

# MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER



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LOCAL COUNCIL  
AWARD SCHEME  
QUALITY GOLD



## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL



Dear Residents

2025 has started very wet and cold, let's hope the Spring brings something warmer and drier! The Parish Council was pleased to welcome Jon Goda onto the Parish Council following his co-option as a Parish Councillor at the December Full Council meeting. We also welcome back Paul Dobinson who was co-opted back onto the Council in February. We still have one Parish Councillor vacancy if you are interested in joining our team see the information below.

On behalf of the entire village, I want to thank Ian Jones, our Cemetery Caretaker, for the last 38 years, who has decided it is time to retire at the end of March. He will be much missed.

Marden at Christmas was a wonderful community event, despite the atrocious weather that day. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

There are three Parish Council events coming up that I would like to draw your attention to. The community consultation open morning on Saturday 22nd March, the Annual Parish Meeting on 8th April and the beacon lighting on 8th May to commemorate 80 years since VE Day.

You will find information about all these events in the newsletter.

*Best Wishes*

*Councillor Kate Tippen*

### Co-option

To make our team complete with eleven councillors, the Parish Council has the authority to co-opt another new Councillor onto the Parish Council. As a Parish Councillor you have the opportunity to influence change and instigate projects that have a positive impact on our community. Councillors come from all walks of life and have many different types of experience. If you are interested in joining our very committed team, you can find out more about the role of a Councillor, or if you wish to obtain an application form, please either call Ali or Rachel in the Parish Office on 01622 832305, or email: [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk). Parish Council and Election information can be found at: [bit.ly/MPCElectionInfo](https://bit.ly/MPCElectionInfo)

**CALLING ALL  
COMMUNITY HEROES**



**YOUR LOCAL  
COUNCIL NEEDS YOU!  
MAKE A CHANGE  
BECOME A COUNCILLOR**

To find out more contact: [Ali \(the Clerk\) on 01376 297981](mailto:Ali (the Clerk) on 01376 297981)

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# GENERAL UPDATE

## Ian Jones

We are sad to announce that Ian Jones who has been our Cemetery Caretaker for 38 years has decided it is time to retire at the end of March. We will miss his cheerful face and dedication to duty in the Cemetery in all weathers. He has worked tirelessly to keep the Cemetery looking beautiful and with great respect to all the families who have loved ones interred there.



Thank you Ian for all your hard work and we wish you a long and happy retirement.

## Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) Quality Gold Status

As reported in the Autumn Newsletter, we were proud to announce that The National Association of Local Councils has accredited Marden Parish Council with the Quality Gold award – the highest achievement for a parish council to attain.

At the November Full Council meeting, the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor John Perry and the Chief Executive of the Kent Association of Local Councils,



Charmaine Keatley presented the award to Cllr Kate Tippen, Chairman and Alison Hooker, Clerk to the Council.

Going forward, the Parish Council will continue to enhance what it offers to the local community and welcomes input from residents and partners. Marden Parish Council, and other local councils, are at the front line of the government's localism agenda and are doing as much as they can to deliver services whilst continuing to be efficient and cost-effective as it can.

## Marden Community Survey – How do you feel about Marden?

You will find the Marden Community Survey enclosed with this newsletter. We want to know how you feel about Marden, the community and facilities. We would be very grateful if many residents can complete the survey by returning to the Parish Office via the post-box or place in the box at Marden Library.

## GENERAL UPDATE CONTD

## Marden Community Survey Contd

Alternatively, you can complete this online by 25th April 2025.

Once your feedback has been collated and reviewed, we will provide an update in the Summer Newsletter.

## VACANCY

## Marden Parish Council Parish Groundsperson

Marden Parish Council is looking for a Parish Groundsperson to undertake general and grounds maintenance tasks in the Cemetery and around the village.

35 hours per week (depending on weather conditions)

The job involves manual work and some heavy lifting. The successful applicant should also be able to work on own initiative. Desirable skills include basic knowledge of gardening, tree work and garden machinery. Ideally the applicant would live locally and have a knowledge of Marden. Equipment and access to a vehicle will be provided and training given where appropriate. Please contact the Parish Office on 01622 832305 or email [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) to find out more details and obtain an application form and job description.

**Closing date: 31st March 2025.**

## Parish Council Communications

We aim to provide residents with as much information as we can on the work that the Parish Council is undertaking in our newsletters, weekly e-newsletter, the village noticeboards, on social media and gives village organisations the opportunity to report on what they are up to.

The Parish Council is considering holding 'Meet the Councillors' sessions, but 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.

The Parish Council's Facebook page is also a good source of information, and it would be great if you could follow or give us a like on our Facebook page. Our Community Engagement Policy can be found at: <https://bit.ly/MPCPoliciesProcedures>



## **Community Consultation Open Morning**

**Saturday 22nd March**

**10am-12.30pm – Vestry Hall**

Marden Parish Council is holding an Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March at the Vestry Hall between 10.00am and 12.30pm with consultations on the Marden Neighbourhood Plan Review Regulation 14 and Open Space Byelaws, along with the 'Quality of Life' survey for Marden residents.

The open morning will also provide residents with the opportunity to view what the Parish Council is looking at for the future including the Marden Infrastructure Spend Plan, the Highways Improvement Plan and environmental issues (such as the Earth Charter and Marden Plastic Free Campaign).

As we've already mentioned, Councillors are keen to engage with as many residents as possible and this is a great opportunity for you to pop along to have a chat and give us your thoughts over a cuppa.

## **Marden Annual Parish Meeting (APM) – Tuesday 8th April at 7.30pm in Marden Memorial Hall**

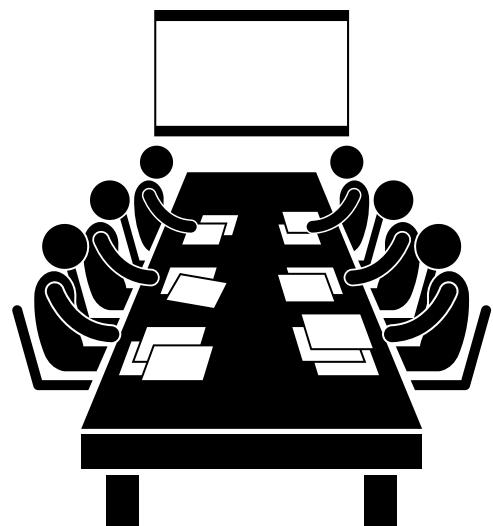
This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th April at Marden Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm and all residents are welcome to attend. We will have Sue Eltringham from Sporting Memories giving a talk so do come along and see what the parish council and village organisations are up to.

All village organisations will be contacted asking for a report on their activities over the last year and these will be made available at the meeting and on the Parish Council website.

## **Parish Council Meetings**

Parish Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm. Full Council is held on the second Tuesday of each month and Amenities on the fourth Tuesday of each month both of which are at The Allens in Albion Road. Planning is held on the first and third Tuesday of each month and Finance quarterly both in the Parish Office at the Memorial Hall.

Agendas are placed on the Parish Council Facebook page and village noticeboards each week and if you have something you wish to raise either with Council or on an item on the agenda, you are welcome to send this to the Clerk two weeks prior to the meeting for it to be raised on your behalf. You can find all agendas and minutes on the parish website: <https://bit.ly/MPC-Meetings>





**Village Litter Pick  
Saturday 29th March  
9.30am till 12pm  
John Banks Hall  
We Need You!**

We are calling for volunteers to help with the village clean up on the morning of Saturday 29th 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, hi-viz and bags (please bring your own gloves if possible) and you are covered by the Parish Council's insurance. Please contact Lisa for further details to register your interest either by email: [adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or call 01622 832305

Hopefully this will be part of the Marden Plastic Free Campaign where litter can be separated into plastic and general waste. However, this is only feasible in the village centre as it's too difficult to undertake in the village lanes.

It's a great community event working together to keep our lovely parish of Marden tidy. Once again, we would like to thank all those wonderful residents who regularly litter pick around the village – you are stars!

## **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 such as a reduction in the tax base of properties paying council tax, an increase in employer's National Insurance contributions, a need to start rebuilding the council's reserves to a more sustainable level and a general percentage increase on essential services, the Parish Council has had to make the difficult decision to make an increase. This means the amount of money collected from residents to be spent in Marden in the next financial year from April 2025 for a Band D taxpayer will be £99.45 per annum or £8.29 per month for a band D property. This is an increase of £16.73 per annum or £1.40 per month for a Band D property.

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**

### **Weekly Village E-Newsletter**

As well as sharing information on our social media, we also have an e-newsletter which is emailed out once a week on a Friday called the Weekly Village Round Up. This is perfect for those who are not on social media and would prefer all the information in an email sent to their in box. See the instructions on how to sign up below. You can unsubscribe any time. Please share this with those who may find this useful.

## **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



**SCAN ME**



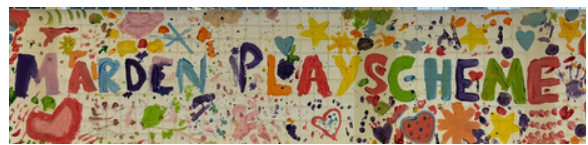
Alternatively, from your search engine type:  
<https://bit.ly/MPC-E-NewsletterSignUp>  
Or call or email Rachel on: 01622 832305 or [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) who can add you to the mailing list.

## **Marden Open Space Byelaws**

The Parish Council has been updating its Byelaws for public consultation. A draft of the new document is available to view on our website:  
<https://bit.ly/MPC-Byelaws2025>

If you would like to comment on the draft document before it is submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government please send to Ali at [clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk)

Alternatively, a hard copy can be obtained from the Parish Office or by coming along to the Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March. The consultation is open from 10th March to 25th April.



## **Marden Summer Play Scheme**

Last year's summer play scheme was another great success under the management of Jen Ward and colleagues, and the Parish Council is hoping to run the Summer Play Scheme again during the summer holidays this year.

We are currently waiting to hear if we can run it at Marden Primary Academy again, but this depends on whether the proposed plans for the extension of the school takes place. If not, we will look to see if it can be run at Marden Scout HQ like last year. More details will be available nearer the time in the next newsletter and on our website/social media pages.

# PLANNING UPDATE

## **Land East of Albion Road and North of Copper Lane**

As you will be aware, the above outline application with some reserved matters (access only sought) was refused by Maidstone Borough Council and then taken to appeal by the developers. The Government Planning Inspector has permitted this development to go ahead for the removal of 2 former agricultural sheds and the erection of up to 117 dwellings and associated infrastructure, including partial footways on Albion Road, at land east of Albion Road and north of Copper Lane, subject to a number of conditions. The proposal was outline other than in respect of access and the next step is for the developer to submit a full planning application. Marden Parish Council submitted an extensive written representation to the Planning Inspectorate and sent a representative to the inquiry in November, as did Marden Wildlife. You can find the application details on the MBC planning portal: <https://bit.ly/CopperLaneApplication>

## **Marden Neighbourhood Plan Review (MNP) – Regulation 14 Consultation – 10th March-25th 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. Councillors refer to the policies when considering planning applications to ensure they are compliant. We are hoping it does not need to be taken to full referendum but will probably need to go to examination.

Please come along to the Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall where you will be able to view the draft revised document and make comment. If you are unable to come to the consultation, here is the link to the document: <https://bit.ly/MPCMNPReg14>

There will also be a copy in Marden Library or pop into the Parish Office. The deadline to respond is 25th April.

Please do check the plan out 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.



## **Land South of Howland Road**

An outline planning application for access and scale was discussed at an MPC Planning Committee last August for the erection of nine dwelling houses. This was submitted under the Marden Neighbourhood Plan Rural Exception Policy for affordable housing for local people. Whilst we recognise the need for local affordable housing, for a number of reasons the Parish Council recommended refusal, as did a number of residents. Maidstone Borough Council refused the application. However, the developer has now taken this to Appeal, and we await the outcome of the Inspector's decision. You can check out the application: <https://bit.ly/HowlandRoadPlanning>

## **Reed Court Farm**

### **Proposed Chicken Farm, Hunton Road**

This contentious planning application has once again been deferred and is unlikely to be heard at the MBC Planning Committee until later in the Spring. The application is for the erection of a new free range egg farm consisting of 2 hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works. You can check it out on the MBC Planning Portal: <https://bit.ly/ReedCourtPlanning>

## **Solar Farm West of Pattenden Lane**

ILOS New Energy UK Ltd held a public drop-in session last October to evaluate the community's comments and suggestions.

ILOS then submitted an EIA Screening Opinion in relation to the installation and operation of a ground mounted solar PV energy generation with all associated works, equipment and infrastructure to Maidstone Borough Council. In December, MBC adopted the opinion that an Environmental Impact Assessment for the above proposal is not required.

The Parish Council held an Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting on 4th February to discuss the planning application and after a great deal of discussion, including with the residents who attended, the Council agreed to recommend to Maidstone Borough Council that the application be approved.

You can find all the information on the MBC Planning Portal: <https://bit.ly/PattendenLaneSolar>

## **Marden Conservation Area Appraisal**

Marden already has a designated conservation area and Maidstone Borough Council undertook a review and consultation last year to see if there is a case for extending or amending the boundary. The proposed Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (known as CAAMP) recognises and summarises the significance and character of Marden and provides a framework system to ensure that this character is protected or enhanced and follows the advice set out in Historic England's guidance note.

# PLANNING UPDATE CONTD

## Marden Conservation Area

### Appraisal Contd

The Appraisal has now recorded that the conservation area boundary is still relevant in the most part as it draws a clear line around the appropriate area which is compact and contained. Marden Parish Council requested that consideration be given to extending the boundary of the conservation area to include the group of Victorian terraces opposite Jewell Grove. However, MBC has decided that the separation distance between the boundary of the conservation area and the buildings, and the modern development in between, are not suitable for inclusion in the conservation area but they will be afforded protection on the Marden locally listed/non-designated assets list.

It has been suggested that Edwin Villas, West End, Marden be considered for inclusion in the non-designated assets list and Marden Congregational Chapel has now been added to the list.

# PROJECT UPDATE

## Marden Parish Resilience Plan

The Parish Council has been drafting a parish resilience plan (previously known as the Emergency Plan) for some time which would be used in the event of an emergency affecting our community and Councillors will

be meeting shortly to progress the plan further. In most cases, emergencies are dealt with by the 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, there may be circumstances, such as widespread flooding or a train crash, where the arrival of the emergency services and other responders could be delayed, or when essential utilities and highways access may be compromised. In these circumstances it is important that our community can help itself until help arrives and it will do this more effectively if it has a plan in place. More details will be available in the next newsletter.

## Marden Playing Field Changing Rooms

As residents will be aware, a public consultation was held last year where most responses were in favour of refurbishing the building as a community space. With the assistance of a local architect, a formal planning application will be submitted to Maidstone Borough Council and a specification has been drawn up to obtain quotes for the works. This project will mainly be funded with \$106 monies received from recent developments.

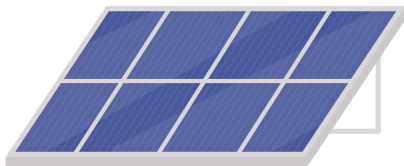
## **Marden Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)**

An ISP is a wish list of the projects that are of priority to your community and is based on residents' feedback at various consultations. It should address the key issues that are important to the area so if you come along to our Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall, you will be able to check it out and make further suggestions.

You can find the document on our website:

<https://bit.ly/MardenISPUpdated>

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



## **Public Conveniences Solar Panel Project**

Whilst Maidstone Borough Council own the public toilets building, the Parish Council maintain this important village facility. As part of our environmental responsibilities, we are planning to install solar panels on the roof and have received a few quotes and grants from Bockingfold solar farm, situated in Horsmonden Parish and County Councillor Parfitt towards the cost. We will be appointing a contractor to install the panels once a structural survey has been undertaken. This should help to offset the cost of electricity in the toilets.

## **Allotments at Highwood Green**

The good news is the S106 Deed of Variation wording has now been agreed which will allow Redrow to transfer the land to the Parish Council. However, Redrow is still trying to find a management company to take on the parking spaces which is stalling the situation. Hopefully we'll have some more news for you in the coming months.

## **Litter Bin Audit**

The Parish Council recently undertook a litter bin audit in the village and one area in particular in the High Street, near the Old Post Office Café and Marden Bakery, needs a bin where a lot of rubbish is often deposited.

Maidstone Borough Council have advised they are unable to provide any new bins in the parish but are happy to relocate one. There are a number of bins in the West End area of the village, and we are investigating with MBC whether one could be moved close to the fingerpost sign in the High Street.

## **Fingerpost at Plain Road/Thorn Road Junction**

This fingerpost sign was severely damaged some time ago and the base of the sign needs to be dug out to remove the post before works on the fingerposts can be undertaken. We are still liaising with Kent Highways in regard to this and hope to be able to report further in the next newsletter.



# HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT

## Marden Speed Watch

Marden Speed Watch is now up and running and the first session took place last year in Goudhurst Road. We will shortly be organising some more sessions, but if you are concerned about speeding around the village, then why not sign up for Speed Watch as we need more volunteers? You will need to undertake some online training, but for further information, please contact Lisa either by email: [adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:adminassistant@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.



## Parish Council Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

As you are aware, the Parish Council has developed a HIP after a few public consultations. If you come along to the Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall, you can view the document and make any further suggestions.

We have been liaising with Kent Highways on a few priority issues:

- Single Yellow Line proposals in Goudhurst Road and Double Yellow Lines in Albion Road /Stanley Road - Kent Highways are progressing with the Traffic Regulation Orders regarding both the single and double yellow lines.
- The Parish Council has been concerned about pedestrian safety at the Pattenden Lane/Church Green junction and asked Kent Highways to produce a scheme to improve road safety. A design proposal to widen the footway on the West End side was proposed by Kent Highways and accepted by the Parish Council. This work was completed last month.
- Maidstone Road Village Gateway – costings are being obtained from Kent Highways for the existing village sign by the planter to be upgraded to a gateway.

You can find the HIP document on the website:

<https://bit.ly/MardenISPUUpdated>



## **Village Gateway Sign in Thorn Road**

The village gateway sign close to the big bend in Thorn Road was severely damaged by a speeding vehicle last year and we are pleased to report that Kent Highways has now installed a new sign.

## **White Road Markings**

Many of the white road markings in the village are fading and some have not been reinstated after utility works have taken place including zebra crossings. These have been reported to Kent Highways for action.

## **Potholes - Report, Report, Report**

Despite all the pothole repair work KCC undertook last year and after all the extensive rain and frost over the past few months, many of the potholes have opened up again.

KCC is committed to repairing them and are working hard to fix as many as possible with the funding and resources available to them, but they need to know where they are.

If you spot a pothole in the parish, KCC has a very easy to use online tool to report damaged roads as well as other highway issues to help them schedule repairs. If you add your details to the report, then you will receive confirmation that it has been logged, and you can check progress towards the repair at:  
<https://bit.ly/KHReportAProblem>

# **DRAINAGE & WATER**

Once again Marden has experienced an enormous amount of rain over the Autumn and Winter and some of the roads were flooded on a few occasions. Water supply and sewerage are still the biggest utility infrastructure concerns for residents and the Parish Council. As we all know, failures are not always being rectified promptly and effectively and these include leakage and low water pressure, sewer flooding in the village centre, as well as wastewater pumping station capacity and failures.



The ongoing improvements are welcomed that are being carried out by South East Water (water supply) and Southern Water (sewerage). Part of the project Southern Water has been undertaking in the village was to improve capacity at Roughlands Pumping Station as well as lining the sewers to stop surface water getting in. However, despite these improvements, this did not seem to be happening following the heavy rainfall in early January when the manhole on Maynards Path once again overflowed.

## DRAINAGE & WATER CONTD

As a result, the Parish Council asked Southern Water to clarify what work has been undertaken so far. We have now been advised that the project has achieved 1.7 km of sewer lining to protect the foul network against groundwater infiltration and it also identified and fixed several operational issues such as bellies (dips) in pipes and blockages.

### **Pattenden Lane Bridge**

There are still problems under Pattenden Lane railway bridge, and this has been raised with the Kent Highways Manager. Kent Highways have been out to clear the gullies, and we will continue to monitor the situation. You can find information on local drainage and flooding on the Parish Council website:  
<http://bit.ly/MPCDrainageandFlooding>

## OPEN SPACE

### **Marden Playing Field, & Napoleon Drive Play Area**

More CCTV cameras should be installed in Marden Playing Field soon and, at the request of residents, a notice board and two robust football goals, to help those keen young footballers to practice their soccer skills, have been purchased with the help of grants from County Cllr Parfitt and MBC. These will be installed as soon as the weather improves.

### **Southons Field**

This beautiful field is frequented regularly by families and it's great to

see the football goal being used so often. Rugby Taggers are also running sessions on the field on Saturday mornings. At some point, it is on our 'Wish List' to install another piece of equipment to add to the existing play trail and swings. Once again there will be a few events held in Southons over the Spring/Summer – the lighting of the beacon for VE 80 on Thursday 8th May, Marden Motor Show on Saturday 24th May and the Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company on Friday 27th June. If you would like to hire or use the field, please email Rachel: [deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk)  
Spring/Summer opening hours: March 8am-6pm (or dusk if earlier) and April to August 7am-8pm. The access gate will be locked during the hours of darkness.

Please remember it is a dog free space (apart from assistance dogs) to enable children to run around safely and to avoid the issue of dog fouling which is a problem in Marden Playing Field.

### **Marden Cemetery**

Our peaceful cemetery is full of wildlife and biodiversity. Most of the 2,000 saplings that were planted at the back of the cemetery last winter are doing well and the area will be mowed in the Autumn once they are more established.

The new section has started to be used and you can check out the cemetery rules and regulations at <https://bit.ly/MPCCemetery>



# 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.

## **Community Assistance/Involve**

Link workers from the social prescribing charity Involve attend the Marden Food Bank every second Monday of the month. They offer advice and support to those who attend and may want to self-refer for the 12 weeks support service that Involve provide, or those who just want to be pointed in the right direction for some help. So please pop along if you have any concerns.

Whilst Marden no longer has a dedicated Community Warden, we are currently well supported with local agencies to assist vulnerable people. The KCC Wardens for Tonbridge, Maidstone & Malling also receive referrals.

Alternatively, if you do have any concerns, please do let the Parish Council know, or worries about crime, ASB etc, please report this to Kent Police via the online reporting tool or live chat on the Kent Police Website or call 101 or 999 if a crime is in progress. If you come along to the Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall, we would welcome your thoughts/feedback on whether we need a dedicated Community Warden for Marden. However, the costs would have to be taken from the parish precept funding when we budget for 2026/2027.

## **Kent Care Services Directory 2025**

Need to know more about care and care services in Kent? The recently published new edition of Kent Care Services Directory 2025 can give you the information you need to find the right services in your area. You can find a copy in Marden Medical Centre, Marden Parish Office, Marden Church and Marden Library, or follow the link to the e-book version:  
<https://bit.ly/KentCareServices>

## **Prescription for Nature in Marden Dr Julie Morgan**

Over the last year we have been working together with Marden Wildlife, Marden Parish Council and our Patient Participation Group to develop the Prescription for Nature Project in Marden. Prescribing nature is a means of supporting people to engage in nature-based activities and interventions to improve their well-being and physical health. The project has been well received by patients and clinicians – to date 42 patients have received nature prescription packs and postcards. The project has also raised awareness of our beautiful local nature spots and the benefits of nature. In the Spring we are hoping to expand our resources and to start working with the RSPB on their Kent wide scheme.

For more information, please visit Marden Wildlife website and check out the Prescription for Nature section:

<https://bit.ly/MWPrescription>

# HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

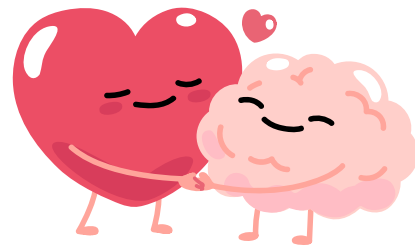
## Kent County Council - Health Focus

In the Autumn edition of the Parish Newsletter, we focused on the issue of mental health and how you can seek help. For more general information that Kent County Council can assist with, please check out:  
<https://bit.ly/KCCHealth>

There's lots of information on sexual health, winter health, mental health, 'One You Kent', managing a long-term health condition, 'Release the Pressure', NHS screening, drug and alcohol support etc. 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>



## ReferKent

ReferKent is an online directory of groups and services which aims to strengthen referrals across Kent for adults and families. It allows users to refer to organisations directly and help those who are experiencing or are at risk of hardship. To find out more please visit:

<https://bit.ly/KCCReferKent>

### Make the right decision



	<b>Only in an emergency:</b> loss of consciousness   severe breathing difficulties   heavy bleeding	<b>Emergency Department</b>
	<b>When it's urgent but not life threatening:</b> sprains   fractures   minor burns   skin infection	<b>Urgent Care Centre</b>
	<b>For symptoms that don't go away:</b> ear pain   back pain   stomach pain	<b>GP Surgery</b>
	<b>Feeling poorly and need advice about:</b> fevers   stomach upset   aches & pains   headaches	<b>Pharmacy</b>
	<b>Need help fast and its not an emergency?</b> Unwell?   Confused?   Need help?	<b>NHS 111</b>
	<b>For common ailments and illnesses:</b> hangover   grazed knee   sore throat   cough	<b>Self-care</b>

## **Maidstone Family Hubs**

As you will be aware, the Marden Children's Centre has been closed by KCC who have implemented Family Hubs across the County. Currently the only outreach service being provided in Marden is Health Visitor appointments at Marden Library on a Monday, but this is not a drop-in service – by appointment only.

With Kent Family Hubs, you can find advice, support and services to help throughout your family journey, from newborns to 19-year-olds, or up to 25-year olds with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). To follow the latest news, classes and information check out their Facebook page. In addition they also have a Digital Team which has an abundance of information and for young people there is an Instagram page: [maidstonefamilyhubs11to19](https://www.instagram.com/maidstonefamilyhubs11to19/). You can find your nearest Family Hub at: <https://bit.ly/KentLocalHub>

## **Maidstone – Everyday Active Kent**

Everyday Active is a campaign which is being run by Active Kent and Medway. It aims to promote regular movement as a means of improving both physical and mental health. For more information take a look at: <https://bit.ly/KentEverydayActive>

## **KCC Proposed Changes to Wellbeing Services in the Community**

KCC recently held a consultation on proposed changes to wellbeing services in the community and

community navigation which are funded by the KCC's Adult Social Care and Health Directorate and delivered by Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

Wellbeing services support people to be proactive about their health and wellbeing, can increase independence and reduce or delay the need for care and services.

The proposed changes are to reduce the level of funding for wellbeing services in the community and redesign the way they are provided incorporating some elements of community navigation; and stop funding the 'Innovation Fund' in the mental health community and wellbeing services which is used for testing new approaches.

This proposal will make sure KCC are not duplicating wellbeing services whilst ensuring those with the greatest need still receive support. Find out more at: <https://bit.ly/KentWellbeingConsultation>





# HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

## Warm Hubs

Thank you to Marden Village Club for kindly opening their doors as a Warm Hub on Thursdays from 10am-1pm until 27th March.

## Marden Charity is here to help you

If you need a bit of financial support or for any further information please email: [mardencommunitycio@gmail.com](mailto:mardencommunitycio@gmail.com) or check out: <https://bit.ly/MardenCharity>

## KCC - UK Government Household Support Fund

Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of the UK government, the Household Support Fund scheme supports vulnerable Kent households in need of help with significantly rising living costs. Please check out: <https://bit.ly/KCCHouseholdSupport>

## Kent Together Support in our Communities

If you have money worries or are looking for ways you can make your money go further, KCC can help you to find your way through to the advice and support available. Check out: <https://bit.ly/KCCCostofLiving>

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

MDFC are pleased to announce our second free seated exercise class in Marden. It is every Monday at 2pm in Marden Village Club, run by Emma a Fitness and Wellbeing instructor.

Our other class continues with Millie, an Occupational Therapist, in the John Banks Hall every Friday at 10.30am.



Everyone is welcome, not just those with cognitive issues. So please go along and improve your health outcomes for free! Refreshments served afterwards. Please check out our Facebook page where you will find more information on events.

If you are living with dementia, you are entitled to apply for a grant to help you with any extra expenses or maybe just to treat yourself to a special day out. If you wish to be added to our mailing list, please email: [mardendfcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mardendfcinfo@gmail.com) or call Rachel on 01622 831941 for more info.

## Kent Karrier – Kent County Council

Kent Karrier is a flexible dial-a-ride service. Our providers can collect you from your home and take you to a location, such as a supermarket, town centre or hospital, for a small fee. We use wheelchair accessible vehicles, and our experienced drivers will give you all the help you need. Before you can use the service, you need to become a member.

It is free to join, and you need to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- you have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult, or
- you live in a rural area more than 500 metres from a bus route or railway station, or
- you are aged 85 or over.

From April 2025, membership will cost £50. You can find more information and how to join the scheme at:  
<https://bit.ly/KCCKentKarrier>

### **Marden Foodbank – Rev Nicky Harvey**

The Foodbank continues to run every Monday between 9.30am and 11.30am supporting the people of Marden. Over the last few months there has been an increase in the number of people using the foodbank. 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.



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

### **Dog Fouling and Irresponsible Dog Ownership**

As frequently mentioned on the community Facebook pages, this has once again become a big issue in the village with dog-owners not picking up after their dogs or leaving the collected poo bags on the paths, trees etc. If people witness someone failing to pick up after their dog, you can report it to the MBC Community Protection Team either online via the website: <https://bit.ly/MBCComProtect> or call 01622 602162. You can also report irresponsible dog owners to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



A serious element of dog ownership is the risk of harming another dog or a person, regardless of their breed or size. Dog attacks on people or animals are serious offences that result in prosecution, fines or even imprisonment in line with the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING CONTD

Keeping dogs under proper control is the responsibility of every dog owner and it is an offence to allow them to wander or roam loose without a person accompanying it or to not keep a dog on a lead when requested by an authorised officer. It is also an offence to take or allow a dog into village play areas.

A Public Space Protection Order for Dog Control enables Maidstone Borough Council to issue Fixed Penalty Notices of £100 to irresponsible dog owners. Check out: <https://bit.ly/MBCDogControlOrder>

### **Kent County Council Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

We all know how important getting out into nature is for our health and wellbeing and we are very fortunate in Marden to have a substantial and wide-reaching network of PROWs which cross all corners of the parish, through the local patchwork of orchards and fields and to the surrounding villages and hamlets. The area also benefits from several 'permissive' routes.

It's important to maintain safe and easy access to the countryside for all and that the PROWs are kept clear. The KCC PROW officers do come out to fix problems, but if you want to report any non-urgent issues such as broken stiles, overgrown vegetation

or fallen trees, damaged or dangerous path surfaces, damaged or missing signposts, you can report it online: <https://bit.ly/KCCReportPROW>

### **Visibility Along Country Lanes Keep Light & Bright**

It's great to see so many residents walking, running and cycling around our country lanes, but to help other road users to see you, please wear something light, bright or fluorescent especially in poor daylight conditions. When it's dark, please use reflective materials which can be seen by drivers. It is also advisable not to wear earphones so you can hear approaching vehicles.

Most country lanes have no pavement, and the Highway Code advises to keep to the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic, take extra care and be prepared to walk in single file especially on narrow roads or in poor light and keep close to the side of the road. It may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right-hand bend so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you then cross back after the bend.

Can we also put a shout out to drivers, especially larger vehicles, to take care especially around bends. Walkers, runners and cyclists have every right as drivers on the roads. You can check out the Highway Code at: <https://bit.ly/2025HighwayCode>



## **Kent County Council**

### **Public Rights of Way (PROW) Contd**

In an emergency (something which can cause an injury or accident) please call: 03000 41 71 71 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

The government has made a significant decision to remove the 2031 deadline for registering historic public paths and bridleways in England. This change provides extra time to ensure that these often-overlooked routes are officially documented and preserved for public access. If you know of any unregistered paths in our parish, please check out the definitive map which shows the legal position and status of every PROW in Kent and there is a process to correct the rights of way map: <https://bit.ly/PROWMap>  
There is also a map of the local PROWs outside Marden Library. KCC also have a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in addition to a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Links to each of these can be found here:  
<https://bit.ly/KentCyclingPlan>  
<https://bit.ly/KCCRightsofWayImpPlan>

## **SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Parish Council Environmental Group**

If you are interested in joining the Parish Council Environmental Group and helping with this project, please let Lisa know either by emailing: [adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk](mailto:adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) or ringing 01622 832305.

If you come along to our Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall, we'll be displaying some of the issues we are covering.



### **Join Us in the Marden Plastic Free Campaign!**

This exciting campaign was started by two very enthusiastic residents – Elle Parker and Silvia Ferrero along with Cllr Anne Boswell. The launch of the project was held in November where information was shared about the campaign and several residents, borough and parish councillors, businesses, village groups and the Principal of Marden Primary Academy attended. The first Steering Committee meeting was held in January and members are made up of residents and three parish/borough councillors.

We have already applied for Plastic Free Community status and to lead by example, the Parish Council has ratified removing 3 single-use plastic items from its premises. We need to sign up at least 15 community allies - village groups/organisations (Marden in Bloom has signed up) and at least 5 independent business champions and hold at least two community events per year to raise awareness.

# SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE CONTD

## **Marden Plastic Free Campaign Contd**

We have already started to contact all the village organisations including Marden Primary Academy, Marden Church, the Scout Group etc and some of the businesses to help reduce plastic waste and consumption.

For our first event, we will be participating in the Village Spring Clean on Saturday 29th March (details above). It is planned that the litter collected in the village centre (not the outlying unpaved roads) is separated into recycling and non-recycling bags. The recycling bags will then be sorted for plastic items to be made into 'art' to display at an event later in the year. To help shape our plastic-free future and work together to create a cleaner, greener Marden, check out the Plastic Free campaign:  
<https://plasticfree.org.uk/> or email: [plasticfreemarden@gmail.com](mailto:plasticfreemarden@gmail.com) if you'd like to be a volunteer or discuss other ways in which you could contribute either as resident, group or business.

Look out for more information in future newsletters and social media.

## **Maidstone's Big Day Out Saturday 14th June**

Aligned with the national Great Big Green Week event, Maidstone Borough Council is holding a day long festival of co-ordinated events for residents to experience all that is best within the

Borough when it comes to the natural beauty of Maidstone. At the time of writing, there are no specific plans for Marden, but the Parish Council's Environmental Sub-Group and the Marden Plastic Free Steering Committee will explore what we can do in Marden. You can check out: <https://bit.ly/MaidstoneBigDay>



## **Marden Wildlife Update**

### **Ray Morris**

Our innovative plan for regenerating scarce local wildflowers and Chequer trees is now established. Using Marden Horticultural Society members' expertise, seeds collected from wild local plants are germinated over winter to raise seedlings for reintroduction to establish meadows in selected local sites, or to neglected woodland that is under proper management again. While commercial nurseries may sell some of these plants, they are not necessarily of native origin, whereas our homegrown seedlings are genetically suited to local conditions. Not only does this increase the chances of their growing, but it is also helping slow the relentless loss of genetic biodiversity. A purpose-built nursery facility will be established at Mackender Farm this year so that this work can be significantly scaled-up.

But scaling up will require more volunteers! If you recognise the slightest hint of green in your fingers and would like to help in occasional, socially fun potting-up sessions in the new nursery, Judy Taylor would love to hear from you at [mardenwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:mardenwildlife@gmail.com)

Marden is also a recipient of Dutch elm disease resistant elm saplings from KCC as part of a national trial to re-establish these once familiar hedgerow giants, along with White-letter Hairstreak butterflies that depend on them. A generous grant from the company installing the Bockingfold solar array is being used to acquire state-of-the-art audio technology to support our Turtle Dove research. This is only made possible with the help of local volunteers who make regular visits to remote cameras or audio equipment to change the SD cards through spring and summer. More help with these tasks will be needed this year (eg one or two flexible hours a week that can be fitted in with a full-time job). Interested? Email me at [mardenwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:mardenwildlife@gmail.com) to find out more or check out our Facebook page.

## **Marden Farmer Cluster**

### **Lou Carpenter**

Kent and Medway's draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published in January. It mentions the positives of the 14 farmer clusters working at landscape scale across the county, Marden among them. A quarter of farmed land in Kent is now in the hands of 315 cluster members, running farms of all sizes.

A cluster is a self-led group of farmers who share a landscape and common ecological objectives. The main purpose of each farm is to produce food, but the cluster aims to do this with a lighter impact on the environment. Members share expertise and coordinate their endeavours for targeted objectives, such as supporting Marden Wildlife's farmland bird work, including the Turtle Dove project. We're working to improve the state of our soils and our rivers and recover lost species. With Natural England's farm team keen to work alongside us, it's a very positive partnership.

We are also immensely proud of our members who organised the Young Farmers Christmas tractor run, most particularly Claire and Guy Eckley. What an inspiring example they are showing the young people in our industry, working together for the community. Well done! Want to see what we're doing? Check out the new website: <https://mardenfarmercluster.org>

## **Recycling Printer Ink Cartridges**

Marden Church is offering a recycling point for printer ink cartridges. Just place in a bag and drop to The Vicarage, into Church or into the collection box provided. Please note, they cannot take toner or laser cartridges. This is part of the ECO church initiative, and it will raise a small amount for the upkeep of our ancient church building.



# SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE CONTD

## Recycle A Device

What do you do with your old and unused tech such as old phones, TVs, laptops and other gadgets?

There is a safe and secure way to get rid of unwanted mobiles, tablets or laptops, while also reducing environmental impact and they will even come and pick up your gadgets so you don't have to worry about a trip to your local recycling centre! All of this is available thanks to our Device Recycling Scheme:

<https://bit.ly/KCCDeviceRecycling>

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new statutory planning condition that requires developers to replace and improve natural habitats destroyed through development. The concept of BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. BNG can be achieved through various methods including creating more habitat or delivering habitat of a higher quality. Our Local Planning Authority (LPA) is responsible for monitoring BNG for 30 years and have powers to backdate the baseline if there has been an unauthorised degradation of a site prior to the planning application being submitted. So keep an eye out for any activity on the removal of trees and/or hedgerows.

# POLICE & CRIME UPDATE

## My Community Voice Protecting the Neighbourhoods of Kent & Medway

My Community Voice (MCV) is a two-way engagement tool brought to you by Kent Police. By signing up, you can find out what's happening in your area, receive alerts from your local officers and tell them what matters to you. Find out more at:

[www.MyCommunityVoiceKent.co.uk](http://www.MyCommunityVoiceKent.co.uk)

Police Officers use MCV to publicise their daily activity and it gives people a chance to respond and ask questions. The service sends updates about your local area directly from the police officers themselves and if you have anything else you would like them to investigate, please feel free to respond to any post they put up.



The poster for My Community Voice (MCV) features a blue background with a white silhouette of a city skyline at the top. Below the skyline, the text 'My Community Voice' is written in white, followed by 'Protecting the neighbourhoods of Kent and Medway' in a smaller font. The poster includes several key messages and icons: a pink bar with a megaphone icon saying 'Find out what's happening in your area'; an orange bar with a bell icon saying 'Receive alerts from your local officers'; a green bar with a group of people icon saying 'Tell us what matters most to you'; a blue bar with a hand pointing to a 'Sign up' button saying 'Sign up today and make your voice count'; and a QR code in the bottom right corner. Logos for Kent Police and the Environment Good Watch are also present. At the bottom, it says 'Find out more [www.MyCommunityVoiceKent.co.uk](http://www.MyCommunityVoiceKent.co.uk)'.

### **Beat Officer Drop-in Sessions**

A couple of drop-in sessions for Marden residents were held last year in the Vestry Hall at the Village Café and a date has been arranged at the Warm Hub at Marden Village Club on Thursday 20th March at 10.00am to enable residents to have a chat with your local Kent Police Beat team and will enable the police to hear first-hand your concerns.

### **Independent Advisory Group (IAG)**

Maidstone Police have set up an Independent Advisory Group which is a forum for parish councils and other representatives to discuss local community issues in the Borough and how to gain community intelligence.

Cllr Adrian Rabot is the representative from Marden who has raised several local problems such as anti-social behaviour. One of the meetings took place in December in Marden but only a few residents attended.

### **Safer Maidstone Partnership Ward Clusters**

Cllr Adrian Rabot also attends the Ward Cluster meetings covering Marden, Yalding and Staplehurst the objective of which is to work collaboratively to identify, challenge and ultimately reduce community safety concerns within the cluster. They have recently discussed areas of concern such as fly tipping and litter, speeding in rural communities, parking around schools and

inconsiderate parking on pavements, the apparent increase in drug taking and implied availability of drugs in the area and the issue of catapults.

### **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 check out: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>



However, please continue to report ASB and other non-emergency incidents to 101 or online at: <https://www.kent.police.uk/> – the more that is reported, the more chance it will get dealt with. Incidents need to be reported for the police to focus on the issue.

### **Action Fraud for Scam**

If you've been the victim of a scam, fraud or online crime (cybercrime) you can report it to Action Fraud which is the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime.

# POLICE & CRIME UPDATE

## CONTD

### **Action Fraud for Scam Contd**

It collects reports about fraud on behalf of the police in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Click on: <https://bit.ly/PoliceActionFraud> or call 0300 123 2040 (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm).

### **Street Check**

If you sign up to Street Check, you can receive details of all crimes recorded in Marden by searching for your street name or postcode. This map uses data from local forces and the hotspots give only an approximate idea of where crimes happened – actual locations and details of crimes are kept anonymous and not all crimes that have occurred can be shown on the map. You can view the local crimes in the Marden and Yalding area by using the following link: <https://bit.ly/KPCrimeMap>

### **Country Eye App**

Unlike messaging using social media groups, the integrity of information from Country Eye has been accepted as evidential by the Crown Prosecution Service and is also GDPR compliant. Country Eye has links to the following Agencies: Kent Police, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, KCC Intelligence Unit, Special Branch, the 13 Borough/District Councils in Kent, Kent Heritage Watch, Kent

Neighbourhood Watch, Kent Wildlife Trust and HGV Watch. Check out: <https://bit.ly/CountryEyeApp>

### **e-Watch Newsletter**

#### **Community Safety Info Hub**

By signing up to this email newsletter, you can check out information on Kent Police news and crime figures in your area, NHS Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group, Kent Fire & Rescue, KCC, Scam Alerts, Action Fraud, Trading Standards, Food Standards Agency, KCC Traffic information. Check out: <https://bit.ly/EWatchArea>

## YOUTH PROVISION

It is so disappointing that KCC no longer has the resources to run a youth club in the village. If you come along to the Open Morning on Saturday 22nd March from 10am-12.30pm in the Vestry Hall, we would welcome your thoughts/feedback on whether we need a dedicated youth worker in the village the costs of which would have to be borne from the parish precept when we budget for 2026/27, or if you have any ideas of running sessions for our youths.

## OTHER PARISH INFORMATION

### **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

#### **What it Could Mean for Kent**

The unveiling of the English devolution white paper was published in December and outlines the



government's approach to accelerate and standardise the processes of passing powers, funding, and programs from Westminster to local areas.

These are sweeping reforms, and the goal is to unleash power from Whitehall back into local communities making significant changes to the structure of local government in England.

One of the central proposals is the transformation of two-tier systems – where services are divided between county and district councils – into one streamlined unitary authority. This shift aims to simplify governance and service delivery by consolidating responsibilities under a single authority.

Kent and Medway have submitted a bid to become a Mayoral combined authority with an elected mayor but on 5th February the Government announced that Kent and Medway have not been accepted into the Devolution Priority Programme.

## **Weald of Kent Constituency**

### **Katie Lam MP**

Katie Lam, our new MP in the Weald of Kent wrote to parish councillors prior to Christmas to introduce herself. At some point in her busy diary (she has 56 parishes under her wing), she would like to sit down with the Parish Council and discuss any issues that are particularly pressing.

We invited Katie to the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 8th April (see details above) but unfortunately has parliamentary duties that evening. You can get in touch with Katie if there are any issues affecting you or your family where you need support from your MP, so please email: [katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:katie.lam.mp@parliament.uk) or you can call her on 02072 198175/01580 388344, or check out her website: [katieforkent.com](http://katieforkent.com) or Facebook page: [fb.com/katieforkent](https://fb.com/katieforkent)

### **Marden Memorial Hall**

The Memorial Hall has started to use a new booking system and although you aren't able to book online you can view the hirings by visiting: <https://bit.ly/MardenHallBooking>

If you wish to book any of the halls, please email Lisa on: [mardenmemorialhall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mardenmemorialhall@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone 07737 521761.

Marden Memorial Hall Trustees are also pleased to report that a defibrillator has been installed on the front of the building available for public use 24/7.



## OTHER PARISH INFORMATION CONTD

### **Marden Library**

Marden Library is open Tuesday-Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm and on Saturday 9am-1pm. The library is free to join and offers a wide range of services including free access to books, audiobooks, computers and the internet. Access is available to the printer and photocopier, prices start at 20p for an A4 page. As ever, the selection of fiction and non-fiction books is updated regularly, and you can reserve a book from any of the Kent libraries.

To keep up to date with local library events and news please follow 'Maidstone Libraries' on Facebook. Please take a look at the event schedule:

- Tuesday: Games & Chat. 2pm-4pm. The game is currently Upwords, but new suggestions are always welcome. Held weekly.
- Wednesday: Preschool story time. 2.15pm-2.45pm. First Wednesday of every month.
- Thursday: Stay & Chat. From 10am. Chat about days gone by with free tea and coffee. Held weekly.
- Homework Club: 3.30pm-4.30pm. Open to all children. Held weekly term time only.
- Friday: 0-5 Rhyme Time 10.30am-11am. Held weekly term time only. Please note change in time.
- Saturday: Lego Club 10am-11am. Held Weekly term time only.

Book Groups meet to chat over the book for that month. Held monthly.

For more information on any of the services please pop in and chat to the library staff.

### **Marden Primary Academy**

#### **Hannah Penning, Principal**

*Young Voices* - as part of our extra-curricular offer, we have a school choir. On 23rd January, the choir took part in the Young Voices concert at the O2. This was a fantastic opportunity for the children to share their enjoyment of singing with other schools from across the country. The children thoroughly enjoyed the event and the chance to collaborate with other children and build their confidence.

*Careers At Marden Primary Academy* - we are keen to inspire the children for the future and feel it is important for them to learn about a range of different career opportunities. We are keen to arrange for different professionals to come in and share their experiences in their job and the skills required to complete the role. If this is something you feel you would be able to support us with, we would really appreciate it if you could complete the form linked below on the QR Code (hover your smartphone camera over to get the link). Any offers of support with this would be greatly appreciated.



## **Marden Parish Church**

### **Rev. Nicky Harvey**

*Services.* 8.00am Holy Communion (traditional language) and 10.30am services alternate between Morning Worship, 1st and 3rd Sunday's and Parish Communion on the 2nd and 4th.



Copyright Rev. Nicky Harvey

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 Church website:

[www.mardenchurch.org.uk](http://www.mardenchurch.org.uk) and Facebook page @churchinmarden for our up-to-date services and events. To receive our weekly news sheet, please email [office@mardenchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@mardenchurch.org.uk).

*Messy Church* for all ages and explores a theme or Bible story through art, craft, and activities. We have a short act of worship and then we have tea. The next sessions are being held on Sundays 9th March and 13th April at 3.30pm.

*Sunday Club* for primary school age children runs on the Sundays 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)

If you would like to contact Rev Nicky about Baptism, Marriage, Blessing or arranging a Funeral (Crematorium or church) or Burial of Ashes please contact: 01622 831379 or [rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com](mailto:rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com)

*Weddings.* At Marden Church we enjoy celebrating with you the happy occasion of a Wedding. Congratulations if you have just got engaged or are planning your 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 - an intimate service or large celebration - and 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.

### **Bench at Marden Library**

The bench by the phone box at Marden Library which was installed by Marden in Bloom was unfortunately damaged in January. At the time of writing the bench had been removed so it can be repaired and reinstalled along with the slabs. It is so disappointing that facilities provided for the enjoyment of residents are broken in this way.

### **The West End Tavern**

The West End Tavern is now under new management and good luck to Pete Darling, the new landlord. They are open 7 days a week, family and dog friendly, and they should be serving food soon.

# WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN

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 lucky to have so much going on and there are so many village groups who frequently interconnect/support one another. An example is the newly formed Marden Plastic Free Campaign where all village organisations and businesses will be invited to take part.

As ever lots of events took place over the Autumn/Winter period. Christmas fairs at Marden Church, the PTA and Pre-School. The Marden at Christmas event organised by the Parish Council went down a storm despite the appalling weather and many thanks to Marden Village Club for hosting the morning part of the event. Then there was the Marden Scouts Santa Sleigh and the Weald of Kent Young Farmers Tractor Parade, the Christmas Tree festival in Marden Church and the recent hilarious performance of Marden Theatre Group's 'Allo 'Allo 2 - the Camembert Caper entertaining Marden's residents. Here's a taste of what's happening this Spring/Summer:

## **Come & Sing Group**

### **Sarah Emmanuel**

Come along and meet people, make new friends, and raise your voice together in song - all are welcome.

Come & Sing runs on alternate Thursdays at 2.30pm in the Vestry Hall with singing followed by tea, cake and time together. £1 per session to cover costs. Improve your breathing and well-being, enjoy new songs, rediscover old ones and have fun! Here's the dates: 20th March and 3rd April. Please contact Sarah on 01622 832925 for more information.

## **80th Anniversary of VE Day Thursday 8th May 2025 Southons Field**

The Parish Council will be commemorating the 80th anniversary of VE Day by lighting the beacon in Southons Field at 9.15pm. We are keeping the event low key although will be providing a BBQ and hot drinks.

You are still welcome to bring along your own drinks, picnic, chair/picnic blanket. Toilets will also be provided at the field. Watch out for details nearer the date.

## **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.nicky@gmail.com](mailto:rev.nicky@gmail.com)



## **Marden Community Lunches**

Thank you to Janet McIntosh for kindly organising the community lunches and the next one will be held on Monday 17th March at 12.30pm in the Vestry Hall. The aim is to provide a hot meal for the frail and elderly, especially those who live alone and would enjoy the company as well as the food. The cost is £5 for a home-cooked two course meal plus tea/coffee. For more info or if you would like to help, please contact Janet on 01622 831256.

## **Marden Cricket, Hockey & Tennis Marden Sports Club**

Why not pick up a new sport this spring? Interested to find out more? Visit [www.mardensportsclub.com](http://www.mardensportsclub.com)  
Email: [membership@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:membership@mardensportsclub.com)

*Padel* - our new padel courts are proving a huge hit. Come along and try. No membership required.

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

*Cricket* - come for a couple of free outdoor nets and see what you think. All levels, all ages welcome. Email: [cricket@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:cricket@mardensportsclub.com)

*Hockey* - Marden Russets Hockey Club always welcomes new members, especially beginners of all ages (we run special summer sessions for newbies and rusties - no charge). We now have 13 adult teams and around 400 juniors all enjoying the exercise, fresh air and camaraderie at all levels. Why not try out a couple of free taster sessions (sticks can be borrowed) Contact: [hockey@mardensportsclub.com](mailto:hockey@mardensportsclub.com)

## **Marden History Group and Heritage Centre**

### **Richard Adam & Eunice Doswell**

The group continues its valuable work and looks forward to an interesting programme of events and exhibits during 2025. We start off with a postcard exhibition - then/now. The Village Club has become a venue for our meetings and also Dispatches which we leave around the village and will email if requested.

Our flyer in the last issue encouraged several villagers to contact us and help in our work. You can still get in touch if you want to be involved in researching/gathering information about your local history. Why not pop into the Centre when the Library is open and make contact?

We have the latest wartime film produced by Philip Day showing on 25th March in the church, so keep an eye out on social media etc. for information on this and other planned events.

# WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN CONTD

## **Marden History Group Contd**

We are also liaising with Collier Street History Society where we have a joint invitation to attend each other's meetings and events.

We give our sincere thanks to village businesses/groups raising funds to help pay the large amount paid to KCC for use of the library. Email: [history@mardenhistory.org.uk](mailto:history@mardenhistory.org.uk) Website: <http://www.mardenhistory.org.uk>

## **Marden Horticultural Society (MHS) Julie Nicol, Chair**

After a wet and windy winter, we are looking forward to getting out into our gardens again. With Spring upon us, MHS members will be enjoying monthly evenings of guest speakers. A raffle, with tea & coffee is provided, and various competitions throughout the coming year.

A plant sale in May which is always very popular, a coach trip to Horneman gardens and museum, plus evening trips out to local gardens.

We always welcome new members to our friendly group and for more information, please check out: <https://bit.ly/MardenGardeners> or email [info@mardengardeners.uk](mailto:info@mardengardeners.uk).

## **Marden in Bloom - Anne Boswell**

To welcome us to Spring, the village should be awash with a sea of yellow.

Yellow is the most luminous of all the colours of the spectrum and apparently captures our attention more than any other - it's the colour of happiness and optimism, of enlightenment and creativity, sunshine and spring. Marden in Bloom have planted around 34,000 of them across the village and we hope that residents enjoy!



We are organising a quiz later in the Spring - look out for details on social media and posters. We have decided to give the Garden Safari a rest for this year but will still run a Scarecrow Safari in the Autumn. We hope the planters over the winter has helped brighten you up over the dark and dismal days and they will be replanted in late Spring by the Bloomers.

We always welcome new members to our friendly group, so if you would like to give us a hand that would be great - so good to get out into the fresh air and feel you're doing something worthwhile in the community. Please email: [anne.boswell@ymail.com](mailto:anne.boswell@ymail.com) for more info or check out our Facebook page.



## **Marden Scout Group**

### **Pioneer and Challenger Cub Pack**

#### **Claire Rendell**

Both Cub Packs in Marden are thriving with lots of activities for our young people. Challenger Pack have had a blast recreating the TV show 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here' and have been hard at work keeping the bug hotels nice for our local wildlife in the churchyard. Both packs along with Beavers worked together to create our heroes display for the Marden Scarecrow event - 'Emergency Service Personnel'. Back in September Pioneer made the most of the weather and light evenings by teaching our Cubs all about fires. More recently they went rock climbing and abseiling. Great fun! Both Cub Packs made visits to our fire station to learn more about what they do and to see the equipment they use. In November we learnt about Remembrance and made jar tea lights and hand (poppy) wreaths, all were placed in the Church. Christmas is all about fun and food, so we combined the two with games, and mince pie/biscuit making! Both Packs have many more fun events for 2025! If you would like to join the fun as a volunteer, please email: [gsl@mardenscouts.org.uk](mailto:gsl@mardenscouts.org.uk)

## **Marden Society**

### **Steve McCarragher**

We continue to organise monthly talks on a variety of subjects throughout the spring and summer. Our programme of talks in 2025 is as follows in the column opposite.

- March 26th: "Kent Spring and Summer customs" by Geoff Doel including "Jack in the Green", Hop Hoddening, Oak Apple Day, Beating the Bounds (which the Walking Group used to do in Marden), Horned Head Fares and many others.
- April 23rd: "Ted Catt - A Victorian Naturalist" by Melvin Smith. Melvin introduced us to Ted in his talk about the Rother Levels last year.
- May 28th: "Rudyard Kipling - Something of myself" by Jonathan Jones. Kipling's life story in his own words, interspersed with 'dramatic' readings of some of his best loved poetry.
- June 25th: Our summer outing will be a Boat trip along the Medway on the Kentish Lady. Further details in due course.

All our talks are at 7.30 p.m. in the Vestry Hall and are free and open to all, with a raffle and refreshments served after the talk. We only ask that you buy at least one raffle ticket!

For further information contact Steve at [steve.mccarragher@btinternet.com](mailto:steve.mccarragher@btinternet.com) or 07946 532591.

## **Marden Sporting Memories**

### **Sue Eltringham**

**Tuesdays 2.30pm-4pm**

### **Marden Cricket & Hockey Club**

Marden Sporting Memories is a group where adults meet to talk and reminisce about past sporting occasions and catch up on the weekly sports events.

# WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN CONTD

## **Marden Sporting Memories Contd**

During the summer, the group have had a variety of visitors including Ellie Sims, the world master's weight-lifting champion and Bobby Akers who shared his experiences of playing para sports and the challenges of being a sports fan when you live with cerebral palsy. The group had a trip to Tunbridge Wells to see the World Cup Subbuteo exhibition and in August a visit to watch the cricket in Canterbury - Kent Spitfires v Durham. This year 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. The 'team' look forward to meeting up every Tuesday afternoon - there is always so much sport to catch up on! Marden Sporting Memories currently has a waiting list, but please contact Sue Eltringham to register your interest. If you have an interesting Sporting story or physical challenge that you would like to share with the group; we would be delighted to hear from you:  
[mardensportingmemories@gmail.com](mailto:mardensportingmemories@gmail.com)

## **Marden Village Club**

### **Louise Hickmott**

We are delighted to announce that Marden Village Club raised £17,700 for charity in 2024, with us being able to donate £8,000 to both Chalkdown RDA and Dandelion Time, our charities for 2024. The club also made donations to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide and

MacMillan in support of our club members raising money for both charities. This year the Club will be co-hosting a variety of events for local groups and charities. We have the quiz raising funds for the Marden Theatre Group, holding a murder mystery evening in aid of Dandelion Time, and a charity quiz later in the year with Chalkdown RDA to name a few. The club also holds a weekly warm hub, welcoming members and non-members from the village every Thursday (in winter months) between 10am - 1pm, to offer a warm space to work or meet with friends and have a hot drink. The bar is not open during this time. If you are interested in joining our club, we will be taking a limited amount of new applications every month from March 2025.

## **Marden Walking Group – Sian Burr**

Marden Walking Group remains active, holding a variety of regular walks. Every Saturday there is a short walk of 1-2 hours starting from Marden Library at 2pm around the immediate countryside of Marden. On the last Saturday of each month, there is a car trip to local areas of interest for a short walk. The last Monday of the month a group undertake a train trek to different destinations for a planned walk of between 5-7 miles. On the first Sunday of each month there is a local walk of between 5-7 miles in length and start at 10am from Marden Library. During the summer months a section of a long-distance pathway is walked on Tuesday mornings and each section covered is between 8-10 miles.



Over the past years, eight long distance pathways have been explored, and the next long-distance walk will start in April – you can find the details in the monthly Parish Magazine. The Marden Walking Group has produced two sets of guided walks around Marden with maps and notes and available to purchase at Number 47 and Marden Library. Sunday walks often follow these guides. If you enjoy walking in a friendly social atmosphere and would like to join us, please contact either Steve McArragher on 01622 831007 or Sian Burr on 01622 831106. Remember always to respect the countryside and keep to the footpaths.

### **Marden Women's Institute Moira Ensoll**

Marden Women's Institute meets in the Vestry Hall on the first Thursday of each month. The meetings commence at 7.45 p.m. The speaker in February was a representative from Lainey's Care Farm. In March will see Anna Astin tell us that 'It's Your Duty to be Beautiful Women – Health and Beauty in World War 2'. In April Roger Butler from Golden Hill Nursery will be coming along to give us some gardening advice. Should you require further information please contact Barbara Hammond, President on 01622 831569 or Moira Ensoll, Secretary on 01622 820568.

### **Russet Runners – Marden 10k Sunday 1st June at 9.30am Race HQ - Southons Field**

Once again this should be a fantastic community event for our lovely village, and we want to make it as inclusive as possible for local residents.

Check out: [www.russetrunners.co.uk/10k](http://www.russetrunners.co.uk/10k) and enter promo code: RR10KMARDEN2OFF to get a £2 discount on entries for Marden residents.

### **The Rude Mechanical Theatre Co Friday 27th June Southons Field**

Once again, the 'Rudes' will be in Southons Field on Friday 27th June with a comedy performance of 'Gentle Harry's Farm'. For more information or to book your tickets, check out: <https://www.therudes.co.uk/>

### **WET MUGS - Sue Attwood**

The WET MUGS is the new name of the WET Golf Society – standing for WET Marden Unicorn Golf Society. Our Golf Days end with a prize dinner at the Unicorn to which partners are invited and we run a Summer Knockout competition. The Society supports Macmillan, the Cancer Charity. In addition to partaking in their 72 Hole Challenge where a team of four play 4 rounds in one day, we hold charity raffles at every Golf Day. We also enjoy fantastic support from Marden – businesses and people – for our Coffee morning in aid of Macmillan, which happens in September (please save all of your unwanted presents for our tombola!). We are an inclusive Society with members from Marden and nearby and look forward to getting to know our new members this year. Our members are varied in age and ability, and we are proud to have women members too. If you would like to know more, please contact Captain Paul Attwood on 07831 463446, or email [wetgolfers@gmail.com](mailto:wetgolfers@gmail.com)

# PARISH COUNCIL COUNCILLORS, CLERKS AND OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

## **CHAIRMAN**

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## **PLANNING & FINANCE CHAIRMAN**

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## **AMENITIES CHAIRMAN**

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Cllr Michael Summersgill - 07779 367412

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lottie.parfitt@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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