Contacting Medway Council

**On the internet:** Visit www.medway.gov.uk

**By phone:** Call 333333 for enquiries about waste, recycling, roads, traffic management, public transport, green spaces and environmental health (Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm and Saturday from 8am to 1pm). Phone 332222 for council tax and benefit enquiries. Phone 306000 for all other services.

**By letter:** Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR

We have Contact Points providing local access to council services:

- **Chatham** Riverside One, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4SL
  Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.15pm, Friday: 8.30am to 4.45pm

- **Gillingham** Gillingham Library, High Street, Gillingham, ME7 1BG
  Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am to 5pm, Tuesday: 10am to 5pm, Saturday: 9am to 1pm

- **Rainham** 1 - 3 Station Road, Rainham, ME8 7RS
  Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 9am to 5pm, Wednesday: 9am to 7.30pm
  Friday: 9am to 5pm, Saturday: 9am to 1pm

- **Rochester** Rochester Library, Eastgate, Rochester, Kent ME1 1EW
  Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm, Saturday: 10am to 1pm

- **Strood** Clocktower, Civic Centre, Strood, ME2 4AU
  Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.15pm, Friday: 9.30am to 4.45pm, Saturday: 9am to 1pm

Rainham and Strood Contact Points also include Kent Police services

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Making Medway matter

People often only really think about their local council when a particular issue concerns them. They know that it does many things, but aren’t sure what and only take notice when a negative headline appears in a local newspaper, or something closer to home has happened. But, at the risk of you saying ‘well you would say that, wouldn’t you’, I am going to suggest that councils have a huge task and play a pivotal part in their areas.

In this edition, we have summarised our annual report which shows what Medway Council has achieved in the last year, how it has done and what it plans to do in the future. This special four page feature covers everything from schools, roads, refuse collection, affordable housing, social work, jobs, regeneration, making sure Medway benefits from the London 2012 Olympics and climate change.

A quick look at some of the headline figures in this feature make interesting reading, though.

For instance, Medway Council has helped 3,000 people find jobs and training and more than 660 jobs have been created. Four hundred and twenty seven affordable homes were built - well in excess of the 177 target - and the number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced from 307 to 151.

Elsewhere, Medway now recycles more than one third of the waste it collects and the work it has done to encourage people to save on their fuel bills by insulating their homes has lead to 82,000 tonnes less CO2 being produced.

Crime in Medway has been reduced and Medway’s roads are safer with the number of people killed or seriously injured falling by 45 per cent since 1998.

The number of people using public transport has risen by a quarter in eight years and nearly 90 per cent of all buses now run on time. In addition, young people have benefited from our half price bus fare scheme, with 1,786 passes in use equating to 80,000 cut price trips last year.

Finally, the report shows how the council works hard to make sure Medway is a good place to live, work and visit and now holds 20 days of free festivals a year enjoyed by 400,000 people annually.

To find out more about the work of the council why not visit our website at www.medway.gov.uk

John Staples, Editor
Medway’s hidden history

Revealed: Medway’s hidden history

We all know that Medway is rich with history, but you may not realise what a treasure trove of information can be found in the Rochester Customal book. The Rochester Customal book dates back to 1571 and is a record of local customs, bylaws, oaths of office, freemen admissions and other fascinating facts.

The customal was created by a succession of Rochester town clerks. The first was probably Martyn Cotes (town clerk 1571-1603). Some of the earliest entries include ‘rules as to scolders of women and brawlers of men’, the fact that ‘no hogs (are) to go about the streets’ and that ‘cooks (must) not to receive guests into their houses except on market days.’

In more recent years, the volume has been used to commemorate important visitors to Rochester, such as Winston Churchill who was made a freemen in 1955. From earlier periods, the book also lists the coat of arms of King Charles I, as well as his 1629 charter. The customal is kept in secure storage at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Strood. A micro film copy can be viewed in the search room by phoning 332714. A detailed description of the customal can be seen at http://cityark.medway.gov.uk

Medway’s roads get a major new makeover

Dozens of roads and pavements are to be resurfaced in a huge project during the next two years. The work will be carried out across Medway and will take in everything from main roads to small cul-de-sacs and closes.

In fact, an additional £4 million will be spent putting new tarmac on roads and replacing kerbs and paving stones. The project will take two years and will include 46 roads and 37 pavements in the first year and 29 roads and 26 pavements in the second year.

Some of the main roads that will benefit from the work include Arethusa Road, the Esplanade, Dargets Road and Hempstead Valley Drive.

Cllr Phil Filmer, the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, said: “This is a huge project that will see a great deal of work done to Medway’s roads.

“This is geared towards making our roads and pavements safer for drivers and pedestrians and to help traffic flow much more freely throughout Medway.”

Work will start on the roads shortly and it is expected to be finished by early 2011.

We want your views on schools

Medway Council wants to hear your views on plans to merge 16 of Medway’s infant and junior schools.

The government has set aside more than £11 million for the council’s proposals to transform primary school education in Medway.

Under the proposals, 16 schools will be amalgamated into eight single primary schools and three closed. If agreed, the amalgamations would take place once new accommodation has been built.

The consultations on the mergers take place from 7 September to 6 November. The consultation on primary school closures have already taken place.

For the list of schools being considered for amalgamation and to find out how to make your voice heard visit www.medway.gov.uk/mpsc or phone 306000

www.medway.gov.uk

Serving You Medway
You can help make Medway’s sports stars shine in 2009

The search is on for the sporting stars of 2009. Nominations have opened for this year’s Medway Sports Awards, the annual celebration of sporting success in Medway.

A glittering array of individuals, teams and clubs have been recognised for their sporting achievements at national and international level since the awards were first held six years ago. The awards have also shone a much-deserved spotlight on the dedicated coaches, teachers and volunteers working tirelessly behind the scenes in our local clubs and schools.

Last year’s winners included athlete Shaunagh Brown, who scooped the Sportsperson of the Year trophy after winning discus bronze at the Commonwealth Youth Games. Judo was the other big success story. British Schools Champion James Lewis was named Junior Sportsperson of the Year while his coach John Malkinson won the Coach of the Year trophy.

Cllr Howard Doe, the Portfolio Holder for Community Services, said: “Medway has a fantastic sporting heritage and an even more exciting future. There are so many individuals, teams and clubs for us to be proud of and the recent success of Gillingham FC has kick-started another great year.”

For the first time this year, nominations can be made online. The awards are free to enter and are open to any resident or organisation actively involved in sport in Medway. Nominations can be made by anybody.

Nominations close on Friday, 2 October. The entries will be judged by an independent panel of sports experts later in the year ahead of a gala awards presentation in November. The Medway Sports Awards are organised by Medway Council’s Sports Development Team.

For more details on the awards and how to nominate visit www.medway.gov.uk/sportsawards, phone 338761 or email sportsdevteam@medway.gov.uk

Market forces lead to win

A former City worker from Medway who lost his job last year has been crowned the first-ever winner of a national markets competition.

Matthew Crawford, 30, from Strood, left his role as a business development manager when he was made redundant last December.

With a family to support, Matthew decided to invest his last pay cheque in setting up his business Easy’Nuh at Gillingham market - which provides fresh, authentic Caribbean takeaway food on Mondays and Saturdays.

Now he has become the overall winner of Make your Mark in the Markets - a competition that offers one person the chance to trade on their local market free for six months. Matthew’s entrepreneurial spirit combined with his Caribbean classics - such as spicy jerk chicken and rice - beat off competition from 30 other shortlisted UK entrants.

Matthew said: “Being laid off is the best thing that’s ever happened to me. I’ve always wanted to set up my own business, so I jumped at the chance to enter.”

Medway Council’s Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth Cllr Jane Chitty added: “My congratulations to Matthew, what an astonishing achievement.”

The summer page turner

Literature loving children can embark on a fantasy adventure this summer with Medway Library Service. The Summer Reading Challenge runs until 3 September and the theme this year is Quest Seekers – the power of the imagination.

The challenge, for children up to 12 years, is to read six books throughout the school holiday. Along the way they can collect stickers, a fridge magnet and a model dragon. Portfolio Holder for Community Services Cllr Howard Doe said: “Reading is one of life’s pleasures. The reading challenge will keep children amused all summer and it doesn’t cost anything to join a library and get reading.”

A medal ceremony will take place on Saturday, 5 September at Capstone Park, Chatham, for all children who successfully complete the reading challenge.

Find your local library and details of the summer reading challenge at www.medway.gov.uk/libraries

■ Shaunagh Brown (left) and James Lewis (Right), winners at last year’s Medway Sports Awards.
Medway Council’s £6 billion regeneration programme has been given a ‘good’ two-star rating by the Audit Commission - one of the highest scores of any council.

The report said the work done on regeneration is good and that there are promising prospects for improvement. And it praised the way the council communicates Medway’s ambitions and opportunities to businesses and potential investors.

However, the report pointed out that the council could improve the way it communicates the wider benefits of regeneration to residents. This is something that the council is doing through publicity and through its Regeneration Ambassador Scheme, which uses volunteers to communicate accurate news through a series of exhibitions and public events.

For many people, the word regeneration conjures up an image of new flats and other developments. But it isn’t just about new buildings - it’s about changing the feel of an area so people want to live, work and play in it.

The only way to do this is to bring in investment - which leads to jobs - retrain people and make an area more desirable by improving its cultural events.

This is something that the council has been working very hard on in Medway. In the last year, 3,000 people have been helped to find jobs and training and more than 663 jobs have been created, despite the recession. A further 420 jobs have been protected.

And Medway runs 20 free days of festivals a year, attracting 400,000 visitors. These festivals range from Sweeps to the Fuse Festival, which is now completely free, and Dickensian Christmas.

Leader of Medway Council Cllr Rodney Chambers said of the report: “We are at the start of our ambitious regeneration programme and are capitalising on the London 2012 Olympics, becoming a centre for green technology, investing in our green spaces, ensuring we have adequate employment sites and encouraging inward investment.”

The Audit Commission said the council could involve more local people in developing regeneration programmes, tackle health inequalities more effectively and improve on promoting skills development in deprived communities. However, it singles out for praise successes in workforce skills development, which were fundamental to achieving a two star rating and neighbourhood regeneration.

For the full report visit www.auditcommission.gov.uk
Have you been inspired by the crafty talents of TV’s Kirstie Allsopp and now want to achieve that vintage look in your home without the price tag?

If so, then a creative course through adult education could set you on the right track for weaving and spinning, or painting and decorating your home and wardrobe.

New courses from Medway’s Adult and Community Learning Service start in September and although there are plenty of traditional courses to choose from - including languages, English, history and maths - it’s the more hands-on subjects that history and maths - it’s the island in-craft-based courses. She said: “There’s been lots of interest in dressmaking and fabric-based courses recently and TV shows like Kirstie Allsopp’s have helped people realise they can create something themselves. “People attending my course learn to sew, select fabric and work with patterns. “Making things is very rewarding and means you can put your own stamp on your home. Courses in patchwork and revamping clothes will help you introduce colour into your home and ditch that minimalist look.”

Portfolio Holder for Community Services Cllr Howard Doe said that Medway’s adult education courses are a great way to improve your skills.

He added: “Learning a new skill is a positive and rewarding experience and with hundreds of courses on offer I would encourage all Medway residents to consider taking a course through Medway’s adult learning service.”

A new brochure has just been produced by Medway Council (picture right) and this is being sent out to all homes this summer. It shows that from cookery to crafts and painting to Pilates, there’s something for everyone looking to study a practical, fun or rewarding course. For more details of the courses available phone 338400 or visit www.medway.gov.uk/learning.
An innovative project aimed at making Medway an even safer place and helping people with health issues on weekend evenings has started.

The SOS bus was launched in May and now sits in Rochester on Friday and Saturday nights providing help to revelers and others.

The single-decker bus, which is run by medically trained volunteers, is split into three sections – a medical room, an open area with seating and a private room. It deals with people that are in distress, under the influence, vulnerable, in difficulty or simply in need of advice or assistance.

This not only provides a safe haven for people who need help during weekend evenings, it also lessens the burden on the emergency services and hospital accident and emergency departments during their busiest periods.

The SOS bus also tours Medway on weekdays offering advice and information to people on alcohol and drug awareness and health and safety issues.

NHS Medway, Medway Council, Kent Police and other partners from the Medway Community Safety Partnership (MCSP) are involved in the project.

Medway Council’s Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement Cllr Rehman Chishti said: “The Medway SOS bus is yet another example of how we are making Medway an even safer place to live, work and socialise. It will help to reduce hospital admissions for minor ailments, mean fewer minor incidents for the police to deal with and help health managers reach out to the public.”

Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley, Area Commander for Medway, added: “The bus is already proving to be an excellent addition to Medway helping people who need support.”
‘We’ll turn around the Hoo’

A million pounds of investment, new leadership and a new governing body are all helping to raise standards at the Hundred of Hoo School. This follows an Ofsted report which stated the school was failing and placed it in to special measures in June. Medway Matters spoke to the new temporary headteacher who is making sure the school gets back on track.

A round of applause greeted Dr Gary Holden when staff at the Hundred of Hoo learned he had been given the job of running their school.

Dr Holden, who is the headteacher of Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical school, in Rochester, became the Interim Executive Head of the Hoo in June after Ofsted inspectors placed it in special measures. This means the school will now be regularly monitored by Ofsted to ensure it improves.

Ofsted did this after declaring that the school was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and said there were issues with governance, levels of teaching and learning.

Dr Holden, whose own maths school was rated as “outstanding” by Ofsted during its last inspection, now has the challenge of improving the Hundred of Hoo, in Main Road.

This means he will spend three days a week at the Hoo until a new permanent headteacher is appointed, and two at the maths school.

Dr Holden said: “The staff at the Hundred of Hoo were pleased when they heard I had been appointed and applauded me when the announcement was made. “It is a great honour for the maths school. “It represents faith and confidence in our school to help raise standards at another school in our community. “A lot of the teachers there asked me what they could do to help when they heard the news. “That’s the kind of people I have working for me. “They’re a fantastic bunch of people who rise to a challenge and want to improve educational standards at all schools.”

Dr Holden is working closely with the new temporary governing body at the Hoo, called an Interim Executive Board, that’s made up of educational specialists and community leaders, including the Rev Andy Harding from Hoo St Werburgh Parish Church and Sue Gray, headteacher at St James’ Primary School in Grain.

And up to £1million of public money has been set aside to help improve standards at the Hoo during the next two years.

The money could be used to employ new teachers in core subjects, take on high level teaching assistants, raise pupil aspirations and promote first class leadership to transform the school.

In 2008, only 26 per cent of pupils at the Hundred of Hoo achieved this standard, compared to 46 per cent nationally.

Dr Holden added: “The beauty of the arrangement is that it will enhance the partnership between the two schools. “We can use teachers from the maths school to work with teachers at Hoo to look at their practice to make sure children make the right progress. “Everyone wants the school to regain its pride and reputation, to win back the confidence of families in the area. “I am sure we can turn the school around.”

Ofsted inspectors will conduct unannounced six-monthly visits to the school to monitor its progress.

For more information on the Ofsted report go to www.ofsted.gov.uk

Get involved in planning Medway’s future

Medway Council is consulting with residents about the future of their area. A draft Local Development Framework document has been drawn up which sets out areas of land that could be developed in Medway.

From this, people can comment and contribute to the final plan, which will shape building development in the area up to 2026. The draft Local Development Framework included suggestions for areas for development across Medway from building firms and other developers.

Once the consultation is ended a full plan will be drawn up that will contain strategic policies relating to housing, jobs, the environment and more. It will also identify agreed locations for building development up to 2026.

The document will cover the whole of Medway and will affect everyone to some degree or another, so it is important that as many people as possible are actively involved as it needs to reflect local needs and the views of the community.

The council are consulting over an eight week period, so look out for specific details in the local press, in libraries and at council contact points. To find out more visit www.medway.gov.uk/ldf email: ldff@medway.gov.uk or phone 01634 331629.
The demolition of the Sir John Hawkins Flyover began with the removal of its central span during the weekend of 11 to 12 July. But the full demolition job will take up to three months.

A temporary bus, taxi and cycle route is now in operation. The map on this page shows how it works.

In addition, we also show you how drivers can get around with the temporary road scheme in place with our helpful journey guide (see right).

For the rest of the demolition period, there will be restricted pedestrian access either side of the flyover for safety reasons. However, access to all High Street premises - business and residential - will be maintained throughout the demolition period via clearly signposted walkways.

After demolition, a permanent bus, taxi and cycle route will be constructed. This should be operational by November/December.

Spoil from the demolition of the flyover will be used in the construction of the new route. Drivers can now no longer turn into Medway Street from Globe Lane - enforcement cameras and the council’s CCTV vehicle are being used to monitor this.

“This is major, complex infrastructure work and some disruption is unavoidable,” said Robin Cooper, Medway Council’s Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture.

“But it’s a little pain for massive gain. This work will eventually give Chatham improved traffic flow for years to come. It will contribute to making the centre of Chatham a hugely more attractive place.

“The aim is to open up central Chatham and the waterfront for major private sector investment. Dozens of new shops and hundreds of new homes are on the way because of Medway’s 20-year, £6 billion regeneration programme.”
Chatham’s roads - find out more

Letters and newsletters detailing Chatham’s road works have been widely distributed. Latest information on the works is available at www.medway.gov.uk/chathamfuture

New routes – without the flyover

Rochester to Chatham Maritime

There are two options with similar journey times. From Rochester you go to Strood, turn into Station Road, follow signs to Medway City Estate and go through the Medway Tunnel. Alternatively, take the A2 New Road turning left at Union Street (towards Tesco) then follow The Brook to Dock Road.

Maidstone Road to Chatham Maritime

The most direct route is to turn right onto Best Street at the bottom of Railway Street, then left into Union Street (towards Tesco) and follow The Brook. Alternatively turn into Gibraltar Hill and follow the A2 to Union Street.

Rochester to Gillingham

Destination: hospital – your route is the A2 and Chatham Hill

Destination: Brompton or Lower Gillingham – Medway Tunnel is one option. Alternatively, the A2 and The Brook.

Innovation Centre attracts entrepreneurs

The Innovation Centre Medway opened in Spring 2009 and has proven to be a big hit with tenants.

The centre provides high-quality serviced office space giving innovative businesses or entrepreneurs an impressive corporate image without high costs.

It has been jointly funded by Medway Council and the government’s Thames Gateway team.

Tribe Technology, an IT service solutions provider, moved into the centre when it opened. The company was previously based at phase one of the Innovation Centre Medway while phase two was being built.

Manager Mark Instance said: “We have always intended to move to phase two and since coming over here we have already recommended it to other companies. It’s a very modern, high-spec centre that will suit a wide range of businesses.

“We require very complex facilities due to the nature of our work and this place gives us everything that we need and more. It has the high specification we require in terms of cabling and connectivity and, importantly, a data room facility on site. All of the facilities are first class. “It is ideally situated between Medway and Maidstone, with excellent transport links to the rest of the country.”

Since moving in, Tribe has already grown. The company has employed three new members of staff and bought a local PC repair company, which is now also based at the Innovation Centre Medway with two members of staff.

Another tenant is Object Training – an Australian software company. The company only branched out into Europe in February 2008 and moved in in May this year, having previously been based in London.

UK Manager Gerry Turner said: “Having an office here has a variety of advantages. It is a class A facility and the services are spot on.

“It means I can bring my customers to where I work and feel proud to do so. It also offers a much better work-life balance - I live in Medway and was previously commuting to the City to get to work, something I don’t miss at all.

“I think this is a fantastic investment for Medway. There is also a great resource pool here, which companies can take advantage of. “I know I will be looking to recruit from Greenwich University in the future.”

To find out more about the Innovation Centre Medway visit www.icm2.co.uk or phone 562062.

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To find out more about the Innovation Centre Medway visit www.icm2.co.uk or phone 562062.

BANK HOLIDAY REFUSE COLLECTIONS

Due to the Bank Holiday on Monday, 31 August, refuse collections will be delayed by one day.

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Any queries, email wasteminimisation@medway.gov.uk or phone Customer First on 333333.
The summer holidays are almost here – the perfect time to get out and explore the wealth of things to see and do in Medway. Whether you choose to grab a picnic and enjoy Medway’s great parks and open spaces, or explore the area’s fascinating heritage, there’s something for the whole family to enjoy.

**Capstone Farm Country Park**
This fantastic open space covers 114 hectares of former farmland set on the North Downs. It is very popular with families and has a huge variety of habitats, including ancient woodlands, old orchards, a lake and meadows. Facilities include a fishing lake (a day ticket is required), a horse riding trail, an accessible visitor centre, education room, café, children’s play area and picnic facilities.

There is also a mountain bike course, which is free to use and open from 8.30am to dusk every day. For more information on the course, phone 338191.
- Capstone Road, Gillingham.
- Open daily throughout the summer from 8.30am to 8.30pm.
- [www.medway.gov.uk/parks](http://www.medway.gov.uk/parks)

**Riverside Country Park**
This park is a haven for wildlife that live in its ponds, reed bed and grasslands.

Situated alongside the Medway Estuary at Gillingham, there is plenty of green space for walking, picnics and children to play – making it a great place to visit for a fun day out. Facilities include a visitor centre, an events programme for adults and children, a café and children’s play area and picnic facilities.
- Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham.
- Open daily throughout the summer from 8.30am to 8.30pm.
- [www.medway.gov.uk/parks](http://www.medway.gov.uk/parks)

**Ranscombe Farm Reserve**
Part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ranscombe Farm is owned by Medway Council and managed in partnership with Plant Life as a nature reserve, working farm and country park. Just north of Cuxton, the reserve has more than five miles of public footpaths, providing plenty of opportunities for quiet walks in the attractive countryside.
- Cuxton, Rochester.
- Accessible on footpaths from Cobham, Cuxton and Strood.
- Visitors are welcome any time but are asked to keep to the marked footpaths.
- [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)
The six attractions, all closely linked to the River Medway, are Rochester Castle, The Historic Dockyard in Chatham, Upnor Castle, The Kingswear Castle, Dickens World and The Royal Engineers Museum.

Valid until 31 October, £30 for an adult ticket and £15 for a child’s ticket. Purchase in person or by phone from Medway Visitor Information Centre. Phone 843666 or email visitor.centre@medway.gov.uk

History and Heritage

Everyone knows that Medway has a fascinating history and heritage. Here are some of our suggestions.

The Historic Dockyard Chatham

Explore this vast site, which is rich with Medway’s 400 years of naval history. You can also step aboard HMS Gannet, Cavalier and the submarine Osceola. For more information visit www.chdt.org.uk

Temple Manor

Set on the opposite side of the River Medway to Rochester Castle, this 13th Century house once provided lodgings and fresh horses for members of the Knights Templar on their way to and from the Crusades. Knight Road, Strood. Open Saturday and Sunday, 11am to 4pm until 31 October, admission free. www.medway.gov.uk/tourism

Fort Amherst

Europe’s largest surviving Napoleonic fortress and a site of international historical importance. The site has some of the most breath taking views in Medway and you can take a picnic or enjoy the Caveyard Cafe.

- Dock Road, Chatham.
- Open every Sunday and Bank Holiday to 6 September, 10.30am to 4.30pm (last admission 4pm). admission free. www.fortamherst.com
Easing the burden of the new school year

The school year will start soon and every parent knows this can be costly - which can be a worry in these difficult economic times. Here, we look at the benefits the council's Children's and Adult Services department offer pupils and students - making it less of a struggle for many parents.

- **Free transport**
  Pupils who attend their nearest appropriate school and live over the minimum distance are eligible. Children aged 11 years or older from low income families will also qualify if they live between two and six miles from their school (subject to conditions). Low-income families are those with children entitled to free school meals, or who receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. For more information call 331155.

- **School Learner Support Fund**
  This is available for students aged from 16 to 19 who go on to further education in the sixth form but face financial difficulties. If you attend a college of further education, you should apply direct to the college. To find out how to claim phone 331155.

- **16+ travel assistance**
  Once a pupil continues their education into Year 12 the council no longer subsidises travel passes or provides free travel for students. However, eligible students can still apply for a bus or rail pass, which is charged at cost. The two types of bus tickets available are the point-to-point tickets or the flexible tickets. For more details visit www.medway.gov.uk/learning

- **Education Maintenance Allowance**
  Students in years 12 and 13 can apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is a weekly payment up to £30 for day-to-day costs such as travel, books and equipment. The weekly payment depends on household income. For further details and an application form contact your school or college or visit www.ema.direct.gov.uk

- **Half price bus fare scheme for 18 and under**
  This scheme allows students in full time education to travel by bus at child fare (half the adult fare) any time and day of the week. From September this will include students aged 18 and under in years 12 and 13 – for travel to and from school or college up to 6pm Monday to Friday. To qualify students must live in Medway and travel to any school/college within Medway or Kent (as long as all charges of bus are within Medway). There is a £5 administrative charge. For more details phone 331155.

- **Free School Meals**
  Eating school meals is a good way of encouraging young people to have a nutritious diet. If you are in receipt of benefits your children may get free school meals. If you think you may be entitled to any of the above benefits, application forms and further information are available by contacting Medway Council’s School Transport and Benefits Team on 331155 or by visiting your school or college.

Don’t lose your right to vote

Voter Registration Forms will be sent out to all properties across Medway at the end of August as part of the annual canvass to compile the new Register of Electors for 2010. Every household is required by law to respond to the annual canvass, even if there are no changes to be made to the form.

Names of people no longer living at an address should be crossed out and the details of new residents of voting age added in their place. The form should then be returned as soon as possible in the freepost envelope provided.

The names of those who will reach the age of 18 in the coming year can also be added. Therefore some 16, and all 17 year olds must be added to the form.

For those properties where no changes are needed, there is also the option to respond by using either the free telephone line or the internet.

Making an early response allows the council to save money by reducing the number of reminder letters that need to be sent out.

Look out for your Voter Registration Form and return it as soon as possible.

Don’t lose your right to vote.

A General Election has to be held before June 2010, if you are not registered you will not be able to vote when the election is called.

For more information go online at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Benefit cheats prosecuted

An agency driver from Walderslade has been convicted after falsely claiming more than £3,000 in benefits while working.

Peter Simmonds, 59, of King George Road, Chatham, pleaded guilty to six counts of failing to notify Medway Council and the Department for Work and Pensions of a change in his circumstances.

He claimed Job Seekers’ Allowance, council tax benefit and housing benefit from August 2007 to June 2008, despite working as a driver.

When applying for benefits, Simmonds told the authorities that he was not working. He claimed £3,176.21 in benefits while earning an average of £235 a week as a driver.

On 17 June magistrates in Medway gave Simmonds a two-year conditional discharge for each charge, to run concurrently, and ordered him to pay £100 costs.

He will also have to repay the benefit overpayment of £3,176.21 to the Department for Work and Pensions and Medway Council.

In a separate case, Gillian Sasmaz, 39, of Hathaway Court, Chertsey Road, Rainham, has been ordered to repay more than £5,000 in benefits that she falsely claimed.

Sasmaz claimed housing benefit and council tax benefit from 2005 to 2007, while living with her husband.

She received a two-year conditional discharge after pleading guilty to two charges of making false representation to receive benefits. Medway Magistrates’ Court ordered her to pay £150 costs and repay the overpayment of £5,104.
Like all large organisations, Medway Council produces an annual report each year. Here, in this special report for Medway Matters, we look at our latest one - for the 2008/9 financial year - and how the council has done during this period at achieving its six priorities.
Safer Communities

Medway is becoming a safer place to live, with burglary down 23 per cent on the previous year, vehicle crime down 17 per cent and antisocial behaviour down from 9,582 incidents in 2007/08 to 6,301 in 2008/09 - a drop of 34 per cent. While there is much work to do to communicate these facts to the public, the facts speak for themselves. Crime is down in Medway and it has become a safer place to live during 2008/9. Listening to our residents, though, and understanding their concerns is a key part of our approach to tackling community safety. Working with the police, we are establishing a Partners and Communities Together (PACT) group in each local area in Medway. This allows residents to tell us their concerns. Also, every ward in Medway has a dedicated Safer Communities officer.

Cleaner and greener

The total amount of household waste recycled by Medway Council after being collected from the kerbside or at household recycling centres has increased from 31.7 per cent to 33.5 per cent. To help this we started recycling glass through our doorstep recycling service in July last year.

Improving the local street scene continues to be important to local people. Only 5 per cent of our streets had unacceptable levels of litter, down from 7 per cent the previous year, better than the national average of 11 per cent.

And the council has continued to tackle the long-term impact of carbon emissions on the local environment. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Medway are the lowest in the south east. In the past year, we have helped residents to save money by contacting three quarters of households to offer them advice on how to reduce their energy bills and cut carbon emissions at the same time. This has prevented the emission of 82,000 tonnes of CO₂ through home insulation, and will put some £10million back in the pockets of residents.

Children and young people having the best start in life

During 2008/09, Medway Council and its partners laid the foundations for the new Children’s Trust, which brings together all the main agencies in the area working with and for children and young people.

The trust’s vision is to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people to ensure they are safe and cared for, succeed in learning and thrive.

Following the much reported case of Baby P, we commissioned an independent review of child protection procedures in Medway following the Baby P case. This found that child protection procedures in Medway are sound.

And we have opened 14 out of our proposed 20 Sure Start children’s centres. This means that 70 per cent of households can now access a Sure Start children’s centre. This will increase to 100 per cent by the end of 2010/11.

GCSE results in Medway continue to improve, with 66 per cent of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades. This represents a four-year trend of improving results and is better than the national average of 64 per cent. Currently, 48 per cent of pupils are achieving five or more A*to C grades including English and maths and this is improving at three times the national average rate.

Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence

Medway Council is helping more of our vulnerable residents to be in control of the care they receive and to live independently while supporting them to lead active, healthy lives.

A maximum three out of three stars was given to the council in its annual performance assessment of Adult Social Care services. In addition, six of Medway’s care homes were given ‘excellent’ ratings and the Platters Farm Lodge linked service centre also received an ‘excellent’ rating.

People are living longer and the number of older people living in Medway will significantly increase during the next 15 years.

The council is already commissioning services that will meet their needs, as well as planning in partnership with NHS Medway for the longer term. The redevelopment of the former Churchlands care home in Chatham began in January 2009. The council is working with Kent Community Housing Trust to develop a 112-bed home for older people with dementia.

In 2001, 21,500 people described themselves as carers in Medway. The council is committed to supporting these citizens

The council’s priorities are:

- A clean and green environment
- Safer communities
- Children and young people having the best start in life
- Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence
- People travelling easily and safely in Medway
- Everyone benefiting from the area’s regeneration

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In 2001, 21,500 people described themselves as carers in Medway. The council is committed to supporting these citizens
who make a positive contribution to the lives of vulnerable and older people. The carers’ strategy, which was developed with NHS Medway, was also launched. Through this strategy we will support carers and involve them in decisions so that services are personal to them and their needs.

**People travelling easily and safely in Medway**

Medway is becoming a safer place to travel. The number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads has fallen by 40 per cent and the number of children killed or seriously injured has fallen by 51 per cent since 1998. The council has worked hard on road safety, completing more than 40 road safety schemes a year, as well as educational programmes and publicity campaigns.

More than 80 per cent of schools in Medway now have school travel plans, which help schools develop alternatives to car travel. More than £165,000 has been awarded to Medway schools to help improve travel and road safety arrangements around school grounds. Take up of our half-fare bus scheme for young people has grown, with 1,786 passes being on issue in June 2009 and 80,000 journeys made during 2008/09.

Medway Council has continued its programme to ensure that all residents have access to convenient public transport. And it has significantly improved transport in rural areas through the continued development of the two 16-seater Villager community buses. In their first two years of operation, these have carried out 400 journeys for 3,000 passengers. The number of people using buses has increased by over a quarter in eight years and 88.9 per cent of buses ran on time – an increase from 80 per cent two years ago.

We have also secured £13million of government funding to improve the quality and reliability of bus services, and introduce a new Urban Traffic Management Control system, which will reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of the road network by providing real time information to bus and road users.

**Everyone benefiting from the area’s regeneration**

Medway’s track record on physical, social and economic regeneration has been given a ‘good’ two-star rating by the Audit Commission. This is one of the highest scores received by a local authority.

The current economic climate is challenging for all of us, so we have supported the physical changes in Medway with social and economic regeneration. Around 3,000 people have been given help to find jobs and more than 663 new jobs have been created, with a further 420 protected in Medway, despite the economic downturn. We realise it is a hard time for many people and have a rapid response team which works with firms making redundancies to help to get people back into employment as soon as possible. We offer business start up grants and loans, apprenticeships and graduate work placement opportunities.

We have successfully won more than £20,000 of funding for the Employ Medway project, a major new counter-recessionary initiative to strengthen the employment potential and skills levels of local people and we are opening a new jobs advice centre in Chatham.

During 2008/09, the restructure of the council’s housing services was completed. It has streamlined the way we provide services to make them more effective and this delivered a number of key improvements last year which lead to the Audit Commission giving the housing service a maximum four out of four star’s in its annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment. These improvements have seen the council exceed its target for the number of new affordable homes in Medway, providing 427 homes against a target of 177 and reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation from 307 at the beginning of the year to 151 at the end of March.

Medway Council is working to maximise the benefit of the London 2012 Olympic games. The council has won the Sustainable Communities Award for the 2012 legacy it is creating. The council has promoted sport more generally, including the introduction in 2009 of free swimming for under-16s and over-60s in partnership with NHS Medway.

And we have invested in our leisure facilities. During 2008/09, we refurbished and extended the Echoes Suite at Strood Leisure Centre. We started an £11million improvement scheme at the Black Lion Centre to create the Medway Park regional centre of sporting excellence. It will be completed by 2010.

Tourism supports more than 5,000 jobs in Medway and it is vital that we continue to promote the area as a heritage and cultural tourism destination. The amount of money tourists spend in Medway has grown since 2000. Latest research estimates an annual value to the local economy of £260million. Medway runs 20 free days of festivals which attract 400,000 visitors to Medway.
Financial Information

We want to be open and transparent about the council’s finances. In order to do this, we have set out the following detailed information on how we used our money, together with our explanation of what it means.

Income – where the money came from

Funding for Medway’s services came from a variety of sources with more than 60 per cent, or £400million, being provided from government and other grants. These grants include £191million for children, schools and families, £90million in general grants and £8million from the Department for Work and Pensions. It can be seen from the tables that council tax accounted for only 14 per cent of our income.

In 2008/09 we, once again, achieved an underspend on our overall budget and were able to transfer £3million to council savings - a prudent measure given the much tougher economic environment ahead. This underspend has been achieved through tight financial control and finding more effective and efficient ways of delivering services, such as the move to our new administrative centre, which is currently saving the council £1million a year.

Expenditure - how the money was spent

We spent a total of £647million delivering services during 2008/09. This included £290million on children’s services, £91million on adult services, £19million on environment and planning, £40million on highways, transport and parking, £113million on housing, £20million on waste services, £9million on culture, tourism and heritage, £4million on libraries, £8million on sports, £5million on green spaces and £46million on other expenditure.

In addition to this, each year the council agrees a council plan, alongside the budget, to show how it will allocate its resources to achieve its six priorities. The table below shows the spend per resident:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medway’s priorities - spend per resident</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A clean and green environment</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer communities</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people having the best start in life</td>
<td>1,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older and vulnerable people maintaining their independence</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People travelling easily and safely in Medway</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone benefiting from the area’s regeneration, of which:</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing costs (depreciation, interest etc)</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capital expenditure – money spent on long-term projects

As well as day-to-day expenditure, we also invest in long-term projects such as £17million improving roads, £7million building new schools and improving existing buildings and £16million on regeneration throughout Medway. Examples include:

• The completion of the new Pilgrim Church of England and Blunt Oak primary schools;
• The opening of Phase 2 of Medway Innovation Centre;
• Road maintenance and improvements;
• Our major regeneration projects, such as Rochester Riverside and Chatham town centre.

Next year will see the completion of extensive refurbishment and improvement works to Medway Park facilities at the Black Lion, extensive highway improvements and further regeneration projects throughout Medway - in particular in Chatham.

Funding for these schemes comes from a variety of sources, including government grants, borrowing and other contributions.

Summary

The council has been independently assessed as performing well. For the sixth year running the Audit Commission gave the council an overall three stars out of a possible four in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) - a national marking and attainment scheme for all councils. We continue to deliver more and improve services, while maintaining one of the lowest council tax rates in the country. We have been independently assessed as giving good value for money, but we will continue to seek ways to make ourselves more efficient while improving our services.

To read the full report visit www.medway.gov.uk/annualreport

How much is spent in Medway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school place per pupil per year</td>
<td>3,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school place per pupil per year</td>
<td>4,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries per person per year</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street cleaning per person per year</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road maintenance per person per year</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly cost of older person in care</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and open spaces per person per year</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting rubbish and recycling per household per year</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting per household per year</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medway Council and its partners now work to a Local Area Agreement, which sets out how they will share resources and expertise to make life better for local people.

The agreement recognises that issues are best dealt with by a number of agencies. For instance, crime is not just a matter for the police and the health of local people is also affected by decisions made by the council and others, as well as the health service.

The Local Area Agreement is based on a series of pledges which set out goals related to such things as reducing the number of teenage pregnancies, raising educational standards, reducing antisocial behaviour and tackling obesity.

Partners include Kent Police, NHS Medway, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, DVE Medway, Jobcentre Plus, the South East England Development Agency, colleges, businesses and the voluntary sector. Each of these has signed up to 50 targets that must be achieved by the end of 2011.

Those targets are real and we have clear actions in place to make sure they are achieved. They spell out clearly what will be done, who will do it and how it will improve the lives of people in Medway.

Here, Medway Matters looks at two of the targets the Local Area Agreement will achieve.

**Target: Helping people with a long-term condition stay independent and in control**

Why have we chosen this target?

Most people with a long-term health problem want to be independent and look after themselves as long as they are given the support they need. They value their independence and are happier living in their own homes.

Who is involved in tackling it and how are they planning to make life better?

NHS Medway, Medway Council, Kent and Medway NHS and the Social Care Partnership Trust are working together to give people the resources they need to live the life they choose. The aim is to give everyone with a long-term condition a personalised care plan that reflects their needs and preferences.

Personalised care planning also helps service providers work together so that people with more complex needs or who are approaching the end of their life receive properly-thought out care.

What specific things are being done?

People are given a personalised plan that they have helped create and that can be seen by everyone involved in their care. NHS Medway has also:

- worked with the Parkinson’s Disease Society to employ Parkinson’s Disease specialist nurses;
- looked for ways to allow a wider range of patients to access cardiac rehabilitation programmes;
- improved the community diabetes service so more people can be seen and helped closer to home.

When will the people of Medway see a difference?

By 2010, 90 per cent of people with a complex long-term condition will have been offered a personal care plan.

How will we know we have made a difference?

Making a real difference in this area will result in fewer unnecessary admissions to hospital and fewer unnecessary visits to outpatient clinics, GPs’ surgeries and residential and nursing homes.

**Target: Alcohol harm related hospital admission rates**

Why did we choose this target?

While drinking alcohol sensibly does not cause any harm, drinking to excess can cause health problems as well as be responsible for violence and accidents. Alcohol abuse also makes major demands on the NHS.

Who is involved in tackling it and how are they making life better?

A range of partners are involved in tackling alcohol misuse in Medway. The police are working to reduce alcohol-related antisocial behaviour, the probation service is working with professionals to help offenders receive treatment and public health experts are working within the NHS to train frontline staff to work with the public.

What specific things are they doing?

Medway Police, public health experts and the voluntary sector have together launched the Medway SOS bus which is being deployed outside nightclubs at weekends to give young people a safe haven at the end of an evening if they have drunk too much.

The aim of the bus is to give vulnerable young people somewhere to go for help and advice, reduce alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and cut the number of alcohol-related admissions to accident and emergency (A&E) units. Those manning the bus also offer advice about safe drinking.

The probation service is working with the voluntary sector drug and alcohol treatment service on a Medway pilot scheme that will identify criminals with an alcohol misuse problem that is fuelling their criminal behaviour.

The scheme, which began in Medway in November, will allow a court to recommend that an offender completes a course of treatment in place of a custodial sentence. This programme has been successful in other parts of Kent.

How will we know we have made a difference?

This is a long-term goal that will depend on changing cultural attitudes to alcohol, but the partners will have made an impact when alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and hospital admissions fall.

Making a difference will also mean few residents saying that they feel unsafe near to pubs and clubs in the evenings in Medway.
Hi, my name is Ayesha Khan and I am a member of the Medway Youth Parliament and the Chairman of the Sports and Recreation sub-committee and recently me and other members and I have been wondering about the developments that are happening at the Black Lion Leisure Centre, soon to be Medway Park.

In May Mike Evans, Medway Sporting Academy Officer for Medway Council gave us a guided tour. He explained the plans for the centre and showed us the work that is underway as part of its £11 million redevelopment.

The new centre will include an eight lane athletics track, a sports hall, a dance studio, gymnastics centre, judo centre, a health and fitness suite, a sports therapy and sports science laboratory and the renovation of all existing facilities.

The completed swimming pool and changing rooms are open and the bright colour scheme creates a lively feel. Replacing the screens between the teaching pool and the main pool has made the area more open and bright.

The free swimming for under-16s and over-60s and means that the pool is being used more and more, particularly by young people.

Medway Park with its modern touches, warmly welcomes all people to have a go at a new sport or to continue practising a sport they already play. I hope the new gym, sports hall and the gymnastics centre are just as good as the facilities that are already completed. They give young people in Medway the opportunity to try new sports in the best surroundings.

Medway Park brings pride to Medway. The young people of Medway are beginning to benefit from it and will do so for many years.

The new judo centre has two Olympic standard mats along with changing rooms, a club office and a viewing gallery. The whole area has a really contemporary design and is a great place for young people to try a new sport.

“The whole area has a really contemporary design and is a great place for young people to try a new sport.”
Summer 09 Activities

Pack your days with fun

What is there to do?
There are activities for everyone to take part in including music, sports, drama and dance. Here are a few activities we picked out to give you a taste of what’s in store.

Can you survive the Capstone challenge?
Camp out in Capstone’s woodlands with the rangers, sleeping in a shelter you have to build. Cook food over the campfire and learn forest crafts. Are you tough enough?

You think you can dance?
Lose yourself in one of our dance workshops. Whether you’re a fan of street dance or Girls Aloud you can learn all the routines and show your friends that you can dance.

Mamma Mia! It’s Wicked
Check out any two of these five-day drama workshops. Based on hit stage shows, come along and find out the reasons why the stories unfolded the way they did and try your hand at acting them out. Find out if you’ve got what it takes to be a star.

Feel the breeze
Try out the power boating course on offer. Learn how to ride the waves and handle a powerboat and get yourself a qualification at the same time.

Anything else?
There are lots of other things going on including:
- Sports camp
- Trampolining
- Fishing
- Tennis coaching

Check out www.mixitonline.co.uk for full details or look out for a summer activities booklet in leisure centres, libraries and youth centres.
Nursing staff on a ward at St Bart’s Hospital have put their best foot forward to help them spend more time with their patients.

National research revealed that most nursing staff spent on average only one third of their time with patients.

So the hospital decided to use a project designed by the NHS Institute of Innovation, which looks at ways of improving staff work methods. The project is called The Productive Ward – Releasing Time to Care.

At St Bart’s staff wore pedometers which revealed they were walking up to six miles a shift. Every part of the ward was filmed and the staff watched it back to see what changes they could make.

Changes were made on Andrew ward, including re-organising and relocating the linen store and moving the drug cupboard from the end of the ward to the centre.

A patients’ meal choice form has also been reintroduced. Before this it took two staff 19 minutes to complete a fiddly form - 38 minutes a day of nursing time gone. By returning to the former meal choice form, the task now takes six minutes, which has saved 158 hours a year and reclaimed more than a month of nursing.

The changes have had a real impact on how many miles staff walk, freeing up much more time for them to spend with patients.

The miles that healthcare assistants are walking has nearly halved from 4.2 miles a day to 2.2 miles while staff nurses who walked 2.5 miles a day now walk 1.6 miles.

In addition, healthcare assistants who spent 32 per cent of their time with patients before the changes were put in place are now spending 58 per cent of their time nursing patients. Staff nurses have also increased the time they spend with patients from 36 per cent before the changes to 51 per cent now.

Brian Booth, charge nurse at St Bart’s Hospital and project facilitator, said: “This shows the changes are really working.”

And patients say they are highly appreciative of the care they get at St Bart’s Hospital, which has been enhanced by the extra time the staff now spend with them.

St Bart’s Hospital is releasing time to care

Physiotherapist Sule Hackman with pedometer

Healthcare assistants Margaret Wratten and Hannah Ramanouskaya

Physiotherapist Suzie Hackman

Harry Dunn with assistant physiotherapist Tom Skinner

Alan Tarry, 73, of Street End Road, Chatham, said: “The staff have been so attentive and I’ve enjoyed my stay here. I found the experience very therapeutic and it will help me on the way to a full recovery.”

Valerie Newton, NHS Institute for Innovation Facilitator, added: “The primary care trust has really worked hard to make significant changes and release time into care.”

Ward senior sister Helen Jones said: “Without the dedication of the staff this project would not have been such a success. The little changes we have made have made a very big difference. We want our patients to receive first rate nursing in an efficient, professional, caring and clean environment.”
Innovative thinking

It's not just St Bart's Hospital where innovative ideas are being used to provide excellent healthcare.

Innovative thinking is being used to bring about the best quality health service in the most appropriate settings for Medway's residents.

Personal health budgets

Medway wants to offer personalised budgets to people who have been given six to 12 months to live and have neurological, heart or lung conditions that require care. Patients with a personal budget will be able to choose how they spend the NHS money on their care. Medway has already made it through to the second round of the national assessment to run the pilot for this and hopes to hear from the Department of Health in the autumn if their national funding bid has been successful.

Community equipment team

If you need a walking aid, a hoist or a sling Medway Community Healthcare's community equipment team can now provide this equipment quicker than ever before.

The team has dramatically reduced waiting times despite a 20 per cent increase in demand, as more people choose to be cared for at home.

Cash boost for Medway's single-sex accommodation

Providing privacy and dignity for all Medway patients is important and with a £1.8million cash boost from the Department of Health, NHS Medway will be making sure this happens. The money will be used to improve the availability of single-sex accommodation in Medway's hospitals. The majority of the money will be spent at Medway Maritime Hospital, with the remainder going to Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust and to St Bart's Hospital and the Wisdom Hospice, both run by Medway Community Healthcare.
Children’s Trust Launch party

Medway’s Young Commissioners let their hair down at two parties thrown to celebrate their commitment to making Medway a better place for young people.

The parties - one for eight to 11 year-olds and one for 12 to 19-year-olds – were held at Rochester’s Corn Exchange. Break dancers and a magician kept the partygoers entertained before they strutted their stuff to tunes spun by DJ Manny. The parties were hosted by the Medway Children’s Trust, a new collective of local organisations responsible for improving the lives of children, young people and their families. Medway Council and NHS Medway lead the Medway Children’s Trust, but work closely with other organisations like the police, schools, local probation boards, youth offending teams, Connexions partnerships and the Learning and Skills Council for England.

The Young Commissioners will offer ideas and suggestions to the trust about what they would like improved in Medway. They will also make sure the new Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) is kept up-to-date and remains relevant to their needs. The CYPP is the trust’s promise to make sure children and young people are healthy, stay happy, enjoy life and achieve well at school and in their adult lives. It will be updated every three years by the trust.

Cllr Les Wicks, Chairman of the Medway Children’s Trust, said: “We want everyone to have the best start in life, no matter what their background, age or where they live. The new Children and Young People’s Plan is our promise to them that we have their best interests at heart.”

Find out more about the Children’s Trust and Children and Young People’s Plan by visiting www.medway.gov.uk/childrenstrust by email childrenstrust@medway.gov.uk or phone 306000.
Circle of support for Medway’s young parents

A new service is to be launched in September offering young parents under 21 the opportunity to access formal learning in an informal setting.

Step4ward Plus will promote personal development by helping young parents to engage in education without the barriers that can be experienced with statutory educational provision.

Opportunities will include gaining Edexcel-accredited qualifications in English and mathematics, which will be equivalent to GCSEs.

The Step4ward Plus groups will be held at Woodlands Children’s Centre, Gillingham, and Wayfield Children’s Centre, Chatham.

Step4ward Plus is an extension of the Step4ward sessions.

Medway’s young parents and parents-to-be are already offered support, guidance and somewhere to relax, thanks to the Step4ward sessions at many of the area’s Sure Start children’s centres.

The groups give support to help young parents succeed in their goals and ambitions.

The young mums, dads and parents-to-be meet every week and during the sessions decisions are made on courses or training they would like to attend. Courses include:

- first aid for children and babies
- self-esteem
- anger management
- cookery
- managing your child’s behaviour

To find a Step4ward group near you or to find out more about Step4ward Plus, phone Karen Halliday on 333725.

See Gillingham male voice choir

The Gillingham Male Voice Choir will hold their 21st birthday charity concert in September.

The choir won the Borough Council Choir cup at the Medway Festival of Music in May and their concert will take place on 26 September.

The concert will be at the Central Theatre, Chatham, with music from the Central Band of the Royal British Legion. The profits from the concert will be donated to the Royal British Legion.

New members are welcome to join the choir. Contact Tony Luckhurst on 573872 or Jim Simmonds on 360134.
We’re named ‘the most improved hospital in UK’

Medway NHS Foundation Trust has been singled out for praise at a national awards ceremony.

The trust – which runs Medway Maritime Hospital – has been named as the Most Improved Hospital at the 40 Top Hospitals 2009 awards.

Hosted by Healthcare Knowledge Systems (CHKS), these awards celebrate excellence among CHKS clients across the UK and are based on the evaluation of 21 indicators covering safety, patient experience and quality of care.

Lois Howell, Company Secretary at the trust, said: “We are absolutely thrilled to receive such a prestigious accolade.

“This award is presented to the trust showing the most significant improvement across all of the 40 top hospitals recognised at the ceremony, so it’s a real honour.”

James Coles, Director of Research at CHKS, said: “We are delighted that Medway has been named as one of our 40 top hospitals.

“These awards recognise outstanding performance in 21 areas which we believe are critical to delivering good patient care.”

Putting an end to mixed-sex wards

Medway Maritime Hospital is putting the privacy and dignity of its patients first by putting in place a programme of improvements which will mark the beginning of the end for mixed-sex accommodation.

This is being made possible due to the Department of Health’s Privacy and Dignity Fund, which was announced by the Health Secretary in January 2009.

The £100million ring-fenced fund will enable trusts to make swift adjustments and ensure patients are not treated in mixed-sex accommodation, unless it is clinically justified.

The trust will begin work in the next few months to convert many of the current mixed-sex wards into single-sex accommodation.

And male and female toilets and showers will be put in place, to ensure patients do not have to pass patients of the opposite sex when using the bathroom.

New blinds and partitions are also being installed to protect the patients’ modesty and doors are being secured to prevent patients from being able to walk between male and female wards. Contractors will be on site for seven weeks to complete the work.

“We believe that every patient has the right to be treated in privacy, with the utmost respect and dignity,” said Jacquie McKenna, Director of Nursing and Strategy at Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

“We are taking a two pronged approach, so in addition to these building works we will also be training and educating our staff so that they understand the importance of privacy and dignity and how they can promote and protect it.

“We are also beginning a major redevelopment of the hospital, which will eventually see all the older wards replaced with new, modern facilities with single rooms and en-suite facilities.

“There will inevitably be some areas that can’t be converted to single sex because they are specialist wards, such as critical care and high dependency, but patients can be reassured that their right to privacy and dignity will be respected at all times.

“We are working closely with the primary care trust, strategic health authority and the Department of Health to ensure we are meeting requirements for single-sex accommodation and to make sure we get our dignity values right.”

Date for the diary - Annual General Meeting

Medway NHS Foundation Trust will be holding its Annual General Meeting on 29 September 2009. Why not come along and find out about our plans for the future? Keep an eye out for more information at www.medway.nhs.uk
New senior chaplain appointed

The Reverend Steve Spencer has become Medway Maritime Hospital’s new Senior Chaplain. The Reverend Spencer spent most of his adult life in the Royal Army Medical Corps where he trained as a nurse and qualified as a clinical physiologist before being commissioned as an officer. He has been a part-time chaplain at the hospital since 2004 and will now take over in this senior role from Canon Alan Amos. Reverend Spencer says he thinks the role of chaplain is extremely important in hospitals.

“We are happy to help in any way we can”

He added: “Evidence shows that when you look after someone’s emotional and spiritual wellbeing, not just their disease or condition, they actually get better much more quickly. That is what the chaplaincy is all about.

“We are happy to help in any way we can. Although we are non-denominational, if a patient would like to speak to a representative of their own church or denomination, we can arrange that for them.

“We also have very close ties with other world faiths in our local community, such as Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism and Judaism.

“We are here for everyone, all the time. Just come and find us on level two in the blue zone.”

Older, but not really wiser

Older age groups are taking too many risks with their sexual health. People aged 45 and over in Medway are becoming increasingly reckless when it comes to practising safer sex, new figures show.

In the last three years, the number of people aged 45 to 70 that have been diagnosed with Chlamydia has risen by a staggering 83 per cent. Dr Chula Wijesurendra, a consultant at Medway’s Genito Urinary Medicine department, said: “Because they don’t need to worry about the risk of pregnancy, people in this age bracket often think contraception isn’t necessary, but they still need to protect themselves.

“This is supported by recent figures published by the Health Protection Agency which show that the number of people contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) over the age of 45 has doubled in the last decade – faster than in younger age groups.

“Here at Medway we have an open-door policy for anyone who is concerned they have contracted an STI. The clinic is open from 9am to 4pm and a GP referral is not necessary. The team here treats everyone with discretion and sensitivity.

“No matter what your age, STIs pose a very real threat to your health and it is your responsibility to prevent them.”

A message from the governors

Medway has been a foundation trust for just over a year and the governors say they have enjoyed working on your behalf to make the changes you want. During that time their work has included reviewing the patient experience and appointing a chairman, a new non-executive director and the auditors of the trust.

In addition, they have hosted a series of events for members where they can find out more about clinical procedures from the consultants that carry them out. They have heard about the hospital’s long-term plans for improvement and they have had the opportunity to question the trust’s directors directly.

Anyone in Medway can become a governor and this gives them the opportunity to tell the trust what they think about the hospital and recommend what services should be offered in the future.

They do not cost a penny to be a governor and people who sign up can have as much or as little involvement as they like.

Find out more online at www.medway.nhs.uk or phone the membership office on 825292.
**WHAT'S ON?**

**Screen Classics - Film**

**Tuesday, 11 August 7.30pm**

**Rear Window** (1954, PG) Hitchcock's tense thriller, where a neighbour moves from curtain twitching to a deadly case of eye-spy.

**Cliffe Pools Safari Day**

**Wednesday, 5 August 11am to 5pm**

Mini beast hunts, tabletop games, animal and traditional dance, Japanese arts displays, Japanese music and calligraphy demonstrations. There will also be a chance to find out all about Manga – a Japanese style of drawing or animation made famous through comics, cartoons like Pokemon and style of drawing or animation made famous through comics, cartoons like Pokemon and Ingrid Bergman. A truly iconic film of the last century, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Tickets: £5 per film see four Screen Classics and get a fifth free. The Central Theatre, Chatham box office 338338 www.medway.gov.uk/theatrebooking

**Countryside**

**Wednesday, 5 August 11am to 5pm**

Cliffe Pools Safari Day

Mini beast hunts, tabletop games, animal and traditional dance, Japanese arts displays, Japanese music and calligraphy demonstrations. There will also be a chance to find out all about Manga – a Japanese style of drawing or animation made famous through comics, cartoons like Pokemon and Ingrid Bergman. A truly iconic film of the last century, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Tickets: £5 per film see four Screen Classics and get a fifth free. The Central Theatre, Chatham box office 338338 www.medway.gov.uk/theatrebooking

**Make it Yours This Autumn**

For tickets, more information and this season’s full line up 01634 338338 www.medway.gov.uk/theatrebooking

**Festivals**

**Saturday, 5 and Sunday, 6 September 10am to 5pm**

**Medieval Merriment**

Discover historic Rochester through the late Middle Ages. This living history event offers archery, skirmishes, birds of prey and parades. Rochester Castle Gardens Admission free. Normal admission charges apply to the castle. Phone 843666 or email visitor.centre@medway.gov.uk

**Saturday, 12 September 11am to 4.30pm**

**Will Adams Festival**

Celebrating the life and times of Medway’s famous seafaring son, with a spectacular celebration of Japanese culture and a taste of life in Tudor England. Phone Medway Visitor Information Centre on 843666 or visit www.medway.gov.uk/willadamsfestival

**Saturday, 19 and Sunday, 20 September 10am to 5pm**

**Tudors at Upnor**

Upnor Castle will come alive with Tudors. Come and see for yourself the life and times of a Tudor castle. You may even meet Queen Elizabeth I so keep your head about you.

Upnor Castle Admission £5 adults, £3.50 children and concessions, £13.50 for a family ticket. English Heritage members half price.

Phone 843666 or email visitor.centre@medway.gov.uk

**A new setting for the Will Adams Festival**

The Will Adams Festival returns in September in a new location and with even more sights and sounds from the life and times of Medway’s famous seafaring son. This year’s colourful spectacle takes place on Saturday, 12 September at Gillingham Park, in Canterbury Street, from 11am to 4.30pm. As well as celebrating Japanese culture and traditions, visitors will also be able to sample life in Tudor England when William Adams made his famous voyage to the East.

The day will feature Tudor dance demonstrations and costumed characters along with Taiko Drummers, martial arts displays, Japanese traditional dance, Japanese music and calligraphy demonstrations. There will also be a chance to find out all about Manga – a Japanese style of drawing or animation made famous through comics, cartoons like Pokemon and the hit TV show Heroes. William Adams was born in Gillingham and is believed to be the first Briton to reach Japan.

He landed there in 1600 and stayed until his death in 1620. He was a key advisor to the shogun (general) and built for him Japan’s first western-style ships. He was also the inspiration for the main character in the best-selling novel Shogun by James Clavell.

Japan holds its own Will Adams festival each year, releasing doves as a symbol of peace.

For further details of this year’s event, visit www.medway.gov.uk/willadamsfestival or phone Medway Visitor Information Centre on 843666.
Medway Council’s social workers work within integrated mental health teams, with consultant psychiatrists, community mental health nurses and other health professionals. They are part of the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust. Medway Matters asked Director Justine Leonard about the challenges and rewards of her role.

What does your job involve?
I am responsible for ensuring the people of Medway get high quality mental health services when referred by their GP for more specialist care. I also manage a number of very specialist mental health services, including eating disorders, mother and infant mental health and personality disorder services across all of Kent. I have to work closely with the rest of the NHS, the voluntary sector and our partners at the council.

What inspired you to work in this field?
I trained as an occupational therapist and quickly developed a real interest in supporting people with more complex mental health needs to live independent lives. I have always worked in mental health services in day therapy, hospital and community-based services and have worked in Medway for large parts of my career.

What did you do before taking on your current role?
After working as a clinician in London in a range of settings, I worked locally in community services and moved into management in 1996, leading occupational therapy teams and rehabilitation services. I became a Director of West Kent’s Specialist Services in 2004 and in 2006 the Director for Mental Health Services in Medway.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?
I am pleased to have been a part of mental health services at a time when we have truly moved to ensure people with mental health needs can live fulfilling lives in the community. The closure of the large Victorian asylums in the 1990s was heralded as an era in which the focus of mental health services shifted to empower patients to have real control over how they manage their illness.

What challenges does the service face?
Despite the progress during recent years with the style of services provided, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that the stigma associated with mental illness is reduced and eliminated. In particular, we need to continue the work we have started to focus on getting help to young people when they begin to become unwell. Everyone can become mentally unwell and we all need to be able to spot the signs and take action.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
I have a busy family life with many weekends spent watching my sons play football.

The quick fire round
Where do you live?
Gillingham.
What do you love?
My family and anything art deco.
Hobbies?
Shopping, food and friends.
Favourite colour?
Emerald green.
Favourite sport?
Football.
Any pets, if yes, what?
Roger and Barry, my hamsters.
**Meetings calendar**

**JULY**

29 Licensing Hearing Panel – Sub Committee of Licensing & Safety

30 Council

8 AUGUST

12 School Transport and Curriculum appeals Committee

12 Development Control Committee

18 Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20 Health and Adult Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 Cabinet

25 Licensing and Safety Committee

26 School Transport and Curriculum Appeals Committee

27 Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny

**SEPTEMBER**

4 Licensing Hearing Panel – Sub Committee of Licensing & Safety

5 Development Control Committee

5 Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 International Relations Committee

6 Employment Matters Committee

10 Council

11 Licensing Sub-Committee of Licensing and Safety Committee

15 South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee

16 School Transport and Curriculum Appeals Committee

18 Licensing Hearing Panel – Sub Committee of Licensing and Safety

22 Cabinet

22 Audit Committee

**Call:** 01634 848441 for a no obligation appointment

**Offices in:** Gillingham, Sittingbourne and Whitstable

**Are you looking after someone else’s child for more than 28 days?**

If so, then you must notify Medway Council for help and clarification of your responsibilities as a private foster carer.

**Phone:** 01634 334466

**Email:** ss.access&info@medway.gov.uk

**Is your child living with someone else, who is not a close relative, for more than 28 days?**

Medway Council is looking for people who can give time, energy and commitment to adopting a child. We need families for all ages of children but especially for older children and those from black and ethnic minorities. Please call 01634 335676 to discuss your next open evening or visit www.medway.gov.uk/adoption

**Medway Matters**

The Council Magazine for Everyone in Medway

August/September 2009

www.medway.gov.uk
Contact your councillor

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Conservative 33
Labour 13
Liberal Democrat 6
Independent 1

If you want more information phone member services on 332732 or email members@medway.gov.uk
Cheaper bus travel for students

Now extended up to age 18

Medway students in full-time education up to 18-years-old can travel at half the adult fare from September.

For an application form or further information:
www.medway.gov.uk      Phone: 331155

The pass is valid for journeys at times when the bus companies would normally charge students the adult fare (passes for years 12 and 13 can be used to and from school/college only, up to 6pm Monday to Friday).