



# **MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**WELCOMES**

**YOU**

**TO THE**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**18<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**(IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS HANDOUT IN  
LARGER PRINT PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH  
CLERK)**

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By Cllr Chris Childs, Chairman of Planning

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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By Cllr Paulina Stockell

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By Mira Martin

**SIR CHARLES BOOTH CHARITY / VICTORY FUND / ALLEN & MAPLEDEN  
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**MARDEN ORGANISATIONS AND CLUBS**

Blue House Cricket Club	Marden Primary School
Bowls Club	Marden Theatre Group
Brownies	Motor Club
Cricket & Hockey Club	Neighbourhood Plan
Fete Committee	Network of Rural Businesses
Friends of Marden's Heritage	PTA
History Group & Heritage Centre	Retained Fire Service
Horticultural Society	Royal British Legion
Kent Air Ambulance	Scouts
Library	Short Mat Bowls
Marden Business Forum	Tennis & Badminton
Marden Minors FC	The Allens Coffee Shop
Marden Society	Thursday Club
Medical Centre	Toddler Group
Memorial Hall	Village Club
Marden Parish Magazine	Walking Group
Marden Pre-School Playgroup	WI

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

### **By Cllr Kate Tippen**

Marden is going through unprecedented times of change and residents' lives are often being changed in ways they never thought would happen 10 years ago.

We have a vast amount of development with over 500 new properties being built within a 5 year time span which will increase the number of dwellings in the village by c32% by 2020.

The Parish Council's aim is to ensure we are getting the best possible outcome for the village from the developments. We are trying, with varying degrees of success, to hold regular meetings with developers and to ensure they understand residents' concerns be that highways, flooding, noise, hours of working, mud on the road and anything else that arises. Of note has been the area at the back of the Playing Field where there has been a problem with fly tipping and rubbish and we were very grateful to Millwood for agreeing to clear the Parish owned land as well as their own. Although it is very disappointing that the area is again in a disgusting state and as bad as it was before the clearance took place. The developers at the solar farm in Plain Road have supplied and fitted, free of charge, solar panels here at the Memorial Hall. Redrow agreed to reinstate the off road parking for residents of Spring Grove Cottages, after we met with them, having applied to have it removed from the plan. We hope there will be further good news stories in the months to come.

Section 106 monies have been allocated to the Playing Field from both the Highwood Green development and the Parsonage. Our first priority has been to replace the outdated and scruffy children's play equipment in the Napoleon Drive Play Area, now that we own it, with equipment suitable for the under 5's. Following a public consultation a contract has been placed with Wicksteed, a major supplier of play equipment, and work is due to start in May. We have plans to install an adult gym, a much improved youth shelter and a new sports wall. We are also looking at the possibility of installing a walking/running track round the perimeter of the playing field and improving, enlarging or replacing the changing rooms so that they can become a more inclusive village facility.

Parking and road safety is a very major concern to residents, not least outside the School. We have worked with Kent Highways and the Planning Department at Maidstone Borough Council to push the case for a controlled crossing, which has been specified as a planning condition on three of the major developments. We understand that one of the developers will be installing a puffin crossing but as yet we do not know when that will be.

The Parish Council sent out a parking survey last summer to residents and the results have shown us that there's no easy solution. Undoubtedly the improved train service to London has made Marden more attractive to commuters from outside the village and we will be pushing the case with Southeastern to increase the car parking capacity at Marden Station, but finding the right person to speak to, and who can make a difference, is a challenge.

It was very gratifying that around 60 adults and many children took part in our annual litter pick on 18 March. Whilst it is very disappointing that we have to do this to keep our village and surrounding countryside looking beautiful there's always a great deal of community spirit on the day and I know that those residents who participated gained a

great deal of satisfaction from it. If more people are willing to take part next year then we can have an even greater impact.

The normal work of the Council continues, my colleagues Anne, Chairman of Amenities and Chris, Chairman of Planning will update you on the work of these committees.

I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Parish Council who voluntarily put in a great deal of time and effort on your behalf. What you see at meetings is only a tiny proportion of what they are doing behind the scenes. I particularly want to thank our very hard working Clerk, Ali and Assistant Clerk, Erika. They often work above and beyond their contracted hours, deal with a huge variety of issues, have exceptional knowledge of all things Marden and remain cheerful, welcoming and unflappable. We are truly lucky to have the services of two such exceptional people here in Marden.

## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

**By Cllr Anne Boswell**

The Amenities Committee is responsible for the open space in the village owned by the Parish Council along with the Cemetery, Rookery Path and Public Toilets. We also organise the annual village Christmas celebrations, the Summer Play Scheme and other ad hoc Events. As Kate has already mentioned, another very successful Village Litter Pick took place in March and many thanks to all those residents, the Scouts and Walking Groups who participated – a great village engagement.

It certainly helps to tidy up the Parish. Many thanks also to those residents who regularly litter pick around the village - it is such a community-minded thing to do. Sadly, however there has been an increase in fly tipping particularly in Tilden and Underlyn Lanes.

### **Marden Playing Field**

Our main priority is to maintain this vital area of village open space to a high standard. The maintenance, including the mowing and landscape management, is undertaken by our village caretaker, Colin Judge. Monthly tree inspections are carried out at both the Playing Field and Rookery Path (along with Southons Field and the Cemetery) to ensure they are safe and remedial work undertaken if necessary. We also maintain the changing rooms which are owned by the Parish Council and used by Marden Minors Football Club. We are looking to replace-the white fascia boarding, which has been broken on a couple of occasions, with wooden fascia.

Of utmost importance is the maintenance of the play equipment and regular safety checks are carried out and corrective measures taken where necessary. CCTV has now been installed to monitor any anti-social behaviour in the playing field which our PCSO Nicola Morris and Parish Clerk continue to monitor. Kate has already mentioned the area at the back of the playing field but it is hoped, with Community Warden funding, to position a litter bin at this end of the field in the near future.

As ever the problem with dog mess continues, and whilst the field is covered by Maidstone Borough Council Dog Control Orders, they do not clear up the mess in the field. They will respond if dog owners are reported of allowing their dogs to foul the field and they will then visit to monitor and view. Our Community Warden Mira Martin monitors the situation and it is such a shame that a few irresponsible dog owners spoil things for others.

### **Southons Field**

The Parish is very fortunate to have an additional open space at Southons Field with its numerous species of trees and both the '*Kent Men of Trees*' and the Hadlow Tree Warden were very impressed on their village walkabouts last year. Usage of the field has certainly increased particularly by families as a peaceful and safe haven to run around, have a picnic on the benches, or play on the Play Trail – a great piece of equipment for balance and co-ordination and can be used by adults as well as children. For these reasons the field is kept 'dog free' (apart from guide dogs). Hopefully at some point, the Parish Council will be able to install a few additional pieces of Trim Trail equipment to help residents continue with their fitness campaign!

Opening hours of the field vary slightly depending on the season but is currently open for the use of anyone in the village between 7.00am to 8.00pm.

The field is available for hire by any organisation in the village and various village celebrations take place there. This year there will be a 'What Marden Does Best' event on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June from 2pm and a Firework Display organised by the School PTA on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Colin also maintains the field and I am sure anyone who has recently visited will agree that it is looking magnificent – it is a wonderful village asset.

### **Cemetery**

Again the Parish is lucky to have such an attractive and well maintained Cemetery with a convenient footpath running to it from the village centre. I would like to record our thanks to Ian Jones, our groundsman, for all his effort and hard work he puts into maintaining it to a very high standard. I am sure you will all agree it is a delightful, peaceful and important facility. Last year the South & South East in Bloom judges thought it was a wonderful open space and encouraged us to enter it into the 'Cemetery' category of this year's South & South East in Bloom competition. Fingers crossed we do well!

We have received a number of kind donations from residents of shrubs, perennials and bulbs helping to create some new flower beds, and the Parish Council is more than thankful to receive further contributions particularly if they are 'rabbit-proof'!

We have already started to create a new area which will come into use over the next few years. A central flower bed has been created and gradually being planted up, and we will be starting the layout of this area shortly lining the new pathways with shrubs etc. Again any donations kindly received.

### **Public Toilets**

We recognise that the Public Toilets are an important public facility which the Parish Council has responsibility for although they are owned by Maidstone Borough Council. Thankfully, there have only been a few anti-social behaviour incidents there recently. A cleaner services them daily and Ian regularly checks and locks them daily, and Colin deals with any maintenance that is required.

### **Christmas Celebration**

Once again another great village Christmas celebration took place last December and the well tested formula seems to work with Carols and Morris dancing at The Allens then a Christmas Fair at the Memorial Hall, complete with Father Christmas in his grotto. So many of the village groups now take part, including the Parish Church and Scouts, making it such a great community event. This year's event will take place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December and our grateful thanks go to our Assistant Clerk Erika Lock and Parish

Clerk Alison Hooker whose hard work and planning always ensure the day is a huge success.

The Christmas trees were once again erected around the village which I hope you agree helps to make the village centre look so festive.

### **Summer Play Scheme**

Because of the success of running the scheme again all day last year, it will run from 9.30am to 3.30pm from Monday 24th July to Friday 4th August at Marden Scout HQ for 5-11 year olds. Registration forms will be available from the Parish Office from the 1st June. The Play Scheme is able to take place due to funding from Marden Parish Council and hopefully Maidstone Borough Council. Further details will be available in the next edition of our Newsletter and from the Parish Office.

### **Amenities Committee**

The Amenities Committee meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month in the Parish Council meeting room and all are welcome to attend. I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow councillors on this Committee – Richard Adam, Jane Cowin, Sean Harvey, Ian Newton, Jean Robertson, Kate Tippen and Andy Turner - for all the work they have undertaken over the past year.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **By Cllr Chris Childs**

The Planning Committee has been kept busy with close to 100 residential applications during the past year. It is often not realised that the Parish Council can only make recommendations to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), but the Planning Committee has a mix of experience that is much respected by the decision makers at MBC.

The Highwood Green development by Redrow has now completed and has integrated into the Parish in a seamless manner, and the Council is endeavouring to ensure that the remaining housing developments are equally as sensitive to the needs of our village. Industrial developments such as the new Solar Farm off Plain Road, has needed careful oversight and the committee is most diligent in reviewing traffic plans. Within the larger housing development plans are commitments to provide village facilities under the S106 scheme, and the Parish Council is assiduous in ensuring the developer's commitments are neither overlooked nor forgotten. The Pedestrian crossing located near to the school rate as extremely important in this context.

The compound effect of the new housing developments on the village parking and traffic flow is a constant concern and the Parish Council is taking an holistic approach to problem and has taken full note of the views expressed by parishioners in the recent parking survey. Many of these views reflect directly on planning applications.

The Marden Primary School is undergoing a reconfiguration to accommodate the larger numbers expected from the additional housing being built. Twice a day the traffic conditions outside the school along Goudhurst Road are at a peak if not at a standstill, and the Parish Council is looking for a solution.

The Marden Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) and the MBC Draft Local Plan are all progressing well and will be welcome tools for the committee in exercising the planning responsibilities.

Councillors cannot see everything and just by ignorance parishioners may flout planning conditions or regulations, but the Planning Committee would like to know, as it is our aim to keep the character of the village intact. A quiet word by the Parish Council to MBC enforcement is a tool that can be used.

Finally, many parishioners keep themselves abreast of Parish Council matters by reading the agendas/minutes on the various notice boards scattered around the village, but remember you are welcome to attend any planning committee meeting.

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Paulina Stockell

It has been my privilege to represent you at County Hall for over 15 years. KCC is continuing to make Kent a great place to live and work, making a positive contribution to residents' everyday lives, despite the financial challenges and rising demand for our services creating additional pressure. Since 2010 KCC has already saved more than half a billion pounds while at the same time ensuring that every penny we spend counts so that we can continue to deliver good services which are value for money. The additional pressures come from a combination of factors, including rising prices, the rising demand of more elderly people to support, increased demand on children's services and the introduction of the National Living Wage falling on providers. KCC has responded to this challenge through efficiency drives and radically re-designing what we do by becoming a strategic commissioning organisation. By planning and designing our services well, ideally with the help and input from service users, KCC can now deliver services through a range of providers across the public, private and voluntary sectors, alongside our own in-house services. We are also investing in quality preventative services to ensure that expensive interventions are avoided wherever possible and people are given the opportunity to have greater choice and independence, ultimately resulting in better outcomes for everyone. Some examples of where KCC has already demonstrated its determination to save costs and generate income:

The Education and Young People's directorate is looking at innovative ways of generating additional income of £1.9 million in 2017-18 through the creation of support packages for schools and academies in Kent and other council areas.

In Adult Social Care, KCC has identified savings of £13.3 million through transformation, although the increase in demand for, and costs of care services, will mean the extra costs will outweigh even those savings.

KCC also anticipates saving about £2million from its home-to-school transport budget for special education needs pupils through smarter route organisation and intelligent procurement.

The £40million project to convert all KCC's 118,000 streetlights to LED technology will deliver in excess £5.2 million in savings on energy bills annually, once complete (as well as reducing KCC's carbon footprint).

Although the cost of waste disposal per tonne continues to increase, the cost of recycling and handling waste in Kent is lower than four years ago as the county has reduced its landfill waste from 19% in 2013 to below 2% (which is well ahead of the national target of 5% by 2020)

Over the past year:

**LED Street Lighting.** As a result of a consultation on our Street Light Policy, KCC has agreed to an optimised all-night street lighting programme using new energy-efficient LED lights. The newly upgraded lighting will be connected to an individual central management system (CMS) that will allow us to monitor and adapt lighting levels in the future.

**Operation Stack.** Lorry parking has been an issue in Kent for a number of years. As a result the government has discussed plans to build a huge lorry park to end the gridlock caused by Operation Stack and the closure of parts of the M20 so lorries can queue during the crosschannel disruption. KCC is considering how lorries can be encouraged to take advantage of this increased capacity, particularly as The Port of Dover estimates the UK economy loses up to £250m per day when Stack is in force.

**Free wi-fi in all of Kent's 99 libraries.** This has been made possible after Kent County Council secured full funding from Arts Council England to complete the roll-out of free Wi-Fi across all library buildings in the county. The new provision also means more people can access a vast range of online library services, such as free online subscriptions (newspapers, journals, encyclopedias, business resources etc.) and the online library catalogue which contains almost half a million books, DVDs and CDs, available via a free click-and-collect reservation service.

**Lower Thames Crossing.** Highways England is consulting on options for a Lower Thames Crossing; a new road crossing for the River Thames connecting Kent and Essex. It proposes a tunnel crossing under the Thames located east of Gravesend and Tilbury. A new crossing is needed to reduce the increasing congestion at the Dartford Crossing to unlock economic growth, supporting the development of homes and jobs in the region. KCC is supportive of a bored tunnel at this location but prefers the Western Southern Link to the A2 (not Highways England's preferred route) so as to minimise environmental damage and avoid Shorne village and woods.

### **What services does Kent County Council provide?**

Your council tax payment to Kent County Council funds over 300 services. Listed below are some of the services we provide:

Home to school transport for 7,500 children to mainstream schools and 3,800 children with Special Educational Needs.

Care for nearly 1,500 Looked after Children in fostering and residential care.

A network of Children's Centres, preventative work and more than 11,000 children a month avoiding the need for more expensive care.

Care for nearly 4,000 older people in their own homes.

Care for over 1,000 adults with Learning Disabilities through supported living arrangements.

Care for 5,500 elderly and vulnerable adults in residential homes.

Direct payments for nearly 4,000 elderly and vulnerable adults to make their own care arrangements.

16.9m free journeys on public transport for elderly people on their bus passes.

Maintaining and managing a network with over 5,000 miles of road and 4,000 miles of pavement.

Disposing of and recycling 711,000 tonnes of domestic waste.

99 libraries attracting 6.5m visits online and in person a year.

Extra school places where our population is growing

1.4m public enquiries through the Contact Centre.

In addition, as a member of The Kent Rural Board I have been pushing for the case for improved broadband in rural areas and I am pleased to report that KCC is investing in extending access to superfast broadband to the rural areas of Kent.

### **Grants awarded within the Parish:**

Marden in Bloom £500

Support for Marden Village Stocks £7450

Marden Memorial Hall £657.00

Marden Unicorn Pub Keep Clear £178

B2079 Goudhurst Road at Marden Primary School £3750

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**By Borough Cllr Annbelle Blackmore**

Cllr Blackmore spoke about MBC's Local Plan which had now gone through the inquiry and was back with MBC with a few modifications. This was out to consultation with Parish Councils and residents and the closing date was 17<sup>th</sup> May. This was the last opportunity to comment. The 20 year plan explains where development can take place and the infrastructure, it also puts Parish Councils and the Borough Council more in control of planning. There will be a review period in 2021 to make sure the plan is still sound.

MBC has a statutory duty to house homeless people and there has been a significant increase in the numbers therefore the finances have had to be adjusted to accommodate this.



**By PCSO Nicola Morris**

**01622 604392 / [nicola.morris@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nicola.morris@kent.pnn.police.uk)**

Over the last twelve months I have continued to work within the Marden & Yalding Ward. I have been involved in numerous local issues and village events.

I continue to provide local crime figures and area updates each month, updating Councillors and residents on the crime trends within Marden.

I continue to advertise surgeries/public engagements to encourage local residents to speak to me about any issues. These have been held at local events, Marden Train Station, Marden Youth Club. Dates are advertised on Kent Police website and passed to Marden Parish Council for advertising.

I work closely with other agencies – Golding homes for frequent visits, Kent Fire and Rescue, KCC Community Wardens, British Transport Police, Maidstone Borough Council, to name a few

Local operations have been held to target suspicious vehicles and targeting certain crime trends within the area. Operation Innovate is in place for this, where we have a number of positive results in Marden. I have put tasking's in place for Police Officers to specifically target the Marden area. We have used marked and unmarked vehicles for this.

The Community Safety Unit has been involved in Marden for joint visits and CCTV opportunities. I have access to Marden Parish Council CCTV to help identify individuals causing antisocial behaviour locally

Planning ahead I am looking to promote Neighbourhood Watch further as I feel we could get more information out to local residents and vice versa especially with all the new developments within Marden.

Anyone wishing to contact me about any issues or crime prevention advice can call the non-emergency Police number 101 and ask for local officer PCSO Nicola Morris 56202.

Please continue to report any suspicious persons/vehicles/events through 101

Thank you for your continued support in making Marden safe.

## **COMMUNITY WARDEN**

**By Mira Martin**

It has been another busy year in Marden and Staplehurst and my report covers my activities in both villages as quite a few overlap and are carried out in both.

Meetings that I've attended include Parish Council, Speedwatch, **Staplehurst Emergency Help Team\*** Marden Children's Centre (networking meetings, after school club, attended and helped at Swattenden Centre session, Mote Park event on 12/8/16 and Cockpit event on 1/9/16.

I've visited Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies and Rainbows, Marden and Staplehurst Pre-schools and Primary Schools (including road safety talks). I've visited Marden and Staplehurst Youth Clubs.

Marden and Staplehurst libraries have held events and activities for children and adults that I've attended when I can and I have also visited Age UK, Bright and Breezy (for people with COPD and other conditions that affect breathing), Sobell Lodge (home for disabled people), Weald Club for Disabled People, The Allens and the Village Café and other clubs and groups.

I work with and assist other agencies such as Social Services, Trading Standards, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue. I am still encouraging people to join or form Neighbourhood Watch schemes in their areas and I have attended sessions, given advice and information and handed out personal security and home security items.

I work with various housing associations that have properties in the area – Hyde Housing, Town and Country and Golding Homes. I keep them informed of problems and issues and help with visits to residents or signposting to other agencies when required. Training and workshops that I have done include: LGBT & Mental Health & Hate Crime, Self-Neglect Workshop, Biker Down training at the KFRS Road Safety Experience Building, First Aid refresher course and Domestic Abuse Awareness.

Village events that I have attended include: Marden Village Litter Pick (this year as First Aider) and Marden Big Musical Picnic.

Other issues that I've dealt with or am dealing with include: neighbour disputes; Community Safety such as bogus caller and scam info and updates; Youth ASB: litter pick with 2 offenders; nuisance dogs; fly tipping; abandoned cars; nuisance parking, nuisance youths etc.

The Kent Resilience Team carried out an exercise at Romney Marsh which I attended with several members of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – the scenario being an evacuation of residents due to flood warnings. It was a good to see how the emergency services work in that kind of challenge and to pick up ideas of what to do and what not to do when setting up and running a rest centre.

\*this year I aim to help Marden Emergency Help Team get up and running so we may be asking for information and helpers/volunteers – keep an eye out for further updates if you are interested.

If there is anything that I may be able to help you with just give me a call or email me:-  
telephone: 07969 584179 / [mira.martin@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mira.martin@kent.gov.uk)

## **SIR CHARLES BOOTH CHARITY**

**By Graham Tippen (Hon Treasurer)**

The Sir Charles Booth Charity is an educational support charity set up to provide financial aid to local people with their children's education. When he made his will, in 1792, he made the bequest that a sum of money be invested for the benefit of the

children of the parish, providing they had attended the village school and met a number of other requirements.

**So how much is available?**

The will specifies that the money available shall be the interest earned on his endowment. What may have been a lot of money over 200 years ago is obviously worth much less today, in real terms. However, by prudent investments over the years, the Trustees to the Charity are able to make payments of up to £100 for each individual applicant. In order to reserve the funds for the future, normally a maximum of 2 awards are made annually, though each case is considered on its merits by the Trustees.

**So who are the Trustees?**

The Will of Sir Charles and subsequent Charity Commission documents specify that there should be seven Trustees in all. The current trustees are: Dorothy Reed (Chairman); Rev. Ali Duguid; Robin Judd; Richard Day; Eunice Doswell; Sarah Hill and myself.

**So how do I apply for an award from the Trust?**

Just contact any one of the Trustees, in writing, given the reasons for your application. Most of them will be familiar to people in Marden, or you can find them in the telephone book. They will then meet to discuss your request.

**VICTORY FUND (1959)**  
**By Robin Judd (Chairman)**  
No Report has been received

**ALLEN & MAPLESDEN CHARITY**  
**By Mike Lutener**

The Allen and Maplesden Trust distributed £595 in 2016. This was to 17 couples receiving £15 and 34 singles receiving £10.

The Trust is discussing with the Victory Fund the possibility of a merger and altering the way in which the money is distributed but no decisions have been made yet.

**ST MICHAELS & ALL ANGELS PARISH CHURCH**  
**By Revd Ali Duguid**  
No Report has been received

## **MARDEN ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETIES**

### **BLUE HOUSE CRICKET CLUB**

**By Steve Waite**

Blue House Cricket Club bowed out of the Kent Village Cricket League after more than 40 years at the end of the 2016 season.

Members voted unanimously to withdraw from the competition.

It was not a decision that was taken lightly, the club having been one of the founder members.

Back then, the clubs were small village teams who wanted to play competitive cricket on a Sunday. The vast majority of league cricket in the county, at that time, was played on Saturdays.

Now, the league has grown to seven divisions and has welcomed much larger clubs with huge resources, making it less attractive to smaller clubs such as ours.

Despite not playing league cricket, Blue House intends to continue playing a full fixture card of friendlies in 2017.

As such, we are grateful for the continued support of our landlord Colin Day and Geoff Maynard for the mowing.

We have others to thank such as our ever dependable team who do the marvellous teas and our members who put so much hard work into the ground.

We're looking forward to an enjoyable 2017. Anyone who would like to join us would be more than welcome. Just turn up on a Sunday when we have a game or call secretary Steve Waite on 07810 444231.

### **BOWLS CLUB**

**By Mick Collins**

The Bowls Club had another successful year in 2016 and again hosted many prestigious county events. The green, maintained by club members, continues to be one of the best in Kent, and therefore we receive many requests for county competitions to be played at Marden and on these occasions our ladies excel with the preparation of after match meals.

Last year, at short notice, due to the poor state of the Maidstone green, we were asked to host Kent's Middleton Cup matches and we will be doing the same in 2017. The Middleton Cup is the major national inter county competition in which Kent lost to Devon in the final last year. We also hosted other county competitions and matches during the summer and we acknowledge we can only do this with the availability of Southons Field for parking as street parking would make it impossible for the competitors to park and would ultimately clog up the village roads. There is no payment

from the county for hosting these events but we do manage to make it worthwhile with increased bar takings.

The club itself continues to have a very active short mat section running throughout the winter months and the summer is very busy with participation in local leagues and competitions and friendly weekend matches. At the start of the outdoor season we ran an Open Day at which we attracted a few new members and during the summer we invited the local Scout Group who came along to try bowling and then enjoy a hotdog and a can of drink. In August we ran a Charity Day to raise money for the Heart of Kent Hospice and in all about ninety people, young and old, attended and we raised £750 which was presented to them at our Christmas Social evening.

Our membership remains, as it has for many years, at about mid sixties but quite alarmingly the percentage of Marden residents in that number is less than 30%, so our aim over the next few years is to attract more of the growing population of Marden. Bowls is a game for both young and old and presents a chance to make many new friends, be more active and to enjoy many social functions. For this season we are offering 50% membership (£32.50) for new bowlers and you will also receive a newly designed club shirt. For anyone having never considered playing bowls, why not pop along on our Open Day on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April from 2pm. You can try bowling, enjoy our hospitality and enjoy a drink with us. We look forward to seeing you.

We are very proud of our clubs success and its high standing within the county of Kent, and we hope that this transmits into the local community with visitors making their way to village shops and restaurants, and generally getting to know Marden better.

## **BROWNIES**

**By Anne Thompson, Assistant Brownie Leader**

20 16/17 has been another good year for the Brownies we have been on pack holiday twice once as princesses and then as wizards as our theme was Harry Potter the reason for two in the same year was Wise Owls wedding which was during the summer so decision was taken that a wedding and a pack holiday to organise was too much even for someone as special as Wise Owl

We have earned many badges this year including cooks, science investigated and number fun. We have been seen out and about on our summer toss a coin walk and attended Remembrance service but most of all we have had fun times together

## **CRICKET & HOCKEY CLUB**

**By Charlotte Sharp**

[www.mardenrussets.com](http://www.mardenrussets.com) / [www.mardencricketclub.co.uk](http://www.mardencricketclub.co.uk)

No Report has been received

## FRIENDS OF MARDEN'S HERITAGE

By Kitty Naylor



Another year has rushed past and to our great sadness we have lost two very special associates of The Friends of Marden's Heritage; Bryan Clayton who served on committee for a number of years. He is much missed, and we extend our condolences to Mo, who, luckily for us has continued to contribute to our group through her support of our events, and in particular her skills in putting together picture quizzes for our quiz evenings – Thank you Mo.

Sir Nicholas Fenn – Nick – to friends and associates, has left a hole not only in the very heart of The Friends of Marden's Heritage but in the village too. Nick put our original constitution together for us, and his experience, wisdom, kindness and charm were called upon often, by us all. Nick supported us graciously with his wit and humour as well as his time at our events, he is missed very much.

The Big Musical Picnic was another resounding success last June, and our grateful thanks to all who help out with it year on year. Many may wonder why we have decided not to run this event this year. The reasons are many and varied, but it takes a great deal of work to organise and run, up to the day and on the day itself. The growth of the event means that it is a huge undertaking for the committee, as well as Mo Gillis-Coates and his crew, and it was felt that a year's sabbatical from the event would be a good idea, to return next year refreshed and enthusiastic.

Last year's Hog Roast Event went ahead and we were very kindly hosted by David and Evelyn McFarland in their beautiful garden, many thanks to them both. We also had a stall at Marden at Christmas, and will do so again this year but with a slightly different approach, so watch this space.

Our regular January quiz took us a little by surprise as we were expecting 6 tables of entrants and ended up with 9 tables. Miracles were worked in the kitchen and the biblical loaves and fishes were alluded to. A very successful evening in all.

We have our annual joint event with the 3 'T's' coming up this weekend for St. George's Day, it is a concert by 'Opus 32' young choir who perform a wide range of songs. This will be held in St. Michael's and All Angels on Saturday evening from 7.30 pm, tickets are available from the Village Stores, West End Stores and the Heritage Centre, as well as on the door.

We continue to work towards our project of the restoration and repair of the stained glass windows in the Church, and at our AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> May (in the Vestry Hall) we have a guest speaker talking about this subject.

## Hi-Kent (Hearing)

Have you got a hearing aid, if so, get your batteries at the Hi Kent Sessions, currently in Marden Library.

Dates for the remainder of the year are:

May 25<sup>th</sup>

July 27<sup>th</sup>

September 28<sup>th</sup>

November 30<sup>th</sup>

## HISTORY GROUP & HERITAGE CENTRE

By David McFarland (Chairman) - 832295 / [history@mardenhistory.org.uk](mailto:history@mardenhistory.org.uk)

No Report has been received



## HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

By Jill Nichols (Chairman)

The Marden Horticultural Society continues to go from strength to strength with an increase in members and interesting and stimulating monthly meetings.

In April our main speaker was Nick Hamilton who came to talk on the Barnsdale Years and gave a great talk with many interesting anecdotes about his father Geoff Hamilton. The meeting was in the Memorial Hall and was very well attended by members and guests.

Other speakers covered a wide variety of subjects including Sweet Peas, All things Nutty, Front Gardens and La Chaire in Jersey.

We had two local visits one to Orchard End in Horsmonden to support the National Garden Scheme and one to King John's Nursery in Etchingham. Our two main visits were to the Savill Garden and the Wisley Flower Show in September.

Our plant sale once again raised necessary money to help pay for our events and visits and this year will be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 9-11am.

Two of our members are holding cream teas this summer choosing a charity of their choice. As usual we have a great range of speakers lined up for this season and many interesting visits including one to the Olympic Park to see the plantings.

We welcome new members and our meetings are held every second Tuesday in the month at The Vestry Hall at 7.30.

## KENT, SURREY & SUSSEX AIR AMBULANCE

By Jill Playle, Director of Communications

Email: [jillp@kssairambulance.org.uk](mailto:jillp@kssairambulance.org.uk)

Kent Surrey Sussex



**Air Ambulance**

A Charity That Saves Lives  
Registered Charity No. 1021367

No Report has been received

### LIBRARY (KENT COUNTY COUNCIL)

Marden Library, High Street, Marden TN12 9DP 01622 831619 Fax 01622 831619

Email: [mardenlibrary@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mardenlibrary@kent.gov.uk) Contact Name: Craig Fox

Opening Hours: Monday closed; Tuesday 1.15 - 6; Wednesday closed; Thursday 1.15 - 6;  
Friday 9 - 1.30; Saturday 10 - 2; Sunday closed

#### Events and activities held throughout the past year:

Marden History Group continues to work in partnership with us and volunteers can be found in the Heritage Centre during all Library opening hours.

Every class from Marden Primary School visits the library regularly. As well as the regular visits the children from the Reception Classes visited the library in February to

learn about libraries and hear some stories and Year 5 children came for a morning of heritage workshops provided by the Heritage Group, Kent Archives and the library in September.

Two Reading Groups meet in the library once a month, one on a Saturday and the other on a Thursday. Anyone who enjoys reading and discussing books is welcome to join either group. Every Tuesday afternoon we hold a Talk Time, a chance for anyone to join us for tea and a chat.

There have been a series of history displays in the foyer and in the Heritage Centre. A very successful weekly Story/Rhyme session for pre-school children is held in the library every Friday morning, led by local parent volunteers.

The Community Warden continues to use the library as a base and to hold surgeries in the library when people can discuss their concerns with her.

#### Services Provided

The library provides a varied selection of items for loan to adults, teenagers and children. This includes fiction, non-fiction, large print, spoken word cassettes, babies' board books and DVDs. New stock is added on a regular basis.

You can also access our online library services and can perform many routine tasks, such as renewing books and booking a library PC. Our 'Online Reference Library' acts as your very own electronic bookshelf, providing access to encyclopaedias, dictionaries, newspapers and magazines, and other subjects such as business or health from quality commercial databases or tried and tested free-web resources.

eBooks and eAudiobooks are also available to borrow with your Kent Library Card

Free public access computers are available in the library, along with a scanner and printer.

Using a public computer in the library, you can access [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) and [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk) **free of charge**. These websites provide access to a vast amount of information for those interested in family history.

### **Concluding remarks:**

We would like to thank the staff for all their hard work, the local volunteers for providing our wonderful pre-school session and the History Group for their continued support of the library.

## **MARDEN BUSINESS FORUM**

**By David Burton, Chairman**

MBF is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Forum consists of approx. 100 businesses from Marden parish although there are many more which aren't members. Current members range from single person businesses to international companies. Regular networking events are held and the 2017 business directory has just been published and will be delivered shortly to all houses. Another Business Showcase is being planned for later in the year and the AGM is on 27<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm.



## **MARDEN IN BLOOM**

**By Anne Boswell (Chairman)**

'It's all about Village Engagement'

Our Objectives:

- To provide a stronger sense of community by engendering engagement and inspiring people to make a difference through improving their local environment
- To increase local pride and community empowerment
- To work with residents, village organisations and businesses to enhance Marden's open space and its environment
- To provide cleaner and greener surroundings and to tidy up the village

### **Our achievements in 2016:**

- We were very proud that S&SE in Bloom awarded MinB 'Silver' category for 2016 – not a bad start after just a few months. Our plan is to build on what we have already achieved and enter again in 2018 to see if we can attain Silver Gilt or Gold.
- Planters to replicate apple crates have been made by a member and installed – the S&SE in Bloom judges were very impressed. They are currently looking great. Golden Hill sponsored the plants last summer and are generously doing again this summer.
- The frontage of the Memorial Hall, the Parish's main community asset, is being tidied and brightened up, two planters have been installed and we will create a bee/butterfly enhancing bed at the front.

- The Library area has been planted up in liaison with the History Group – hydrangeas, bulbs and perennials and we are trying to keep the area weed free and will sew Wildflower seeds and plant some bee/butterfly enhancing plants.
- Engaged with all the Village Groups many of whom participated and helped in the project. We were very grateful that the Horticultural Society helped MinB to raise funds.
- ‘Best Floral Display’ competitions were really successful – for residents, businesses and village groups.
- 2,000 crocuses were planted in various areas as part of the Purple4Polio campaign and have recently been flowering.

**Some of our plans for 2017: ‘OUR VILLAGE IS GOING TO BEE BUZZING’**

- Encouraging residents to plant more bee, butterfly and bat enhancing plants.
- Installing another planter in Chantry Road and on the railings of the alleyway leading to The Cockpit.
- Encouraging children to help nature to ‘bloom’ – we are starting a project with the Primary School & Pre-School and Golding Homes have sponsored us. Every child will be given a packet of Sunflower Seeds to grow at home and we would like children/parents to share a photo by 15th September either on <https://www.facebook.com/MardeninBloom/> or email your photo to: [mardeninbloom@outlook.com](mailto:mardeninbloom@outlook.com)  
These sunflowers help to create a haven for bees and butterflies.
- MinB & PTA members will clear some of the school garden and plant Runner Beans for a ‘Longest Bean Competition’.
- Marden Cemetery has been entered into the S&SE in Bloom Cemetery category and will be judged in July.
- ‘Go Wild’ – planting wildflower seeds.
- Planting more bulbs in the Autumn
- Engaging with the Scout Group and Kent Bat Society – possibly making bat and bird boxes.
- Possibly creating a small Nature Reserve area at the ponds behind the Playing Field.
- Arranging weeding and litter pick sessions – encouraging residents and businesses to keep their frontages clear – this is one of S&SE in Bloom main judging criteria.
- Encouraging sustainability e.g. composting.
- Engaging businesses both in Pattenden Lane and the retail businesses not just for sponsorship but also participation.

**Competitions this Summer:**

We hope as many residents and Village Groups as possible will participate:

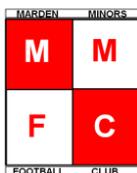
- **PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION** of images of bees, butterflies and other wildlife on flowers – residents to submit photos on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MardeninBloom/> or email your photo to: [mardeninbloom@outlook.com](mailto:mardeninbloom@outlook.com), or just print off.
- **‘WHO HAS THE BEST BLOOMING FRONTAGE’ COMPETITION** – watch out - ‘Bloomers’ will be looking

for candidates to enter into this competition – so make an effort to make your front gardens look great this Summer!

**Some of our proposed Fund Raising Events:**

- Cosmos Pop Up Stall – in late May/early June outside Crowhurst & Tompsett – date tbc
- ‘What Marden Does Best’ event – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June from 2pm – Plant tombola, Cosmos plants etc
- Bee Competition Stall at PTA Summer Fair – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July
- Flower Arranging Demo by Golden Hill – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm – venue and details tbc
- Pimms in Heather Scott’s beautiful garden in Chainhurst – Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July from 2pm – details tbc
- Autumn Plant & Bulb Sale –Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 9am – outside Crowhurst & Tompsett
- Barn Dance Hoedown – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October from 7.30pm – Memorial Hall – details tbc
- Christmas Wreath-Making Workshop with Golden Hill – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December – details tbc
- Marden at Christmas Event – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December in the Memorial Hall – selling pots of bulbs etc

TO ACHIEVE OUR PLANS, WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS!  
If you are interested, please either email the Chairman [anne.boswell@ymail.com](mailto:anne.boswell@ymail.com)  
or call 01622 833351/07828 868703



**MARDEN MINORS FOOTBALL CLUB**

Affiliated to the Kent County Football Association  
President: Mr Ian Ballard Chairman: Mr D.Errey  
Treasurer: Mr Les Stracey Secretary: Mrs Hayley Crabb

**No Report has been received**

**MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL P.T.A.  
By Rachel Gillis-Coates (Co-Chairman)**

Sophie Hawkes and Rachel Gillis-Coates took on the shared role of Co-Chairs at the AGM in October 2016.

Our objective has been to raise money for Marden Primary School to buy additional items they have been unable to purchase within the school budget. We also organise events to help create a rich community feel involving the children, staff, parents and the local community.

The events we have organised since we have been Co-Chairs have been:

- A 1940s Dance Evening on 17<sup>th</sup> September in the Memorial Hall which was open to the public.
- A Macmillan Coffee Morning for new parents on 26<sup>th</sup> September.
- A Halloween Film Night for the children after school on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- A Crazy Hair Day for the children to bring in donations for the Christmas Fair on 25<sup>th</sup> November.
- Christmas Fair on 3<sup>rd</sup> December which took place in the school and the doors were open to the public.
- A Glow Disco for the children on 3<sup>rd</sup> February
- A Jumble Sale in the Memorial Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> February
- A Mother's Day Cake and Plant Sale on 24<sup>th</sup> March

From this and past fundraising we have managed to help purchase for the school:

- Hardship Fund (for school to use to support families in need and the Residential Trip)
- Water bottles for the children's first year at school in Reception Class.
- Leavers Folders for the children leaving in Summer 2017.
- Trip support and school visitors.
- Schools Arts Week.
- School Coding Workshop and Science Resource Workshop.
- Christmas Decorations for the children to make.
- New Picnic Benches.
- New Team Marden polo shirts for the children to wear on external events.
- Red Ted stickers, bookmarks and pencils as prizes to support children's reading.

Our future public events are:

- Curry and Quiz Night in the Memorial Hall on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May.
- Summer Fair on the school field on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- Fireworks Display on Southons Field on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November.

We are constantly looking for places for storage or venues to hold events. If you are able to help us, please email us on [mardenpta@outlook.com](mailto:mardenpta@outlook.com).

You may wish to like our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MardenPrimaryPTA/>

Follow us on Twitter: @PTAMarden

## **MARDEN SOCIETY**

**By Mo Clayton (President) [tillergirl2913@aol.com](mailto:tillergirl2913@aol.com)**

**01622 831529**

The Marden Society has enjoyed some interesting talks in 2016 and continues to attract new members.

Unfortunately last year we also lost several valued and long standing members, whose contribution over the years had been invaluable.

Newcomers to the village are joining us and it is good to see them joining in village clubs and organisations.

Our summer outing was to the World Garden near Sevenoaks, the pet project of Tom Hart-Dyke. This was well supported and very enjoyable – Tom's enthusiasm is certainly catching!

Our membership fee is only £5 which includes regular editions of the Parish Pump and 7 meetings annually. We try hard to choose varied speakers and at least one local speaker each year, and would value any names and different ideas to come and talk to us.

We have been using the Village Club for our meetings so far this year and thank them for their hospitality. We hope to be back in the Vestry Hall for our May meeting

Our Summer Outing this year will be a local event – Peter Hall is going to give us a tour of the work he has been doing on part of his land – a water reservoir to help stop local flooding and a wild life area. Members will be invited to a strawberries and cream tea in the Oast after the tour, provided for them by the Society. We will soon be asking for names of people who hope to come along.

Please contact myself or any committee member for more details

Mo Clayton (Chairman – [tillergirl2913@gmail.com](mailto:tillergirl2913@gmail.com))

## **MARDEN MEDICAL CENTRE**

Church Green, Marden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 9HP

Tel: 01622 831257 Fax: 01622 832840

[www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk)

The Medical Centre is getting busier year on year as a result of increasing patient numbers, ageing population, medical advance and rising administrative pressure. This mirrors the national NHS situation which is more fragile than in any point in its 68 years.

Our List size now exceeds 6,200. Families in the new houses are not all yet registered and obviously there are hundreds of properties anticipated in the next five years. We have, however, officially retracted our boundary around Staplehurst and Coxheath to stem the flow of patients living outside the Parish.

We are happy to announce that we have recruited the very capable Dr Hannah DeCourcy Hallinan to join the Team as a sessional doctor on completion of her training in April this year. She will work five sessions a week and some emergency sessions much like the GP Partners. We shall still have a Retained Doctor and a Doctor in training so that our overall number of appointments shall increase substantially. It is, however, not as easy to guarantee appointments or contact with the Doctor of your choice as the Practice expands.

The Practice Nurse Team and our Healthcare Assistant are providing ever more services and we now have a Hospital Phlebotomist on two mornings a week to take blood tests. We still have enough space in our building for the clinics we offer. We are currently looking to improve the access at the entrance and thereby expand the Reception area.

We have increased the use of on line and texting facilities to reduce the pressure on reception telephones and are pleased to say we are way above the local average in this regard.

We were relieved to get through our Care Quality Commission inspection in May last year from which we were awarded an overall 'Good' rating which included 'Outstanding' patient care. This was achieved despite new management structure and we are grateful to Nikki James and Fiona Kite for all their effort.

The Patient Reference Group is very active and supportive. The AGM is on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April. They will report to the Council independently. The Friends of Marden Medical Centre likewise continues to support the surgery with the purchase of equipment using donations from grateful patients and their families. They have an AGM in June.

Much more information can be found on our website [www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk).

### **Patient Reference Group**

The objective of the Patient Reference Group is to facilitate the work of the Marden Medical Centre in the provision of services. The group aims to provide communication between patients and the Medical Centre staff, so that staff may obtain advice, views and help from patients and patients are informed of developments within the practice and the wider NHS provision. Representatives of the Patient Reference Group attend meetings with the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, to feedback to both patients and staff any changes in provision in healthcare within Kent.

All patients of the Centre are eligible to become members of the Patient Reference Group. The group is primarily a virtual group with a small committee, meeting four times a year. In addition members volunteer to help with Patient Reference Group and Centre activities. Members of the practice also attend committee meetings and minutes of these meetings are circulated to all members.

Over the last few years we have been involved in:

A health fair

The yearly patient survey

Help with flu clinics

Setting up a system to offer support for newly diagnosed patients with a chronic condition to discuss concerns with other patients experiencing the same condition.

At present we are hoping to start a network of people and organisations that practice staff could draw on to encourage certain patients into activities that could benefit them either mentally or physically, for example alleviation of isolation, weight loss.

If you are interested in finding out more contact the Patient Reference Group via Marden Medical Centre website or come to our AGM on April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm in the Vestry Hall.

### **MARDEN MEMORIAL HALL**

#### **By Trustees**

The Committee was still without a Chairman during 2016 so one of the Trustees was elected at each meeting to Chair. Meetings continued to be held quarterly, usually on the first Monday of the month, however extraordinary meetings were called if an urgent item needed to be discussed.

The 200 Club, under licence number 12.04139/LOTTER continued but as the hall roof is now water tight it was been agreed by Trustees that the 200 Club would cease from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Any funds remaining in the account would be used towards capital expenditure for the hall.

The caretaker commenced his role on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and continues to work 10 hours per week. Two cleaners were also employed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

Trustees were successful this year in getting a grant for two new cookers at the hall replacing both which had come to the end of their useful life. In January 2017 Redrow kindly donated a show house kitchen the main hall which has just been installed. Solar panels were also installed during February half term along with new LED lighting throughout the whole building following a donation from Wirsol who installed the solar farm along Plain Road.

The main drainage pipes at the front and to the side of the building had to be relined in December and January following problems with blockages and the possible collapse due them being so old. Although this cost in the region of £12,000 it was felt to be money well spent due to the high volume of hirers using the hall.

The Pre-School continues to be our main user every day during the term time with morning sessions for two days per week and full days for three. Other users include Short Mat Bowls, Brownies, Zumba, Karate, Badminton, Ballet, Pilates and the Parish Council. The National Blood Service will be returning to use the hall from 2017.

There have been no problems regarding licencing and all users who wish to sell alcohol obtain a Temporary Events Notice from the licencing authority. Music and theatre licences are obtained by the Secretary annually and all relevant gas, electricity, health & safety and fire safety checks are undertaken each year.

### **MARDEN PARISH MAGAZINE**

**By Sarah Davies (Parish Magazine Co-ordinator)**

No Report has been received

### **MARDEN PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP**

**By Hayley Schlosser (Manager)**

Marden Pre-school has had a successful year as our community and village continue to grow. This coming term we will have 58 children on role accessing 678 hours per week. Of these 58 children there are 15 two year olds who will be attending 111 hours per week. With the increase in 2 year olds attending the setting, we will be trailing having a dedicated 'toddler' room on Wednesday mornings. If this is successful and the number of 2 year olds attending continues to grow we will look to have this room on a permanent basis from September 2017.

We will be turning 50 in August 2017 and are inviting all members of the community to share their memories of the Pre-School for us to display on our website and during our celebrations in the coming months. Please contact the pre-school if you have anything you would like to share.

In March the Pre-School were donated 420 sapling trees and shrubs from the Woodland Trust, we have distributed these through the community and look forward to seeing the difference they will make to this lovely village.

Our Pre-School committee have been working extremely hard over the past few years to secure the funds to enhance the children's outside space in the garden. This work was completed in March and the children really do seem to be enjoying the new garden. The Early Years Foundation Stage says 'Children learn best

when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them’.

So Pre-school will continue to give young children the opportunity to play, explore and investigate, use their own ideas and ‘have a go’, within a safe, stimulating and caring environment.

Marden Pre-School really is at the heart of this village and where the future adults of this village make their start, we thank the Community, Parish Council and Memorial Hall for their continued and positive support.

### **MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**By Malcolm Goddard**

No Report has been received

### **MARDEN THEATRE GROUP**

**By Rachel Gillis-Coates**

The Marden Theatre Group was going to be dissolved at the Annual General Meeting in November 2016 but theatre group member, Mo Gillis-Coates said that he was willing to become Chair and try to make the group successful again.

The Group had performed some great Shakespearean performances in 2016. It was with regret that Marden Theatre Group’s President, Sir Nicholas Fenn passed away in Autumn 2016.

Since Mo Gillis-Coates has taken on the group, there has been a Social Event in The Unicorn pub which produced another 35 members for the group. Mo and his wife, Rachel Gillis-Coates have been advertising the group on Facebook gaining more interest. There has been several Committee Meetings with plans for a new logo, a new website with online ticket payments, etc.

There is a Production Planning Meeting happening on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April to discuss a comedy/farce play, more Shakespearean workshops and performances, an Improvisation Workshop for members as well as future plans for a pantomime in February 2018.

Rachel Gillis-Coates will be meeting the Benenden Players to discuss how their Youth Group works and to gain advice on setting up the Marden Youth Theatre again in our village.

Marden Theatre Group has asked Mrs Sue Fenn to become their President. We have received correspondence from Mrs Fenn telling us that she would be delighted to accept.

We are looking for more members so if you would like to join us, please email us on [info@mardentheatre.co.uk](mailto:info@mardentheatre.co.uk).

Alternatively, if you are on Facebook, please like our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/mardentheatre/>

### **MOTOR CLUB**

**By Colin Addison**

No Report has been received

**NETWORK OF RURAL BUSINESS FORUMS**

**By Elaine Collins, Chairman**

No Report has been received

**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

**By Nigel Hammond**

No Report has been received

**SCOUT GROUP**

**By Ian Grimes**

No Report has been received

**SHORT MAT BOWLS (WEST END)**

**By Mary Elphick**

We have had another enjoyable year playing twice a week in the Memorial Hall from 7.30 to 9.30 pm.

We would like a few more members and welcome anyone who might be interested to come along one evening and "have a go" or telephone 01622 831755/831100 for further information.

**TENNIS & BADMINTON CLUB**

**By Gill Tarry**

No Report has been received

**THE ALLENS COFFEE SHOP**

**By Dorothy Reed**

Golding Homes permits us to open the Community Centre.

We have coffee/tea and biscuits Monday to Thursday mornings 10.00-12.00 noon. On the second Wednesday of the month there is a games morning, ideal if you like a game of Scrabble. Books and jigsaws are available for a small fee.

We also have a lunch once a month

**THURSDAY CLUB**  
**By Dorothy Reed, RVS**

The club meets fortnightly in the Village Club and is for senior members of the parish.

The meetings start at 2pm and the first 15 minutes is given to general chat. We have various activities, speakers on many topics, slides shows, bingo, quiz and musical entertainment.

Tea and cakes are served at 3.15 followed by a raffle and generally end at 4pm.

Annual events are a New Year party, Summer picnic, Garden party and Christmas lunch.

We also have several coach trips during the year.

I would like to thank all the helpers, cake makers and especially The Village Club for the use of their facilities.

**TODDLER GROUP**  
**By Hanna Rosser, Children & Families Worker**  
No Report has been received

**St Michael & All Angels, Church, Marden**  
No Report has been received

**VILLAGE CLUB**  
**By Mick Collins**  
No Report has been received

**WALKING GROUP**  
**By Catherine Alderson**

Thank you to all those who have participated in our walks in 2016/17 and particularly the new walkers.

**SATURDAY STROLLS** WEEKLY 2.00pm The pace is determined by the participants  
Friendly, sociable and about 75 minutes

**WEDNESDAYS** WEEKLY MARCH TO OCTOBER 9.45am  
Local area and villages Maximum 2 hours  
1<sup>ST</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> OF MONTH NOVEMBER TO FEBRUARY

**SUNDAYS** FIRST OF THE MONTH 10.00AM  
NB NOTE change from Last Sunday of the month due to Half Terms and Bank Holidays fall at the end of the month.  
Walks of 5 – 7 miles including some stiles.

ALL OUR WALKS START OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY and sometimes we share cars.

#### EVENTS IN WHICH WE HAVE PARTICIPATED

PROMOTIONAL EVENTS - Music in the Park, Christmas Fair and a tree in the Church Ride and Stride organised by Kent Churches

LITTER PICKING - all Fly tipping can be reported to the Parish Council who arrange for removal. We particularly notices this year that there was considerably less general litter in the lanes and ditches and thank residents for awareness of this problem.

HISTORIC WALKS - These are done locally periodically and U3A and History Groups book to find out more about Marden.

FOOTPATHS - We are in the process of preparing revised texts of our Walking Leaflets. The new editions will include the Footpath numbers which should help our new residents and dog walkers to find their way in our beautiful surrounding countryside. A new footpath is being constructed in April joining Park Road and Copper Lane so residents can walk to Marden Meadow more safely.

WE NOTICE WALKERS/JOGGERS singly and in groups. If alone please have a MOBILE PHONE with you – a foot down a rabbit hole needs rescuing!

## **WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

### **By Moira Ensoll, President**

2016 was always going to be an important year for Marden WI – the celebration of our formation 90 years ago in 1926. The year commenced with our Annual Meeting in May when Moira Ensoll was voted in as President along with a very supportive Committee. At the same meeting we celebrated our birthday with bubbles and birthday cake. Towards the end of May members enjoyed a celebration afternoon tea at Frasers of Coldharbour Farm, Egerton.

The membership has grown over the past year and now stands at 48 and growing. The programme has been many and varied which has encouraged people to come along. Our subjects have ranged from Aloe Vera beauty products, Greek Cookery, handmade silver jewellery, 'the Roaring Twenties', Belize and Guatemala, Kent in Four Seasons and the amazing Medical Detection Dogs.

As part of the continuing birthday celebrations, it was decided to organise an Extravaganza in the Vestry Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2016 when we welcomed everyone to come in and see what we were about. There was a magnificent display of craft work together with a historical display. Visitors were invited to sample the wonderful display of cakes, enjoy a coffee and a natter with friends old and new. The idea of the event was to celebrate with the whole village and to promote the WI as a living breathing organisation. July also saw us submit an entry in the Matfield and Brenchley Flower Show WI Competition entitled 'A parcel from home to Flanders Field'. No prize tickets this year but we shall keep trying!

Theatre trips are always popular and in April several members enjoyed 'The Witches of Eastwick' at the Hazlitt Theatre and then in November a large party made their way to London to see 'Beautiful – the Carole King Story'. An excellent production enjoyed by all.

Our Christmas meeting was a lively evening when Rob T came along with his ukulele and sang songs from the '60's and 70's' with which everyone joined in assisted perhaps by the mulled wine. Each member was given a cotton shopping bag with an insignia designed by Gill Tarry to commemorate our 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday at this meeting. In fact, that was the last time we met in the Vestry Hall since a water leak was found shortly afterwards.

The Canterbury Lodge Hotel was the venue for our Christmas Lunch – this was a complete change to normal but proved to be a great success. An excellent meal in lovely surroundings plus time for shopping!

The provision of cakes is always part of our remit and everyone assists with the cake stall at the Horticultural Society Plant Sale and the Marden At Christmas event in particular and other occasions as required.

Marden WI meets on the first Thursday of each month in The Vestry Hall commencing at 7.45 p.m. We are a group of like-minded people who are always open to welcoming visitors and new members alike. Do come along and say hello.



## **YOUTH GROUP**

**By Natalie Penfold, Maidstone Youth Project**

No Report has been received

## **MARDEN STATION**

**Update on South Eastern, Network Rail and consultations**

**By Cllr Richard Adam**

Useful links:

South Eastern Railways – Rail Franchise consultation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-south-eastern-rail-services>

Network Rail Kent Route Study – consultation

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Kent-Route-Study-Summary.pdf>