



MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2025 AT THE ALLENS, ALBION ROAD, MARDEN COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

Marden Parish Council operates under General Power of Competence since adopted on 7th May 2024. Minute Reference 012/24.

085/25 PRESENT

Cllrs Adam, Boswell, Dobinson, Gibson, Newton, Rabot (in the chair), Summersgill, Tippen and Turner were present. The Clerk was also in attendance.

Borough Cllr Russell arrived during the meeting.

086/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Goda and Griffiths. Borough Councillor Couch had also given her apologies.

087/25 COUNCILLOR INFORMATION

Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

Changes to Register of Interest

There were no changes to Cllrs Registers of Interest

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation.

088/25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllrs received, and accepted, as a true record the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th November 2025. These were duly signed by the Chairman.

089/25 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The meeting was adjourned for the following:

PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public will be given the opportunity to raise any issue under this item.

EXTERNAL VERBAL REPORTS (if in attendance)

County Councillor Report – not in attendance

Borough Councillors Report: Borough Cllr Summersgill gave brief details of what was included in his written report which had been submitted previously to Cllrs.

Police – not in attendance.

The meeting was reconvened to discuss item 090/25 onwards.

090/25 CLERK'S REPORT

Issues outstanding were being chased for an outcome. Majority of the last couple of weeks have been taken up with organising Marden at Christmas.

091/25 PARISH MATTERS

7.35 – *Cllr Dobinson arrived at the meeting.*

Reports from MBC and KCC

Cllrs had received, and noted, Borough Cllrs Summersgill and Couch's written report.

Police Update/Report from Police Forum

Crime Figures

Unfortunately, the crime figures on the Kent Police website had not been updated with October's figures so therefore would report at the next meeting.

Other Police Matters

No other Police matters to discuss.

Communication

Newsletter

The Clerk had prepared the dates for 2026 and these would be circulated to the Communications Sub-Group.

Marden Flooding

No responses had been received from Southern Water on previous correspondence. The Clerk was asked to send a reminder email for an update.

7.38 – *Cllr Turner arrived at the meeting*

Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)

No requests had been received for inclusion.

Changing Rooms Refurbishment

The Clerk advised Cllrs that, following the advice received at interim Internal Audit it was advised to still advertise on Contract Finder to remain transparent. The Council can still write to local companies at the same time and place on social media/website etc. A matrix will be drawn up for when the tenders are opened in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

A letter had been sent to the architects requesting detailed plans to submit for Building Regulations and for the tender process.

RESOLVED: Once full details were available tender applications would be sent out to local companies and the Clerk would add to the Government's Contract Finder. Building Regulations would be applied for by the architect.

Public Conveniences – Solar Panels

The draft licence from Maidstone Borough Council had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the Amenities Committee meeting where it was discussed briefly. One query was raised on clause 7.1 which the Clerk would contact the solicitor to ask for further information.

Cllr Turner advised the meeting that Building Regulations should also be applied for and he would look into this to assist the Clerk.

RESOLVED: The Clerk would contact the solicitors regarding clause 7.1 and Cllr Turner would make a submission for Building Regulations to Maidstone Borough Council.

7.44 – *Borough Cllr Russell arrived at the meeting.*

Allotments

No further information had been received from Redrow's solicitors. The Clerk would chase.

Marden PC IT Policy

Following further information received from NALC the Clerk had adapted Marden PC's policy. As there were a few questions/discussions required this was deferred to January meeting to allow Cllrs to review.

Asset Transfer Working Group

Cllrs considered, and agreed, the formation of an Asset Transfer Working Group to view potential transfer of assets from Borough/County Councils as proposed by Amenities Committee.

Cllrs appointed (up until the Annual Parish Council meeting) were Cllrs Boswell, Dobinson, Rabot and Tippen.

RESOLVED: The Asset Transfer Working Group would be set up with the above Cllrs and would report back to Full Council.

Annual Parish Meeting Format

Cllrs received the report submitted by the Clerk and discuss possible changes to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Following discussions it was:

RESOLVED: (a) that a change the name of the meeting would be made to be "Annual Residents meeting"; (b) Option 1 would be trialled: See report at Appendix 1.

Full Council Action Log

Cllrs received a copy which was noted.

Exclusive Right of Burial Certificate

As there would be no Amenities Committee meeting in December two Cllrs signed the Exclusive Right of Burial Certificate for cemetery interment.

7.59 – Meeting adjourned for report from Cllr Russell

Cllr Russell reported on how a couple of other parishes she attends operate their Annual Parish Meeting.

An update was requested from the Highways Working Group held earlier today which would be discussed later in the meeting.

8.03 – Meeting reconvened

092/25 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Amenities Committee

Cllrs noted the Minutes of Amenities Committee meetings held on 25th November which had been previously circulated and available on the Parish Council website.

Planning Committee

Cllrs noted the Minutes of Planning Committee meeting held on 18th November (there was no planning meeting held on 2nd December) which had been previously circulated and available on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Summersgill reported a couple of planning enforcement issues, one of which would be reported to MBC the other was currently being monitored by MBC.

Finance Committee

No Finance Committee meeting was held in November.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars/Other attended

Cllrs noted the following:

Clerks Conference – 13th November 2025 – Clerk and Deputy Clerk attended.

Memorial Hall meeting – 24th November 2025 – reported to Amenities Committee.

Community Forum meeting – 27th November 2025 – notes circulated

MBC Planning Training – 1st December 2025 – Cllr Summersgill attended.

Resilience Meeting at Staplehurst – 4th December 2025 – Cllr Rabot attended and would provide a report to the January Full Council meeting.

Marden at Christmas – 6th December 2025 – another successful event which would be reported to the Events Sub-Group meeting in February.

Highways Working Group meeting – 9th December 2025 – discussed later in the meeting.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars/Events forthcoming

No further meetings (other than MPC Committee meetings) arranged for the remainder of 2025.

093/25 CORRESPONDENCE

The following items and for noting:

Marden Parish Council Office Correspondence Log – November

KALC Newsletter

Clerk/Council publications

094/25 FINANCE

Bank Statements:

Revenue Accounts:

Nat West Business Reserve Account: £44,354.48

Unity Account: £125,940.41 (£57,614.34 held in Unity to be transferred to CCLA)

Capital Accounts:

CCLA – above to be transferred

Payments for Approval

Invoices for Payment

The following invoices were submitted to the meeting:

Paul Waring – mowing of Southons and Playing Field (Code 4014) - £200.70

P&F Cleaning – public conv. Cleaning (Code 4326) - £725.00

Castle Water – changing rooms water supply (Code 4225) - £7.64

Castle Water – cemetery water supply (Code 4302) - £7.64

Employees/HMRC – December salaries/PAYE/NIC (Codes 4000/4002) - £10,361.85

Memorial Hall – November office rent/refuse (Code 4070/4074) - £300.00

Graham Carey – grounds maintenance (Codes 4014/4235) - £264.00

Viking – Office stationery (Code 4071) - £106.10

Stanleys Garage – fuel/miscellaneous (Code 4310/4316) - £156.89

Cloudy IT – monthly IT support (Code 4077) - £223.44

Kent County Council – photocopier rental (Code 4065) - £108.02

Alison Hooker – Christmas/miscellaneous supplies (Code 4201/4076/4310) - £215.42

Mulberry LAS – Interim internal audit (Code 4050) - £294.00

Total: £12,970.70

Cllr Allowances

For those Cllrs who were not at the November meeting, and were elected in May 2024, discussed the provision of Cllr allowance in 2026/27 (£622.86 – this will be subject to VAT, NI payments etc). All Cllrs eligible to receive this allowance declined.

Internal Audit

Cllrs received the notes from Clerk and the interim internal audit report following audit review on 3rd December. The Clerk gave a brief update but as the Audit report had only been circulated earlier in the day it was agreed to defer this until January to allow Cllrs time to read the document.

095/25 HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Highways

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr Tippen gave an update on the priority list and reported that Kent Highways were in discussions with Leigh Academy regarding the dropped kerb at the school.

The Clerk was asked to speak with Kent Highways for plans of the boundary at the school.

Highways Working Group

Cllr Tippen gave an update on the Highways Working Group meeting held earlier today. Notes of the meeting had been circulated to Cllrs.

Speedwatch

No dates planned for prior to Christmas but dates would be arranged for January 2026.

Other

Sheephurst Lane was closed as the river bridge was currently being repaired. Cllr Adam asked what materials were being used to repair and Cllr Tippen would view once work was completed and send to the Clerk.

Public Transport

Meeting with Southeastern/Network Rail arranged for 9th January at 10.30am at the station.

Timetables due to change Sunday.

It was noted that the meeting with Katie Lam MP had been cancelled for 16th January and was being moved to 23rd January (time tbc).

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.48pm

Cllr Adrian Rabot

Cllr Adrian Rabot

Chairman

Date: 13th January 2026

Marden Parish Council, Parish Office, Goudhurst Road, Marden

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Appendix 1

Report to Full Council

Meeting date: 9th December 2025

Authors: Alison Hooker

Subject: Changes to Annual Parish Meetings

Purpose: To encourage more residents to attend

Background

Over the past few years the number of residents attending has decreased to the point that it is felt changes are required to make the meeting more inviting to residents.

Recommendations:

That Marden Parish Council consider the following options:

- (1) The meeting is called by MPC Chairman (if 6+ residents do not come forward) and the meeting is held in the John Banks Hall or Main Hall. The Chairman will read out the Parish Council report, along with Committee Chairmen reading the reports for Amenities, Finance and Planning. All village organisation reports etc would be made available on the website and in hard copy if people request them. The meeting would then be followed by the normal Full Council meeting on the same evening.
 - (1.1) The Council reports and those from organisations and the end of year accounts would form the next newsletter, or an additional newsletter the summer.
- (2) The meeting is called by MPC Chairman (as above) but deferred to a Saturday where an open/consultation morning could be held when MPC and organisations can have stands to advertise their groups etc and copies of the reports be made available.

Re-naming of the Annual Parish Meeting.

The name “Annual Parish Meeting” is sometimes confused with the Annual Parish Council Meeting and therefore residents believe this is still the meeting of the Parish Council. Therefore, could the name be changed: “Meeting of the Electors”, “Residents Annual Meeting” etc.

Options for Council

- a. Note/Do nothing – Keep meeting as it is.
- b. To consider options available.

Expected benefits (*categorise the benefits if possible, good for reaching councillors who have interests, also useful for any potential funding applications*)

- *The local community*
- ~~*The environment*~~
- *The wider community*
- ~~*Other*~~