



NOTES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-GROUP HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH AUGUST 2023 AT 6.00PM IN THE MARDEN PARISH OFFICE

1. PRESENT:

Cllrs Besant, Boswell (*took notes*), Newton, Summersgill and Turner.

2. APOLOGIES:

Interested resident

3. NOTES FROM ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-GROUP HELD ON 20TH JUNE 2023

Notes were agreed as a true record.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Adopted at Full Council on 14th March 2023

5. PARISH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK (PCEN) SOUTH OF MAIDSTONE

Cllr Summersgill gave an update on the PCEN group which is a collaboration of smaller parishes exchanging environmental ideas and includes Sutton Valence, Linton, Boughton Monchelsea, Chart Sutton and Headcorn. A questionnaire has been circulated to the group as attendance has dropped off to ascertain whether it is achieving its original objectives and the next meeting is scheduled for 19th September. Their objectives were to share good practice and compare progress; learn about opportunities for parish councils to improve the environment; maintain momentum and positivity; provide support and encouragement; build on partnership working with MBC.

Cllr Summersgill also mentioned about the creation of 4 ponds for Great Crested Newts in Hunton for which they are seeking planning permission. Consideration is also being given to creating a Green Trail around the South of Maidstone, but it was considered not feasible for Marden to be included because of the distance and lack of footpaths linking up. They are currently discussing funding with KCC. If this trail is created, the Marden Walking Group could promote it or consider something similar in Marden.

6. ACTION POINTS FROM MEETING HELD ON 20TH JUNE 2023

Make contact with neighbouring parishes to discover what action they are taking. It was suggested we put feelers out to Staplehurst, Paddock Wood and Goudhurst.

Marden Environment Working Group

It was agreed at Full Council to open the working group to representatives from the local community to be involved and assess the practicalities of a local action plan and what's achievable. We need to focus on one thing at a time and look at seeking the necessary funding.

Retrofitting Your Home

Cllr Besant to speak with resident to provide details for next newsletter.

MBC Carbon Literacy Training, Parish Council Net Zero Goals and MBC Climate Change Environment Website

Cllr Boswell to chase MBC and contact the MBC Environment Officers as we need more assistance with small scale projects particularly as we don't have enough resources and time (agreed at Amenities Committee meeting 27th June).

NALC Commenting on Local Planning Applications

Once MPC receive agreement from MBC on the proposed amendments to the Marden Neighbourhood Plan, the MNP Steering Group can look at new policies (see item 10 below).

7. EARTH CHARTER

The interested resident was unable to attend but should be able to do a small presentation at the next meeting on 17th October.

8. MPC ESTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Estate Management Plan ratified at Full Council 8th August 2023. Cllr Besant to amend the Ground Maintenance Plan for Southons Field and Marden Playing Field and prepare one for Marden Cemetery to discuss at Amenities on 26 September.

9. MAIDSTONE ECO HUB

It was suggested MPC support this initiative and Gemma Bailey, of MBC, is in discussion to roll out elsewhere in the borough such as Coxheath. Cllr Summersgill assists with the Eco Hub and they have numerous websites to check out such as solar panels and ground source pumps.

10. COMMUNITY CHARGE POINTS

Marden Car Park

It was raised at a meeting with Borough Councillors about an EV charge point, but they thought there is a greater need for on street charging and MPC should consider who it is aimed at to see where the best locations are to define a need and cost implications. However, the Environmental Group agreed we should keep lobbying and pursue further.

Marden Railway Station

It was mentioned at a recent meeting with Southeastern/Network Rail and it is on their radar, but vehicle turnover would not be high and unprofitable.

Marden Cricket & Hockey Club

Cllrs to make contact to see if they are considering an EV charge point.

Other

Apparently KCC are looking at installing charge points on lamp posts but in Marden this was thought unfeasible. The car park at the Memorial Hall is private and reserved for hall users only not to the public. If an EV charge point was installed it would restrict the number of cars that can park there.

11. SOLAR PANELS ON PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

This would need MBC agreement and apply for a Building Alteration Licence which costs £750 but this could be combined with any other alterations there (e.g. if we reconsider installing a water fountain).

12. NALC CLIMATE EMERGENCY NETWORK SESSION 27TH JULY 2023

Notes previously circulated to the Sub-Group.

13. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**PROW's in Marden**

A discussion took place on the PROWs in the parish and how some need attention and tidying up. This could be a good community action to involve Marden Walking Group, Marden Wildlife Group and residents.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17th October at 6pm in the Parish Office.

Agenda Item for next meeting: Local Council Awards Scheme – Quality Gold Level Criteria – submit a statement on engaging with the community of issues relating to the environment and climate change.