

[19]

ment

vision unveiled on of one of visible Margate the site. concrete- kly allowed in a rist resides r a sount, ct, s as they to walk tangible sad says now put e. While aching n the nd of istor, which hin h-rise relies cent on can so the has

Why we have to sell up

THERE'S been a lot of interest in the council's asset disposal programme. Quite right. The taxpayers have a right to know that the assets they own are going to be sold at the best price.

The more open this process becomes, the better. This year, for the first time, we've published a complete list of all the properties the council owns. We've also published a list of the assets scheduled for sale.

Sadly, this has triggered mischief from some, who really ought to know better. That's a story for another day, but before you sign a petition to block a sale it's worth knowing that the process was passed by unanimous vote. That includes the councillors on the opposition benches.

Maybe this is why national support for Labour, according to a poll last week, has sunk to the lowest level on record.

I'm often asked why we need to

Leader's View

with Sandy Ezekiel



sell assets. Well, there are a number of good reasons, and also some regulations.

The good reasons are to fund investment in new, and improved facilities in the area. Thanet's two new swimming pools will largely be funded by sales.

It's also a central government requirement. The council's capital assets are taken into account when assessing the grant it receives from Westminster. If we're not seen to be getting the best out the property we own, well, more or less, it's going to

end up on your council tax bill and mine. And that's on top of the real terms cuts in funding we've had to budget round in successive years.

This calls for some skilled decisions. We have to balance keeping assets for non-profit organisations, but make sure we identify what isn't being used and can be turned into much-needed funds.

At the end of the day, there's no point in the council sitting on patches of land which have value, or other assets which aren't going to get used. Each proposed sale goes out to all councillors, on all sides of the political divide, for comment. Nor is this now. Properties, including some very iconic ones, were sold under Labour's last administration. There's no point in going back over which and when. People are simply tired of that stuff. The task is to look ahead.

Living tribute to seven villagers

SEVEN trees were planted in Cliffsend last Saturday in memory of past villagers.

Their families and friends gathered for the tree planting and memorial service led by St Mary's vicar Rev Michael Darby.

The trees are the latest additions to the Marjorie Chapman Meadow, which was donated to the people of Cliffsend on a 125-year free lease by farmer Rob Chapman.

Cliffsend Parish Council named the land after Mr Chapman's mother Marjorie, a prominent resident who ran a radio station in the village during the Second World War.

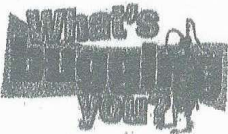
The trees were planted in memory of villagers, including one of Cliffsend's first parish councillors John Kellands and the council's first chairman Jean Dillitway.

Vice-chairman Bearyl Harrison paid tribute to those who worked to prepare the ground and said: "It was particularly poignant that Rev Darby talked about each family member that the trees were dedicated to.

"We plan to continue planting flowering shrubs in the meadow and hope to put some seats there, too."

But, while encouraging residents to enjoy the meadow, Cllr Harrison gave a word of caution to dog owners.

She said: "I do hope that people walking their dogs will treat the meadow with respect. I'm disappointed that some



WE'RE told by the climate-change doom-mongers that carbon...

