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Issue no 229

Calls for an end to new homes bid as drought predicted

By Ed Hill

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CAMPAIGNERS against a massive new housing development have said how the latest drought threat shows building the new homes is not sustainable.

Kent was officially put on Defra's drought list last week after two winters of below average rainfall.

Now the Keep Chilmington Green group want nearly 6,000 homes planned to be built near the hamlet removed from Ashford council's core strategy. They say the water companies will not be able to supply the new homes because of delays in their infrastructure programmes.

Bewl reservoir near Tun-

bridge Wells, which is due to supply much of the new development, is unlikely to be enlarged until after 2023. The lake has been at 41 per cent of its capacity for much of the winter.

Sarah Dacre from the Keep Chilmington Green campaign said: "The continuation of a house building programme does not take into account the impact of climate change, new requirements to restore sustainable abstraction or severe delays in implementing measures to increase the town's water supply. The proposed South Ashford New Town development must not proceed unless the project's sponsors can demonstrate that sufficient water resources will be made available."



Work on covering the roof of Ashford's Civic Centre with 180 solar panels has nearly been completed, for the full story see below.

ENERGY

Solar panels are ready to power council buildings

ASHFORD'S Civic Centre took on a new look last week as the last of 180 solar panels were installed on the roof.

The installation means around 300 square metres of solar panels will start generating power to feed into the National Grid.

The council had to rapidly change its mind to go ahead with the installation after solar panel companies successfully

challenged the Government over its decision to change the amount of money solar panels would earn.

It had originally scrapped its plans.

Cllr Jessamy Blanford, portfolio holder for the environment, was shown the progress of the installation which will provide the council with an anticipated return of between seven and 14 per cent each year over the next 25 years.

Any excess energy generated will be sold back to the National Grid.

She said: "This project demonstrates the council's ambition to be at the forefront of using sustainable energy and in reducing our carbon emissions. Our contractors have done a sterling job on this to ensure the work is completed by the end of February and will hopefully enable the council to receive the higher

feed-in tariff.

"We had to act fast on this after the Government announced that the reduction in the feed-in tariffs deadline had been moved from December 2011 to March 2012."

The council appointed Kingsnorth Electrical to carry out the work.

Panels are also being installed at Trumpet House in Godfrey Walk.

INSIDE

- News 2-28
- Kent Remembered 29
- Comment/Feedback 30-31
- Business Week 32-33
- Training & Careers . 36-37
- Jobs & Notices 40-47

Kent Weekend

- The Interview 51
- Food & Drink 53-54
- Homes 57-68
- Driving 71-85

INQUEST

Death crash driver drunk

A STUDENT from Ashford was twice over the legal alcohol limit when he died in a car crash which also killed a doctor.

William Wise, 20, from Kingsnorth hit Esohe Omoregie's car head on when the crash happened in April 8 last year on the A28.

ENVIRONMENT

Recycling of ink cartridges

THE British Trust for Conservation Volunteers has teamed up with Ashford council to recycle printer cartridges.

Recycling bins have been set up at points around the Civic Centre, where council staff will put empty cartridges. Proceeds will go to BTCV's work with communities.

CRIME

Jail for stab attack in club

A TEENAGER has been jailed for six years for stabbing a fellow clubber.

Connor O'Sullivan, 19, attacked Charlie Cooper after an argument in the Liquid & Envy nightclub. O'Sullivan had been ejected from the club but returned later with two knives.