

Motorway shut for resurfacing

The coastbound entry slip at junction 6 of the M2 will be shut for four nights from tonight (Wednesday). The closure will be in place between 8pm and 6am each night while resurfacing works take place, and a diversion will be in place along the A251 and A2.

First aid course places available

There are still places for a first aid course being run by Teynham Parish Council. The session will run on Sunday at the Community Hall on Station Road. This course has been organised following the installation of a defibrillator at the hall. Each participant will receive a manual and be awarded a certificate. Book your place by emailing parish-clerk@teynham.org

Travel-themed choral concert

Enjoy a concert of songs on the theme of travel, presented by Choir Cantiana. The performance on Saturday, June 30 will include songs by Nat King Cole and Fats Domino, among others. The concert will be held at St Michael's Church on the High Street from 7.30pm. Tickets are £7.50 and can be booked by emailing lissiebayford@gmail.com or can be bought on the door.

Plans to turn offices into 75 flats on agenda

Bedsits could be 'very poor quality' chief planner warns

By Harry Howard
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A proposal to convert a Sittingbourne office block into 75 bedsits could result in 'very poor quality accommodation', says Swale council's head of planning.

James Freeman noted his concern in a report on the development, at 25-29 London Road, pictured, for the council's Planning Committee.

The plans, submitted by AA Homes, do not include any gardens or outdoor space and the flats would be only single rooms.

Mr Freeman said: "I am concerned about the number and size of units to be provided. The provision of 75 small flats without any outdoor amenity space could give rise to very poor quality accommodation."

Yet planners are "unfortunately" not able to consider this under legislation governing



change of use from commercial to residential. Under the rules, the converting offices to homes is automatically permitted, subject to considerations including impact on roads.

The building, previously occupied by Capita Insurance Services, also has 48 parking spaces. There are no plans for more.

Yet Mr Freeman argues vehicle use and ownership among residents would be less than if it were to remain as an office.

"The adopted Kent Parking Standards suggest that an office block of this size would require 74 parking spaces, [and] the cur-

rent proposal generates a lower parking demand," he said. "In this regard I consider the highways impacts to be acceptable."

Tim Donnellan, of Burley Road, opposed the proposals. Commenting on the council's website, he wrote: "I object to the proposed development as this is bound to cause extra parking problems in an already busy area."

"The argument that when the business was running, there were more employees than future residents ignores the fact that the business was generally [only] 9am to 5pm weekdays."

The Planning Committee is due to consider the proposals at a meeting tomorrow (Thursday).

■ An article in last week's News Extra referred to a similar plan for the same building. Those proposals, for 22 flats, had not required prior approval. It is the 75-bedsit development that is on the committee agenda. We are happy to clarify the situation.



Freya Endacott has donated hair to the Little Princess Trust

Freya's charity chop

An 11-year-old schoolgirl has donated 15 inches of her hair to the Little Princess Trust.

Freya Endacott had been thinking of ways to help people who suffer from the hair loss condition alopecia since she was

at primary school. The Fulston Manor pupil is giving away the cuttings to be used as wigs for young people with cancer.

Freya said: "I feel like my head is really light! I am so happy to have helped somebody else."

 **Sheppey**
College

OPEN DAY

TUESDAY JUNE 26
4PM - 7PM

Open days will be held at:

Sheppey College

Sittingbourne Technical College

sheppeycollege.ac.uk

