Appendix C

Please contact: 01634 306000

Your ref: Our ref:

Date: 01 March 2018

Medway

Serving You

Parish Councillor George Crozer

Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham Kent ME4 4TR

Telephone: 01634 306000 www.medway.gov.uk

#### Dear Cllr Crozer

I am writing in response to the petition received by the Council entitled "Save Deangate Ridge". The petition asks whether the Council has made a fair attempt to increase revenue and consider alternative business models ahead of the decision taken by the Cabinet on 6 February 2018 to close the golf course. The petition also asks whether the Council has allowed the golf course to be run into the ground to make the site viable for sale and redevelopment.

In addition, I will address other points raised in letters sent on behalf of the signatories to the petition to all Members of the Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## **Decision to close Deangate Ridge golf course**

The provision of leisure services is a non-statutory (discretionary) function of Medway Council so there is no requirement for the council to provide this service.

The Leader and Cabinet decide on an annual basis how to apportion the funding available to ensure delivery of a balanced budget in line with its aims and objectives. This is entirely consistent with the annual budget setting process.

In the face of long-running and increasing annual financial deficits in the running of Deangate Ridge golf course, totalling more than £1.5m in the past seven years, together with a national decrease in golf participation over the past decade, the Cabinet has made an executive decision to no longer use Council funding to provide a golf course at Deangate Ridge.

## National decline in golf participation

While the petitioners say that Golf England refute the advice provided to the Cabinet that golf is in decline, the attached link sets out a report in Golf Business stating there was an 11% year-on-year drop in the number of golf rounds played in the final quarter

of 2017, meaning last year had the lowest monthly average rounds in the past five years.

http://www.thegolfbusiness.co.uk/2018/02/shock-11-drop-in-golf-rounds-played-at-end-of-2017/

In July 2017 BBC Radio 4 presented "In The Rough: Golf's Uncertain Future.

## http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08wn9mj

In that programme, the editor of Golf Business, Alistair Dunsmuir stated: "The industry has been suffering tremendously over the last 20 years or so.

"Between 2008 and 2015 the number of golfers who played once a month in England fell from over 1.5 million to 1.1 million, a trend that's been happening since the late 1990s.

"It had a knock-on effect of golf club closures."

Those closures include nine golf courses in Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the past four years as stated on the golf website - Golf's Missing Links. The latest to shut was Broke Hill Golf Club in Sevenoaks at the end of 2017.

#### Efforts to increase revenue

Medway Council has made extensive efforts to increase revenue at Deangate Ridge in recent years

Annual increases in income targets at Deangate Ridge were built into the medium-term financial plan prepared by the chief finance officer on the basis of a three-year plan to increase revenue by improving the golf offer while at the same time diversifying into other sports. Among the activities introduced were:

- Deangate Meangate tough-mudder run
- Tag archery
- Cycling club
- Cross-country
- Footgolf
- Meangate Ultra all-night run

Unfortunately, income generated from these new activities was insufficient to overturn the annual deficit of running the centre, and any income generated was being largely offset by the additional expenditure being incurred to run the activities. There were also complaints from golfers about the use of the course for events, such as Deangate Meangate, which meant they were unable to use the facilities.

Alongside the proposal to increase revenue a marketing plan was developed by the council's marketing and communications team. I enclose a summary of the action taken

in this respect. In addition there was ongoing social media activity through Medway Sport twitter, for example.

#### Business case and consideration of alternative business models

In the petition and a letter sent on behalf of the petitioners to the Leader and Cabinet dated 4th February 2018, concerns are raised that the Cabinet did not give consideration to a full options appraisal when it took the decision to close the golf course and reference is made to Treasury Management Guidelines, HMRC guidelines and the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. A request is made on behalf of the petitioners for consideration to be given to other business models including use of the club for weddings and other events, redevelopment as a mixed use sports and social environment, entering into arrangements with an external provider for management of the golf course or conversion of the site into a country park.

The decision to close the golf course has not been taken lightly and, as set out above and in the enclosure to this letter, this is only after extensive, but unsuccessful efforts have been made to increase revenue at Deangate Ridge golf course over the last three years. In reaching the decision the Cabinet has recognised the need for a larger, more modern sports centre on the Hoo Peninsula, which will address the modern needs of residents and reflect the growing population in this area in future years.

A balance had to be struck between providing substantial ongoing subsidy to the golf course, while alternative business models were explored with no guarantee they would generate the required improvement in revenue streams, and the duty to have regard to the Council's immediate and overriding financial position together with the interests of the wider community. This was against a backdrop of a national decrease in participation in golf over the past decade, low membership levels at Deangate Ridge and the closure of a number of golf courses across the country.

#### Ongoing development and maintenance of the site

The financial provision made by the Council for development and maintenance of Deangate Ridge Golf Course has not decreased in recent years. Medway Norse has had the same annual funding, as was previously available when maintenance was inhouse.

Regular meetings regarding Deangate were held between Norse and the Council's sport leisure, tourism and heritage service to ensure outstanding issues were being addressed and forthcoming matters planned. These meetings continue to be held (the latest meeting was on February 13<sup>th</sup>)

Improvements have been made to the driving range, and a new Footgolf course has been established, as well as ongoing maintenance to the golf course.

As outlined above, there were increased income targets identified through diversification of the sporting offer, linked to an ongoing marketing plan.

## Impact of capital works on income generation

The financial period covered in the Cabinet report included years when capital works improvements were being undertaken and years when they were not, including the past two years when the improved driving range has been fully operational and the new footgolf course has been available.

Despite these works, there has been no material improvement in the financial deficit being incurred through operating Deangate Ridge golf course, as highlighted in the Cabinet report.

## Consultation on closure of golf course

There was no legal duty to consult on the proposed closure of Deangate Ridge Golf Course.

No legitimate expectation of consultation can have existed since the Council did not promise to consult and there is no established practice that all Cabinet decisions about the closure of facilities will involve consultation.

The Cabinet decision, to no longer operate a council golf course at Deangate Ridge with effect from 31 March does not preclude options for future golf provision being presented by interested parties, as part of the Local Plan consultation process.

## Future development of the site

No decision on the future use of the Deangate Ridge site has been taken at this point. This will be subject to the Local Plan process.

Medway Council recognises and supports the need for community consultation on the future of Deangate Ridge and, in line with the Local Plan's Statement of Community Involvement, there will be a period from March 16<sup>th</sup> until early May 2018 for full consultation. This will provide all interested parties with the opportunity to put forward proposals. These will then be considered during the Summer before a preferred option is developed.

## Transparency and access to Information

In the letter sent to the Cabinet on behalf of petitioners dated 12 February 2018, questions have been raised about the Council's duty to meet legal requirements relating to the publication of reports in advance of meetings.

The Cabinet Agenda, including the report on Deangate Ridge golf course, was published on 29 January 2018, five clear days in advance of the meeting, in accordance with the relevant legislation; specifically section 7 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and rules 7 and 21 of the Access to Information Rules in the Council's Constitution (Chapter 4, Part 2). In addition, the item had been included on the

Cabinet's Forward Plan in accordance with the relevant legislation; specifically section 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and rule 16 of the Access to Information Rules in the Council's Constitution (Chapter 4, Part 2).

I hope I have addressed all the key points raised in the petition and the letters sent to the Cabinet dated 4 and 12 February 2018.

Under the Council's Petition Scheme you may now ask for this matter to be reviewed by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee if you feel that the Council has not dealt with your petition properly. You should do this by giving notice, by email, to the Head of Democratic Services at the postal address above or by email (<a href="mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk">democratic.services@medway.gov.uk</a>).

You would normally have 10 working days to request a referral to the Committee. However, since receiving your petition, a request to 'call in' the Cabinet decision on the closure of Deangate golf course has been received from six members of the Council and the date and time of the meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the call-in is Monday 12 March at 6.30pm. It would be appropriate for any petition referral to be considered at the same meeting. Could I therefore please ask that, should you wish to request a referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, you do so as soon as possible and ideally by email.

Yours sincerely

Tomasz Kozlowski

Assistant Director Physical and Cultural Regeneration

cc. Cllr Craven, Cllr Franklin, Cllr Osborne

## **Communications and Marketing**

## **Examples of spend and activity for Deangate Ridge**

## June 2014 Marketing Plan

## **Objectives**

Use generic sports brochure and leisure centre membership offers with the existing identity of Deangate Ridge Golf complex to create a style in which to present offers.

Deploy the portfolio of collateral that has been developing within leisure. Define the items/sites but within the suite of leisure material for a complementary fit.

Promote a new member referral scheme to encourage new members to the club:

- Introduce a new member and receive 1 free month of golf (i.e.1 extra month will be added to the end of your membership)
- Join Deangate Ridge as a member having been introduced by a current member and get your first month free

## Campaign activity/materials

|            | <del>_</del>   |
|------------|--|
| PRINT      | Referral posters (A1 x 5; A3 x 10; A4 x 20)                      |
|            | Referral vinyl banner x 1  |
|            | Referral barracuda   |
|            | Referral flyers x 1500   |
|            | Sail flags x 2   |
|            | Corporate offer poster x A1 x 3; A3 x 20; A4 x 50                |
|            | Corporate offer A5 flyer x 5000                                  |
|            | Deangate Ridge £10 poster x5                                     |
|            | Roller Banner  |
|            | Vinyl banner x2 print  |
|            | Posters x222   |
|            | 4pp flyer x 10000  |
|            |  |
| DIGITAL    | Email distribution   |
|            | Screen design for Gun Wharf and Chatham Big Screens              |
|            | 50k kmonline impressions over Aug                                |
|            | Flyer distribution via Mailchimp                                 |
|            | Google Ads in July and Aug                                       |
|            |  |
| MEDIA      | April 2014 – Medway Festival of Sport's 80 days of action-packed |
|            | activity. Details of Medway Golf Open included.                  |
|            |  |
|            | June 2014 – Medway Open golf tournament                          |
| CHANNELS   | Modway Matters ad Aug/Sont Issue E2                              |
| CHAININELS | Medway Matters ad Aug/Sept Issue 53                              |

| PRESS ADVERTS | KM ad space1, 4,6 Aug |
|---------------|-----------------------|
|               |                       |

## June 2015 Marketing Plan

## **Objectives**

To increase revenue Deangate was positioned as more than a golf complex. Rather than encroach on the golf course, we developed ideas to use the surrounding woods and the land on top of the hill.

- Pay and play to encourage people to turn up and play. These types of golfers can bring in more revenue than members. Target market males aged 30 40.
- Footgolf
- Golf
- Golf lessons were promoted
- New event launched *Deangate turns Meangate* is a tough mudder type event within the surrounding woodland of Deangate

Having invested in a range of print collateral last year, this year the marketing and communciations team deployed more digital marketing.

## Campaign activity

| Medway Golf Open        | A5 leaflet to promote this event. Launched golf lesson vouchers at this event for people to buy as gifts.                      |
|-------------------------|--|
| Footgolf Promotion      | Banner and digital advertising. Archery Tag was put on in the woods to develop a package.                                      |
| Pay and play promotion  | so we created adverts such as "get a round in at Deangate" and "play a round for £20"  |
| Additional activity     | Night golf event. Driving range promotion  |
| Deangate turns Meangate | First wholly digital marketing campaign.   |
|                         | Core marketing collateral – video; viewed by 90,000 people on Facebook (minimum period required to count as a view: 3seconds). |
|                         | YouTube adverts - 15,300 views (minimum period required to count as a view: 30 seconds).                                       |
|                         | Solus emailer - sent to 6,800 people, 3,826 total opens (24% open rate) and a 3% click through rate.                           |

|              | Meangate web page - nearly 7,000 hits, c. 6,000 of these were unique visits   |
|--------------|---|
| Media        | Pre-event coverage from BBC Kent, KM Group  |
|              | and KMTV. KM also attended on the day.  |
| Social media | MedwaySport @MedwayS 3 Aug 2015 If u had a shocking round of golf yesterday (like me) you'll take advantage of Deangate's driving range happy hour @ 5pm today! See u there   |
|              | MedwaySport @MedwayS 31 Jul 2015 Preparing for this weekend: 5 round of golf? Visit Deangate Ridge's driving range for the 5pm-7pm happy hour. Every Mon & Fri. 50% extra free  |
|              | Medway Sport @Medway S 23 Jul 2015 Inspired by The Open Golf? Head to Deangate Ridge for pay&play round or driving range session. medway gov uk/leisureculture pic.twitter.com/EhIBWxgPQT   |
|              | Medway Sport @Medway Sport 1 Apr 2015 Stephen Gallacher talks about getting back into golf. 1st step-visit Deangate Ridge Golf Complex right on ur doorstep m bbc. co. uk/sport/get-insp  The way of the control of t |
|              | MedwaySport @Medway 27 Mar 2015 Night golf tonight at Deangale Ridge. Outick snap of the first teell #inightgolf ligolf Rdark Rcold pic.twitter.com/E1aNHbk8Fa  |
|              | MedwaySport @MedwayS 9 Dec 2015   |
|              | Find out about golf special offers this Christmas at Deangate Ridge Golf and Sports Complex. fb.me/23k4LFStq  |

## 2016 Marketing Plan

## **Objectives**

- To heighten the profile of Deangate via a new Guinness World Record.
- To promote:
  - World record attempt and golf lessons
  - o A Monday £7 a round offer
- To promote Meangate II and increase competitors.
  - Feedback on the autumn event highlighted aspects the marketing and communications team used as key selling points. A new video used footage from the recent event to emphasise:
  - o New obstacles and a cross-country rather than tarmac course
  - Showers and free parking.

All course infrastructure established and marketing collateral in place – video, banners, signs. Promotional activity prompted 100 charity advance places booked for the 2017 event.

## Campaign activity and materials

| New Guinness World Record                                    | New record achieved   |
|--|---|
| 60-minute live Twitter Q&A - a Medway                        | Hosted by one of Deangate's pro-golfers; 60                                     |
| Council first – to promote the world record                  | minutes were packed with questions, 500   |
| attemptt and to promote golf                                 | website hits to the dedicated page  |
| Monday £7 a round offer                                      | Doubled the number of Monday players  |
| Golf video to promote golf lessons and the Medway Golf Open. | Out across social media   |
| Meangate II –  | Press and digital adverts   |
|  | Branded headbands to appear in photos /selfies                                  |
|  | competitors took and posted on social media/Instagram                           |
|  | Course signage and banners - runners were encouraged to hold up changed signage |
|  | while they had photos taken; the images were an effective way of promoting      |
|  | Meangate when shared on social media.   |
|  | Media –   |
|  | June 2016 - Medway Open Series 'The Medway                                      |
|  | Golf Open is a long-established competition                                     |

| held at Deangate Ridge Sports Complex for men, women and young people.'                    |
|--|
| June 2016 - Guinness World Record attempt at Deangate Golf Course                          |
| June 2016 - New promotions - press release promoted gym, swim, classes and the golf course |
| KM Group and Radio Kent did pre-promotion;<br>KM attended on the day.                      |
| 2010 event vide and for 2017 promotion   |
| 2016 event videoed for 2017 promotion  |

## 2017 Marketing Plan

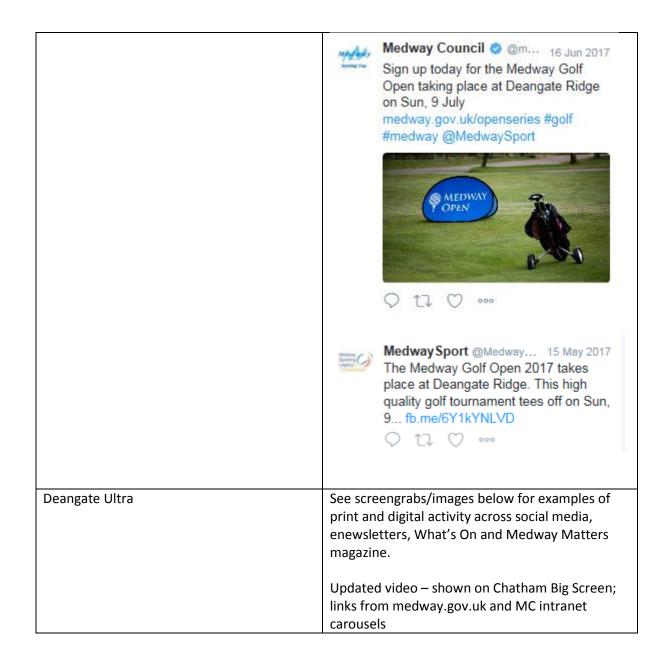
## Objectives

To promote:

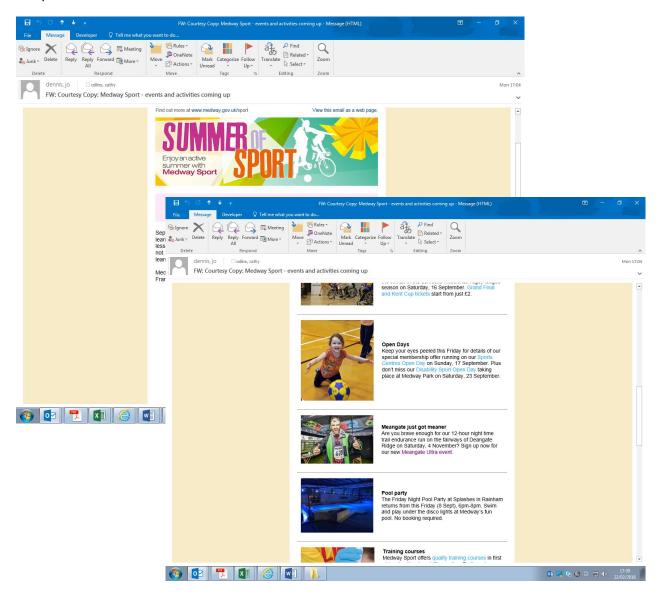
- Medway Golf Open
- Meangate Ultra a new, night time event

## Campaign activity

| Medway Golf Open - digital | Enewsletters – Medway Matters and Your<br>Medway (MC staff)   |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            | Social media -  |
|                            | Medway Sport @Medway Sport 9 Jul 2017 It's Medway Open day at Deangate Ridge Golf and Sports Complex. Good luck to everyone taking part today fb.me/8QClq3WKi |

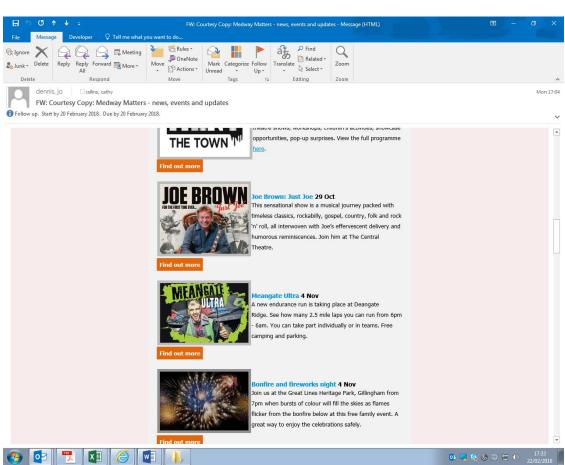


#### 6 September 2017



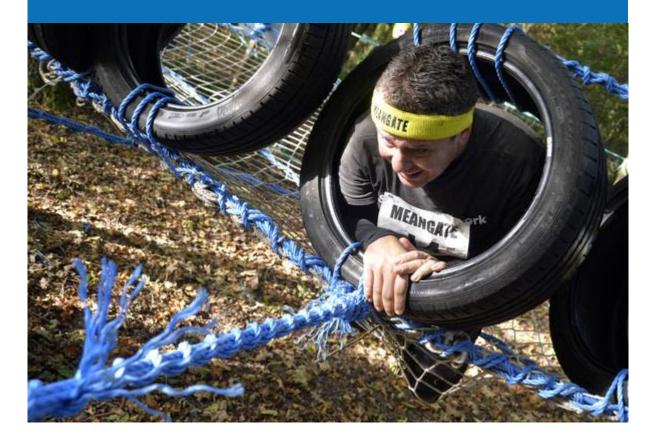
#### 13 October 2017





## **Medway Sport**





## Deangate turns Meangate - get your tickets NOW!

Runners are booking their places on Medway's meanest obstacle course race, why don't you join them? It's much more fun to run with friends, so take advantage of the group and team options to get your places The 4km, 8km and 16km purpose-built course is designed to challenge your strength, stamina and resolve.

It includes tunnels, scramble nets, inflatables, straw bale hurdles, tyre walls, slides, ladders and walls, natural obstacles including hills, trenches, swamps, ponds and of course, mud. Watch last year's video for an idea of what you will endure.

Want to take part with your friends or as part of a club? No problem... we have **group** 

for as little as £22.50.

For those of you who have not heard of Meangate before... it is the extreme cross country obstacle course run on the rolling hills and woods of Deangate Ridge Sports Complex, taking place on <a href="Saturday">Saturday</a>, <a href="11">11</a> March.

and **team** entries available.

For more details on booking and for group/team information, visit our **Meangate page**.



## Not for the faint hearted...





It WILL get muddy...

Oh, did we mention the river?

Sign up for further topic updates so you never miss a thing in Medway.

## What last year's runners thought...







At least there is somewhere to It's not all bad, there's also a 'clean' yourself up!

slide!

Just when you thought it was hard enough, there's a net!



"Best OCR I have done in a while. Was great event and great day." James Parkinson



"Best two hours ever spent on a golf course". Laurence Leppard



"Brutal first 3km at Meangate today." Maynard Paton.









**Edit your preferences or unsubscribe** 

Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR



# **Medway Sport**





# Two weeks to go until Meangate... get your tickets now!

Time is running out for you to give yourself the ultimate challenge! In response to last year, when some people said our 8km course wasn't long enough, we have introduce a 16km course, and for those who don't quite fancy the 8km, we also offer a 4km course.

The courses are open to anyone - children as young as 11 can enter with an adult, and the 16km course especially will challenge even the most experienced of runners.

The course includes tunnels, scramble nets, inflatables, straw bale hurdles, tyre walls, slides, ladders and walls, plus natural obstacles including hills, trenches, swamps, ponds and of course, lots of mud.

This will all be happening on **Saturday, 11 March** at **Deangate Ridge Sports Complex.** 

Don't miss out - <u>book</u> your tickets today for as little as £22.50.



## This isn't a race, this is a challenge!





Numerous water challenges...

Sign up for further topic updates so you never miss a thing in Medway.

## On your own, or with friends, give it a go!



There will at least be a pond so you wont be muddy the *whole* time!



And some tyres that are just slightly too small to be comfortable!



And just in case you thought we were kidding about the amount of mud... we weren't.















## **Edit your preferences or unsubscribe**

Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR



## The tough get tougher

Meangate is meaner. Sign up for our new, ultra endurance event where competitors have the added excitement of running through the night to complete as many laps as they can of the 5km cross country course in 12 hours. Saturday, 4 November. medway.gov.uk/meangate





## Archives Centre, Strood

Discover your local ancestry or research local history at Medway's new archives centre. Based in the former Strood library building in Bryant Road, there are now more historical records available to view than ever before. medway.gov.uk/archives

## How Kent weathered the storm

It's 30 years since a hurricane hit Kent. Revisit the drama through the photos of former newspaper editor Bob Ogley. He flew over Kent and captured scenes of the devastation. Wigmore Lecture On Tour, Wednesday, 18 October. medway.gov.uk/wigmorelectures



## Crisp walks at country parks

Medway's parks are some of the very best in the world. Seven received the prestigious Green Flag Award this summer, Take a walk and see why.

Frightful knight

medway.gov.uk/parks

at Rochester Castle

Hands-on family craft fun in time for Halloween. Make protect the haunted castle. Tuesday, 24 and Thursday, 26 October.





Mon, 4 Sep to Sun, 17 Dec for 14 weeks Swimming lessons term dates

Our autumn term of swimming lessons. Lessons available across our pools for all levels. Plus don't miss the October half-term holiday crash courses, running across our pools from Mon, 23 - Fri, 27 October. £6.95 per lesson or £97.30/term (payable in two instalments). Discounts available for Premier Membership holders Diving, syncro and rookie lifeguarding lessons also available.

medway.gov.uk/swimacademy Medway Park, Strood Sports Centre, Hoo Sports Centre and Splashes



Tue, 24 to Fri, 27 Oct, 9.30am to 3.30pm October half-term sports camps

You can book for single days or up to four days for these sports camps. Download a booking form at medway.gov.uk/sportscamps For more information phone 01634 338763 or email john.hatchett@medway.gov.uk Advanced bookings: £15 per day or £45 for all four days. On the day: £20 per day or £55 for all four days. Please note the four day offer is for consecutive days in the same week only. A discount is available for junior members and children of Premier membership holders.

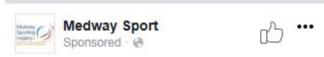
Medway Park

## Sat, 4 Nov, 6pm – camping from 2pm Meangate Ultra

The Meangate brand returns with an ultra endurance event. Competitors will run through the night aiming to complete as many laps of the 5km cross country course in the 12 hour window as possible. Free camping for all participants will enable them to set up and prepare for their race. The wellstocked fuel stations, chip timing and floodlit race HO and camping area will make the run a great experience. Competitors can enter individually or in

£30 per person. £100 per team of four. More info: medway.gov.uk/meangate Deangate Ridge Sports Complex





Are you brave enough?

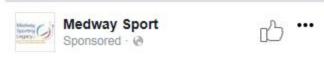
Meangate Ultra is a new 12-hour, night time, trail, endurance run taking place on Sat, 4 Nov at Deangate Ridge. How many 2.5 mile laps can you run? Free parking and camping.

Find out more at medway.gov.uk/meangate or email medwaysport@medway.gov.uk

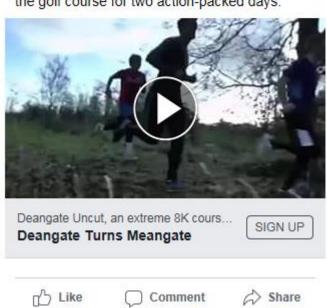
#medwaysport #OCR



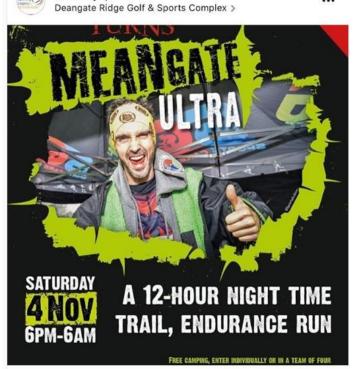
Report a problem with this preview



Mud-loving runners and cyclists will take over the golf course for two action-packed days.







1 7k Views

medwaysport

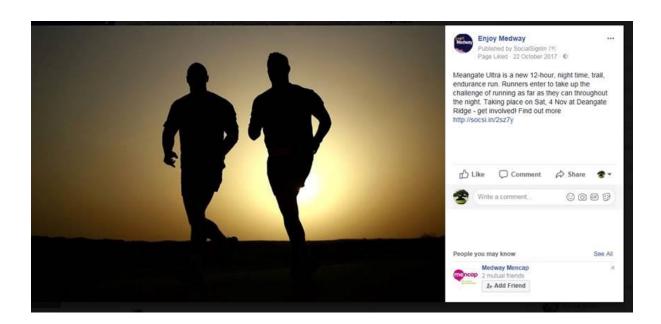


enjoy\_medway Can you handle a 12 hour run through the night? Camping is provided! Sign up now - you can enter individually or in a group of four. Find out more Medway.gov.uk/meangate or call 01634 333943

#meangateultra #medway #ocr #deangateridge thega\_singh @sportscarerevolution



Log in to like or comment.





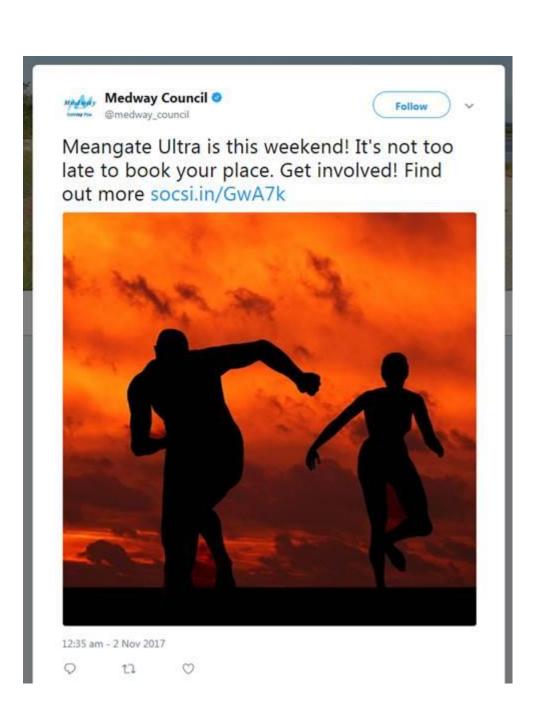


Meangate Ultra is a new 12-hour, night time, trail, endurance run. Sat, 4 Nov. Get involved! Find out more socsi.in/bSAtz



12:00 am - 26 Oct 2017











Meangate Ultra is a new 12-hour, night time, trail, endurance run taking place on Sat, 4 Nov at Deangate Ridge. socsi.in/XFMoL