

January 2012

I'm not going to pretend that there are not tough times ahead; that energy bills are not increasing or food prices appear to be going up on a weekly basis; that the smaller than expected increase in rail fares is not still a hike too much for some people or that high petrol prices are not curbing family and business activity. We live in troubled times. The Government is fighting to bring the economy under control, to reduce the huge deficit left to us by the last government, to contain some of the worst excessive spending ever seen in this country and all during massively volatile times in the Eurozone.

All of the above defined 2011 and while it may still exist during the coming months we must not let the bad times define 2012. I am a glass half full kind of girl and I'd like to share the positive outlook of this paper and many of its readers as to how 2012 can be a year of opportunity for Medway. With 2012 being the year of various celebrations of life, service, sport and work in the towns we have the chance to showcase what is best about the area. We have a wonderful history and I am forever learning new facts about the area (did you know they used to make the cannonballs in Snodland for the ships that set sail from Chatham) and I want the world to know about it, which is why I support the Medway City bid and our bid to be on the World Heritage List.

We have some amazing local sporting talent, some of which will be showcased in the London 2012 Olympics. It is fantastic to have people like former Chatham school girl Kat Driscoll competing in the world's most important sporting event only a few miles up the road and we should not underestimate the positive and inspiring role model that she and others will be for local youngsters.

So yes 2012 will undoubtedly be another tough year, but it could also be a great year and that's what I will hope and pray for.