

SPRING 2026

# MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER



LOCAL COUNCIL  
AWARD SCHEME  
QUALITY GOLD

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## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL



Dear Residents

As we look forward to spring, the Parish Council can reflect on the success of Marden at Christmas, which benefitted from better weather this year and once again saw the village enjoy a range of festive celebrations. We would appreciate your feedback on how we can improve the event next year – details on how to comment can be found later in this newsletter.

The recent water shortage issues are of particular concern in relation to how they have been managed by South-East Water and the way they supported and communicated with residents. From the Parish Council's perspective, we will review and update our Resilience Plan to address these issues. To do this we would welcome more community volunteers to help us in emergencies. This hopefully will replicate the hard work Councillor Kate Tippen does in leading our flood wardens, informing and protecting residents of flood risks in our now frequent flooding events.

We would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to three key individuals who are retiring this year. Dr Julie Morgan for her 27 years of service at Marden Medical Centre and John and Pat at the West End Stores. They have all gone above and beyond what could normally be expected with a genuine concern for those in our Parish who are vulnerable or need extra care and kindness.

Finally, I'd like to thank Councillor Anne Boswell for her dedication in championing environmental issues, for her hard work in producing the Parish Newsletters and Councillors Richard Adam and Andy Turner for championing the concerns of the Parish on important sensitive planning and other issues.

*Best Wishes*

*Councillor Adrian Rabot*

## GENERAL UPDATE

The Parish Council belatedly wish residents all the best in 2026, and we look forward to the challenges that a new year always brings. We are often asked 'what does the parish council do?' Parish Councils are the first tier of local government and Parish Councillors are elected (or co-opted) representatives to support all residents within our parish and have a responsibility to know what's going on and help to support our community. We are the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue. We are committed to maintaining regular communication with residents and aim to provide as much information as we can on the work that the Parish Council is undertaking in our newsletters, weekly e-newsletter, the village noticeboards and on social media.



The Parish Council newsletters are produced three times a year in the spring, summer and autumn and we hope they provide an excellent source of news - not just on what the Parish Council gets up to, but what the village organisations do and other useful information. The newsletters are delivered by hand or by post in outlying areas to every household in the Parish. Cllr Anne Boswell has been compiling the newsletter for some years (with the assistance of other councillors) and does not use AI!

The Parish Council's Facebook page is also a good source of information, but unfortunately there was a blip with our page last year and we have had to create a new one. So can we ask that those residents who use social media give us a like or follow us on the new page: <https://bit.ly/MPCFacebookPage>



If residents need to raise any issues or have any suggestions, please pop into the Parish Office for a chat with Ali or Rachel. Alternatively, you can call them on 01622 832305 or email: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk). - they are available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to 12 noon in the Parish Office.

## **Marden at Christmas 2025**

Once again, the Marden at Christmas event on 6<sup>th</sup> December was very successful with both businesses and village organisations participating, and it was a delight to see so many residents enjoying the day at the start of the festive season. More children visited Father Christmas in his grotto than ever before, and he was kept very busy throughout the afternoon giving out 204 presents compared to 128 in 2024. Thanks are given to those businesses, village organisations, volunteers, police cadets and stall holders who made this another great event and luckily the weather was better than in 2024.

We are asking for feedback from stall holders, businesses, organisations and anyone who came along as to how people felt the event went, suggestions for improving etc. You can either send your comments to Rachel at [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or complete the online survey at: <https://bit.ly/MatCFeedback> The closing date is 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Even if you couldn't attend last year, please let us know your ideas. Cllrs will then review the responses, and an update will be placed in the next newsletter.



**Marden Annual Residents Meeting – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in Marden Memorial Hall**

The Parish Council has decided to trial a new format for the Marden Annual Parish Meeting as the name is sometimes confused with the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting of all the local government electors for the Parish.

The meeting is called by the Parish Council Chairman (if 6+ residents do not come forward) and all residents are welcome to attend. The Chairman will read out the Parish Council report, along with Committee Chairmen reading the reports for Amenities, Finance and Planning. All village organisation reports etc will be made available on the website and in hard copy if people request them. The meeting will then be followed by the normal Full Council meeting on the same evening. All the reports will then form part of the summer Newsletter. All residents are very welcome to come along to the meeting.

**Meet the Councillors**

Councillors are here to support residents as much as we can and we have restarted the ‘Meet the Councillors’ sessions outside Marden Library from 11.00am-12 noon. The last session was held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Future dates for your diary are 30<sup>th</sup> May 2026 and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

**Parish Council Finances**

The Precept is collected by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on behalf of the Parish as part of the Council Tax. The Parish Council makes every effort to maintain the existing level of service as well as staying on a sustainable financial footing. We always strive to be prudent and diligent with our finances. Councillors have once again undertaken a thorough review, but due to various increases in costs and a need to rebuild the council’s reserves to a more sustainable level, we have had to make the difficult decision to make a small increase. This means the amount of money collected from residents to be spent in Marden in the next financial year from April 2026 for a Band D taxpayer will be £104.39 per annum or £8.70 per month for a band D property. This is an increase of £4.95 per annum or £0.41p per month for a Band D property (5% increase on 2025/26). For other Band details please view the Precept Calculator at: <https://bit.ly/MPCPrecept>

We understand how difficult it is for residents and hope you understand our decision to make the increase. The Parish Council is aware of its responsibility to the community to provide value for money and that public money is spent efficiently to provide an effective service.

In the interests of transparency you can find a list of expenditure over £500 which is accessible on our website: <https://bit.ly/MPCTransparency> A link to Quarter 3 income and expenditure can be found at: <https://bit.ly/MPC-Budgets>

### **Get It Hot Off the Press Marden Village News**

Sign up for the weekly e-newsletter providing information on what's happening not just with the parish council, but roadwork updates, police communication, other village organisations, etc. This is especially helpful to those residents who are not on social media so why not sign up and find out what's going on? Contact Rachel in the Parish Office either by phoning 01622 832305 or emailing [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk).

## **GET HOT OFF THE PRESS MARDEN VILLAGE NEWS!!**

### **Sign up for the Marden Parish Council Weekly E-Newsletter here:**

Use this QR Code on your mobile phone:

- Open your camera
- Hold it over the code
- Click on the link to browser
- Fill in your details



Or call or email Rachel on: 01622 832305 or [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) who can add you to the mailing list.

## **PLANNING UPDATE**

### **Marden Neighbourhood Plan Review (MNP) – Regulation 14 Consultation - Monday 2nd March to Friday 10th April**

The Parish Council has been reviewing and updating the MNP which is a legal document and is part of the planning policies within Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). Councillors refer to the policies when considering planning applications to ensure they are compliant, and MBC take them into consideration when assessing planning applications.

As part of the process to amend the plan we now need to hold a public consultation on the changes we propose before it is submitted to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). MBC will assess our proposed changes and recommendation about the scale of changes.

There are three possible recommendations we can make regarding the scale of the proposed changes which are – minor (non-material) modifications; material modifications (examination); material modifications (referendum). MPC's recommendation is that there are some material modifications, but they are not so significant that a referendum is needed and that a planning inspector would be able to agree the changes based on the evidence submitted.

# PLANNING UPDATE CONTD

## Regulation 14 Contd

The consultation is called Regulation 14, and it will run from Monday 2nd March to Friday 17th April 2026. A copy of the plan will be in Marden Library and the Parish Office, it will also be on our website:

<https://bit.ly/MPCMNPReg14>

Further information will be uploaded prior to the commencement of the consultation as it becomes available. The consultation deadline to respond is Friday 17th April 2026.

Please do check out the plan as it makes an interesting read about the parish and is designed to ensure that Marden will continue to be a thriving parish, to maintain its individual character, heritage and community spirit. It aims to balance the existing and future needs of residents and businesses to fulfil Marden's function as a Rural Service Centre, by managing the expansion of housing provision, employment, education and recreation opportunities, whilst retaining and enhancing the natural beauty and biodiversity of the surrounding rural area.

## Other Planning News

There is no further update about the speculative planning application for Land North of Marden and still no more news on the development of land east of Albion Road and North of Copper Lane for the erection of up to 117

**Open Morning on  
Saturday 7th March 2026 from  
10am-12.30 pm in the  
Vestry Hall**

We are holding an open morning on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March at The Vestry Hall from 10.00am to 12.30pm. Please come along where you will be able to view and comment on the proposed changes to the Marden Neighbourhood Plan.

We have also arranged for the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAM) to give a CPR/defibrillator demo session to residents.

There will be an opportunity to look at the draft Marden Parish Community Resilience Plan (see article below) which is particularly important especially after the recent water issues with South East Water and try out the Speedwatch equipment - we need to sign up more volunteers!

dwellings, which has been permitted by the Government Planning Inspector.

The contentious planning application for a chicken farm at Reed Court Farm on Hunton Road was refused by MBC last year and the developer had six months from the refusal date to consider an appeal which has not happened.

## **Proposed Government Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation**

This consultation on the Government's proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is seeking views on how they may revise national planning policy to support their wider objectives. The draft NPPF sets out the detailed proposed policy wording indicative of what may be implemented, subject to the outcome of this consultation.

There are twelve key policy changes, and the most concerning one for Marden is building homes around stations which sit within the top 60 Travel to Work areas. This could put more pressure on Marden because we sit within the Maidstone and Medway Travel to Work area, which is ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in England.

The Parish Council is looking very carefully at the proposals and will be formulating a response to send in before the closing date.

The closing date is the 10<sup>th</sup> March and you can find the consultation at:  
<https://bit.ly/ProposalsNPPF>

## **Guidance for Residents Responding to Planning Applications Material & Non-Material**

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee to some planning applications such as full planning applications, listed building consent,

outline and reserved matters, but is not notified on other applications such as lawful development certificates, conservation area applications and submission of details although can make comment.

Residents can view all planning applications for Maidstone Borough Council at:

<https://bit.ly/MBCOnlineApplications>  
You will need to register and then you can access/track applications.

There are various material considerations when responding to planning applications such as loss of privacy, loss of light, highway safety, traffic generation etc. However, there is also a list of non-material considerations such as loss of private view, effect on the value of your property, boundary disputes, strength/volume of local opposition, matters controlled under building regulations or other non-planning laws. You can find the full list on the Parish Council website along with useful links to assist with responding to planning applications and how to make a comment:

<https://bit.ly/MPCPlanningInfo>



# PROJECT UPDATE

## Village Litter Pick

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

We are calling for volunteers to help with the village clean up on the morning of Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March meeting at the John Banks Hall at 9.30am. We welcome children under the age of 16 but they must be accompanied by an adult. You will be provided with a picker, high-viz and bags (please bring your own gloves if possible) and you are covered by the Parish Council's insurance. Please contact Rachel for further details to register your interest either by email: [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or call 01622 832305.

It's a great community event working together to keep our lovely parish of Marden tidy and last year we had a great turnout. We know we have many committed members in our community who go out there and regularly litter pick around the village and lanes and love where you live and want to make a difference to the environment on our doorstep by volunteering your time to pick up litter, improve and protect local spaces, protect local wildlife, and by encouraging others to reduce waste and live more sustainably - a big thank you to you all.



## Marden Parish Emergency Resilience Plan

**Cllr Adrian Rabot**

The Parish Council has now drafted its Parish Emergency Resilience Plan in line with new guidelines from the Borough's Resilience Forum. Once finalised this will be used in an event of an emergency affecting our community such as a rail incident.

Emergencies are dealt with by the first responders, emergency services and other key responders such as health authorities, local authorities and utility companies who all have well-rehearsed plans to deal with such situations.

However, the Parish Council can provide essential immediate support to the people living in Marden especially in the early phase of an incident. An example is the recent lack of water in various areas of the parish in January where affected residents could get hold of bottled water by the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team.

The Parish Council is working closely with neighbouring Parishes, particularly Staplehurst Parish Council, who also have a well-established plan, utilising local volunteers with expertise in dealing with local emergencies.

**Shout Out: we are looking for volunteers with an IT background, communications, fire, medical, 4x4 and chainsaw licence holders to come forward to sit on the Resilience Planning Sub-Group and be included in the contact list for emergencies. If you would like to be part of this important community resilience plan, then please either email Ali: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or call 01622 832305.**

### **Meeting with MP Katie Lam**

The Parish Council recently met with our MP, Katie Lam, after she visited Marden Primary Academy and it was a very useful discussion where we raised various issues. Water supply and sewage problems were top of the list and Katie will be sending out a survey to all residents regarding water supply or you can respond on the following link: <https://bit.ly/KLamMPWaterSurvey>

We discussed Marden's planning and development pressures and the disproportionate housing growth in the village as well as the concerning NPPF consultation about building houses around stations which could have a further impact on the village (see article on page 6). We explained about the over-capacity of trains and the station car park which is affecting the rest of the village as commuters park on residential roads. We raised the issue of pavement parking and we asked Katie to support local authorities (MBC) to implement and enforce. Mention was made of the rural roads suffering from

HGV movements and safety concerns and the issue of catapults which Katie is aware of and how long it takes reporting ASB to 101. Councillors expressed their concern over business rates particularly affecting our village pubs. As a result, Katie is happy to meet the Parish Council on a regular basis as and when issues arise.



### **Marden Playing Field Changing Rooms**

As you will be aware, the Parish Council are in the process of arranging for the old changing rooms at Marden Playing Field to be refurbished and become a small community space and we have received planning permission to undertake the works.

Building regulations are due to be submitted following the architect finalising the technical drawings. Tenders will then be sought and to remain transparent, placed on the Government's Contract Finder. Dependent on costings, hopefully the works will commence this year, and rest assured we will keep residents in the loop.

# PROJECT UPDATE CONTD

## **Marden Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)**

An ISP is a wish list which identifies all the improvements the Parish Council and residents would like to see in the village and has been compiled after various consultations over the past few years. Some of the small items the Parish Council may be able to fund, but large, more ambitious plans such as a new pavilion at Southons Field are longer-term and will require a greater level of funding.

In spring 2025 we asked residents for their suggestions, but no specific items were raised which weren't already in the ISP document which you can find on our website:

<https://bit.ly/MardenISPUpdated>

If you wish for Councillors to consider other suggestions, please forward to Ali at: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk).

## **Public Conveniences Solar Panels**

Whilst Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) own the public toilets building, the Parish Council maintains this important village facility. As part of our environmental responsibilities, the Parish Council has been exploring the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof to offset the cost of electricity in the toilets. We have received a couple of grants towards funding the panels.

A structural survey has been undertaken which advised that work should be undertaken to the roof to bear the weight of the panels and a license for

building alterations is currently being drafted between ourselves and MBC. We are currently submitting Building Regulations to MBC, once these have been received work can commence.

# HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT

## **Marden Parish Council Highways Working Group**

We understand residents' concerns about highways issues in the village and as a result a Highways Working Group has been set up to put more focus on highways issues, monitor the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) - not just on its progress but recommend any additions - and monitor the annual prioritisations. The working group will proactively identify where there are highways concerns and seek appropriate solutions and monitor highways maintenance such as pavements, faint lines in the village etc and draft responses to any surveys relating to highways.

Along with Councillors a resident attended the first meeting in December where amongst other issues, the Highways Improvement Plan was discussed. The Terms of Reference have been agreed and up to three residents can be co-opted onto this group. If you would like to be involved, then please contact Ali: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or call 01622 832305.

## Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) Update

Based on comments received from Kent Highways, the Highways Improvement Priority List was reviewed as follows:

- *Howland Road (bend at Rose and Crown Cottages)* - as residents are all too aware, this is a dangerous and blind bend where parking is permitted with no proper footway, and many vehicles drive too fast often hitting stationary vehicles. There is no off-road parking for residents, so all cars are parked on the road leaving only a single width road for driving around the bend. Kent Highways disappointingly advised that the only solution is placing a road restriction there which will mean reduced parking which of course is not a feasible solution for residents in that vicinity. The only other solution that Kent Highways have offered is installing warning/slow signage and we are currently ascertaining what the cost to the Parish Council would be before agreement is reached.
- *Bend at West End Corner* - an Automatic Traffic Counter Survey (ATCS) was installed for a couple of weeks to collect traffic speed data vehicle classification particularly HGV Weight and volume of traffic as there has been a significant timeline of accidents in that area of the village. We have recently

received data from Kent Highways, which we will be reviewing.

- *B2079 Beech Bridge* - We reported in the last newsletter that the narrow carriageway between Beech Bridge Cottages and south of the junction with Roughlands Lane resulted in kerb/verge damage from vehicular over-running particularly HGVs mounting the verge. The Kent Highways Design Team advised that the cost of this scheme would be in excess of £20,000 and if the road was widened this could encourage speeding and increase the use of HGVs so this has been taken off the priority list. We also requested that Kent Highways cut back the foliage blocking the road signs in the vicinity.
- *B2079 Winchett Hill to Marden Beech* -The road is heavily used by motorists including HGVs, farm vehicles, cars and cyclists and several accidents have occurred where vehicles have ended up in residents' gardens. A 50mph limit from the parish boundary to the existing 50mph limit would help to mitigate these risks. Kent Highways have been provided with screenshots of exact locations of where incidents have occurred and we are awaiting feedback from Kent Highways.



# HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONTD

- *Dropped Kerbs* - some pedestrian crossings in the village centre lack dropped kerbs for those residents' using wheelchairs, pushchairs etc and many others lack tactile paving for the visually impaired. The locations where there is a need for dropped kerbs are in Goudhurst Road - entrance to Marden Primary Academy, High Street; at entrance to the Old Market; Chantry Road/Lime Close junctions and Chantry Road by the bungalows. Kent Highways are currently investigating these locations.

The following new proposal will be added to the HIP which have been raised by Councillors and residents: to continue with DYs between Stanley Road/Seymour Drive and on the opposite side of the road by Jewell Grove.

Single yellow lines have now been added to Goudhurst Road beyond the School which are designed to prevent all day parking and give parents more space to park at School drop off and pick up times. KCC has also been consulting on a proposal to add double yellow lines around the entrance to Admiral Way on Goudhurst Road to improve road safety and sight lines. We are awaiting the outcome of this consultation. Double yellow lines have also been added to Albion Road to

protect the entrances to Stanley Road and Seymour Drive. You can find the HIP document:

<https://bit.ly/MPCHIP2025>

## **Marden Railway Station**

Councillors held another meeting in January with Southeastern raising various issues and suggestions at Marden Station.

Items included: the two missing trains not stopping at Marden during the morning peak time; the lack of waiting/drop off bays; the car park being full on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays which will become worse once commuters have to return to the office more - a number of commuters are now using other areas of the village to park when it is full causing congestion around the village roads; installation of station approach lighting as the area is very dark and a safety concern as well as several lights out in the car park and on the station; a proposal to replace the ugly palisade fencing; the pooling of water on the London-bound platform near the footbridge which traps silt and causes a slip hazard; the consideration of a gate in the fencing leading to the PROW and black metal bridge to allow easy access for passengers living at the top of the village (a number of fences have been broken down when people have tried to leave the platform via this route); Network Rail consider moving the 4/6 coaches sign back nearer the stairs as trains stop unnecessarily further down the platform; and consider installing a Fire Hydrant.

Most of these issues have been raised before at previous meetings with Southeastern and they will be liaising on most of the items with Network Rail.

### **Access for All**

The Department for Transport's Access for All (AfA) programme aims to provide an obstacle free, accessible route onto and between train station platforms. In 2024 Marden was selected as one of the stations for the Department of Transport's 'Access for All' grant funding for the next cycle of works which was subject to a detailed technical assessment for the possibility of a much-needed lift being installed at Marden station.

The good news - it was announced on 15th January that the scheme is being progressed to detailed design. You can read full details on the GOV.UK website.

### **Speed Watch**

Over the last six months or so, the Parish Council has carried out several speed watch sessions both in Pattenden Lane and on Goudhurst Road. But we need volunteers: If you are concerned about speeding around the village, then why not sign up for Speed Watch? You just need to undertake some online training that doesn't take long and for further information, please contact Ali either by email: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or call 01622 832305 with your details.

If you see a speeding vehicle, please make a note of the registration number and inform the Police. Our Police Beat Officers do undertake regular speed checks particularly in Pattenden Lane where speeding is a big issue.

### **Kent Highways Fault Reporting Tool**

The Kent Highways fault reporting tool is the quickest and easiest way to tell them about issues. You can report all types of highway issues including potholes, street lighting and drainage problems. It helps if you have a photo of the problem and you need to know the location which you can add on a map, or using what3words, postcode or street name. You can check on the map if a problem you spot has already been reported and what action is planned to address it. Please check out the information for reporting on the back of the newsletter or: <https://bit.ly/KHReportAProblem>



## **DRAINAGE & WATER**

"Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink" is a famous line from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. How true this proved to be in January.

## DRAINAGE & WATER CONTD

After a very dry and, at times, hot Spring and Summer 2025 heavy rain before Christmas did not cause any flooding problems. However, Storm Goretti hit on 8th/9th January and did not affect Marden too badly, but we did have some flood impacts from the heavy rain. Plain Road flooded as did the area around Hunton Bridge on the border of Chainhurst and Hunton.

Further heavy rain on 15th January, and again on 27th January, did result in some flooding and flood alerts were issued for the River Teise. Plain Road and Green Lane were flooded and despite warning signs being put out some people thought it was ok to drive through, which resulted in vehicles breaking down in the water. Grateful thanks to our Flood Wardens who put out warning signs on both occasions to alert motorists to the flooded roads.

The heavy rain on both 15th and 27th January also caused the sewer on Maynards path to overflow once again. Southern Water blamed it on too much water in the sewer system. The Parish Council continues to push Southern Water to explain what they are doing about this problem and have asked our MP, Katie Lam, to take it up with them.

The same week on 13th January residents in Chainhurst, Pattenden Lane, Staplehurst Road, Underlyn, Stilebridge and Battle Lane areas lost

their water supply during the extensive outage that was well publicised at the time. Water was not restored for most people until late on 14th January. The same thing happened again, impacting the same residents, on the 18th January, and thankfully the supply was restored later the same day.

We all know how poor the response was from South East Water. Vulnerable residents on the priority list did not have water delivered to them but thanks to friends, neighbours and relatives they were all looked after. Those with livestock and horses were left to fend for themselves and businesses had to close. The nearest water stations provided by SE Water were either in Maidstone or Headcorn, neither of which are convenient for residents.



Fortunately, Staplehurst has a very active voluntary Emergency Help Team who had privately sourced water supplies. They generously opened their water station to Marden residents, as well as to those from a very wide area and was manned by volunteers from 8.00am to 10.00pm on 13th and 14th January.

We give heartfelt thanks to the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team for their fantastic support. Ali Hooker, our redoubtable Parish Clerk, helped manned the water station on 13th January in appalling weather conditions and then came straight to a Parish Council meeting. Both Ali and I continued to help distribute water at Staplehurst on 14th January.

Are you prepared in the event of an emergency? Road flooding in the winter is not that unusual in Marden, fortunately flooding of properties is highly unusual. We do have roads that flood in the event of heavy rain and become dangerous for drivers - Plain Road, Sheephurst Lane, Hunton Road, Green Lane. If these roads flood, we have flood wardens who put out warning signs. Please do not ignore these signs and use an alternative route. The best advice in the event of heavy rain is to avoid these roads and stick to the main B2079 and A229, it might make your journey longer but better than being stuck in flood water. Remember even 30cm of fast flowing water is enough to move your car. The five steps to become better prepared can be found on the back page.



You can find information on local drainage and flooding on the Parish Council website:  
<http://bit.ly/MPCDrainageandFlooding>

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Parish Council tries to promote health and wellbeing in the community and provide as much information as possible in each newsletter and on social media. With pressure on public services including the NHS, it is important that we continue to increase awareness on health-related matters across the community to make residents more aware of self-help and to continue to support our overstretched Medical Centre as much as we can.



### **Marden Community Health & Wellbeing Contact List**

You can find this very useful Community Health & Wellbeing Contact List on the Parish Council website at:

<https://bit.ly/MPCWellbeing>

It's also in PDF format if you wish to print a copy and copies will also be available in the Library, Medical Centre, Marden Church or you can pop into the Parish Office.

# HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

## Health & Wellbeing Support in Marden Reaching Out to the Lonely and Vulnerable

The Marden Community Forum is made up of representatives from the Parish Council, the Medical Centre, Marden Church, Marden Primary Academy, the PPG, Marden Dementia Friendly Community, Marden Pre-School, Maidstone Family Hubs etc who discuss health and wellbeing issues so we are aware of what is going on in our community and can help signpost each other and residents on health and wellbeing matters.

We are currently discussing how we can reach out to as many lonely and vulnerable people in the parish as we can. Marden already has so many wonderful village groups and residents who run events, or regularly check in and help their neighbours, but there are still loopholes. As a first step, we will be setting up a meeting to further explore how we can collaboratively achieve this in our community. This would be especially useful when there is an incident such as the recent South East Water crisis, where many residents were left without access to water, so we can try and ensure they are safe.

There are so many village groups doing great work such as Marden Dementia Friendly Community, Play On, Sporting Memories, the Craft Group, the Village Café, 'Come & Sing', the Community

Lunches, Marden Foodbank (who provide excellent voluntary work to those vulnerable members of the community), the WI, Horticultural Society, Marden Oddfellows, various sessions at Marden Library and of course our wonderful Medical Centre etc.

### S.E.N.D Help Marden

We wanted to remind the community about S.E.N.D help Marden, a small, friendly support group for parents and carers of children with additional needs, with or without a diagnosis or if you just have concerns, you are very welcome.

We meet at the Vestry Hall from 9.30am to 10.30am for informal coffee mornings where parents can talk, share advice, or just sit with others who understand. No judgement - just support. We have information packs, legal information, activity packs for children and a small lending library. We also try to arrange frequent visits from specialists as we are very aware of our rural disadvantage. If you'd like more information, find "SEND help Marden" on Facebook or email [sendhelpmarden@gmail.com](mailto:sendhelpmarden@gmail.com). Children are always welcome so please feel free to share - you never know who might need this. Future dates for your diary are 10th and 24th March.



## **Digital Kent**

### **Sessions at Marden Library**

Digital Kent's friendly team of volunteers are on hand to support you in your digital journey. They can help you use the NHS App as well as other digital devices and you can book a session with Digital Kent at selected libraries including Marden Library every third Friday of the month 2pm-4pm. Check out: <https://www.digitalkent.uk> or email: [digitalhubs@kent.gov.uk](mailto:digitalhubs@kent.gov.uk) or call the team on 03000 40950.

### **Joy App**

With Involve no longer having the Marden social prescribing contract, the Joy App is used by Marden Medical Centre for signposting residents to local services. Individuals can also use the resources themselves (self-refer) and you can find services on Joy's marketplace at: Joy - The right support is just a few clicks away

However, Involve does accept self-referrals to their ICB social prescribing service which covers Marden and referrals can be made directly via the following link: <https://www.involvekent.org.uk/how-can-we-help/one-to-one-support/support-for-18s-and-over/> For parents, please speak to your GP who will make a referral to the team as required. For any pre-schools, schools or parish councils in the Weald, you can email Katie Filmer: [katie.filmer1@nhs.net](mailto:katie.filmer1@nhs.net).

## **Marden Medical Centre – Anima for Patients – New Online Consultation Platform**

The Medical Centre team are working hard to prepare for the transition to full use of the digital communication platform Anima. Patients have been successfully submitting the new form since the beginning of January.

- How does the online total triage system work? Patients will no longer phone or come into the Surgery to book appointments but will be asked to complete a short online questionnaire to allow us to assess their needs and ensure they are directed to the most suitable person to care for them. Where possible, patients are asked to complete the request form online via our website. However, our reception team will be able to support any patients who are unable to fill the form out for themselves. A GP will review each clinical patient request to decide which member of our healthcare team is best placed to assist them, the most suitable timeframe for an appointment, or whether this is best suited to be by telephone or face-to-face in the practice.
- The Benefits of Anima - Easy to access: no app, no account needed - simply submit a query directly through the practice website. Convenient: available Monday-Friday, so you can send in your request at a time that suits you.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

- **Faster:** the requests are simple to submit, so you don't need to wait on hold on the phone. Turnaround time: usually 24-72 hours, with urgent requests being dealt with on the same day. **Continuity:** you can request to be contacted by a specific GP or member of staff – if they are available, we will do what we can to honour your request.
- What happens if I can't access the internet or don't feel confident using it? Our reception team are always happy to help and they are able to submit requests for you via Anima and can text you or call you back to inform you of the outcome of your request and book you in for the necessary appointment. We will have two fixed tablets in the waiting room for patients to use.

### **KCC Health**

It is saddening to know that mental health concerns continue to rise. There's a plethora of information not just on mental health on the KCC website, but drug and alcohol support, sexual health, managing a long-term health condition, safe sleep for you and baby, smoking and young people, pregnancy and the first two years, NHS screening etc. Check out: <https://bit.ly/KCCHealth>

If you do need urgent help for a mental health crisis or emergency, you should get immediate expert advice and assessment by calling: NHS 111 Option 2. It's important to know that support services are available for you to access whatever you're going through. You can find more info at: <https://bit.ly/NHSMentalHelp> You can also find advice, support and services on the KCC Maidstone Family Hubs to help throughout your family journey. Check out: <https://bit.ly/KentLocalHub>

### **Patient Transport Update**

- NHS Patient Transport is provided by G4S – this a non-emergency patient transport service to local NHS sites for people whose health means they cannot get to or from their NHS appointment in any other way. You can find out if you are eligible for patient transport or book an appointment by calling the freephone booking line on 0800 096 0211 – 24 hours a day. Check out: [www.km-pts.co.uk](http://www.km-pts.co.uk)
- Involve Community Transport – Call 03000 810005
- Imago/Dial2Drive – based in Tonbridge – Call 0300 777 1200
- Kent Karrier – wheelchair accessible transport service provided by Compaid: [kent.karrier@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kent.karrier@kent.gov.uk) or call 03000 413567
- Compaid – provides a transport service. Call 01892 834539 or email: [enquiries@compaid.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@compaid.org.uk) or check out: <https://www.compaid.org.uk/>

### **Marden Charity is here to help you**

The charity has a number of aims one of which is to support education. So, if you need some help to fund a course, buy some books or attend a training session for example please email [mardencommunitycio@gmail.com](mailto:mardencommunitycio@gmail.com) or see more information on the link: <https://bit.ly/MardenCharity> Grants are given at trustees' discretion but are usually around £150.



### **Marden Dementia Friendly Community (MDFC) – Rachel Chacon**

The monthly free lunches continue on the first Tuesday of the month alternating between the Unicorn and Marden Village Club. They are free to Marden residents with cognitive issues and one carer. We held an afternoon tea in November and hope to repeat this. Look out for our posters in Marden Library and on the planter by the phone box or follow us on Facebook and like our page: <https://bit.ly/MardenDementiaFacebook>

The two seated exercise classes continue with Millie on Mondays at 1.45pm to 2.45pm in Marden Village Club and on Fridays at 10.30am to 11.30am at the Vestry Hall and both are well attended. The classes are part of our project to 'Reduce Your Risk' and are open to anyone living in Marden.

We are funding, thanks to a grant from Maidstone Borough Council, the new 'Play On' group set up by Sue Eltringham, we need to raise more funds to complete the project and have been applying for more grants. We also receive donations from the group themselves and from the K20 Cycling club as we are one of their chosen charities.

If you are living with cognitive issues, you are entitled to apply to us for a grant to help with care or maybe just to treat yourself to a special day out. If you wish to be added to our mailing list, apply for a grant or would just like more information please email: [mardendfcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mardendfcinfo@gmail.com) or call Rachel on 07771 770541 for more info.

### **Marden Foodbank – Rev Nicky**

The Foodbank continues to run every Monday between 9.30am and 11.30am supporting the people of Marden. We regularly support 25 to 30 people each week. We are extremely grateful for all the donations we receive. All donations can be dropped to the Vestry Hall on a Monday morning or left on the Vicarage doorstep at any time. We are always in need of donations of non-perishable goods: pasta, rice, tinned vegetables, soup, baked beans, pasta sauce, milk, squash, custard, rice pudding, cereal, tinned fish and meat.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

### **Marden Foodbank Contd**

For further information about the foodbank please contact Kathy Young on 01622 831890 or email: office@mardenchurch.org.uk

If you or anyone you know is in urgent need of help from the foodbank, please call Rev Nicky on 01622 831379 at any time.

## SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE

### **Parish Council Environmental Sub-Group**

The Parish Council Environmental Sub-Group have undertaken various initiatives over the past couple of years and if you would be interested in helping with projects, please let Lisa know either by emailing: adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or ringing 01622 832305.



### **Hedge Planting behind Marden Cemetery**

As part of our biodiversity duty, the Parish Council has already planted many saplings on our open space, and we planted 1,000 whips to form a hedgerow on land behind Marden

Cemetery and another 1,000 whips as part of the Kent Plan Tree initiative a couple of years ago which are all doing well. In January, we planted more hedging saplings provided by Maidstone Borough Council to enable the boundary hedge at the back of the cemetery to be completed. Despite the cold and very soggy conditions, it was great that the Maidstone police cadets, parish councillors and the Marden 'Bloomers' helped with this - many thanks to those of you who helped us to achieve another goal.



### **Green Open Homes Event Marden – Sunday 17th May from 10am-12noon – Marden Village Club**

Join us at Green Open Homes Marden on Sunday 17th May - an event which aims to help residents to improve their home energy efficiency, making it easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

Information on advice and support to install measures such as insulation, solar PV and heat pumps will be available. A local heat pump installer will be there to help explain the technology and answer your questions.

*How can I take part?* By allowing others in your community to view your heat pump at home, you can share your knowledge and experience of low-carbon technology; showcase your commitment to saving energy to an audience that is interested in your home upgrade journey; and inspire others to retrofit their home with energy efficiency measures.

If you have a heat pump and want to invite others in your community to take a look, please contact [climate.change@kent.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@kent.gov.uk) to express your interest. Would you prefer to talk at this event about the retrofit measures you have, without inviting people to see your home? We want to hear from you, too!

If you want to join us as at Green Open Homes Marden as an event attendee, we look forward to welcoming you. A registration form will be available soon. This event is hosted by Marden Parish Council, with support from Kent County Council.



### **Marden Wildlife Update – Ray Morris**

At the well-attended recent AGM members heard more about the ongoing hedgerow surveys – hedgerows being a defining feature of the village for probably a thousand years - conducted by Liz Taylor and her team.

They also had a preview of the group's presentation at November's public launch of Kent & Medway's Nature Recovery Strategy - the only one to showcase hands-on work carried out entirely by volunteers. The discovery, in Marden, of the country's rarest fungus was also announced - the first (and so far, only) UK specimen - found by resident mycologist Jasper Sharp.

The group's continuing work on the conservation of chequer trees, creation of wildflower meadows and the restoration of turtle doves to local farmland continues to be recognised at both national and international level with Marden hosting visitors from The Netherlands, Belgium and France to discuss them.

We are looking forward to continuing this work in the coming year and encouraging more local people to discover and enjoy the area's wildlife and natural places. If you'd like to be involved or have a particular interest you'd like to follow up, please get in touch via [mardenwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:mardenwildlife@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you.

### **Marden Farmer Cluster – Flowers or Food? - Claire Eckley**

Last year, we made the decision to grow cover crops rather than oats on some of our fields. Cover crops are grown for the benefit of the soil and they protect it from weather, and the variety of roots encourages soil biodiversity. Air and water penetrate to greater depths and more soil life excretes and exudes more nutrients.

# SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE CONTD

## Marden Farmer Cluster Contd

The following crop can use those nutrients, and we should not need as much fertiliser.

Flowers dominated our cover crop mix last summer. Long lasting purple phacelia and yellow mustard provided colour for months with sunflowers above and linseed adding blue later. People came to look for a while. Our decision was down to cash flow, and we received a payment from DEFRA for the cover crop relative swiftly. We did grow oats on a couple of fields, planting in March, fertilising, spraying, harvesting and storing. We have just agreed a price and won't get the money till long after the oats have gone to Cheshire to be turned into porridge oats probably 12 months after planting. We will get 12p/kg. In Sainsbury's Scottish oats are £1.35/kg. With wheat, the wait is even longer.



We recently attended a meeting with some farm economists. They said price spikes for cereals would be largely reliant on Mr. Trump saying something alarming. Over-production of maize across the globe is driving down all cereal prices.

So, whereas you may see just another field, locally your farmers are having to make some challenging decisions - "flowers or food?".

## POLICE & CRIME UPDATE

### Police Surgeries – Next one on Friday 13th March at Vestry Hall 10.00am to 11.45am

Our Community Police Officers aim to walk around the village weekly and work closely with the Parish Council on enforcement and engaging with residents to gather intelligence. Over the last few months several police surgeries/drop-in sessions have been organised at both Marden Village Café and Marden Village Club and hopefully these have helped residents to engage with our Community Officers and Maidstone Community Protection Team with their concerns. The last session was held at the Village Club on Wednesday 4th February from 5-6pm where several residents attended and were able to raise concerns. A further drop-in session has been arranged for Friday 13th March at the Vestry Hall from 10.00am to 11.45am when representatives from Kent Police and Maidstone Community Protection Team will be in attendance along with Marden Parish Council.



These sessions are a good opportunity for you to have face-to-face and for the police to gather intel on what is going on in the village. You can also find out what your local officers are doing to tackle the issues that matter to you and learn more about how they are working to keep Marden safe.

Please remember it is so important to report any incidents of ASB and other non-emergency incidents to 101 or help to keep Kent Police phone lines free for emergency calls by reporting non-urgent incidents online. It's easy, user-friendly and you can do it at your own pace. Your safety matters.

<https://kent.police.uk/report>  
#FreeTheLineFor999

### **Marden Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – Neighbourhood Connect** **Cllr Adrian Rabot**

Since the launch of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme last August, Kent Police have a new internal platform called 'Neighbourhood Connect'. It is a dedicated internal Kent Police space to share stories, updates, and visual content from local schemes, highlighting the valuable partnerships between our volunteers, Community Safety Officers, and policing teams.

This can highlight local events, neighbourhood engagement, or simply positive moments that showcase what Neighbourhood Watch is all about. This could be anything from a meeting or leaflet drop to community events, problem-solving activity, or general

neighbourhood engagement, giving Neighbourhood Watch a stronger voice within Kent Police. This will give renewed impetus to Marden's Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, but we are still looking for more residents to sign up so please contact Ali to sign up and be part of something positive in the community.

### **#MaidaSafer – Working Together to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour**

Every report of anti-social behaviour helps build a clearer picture and take effective action – whether it's nuisance bikes, catapults or other concerns, small details can make a big difference. Reporting is vital as Maidstone Borough Council, neighbourhood policing teams and other partners rely on information from residents – even if it seems minor, reporting through official channels helps them identify patterns and act sooner. Report incidents promptly via:

<https://www.kent.police.uk/> or  
<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

### **Crimestoppers** **Speak Up and Stay Safe**

Do you know something about crime in your community? People often feel that nothing gets done when they report a crime or get worried that if you report a crime the perpetrator of the crime will find out it is you, but rest assured your anonymity is 100% guaranteed with Crimestoppers. Call 0800 555 111 to contact the charity or <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

# POLICE & CRIME UPDATE CONTD

## Catapult Concerns in Marden

Kent Police is continuing its crackdown on the antisocial use of catapults across the county, including here in Marden. These devices are increasingly being used to harm wildlife, damage property, and intimidate residents.

Officers are conducting regular patrols in hotspot areas to deter and respond to catapult-related behaviour; stop and search powers are being used where appropriate, and seized items are being destroyed and schools across Kent have received letters to raise awareness among parents and pupils about the risks and consequences of catapult misuse. The Parish Council is also lobbying our MP Katie Lam on the issue.

### What You Can Do:

- If you witness catapult use or antisocial behaviour, please report it via [www.kent.police.uk/report](http://www.kent.police.uk/report) or call 999 in an emergency.
- Parents: please speak with your children about the dangers and legal implications of carrying or using catapults in public.

We are committed to keeping Marden safe and appreciate the community's support in tackling this issue.

# YOUTH PROVISION

## Kent Cricket Community Trust Cllr Adrian Rabot

The Parish Council are working with Kent Community Cricket Trust to bring its unique 'No Boundaries' Youth Engagement Initiative to Marden hopefully in the school holidays. This is a vibrant new initiative bringing positive activities to young people in Marden. The aim is to help young people stay active, create safe spaces where young people can come together and stay active. If we are successful in securing a few sessions at Marden Playing Field, we will let residents know.



# OTHER PARISH INFORMATION

## Marden Church – Rev Nicky

- *Services* - 8.00am Holy Communion (traditional language) and 10.30am services alternating between Morning Worship, 1st and 3rd Sunday's and Parish Communion 2nd and 4th. The church is also open each day, for visitors and anyone who would like to spend some time in reflection or prayer. Midweek Communion is every Thursday at 9.15am. Morning Prayer Monday and Wednesday at 8.45am

- *Messy Church* - for all ages, explores a Bible story through art, craft, and activities. We have a short act of worship and then we have tea. Held in the Vestry Hall next dates: March 8th, and May 17th. Sunday Club for primary school age children runs on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Youth Group - faith based for Years 7-11. Contact Rev Vicki on [curate@mardenchurch.org.uk](mailto:curate@mardenchurch.org.uk)
- *Weddings At Marden Church* - we enjoy celebrating with you the happy occasion of a Wedding. If you are looking for a place to get married please do consider Marden Church, we are happy to work with you to provide the service you would like, there are many options! Please do contact Rev Nicky at the Vicarage on 01622 831379 or [rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com](mailto:rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com) to answer your questions or plan your wedding service.
- *Together@4* - a new informal service in the Vestry Hall with refreshments. Meets at 4pm on 22nd March and 26th April.

If you would like to contact Rev Nicky please call: 01622 831379 or email [rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com](mailto:rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com). Please check out the church website: [www.mardenchurch.org.uk](http://www.mardenchurch.org.uk) and Facebook page @churcheinmarden for our up-to-date services and events. To receive our weekly pew sheet, please email: [office@mardenchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@mardenchurch.org.uk).

## **Marden Library**

In January the popular children's groups restarted after a well-earned break by our lovely volunteers, so don't forget to call in to the library to see what is happening this term. All our book groups continue to flourish, and our newest group has suddenly seen a rapid growth and now boast 10 members in total - at this rate we may have to consider starting another new group.

This year Kent Libraries are promoting our Home Library Service to both those customers who are unable to visit a library and those who would like to take on a rewarding volunteering role by helping to deliver books. Please do call in to the library or visit our website for more information about the library services direct scheme: <https://bit.ly/KCCLibraries>

Groups currently running in the library:

- Talk Time - Tuesday 2.00pm call in for a chat and a challenging game of 'Upword'.
- Talk Time - Thursday 10.00am enjoy a cup of coffee or tea (initially started to support people with dementia and their families, but open to all).
- 'Fun with Homework' - Thursdays 3:30pm (follows Marden Primary Academy curriculum, termtime, no need to book).

## OTHER PARISH INFORMATION CONTD

### Marden Library Contd

- Baby Rhyme Time - Fridays  
10:30am (termtime, bookable)
- Lego Club - Saturdays 9:30am  
(termtime, no need to book)
- Book Group - Monthly on a  
Saturday 11.00am (let us know if  
you would like to join)

We are open Tuesday to Friday  
10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to  
5.00pm and on Saturdays 9.00am to  
1.00pm.

### Light it Up Tractor Parade

#### Weald of Kent Young Farmers

Once again what an amazing Tractor Parade in December and it was wonderful to see so many people lining the streets of Marden - so much cheering, waving, smiles and children jumping up and down so excitedly. Many congratulations to the Weald of Kent Young Farmers for organising such a fabulous event - the sheer amount of organising and the traffic management team having to work so hard keeping the roads clear along the route.



Almost an unbelievable £22,000 was raised and thanks to everyone's generosity and kind donations. All fundraising will go towards various charities - KSS Air Ambulance, Cardiac Risk in the Young, Weald Family Hub, Hands of Hope, WOK Young Farmers and Staplehurst Emergency Help Team. The street collections raised £3,028.89 in Goudhurst and Cranbrook (Tunbridge Wells Borough Licence 25/04115) and a huge £5,463.74 in Staplehurst and Marden (Maidstone Borough Licence 25/04113).

Additionally, the Weald of Kent Young Farmers organised another Christmas tree collection in Marden which raised £170 for the foodbank.

### Christmas Day Community Lunch

Congratulations to Sue Eltringham and her team of volunteers for organising this very special Christmas community lunch for residents and all the businesses who supported the event - what a wonderful thing to do and to give up your time on Christmas Day.

### Message from Sue & David

Thank you! We wanted to thank everyone involved in supporting us to run the Christmas Lunch held for the community on Christmas Day in the Vestry Hall. We were inundated with so many offers of help both financial and the giving of time.

So thank you to the Marden Community Fund; the volunteer drivers who gave lifts to those who needed it; the helpers

on Christmas Eve who came to decorate the hall and prepare the vegetables; those who baked cakes and for the box of satsumas; those who donated spare Christmas decorations; to Nick at Herbert Hall for generous donations; to Richard and Leslie Balfour for your time and offer of lifts; to Kara Fox and Affordable Flowers for the beautiful table decorations and to Marden Village Club for the donation. A special thank you to those who stayed behind to help tidy up on Christmas Day.

It was lovely to see the community coming together to be able to offer a Christmas Day Lunch. With everyone's generosity we even had some funds left over and were able to donate £95.69 to Marden Food Bank. Happy New Year!

### **Retirement of Dr Julie Morgan**

After 27 years of dedicated service to residents in our community, Dr Julie Morgan has decided to 'hang up her boots' on 2nd April and enjoy a well-deserved retirement. Julie has played a pivotal role at Marden Medical Centre with her exceptional commitment, compassion and professionalism throughout her years of practice – you will be sorely missed Julie by the Medical Centre and residents alike.

### **West End Stores**

John and Pat Wilkins who have been running the West End Stores are imminently retiring after 36 years at the shop. During this time, they have gone above and beyond what you

would expect from a convenience store. Regularly delivering shopping to the elderly and housebound at no charge as well as collecting and delivering prescriptions for them; taking elderly residents home who have shopped in the store; keeping an eye out for those vulnerable residents who regularly shop there and alerting others if they became concerned about any of them; obtaining items customers ask for from their suppliers; providing, unasked and free of charge, refreshments for village events; acting as a ticket office for many village events. Despite John and Pat having ongoing health conditions, they kept the shop open during the pandemic. Throughout all their years at West End Stores they have been unfailingly cheerful, helpful and committed to the community – a true community hub used and loved by many residents.

We wish John and Pat all the best in their well-earned retirement.

### **Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide (SAWW) – Carol Newman**

Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide (SAWW) is a local charity with an international reach that works to improve anaesthesia services in low-income countries. Imagine needing an operation without anaesthesia? Worldwide 5 billion people lack access to safe anaesthesia and surgery. As a result, millions suffer disability or death. SAWW works to change this by providing suitable equipment and training to hospitals in poor countries.

## OTHER PARISH INFORMATION CONTD

### **Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide Contd**

Thank you to everyone who supported the work of SAWW over the past year. You can read about our activities and the impact this makes in our latest Annual Report that is now available to read or download from our website <https://safe4all.org.uk/annual-review>.

We have many more requests for help from hospitals waiting desperately for donations. If you would like to fundraise for us, please get in touch at: [info@safe4all.org.uk](mailto:info@safe4all.org.uk) Thank you.

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN

As ever, a very warm welcome to all new residents who have recently moved to the village, and you can find our Village Welcome Pack on our website:

<https://bit.ly/VillageWelcomePack>

We are very fortunate to have so much going on and there are so many village groups who frequently interconnect/support one another.

Each time a newsletter is being drafted, we email all village organisations to give them an opportunity to include a piece, but if you think you haven't been included or are a new group in the village, please let either Ali know or email: [cllrboswell@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:cllrboswell@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk)

You can also check out the 'Village Diary' to find out what's on in and around Marden on the church website: [www.mardenchurch.org.uk](http://www.mardenchurch.org.uk) or if you have something to add, then email: [diary@mardenchurch.org.uk](mailto:diary@mardenchurch.org.uk) Here's a taste of what's happening this Spring:

### **'Come & Sing' Group**

#### **Sarah Emmanuel**

All are welcome to come and sing to improve health, boost well-being, for good company or just for the joy of singing! We sing well-loved songs from a variety of genres followed by tea, cake and time together. We meet on alternate Thursdays at 2.30pm in the Vestry Hall – Spring dates: 12th and 26th March for the Easter celebration, then 9th and 23rd April. £2 per session to cover costs. Please contact Sarah on 01622 832925 or email: [emanuelfamily@btinternet.com](mailto:emanuelfamily@btinternet.com) for more information.

### **Little Fishes Baby & Toddler Group**

Little Fishes baby and toddler group runs in the Vestry Hall every Wednesday during term time between 9.30am-11am. All parents and carers are welcome to go along with their little ones. There is no need to book just turn up as and when you are able to. Suggested donation for each session is £1. For more information, please contact Kathy: [office@mardenchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@mardenchurch.org.uk) or Rev Nicky: [rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com](mailto:rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com)

### **Marden Bowls Club - Colin Smith**

Any New Years resolutions? We wonder what your plans are for 2026?

Are you considering your options for improving your fitness, losing a bit of weight or maybe you prefer to think about making some new local friends, enjoying a sunny afternoon watching a bit of local competitive sport with a drink in your hand and having a chat with like-minded folk whilst you do so? Then perhaps we can tempt you to think about coming up to the bowls club, and checking us out, as we can fulfil all those suggestions!

As Spring is on its way, we are starting to plan for our new season and would like to encourage you to consider coming up and meeting us and having a chat about what we can offer you. We intend to have a social event before the end of March and have plans for an open day or two as April progresses. We have people to help you learn the game and great discounts for new members, whether first time bowlers or experienced bowlers looking for a new venue. Oh, and the bar is always discounted and have both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, social members also welcome.

Why not email me:

mardensecretary24@gmail.com and see what we offer and how it can help you enjoy 2026 just a little more than you expected. Wishing you a healthy and prosperous New Year from all the members of Marden Bowls club.

## **Marden Community Lunches**

### **Carol Hogg**

Started by Janet McIntosh in the year 2000, the community lunches were originally intended to provide a nourishing meal for the frail and the elderly, and company for those living alone. Now, some quarter of a century later, the lunches are still held on the third Monday of each month at 12:30 in the Vestry Hall, where a home cooked meal is provided for up to 40 people for just £5 each. The whole event, including the cooking, is run entirely by volunteers. Additional offers of help are always appreciated. For further information please contact Carol at [carol.hogg@hotmail.com](mailto:carol.hogg@hotmail.com) or 07949 501043



### **Marden Scout Group - James Blythin, Assistant Group Lead Volunteer**

The Group had a busy December, really getting into the Christmas spirit and supporting various events within the village:

*Santa's Sleigh* – Our Scout elves again joined the Paddock Woods Lions and Santa, handing out presents to the village's children and getting everyone into the festive mood. Marden again showed huge generosity and raised an amazing £660, with the Scouts donating their half to the Marden Food Bank and

# WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN CONTD

## **Marden Scout Group Contd**

the remaining going to the Worth charities supported by the Lions. A huge thank you to everyone who donated!

*Church Christmas Tree* – Our Pioneer Pack beautifully decorated a tree in the Church with home-made baubles and biscuits.

*Scout S'mores for Marden at Christmas*  
As ever, our Scouts were cooking on an open fire and provided their now legendary and delicious S'mores to passers-by on their way to the Memorial Hall. Thanks Scouts!

We do have several exciting volunteer opportunities, from the leadership teams for our Beavers and Cubs through to social media and Trustees. We need more helpers to be able to continue providing the young people of the village the great Scouting experiences we do today - no experience necessary!

For further information on how you can join the team and help, please contact [GSL@mardenscouts.org.uk](mailto:GSL@mardenscouts.org.uk). Thank you for your continued support!

## **Marden History Group & Heritage Centre - Richard Adam, Chair**

With 2025 being the 200th anniversary of the railways, Graham Tippen gave us an enlightening presentation last November of the railway in Marden over the years.

We are looking forward to events in 2026, particularly about local nature and wildlife. Keep an eye open for our upcoming programme.

We are extremely lucky to have a local IT specialist look at revamping the History Group website and a new version should be live soon.

Research on buildings continues with Shepherd's House being completed, and Jewell House with its Bishop's House and Cottage on the way. As a point of interest, Bishop's House has been wrongly misnamed as it never belonged to the Bishop of Canterbury, as previously thought. John Jewell was a Marden farmer, and the cottage seems to have been once called The Bakehouse! Check out our website: <https://bit.ly/MardenHistoryGroup>

## **Marden Horticultural Society Julie Nicol, Chair**

During early Spring the axis of the earth is increasing its tilt relative to the sun, rapid length of daylight, and warmth causing new plant growth to "spring forth", giving the season its name.

Marden Horticultural Society continue through the seasons to invite interesting speakers all of which you can find on our website where you can also find information on jobs to carry out in your gardens, and gardens of interest in the area.

We are also looking forward to 10th March at 7.00pm when we shall have

the well-known Chris Beardshaw designer, broadcaster, and plantsman talking about Chelsea gardens over the years in Marden Memorial Hall. For more information and tickets please email us at the address below. Our coach trip this year in July shall be a trip to Arundel castle, and gardens in Sussex.

As a group we look forward to welcoming new members at our monthly meetings on the second Tuesday at 7.00pm where we also hold a raffle, and teas. For more information visit our site

<https://www.mardengardeners.uk>



## **Marden in Bloom – 10th Anniversary**

### **Diana Rabot, Secretary**

Over the winter, Marden in Bloom has continued to maintain the village planters ensuring they stayed tidy, healthy and interesting despite the challenging weather. Our thanks go to the 'Bloomers' as well as Golden Hill Nursery for supplying us with some of our summer plants. Last autumn, we planted another thousand bulbs at Windsor Meadows and we're sure you'll agree that the thousands of bulbs we have planted over the last 10 years are a welcome sight after the long winter.

We have also continued to maintain the flower beds at Marden Library and many residents have commented on

them positively. If you would like to help, we meet there at 10.30am on the first Monday of the month.

We are hoping to run a Quiz Night on Wednesday 8th April. Get together a team and sharpen your wits - you don't need to be an expert gardener to take part!

This year we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary and holding our third Garden Safari in the village on Sunday 28th June. Take an opportunity to wander around the village, enjoying a variety of different gardens. Every space is special and you don't need the 'perfect' garden to take part. If you would like to open your front or back garden that would be great. If you would like to find out more about any of these events or join the group, simply email [anne.boswell@gmail.com](mailto:anne.boswell@gmail.com)

## **Marden Motor Club**

### **Nick Ferguson-Gow**

The Marden Motor Club meets on the first Tuesday of every month at Marden Village Club starting at 8pm. The calendar of events for 2026 has already been formulated and includes drive out breakfast meets, motor museum visits, quizzes, presentations, treasure hunts as well as our monthly/social meetings. The Club is also taking part in National Drive-it Day on 26th April and organises the annual Marden Motor Show held on Southons Field on Saturday, 23rd May.

New members are very welcome to come along and join us.

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN CONTD

### **Marden Oddfellows – Julie Broomfield**

The Oddfellows Society is a small friendly society, which runs every Friday in Maidstone and the 2nd Monday every month in Marden Memorial Hall.

Are you looking to bring invaluable laughter into your life, make new friends, chat, learn new activities, crafts, or share your own crafts? We also organise cost effective trips throughout the year which do not break the budget. If you would like further information, call Julie on 07910888607 and I can explain in more detail of what we can offer. You never know, it may be the best decision you ever made.

### **Marden Play On – Sue Eltringham**

'Play On!' is a group to encourage members of the community to socialise and to stay active together and is funded by the Marden Dementia Friendly Community. Each week we reminisce about past occasions and sporting events from days gone by. This has included a wide range of memories such as favourite childhood books and lively discussions around confectionery and memories of sweet shops as children. One of the group shared family memories of their father's rowing achievements, sharing medals and old photographs with the group. There is no point keeping all you precious memorabilia in a box in the attic - it's good to share the memories together!

We also enjoyed a Robin Hood session, with a themed quiz followed by a very competitive indoor archery challenge, no windows were broken thankfully! At 'Half time' refreshments are served, followed by an activity together. Nothing too strenuous, but just something to keep active and more importantly to laugh together.

In December the 'Play On!' were included in the invitation to the Christmas lunch hosted by Leslie & Richard Balfour at the winery and the group enjoyed a fabulous Christmas dinner and singing lead by Marden's Come & Sing Group - a lovely way to end the year. We meet every Thursday 11.15am - 12.30pm - Vestry Hall, Marden. For further details contact [sue.eltringham@SEEOccupationaltherapy.co.uk](mailto:sue.eltringham@SEEOccupationaltherapy.co.uk)

### **Marden Society – Steve McArragher**

Our decision to switch to afternoon meetings has been vindicated, with meeting attendance well up to 30 or more, so will continue for another year at least and have organised a programme of talks as follows:

- 25th March: "Historic London Hotels, Luxury and Scandal" by Conrad Biggam. This covers the historical and cultural significance of some major London Hotels, including elements of scandal and intrigue.

- 22nd April: "An Audience with C S Lewis" by Jonathan Jones. C.S. Lewis - or Jack as he was known to friends

and family - will tell us of his life and rise to fame before Narnia.

- 27th May: "The Significance of the Ship-Burial at Sutton Hoo" by Imogen Corrigan. The rich hoard found at Sutton Hoo dates to the early c7th and tells us much about the wealth and culture of the country then. It is believed, though not proven, that King Readwald was buried in the ship.

All talks start at 2.30pm in the Vestry Hall with a raffle followed by refreshments after the talk. For further information contact Steve at [steve.mcarragher@btinternet.com](mailto:steve.mcarragher@btinternet.com) or 07946 532591.



### **Marden Sporting Memories Sue Eltringham**

Marden Sporting Memories (MSM) meet to talk and reminisce about past sporting occasions and catch up on the weekly sports events.

MSM are grateful to all at Brigade Fitness who have given their time so freely to support the group last year. Will came to talk to the group about his rugby career and winning the touch rugby championships and in November 'Ultra runner Jack' shared his story and his fundraising achievements for the men's mental health charity

'Movember' for which MSM made a donation. Much laughter was had as Jack joined in with our own 'seated running challenge'.

An 'away match' to Marden Primary Academy gave the group the opportunity to take part in some activities with the pupils at the school, who could not have been more enthusiastic, polite and were a real credit to the school. A re-match is planned for the Spring.

The Christmas party was hosted by Leslie & Richard Balfour at the winery, and the group enjoyed a fabulous Christmas dinner and singing lead by Marden's Come & Sing Group.

If you, or anyone you know has an interesting sporting story or physical challenge that you would like to share with the group, we would be delighted to hear from you? Please email: [mardensportingmemories@gmail.com](mailto:mardensportingmemories@gmail.com)



### **Marden Village Café – Fridays 10am-11.45am in the Vestry Hall**

The Village Café is held every Friday morning from 10.00am-11.45am at the Vestry Hall offering homemade cakes, scones and hot drinks to anyone within our community at very reasonable prices. A warm welcome awaits you and children are very welcome.

## **Sport For All at Marden Sports Club** **Russell Wheldon**

Why not pick up a new sport this spring?

*Padel* - Our padel courts have proved a huge hit. Come along and try - no membership required. Info at [www.mardensportsclub.com/padel](http://www.mardensportsclub.com/padel)

*Tennis* - Courts are open all day, all year round, with social tennis sessions being informal and very popular (Sunday mornings & Wednesday evenings). Beginners can opt for coaching with Hotshotz. Contact [tennis@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:tennis@mardensportsclub.com) for more info & to enjoy a free taster session.

*Cricket* - We have big plans, professional coaching and more teams lined up for 2026. Come for a couple of free outdoor nets and see what you think. All levels, all ages welcome. Message [cricket@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:cricket@mardensportsclub.com)

*Hockey* - With 13 adult teams and around 400 juniors, Marden Russets Hockey Club always welcomes new members, especially beginners of all ages. We run special summer sessions for newbies and rusties - no charge & sticks can be borrowed. Get in touch now so you're ready to go. Contact [hockey@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:hockey@mardensportsclub.com)

Interested to find out more, then please visit [www.mardensportsclub.com](http://www.mardensportsclub.com) and contact [membership@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:membership@mardensportsclub.com)

## **Wet Golfers Society** **Chris Parsons, Treasurer**

Not much golf being played at the moment but our programme for golf days and charity supporting events this year is already in place and simply waiting for longer, warmer days. We are an inclusive golf society with members from Marden and nearby, varied in age, gender and ability and we're always keen to welcome new members. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Captain Paul Attwood on 07831 463446, or email [wetgolfers@gmail.com](mailto:wetgolfers@gmail.com).

To whet your golfing appetite here's a summary of what 2026 has in store: Six golf days running from April to September at Kingshill, Sweetwoods, Cherry Lodge, Tenterden, Weald of Kent, Hever Castle; each followed by a prize-giving dinner with partners at The Unicorn, a golf tour to Le Touquet and a Summer Knockout competition at Village Golf.

Charity events, both golfing and socials, supporting Macmillian and Hospice in the Weald. Our members raised over £5,000 for Macmillian in 2025 with amazing support from Marden businesses and people.

Our year officially kicks off with a Pre-season Social gathering at The Unicorn in March for existing members and, who knows, perhaps a few new members too.

# PARISH COUNCIL COUNCILLORS, CLERKS AND OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

## **PARISH COUNCILLORS**

### **Cllr Richard Adam**

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### **Cllr Paul Dobinson (Amenities Chairman)**

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### **Cllr Ian Newton**

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### **Cllr Adrian Rabot (Chairman)**

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### **Cllr Mike Summersgill**

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### **Cllr Kate Tippen**

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### **Cllr Andy Turner (Planning Chairman)**

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## **PARISH CLERK**

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## **BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

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gracecouch@maidstone.gov.uk

Cllr Michael Summersgill - 07779 367412

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Cllr Claudine Russell

claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Brian Black - brian.black@kent.gov.uk

## **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

Katie Lam MP

Member of Parliament for Weald of Kent

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk

www.katieforkent.com

## **KENT POLICE**

Emergency: 999

Telephone: 101

<https://bit.ly/KPReportACrime>

<https://bit.ly/KPRuralCrime>

## **BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE**

Freephone: 0800 405040

Text: 61016

## **FAULT REPORTING**

Maidstone Borough Council

(for Flytipping, Abandoned Vehicles, Dog Fouling and Street Cleaning)

Telephone: 01622 602162

Website: [www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/report-it](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/report-it)

Kent County Council

(for Potholes, other Road Issues, Vegetation and Street Lighting)

Telephone: 08458 247800

Website: [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

## **ADMIN ASSISTANT**

Lisa Stevens

adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Tel: 01622 832305



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@mardenkentpc



@mardenparishcouncil

**Marden Parish Council, Parish Office, Marden Memorial Hall, Goudhurst Road, Marden, TN12 9JX**

**Website: [www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](http://www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) - Office Telephone: 01622 832305**

**Office Opening Times: Monday, Tuesday and Friday 10.00am to 12noon**

# 5 steps to become better prepared

STEP

1

## Make an emergency grab bag – consider:

- Torch
- Keys
- Medication
- First aid kit
- Toiletries
- Important documents
- Radio and batteries
- Money and credit cards
- Clothing and blankets
- Mobile phone and charger
- Pet food
- Food and water
- Emergency contacts



STEP

2

## Make a 'Household Emergency Plan'

Make an emergency plan for your home and practice it with your household. Your plan should include: contact numbers, how to turn off your gas, electricity and water, and sources of information and advice.



STEP

3

## Sign up for weather and flood alerts

- Sign up for Met Office weather alerts: [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)
- Get Environment Agency Flood Warnings: [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)



STEP

4

## Check your flood risk

Check your home's flood risk by visiting the Environment Agency website at [www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)



STEP

5

## Join the Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register is for customers who may need additional support in a utility outage. Find out if you or a relative is eligible to sign up for this free service by visiting [www.thepsr.co.uk](http://www.thepsr.co.uk)



Scan the QR codes for more information or visit [www.kentprepared.org.uk/5-steps](http://www.kentprepared.org.uk/5-steps)

Are you  
**emergency**  
ready?

Kent and Medway  
**prepared**



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