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Giant turbines in place at hydro project



The second of two massive turbines is lifted into position at the Totnes Weir hydro-electric project. Story and more pictures on page 5



Blessing your pets
A church is inviting people to bring their pets to a service where they will be blessed
page 16

Tower to tumble
Plans are being made to knock down a 100ft chimney at the former Dairy Crest site
page 2

Atmos flats plan worries residents

Scheme is likened to 'Cell Block H'

A THREE-storey complex of 37 flats – which will form part of the acclaimed Atmos scheme on the former Dairy Crest in Totnes – has been condemned as an 'ugly monster' and likened to 'Cell Block H'.

Residents living in homes at Weirfields, just yards away from the rear of the proposed flats, fear they will overshadow their bungalows and the nearby historic Brunel building, which they claim should be the 'jewel in the crown' of the community redevelopment project.

The residents claim they still have not been able to find out just how high the prominent block of flats will be, despite months of consultation.

And Jacqui Perks, whose own home is just 15ft away from the rear of the proposed flats, said: 'How on earth can we make a considered response if we are not given all the facts?'

She said she was speaking for dozens of Weirfields residents as she warned: 'We are deeply concerned that McCarthy and Stone can pro-

pose such a huge and ugly monster of a three-storey building that it has.

'The jewel of the crown for the Atmos site should indeed be our Brunel building, not a three-storey retirement block that has, on social media, been likened to Cell Block H.'

She added: 'Its mass, scale and presence completely overshadows and dominates the listed Brunel building and throws massive shadows on its neighbours.'

The flats are part of the multi-million pound redevelopment project for the whole of the eight-acre former Dairy Crest site which stretches from Station Road to the River Dart, by the railway station.

Continued page 3

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A crane lifts one of the two Archimedes screws into place

Weir hydro project nears completion

THE two massive turbines at the heart of the £2m Totnes Weir hydroelectric scheme are now in place – and will be producing power within weeks.

The Archimedes screw power plants were craned into place at the weir on Thursday and Friday last week after being shipped over to the UK from Holland and then trucked to Totnes from Harwich.

A 300-tonne crane was used to drop the two turbines into place in the housing which

Dart Renewables has been constructing at the weir site for the last eight months.

Peter Kibel, of Fishtek Ltd, which is part of the Dart Renewables group, said the two turbines would be connected up within the next few weeks. Water should be flowing through them and producing electricity in December.

When they are fully operational, the turbines will produce 1.2 gigawatts of electricity an hour – enough to power some 400 homes.

It is planned to power the

whole of the neighbouring King Edward VI Community College through the turbines, along with homes on the former Dairy Crest site which the Atmos community team is currently consulting on.

Earlier this month, work was carried out to connect the weir site to the electricity sub station outside KEVICC in Ashburton Road.

The work to prepare the weir for the turbines has included building a concrete 'coffer' dam to hold back part

the River Dart while the work was going on.

Mr Kibel said that there was still work to do even when the turbines have been commissioned.

'There will be some finishing off to do,' he said. 'We will have to clad the power house in stone, turf the roof and carry out the landscaping. There will be works on going for some good few weeks yet.'

He also said that the new fish paths for migrating salmon and trout should be open soon.



One of the two turbines arriving in Totnes

Victory claimed in fight for future of 'little ship'

A TRUST is claiming victory in tug-of-war battle over who decides the future of the Dunkirk 'little ship' The Lady Cable which has been waiting to be restored for the last seven years.

But 40ft-long former pleasure boat, which rescued more than 600 troops from the war-torn beaches of Dunkirk in 1940, appears no nearer finding the £150,000 needed to restore her.

And the National Maritime Museum at Falmouth has said it is no longer interested in doing the restoration work after trust was adamant that the old ship cannot leave the Torbay area.

Last week, the boat, which was the last of the flotilla of little ships to leave the beaches of Dunkirk 75 years ago, was sitting on the quayside at Baltic Wharf looking sad and exposed to the weather.

Russ Buckingham, chairman of the Turning Point Heritage Trust, which owns of the Lady Cable, said it had slapped a 'legal notice' on the boat to stop the Lady Cable Trust – given the job of finding the cash for the restoration – from handing her over to the maritime museum.

Now Mr Buckingham and his trust are forming a new committee to try to sort out finding the cash to get the old boat restored.



The Lady Cable on Baltic Wharf, Totnes

He admitted that the trust did not yet have the £130,000 to £150,000 needed to restore the Lady Cable but said: 'We have a lot of fingers in a lot of pies that will, we hope, bring in enough money.'

Meanwhile, Lyn Yeoman, archivist with the Lady Cable Trust, warned that the museum offer had probably been the last chance to save the Lady Cable.

She said: 'The Lady Cable's history is all about part she played in Dunkirk. It is this that should shared with the nation. Sadly it now looks like she has missed her only viable chance.'

The Lady Cable was built in 1924 and operated as a pleasure

boat carrying passengers on the Teign and the Dart.

In 1940 she was part of the 'miracle of little ships' which helped save hundreds of thousands of British troops from death or capture on the beaches of Dunkirk. The Lady Cable, an open boat, made two trips across the English Channel as part of the rescue operation and was the last little ship to take soldiers off the beach.

During a 12-year campaign to save the Lady Cable there have been several failed attempts to gain lottery cash for the restoration – despite the formation of the Lady Cable Trust to overcome funding obstacles.

The Lady Cable Trust

thought it had finally done the job when the Falmouth museum agreed to take over the Lady Cable, and carry out the restoration work using Help for Heroes volunteers, so that the little ship would be able to sail back to Dunkirk as part of the expected 2020 80th evacuation anniversary celebrations.

But Turning Point Heritage Trust stepped in saying that the boat could not leave the Torbay area, as part of the agreement with the trusts.

Ms Yeoman said that since taking over responsibility for the boat, the Lady Cable Trust had 'worked tirelessly to record her history, develop a schools and community programme in south Devon and

mount a bid for a Heritage Lottery grant to fully restore her'.

But she added: 'We have to advise you today that after six years of effort and over £6,000 of secure storage costs for the Lady Cable, we have finally run out of money and therefore we have no option but to pass back the ownership of the Lady Cable to the Turning Point Heritage Trust with immediate effect, in the hope that they will take this wonderful opportunity to transfer the Lady Cable to the museum without delay or conditions.'

'We believe that is the probably the last chance that the Lady Cable will have to be restored. If it is not taken now she will face a very uncertain future.'

Insp Andy Tomlinson said there would be a 'slightly higher police profile' in Totnes as a result of the horrifying incidents in France.

'There is nothing linked to here as far as we are aware but people feel vulnerable when something like this happens,' he said.

Devon and Cornwall's Assistant Chief Constable Russ Middleton said that the public should not be alarmed at this time but it is important that everyone remains alert with a sense of awareness and be vigilant to any suspicious persons, incidents or behaviour.

He added: 'To help maintain public reassurance and confidence, the force is increasing visible patrols, particularly at sensitive sites and key areas of the force to ensure that people feel safe to go about their daily lives.'

Thoughts are with French

TWINNERS were due to hold a two-minute silence at their annual meeting yesterday in the wake of last Friday night's terror attacks in Paris.

Totnes has the longest twinning links with France in Devon after forging ties with the Normandy town of Vire more than 40 years ago.

Marion Adams, the chairman of the Totnes Vire Association, said she was planning to contact the mayor of Vire 'to send our condolences'.

She added: 'This has come as a shock. It is a shock to the whole world, not just here, and when you know people who live there it brings it home a bit more.'

She said the association was due to hold its annual meeting at the Royal Seven Stars Hotel yesterday and said its members would be holding a two-minute silence for the people who died in the Paris attacks.

Police across the county are asking members of the public to be vigilant and report anything suspicious to the police as the horror of the Paris attacks continues to send shockwaves around the globe.

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