



St. Mary's Island Residents' Association Ltd.

Who we are and why you should join us:

St. Mary's Island Residents' Association Ltd. (SMIRA) is funded by Chatham Maritime Trust and operates as a limited company with a board of volunteer directors all residents of SMI.

Our membership exceeds 700 and we hold regular meetings throughout the year. It is important that as many residents as possible become members and attend so that we better reflect their needs and wishes. Membership costs nothing and by joining you will regularly receive the minutes of our meetings and better understand and have an input into the improvements that we strive for and the issues that we try to resolve.

We want to be as representative as possible so please join us by downloading an application form from our website www.smira.info and help us in our endeavours to make Chatham Maritime in general and SMI in particular a better place to live, work, play, retire and bring up our children. **David Taylor, Chair**

Chairman's Voice:

I have endeavoured in my report below to cover what I believe to be some of the most important and significant subjects and issues that SMIRA have worked on over the past twelve months that are not covered elsewhere. I hope you feel that we continue to support and reflect residents' views and issues but these can only be addressed if you engage with us and bring them to our attention.

You can best do this by attending one of our eight meetings through the year which are held at our Community Centre and in that way other residents in attendance can have an input or share any concerns. If you are not able to attend any of these meetings you can email us on admin@smira.info. If, however, you just want to catch-up on what's going on in general or any SMI activities and events you can visit our website on www.smira.info, and review the host of information, that is regularly updated.

Ring Road Adoption:

The ring road (Island Way East and West) is now adopted. Therefore, any issues with the roads, footpaths and lighting should now be addressed to Medway Council as per the details given in this newsletter. The adoption of the ring road verge landscaping has still to take place and we are hopeful that this and the ongoing maintenance, to the standard that we now enjoy, will soon become the responsibility of CMT.

Secondary Road Adoption:

Adoption works have now commenced on the secondary roads in Sector 1 (Countryside) and Sector 5 (Barratt's). These works should be completed soon, but again excluding the verge landscaping. Countryside Sectors 2, 4, 6 and 12 are the next to be addressed and these should be completed during 2015. A sector map may be found on the SMIRA website; St. Mary's Island page. Redrow are also discussing the adoption of their sector with the Council. SMIRA will continue to engage with the Council and the Island developers until all the built out secondary roads on the Island have been adopted and I would personally like to express my thanks to Medway Council and our Councillors for driving the negotiations and working constructively with us in this lengthy, but I hope you agree, very necessary objective.

Masterplan: Final Phase "Build-Out" of SMI:

The Planning Application for the "Build Out" of SMI has received approval, subject to some reserved matters. It is expected,



depending on market conditions, that the works, which are extensive, will commence in spring 2015 and could take between 5 and 10 years to complete. Enabling works such as the construction of a new surface water outfall by the Blue Crane will commence sooner but SMIRA will be kept informed to mitigate disruption and inconvenience. You can view the latest drawings on the SMIRA website.



Footpath over Caisson under HMS Chatham Bridge:

SMIRA continue to seek a solution to this very frustrating issue. Unfortunately, we are on difficult ground because we need Peel Ports, who own the caisson, to agree to issue a license to the Trust to allow pedestrian access across it again. Both the Trust and Medway Council are supportive of our position and, with us, will lobby Peel Ports to try and draw this to a satisfactory conclusion, by which I mean the re-instatement of our treasured pedestrian access. If Peel Ports agree to the issue of a license, the Trust have agreed to consider helping to fund the construction of a walkway, complete with hand rails, on top of the caisson and insure for risks associated with the whole structure. If Peel Ports do not agree, then an alternative solution requiring an independent bespoke foot-bridge may be required.

Street Fuel Ltd:

After very considerable consultation with SMI residents, encouraged by SMIRA in particular, the Environment Agency (E.A.) issued the recycling permit to Street Fuel Ltd, who had already taken over from Nordic Recycling operating from the same site, adjacent to the boundary with SMI inside Chatham Docks.

Since the changeover there have been a number of very concerning issues, including an initial fly infestation during our lovely summer. As a result of unannounced site visits by the E.A. the operators have been found to fall short of their obligations under the permit and have had to carry out a number of timely corrective actions.

As a direct result of many complaints received from residents regarding the increase in fly numbers, the E.A. ran a number of fly paper tests in the homes of adjacent SMI residents and the full conclusions are awaited. In addition, SMIRA remain engaged with

BBC South East News who continue to take a vigorous interest. SMIRA receive, as a matter of course, copies of the reports resulting from the unannounced visits that the E.A. make to the site and currently feel that due process must be allowed to take its course. The Company are continuing to take corrective action on their non-compliances, but if over a reasonable period of time they cannot meet the permit requirements we have been assured by the E.A. that the permit will be withdrawn.

In Summary:

I hope that, like me, you feel that with each passing year our lovely Island becomes more of a community with our community centre, surgery and pharmacy at its hub. SMIRA is not just a body where residents can take up their particular issues and seek information but we work hard to embrace all stakeholders such as Medway Council, Chatham Maritime Trust, Countryside, Homes and Communities Agency, Kent Police, Arriva our School and Church that affect and embrace our lives both now and in the future. I want to thank all those stakeholders, both personally and on behalf SMIRA, for engaging with us in such a positive and constructive way and of course our Councillors who have been very pro-active again, resolving our issues, opening doors and opportunities and ward funding support.

Thanks:

Finally I want to thank our Directors and Officers, all volunteers, for their dedication and hard work throughout the year and I hope you agree with me that our lovely Island remains a pleasant and safe environment. The Directors and Officers of SMIRA remain determined to ensure that this is not lost.

Our AGM:

Our AGM this year takes place on Friday 5th December at our Community Centre commencing at 7:30 p.m. and all residents, not just members, are welcome.

The formal business is soon dealt with and this year we have presentations from:

Heather Kerswell: Interim C.E.O. of Chatham Maritime Trust, who will give us an annual update with particular focus on the new security arrangements.

Andrew Mackness: Ward Councillor, who will talk about S.M.I issues and deliver a presentation on future regeneration both in Medway and the immediate surrounds.

This is your chance to hear and put questions to them both and I would very much appreciate your attendance in support of the Board.

David Taylor Chair

SMIRA meetings through 2015:

The dates of regular SMIRA meetings next year are as follows: 13th January, 24th February, 7th April, 19th May, 30th June, 11th August, 22nd September and 3rd November. Any resident is welcome to attend these meetings without prior notice.

These meetings commence at 7:00 p.m. but residents who wish to discuss particular or confidential issues can attend a surgery from 6:00 p.m. where representatives of CMT, SMIRA, Moat Housing and one of our Councillors will be in attendance.

Security Changes: In April 2014 Chatham Maritime Trust (CMT) made some changes to the Land Management and Security contract. SMIRA was involved in the working group which looked at the provision of security on the estate (which comprises St. Mary's Island and the area south of basins) for the future. The working group proposed some major improvements to the provision of security, although St. Mary's Island has a very low

level of crime. The CCTV cameras on the estate will be upgraded over the next two years to current models with better night-time vision, better resolution and will include automatic number plate recognition on some cameras. Many cameras will have remote on-line access for the public for the first time (except those overlooking children's playgrounds) so that residents can see what's going on from any computer. There will be some new cameras installed to provide full surveillance of the River Walk alongside the newly installed lighting.

A new company, Ward Security, has been appointed to monitor the CCTV cameras 24/7 with availability of a quick and appropriate response to problems. They will also provide an evening patrol using their own vehicle and check the children's playgrounds for vandalism or damage every weekend. Ward Security will also react out of hours if it's a non-police issue, if you alert them. They can be contacted 24/7 by telephoning 01634 890292 if you have any problems.

CMT have appointed an Estates Officer, Grant Leathwhite, to deal with the 'on the ground' land management work and control of contractors. The majority of his time is spent out on the estate either patrolling in the existing Land Management vehicle or on foot.

Grant checks the open spaces, footpaths, playgrounds and safety equipment during the week and works closely with the new security contractor and the PCSO. He can be contacted on 07867 507187 between 7:00am and 4:00pm.

CMT have also paid to increase the PCSO provision from a part time post to a new full time post. Our new PCSO is PCSO 58794 Helen Kristic and she can be contacted on 07870 252191 (will only answer if on duty) or by email: Helen.Kristic@kent.pnn.police.uk.

Prior to April 2014, Land Management only looked after the security of CMT's property and assets. Local estate agents often wrongly advertised the Island as having 24 hour security. However, the current improved situation is that the new contactor, Ward Security, is tasked to provide security to the entire estate and SMI residents. The new arrangements will be monitored and reviewed after a year of operation.

Bob Muid, Secretary

On the buses.

Much progress has been made this year in improving the bus service for St. Mary's Island. Arriva, Medway Council and Councillor Andrew Mackness continue to be receptive and supportive to our feedback. So what progress has been made:

1. The "trial" Saturday service has been a great success thanks to your support and will continue for another year. Well Done! and thank you Medway Council.
2. Telemetry has been installed in the Stones and Goldcrest bus shelters
3. The "off peak" timings having been amended (26 mins past the hour) now mean it is possible to catch the fast train link to Victoria (50mins past the hour).
4. A new timetable with effect from 23 November (with some minor changes) has been introduced to facilitate the laying up of the bus at the School. Hopefully negating the need for lengthy passenger waits at the School.

Arriva are well aware that the telemetry is not working as well as they would wish, this is work in progress. But overall there has been much improvement in their punctuality.

Residents are reminded there is an Arriva hotline which Arriva are



committed to respond to if you have an issue or complaint.
0844 800 4411 www.arrivabus.co.uk/south-east
Similarly Arriva now have an App which you can download to your phone/l pad etc. which will give you real time information. Really good.

Work in progress:

1. Initially it was hoped that Arriva would be able to amend the current timetable to accommodate more peak time arrivals from London in time to coincide with the new timetable. Unfortunately this was not the case but should happen within the next planning period.
2. Similarly Medway Council were hoping to improve the Saturday service by providing an earlier bus into Chatham. Again this could not happen within the current time lines but hopefully will happen shortly.
3. Arriva and Medway Council are planning for the 140 Bus to service the new Asda on Pier Road once complete. To enable this to happen the route around the Outlet Centre will have to become a two way system. This would then negate the need for 100 to go round the Outlet Centre the long way when returning from Chatham Town Centre thereby saving circa 3 mins.

Finally – Please! Please! continue to support your Saturday Service.

Keith Robinson, Director

Our lovely Island:

My thanks to island residents who have kept me informed of various nature observations throughout the year and to those who have forwarded photos. Here are some of the highlights:



The year commenced well in early January with the sight of little grebe (sometimes called dabchicks) and their chicks on the Medway by the fishing village and also further along the river. Little grebe are small fluffy –

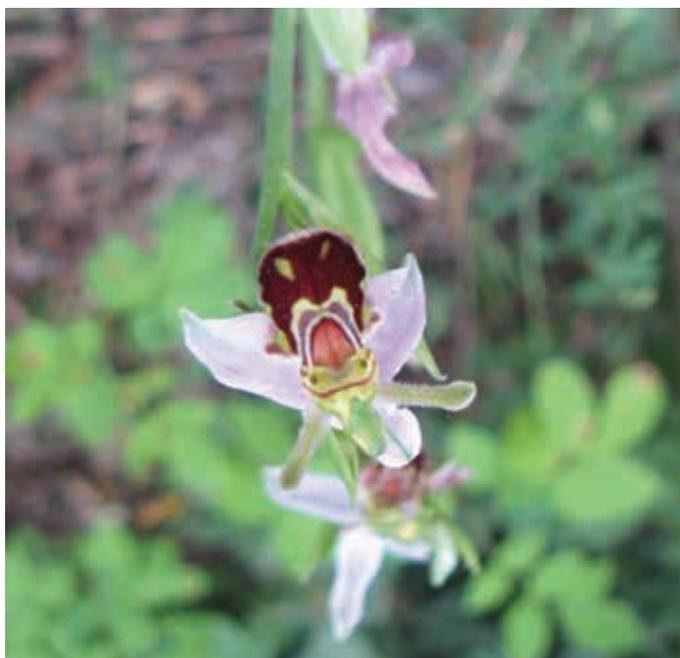
looking birds even when full grown and those sighted were initially identified as ducklings (an easy mistake). The chicks are a darker, miniature version of their parents. Look for the white rump!

By mid-April the swallows were back by the HMS Chatham Bridge, house martins were in evidence in the Redshank area and it was a relief to hear the skylarks singing again on the undeveloped land opposite Upnor Castle.

In May blue tits were observed nest building by entering a hole near the top of a CCTV metal pole by the statue. We are uncertain as to how successful this chosen nest site transpired to be.

At the end of June a cuckoo made an appearance on the bund, calling fleetingly from a tree during one lunch time. June was an eventful one, for as well as the cuckoo a seal decided to come up the river almost as far as Upnor Castle. He was in good view on the mud and I know several excellent photos were obtained. June revealed a large 'crop' of Bee Orchids also – I counted 55 on the bund behind me. A 'first' for me was the sight of four Pyramidal Orchids in amongst the shrubberies there. Let's hope these new additions multiply as the years progress.

During the Wimbledon men's final match in July a sparrow hawk



caught a collared dove and devoured it on a lawn in a garden in Meadowsweet View (a fantastic set of photos was obtained by the householder). I gather it was a real tussle as to whether to keep an eye on the match or on the sparrow hawk! All that remained were the feathers. In the same area several weeks later a sparrow hawk landed on a car roof with a blackbird in its talons but was disturbed by parents on their way to meet the children from school, so the blackbird lived to see another day.

In early August shelduck were proudly parading their family of seven ducklings near the Fishing Village. I wonder how many survived to adulthood.

Throughout the summer various species of warbler are around on the island and some residents have been fortunate enough to identify them in their gardens and see them on their bird feeders. Although herons are fairly commonplace along the river they are not so common viewed on roof tops. I took the photo of one resting on my neighbour's roof in Foxtail Close. In early June Egrets were seen wading in the mud at the end of the central walk. I am pleased to report Egrets are becoming well established on the Medway.

The Southern Hawker dragonflies were back again this September and bats continue to fly at dusk and have been sighted in various parts of the island.

The large sward of land opposite Apollo Close was planted with a variety of shrubs to encourage wild life earlier in the year and the slope facing Peel Ports land continued to support cowslips, which is the natural wildlife area of the island. I would welcome any observations of wildlife development in this newly planted area by those who pass by on a regular basis. The introduced/planted area will still require careful management.

Janet Adkin Resident

Food and Drink Festival: Dragon Boat Challenge

Many residents expressed their satisfaction and pleasure with the Food and Drink Festival that CMT staged in 2014 alongside Basin 2. It was so well received that the event is to be repeated again in 2015 over the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the Whitsun weekend with the Dragon Boat Challenge taking place on Sunday 24th May. If you missed it last time you should ensure that you diarise the weekend well in advance and perhaps even consider taking part.

So What of our Island Clubs:

Our **Active Retirement Club, SaintARA**, now boasts a membership of 200 with a healthy waiting list.

Our **History Group** has consolidated and recently held an exhibition at our Community Centre setting out the rich history of SMI and Chatham Docks from 1914 to 2014. All the information, much of which was submitted by residents, is to be archived for future generations. If you are interested and would like to join, call **Rose Goodson on 893775**. You won't regret it.

Our **Youth Club, Castaways**, is now in its seventh year but, sadly, is in danger of having to close due to a shortage of volunteers. We ask parents of members to give up one Friday evening a year to supplement our hard working Steering Group who regularly volunteer but there is little take-up and the future remains in doubt. Our members range from 10 to 13 years of age and if you would like to find out more about volunteering for this very important community activity please call **David Taylor on 893447**.

Help of our Councillors:

I would like to acknowledge the help and support of our Ward Councillors and particularly Cllr. Andrew Mackness who has been especially active on SMI issues. Andrew has been alongside us as no other Councillor before him in reinforcing our actions, facilitating access to the Council's executive officers and departments and fighting our corner with other Chatham Maritime stakeholders.

Residents' New Year's Eve Party:

This very popular event is on again this year. Subject to numbers, residents can again enjoy a great night of dancing and celebration to welcome in 2015. Bring your own food and drink. Tickets are available from the 5th December at 7:00 p.m. before the SMIRA AGM at the Community Centre and will be limited by numbers.

Cost £7.00 for adults and £5.00 for children over two years of age. Call Martine on 07976 575914 or Cara on 07885 410313. The party is open to all residents, family

and friends and any profit this year will be donated to The Wisdom Hospice.

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.

- 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. Dog owners should please be aware that medway council are now enforcing the Control of Dogs act (Medway) 2014.

The following activities are prohibited:

- Horse riding on any part of the Estate
- The launching of boats, jet skis and other similar watercraft from the Estate into the river.
- The landing of aircraft and hot air balloons on any part of the Estate.
- Fishing in the River Medway from the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- Swimming from the foreshore within the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- The trapping or killing of wildlife on the Estate (save as part of a proper pest control operation).
- The flying of model aircraft and the sailing of model boats from the foreshore within the Estate and in the Dock Basins.
- The lighting of fires and barbecues on the Amenity Areas.

Useful Numbers and Contacts:

- Police Community Support Officer is PCSO 58794 Helen Kristic (Tel: 07870 252191). She will only answer if on duty. Email: Helen.Kristic@kent.pnn.police.uk
- Police: 999 (Crime in action) Police: 101 (Report a crime)
- Council Community Officer for River Ward: Yusuf Cinar. 338163 Yusuf.cinar@medway.gov.uk
- C.M.T Security and Land Management: 890292. This number should be used to report any incidents on the public open spaces on SMI or the Chatham Maritime Estate.
- Grant Leathwhite is the new Estates Officer providing on the ground monitoring across the estate. Grant's core hours are 7am to 4 pm; he can be contacted on 07867 507187 or 01634 793942 during working hours. grantleathwhite@cmtrust.co.uk
- C.M.T Office: 891888
- River Ward Councillor: Andrew Mackness. Telephone 07970 734105. andrewmackness@live.co.uk. [Twitter@andrewmackness](https://twitter.com/andrewmackness).
- Island Doctor: 890712
- Island Pharmacy: 891207
- Community Centre: 890072
- Environment Agency Hotline: 0800 8070600
- Failure of street lighting on adopted roads: 331404 (Note the number on the lamp standard before reporting)
- SMIRA Website: www.smira.info/
- SMIRA E-mail: admin@smira.info

