

## **Timeline of Marden Planning Opposition Group (MPOG)**

The reason that we started the campaign was due to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments paper on Garden Communities which states that 'Proposals should set out how the local community is being, or will be, engaged and involved at an early stage, and strategies for the continued community engagement and involvement. We are clear that local communities-both current and future residents-must have a meaningful say in developing the proposal from design to delivery.'

The aim of MPOG from the start was to clearly state how we will not be involved or have a meaningful say (other than no and the reasons why), thereby if the government paper is being followed correctly this main aim of the garden community cannot be satisfied in Marden. Therefore this also followed on to our petition wording which stated that;

**We as 'people who will be most closely impacted by the new garden community proposal', we the undersigned state that we DO NOT share the vision of the landowners, DO NOT support the proposal, and WILL NOT engage or be involved in the creation of a garden community in or around Marden village.**

We garnered press attention for the campaign right from the start.

Kent Messenger- Campaigners unite against plans for 2000 homes in Marden. 7th March 2019

<https://www.kentononline.co.uk/maidstone/news/it-will-totally-crush-the-village-200193/>

We produced a 'slider image' which is an indicative image of how the Firmin housing development would look in Marden. From this our campaign was featured in national news along with local news. Meanwhile residents purchased and hung their own banners and purchased t shirts with the slogan of the campaign on them.

Kent Messenger - Campaigners have produced striking images.. 7th May 2019

<https://www.kentononline.co.uk/weald/news/is-this-how-village-could-look-204145/>

Daily Mail.online Article about Marden and our Campaign. 9th May 2019

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7009411/Striking-aerial-images-sprawling-green-fields-sleepy-Kent-village-paved-over.html#comments>

We spoke to our MP Helen Grant and I had a meeting and a number of phone calls with her, ahead of her agreeing to back our campaign and to schedule a photocall with her in the village.

Kent Messenger online Helen Grant Article. 17th May 2019

<https://www.kentononline.co.uk/maidstone/news/mp-joins-villagers-ahead-of-protest-204879/>

Our March for Marden was held on the 18th May and had just under 2,000 people march through the high street which we legally closed and risk assessed the whole day, even obtaining insurance for the march itself. The march was televised on BBC South East Today and was also featured again in the Kent Messenger.

March For Marden on BBC South East Today 18th May 2019

<https://www.savemarden.com/slider/VID-20190527-WA0017.mp4>

Kent Messenger - 18th May 2019 Marden villagers take to the streets to say no to 2,000-homes plan

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/almost-2-000-demonstrators-march-through-village-204895/>

A video montage of the March was produced and put on our Facebook page, which by now had over 1,000 group members including some of the borough councillors.

<https://www.facebook.com/100014417686395/videos/580568189100432/>

I was invited to speak on BBC Radio Kent about the SaveMarden campaign. The link to this is below. If the links take you to the Facebook page but you cannot see them as you are not a member of the group - maybe Rachel could show them to you?

<https://www.facebook.com/100014417686395/videos/581699692320615/>

We created a website [www.savemarden.com](http://www.savemarden.com) and put all of the FOI information gathered on there. We also started gathering signatures for our petition against the creation of a garden community in or around Marden village. We now have 3,000 signatures and have taken a copy of the petition to the previous housing minister at Downing Street. We received a reply which states that Marden is not one of the governments sponsored locations for a garden village development.

Please see attached the full response that we got from the government following the handing in of a copy of the petition.

This link below is again to the Facebook group so you may need to get Rachel to show you.

<https://www.facebook.com/100014417686395/videos/612972869193297/>

This event was also captured in the Kent Messenger:

Kent Messenger Marden Planning Opposition Group takes petition against 2,000 homes plan to Downing Street 15th July 2019

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/weald/news/housing-fight-taken-to-downing-street-208484/>

I presented to the SPI meeting, asking a question about how the capacity of rural service centres will be calculated and analysed during this local plan review process

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFPkHm05AW4&app=desktop>

and afterwards was asked to go on to Radio Kent to go head to head with the Leader of the Maidstone Borough Council Cllr Martin Cox. Start time approximately 7:10am.

BBC Radio Kent. The Wake Up Call. 7th November 2019:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07qspgs?fbclid=IwAR3pHH7ESIFmTCcqjth6Po-xHBM\\_nR3ntqjLT8x8-mEevrt4jKAvmANeNIM#play](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07qspgs?fbclid=IwAR3pHH7ESIFmTCcqjth6Po-xHBM_nR3ntqjLT8x8-mEevrt4jKAvmANeNIM#play)

Members of our Committee have also attended all the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure committee meetings at MBC town hall since the 7th July. We have also attended all the Policy and Resources Committee meetings. The P and R committee are also highly relevant as they are the committee that decided to invest and proceed with the proposal plan for Lenham's Garden community.

We have lobbied and continue to lobby all the Maidstone Borough Councillors and the relevant Kent County Council Councillors as well as the Maidstone borough council head of department officers about our campaign. To this end we professionally produced and hand distributed our technical document to all 55 borough councillors along with the council officers.

Please could you add this information to your response to Maidstone Borough Council about the call for site in Marden.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Chair of Marden Planning Opposition