

In brief

Snap to it

PHOTOGRAPHS depicting climate change could win the snapper prizes for days out.

The Capturing Climate Change competition, run by Kent County Council, is for photos taken by entrants of any age in the county. The closing date is 5 September. Entries at www.kent.gov.uk.

Just the ticket

TICKETS are now on sale for Temple Ewell Players' latest play 'Out of Focus' by Peter Gordon. Tickets for next month's production are £5 and can be bought from the Fox Pub during opening hours.

Tory candidate in expenses promise

Throw me out of Parliament if I break rules, he pledges

Report by Rhys Griffiths

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TORY candidate Charlie Elphicke has made a

pre-election pledge to the people of Dover - saying voters should throw him out of parliament if he fails them.

His bold promise on expenses comes less than a

year before the next general election and contains a raft of commitments over his conduct should he be elected.

After the scandal of House of Commons expenses erupted earlier this year, Mr Elphicke was highly critical of his Labour rival Gwyn Prosser's handling of the affair.

Mr Prosser, MP for Dover and Deal since 1997, made claims for numerous items for his three homes and failed to reveal details of his claims before redacted versions were finally revealed by Westminster authorities.

Now his Conservative challenger has offered what he describes as a contract between himself and the voters.

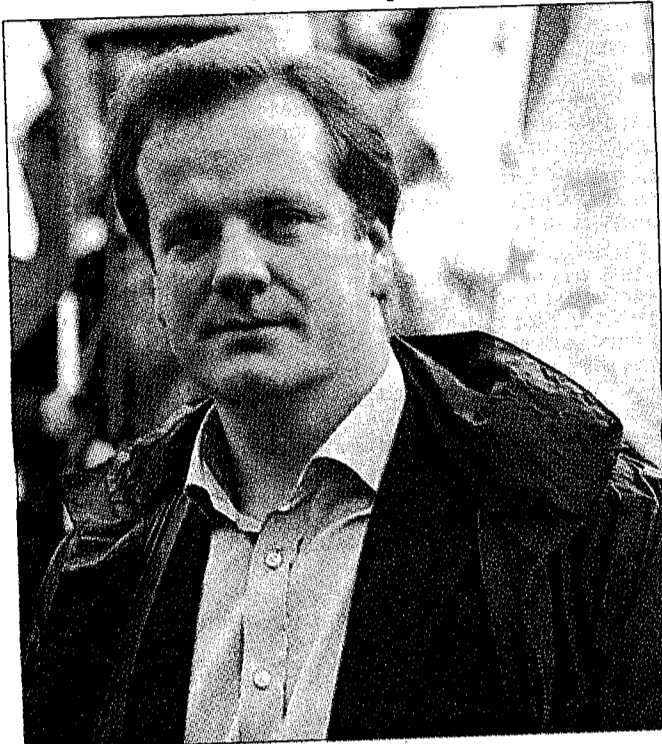
He has vowed to publish online full details of his personal and office claims, to open up his accounts unedited to the local press, to never claim for household expenses, and to meet his own tax bills without using public funds.

Mr Elphicke, a tax lawyer who lives in London and Deal, said: "Ever since the details of MPs' expenses were first published people have been furious about the excessive, unacceptable and possibly illegal claims made by some of the people we send to represent us in the House of Commons.

"If I serve as your Member of Parliament, I will keep to these rules. If I break these rules, you should throw me out.

"For me there are no grey areas, deep down we all know where the line is. I mean to bring honour to our people in all that I do."

Mr Elphicke also promised to be accessible to his constituents, both by phone and for face-to-face meetings.



Vow: Charlie Elphicke has made a pledge to the voters ahead of the election

fact file: Expenses saga

■ April 2008: Charlie Elphicke challenges Gwyn Prosser to publish a breakdown of his expenses claims.

■ November 2009: Mr Elphicke threatened to send a Freedom of Information request to the Speaker of the House of Commons demanding a breakdown of Mr Prosser's second homes allowance after the release of parliamentary expenses was delayed.

■ May 2009: Mr Prosser struck back at his rival's actions on expenses, describing it as a "nasty smearing campaign".

■ June 2009: Mr Prosser defended paying his brother for work on a London pad after details of his claims were revealed in the media.

■ When full details were published later in the month it emerged he had used public funds to buy things like a TV and a bed.



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Praise for busy lifeboat crew

CREWS of Dover lifeboat are having a very busy time with at least six call-outs this month already. The latest rescue call was last Thursday was to a sick crewman on board a 97 metre dredger. The man was thought to have had an allergic reaction to an insect

bite. He was transferred to the lifeboat and landed at Dover Marina where an ambulance was waiting to take him to hospital for further treatment. The previous evening the lifeboat headed out of the harbour at dusk to recover the body of a man spotted on the foreshore

in Crab Bay, east of the port. The body was handed over, to the Coroner's Officer.

Lifeboat coswain Stuart Richardson said: "This has been a very hectic time for the station and I am proud of my volunteer crew members who have been brilliant."

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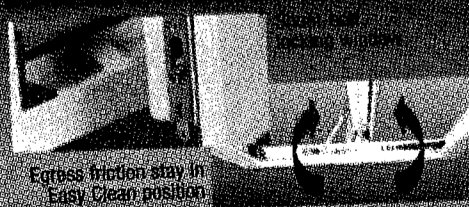
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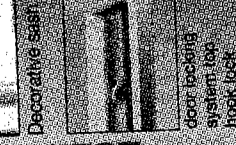
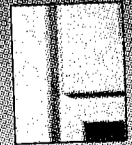
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