

Coalhouse Fort Advisory Group Members

Cllr Valerie Morris-Cook

Valerie Morris-Cook is a semi-retired senior professional who held executive leadership roles in high-volume multinational supply chain logistics. With a strong background in national wage negotiation and collective bargaining in unionised environments, investigating and resolving complex ER issues, collective consultations and resolving conflict during change Valerie is known for her solution-oriented approach and ability to build relationships effectively. Her straightforward communication style, coupled with her extensive real-world experience and credibility has earned her the respect of many, and led to successful outcomes in complex ER Challenges that have escalated to executive committee levels.

As a trained facilitator, Valerie is recognised for her openness, authenticity, positivity, and resilience. She excels at communicating effectively across all organisational levels, ensuring clarity, and understanding in her interactions. In addition to her professional endeavours, Valerie is an active public servant and an elected council official at an Essex County council, where she holds Cabinet and portfolio responsibilities. Her passion for resolving difficulties and enhancing the lives of everyday people drives her commitment to service and community improvement.

Cllr Fraser Massey

Fraser is an operations director for a local IT support company, with over 20 years experience operating businesses in the Thurrock area. Beginning in business as a sole trader the company has now grown and expanded to a point where much of his professional role is now related to compliance and developing business processes and policy. As well as extensive business experience. Fraser has been involved in organising local community events and has held roles in many local charitable community groups also holding roles such as chairperson and treasurer. As an elected member since 2019 Fraser has sat on various committees alongside currently chairing committees such as the Lower Thames Crossing Taskforce and the newly created Audit committee. In recent years he has been a trustee on the board of the Mucking Charitable Trust. During Frasers time as a councillor, he has further developed skills regarding governance and audit alongside a positive 'can do' attitude in developing and progressing local projects.

Allen Jones

Allen Jones is a retired professional engineer who has worked as a design engineer, national project sales manager in the shipbuilding industry as well as the energy sector. He was involved from the outset as the first project manager at Coalhouse Fort in 1984 and later served on the fort's management committee as Chair until 1991. He also has experience in project management in major shipyards as well as other work involving restoration, conservation and repair projects at historic sites including Hampton Court Palace, stately homes and a historic steamship. His knowledge and skills include planning and marketing management. In 2020, he was a founding director of the nationally recognised Thames Opera Company based in Purfleet, setting it up from scratch as a CLG and registered charity.

Kevin Diver

Kevin is currently a Project Curator working at Thurrock Museum. Skills include maintenance, management and operation of historic properties and visitor attractions. He also has experience in volunteer management, wildlife/ecology including survey work, historic research, curatorial, collections management, education, outreach and creation of interpretation and exhibitions.

He project managed the Heritage at Risk conservation repairs at Coalhouse Fort (between 2016 & 2020) and previously held site management roles at Tilbury Fort and Thameside Nature Park. In 2020 Kevin created a "Friends of Coalhouse Fort" group (Coalhouse Fort Future) which has an active Facebook presence with nearly 2000 group members.

Lucy Emma Harris

Lucy is a Director of Tilbury on the Thames Trust and Community Engagement Manager at Forth Ports Ltd. Knowledge and skills include community engagement, events planning and delivery, stakeholder development, design and interpretation, place making and regeneration, heritage, cultural project management, including development of a major heritage project at Tilbury Docks securing over £4m in Heritage Fund grant.

Scott Sullivan

Scott lives in East Tilbury, working as an independent consultant to develop, deliver and evaluate heritage, environment and arts/culture place-based projects. Since 2015, he has worked with a broad range of public, private and community sector clients across the UK predominantly on planning and fundraising for place-based change. He has raised £17.2M in funding for clients, with £11.5M of that total in South Essex – most recently securing £4.6M towards the Grade II* Tilbury Riverside Station. He was also responsible for the last major Heritage Fund investment at Coalhouse Fort, establishing the current café and toilets. Scott is contracted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund as a consultant on their Register of Support Services (RoSS), monitoring and mentoring 12+ projects across the UK.

Neil Woodbridge and David Reynolds, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions (shared position)

Neil Woodbridge is a 'social entrepreneur' and CX of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC (a social enterprise founded on the concept of Community Solutions). Experience, knowledge and skills in business planning, community and asset-based community development, working with hard-to-reach communities, young people in transition and engaging service users in strategic planning. Involved in several Thurrock economic and business boards, and Chair of Governors Thurrock Adult Community College. Trainer in diversity and working with people with Autism.

David Reynolds is a director of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC which is unusual in that their Governance insists that 100% of the Board are people who identify as Disabled. David has a keen interest in local history, is a third generation East Tilbury resident and used to volunteer at Coalhouse Fort. His experience, knowledge and skills include understanding the needs of disabled people & representing the views of others, analysing financial accounts and budgets, scrutiny of plans and supporting the running of meetings as part of a committee or group.

Curry and Katie Beadle, Start Thurrock (shared position)

Roxie Curry is a senior cultural sector manager and currently Executive Director for Start Thurrock. Roxie has worked in Thurrock since 2015, including as Senior Strategy Manager for Royal Opera House Bridge (with responsibility for Thurrock, Southend and Essex schools partnerships), Cultural Education Partnerships Lead for Harris Academy Chafford Hundred/Thurrock Cultural Education Partnership and consultancy/project management for Thurrock Council, developing the Thurrock Plan for Culture and working on Creative Estuary projects. Previous roles include Cultural Regeneration Manager at Shoreditch Trust and Arts Development Officer at Rochford District Council. Roxie has been a Trustee for several arts organisations including Kinetika and Chats Palace Arts Centre. Roxie will share this role with Katie Beadle, who is Creative Director at Start Thurrock. katie@startthurrock.org

Ella Barnett

Ella is a Senior Ecological Consultant at Place Services, Essex County Council, with over 11 years experience as a professional ecologist. Her experience, knowledge and skills include organising and carrying out protected species surveys including at Coalhouse Fort; site assessment, mitigation planning and organising bat mitigation licences and monitoring. Ella is from East Tilbury and is involved in local volunteering, public engagement, education and outreach.

Paul McSoley

Paul has recently founded his own company, PMCSTECH Consult Ltd. Paul has worked in construction for over 25 years in a variety of areas from planning, design leadership, refurbishments of historic buildings, commercial and residential and hyperscale. His experience, knowledge and skills include working and implementation knowledge of construction contracts and contractual matters, large scale projects as an MEP project manager, Principal Design Engineering Leader and Technical Compliance Director, business strategy and team leadership.

Chris Seamark

Chris currently works as Programmes Lead managing a large multi-disciplinary team for one of the UK's leading technical and energy service providers, at the forefront of delivering net zero solutions to a wide range of clients in private and public sector across the UK. His experience, knowledge and skills include strategic planning with a strong community focus; planning and delivery of major funding programmes working with public, private, voluntary and community sectors; development of long-term strategic plans through collaborative decision making, organisational development and sound governance. He has a passion for the local area with a keen interest in its rich history, having been born and raised in Thurrock.

Lewis Sharp

Lewis is a mechanical engineer who worked for 40 years in the building products industry. He has knowledge and skills in product and process development, training and knowledge management, team management and development, site and HSE management. Now retired, he remains a part time consultant for his previous employer. Since 2019 Lewis has been the secretary of the Palmerston Forts Society where he is responsible for administration, communications and events management. In 2022 Lewis launched, and continues to manage, the Victorian Forts Network which includes 80 stakeholders concerned with 45 Victorian fortified sites in the UK.

Thurrock Council contacts for the Coalhouse Fort project development planning and Advisory Group:

Gloria Ighodaro, Chief Officer – Housing, Economic Development and Skills, Regeneration.

Judy Flight, Head of Economic Development

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