

SPRING 2023

MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER



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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL



Dear Resident,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that many of you have stayed fit and well and escaped the flu and Covid bugs that have been around this winter.

Many residents attended the wonderful concert for Ukraine, at Marden Church on 8th January. The Church was packed, and we were very privileged that the choir from the Chapel Royal Tower of London performed for us along with guests from Ukraine who are now living in our community. The concert was both uplifting and very moving as Marden continues to show support for our Ukrainian friends, more than £6000 was raised all of which will be going to support Ukrainian people in their homeland.

We were delighted to hold Marden at Christmas once again and what a great day it was. We're now busy preparing for the King's Coronation Fete to be held on Monday 8th May at Southons Field, you'll find more information about this event later in the newsletter. Another date for your diary is the Annual Parish Meeting being held on Tuesday 4th April at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall. If you want to know more about what goes on in Marden do come along.

In November and December we had unprecedented amounts of rain, resulting in flooding around the Parish.

I would like to thank the Flood Wardens who helped to keep us all safe by putting out flood warning signs on those roads that were dangerous due to deep water.

It is with regret that we will be saying goodbye to Hollie, our Admin Assistant who will be leaving us in March. We are, therefore, having to advertise the position and details can be found later on in the newsletter.



As a Parish Council we are committed to keeping our residents informed about local news and events. If you use social media you'll find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For those of you not too keen on social media we issue a weekly e-newsletter, if you haven't already signed up to receive this send our Deputy Clerk, Rachel, your details and she'll add you to the mailing list. In addition, we publish this newsletter three times a year and deliver it to every household in the Parish. I would like to thank my colleague Cllr Anne Boswell who puts an enormous amount of time into producing this newsletter.

Warm wishes

Cllr Kate Tippen

GENERAL UPDATE

What a dramatic year 2022 was. No one could have predicted the events that have unfolded creating so much uncertainty and instability for us all. Learning to live with COVID, the war in Ukraine, a long hot dry Summer, turmoil in our national politics and the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II. Not to mention the escalating cost of living and rising inflation, the increase in mortgage rates, strikes, the ever-present climate emergency and the extreme flooding in the Autumn ending in snow and ice.

We began 2023 with spiralling flu and hospital admissions soaring and the on-going strike situation. 1979 was called 'The Winter of Discontent' but this Winter must certainly top that. In January we experienced more torrential rain, followed by bitterly cold temperatures culminating in potholes and more flooding (see article under Water & Drainage below). 2023 will certainly be another challenging year and let's hope there will be a glimmer of economic hope.

As ever the Parish Council tries to provide as much information as possible on what the Parish Council is getting up to and other parish news.

Parish Council Finances

The Precept is collected by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on behalf of the Parish as part of the Council Tax and 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 undertaken a thorough review but due to the rise in inflation and increase in the cost of various services, the Parish Council has made a slight increase which means the amount of money collected from residents to be spent in Marden in the next financial year from April 2023 for a Band D taxpayer will now be £80.28 per annum or £6.69 per month. This is an increase of £3.46 per year or 29p per month for a Band D property. We understand how difficult it is for residents in the current financial crisis and hope you understand our decision to make this slight increase.

Marden Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 4th April at 7.30pm

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 4th April at Marden Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm and all residents are welcome to attend. All village organisations will be contacted asking for a report on their activities over the past year and these will be available at the meeting and on the Parish Council website. Speakers this year will be Rachel and Gail from the Dementia Friendly Community Marden and Members of the Community Protection Team/Maidstone Task Force.

Meet the Clerks

The Parish Clerks will be at the Village Café, held at the Vestry Hall, on Friday 24th March; Friday 21st April; Friday 19th May and Friday 30th June from 10.00am to 11.00am. Come along to have a chat and raise any Marden issues that may be of concern to you.

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council Meetings are held every Tuesday and agendas can be viewed on the noticeboards around the village and on the Parish Council website They are also published on our Facebook page and on the weekly e-newsletter.

Parish Council e-Newsletter Weekly Village Round Up

Have you signed up for the Parish Council e-newsletter yet? The “Weekly Village Round Up” is sent out every Friday and is full of local news, information and updates and lands direct in your inbox. You can sign up by either emailing Rachel at deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk, by typing in the weblink below: <http://bit.ly/MPC-E-NewsletterSignUp> or scanning the QR Code here via your mobile phone camera and clicking on the link:



Marden Summer Play Scheme Under Threat

As reported in the last newsletter it is with regret that Jordan Manley is unable to work as Manager of Marden Summer Play Scheme this year and Marden Parish Council wishes to pass on their thanks for all the years and commitment Jordan has put into running the scheme. The Parish Council has been looking at options available to continue with the Play Scheme this summer. For the Play Scheme to go ahead we need a manager and staff; if we cannot find a manager then we cannot go ahead.

If you think you would like to be considered for the role of manager please email your details to Ali: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk. You will need to have NVQ Level 3 in Childcare or a teaching qualification together with current first aid and safeguarding certificates. You will need to be available for the first two weeks of the School Summer holidays and for several hours on the lead up to the scheme for planning purposes (assistance will be given with this if required).

Please note this is not a job application, but to give the Council an idea of whether we will be able to proceed. Closing date for details is Friday 31st March and a final decision will be made at the April Parish Council meeting.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Parish Council tries to provide as much information as possible on Health & Wellbeing and you will find the 'Key Community Contacts' list enclosed with this newsletter which has been updated by the Parish Council and Patient Participation Group. We hope this is a useful source of information for residents to use. There is a huge range of information available to help support mental health issues and anxiety which are the unsung pandemic of the modern world. If you wish to have this in larger print, please contact the Parish Office.

Cost of Living Roadshow

The Parish Council, in liaison with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), organised a "Cost of Living Roadshow" on the 23rd February in the John Banks Hall which provided information from different agencies and support services for residents relating to cost of living increases. Several MBC departments were in attendance to help with housing queries, Council Tax benefit etc, Golding Homes and MHS Housing Associations, Involve, Citizens Advice, Rural Task Force and Community Protection amongst others were there.

It is hoped that those who were able to attend were able to receive the information they required. Councillors would like to thank our Chairman Cllr Kate Tippen for all her hard work in organising this event. You can check out Cost of Living Advice on the following link: <https://bit.ly/MBCCostLiving>

Marden Warm Hubs

In the last newsletter we circulated a list of Warm Hubs in the village where people are assured of finding a safe, warm and friendly environment and to support those vulnerable in the Winter because of the current financial crisis, escalation in food prices and fuel poverty. We understand that a number of residents have been using the Warm Hubs and hope this has helped. You can find a list of where the Warm Hubs are:

<https://bit.ly/MardenWarmHubs>



The Marden Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG works in partnership with Marden Medical Centre to foster improved communication between the Marden Medical Centre and its patients; help patients take more responsibility for their health; contribute to the continuous improvement of services and the quality of care; provide practical support for the Practice and help to implement change.

We meet three or four times a year and if you are a registered patient at Marden Medical Centre, you are invited to join the PPG. To learn more about us and join the group see mardenppg.org.uk or email us at membership@mardenppg.org.uk or contact Marden Medical Centre.

Save Marden Children's Centre – KCC Community Services Consultation

There are serious implications for Marden as the Children's Centre is recommended for closure by KCC. If you are concerned, then please make your feelings known by completing the Consultation questionnaire which closes on the 26th March: <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/community-services-consultation> .You can also contact our County Councillor Lottie.Parfitt-Reid@kent.gov.uk .

We would like as many residents as possible to try to help keep the Children's Centre open. It is an essential community service that many residents use, and it would be tragic if we lost such an important asset in the village. KCC is proposing that residents attend a Community Hub at Cranbrook Library which is 7.4 miles away or Greenfields Children's Centre in Maidstone which is 8.1 miles away. The Parish Council and Borough Councillor Claudine Russell are lobbying both our Kent County Councillor, Lottie Parfitt-Reid, and our MP Helen Grant about the proposals. The Marden Children's Centre is part of a nationwide programme of services for 0-25-year-olds and their families and is open on Mondays and Wednesdays. They offer information, advice and support to parents as well as integrated childcare and early learning, health services, family support and parental outreach.

Make the right decision **NHS**

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



Dementia Friendly Community

Marden/Living Memories - by Rachel Chacon

Loneliness is now known to cause serious decline in those living with dementia and the latest research is also showing that it can be a cause. This year we will be concentrating our efforts on encouraging social engagement and we will do this in conjunction with the Surgery and Marden Library. We are compiling envelopes to be handed out via the Surgery to those living with dementia and these envelopes are offering support and encouragement to engage in the community.

If you know someone who may benefit from one of our envelopes, please email: mardendfcinfo@gmail.com or call 01622 831941. Visit Marden Library to pick up leaflets from the Alzheimer's Society or to find out what's going on in Marden. We are planning some events with the library, so please pop in and find out. Our base continues to be Marden Village Club and we will continue to hold occasional events there. Check out their Facebook page for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/mardenvillageclub/> Dementia Action Week is 15th to 21st May so we will organise something during that week.

Marden Medical Centre

For the latest Marden Medical Centre updates please refer to the Surgery website:

<https://www.mardenmedicalcentre.nhs.uk/>

The Weald Primary Care Network (PCN)

The Weald Primary Care Network website is now online covering the services provided from the 9 Weald GP Surgeries including our wonderful Marden Medical Centre. More useful information will be added throughout 2023. Website: <https://bit.ly/WealdPCN>



Marden Foodbank – Mondays 10am-12pm – Vestry Hall

Anyone in need of food is welcome to go along and receive a bag. They are grateful for donations of the following items: tea & coffee, jam, tinned vegetables, tinned tuna, milk, fruit juice and squash, macaroni cheese, tinned ravioli etc, tinned meat or pies, tinned puddings and custard, jars of pasta or curry sauce. NO baked beans or pasta please!

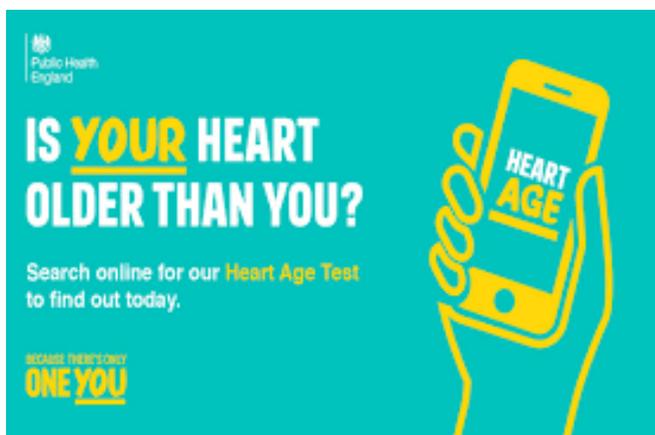
All donations can be dropped to the Vestry Hall on a Monday morning or left on the Vicarage doorstep at any time. If you or anyone you know is in urgent need of help from the foodbank, please call Rev Nicky on 01622 831379 at any time.

One You Kent – NHS Kent Community Health

Healthy changes start with little changes - whether you want to lose weight, get active, quit smoking, or just feel better about life, One You Kent is there to support you. They provide Lifestyle Advisers who can organise NHS Health Checks and Expert Patient Programming to regain your independence, manage everyday situations and boost your wellbeing especially if you're living with a long-term condition.

No lectures - just friendly advice and support. Their advisers can support you by telephone and video calls as well as virtual groups, from the comfort of your home. If you're not sure where to start, or just want some advice check out:

<https://bit.ly/KentOneYou> or call 0300 123 1220 – Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. You can also fill in a referral form: <https://bit.ly/OneYouReferral> You can follow One You Kent on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for playlists, videos and information to help on your journey to a healthier you.



Actively Involved

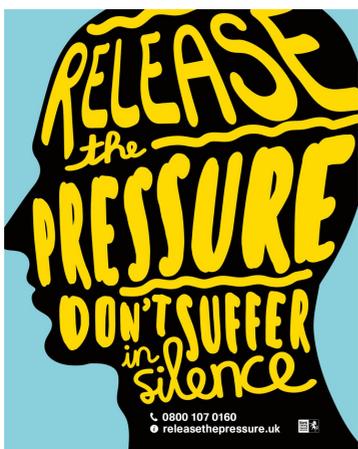
Actively Involved is a new Kent service which aims to improve health and happiness for those 55 and over or living with complex health conditions. It supports people with access requirements to attend groups and activities. The service is available to those 55 and over or under 55 with complex health conditions. The aim is to help find the support you need to improve your health, empowering you and people in your community. They want to tackle the root causes of ill health which can include isolation, loneliness and frailty. It's estimated that between 5% and 18% of UK adults feel lonely often or always and when we feel socially rejected, it triggers a response in our brain like one from experiencing physical pain.



Please check out:
<https://bit.ly/ActivelyInvolve>
and contact details for referrals are: 03000 810005. You can call one of their experienced team members and let them help you find an activity to suit you.

Release the Pressure

Worries over money, housing, heating and food bills can affect mental wellbeing, causing stress, anxiety and depression. Financial concerns can also increase for some people after Christmas expenditures. Coupled with relationship and health issues, you may need to reach out and talk to a trained and caring team. Help is available 24/7 with the Release the Pressure service. Text the word 'Kent' to 85258 or call freephone 0800 107 0160. Find more information at www.releasethepressure.uk.



Calling all Village Groups and Societies - Marden Community Charity

Did you know that the Marden Charity not only supports residents suffering financial hardship but is also there to support all village organisations? If your village organisation has a specific project that needs some additional funding, then why not apply to the Marden charity for a grant? Grants of up to £500 are available, the application process is quick and simple. More information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/MardenCharity> or email: mardencommunitycio@gmail.com.

Marden Community Warden

Community Wardens work flexible hours (mainly weekdays during normal working hours) but can work until 10pm and at weekends if there is an event or requirement to do so. Our aim is to:

- improve community resilience;
- support the elderly and vulnerable;
- foster community cohesion and wellbeing;
- assist with navigating community services.

If you would like to join a local club or group – or set one up – give me a call. I can help you report an issue if you are not able to do or not sure who to contact. Doorstep traders and scammers can catch you off guard – never give in to on-the-spot pressure. You are in control of who you speak to and answer the door to; screen your phone calls and don't answer the door to anyone you don't know and aren't expecting.

If you start to feel flustered just put the phone down.

I can talk to you about phone call screening and devices such as video doorbells that don't need a smart gadget or the internet to work. For approx. £160, supplied and fitted, you can get a video doorbell connected by wire to a handset that has a video screen. When someone is at your door, you can see who it is and speak to them (if you wish) without getting up from your chair.

Marden Community Warden (Contd)

If you need any work done or home help, ask for recommendations from people you know and trust. Get several quotes.

If you, or someone you know, needs support, information or advice, or are struggling to make ends meet, please contact Mira Martin on 07969 84179 or mira.martin@kent.gov.uk and if I can't help, I will try and find someone that can.

Marden Parish Sport, Fitness & Leisure List/Welcome Pack

The Parish Council maintains a village Welcome Pack and is in the process of compiling a more comprehensive list of all sport, fitness and leisure activities in the Parish. If you want to include or update a fitness activity you are running, please let Rachel know by email: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk You can find the Welcome Pack at:
<https://bit.ly/VillageWelcomePack>

PARISH COUNCIL JOB VACANCY Administrative Assistant

As mentioned in the Chairman's report Hollie, our Administrative Assistant, is leaving the Parish Council and we now have a vacancy within the busy Parish Office for a new Assistant to help our Clerks with the day-to-day administration and projects.

It will be for 10 hours over two days per week and office based. Hourly rate will be £10.82 to £11.01 depending on experience and a pension scheme is available.

The post holder will assist and work under the direction of the Parish Clerk and Deputy Parish Clerk. As well as being friendly, enthusiastic and confident, we are looking for someone who:

- Is IT literate and willing to learn new software;
- Is proficient with the use of email, Microsoft Word and Excel;
- Is an accurate record keeper, well organised and able to meet deadlines;
- Is able to manage manual and computer records and filing systems;
- Is able to work on own initiative;
- Will undertake other duties as may be reasonably required.

Please contact Ali in the Parish Office via phone (01622 832305) or email (clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk) if you would like to know more about the Parish Council, the position or an application pack. An application pack can also be downloaded from <https://bit.ly/MPCJobVacancy>). The closing date for return of applications is 5pm on 31st March 2023 with interviews to be held between 11th and 14th April 2023.

SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE

The Queen's Green Canopy

As part of the Parish Council's biodiversity responsibility and to fill in various gaps, we recently planted several trees at the Playing Field and Rookery Path to help create a wildlife corridor. Unfortunately, one of the young oaks was uprooted, which was reported to the police. It was subsequently found in a neighbour's garden having been thrown over the hedge. Can we please ask that residents keep a beady eye on the trees and report any problems to the Parish Office? We have been offered some young oaks by a resident in Collier Street and a few members of Marden Wildlife will kindly be supplying us with some oak seedlings to place in various open space areas. The Parish Council has also applied for some more saplings which will be planted around the village at some point this Spring. If there are any residents who would like to give us a hand, please email Rachel: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk .



Tree Warden Survey

Our Tree Warden, Charlie Edwards, undertakes regular tree inspections at the Parish Council open spaces and other areas in the parish including the new developments, Churchyard, Plain Road and Copper Lane. It is very disheartening that most of the saplings that were planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy in 2021 at Windsor Meadows, The Parsonage and Highwood Green have either died or been destroyed.

Parish Council Environment Group Update

Amongst other things, the Environment Group is in the process of drafting and agreeing an Estate Management Plan looking at realistic and manageable ways in which the Parish Council operates such as recycling, energy, purchasing and travel etc. This will also incorporate a more sustainable mowing strategy etc.

We have also been investigating a Carbon Emissions Calculator to find out Marden's carbon footprint. It shows carbon emissions on a consumption basis (what people who live in the Parish use) in comparison with Maidstone Borough and the UK. It also looks at the information on a territorial basis which is all emissions that happen within the Parish e.g. any industrial/agricultural emissions that take place as well as emissions from vehicles that pass through the Parish (not just what our residents use).

SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE CONTD

Parish Council Environment Group Update (Contd)

It certainly is interesting reading and shows our carbon footprint is above not only Borough but the UK average – something we need to work on. This can be viewed at:

<https://bit.ly/MPCCarbonFootprint>

We are also looking at an Offsetting Events calculator for the forthcoming King's Coronation event. If you would like to come along to one of our meetings, please let Ali know: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk.

Marden Wildlife Update

Members continue to record the Parish flora and fauna, with an autumn bat walk and two fungus forays, led by Simon Ginnaw and David Newman respectively. Bat highlights were multiple species caught on detectors and in torchlight, with Glow Worms included for good measure. Slime moulds (they solve problems - Google them) and some exceedingly rare other fungi were added to Marden's lengthening list - one being only the sixth UK record since 1897! Records such as these (and members' work in finding them) tempted the Trustees of Kent Wildlife Trust to spend a day in Marden discussing our work. This Spring, in conjunction with the Kent Weald Preservation Society, we'll be looking for Wild Service Trees

(commonly known as Chequer Trees) that have a stronghold (albeit weakening) in the Low Weald. At the same time, with Professor Rebecca Cassidy, an anthropologist at Goldsmiths, we'll be searching for old crab apple and apple species and rare, orchard insects. If you have any of these, or would like to know more, let us know at mardenwildlife@gmail.com

Demand increases for Marden Wildlife to talk about its work. The Kent Moth Group enjoyed an excellent account by Karen Latchford of our increasing 'moth-ing' membership and our contribution to the County's records of scarce species. Both are poised to expand with delivery of three portable traps to use on Marden Cluster farms in neighbouring parishes, with a KCC grant courtesy of Cllr Simon Webb.

Finally, thanks to the KCC grant courtesy of Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid, QR information signs can now be found in Southons Field, and by Plain Road winter birdseed field in that has been giving enormous pleasure to villagers, insects and birds alike since August.

Water Refill Station

The Parish Council has been exploring the possibility of installing a water refill station at the Public Toilets. After much investigation, the easiest and simplest solution is to install drinking taps in both the ladies & gents' toilets for people to refill their water bottles. Hopefully the taps will be installed in the next few months.

PLANNING UPDATE

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC)

Local Review Regulation 22

MBC has received confirmation that the first stage of its Local Plan Review Examination has been completed. In a letter to MBC, the Government appointed Inspector confirmed that he believes the overall spatial strategy - which forms the basis of the plan and was very much the focus of the Stage 1 hearings is subject to modification but that he is happy to proceed to stage 2 hearings. As is standard practice in the examination process, the Inspector's interim letter highlights some specific areas within the strategy which will need further work to ensure they are made more robust between now and the second stage of the process e.g. at Heathlands and Lidsing sites. MBC will be working with the site promoters to make sure these are addressed.

The Stage 2 Hearing Sessions will take place in May and a more detailed programme will be published in March. MBC are hoping the revised Local Plan will be adopted in Spring 2024. You can check out the Local Plan Examination Process on the following link: <https://bit.ly/LPR-Reg22>

Marden Neighbourhood Plan (MNP)

As part of the ongoing process of neighbourhood plans, the Marden Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) was adopted in February 2020 following various consultations with residents and Maidstone Borough Council.

This forms a legal document and is part of the planning policies within MBC. Councillors refer to the policies in the document when considering planning applications to ensure they are compliant.

Due to the current review of the Maidstone Local Plan, the Steering Group decided it was time to review the MNP. In May 2022 the Steering Group held an Open Day and we have been reviewing residents' responses. We are in the process of amending/updating the plan and will shortly be asking residents for their feedback. If you would like to be part of the MNP Steering Group, please let Ali know: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk. You can find the documentation on our website: <https://bit.ly/MPCNeighbourhoodPlan>

Marden Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan (CAAMP)

Maidstone Borough Council is finally starting to draft a CAAMP for the parish of Marden and they will consult with the Parish Council once the draft is completed. Conservation Area Appraisals give an overview of the history and development of each area and try to define what it is that makes them special.

They also identify specific features which contribute towards their character, for example, historic buildings and buildings which are locally significant.

PLANNING UPDATE CONTD

Reed Court Farm Proposed Chicken Farm, Hunton Road, Chainhurst

This complex application was submitted to MBC in December 2020 for the erection of a new free-range egg farm consisting of 3 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. Additional information was received in January this year and discussed by Parish Councillors. Apart from one further point to their previous comments in March 2022 about water quality, the Parish Council continue to recommend refusal. The 'We Love Chainhurst' group have also scrutinised the additional information and submitted their analysis to MBC. This is likely to be discussed at the MBC Planning Committee in April. You can search for this planning application on MBC's planning portal:
<https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/>

PROJECT UPDATE

Housing Needs Survey

If you recall in June 2022, a Housing Needs Survey was posted to all residents in Marden to assess whether there might be a need for local needs housing in the parish so that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally are not forced to move away.

High property prices and a predominance of privately owned homes means that some local people are unable to afford a home within the parish. It was also an opportunity to see if there are older people and/or residents with disabilities who would like to downsize and/or move to housing more suitable for their needs. Thank you to all those residents who completed the survey and the results have now been received. The Parish Council is in the process of arranging a meeting with a Maidstone Borough Council Housing Officer to review the outcome of the survey and whether the results reflect the needs of the village. The results will also be cross-referenced to the 2021 Census (see article below). The survey has certainly identified a need for more affordable homes for single, couples, families and other types of households all with strong local connections to Marden. It has also identified homes for older owner occupiers wanting to downsize or move to suitable housing to fit their needs. We will report further in the next newsletter.

Marden Library Footpath Extension

We are delighted that residents are pleased with the new footpath and flower bed at the library area which is owned by Kent County Council but the work has been undertaken and paid for by the Parish Council. The Parish Council would like to complete the final section of the footpath and this area is owned by Maidstone Borough Council.

PROJECT UPDATE CONTD

They have given their agreement we can go ahead with extending the footpath and this project has been added to our Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP) and will be a high priority. Hopefully the work will be undertaken during the year.



Finger Posts

Unfortunately, prior to Christmas, the fingerpost sign at the junction of Plain Road and Thorn Road was severely damaged by a vehicle in the snow. Kent County Council no longer insure, repair or maintain cast iron signs but the Parish Council is currently liaising with KCC and hopefully this sign will be repaired soon.

The Parish Council replaced the dilapidated wooden fingerpost at Goudhurst Road/Sheephurst Lane junction last year as well as refurbishing the fingers and roundels on the cast iron fingerposts at the Howland Road/Battle Lane junction and Plain Road/Albion Road junction. There was an issue in removing the fingers from the post at Maidstone Road/High Street junction and a local contractor will undertake this additional work along with refurbishment of all three main posts on site in the Spring.

Marden at Christmas and Festive Lights

The Marden at Christmas event last December was another resounding success and the Parish Council received wonderful feedback. There was a great turnout at The Allens with carols led by Rev Nicky and music by East Peckham Silver Band followed by the excellent Morris Dancers. The Church had a lovely display of Christmas trees by the village groups and the Scouts had a roaring success with their smores. Lots of people visited the craft fayre and children loved Father Christmas in his grotto at the Memorial Hall. Children were excited participating in the Elf Trail and Father Christmas received lots of letters from them too. Well done to those residents and businesses who participated in the Festive Front Display. Needless to say, the Parish Council will be holding another event probably on Saturday 2nd December.

We hope you enjoyed the wrap around garland lights on lamp posts in the centre of the village and provided much more of a festive display than last year. At some point in the future and funds permitting, we hope to be able to place more garland lights on other lamp posts. Thank you to all those residents who erected the Christmas trees on the front of their properties and for all the wonderful displays around the village.

Marden Car Park – Results of Residents Survey

The car park behind the library is owned and maintained by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) who work closely with the Parish Council on all aspects of management and maintenance. Some residents have reported they have difficulty in finding a space in the car park and we advised in the last newsletter that we were undertaking a survey to ascertain residents views on:

1. Whether to keep the existing parking restrictions between 7.15am and 8.15am Monday to Friday; or
2. Support a 2-hour parking restriction.

We really appreciate the feedback from those residents who responded to the survey (145) and there were some interesting comments. The responses have now been analysed and 108 residents were in favour of keeping the existing 7.15am-8.15am parking restriction (74.48%) and 37 residents (25.52%) supported a 2-hour parking restriction.

Councillors have discussed the results and decided to retain the parking restriction as it is, but we will discuss with MBC further. The main concern if we had a 2-hour parking restriction it would push people to park elsewhere on other roads which is already an issue and it could only really be enforced by issuing parking tickets on a regular basis. Most residents said they usually have no problem finding a space to park in the car park. There was comment about the cyclists parking in the car park, but it is generally felt they attract business to the village by supporting the shops and cafés and we want to encourage people to use the facilities in our parish. Please note that MBC will not issue parking permits in Marden. If we had more than one parking restriction e.g. 5.15pm-6.15pm MBC would not have the resources to enforce two restrictions and it is felt that the car park is too small to charge for parking.

Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)/Parish Wish List

An initial consultation was held in 2019 and the feedback received by residents was incorporated into the parish wish list document. We have recently added the extension of the footpath at Marden Library to the list and will be adding a footpath link at The Parsonage and Windsor Meadows developments once we have heard from the developers. In the meantime, if you have any comments you wish to make, please forward to Ali: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk The ISP plan can be found on the following link on the Parish Council website:

<https://bit.ly/MPCWishList>

HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Community Speed Watch – Keep Your Speed Down!

The Maidstone Community Safety Unit have been operating in Marden regarding speeding motorists and mobile phone use and several drivers have been dealt with for offences and vehicles seized for no tax as well as drivers warned regarding their driving skills or lack of them.

The Parish Council along with residents is very concerned about the amount of traffic and speeding which are causing so many problems in the village and we understand how important it is to start up the Speed Watch scheme. We have the necessary equipment and are in the process of the sites being re-evaluated to meet the criteria.

If there is anybody who would like to be a Speed Watch Co-ordinator or would like to volunteer, please let Ali know by email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or call 01622 832305. Many thanks to those residents who have already come forward to help and Ali will be in touch once we're ready to kick start the project.

Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

Councillors met with the Kent Highway Improvement Team last December to review the top five priorities for Marden and to see what is feasible.

Kent Highways explained their financial constraints and only have a budget of £60,000 across all the West Kent districts which includes 129 parishes. The top five priorities discussed were:

- Goudhurst Road Parking – the Parish Council will undertake an informal consultation with residents before a formal consultation takes place on single yellow line restrictions.
- Pattenden Lane/Church Green Junction – looking at various options such as the possibility of a small island, dropped kerbs, a 'visual' island or widening the kerb.
- High Street/Maidstone Road Junction – Kent Highways looked at crash data but there is no pattern of accidents. However there has been various incidents such as a lorry hitting the lamp post on the corner. Kent Highways have raised a case to see if bollards can be installed on the eastern footway although they do not promote bell bollards only wooden ones.
- Albion Road/Stanley Road Parking – the Parish Council to carry out an informal consultation with residents regarding double yellow lines as some houses do not have off-road parking.
- Gateway in Maidstone Road – possible provision where the 30mph limit begins or at Church Farm corner near the flower trough but this may encroach on the footway.

HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONTD

Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) Contd

The Traffic Regulation Order for single yellow lines in Pattenden Lane was published in the Kent Messenger prior to Christmas but unfortunately it had been advertised as double yellow lines. This has now been downgraded to single yellow lines with restrictions. At the time of publication of the newsletter Marden Parish Council had not been informed of the outcome.

A number of residents have raised their concerns about speeding in the village. A 20mph speed limit within the built-up area has been added to the HIP document which you can find on the Parish Council website:
<http://bit.ly/MPCHIP2022>

Marden Railway Station

The 'Access for All' programme was launched in 2006 to address the issues faced by both disabled and passengers with mobility restraints when using railway stations in the UK, but all the funding has been allocated to projects until 2024.

The Department for Transport requested industry nominations for more stations to be considered should they be successful in securing another round of funding and received over 300 nominations. SouthEastern Rail nominated Marden for potential step-free access installation and these are

currently being assessed with Network Rail, but no funding has been guaranteed. The Parish Council has been chasing for a meeting with SouthEastern and Network Rail for some time as there are a number of issues to discuss such as the poor lighting, state of the pavements and potholes, cost of parking at the station.

Visibility Along Country Lanes

It's so 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 new 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 than 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 new Highway Code at:

<https://bit.ly/HighwayCodeDoc>

Pothole Blitz!

Inevitably after all the recent wet weather and sub-zero temperatures, there has been a massive increase in potholes and flooding issues. Kent County Council's highway crews are busy repairing potholes across Kent which includes individual pothole repairs as well as resurfacing larger sections of road to improve quality.

Please report any potholes via:

<https://bit.ly/KHReportAProblem>

You can also report street light faults, drainage, traffic signal faults and overgrown vegetation (including hedges and grass). Please note, that National Highways deal with motorways and major A road problems.

Road Closures/Diversions

If you notice any confusing roadwork signs around the Parish, then please call 03000 418333. The Parish Council notify any road closure works on their Facebook Page and in the weekly e-Newsletter.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space Update:

The Parish Council will be replacing the missing piece of equipment in the play area at the Playing Field.

In the Napoleon Drive play area, the picnic table that was damaged has been reported as a crime. We will be looking at replacing this with another piece of equipment once we have heard from our insurers. Additional CCTV cameras are to be installed shortly at Marden Playing Field. In Southons Field, two QR information codes have been installed by the Marden Wildlife Group explaining the wildlife, trees, wildflower meadow etc.

In the Spring, two new picnic benches will be installed to replace two of the old ones which have been removed - one has wheelchair access and the other a children's picnic bench.

A sign is being installed at the beginning of the permissive path in Maidstone Road (by the bend exiting the village) leading to Marden Cemetery. The Parish Council will also be creating a Scattering of Ashes section at the back of the new Section 4 around a tree.

The Cockpit Play Area

The Cockpit Play area is the responsibility of Maidstone Borough Council who has recently upgraded and extended the play area and a few new pieces of equipment have been installed. The cost of these works has come from S106 money collected from Russet Grove and Vicarage Field developments.

Marden Playing Field - Changing Room Public Consultation

The Parish Council still has S106 monies left to spend at the Playing Field which cannot legally be spent elsewhere. We have already installed various pieces of equipment, benches, bins etc and we are now undertaking a public consultation for residents to consider whether this money should be spent on the changing rooms.

The current changing rooms at the Playing Field are no longer required by Marden Minors Football Club and we are proposing refurbishment of the existing building with a small extension. We would like residents to vote for one of the following options using the link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MX55S3> or email Rachel: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk The deadline for responses is 14th April 2023.

The Options are:

- (1) Use as a dedicated youth facility with controlled supervision.
- (2) Demolish the existing building and replace with a small building for storage.
- (3) Any other suggestions from residents.

We are very conscious that Marden does not have a dedicated youth facility and the continual expansion of the community means this has become increasingly important. According to the 2021 Census 10% of Marden's population is aged between 9 and 19 demonstrating that youth facilities are needed in Marden and a youth club and activities are vital for making young people feel supported within their community.

POLICE & CRIME UPDATE

Crimestoppers - Reporting Crime Anonymously

Information from the community is vital for the Police targeting criminals, it can assist in tackling key concerns identified by residents, such as drug dealing, cultivations, possession of offensive weapons etc. However, they understand that reporting someone to the Police can be stressful and concerning and not always an easy decision to make. Crimestoppers is a charity that allows the public to give information 100% anonymously. So, if you have any information that relates to a person involved in crime, please have a look at the Crimestoppers website: crimestoppers-uk.org

Maidstone Task Force (MTF)

Have you seen any anti-social behaviour in Marden or do you have an issue to report?

The Maidstone Task Force has been very active out and about in our village identifying problems and they want to hear from residents to help identify new issues in the community. It's a multi-layered team with representatives from Kent Police, Maidstone Community Protection, KCC Early Help, PCSO's and Community Wardens. MTF will relentlessly pursue outstanding offenders to bring them to justice. Contact can be made via the Community Protection email on the next page.

In liaison with Kent County Council, MTF have been engaging with young people and taking part in activities including basketball, football and boxing. There was a good turnout at these events which help to break down barriers between the police and young people as well as providing things for them to do (see further info under 'Youth Provision' below).

Community Protection Team

If you need help with domestic abuse or know of somebody who needs help, please contact the Community Protection Team by email: communityprotection@maidstone.gov.uk or call 01622 602440 or you can fill in an online form: https://self.maidstone.gov.uk/service/report_domestic.

You can also report bonfires, crime, loan sharks, noise, pests and protection orders. Check out: <https://bit.ly/MBCComProtect>

If you have any issues to report/discuss, then representatives from the Community Protection Team are at The Village Café on Friday 10th March and Friday 24th March from 10.00am-11.45am and fortnightly thereafter.

Kent Police – Who to Contact

If you are having issues with Noise Nuisance or need to report an environmental issue such as fly-tipping, dog fouling or parking, then contact Maidstone Borough Council on 01622 602205 or www.maidstone.gov.uk.

If there is a crime happening at this precise moment in time, there is an immediate risk of harm to you or another person, then contact the Police on 999.

If you need to report a criminal offence or another non-urgent police matter such as a road traffic collision, then contact the Police as a non-emergency incident to 101 or www.kent.police/report. You can also report a non-emergency incident on the Kent Police Chat facility or by using the online report tool: www.kent.police.uk



DRAINAGE & WATER

Flooding

There is a complex network of rivers, streams, ditches, drains and ponds in our parish and when we have excessive rain, we experience flooding.

Responsibility for flooding falls to a number of different authorities depending on what's flooding and where it is. Trying to resolve a flood issue isn't a simple matter of one call to one number.

DRAINAGE & WATER CONTD

Flooding Contd

One of the main problems we experience when we have excessive rainfall is sewer overflowing on the path which connects Maynards with Goudhurst Road and sewer flooding in Roughlands Lane. This is the responsibility of Southern Water.

Another problem we experience when we have excessive rain is road flooding. Depending on what the problem is it might be Kent Highways, or the Environment Agency (EA) or the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (UMIDB).

The Environment Agency is responsible for the Rivers Teise and Beult. UMIDB is responsible for the other key watercourses in our area not covered by the EA. Flooding commonly occurs in Plain Road and Hunton Road, the rivers there are the responsibility of the UMIDB. Sheephurst Lane and Green Lane flood when the River Teise bursts its banks, which is EA responsibility.

The EA website has a lot of information about flooding and you can sign up for flood alerts so that you will know if there is a risk that roads will become impassable. <https://www.gov.uk/check-flooding>

UMIDB also has a website which shows which water courses they are responsible for and gives details of their maintenance programme. <https://www.medwayidb.co.uk>

Kent Highways have a responsibility to keep gullies clear so that the roads don't become unreasonably flooded. The main pinch point here is Pattenden Lane bridge which flooded badly in early November.

Highways did an emergency gully clean and it is apparent that the gullies are not cleared often enough. Blocked gullies and other highway issues can be reported to Kent Highways <https://bit.ly/KHReportAProblem>

Network Rail also have an impact as they are responsible for keeping ditches on their land clear, some of which can cause road flooding if not properly maintained. Finally, landowners have responsibility for keeping ditches on their land clear.

We have a network of volunteer Flood Wardens in the Parish who put out flood warning signs when roads become dangerous due to flood water.

Please do not ignore these signs they are there for your safety. Excessive rainfall is becoming the norm and we will continue to have road flooding in the autumn and winter.

Work out your alternative routes when we have heavy rain, the best advice is to stick to the main roads i.e. A229 and B2079, they might be wet, but they don't flood. Its better to take longer to get to your destination than get trapped in flood water.

A big thank you to our Chairman, Cllr Kate Tippen for spending so much time keeping on top of the flooding situations and organising our emergency response with the Flood Wardens.

The Parish Council has recently held meetings with Southern Water and UMIDB, which we report on below. The message from both is that climate change is here, and winters are going to get wetter, so flooding becomes an inevitability. The best advice is be prepared.

Southern Water

As a result of the flooding in November and the issues in December, Parish Councillors met with Southern Water representatives who explained the impact of the prolonged wet weather on the foul-only sewer network and the operational plans that are in place to help mitigate those impacts. The flooding issues experienced in November were the result of surface water inundating the foul-only sewer network and there are multiple stakeholders responsible for the whole drainage system around Marden. Southern Water is only responsible for the foul-only sewer network. The Roughlands Pumping Station was working at its design capacity and the same with Pattenden Lane and Sovereigns Way pumping stations. However, the amount of water had been overwhelming where Sovereigns Way became overloaded.

Sewerage is collected in Marden and pumped to Horsmonden Wastewater Treatment Works for treatment. With the new developments in Marden (approved by MBC the Local Planning Authority), it is Southern Water's responsibility to provide capacity and they are currently undertaking a study that will allow them to develop solutions to accommodate the growth as well as options to reduce the flood risk currently experienced in the Parish. Their network programme is designed to deliver a solution in 2025, but this date is provisional and will be determined by design and construction complexities etc. Southern Water is also reviewing the performance of Horsmonden Wastewater Treatment Works and is building a proposal to OFWAT (the regulator) to reduce the number of spills from the Sovereigns Way overflow in Marden.

Southern Water are also very aware of the number of flooding and raw sewage occurrences along the footpath between Maynards and Goudhurst Road.

The Parish Council continues to keep a written log of all flooding issues within the parish.



Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board

A meeting took place with the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board in February.

UMIDB is working with other stakeholders such as the EA, other Internal Drainage Boards, The Rivers Trust and KCC to establish potential sites which can offer flood alleviation solutions. However solutions are costly and take time to implement and due to climate change flooding will only get worse in the short term.

South East Water Resources Management Plan

As many residents will know, Marden has been suffering from both a lack of water pressure and burst pipes. South East Water, who supply our drinking water, recently held a public consultation on their Water Resources Management Plan which sets out how they will provide a reliable and resilient supply of drinking water for the next 50 years.

Their ability to supply water is under increasing pressure due to a growing population, changing climate and new laws to protect the environment.

They are working hard to create a regional solution which strikes a delicate balance between those pressures whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment and adding value to society.

The plan outlines how they intend to invest £2.2bn during the next 50 years building a range of new infrastructure and a further £2.1bn reducing leaks and customer water use by 2050. You can find out more info: <https://bit.ly/SEWInvest>

YOUTH PROVISION

Marden Youth Club – Thursday 6pm-8pm – John Banks Hall (next to the Memorial Hall)

KCC's Integrated Children's Services recently ran some boxing sessions in Marden which were really well attended and have now started up a Marden Youth Group again in the John Banks Hall on Thursdays from 6pm-8pm. They are running various activities and hopefully in the future a few trips. Children just need to turn up and see what it's all about. For more info, call 01622 755044.

OTHER PARISH INFORMATION

Festive Tractor Run and Christmas Tree Recycle - Weald of Kent Young Farmers Club

Despite the appalling weather conditions before Christmas, the Festive Tractor run organised by the Weald of Kent Young Farmers Club was brilliant and many people came out to watch it in Marden. They raised £1,230 with bucket donations from the four villages they travelled through, and the Christmas tree recycle at Marden Memorial Hall also raised £271.15 which will go to Marden Food Bank.



The overall total raised for the tractor run was nearly £7,000 and Kent Air Ambulance will receive £5,300. There were no traffic incidents or concerns on the way around.

Everybody seems keen to do it again this Christmas and they had about 4000 visitors to their web page - they usually have about 4! The run has appeared on Kent Online, and in various farming press including the South East Farmer magazine. The Christmas tree recycle also seemed to work quite well and they hope to organise another one next January.

2021 Census

Some of the Census data has been received and a survey is being undertaken to see how the demographics have changed in Marden over the last 10 years. Not surprisingly, there has been a population increase of 35% to 5,027 and there are now 2,061 households which is an increase of 33% since the last Census in 2011.

The Borough of Maidstone's population has increased by 13.3% - from 155,143 to 175,800 and the number of households has increased by 12.2% from 63,447 to 71,200 since the last Census in 2011.

Marden Pre-School

Marden Pre-School is situated in the heart of our community and we aim to provide a secure, caring and happy environment where children can flourish. We care for children aged 2 years to 5 years and they are welcome whether they are funded or non-funded.

We accept Childcare Vouchers and 30-hour funding and open 27 hours per week Monday to Friday. We have an amazing staff team of 9 dedicated Qualified staff who love their job and are here each morning greeting the children with a smile and a warm welcome.

Marden Pre-School continues to grow year on year and this year is no exception. As we enter the Spring Term 2023, we as a Pre-School are coming to grips with the fine balance of servicing our ever-growing community, and ensuring we meet the needs of the children in our setting and the staff team. 2023 will continue to see financial struggles across the sector with underfunding and increasing overheads.

With these challenges we are so proud that we can offer a wonderful environment for the children of Marden and surrounding villages. Children that attend make such tremendous progress from their starting points, and by the time they leave us, they are very ready for school.

OTHER PARISH INFORMATION CONTD

Marden Pre-School Contd

Our waiting list is growing daily and this is testament to the wonderful reputation and dedication of the staff and wider community to continue to ensure YOUR village Pre-School thrives and grows. As a pre-school we have worked hard to establish and maintain local relationships to help connect the children to the area they live in. The children have flourished from visits from several key services in the community and this is something we are looking to continue.

If this is something you would like to be involved with going forward, please get in touch with Hayley Schlosser, the Pre School Manager on 01622 832857 or email: manager@mardenpreschool.onmicrosoft.com

Marden Library

Marden Library is open Tuesday to Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm and on Saturdays 9am-1pm and welcomes you all for book browsing, PC and WiFi use and regular activities which include:

- Games and Chat on Tuesdays between 2pm and 4pm when you are welcome to pop in for a chat and a game of Upwords.
- Baby Rhyme Time on Fridays between 10am to 10:30am (during term time).

- Stay and Chat on Thursday mornings between 10am and 11am for an opportunity for a cuppa and chat.

If you are interested in starting up a new group, volunteering for the library, or have any other ideas for us, do not hesitate to email us:

Mardenlibrary@kent.gov.uk and we will see what we can do. Don't forget, joining the library is completely free and we have thousands of books in branch for you to borrow free of charge. We also have a chargeable reservation service for books you cannot find locally, and plenty of free online resources, including free e-magazines, e-newspapers and e-books. Visit:

<https://bit.ly/MardenLibraryInfo>

Marden Memorial Hall

Marden Memorial Hall is looking for a caretaker to work a minimum of 10 hours per week for an hourly rate of £10.45 and will include weekends and evening work. If you are practical, hands-on, flexible and have basic DIY skills this may be the job for you. Please note some heavy lifting is involved and a DBS check will be required. If you are interested, please contact Hannah Cale, Facilities Manager, Marden Memorial Hall, Goudhurst Road, Marden: mardenmemorialhall@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 07562 625626 for an application form and job description. Closing date for applications is Friday 31st March 2023.

Village Hostelries

We are very fortunate in Marden to have four thriving hostelries - The Unicorn, The Stilebridge, The West End Tavern and Marden Village Club - well done to you all in providing residents with such important community and entertainment facilities. It must be so difficult to run a successful pub especially during a pandemic and then in the current economic crisis so a big thank you to all of you!



Congratulations to Marden Village Club

Amazing news that Marden Village Club has won CAMRA National Club of the Year 2022 - one of the highest accolades afforded to British clubs. Since 2014 they have taken part in the CAMRA Club of the Year competitions whose aim is to find the best club in the country with the greatest commitment to top quality real ale served in good condition, who offer fantastic atmosphere and welcoming surroundings. A club must win in the local and regional rounds then the whole of Kent, then battle 14 regions and finally down to four clubs across the country.

The Club has won the Maidstone and Mid-Kent CAMRA Club of year 7 times since 2014.

Congratulations to Simon Banfield, Club Steward who has a real passion for real ales and has now gained the recognition he rightly deserves. He does an incredible job behind the scenes to ensure the cellar and beers are top quality. Well done to all the bar staff and to the Committee who go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the Club is running as smoothly as possible. The Club also undertakes an incredible amount of fundraising. The award was presented by CAMRA on 28th January and as a village we should be proud they have gained the recognition it deserves.



The West End Tavern

We are sure everyone would like to thank Bridget & Sean Harvey for running the West End Tavern so successfully and enterprisingly for the past 10 years or so. Their hospitality has been so warm and welcoming, and it is very sad to see them, and their family, go but we wish them well in their well-deserved 'retirement'. We would like to welcome the new tenants and wish them all the best in running the beautiful old village pub.

OTHER PARISH INFORMATION CONTD

The Unicorn

Thanks also to the Unicorn for the raffles they have organised to support some of the community groups and for all the entertainment they provide.

Marden Business Forum

The Marden Business Forum has been dormant for the past two years as nobody wanted to mix needlessly and risk Covid. Now we are getting your views and/or your help in getting it going again. We will shortly be holding a much overdue AGM, but before we do, we need your input. Is there still a need for the Forum? Should we print another Directory? What events would you like us to run? If you're in business, within the Parish of Marden, even a small one-person start-up, we would love to hear from you. Please email: committee@mardenbusinessforum.com or lizstanley@me.com

Clean, Safe & Green Community Charter

The social housing providers in the village – Golding Homes and MHS Homes – are undertaking a community charter, a voluntary agreement setting out the rights, responsibilities and expectations between residents and service providers. As a first step, they are sending letters to social housing residents to provide their feedback on the consultation.

We expect to receive details of the draft Charter by the time the next newsletter is published.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN?

A very warm welcome to all new residents who have recently moved to the village. As you can see, there's always plenty going on and we hope you will all be very happy here in our friendly community.

Our Village Welcome Pack can be found:
<https://bit.ly/VillageWelcomePack>

Here's a flavour of what some of the village groups are up to this Spring/Summer:

King's Coronation Event – Monday 8th May – 12noon to 5pm in Southons Field – see details on back of newsletter.

'Come & Sing' in the Vestry Hall

All are welcome to come and sing in all sorts of styles for the many health benefits and enjoyment singing brings, and for conversation in a friendly environment over tea and cake afterwards.

They meet in the Vestry Hall at 2.30pm on alternate Thursdays. Upcoming dates: 9th and 23rd March. If you'd like to come, or have any questions, please give Sarah a call on 01622 832925 or send an email: emanuelfamily@btinternet.com

Cricket & Tea – Tuesday 11th April at 2pm - Marden Cricket & Hockey Club

Are you 55 or over and ever thought about having a go at cricket? Did you play cricket as a child, would you like to get more active, but want to find a slower paced activity? Does the idea of a cricket tea and meeting new people sound good? If you would like to attend, then please register via email: communitytrust@kentcricket.co.uk

The Rude Mechanicals – Friday 23rd June in Southons Field at 7.30pm

The ever-popular Rude Mechanical Theatre Company will be back in Marden on Friday 23rd June with a brand-new outdoor production. This talented group of actor-musicians, who tour around the Southeast each summer, will be performing 'Miss Popplewell's Garden' at 7.30pm on Southons Field in Maidstone Road.



It's April 1940 and The Willows School for Girls – including Jocasta, Daphne and Dotty – have to move away from Little Inkling, Sussex, due to the war. They have two weeks to say goodbye to their friends. It's a disaster for Daphne, who has designs on Gerald and wants to be kissed before she's seventeen.

Jocasta thinks they can make one last raid on Miss Popplewell's strawberry patch but an intruder gets in first, trampling over the garden and stealing a plate of scones! Who could it be? The entire village goes into a panic! This comedy of manners is woven with poignancy and gently unearths things from the past of the old witch, Miss Popplewell.

Please wear warm clothing and bring your own low-backed chairs (no dogs are allowed on Southons Field). Adult tickets are £23 or £80 for a group of four, with concessions available for seniors, children, students and families. For full details and to book online, visit www.therudemechanicaltheatre.co.uk or call 01323 501260.

Little Fishes Baby & Toddler Group – Wednesdays during term time – 9.30am-11am – Vestry Hall

All parents and carers are welcome to come 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 info, please email Kathy: office@mardenchurch.org.uk or Rev Nicky: rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com

Marden Badminton Club

Come and join us at Marden Badminton Club every Wednesday from September to May at 7.30pm to 9.30pm in Marden Memorial Hall - just £5 a session. For more information please contact Mark on 07941 790205 or email: markandjoagain@yahoo.co.uk

WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN? CONTD

Marden Community Lunch

The next lunch is on Monday 20th March at 12.30pm in the Vestry Hall. The cost is £5 for a home-cooked two course meal plus tea or coffee. If you would like to book a place or to know more, please contact Janet McIntosh on 01622 831256.

Sport for all at Marden Cricket & Hockey Club

As the days get longer, thoughts may be turning to sports and healthy activity. At Marden Cricket & Hockey Club we can offer a few ideas:

Tennis - We play all year round, with social tennis sessions being relaxed, informal and very popular (Sunday mornings & Wednesday evenings). New beginners coaching is offered on Saturdays from 1.30pm and there's Rusty Racquets on Tuesdays 7pm. For info please contact Malcolm on 07780 221563 or email admin@hotshotztennis.co.uk

Cricket - Outdoor nets should start around 15th April. Indoor nets at Cornwallis School have been taking place over winter. Come for a couple of free nets and see what you think. All levels, all ages welcome. See www.mardenchc.co.uk/cricket

Hockey - Russets Hockey Club always welcomes new members, especially beginners of all ages (we run special

summer sessions for newbies and rusties - no charge). We have 12 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)?

To find out more, please visit: www.mardenchc.co.uk and contact membership@mardenchc.co.uk

Marden History Group - Lesley Mannington, Chair

The Group took a stall at the Marden at Christmas event on 3 December selling publications, Ida Fermor postcards, Penny Day handmade Christmas matchboxes, and a raffle of some of Ida's work, together with collectable old bottles raised funds for the Heritage Centre. Many thanks to all those who supported us.

The discussions with KCC concerning increasing the rental paid by the History Group for our Heritage Centre space in Marden Library continues, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and hopefully not an oncoming train! There will be an increase in rental, but we have tried to keep it within the funds which we can realistically raise over the next 5 years.

We are installing a 'Donations' page on our website, linked to our PayPal account, which anyone who values the work of the Centre can use to donate. We are continuing to investigate any grant opportunities, which is obviously proving difficult in the current economic circumstances,

but for the time being, we are still in business. Keep a lookout on our Facebook page for future events which we are organising. They are interesting, and all are welcome. Check out: www.mardenhistory.org.uk

Marden Horticultural Society - Sue Pennicott, Chair

We have a varied programme of talks booked for our Tuesday evening meetings this year - the second Tuesday each month except July/August at 7:30pm in the Vestry Hall. Coming up in March the subject will be "The Apothecary's Garden". In April the topic is "Bonsai" and in May "Climate Change". More information about all our talks is on our website.

We welcome new members - both gardening novices and those who are more experienced. We have been able to keep our annual subscription at last year's rates (£20) and prospective new members may come to one talk free of charge as a "taster" to see whether the society is for them.

As well as monthly talks there will be trips to local gardens organised for members over the summer. At the time of writing these haven't been finalised, but details will be on the website shortly. Our annual plant sale, open to all, will be held on Saturday 13 May - save the date as it's always a fun event and a great opportunity to acquire some interesting plants. For more information please check out <https://www.mardengardeners.uk>, email: info@mardengardeners.uk or telephone or text Sue on 07762 059412.



Marden in Bloom

Anne Boswell - Chair

The daffodils are blooming around the village giving a lovely welcome to Spring - the Bloomers have planted over 25,000.

We are hoping to hold another Pimms Palace stall at the King's Coronation event on Monday 8th May and after the success of last year's Garden Safari, we are planning another one on Sunday 2nd July. If you would like to open your garden, then please email: anne.boswell@ymail.com We will also hold another Scarecrow Safari early Autumn possibly Disney characters or a season's theme.

We would like to encourage residents to grow more bee-friendly pollinating plants and will be distributing wildflower and sunflower seeds later in the Spring - will let you know details nearer the time. A big thank you to Kate Hargreaves in Chainhurst for her generous donation to Marden in Bloom to thank us for all our hard work - what a lovely gesture.

If you could help the Bloomers even for an hour or so with their projects or would like to come along to one of our meetings, please email: anne.boswell@ymail.com or give us a like on our Facebook page:

WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN CONTD

Marden Motor Club Show- Saturday 27th May – Southons Field – 1pm- 3.30pm

Marden Motor Club will be holding their 4th Annual Motor Show on Saturday 27th May in Southons Field and they hope to have around 200 vintage, classic, sports and super cars, as well as several motorbikes, on display. If you have an interesting car you would like to include, please contact Nick Ferguson-Gow at motorshow@mardenmotorclub.org to register your interest. Please note that only Assistance Dogs will be allowed on the field. There will a BBQ and refreshments available as well as tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

Marden Oddfellows

Are you looking to bring invaluable laughter into your life, make new friends, chat, learn new crafts or join us on a day trip? We hold regular meetings at Marden or Maidstone. For more information please contact Julie on 07910888607 or email:

Julie.broomfield@oddfellows.co.uk or view our website@

www.oddfellows.co.uk You never know, it may be the best decision you ever made! Here's the dates of meetings at Marden Memorial Hall from 10.45am to 2.15pm: 3rd & 17th April; 15th May; 5th & 19th June; 3rd, 17th & 31st July; 14th August; 11th & 25th September; 9th & 23rd October; 6th & 20th November; 4th December.

Marden Society

Our programme of talks for the first half of 2023 is as follows:

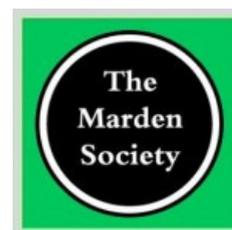
22nd March: "Thirty Years of Bother on the Hover" by Brian Lavercroft-Smith. A humorous look at the world's biggest hovercraft operation across the English Channel and the history of Hovercraft in Dover.

26th April: "The Bayeaux Tapestry" by Imogen Corrigan. A story of Kings, chivalry and ambition, looking at many of the scenes in detail and what we might learn from them.

24th May: "The Titanic" by Eddie Asquith. A review of how the idea of Titanic was born, why the tragedy occurred, who or what was to blame and the legacy of this terrible disaster.

21st June: Summer Outing to the Wildwood Trust near Herne. A guided tour of the nature reserve to view British Wildlife past and present, including bears, bison and wild boar among many others.

All our talks are at 7.30pm in the Vestry Hall and are free and open to all, with a raffle and refreshments served after the talk. We are collecting food donations for the Food Bank and a box is provided for these. For further information contact: steve.mcarragher@btinternet.com or 07946 532591.



**Marden Sporting Memories –
Tuesdays 2.30pm-4pm – Marden
Cricket & Hockey Club, Maidstone
Road TN12 9AG**

Marden Sporting Memories is a group where older adults meet to talk and reminisce, replay and reconnect through the power of sport and physical activity. Activities range from school sports to current sporting events; from the World Cup of 66 to the Lioness' Victory in the Euros 22; from Golf to Darts, from Cricket to Horse Racing, from Rugby to Motor Sports and from Athletics to Subbuteo we cover it all! We enjoy 'half-time' refreshments, then play some gentle sports together, on a very light-hearted level – lots of laughs. We also occasionally have visitors to the group and enjoy their sporting memories, such as an Olympian from the 1968 Hockey Team and we are looking forward to a visit from a World Champion Rower in the new year.



It's free to attend with free refreshments and free parking (full disabled access). For more details, please contact Sue Eltringham via email:

MardenSportingMemories@gmail.com
or call 01622 833053.

The Sporting Memories Network runs clubs across the UK – you can read more about the organisation: The Sporting Memories Foundation (sportingmemoriesnetwork.com)

Marden Walking Group

There is now considerable evidence that walking can improve your well-being - walking in nature can improve both your physical and mental health. If you are interested in exploring Marden and the surrounding countryside, Marden Walking group has produced two sets of six guides to walks around Marden which follow designated footpaths and also include points of interest. These are available to purchase from, No 47 and Marden Library.

For a social walk meeting up with like-minded people, Marden Walking group run walks every Saturday starting at 2pm from Marden Library and are short walks of approximately an hour. On the first Sunday of the month there are longer walks between 5-7 miles starting at 10am from Marden Library. These often follow a route from the published guides and explore points of interest around Marden. Details of both Saturday and Sunday walks are published each month in the Parish Magazine. During the Spring and Summer, a walk is arranged once a week along a section of a long-distance pathway covering approximately 8 miles.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN MARDEN? CONTD

Marden Walking Group Contd

If you enjoy walking in a friendly social atmosphere, why not 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 W.I.

Marden WI is a very active friendly group which meets on the first Thursday of every month, in the Vestry Hall, from 7.45pm. Our programme for 2023/24 is nearly complete and will include talks on Queen Elizabeth II - A Life of Service, Barsleys of Paddock Wood, The Body Shop, Great Dixter, Marden by Robin Judd and a Cookery Demonstration.

We also enjoy visiting gardens, theatre trips and pub lunches in between meetings. If you feel you would like to join us, please contact Barbara Hammond/President on 01622 831569 or email barbham50@gmail.com.

St. Michael and All Angels Church, Marden

The church in Marden continues to hold a pattern of services in church each month. Every Sunday at 8.00am there is a service of Holy Communion using traditional language. 1st and 3rd Sundays are Morning Worship without Holy Communion. 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sundays are Parish Communion and there is Sunday Club for the children.

Services are live streamed on Thursdays at 9.15am and 8.00am on Sunday via the church Facebook page. The church is open every day during daylight hours, and you are welcome to go in and reflect or pray. Our prayer tree is in the porch if you would like to post a prayer there. Messy Church for all ages meets every 6-8 weeks in the Vestry Hall. Next ones are on 5th March and 30th April.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

The church is here for you at these different stages in life and here to help you as much as we can. The cost-of-living increases have put a squeeze on everyone's finances. If you would like to hold a service in church - for either a baptism (these are free), wedding or funeral - please do come and speak to Rev Nicky about all the options available to you for your service. Please also note that we are still able to bury a loved one's ashes in our churchyard. You can contact Rev Nicky on 01622 831379 or email: rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com

Village Café – Fridays 10.00am-11.45am – Vestry Hall

Go and enjoy a cup of coffee/tea and cakes and meet new people for a chat - old and young.



PARISH COUNCIL COUNCILLORS, CLERKS AND OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

CHAIRMAN

CLlr Kate Tippen - 01622 832305
kate.tippen1@gmail.com

VICE CHAIRMAN & CHAIRMAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

CLlr Andy Turner - 07803 598813

CHAIRMAN FINANCE COMMITTEE & VICE-CHAIRMAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

CLlr Richard Adam - 01622 831673
mpc@tn12.uk

CHAIRMAN AMENITIES COMMITTEE

CLlr Anne Boswell - 01622 833351 / 07808 868703

VICE CHAIRMAN AMENITIES COMMITTEE

CLlr Jean Robertson - 01622 831331 / 07950 816370

PARISH COUNCILLORS

CLlr Chris Barker - 01622832305

CLlr Matt Besant - 01622 832305

CLlr Matt Burton - 01622 832305

CLlr Ian Newton - 01622 831832

CLlr Tom Stevens - 01622 832305

CLlr Theresa Gibson - 01622 832305

PARISH CLERK

Ali Hooker
Telephone: 01622 832305
Mobile: 07376 287981
Email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

DEPUTY PARISH CLERK

Rachel Gillis-Coates
Telephone: 01622 832305
Mobile: 07940 241333
Email: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Vacant
Telephone: 01622 832305
Email: adminassistant@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

CLlr David Burton - 07590 229910
david.burton@burtons.uk.com

CLlr Annabelle Blackmore - 01622 833299
annabelleblackmore@maidstone.gov.uk

CLlr Claudine Russell
claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Lottie Parfitt-Reid - 07919 360000
lottie.parfittreid@kent.gov.uk

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Helen Grant MP - 0207 219 7107
helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

Nicola Morris
Telephone: 101
<https://bit.ly/KPReportACrime>
<https://bit.ly/KPRuralCrime>

COMMUNITY WARDEN

Mira Martin
Mobile: 07969 584179
Email: mira.martin@kent.gov.uk

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

Kent County Council
(for Potholes, other Road Issues, Vegetation and Street Lighting)
Telephone: 08458 247800
Website: www.kent.gov.uk

For regular parish information, updates and events, follow us on:



@MardenParishCouncil



@mardenkentpc



@mardenparishcouncil



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE
KING'S
CORONATION

MONDAY 8TH MAY 2023

12.00PM TILL 5.00PM

SOUTHONS FIELD

FOOD STALLS MUSIC

