- Sightings of our new star visitor – the kingfisher (by the sculpture, along the river walk and by Zippers restaurant)

Over the years a sizable diary / list of bird sightings has accumulated (59 in total): Bar tailed godwit, blackbird, black headed gull, black tailed godwit, blue tit, brent goose, common tern, cormorant, crow, cuckoo, curlew, dunlin, dunnock, fieldfare, goldfinch, great black backed gull, great crested grebe, great spotted woodpecker, great tit, greenfinch, green woodpecker, grey plover, heron, herring gull, house martin, house sparrow, jay, kestrel, kingfisher, knot, lapwing, lesser black backed gull, little egret, long tailed tit, long tailed duck, magpie, mallard, mistle thrush, mute swan, northern diver, oyster catcher, pied wagtail, pigeon (feral), redwing, redshank, robin, shelduck, skylark, song thrush, sparrow hawk, starling, swallow, swift, tawny owl, willow warbler, wood pigeon, wren. Can you add to this list?



In the gardens butterflies have not been so plentiful but this year the list comprises the peacock, comma, large white, small white, red admiral, holly blue, humming bird hawk moth, privet hawk moth plus some of the browns as yet to be identified. During August and September the southern hawker dragonflies were in the gardens again.

The various spiders in the garden were plentiful and their webs in September and October have been spectacular. I wish I could feel as enthusiastic about the snails and slugs!

So continue to look around you as you walk around the island and, as I have been reminded recently in Simon Barnes' book 'Bird watching with your Eyes Closed', ears play an important part also!

Janet Adkin with thanks to Gill and Alan Pestell for their contribution

SMIRA:

Our AGM this year takes place at the Community Centre on Friday the 30th November commencing at 7:30p.m. The meeting is open to all and after the formal part of the evening, which does not take very long, there will be short presentations by:

Matthew Hill, recently appointed CEO of Chatham Maritime Trust
Ricky Hemming, Director of Operations for O'Keefe Soil Recycling at Chatham Docks

Andrew Mackness, our River ward Councillor

Membership of St. Mary's Island Residents' Association Ltd. (SMIRA) is open to all residents on the island and costs nothing. Membership forms are available for download from our website, www.smira.info, or in printed form from the offices of Chatham Maritime Trust, The Coach House, Pembroke, ME4 4EU (in the university grounds).

Using the website, residents can source the minutes of the SMIRA meetings and, recently, it has been used to consult with residents on the Traffic Regulation Orders that will be imposed following the

ring road adoption. Please use the e-mail: admin@smira.info to make enquiries or express your concerns about SMI issues and we will do our best to respond and help if at all possible.

Every six weeks, starting from January 15th 2013, we hold a Board meeting at the Community Centre which is open to all. At these meetings issues concerning the residents of the island are discussed with other interested parties who include representatives from Chatham Maritime Trust and our local councillors. It gives residents the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions of those people who influence life on the island. Membership of SMIRA does not mean you have to attend these meetings (we wouldn't have the room to accommodate everyone) but anyone is welcome to attend. The Board meeting dates for 2013 are: January 15th; February 26th; April 9th; May 21st; July 2nd; August 13th; September 24th; November 5th all at 7.00p.m.; and our AGM is on Friday 29th November 2013 at 7.00p.m..

Estate regulations:

The following are the current adopted Estate Regulations and are intended to promote the enjoyment and good management of St. Mary's Island. Residents are asked to strictly adhere to these regulations in the courteous interest and well being of others.

- 1) Dogs shall be kept on a lead at all times in the Amenity and other public areas of the Estate. The designated dog run area on Finsborough Down is the only area of public space where dogs should be let off their lead.
- The following activities are prohibited:
- 2) Horse riding on any part of the Estate.
- 3) The launching of boats, jet skis and other similar watercraft from the Estate into the river.
- 4) The landing of aircraft and hot air balloons on any part of the Estate.
- 5) Fishing in the River Medway from the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- 6) Swimming from the foreshore within the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- 7) The trapping or killing of wildlife on the Estate (save as part of a proper pest control operation).
- 8) The flying of model aircraft and the sailing of model boats from the foreshore within the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- 9) The lighting of fires and barbecues on the Amenity Areas.

Useful Numbers:

Kerry Rudge (Chatham Maritime Trust Residential Services Officer): 891888

Sue Kemsley (PCSO) 0777 222 6226. Will only answer when on duty; please leave a message if no answer. If you leave a message and I do not get back to you in time, please call 101 or 999 in an emergency, or leave a message for me with Land Management & Security at CMT.

Yusuf Çinar (Community Safety Officer): 333333
CMT Island Security: 890292

Ward Councillor : Andrew Mackness: 811636

Ward Councillor: Craig Mackinlay: 841108

Island Surgery 890712

Island Pharmacy 891207

Community Centre Booking 890072

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