

Monument and Memorial Newtown Railway Works

April 2024 SWANCC gladly invited Mr Gerry Clarkson CBE former Leader of Ashford Borough Council to its meeting to discuss the detailed and in depth plans for the Monument and Memorial on Newtown Railway Works.

This will be a significant and meaningful tribute for those who gave their lives in service to this Country in World War II and those whose lives were spent working on the Newtown Railway Works both in War and Peace time.

The following Computer-Generated Image give a draft view of the design so far to demonstrate how the Monument and Memorial is to look, the final design may change but it gives an overall impression of the plan and scope of the Monument and Memorial.

A detailed presentation including a Computer-Generated image of the Memorial is to be included in the Annual Electors Meeting this year, 6:30pm, 29th May 2024 at the Salvation Army Hall.

Newtown Railway Works is a rich and significant part of the history and heritage of SWAN and many families have relatives who worked on the site. It was poignant last year to mark the 175th Anniversary of Newtown Railway Works and 180 years of the railway coming to Ashford, with the Railway Vintage Festival.

In his report to Council Mr Clarkson said "This Monument is to recognise the significant contribution by Ashford Railway Workers to the industrial and economic growth of the United Kingdom from 1847 to 1982. This is also a special Memorial in memory of those who sadly lost their lives in and around the Ashford Railway Works during the ten bombing raids during World War II"

The Monument and Memorial will feature a 3ft square and 6ft high stone base. This will have detailing on each side with the names of those who were killed during the air raids. The rear to have the name of the Belgian Pilot Flying Officer Raymond Gustav De Hasse flying with the RAF who



lost his life in defence of this Nation, hence also there will be an image of a Spitfire. The front of the high stone base will feature details of the unveiling and the purpose of erecting this Monument along with an image of the Coffee Pot Train.

On top of this high stone base will feature a 2ft square 1ft 8 inch high granite block sitting on a 2 inch thick stone base surmounted by a cross 3ft 6 inches high with 2 engine wheels supporting the upright lower section of the cross. Reflecting the purpose of this Monument and Memorial.

A wreath laying stone will be at the base of the Monument 1ft 6 inches deep and 5 inches high surrounding the main base.

The paving will be non slip and feature railway line designs and the history of Newtown Railway Works. The Monument will be accessible for disabled and the ramped entrance will be 9 ft wide.

Either side of the Monument will be two 6ft granite benches which will allow residents and visitors to sit and reflect on their loved ones and their memories.

The Monument will be surrounded by a red brick wall, made from reclaimed brick from the original Railway Works. It will be approximately 3ft high and 9 inches wide capped with a 12-inch granite coping stone and rounded edges.

4 panels are proposed to be erected on the red brick wall which is anticipated to feature images of Railway Workers at the Site, Striking images of Women at work in the War effort, the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to the Railway Works.

The overall Monument and Memorial will be a worthy tribute to Newtown's history and heritage within the Newtown Railway Works. SWANCC are extremely grateful for Mr Gerry Clarkson CBE, who has been working so diligently not only designing and pioneering this Monument and Memorial but also for taking so much time to research all the history and lives of those who contributed to Newtown.

Chairs' Statement

Dear Residents,

It is a pleasure to write to you, in this edition of SWAN News there are updates on Community Activities and Community Groups as well as the plans for the D DAY Beacon 6th June 2024 at Gas House Fields Allotments. Do save the date for this important Anniversary.

As outlined in the first article of SWAN News, SWANCC is delighted to have been working with Mr Gerry Clarkson CBE, Former Leader of Ashford Borough Council for a Monument and Memorial to those who gave their lives in service to this Country and all those who worked at the Newtown Railway Works which is such a strong part of our history and heritage in this area.

Sue Mullan

Cllr Sue Mullan
Chair SWANCC

Widening of the Albion Place Footpath

SWANCC have been lobbying Ashford Borough Council to widen this footpath and have been forwarding residents feedback. However more examples are needed to demonstrate the issues

Residents have reported issues with the path from Albion Place leading towards the Spinney. The path does not line up with dropped Kerb nor is it sufficiently wide enough for wheelchair access.

Heavy rain over recent weeks has increased the problem and the mud and puddles have made the traverse very difficult.

SWANCC know the footpath is very busy as it provides access to the Spinney and Newtown Road. It is used daily by children walking to North School as well as residents who live adjacent to the path. In addition, residents are using it to access the 5 Bus Line on Hunter Road.

To help with the campaign to widen this footpath, it would be very helpful if residents could send their examples to SWANCC via the contact us form on the SWANCC website www.swancc.org.uk



Hellos & Goodbyes

There has been a sad goodbye and a very warm welcome at SWANCC

A fond farewell to Vice Chair Cllr Andy Rogers



Cllr Andy Rogers was Vice Chair of SWANCC, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee and Chair of Planning and Highways Committee, Member of Staffing Committee and Allotments Committee. He said a very sad farewell to SWANCC in February this year. Andy has been an integral member of this Council since its formation and has steered it towards success on every front. SWANCC is so grateful for Andy's commitment, time and friendship to this Council.

Andy is leaving Ashford to move to Holland with his family. SWANCC wish Andy and his family the very best in their new adventures and our loss is most certainly Holland's gain.

A warm welcome to Cllr Malcolm Webb

SWANCC are glad to welcome Cllr Malcolm Webb, he has joined the Council this year and has been a key support in the foundation of this Council from the former SWAN Community Group. It is a delight to have Cllr Malcolm Webb officially joining the Council and his extensive knowledge of the area and its history will be really beneficial to the Council as it moves forward on key objectives for enhancing the area.

SWANCC is a vibrant Council working hard to enhance the community and area of South Willesborough and Newtown. SWANCC does have vacancies for Parish Councillors and welcomes all ages and backgrounds to its Community. It is an A political organisation and does not align itself with Political Parties to ensure that it is local matters and local residents interests put first in all that the Council does. If you would be interested in joining SWANCC please contact the Community Council Manager either by email clerk@swancc.org.uk or telephone 01233 528933.

D Day Beacon 6th June 2024 with National Fish & Chips Day



Thursday 6th June 2024 is the 80th Anniversary of D DAY the largest Naval Land and Air operation in History.

The King's Pageant Master Bruno Peek has put together an International Tribute for this Anniversary.

Comprising of firstly Beacons being lit on the five beaches in France the Channel Islands and across the United Kingdom. Secondly a remembrance of all the work for dig for victory with all Allotment Societies being asked to remember the Campaign and the significant contribution to the war effort this gave. Thirdly National Fish and Chip day has been moved from its normal date of Friday 7th June to Thursday 6th June 2024. Fourthly Poems have been written by HM Chelsea Pensioners to be read in Schools and Nurseries. Finally, 5 Charities reflecting each of the Armed Forces involved in D Day have been highlighted and donations opened.

SWANCC D DAY Anniversary Response

Fish and Chips will be available to purchase for take away at The Alfred Arms from 5pm – 9pm.

The SWAN Centre will be hosting a small exhibition of the Pageant's Masters guide for the Beacon and details on Gas House Fields Allotments will also be available.

SWANCC will be lighting a Beacon at 9:15pm at Gas House Fields allotments with gates open from 8:30pm for residents to attend and remember this anniversary. A bespoke D DAY Beacon has been purchased for the occasion and will burn for 45 minutes. The official International Tribute will be read by the Community Council Manager at the lighting of the Beacon.

We look forward to welcoming residents to Gas House Fields Allotments for this important Anniversary gates will be open from 8:30pm.

Please note: Children remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians at all times and must stay with their parents at all times on Gas House Fields Allotments. Dogs are welcome but must remain on a lead with their owners at all times. There are no toilet facilities at the allotments but the Salvation Army Hall will be open for this purpose only.

To be undertaken at 9.15pm alongside the lighting the Beacons and the Lamp Lights of Peace - 6th June 2024



We would like to encourage all those lighting Beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace to undertake the reading of **The International Tribute** when lighting them at **9.15pm** on 6th June 2024.

This could be undertaken by your Lord Mayor, Mayor, High Steward, High Sheriff, Town or Parish Clerk, Chairman or Leader of the Council, a family member of all ages, or others you feel appropriate, providing them with this unique opportunity to pay 'tribute' to all those that paid the ultimate sacrifice on D-Day and throughout WWII as a whole, whilst fighting for the freedom we all enjoy today.



The Tribute

Let us remember those who gave their lives at home and abroad during the D-Day landings, whose sacrifice enables us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

Let us remember those who came home wounded, physically and mentally, and the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned to restore their relationships and rebuild their working lives after years of conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost husbands, wives, sons, daughters and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen and women and merchant seafarers of all nationalities - from all countries - who fought, suffered and died during the D-Day landings and six years of war.

Let us all remember those in the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, Merchant Navy, and our Allies - the brave people who kept us safe on the home front and abroad and those in reserved occupations during the difficult time of war.

Let us remember the brave doctors and nurses who cared for the wounded, the men and women who toiled in the fields, the coal mines, the factories and the air raid wardens, police officers, firemen, ambulance drivers and the young people of the Scouts and Guides who all played such a vital role in the war.

The International tribute



Community Defibrillators and Community First Aid Training

SWANCC have arranged for a further Community Defibrillator to be installed at the Salvation Army Hall on Cudworth Road.

This Defibrillator will be the health care industry standard Life Pak 2 model which is suitable for adults and children and will provide essential lifesaving equipment in the event of an emergency. This is the third defibrillator SWANCC have installed in the SWAN area to ensure the best safety for residents. Along with the existing Defibrillators at The Albion Pub and The Alfred Arms Pub.

The Defibrillator and Cabinet was funded entirely by Ward Cllr Al Arnold with his Ashford Borough Council Ward Grant. SWANCC are really grateful to Cllr Arnold for supporting this essential project.



First Aid Training

With the installation of the new defibrillator SWANCC will again be offering a half day of first aid training including use of defibrillators for the SWAN area.

This will be provided by Hopkins Defibrillators and Training and hosted at the Salvation Army Hall, with 12 places available.

If you would like to take part in the training please contact the SWAN Office on clerk@swancc.org.uk or telephone 01233 528933 advising if daytime or evening is best for you.

Great British Spring Clean March 2024

The National campaign for the Great British Spring Clean in March 2024 was supported by SWANCC this year with a Community Litter Pick.

SWANCC invested in 20 sets of litter pickers and hoops and set 3 groups out to tackle litter over Frog Orchard and Frog Island, Newtown parade of shops and the car parks and South Willesborough footpaths and play parks.

It was a wonderful community day with residents of all ages coming to take part and actively spring clean SWAN. SWANCC were grateful to SWAN Litter Pickers and Willesborough Wombles for supporting the event and it was a great opportunity to work together. 16 large bags of litter were collected and logged with the #litterheroes Campaign.

The event finished off with tea, coffee and cakes kindly provided by the Salvation Army Hall for which everyone was extremely grateful. It was a wonderful and worthwhile community day.



SWAN Community Plan Area Enhancements

February and March 2024 saw the flowering of additional snowdrops and daffodils across the SWAN area planted by the SWANCC Planting and Biodiversity group last Autumn.

A total of 5000 bulbs were planted across South Willesborough and Newtown to bring cheer and improve the look and feel of the area.

Applications for the Living Heritage Coronation Tree planting have now opened. Within this project SWANCC will be planting 9 fruit trees to create a small orchard of fruit trees to mark the Kings Coronation.

SWANCC will also be ensuring the tree planted in Memory of Amanda Champion on Newtown Green has a new memorial plaque and adequate protection over Summer 2024.

SWANCC Cllrs for Newtown have been actively working with the Ashford Borough Council Housing Department for external improvements in Newtown. In September 2023 and again in February 2024 SWAN Cllrs conducted Ward Walks with Ashford Borough Council Housing Officers to look at external improvements required and opportunities for partnership working to improve the area.

SWANCC were pleased to see the long overdue repairs to external walls in resident parking areas in Belmont Place, along with the removal of fly tipping and waste in this area. Additionally, the fly tipping from Bullied Place and new fencing has brought about positive results for this road.

SWANCC will now be working to see where new planting opportunities are available and review replacement Benches and Seating in the area.



Alleyways and FootPaths

Regular weeding and tidying of the alleyways and footpaths throughout SWAN are now the next focus of the Council.

With the upcoming hire of the Public Spaces Enhancement Officer a regular programme of works can be established to ensure tidying weeding and cleaning of the alleyways for the best look and feel for the area.

The Public Spaces Enhancement Officer will also be looking at cleaning graffiti, tidying and maintaining street furniture, and focussing on Health and Safety responsibilities for SWANCC.

Protection for the longevity of the Bridges on Newtown Road

SWANCC have been actively working with Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and the Ashford International Development Company for Newtown Works to ensure structural surveys and protection is in place for the Bridges on Newtown Road.

Of particular concern is the Crowbridge Bridge adjacent to Gladstone Road to ensure it is resilient for the HGV vehicles which will need to use it for the development works.

SWANCC Cllrs invited the Site Manager for the Newtown Works to its Full Council Meeting to explain the plans in place for the management of traffic and bridges on Newtown Road and this was an informative and helpful discussion. Following this meeting SWANCC Cllrs attended the initial survey by engineers and will continue to diligently observe this process for the safety of the Bridges.

This is part of the ongoing observation role of SWANCC for the Newtown Railway Works.

Litter Collection

SWANCCs' litter picker has been actively working every week across South Willesborough and Newtown ensuring litter is collected from footpaths and alleyways, as well as ensuring all fly tipping is reported and duly collected by Ashford Borough Council.

SWAN litter pickers meet on the first Wednesday of every month and a growing number of residents are also independently collecting litter and actively caring for the area which has brought a measurable improvement in SWAN. SWANCC would like to say Thank You so much to SWAN Litter Pickers and Residents for their time and commitment combatting litter in the area.

There is such a comparative improvement in the amount of litter that needs to be collected from the streets in SWAN and SWANCC would like to thank everyone who has been working to collect litter and keep SWAN Tidy. SWANCC do ask residents to continue to take litter home with you or use the street bins provided.



Gas House Fields Allotments

SWANCC were really saddened by the break in at Gas House Fields allotments Thursday Night Friday Morning 12th April 2024.

5 sheds were broken into and this was a cruel and unnecessary crime. If anyone has any information on this crime please report it to:

KENT POLICE on crime reference 120402 - thank you.

SWANCC are members of Neighbourhood Watch and report all crime and encourage all residents to report all crime. If it is an emergency call 999, for non emergency call 101 or report on the Kent Police Website. If you need any support, KENT Police offer a LIVE CHAT on their website and SWANCC would encourage residents to use this service.

At Gas House Fields Allotments SWANCC have been focussing on Health and Safety. New fencing for the boundary with the neighbouring properties has been installed and the first stage of new fencing along the South Willesborough Dykes for maximum safety for tenants has also been installed. Further fencing is being reviewed by SWANCC to ensure both the safety of the site and to give the best look and feel to the area.

The Living Workshop will again be running this year, planting of the Council Allotment with all vegetables grown, being distributed through the Salvation Army on Friday Mornings at the Community Food and Chat drop in.

Allotmenteeing at Gas House Fields

Allotmenteeing at Gas House Fields brings many benefits, physical health, healthy eating, socialising and accomplishment.

The heavy rain throughout the beginning of this year has been challenging but as the better weather is hopefully coming it will be exciting to see the Allotments spring into life.

It is the hope of SWANCC for as many residents as possible to have the benefit of access to Gas House Field Allotments. Costs are £25,00 deposit and annual rent is currently between £15 and £25 per year.

If a full allotment feels too large there is the option to sign up to the Community Allotment Club which is charged at £5 per year and is a great opportunity to be involved in a Community Gardening project. The produce grown will be for the benefit of SWAN residents and distributed through the Salvation Army Ashford team.

The book a bed scheme is also open with 1m plots for residents charged at a £25 deposit and £5 per year.

If you would be interested in a plot please contact the SWAN Office on email clerk@swancc.org.uk or telephone 01233 528933.



COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES

SWAN Women's Institute

SWAN WI meets 1st Friday of every month at the SWAN Centre in South Willesborough.

New Members are always welcome and SWAN WI is a very happy and friendly group.

A variety of speakers attend the group giving interesting talks and meaningful discussions.

SWAN WI also runs a Book Club, a Walking Group Lunch Club and Whist Group.

2 jumble sales are held every year and are always popular with residents for a bargain and of course the delicious tea and cake. 2 Quizzes are held every year which are always a lot of fun.

Salvation Army Ashford



The Salvation Army Hall has been under going a full refurbishment this year.

The Hall has been redecorated and is now looking really smart. The rear Hall has also been repainted with new fitted cabinets installed giving a really sleek and organised look. The next stage is new flooring throughout the building which will give a fantastic finish to all the redecoration works. New chairs are then being ordered giving the Hall a really fresh and welcoming appeal.

The Community Missions Programme is still running at full force, Monday mornings is Toddlers, Wednesday mornings is Ladies Breakfast, Friday mornings is Food and Chat and Friday evenings is Kids Club.

The Youth Club is being rebranded and moving from Fridays to Tuesdays with new volunteers joining the team. An action-packed schedule is planned including guest speakers, new activities and a new name yet to be revealed!

Sunday Mornings is Full Church at 11am which is really full of people and growing. The Sunday School is also growing and goes from strength to strength.

Everyone is welcome to join the Salvation Army Ashford for any of their programmes.

Baxendale Court

The first Wednesday of the Month is the Community Coffee Moring at Baxendale Court.

Tea Coffee and the ever-popular bacon rolls are available for everyone. A new stall runs each month with high quality and beautiful jewellery, clothes, shoes and handbags and is proving very popular. If you are local on a Wednesday do pop in to the very friendly group as you will be most welcome.



SWAN Litter Pickers

South Willesborough Litter Pickers are a group of volunteers committed to keeping our community clean and tidy for the benefit of the residents and safe for local wildlife.

We meet the first Wednesday of the month 9.00am at the SWAN Centre. New volunteers always welcome. Contact us through Facebook SW Litter pickers.

Annual Electors Meeting 29th May 2024 SWANCC To Make Awards for Outstanding Contribution to the Community

35 years of the SWAN Centre SWAN Centre Management Committee

The SWAN Centre is 35 years old this year and many members of the Management Committee have served for 33 years. This is a pivotal and vital facility in the SWAN Community. SWANCC will be awarding the Management Committee with an Outstanding Contribution to the Community Award at the Annual Electors Meeting on 29th May 2024.

Lauren Corbett Salvation Army

Since July 2023, Lauren has taken on leadership of the Salvation Army Ashford. In this short time there has been significant refurbishment of the Hall and under her leading the Community Missions Programme has gone from strength to strength. Therefore, SWANCC are delighted to be awarding Lauren Corbett with an Outstanding Contribution to the Community Award.



Update from the SWAN Office

It has been a busy start to 2024 in the SWAN Office, the D Day Beacon is a high priority for this national and international tribute and preparations are in full swing.

It was a delight to have a student from North School for work experience in March this year, the week was really productive and our student has written a lovely article for residents to review.

SWANCC is a successful Council but success brings work and success brings growth. With this in mind SWANCC have been focussing on all the Health and Safety aspects for its upcoming expansion to the staffing team, along with its projects and responsibilities. A partnership with Work Nest has brought in a reliable and informative Health and Safety and Human Resource support to the Council to ensure best practices as an employer and a service provider.

It has certainly been varied and challenging in the SWAN Office but extremely worthwhile and it is wonderful to be able to see the activity of the Council making real and measurable improvement in the SWAN area.

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

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Improving Parking on Newtown

Parking on Newtown is congested and it would really support the area if residents can use the car parks for parking whenever possible.

To support this aim SWANCC have been working with Ashford Borough Council to repair and maintain the Car Parks on Newtown. The car park on Wainwright Place has been cleared of all brambles and weeds. The car park on Alfred Road adjacent to Beazley Court has had the bushes reduced and cleared, the wall has been reduced so residents can use the carpark safely and securely for their vehicles.

The further car parks have been weeded and tidied and will be much more user friendly for residents. It is hoped that by improving the serviceability of the car parks residents will be more confident to use them.

Work Experience Week at SWAN Community

I started out this week by meeting the SWANCC Community Manager, Sarah Evans, who was very warm and welcoming and I also met the Chair, Sue Mullan, who was very professional and informative, discussing the Minutes of the recent Joint Transport Board Meeting.

We worked on preparing for the Council's Internal Audit. I learnt about the Council's new accounting package. It was very informative and interesting to know about. We looked at the Council's fixed asset register and its exercise of public rights.

Work was being done to review the fire safety of the offices and first aid qualification updates. The orders were put in for the new defibrillator at the Salvation Army and first aid training for volunteers.

I helped to produce the new exhibition for the 80th anniversary of D-day. A beacon is going to be lit on the allotments in June to mark this large occasion.

I visited the Salvation Army and saw the team, who work to provide the community missions program for the area.

The posters for the new fencing were printed out and laminated for distribution.

I learnt how to review a planning application, we looked at the technical drawings for the development and the impact on both climate and the area, this might have.

I've visited the new allotments for disabled access and we did a stock check of the Council's community litter picking equipment and arranged collection of all the litter that has been collected by the SWANCC litter picker.

I've visited the SWANCC farm and saw the new lambs and the fencing, the Council provided the grant funding for.

The SWAN Community Council is working hard with Neighbourhood Watch and we visited Ashford Borough Council and reviewed the monitoring centre, and there are a vast amount of cameras around town to respond to safety issues or accidents. I thought it was so amazing of how far technology has come to form a wonderful community of people.

Thank you, Councillor Peter Feacey, for arranging a really entertaining tour of the Council. It was so interesting to see the wide range of services the Borough Council provides and how much they improve the area in which we live.

SWANCC Council work hard with Ashford Borough Council to improve the area and it was interesting to see how people work together as one to make each other's lives much better.

Mario Simpson

28th March 2024