

New police chief must avoid the red herrings

After the shocking waste of Kent Police's spy drones, surely the priority for the new Chief Constable will be to publish all salaries, expenses, pensions and costs, as already required by Freedom of Information for every public authority.

The delay from our public servants for full disclosure suggests the bumf and bloat is only outmatched by tax and waste, as tax and council tax automatically increase each year.

While with the appalling air pollution and lack of clean-up and scrutiny from Kent County Council – whether it's removing air and noise monitors from Manston or failing to detail repeated road pollution requiring air quality management areas (don't breathe in, presumably) and shipping pollution such as at Cliftonville sands or Kent's ports – shows how little the various councils in the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership have done to protect the public compared with their pay and pensions.

Surely Kent's MPs and councillors should join forces with Kent Police to pretend there is no problem, and if there is to whitewash it away. With a possibility for red herrings and Macguffins like his Hollywood namesake, perhaps Alfred Hitchcock is ideal for chief constable.

Unless there's an Inspector Charles Chaplin?

Tim Garbutt, Ramsgate

Stop this vandalism of our Heritage Quarter

Monday is D-Day for Gravesend. At 7pm in the Woodville Halls, the council will decide whether or not Gravesend will go for large-scale demolition in the Heritage Quarter –

Victims need a brave man

As operations director of Gravesend-based charity Family Matters – the UK's largest specialist provider of therapy and support for child and adult victims of sexual abuse and rape – I strongly recommend that whoever becomes Kent's next chief constable should have a proven track record in improving the investigation of sexual violence.

The sexual abuse of children and the rape of women, girls and sometimes men are pernicious crimes that are all too common – as Family Matters' statistics show.

We provide therapy for 700 men, women and children each year and receive 3,000 calls on our helpline. Rape and sexual abuse are a violation of the body that creates unique trauma, on a par with murder and serious assault. Consequently, the investigation of these crimes is a unique challenge for any police service.

It is imperative that Kent employs a chief constable who has the vision and boldness to adopt the Baroness Stern inquiry's recommendation to place the victim at the centre of the investigation.

For too long the police have assessed the quality of their service to rape victims on conviction or attrition rates. Such obsessions place the criminal justice system and its needs at the centre of investigations and not the victim, whose needs are often sacrificed on the criminal justice high altar, encouraged by its priests and priestesses, the judiciary.

Is the new chief constable sufficiently brave and able to make the victim's experience of the police investigation the most important element and not necessarily the outcome? Which candidate, if any, can be that chief constable?

Malcolm Gilbert, Family Matters

followed by the construction of a jumble of 1980s-style, non-heritage, inappropriate buildings in their place.

The new scheme would surround the historic and lovely St George's Church and block yet more river views.

Our 'representatives' will try to force through this hated scheme and continue to override months of objections from the public – over 3,500 letters and countless private representations.

The fact is, almost nobody who does not have an interest in this scheme is in favour.

First, our council forced the ordinary, hard-working people of Gravesend to fight them every inch of the way for over a year to stop their horrible 36-storey tower.

Second, it was the same scenario with the attempt to develop St Andrew's Green.

And now we have another 'degeneration' worse than the first two.

Why is the council so keen on a scheme which would make our historic riverside town look like Croydon?

Why is its response to our logical and polite comments always so dismissive and rude?

YOUR LETTERS

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Please be at the Woodville Halls at 6.30pm on Monday and make sure our council listens to our views. For once. And for always.

Peers Carter, Gravesend

Lacking vision or value

Having managed a theme park and consulted on a number of themed facilities, I could claim better experience and knowledge than most regarding Dreamland in Margate.

Fact is, I could have helped them years ago but the operators had no intention of saving it. Now the bickering continues because there is no real end goal or formula for the park.

What one sees and gets is a stew of ideas and concepts, yet no real-time aim apart from the lack of vision.

Dreamland has historic potential, yet even this is staid by vision and lack of concept.

Nostalgia is all right for the few, but lacks a future for the many.

One could say how big is the Big Wheel, but then if one fails to incorporate the potential views from such, one has lost attraction value, just as a meandering river holds no benefit. Only when true vision and value are incorporated can one say Dreamland will attract the tourist numbers required to keep it alive in future years.

Not forgetting its yearly refreshment – a must for any theme park.

One must provide for all ages yet offer selection and choice.

Any park that doesn't may succeed on opening yet fail by year's end.

The mistakes are already being made in the comparison stakes, yet the light is missing for its success.

Ultimately, the failures are in-bred and growing factors that will lead to an unsustainable park.

One can only hope those who are able get it sorted fast.

Derek Packham, Canterbury

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