

# Larner Road Re-Development



The seven tower blocks of the Larner Road estate are distinctive landmarks on the approach to Erith along Northend Road. In spite of efforts by estate staff to keep the neighbourhood presentable, it no longer meets residents' expectations and is increasingly unpopular. After consultation with local people the housing association, Orbit South, has decided to demolish all the current buildings and replace them with new family homes and low rise apartments.

The new development will have a wider range of homes from one bedroom flats to four bedroom family houses with gardens. There will also be a mix of housing types including affordable rented homes, low-cost home ownership and homes for sale.

There is still a lot of work to do before demolition starts. We expect the design process to begin in early 2012 and there will be extensive local consultation to ensure that we take into account everyone's views and priorities. We hope to have planning permission by summer 2013 with a start on site later that year. In the meantime, the 620 residents of the estate are beginning to find other homes, across Bexley and elsewhere. The empty flats are then available for local people on short term lets until the demolition begins.

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## Erith Riverside Clean-Up Saturday 9 July 11.30am - 4.00pm

Join Thames21 and Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith (FORGE) to clean up the Thames foreshore in Erith. Volunteers are needed to help remove shopping trolleys and traffic cones from the mudflats using ropes. Help is also needed to litter pick along the riverside path.

This event is supported by Morrisons, Bexley Council,

Bexley Community Safety Partnership and Erith Town Forum.

### Location:

Riverside Gardens, Erith – meeting on the ramp near the Old Police station.

Meet at 11.15am for introduction and kit-up. Clean-up will commence at 11.30am

*Volunteers at the Riverside Clean Up in March*



# Erith Town & Around

Erith Town Forum Newsletter

Issue 25

Summer 2011



Photo courtesy Grant Blowers

## Ken Livingstone visits the riverside gardens Erith

The Chairman, Secretary and many other members of FORGE were very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Ken Livingstone when he visited the Riverside Gardens on 15th June. Joan McCarthy and Alec Tapper made it very clear to Mr Livingstone that the people of Erith are totally opposed to any building on any part of the Gardens. Members of the community were interested to hear that whilst in office Mr

Livingstone and his officers had identified sufficient brown field sites to meet the housing needs in the Erith area without taking away from the community any of the green areas in the Town.

**Erith Forum and FORGE are both non-political organisations as previously stated, and would be very happy to discuss these issues with Councillors and MPs from all political parties.**

## Note from the Chair

Welcome to the summer 2011 issue of the newsletter of the Erith Town Forum.

We are still in business despite the many funding problems prevalent to-day. Our members are very aware that many residents do not receive copies of the local newspapers freely delivered to many other parts of Bexley and this newsletter aims to keep you all informed of local issues and developments. The Forum is totally non-political with members from all parties represented on the group.

In this issue you will find articles about the progress being made by FORGE to get the Riverside Gardens designated a Town Green. There is also a call for volunteers for the next Riverside Clean Up, an update on the plans for the Larner Road Estate, news from Riverside Shopping Centre and a note from the Chairman of the Riverside Festival. Many

of you were very disappointed that the Festival did not take place this year but Gary Taylor has pledged to make sure it happens in 2012 and hopefully thereafter on a regular basis. This is one of the most important events on the Riverside Gardens and a big factor in our fight to retain the whole Gardens site.

Don't forget everyone is welcome to attend Erith Town Forum meetings, details are given on the back of this Newsletter. Once you have attended a meeting you will then automatically receive the papers relevant to each meeting. If you give us your email address you will also receive all other useful local information sent to the Forum for distribution to the local community.

**Enjoy your read!**

**Doreen Ives**

## Diary Dates

**ERITH TOWN FORUM**  
 meets bi-monthly at the Vets' Club, Park Crescent  
 (corner of Glebe Way) 7pm -9pm

Dates of future meetings:

- 20th July 2011
- 28th September 2011,
- 30th November 2011,
- 25th January 2012,
- 28th March 2012,
- 23rd May 2012 (AGM)

### Police Panel Meeting

13th July 2011 Community Room at Carrack House, Waterhead Close 7pm

### Veterans Club Summer Fete

13th August 2011 in the Club grounds

### Alexander Selkirk re-enactment Day

October 15th 2011 – On the River Front

### Senior's Christmas Event

December 12th 2011 in the hall at Christ Church Erith 2pm - 5pm

### Erith Christmas Tree Festival

Christ Church Erith Friday 9th – Sunday 11th December  
 Tree lit Carol Service 6.30 pm Sunday 11th December.



and Running Horses Supporting Erith Town Forum

The Rowing Club jetty, which will be used for the re-enactment on 15th October.

## Selkirk summer starts with a BANG!

The Selkirk Summer is celebrating the 300th anniversary of the arrival in Erith of Alexander Selkirk – the real life inspiration for Robinson Crusoe. We kicked off with the Selkirk Spectacular Family Fun Day on 26th June, and every one had a fabulous time!

But we've got even more planned! Talks about Erith's seafaring history, activities and fun days for children, drama, history and art trails to follow around the town, and even a music concert!

We are also working with Belvedere, Peareswood, St Augustines and Slade Green primary schools, and the Erith Academy, to produce work exploring Selkirk, Crusoe and Erith over the past 500 years.

All the primary schools will contribute towards a huge

frieze depicting the Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, which will be displayed alongside other work produced, at the Halcot Gallery at Hall Place, Bexley from 15th September.

To crown the Selkirk Summer, on the 15th October 2011, the anniversary of Selkirk's arrival, will be a day of activities around Erith riverfront and the town centre, including a re-enactment using costumed actors of Selkirk's disembarking at the jetty in Erith.

**To find out more, please email [SelkirkSummer2011@hotmail.com](mailto:SelkirkSummer2011@hotmail.com), or check 'Selkirk Summer' on Facebook for events and info.**

## The Rotary Club of Erith Development Committee 1934 and 'The Riversite'

**The acquisition of a site on the bank of the Thames within the Borough, and its development for the enjoyment of the river by the citizens, had long been in the minds of successive Erith Councils, all of whom had failed to come to a definite decision.**

For some years Cannon & Gaze's Mills in the High Street, with a long frontage to the river, had stood empty when the Club [The Rotary Club of Erith] brought into being the 'Erith Improvement Committee.' Although he did not serve on this Committee, it was Rotarian Stanley Bullock who first suggested to them the purchase of the Mills for use as a Riversite. Adopting the line of approach customary in matters of delicacy, the Committee, mainly through the influence of Cope their Chairman, succeeded, by slow degrees, in engaging the interest in these premises of certain prominent members of the Erith Urban District Council. Matters proceeded very slowly while "discussions in Town" were going on until, towards the end of 1935, it became so well known that the matter was being discussed that

the Club considered the question and finally decided to invite to a debate at one of the Club's lunches representatives of the two points of view – for and against acquisition.

The Rotary Club of Erith continued to foster the project, listening to talks at later meetings by the well-known local Waterman, Jim Coles, who spoke in support from the point of view of his lifelong associations with Erith and his knowledge of the river, and the Rev. Moses Williams, also a keen advocate of the scheme.

In due course, when the Ministry of Health Inspector held a Public Enquiry into the Council's proposal to acquire the site, all concerned supported the Council.

Eventually the Club had the satisfaction of seeing the scheme come to fruition, the Council naming the development "The Riversite".

**Taken from 'A History of the Rotary Club of Erith 1929 – 1950' by Past President [1940-41] H.Arthur Churchill.**

**Submitted by Les Hoskins**

## Riverside Festival 2011

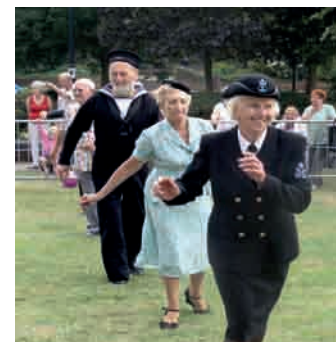
Due to unforeseen circumstances and unrealistic financial demands from Bexley Council, we regret that this year's Erith Riverside Festival had to be cancelled.

However, we are registered with the GLA Cultural Diary for Sunday 3rd June 2012 which conveniently falls on the date of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Big Lunch and is, of course, Olympic year.

Hopefully, we may receive some backing from Bexley Council and local businesses as it is such a special year and Bexley Council would benefit from an event such as this as it is the Big Society in action!

**Garry Taylor - Chairman  
For and on behalf of Erith Riverside Festival Committee  
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1940's dancers at 2010 Riverside Festival)



## Friends Of Riverside Gardens Erith

**On behalf of its 600 plus members, FORGE submitted a strong Representation to Bexley Council in response to the draft plans for the centre of Erith Town. Copies were also sent to our three ward councillors and three senior conservative councillors, together with the three MPs for Bexley, the Mayor of London, and the London Assembly Member for Bexley & Bromley.**

Organisations supporting FORGE include Bexley Civic Society; Erith & Belvedere Local History Society; Erith Town Forum; Erith Rotary Club; Friends of the Earth Bexley; and the Open Spaces Society. The Bishop of Tonbridge is a member of FORGE. Members of Erith Rowing Club, Erith Yacht Club, Erith Theatre Guild and, Erith Women's Institute have also joined forces with us.

Our Town Green application is progressing well Using the Freedom of Information Act

we have procured documentation and information from Bexley Council. Keen and supportive local FORGE residents are completing detailed Evidence Questionnaires and producing Witness Statements.

In addition FORGE has taken a further step by setting up a PETITION for the community to confirm its strong and resolute desire to retain the complete Riverside Gardens and promenade without any multi-storey building constructed on any part of it. Our MP Teresa Pearce will present it to the House of Commons urging greater protection for green areas of particular importance for local communities in the Localism Bill. Please sign the Petition if you haven't already done so by the 27th June 2011.

FORGE has received legal advice through the London Planning Aid organisation.

On 1st June the FORGE Chairman and Secretary met with the London



Residents enjoying the Gardens

Assembly Member for Bexley & Bromley, Mr. James Cleverley, to discuss our grave concerns. It seems that, despite copious photographic evidence to the contrary, claims continue to be made that "the Gardens are underused".

The first "clean-up" of the Erith foreshore set up by FORGE with Thames 21 took place on the 27th March when about 2 tons of rubbish was removed from the mud. Good community support! A second "clean-up" is now arranged for Saturday the 9th July, 11am

to 3 pm. Please come along and give support moral and/or physical. Please meet at the jetty on the Riverside Gardens.

Finally, be ready for sudden announcements during holiday times if a developer for the Flagpole Site is unexpectedly made public and a firm planning proposal is made for the Gardens. All of us will need to resolutely respond. Everyone's support is essential

**Joan McCarthy,  
Secretary and  
Alec Tapper 01322 440199**

## Erith Riverside makes shopping fun for all the family

Easter Saturday saw Erith Riverside Shopping Centre awash with festive activity. Family fun was the name of the game, with an assortment of Easter treats for children and adults alike to enjoy.

The Easter egg hunt saw children hunting round the

shopping centre to find Easter themed pictures with a chocolaty Easter treat waiting at the finish. The live exhibition of an egg lifecycle was a huge success; kids experienced the educational side of hatching whilst also handling an array of farm

animals. To add to the occasion a face painter was on hand transforming children into their own Easter delights.

The Easter Fair featured local craft stalls much to the delight of the shoppers. From handmade cupcakes to jewellery and from shoes to books there was something to make everyone's Easter special.

Over the coming months Erith Riverside Shopping Centre is continuing to provide an array of activities and events for the local community. Saturday 30th July will celebrate the

Summer Launch with a collection of local craft stalls, face painting and a live band.

Making shopping fun for all the family, Erith Riverside will also be playing host to Peppa Pig on 27th of August, ideal for families with young children. Peppa Pig will be making personal appearances at various intervals throughout the day. In the meantime look out for face painters, balloon modellers and even treasure hunts at the centre, making days out even more exciting.

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