

IN BRIEF

Fight begins to save help desk

A protest group to fight Dover District Council's planned closure of the help desk in Deal Library has been launched.

Save the Deal Library Help Desk group has been set up by Jane Mead, Sue Beer and Jenny King.

Their aim is to get the decision to withdraw the service reversed before the council closes it completely, something it has pledged to do by the end of March.

Community activist and Deal town councillor Sue Beer said: "The most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our community will be the ones who suffer. Not everybody will be able to contact DDC by other methods. Elderly people, those with disabilities and people without transport will be most affected."

She would like to hear from any residents who will not be able to easily get advice once this help desk closes. Call her on 07815 459101 or email cllrsuebeer@gmail.com

The group is holding an action planning meeting on Friday, January 26 at the Golf Road Centre from 7pm to 8pm.

Music night for benefit of girl

Fundraising continues to help a little girl's Wish To Walk campaign.

A ticketed event will be held at the Port Arms pub in Deal in aid of Ellice Barr, aged five.

Her parents, Joe and Amy, are raising £65,000 to pay for life-changing selective dorsal rhizotomy surgery and rehabilitation to combat her cerebral palsy.

The event is on Friday, February 2, from 7.30pm, and there will be a live band, free buffet and raffle with great prizes plus lots of fun and games to keep the cash rolling in. Tickets are on sale now from the pub.



'You're the bouncer, not the croupier' regulator is scolded Banks watchdog feels bite of MP's questions

MP Charlie Elphicke has blasted banking regulators for never saying sorry to people affected by the financial crash.

Hundreds of people in his Dover constituency lost their jobs, scores of businesses closed and local taxpayers lost £51 million invested in Icelandic banks.

In a Treasury Select Committee hearing on Tuesday last week Mr Elphicke grilled Sam Woods, deputy governor of the Prudential Regulation Authority.

Mr Elphicke said: "The person on the street feels very strongly that the banks behaved irresponsibly in the run up to the 2008 crisis.

"They feel that they have paid to bail out the banks, no-one has said sorry and they are concerned that they want to reopen the casino and set up roulette wheels once again.

"I put it to you, you're meant to be the bouncer of the casino, not the croupier."

Mr Woods responded: "Absolutely people have the right to feel outraged about what went wrong before the crisis.

"Frankly a significant motivation for me being in this line of work is to try and avoid us being in that position again.

"The amount of taxpayer funding involved was pretty extraordinary."

Following the meeting, Mr



Woolworths went out of business and jobs were lost during the financial crisis

Elphicke added: "I told banking regulators we haven't forgiven them. Ten years on we are still suffering from that massive bail-out.

"Families across Dover and Deal were affected. Unemployment spiked and investment dried up.

"There has been progress since – a 7% pay rise since 2015 for the least well-off, income inequality at its lowest for 30 years, Labour's debt two thirds down.

"Locally £400 million has been invested since 2010 and unem-

'The person on the street feels that the banks behaved irresponsibly'

ployment has halved. But we must keep going.

"We must work harder to put more money in people's pockets."

The last Labour government



had to bail out the banks in 2008 to stop the economy collapsing.

A deep recession dragged on from April 2008 to September 2009.

Major brand names such as Woolworths went bust.

The chain had a branches at Biggin Street, Dover and Deal High Street.

Curry's Digital, with a branch in Deal High Street, also went.

All this was followed by savage austerity cuts brought in by David Cameron's coalition government from 2010.

HOW CRASH HIT US

The number of active businesses in Dover district was going up every year until 2008. The 3,175 in 2007 became 3,170 in 2008, 3,140 in 2009 and 3,100 in 2010 before picking up again.

A total of 970 businesses closed in Dover district between 2008 and 2010.

Job density in Dover declined dramatically from 2008 – from 0.7 jobs per resident then to 0.55 in 2011. In Kent only Gravesham's (0.48) was lower.

In January 2008, P&O Ferries announced more than 40 job cuts at Dover.

In February 2011, pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced it was closing its site in Sandwich, leading to the loss of 1,500 local jobs.

The overall unemployment rate in Dover district went from 2.1% in 2008 to 3.3% in 2009, 3.2% in 2010, 3.5% in 2011 and a high of 3.9% in 2012 before reducing again.

Gross Value Added – the value of goods and services produced – dropped from £15,274 per head in 2007 to £14,749 in 2009 and £14,162 in 2009, more than a thousand less than before the crash.

Dover District Council lost £1 million it deposited in Iceland banks and Kent County Council lost £50 million. In total every person in the Dover district lost around £70.

A total of 350 homes were built in Dover in 2006. It dropped massively after the crash, to 160 in 2007, 130 in 2008, 180 in 2009 and never got above 120 again until 2013. It was up to 450 and 340 for the last two years.

Carnival courts successor to queen Kelsi

A new regatta court for Deal will be chosen next month and girls of all ages are encouraged to compete.

The selections take place on Saturday, February 3, at Ocean Rooms in Queen Street, Deal.

Seven new faces will be recruited, taking over from this year's court – queen Kelsi Endean, senior princesses Amelia Lawson and Hannah Brice, junior queen Charlie Cousin, junior princesses

Aimee McGarrigle and Adelle Sharp and rosebud Daisy Gillespie.

Doors will open at 12.30pm and judging for the rosebud competition, for girls aged five to seven only, will start at 1pm.

Entries for the junior court selection for girls aged eight to 12 will be accepted from 2pm, with judging from 3pm to 5pm.

The doors will then close at 5.30pm and reopen at 7pm for the appointment of the senior

court. Applicants must be aged between 13 and 24.

Check-in will be at 7pm with the judging taking place from 8pm.

Those selected will be expected to attend more than 60 events during the year, taking up Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. A highlight will be Deal Carnival Week which includes events such as the 'Teddy Bears' Picnic and Party on the Prom.

Admission to the selection day is £4 or free to competitors, sash holders and under-14s.

All entrants must live in the CT14 postcode area and dress in formal attire.

To apply, collect a form from the East Kent Mercury office, 13 Queen Street, Deal, or fill one out on the day.

➔ To sponsor the new court, call John Trickey on 07890 942914.



Carnival queen Kelsi Endean



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