



MARDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020**

This Report may well have to be presented by an under-70 yr old! Or put straight to the website if the meeting is abandoned.

Marden has seen masses of community activity during 2019/20 and this period could be one of those times recorded in the annals of the village's history. Just as well we have a History Group and Heritage Centre.

In May 2019 we welcomed Rachel Gillis-Coates as our new Deputy Clerk and she has settled into her job with robust enthusiasm.

Obviously one of the subjects which drew masses of attention was Maidstone Borough Council's Review of their Local Plan and the Call for Sites exercise, which is still ongoing during 2020. We saw the emergence of Marden Planning Opposition Group (MPOG) with their banners and opposition March in the Spring.

Together we have submitted to Maidstone Borough Council the Parish's comments on the 22 sites which were put forward within Marden. Our submission is on the Parish website.

We must celebrate the fact that the village supported Marden's Neighbourhood Plan which went to Referendum this February and was approved with a resounding 90.4% of the village in favour. Thank you. More from Andy later on.

We took over the production of our Parish Newsletter in January 2020 and Rachel has made a brilliant start is getting our first in-house edition off the ground.

We spent some of the villages Section 106 money on the running track around the playing field. This has proved to be a wonderful asset for the village in many ways.

Another important subject which we dealt with this year was the formulation of Marden's Highways Improvement Plan. This has been submitted to KCC and we trust they will look seriously at our comments and suggestions.

We continue to maintain a dialogue with the various developers for the new properties. We are also maintaining contacts with the management companies who are charged with looking after keeping areas tidy.

During the year we have held quarterly meetings to which our Borough Councillors are invited.

There are many other topics with which the Parish has been heavily involved with during the year including Marden in Bloom, the possibility of allotments, eco activities and the dementia work being carried out. We don't sit on our laurels!

We couldn't provide the service we do for Marden without the dedicated service of our Parish Clerk, Ali; Deputy Clerk, Rachel; Ian, who looks after the Cemetery; and Chris, our village caretaker.

Marden is indeed exceedingly fortunate to have such employees as well as the Councillors who volunteer an incredible amount of their time and expert knowledge for the good of the community.

And that leads me on to my special task this evening, which is to present Marden's Community Award. (Not to be published in advance of the event:

Over the years this couple have devoted so much of their time to various aspects of the community. They will be well-known to many villagers of different ages and occupations and well as beliefs. It is my proud honour to present this year's Award to)