



Parish Newsletter October 2026

Parish Council Conference 2026

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the MBC 2026 Parish Council Conference on 16 September.

The conference is a valuable opportunity to strengthen the connection between parish councils and the local authority building on the strong partnerships we have already developed. It provides a chance to share ideas, look ahead at upcoming plans and explore how we can work together across different services to achieve the best outcome for our communities.

The conference included a series of talks and workshops from MBC staff covering topics such as Event Planning, Developing an Emergent Plan, Finance and updates on Local Government Reorganisation. There was also a MBC service market place giving parish council representatives the opportunity to meet teams, find out more about the services we provide and explore how they can make the most of the support available.



We would like to thank all the parish council representatives, councillors, and MBC officers who attended.



If you have ideas of workshops or training or subjects that you would like to see covered at next year's conference, please let us know at Parishliaison@maidstone.gov.uk

MBC Community Cookbooks & Smokefree Signs

If you attended the Parish Conference you may remember our Health Policy Officer, Chrissie Browne, was on hand to talk about the community cookbook and smokefree signs.

To follow up on this Chrissie has offered that if you would like a box of cookbooks to distribute to those you think could benefit in your parish, please let her know and we can arrange to drop off a box to you.

Similarly , If you would like any free smokefree signage, we have both window stickers and graffiti and weather proof outdoor signage. We can arrange for the outdoor signage to be fitted for you. Please contact Chrissie for further information or to take up the offer Christinebrowne@maidstone.gov.uk

The Bread and Butter Thing Celebrates

From humble beginnings with one van serving a single community, The Bread and Butter Thing has grown into a national charity supporting more than 100,000 households. In September, the organisation celebrated its 10th anniversary alongside communities across Maidstone.

Over the last decade, the charity has expanded to more than 160 communities throughout England and helped redistribute food equivalent to 70 million meals. It has become a valued part of community life, providing practical support to families across the country.



Maidstone was the charity's first operational base in the South East and continues to play an important role in its success across the region. Local hubs at Blackthorn Trust, Park Wood, Shepway and Trinity give residents access to affordable food while bringing communities together and helping to reduce food waste.

With support from Maidstone Borough Council, the charity is building a sustainable, long-term approach to improving food security, making healthy food more affordable and strengthening community resilience. The service also helps households make their food budgets stretch further and gives people greater confidence to prepare nutritious meals at home.

The council has also developed a Community Cookbook featuring recipes based on ingredients regularly available through the food hubs. It offers residents practical and creative ideas for making the most of the food they receive. Following high demand, additional copies are being printed and will soon be available from all local food hubs.

There are no eligibility requirements, means tests or contracts, which means anyone can use the service for as long as they need it. Membership is free, and members can purchase up to three bags of shopping—including fresh fruit and vegetables, chilled products and cupboard staples—for £8.50. Smaller and larger shopping options are also available.

Community Cooking Workshops

To continue the cooking theme, there is an opportunity to build confidence in the kitchen with a free, two-hour community cooking workshop at the Blackthorn Trust.

You can pick up practical cooking skills and useful techniques, turn a surprise bag of ingredients into a meal in a Ready, Steady, Cook-style challenge, receive friendly guidance from a trained chef, and enjoy a relaxed, practical and sociable session.

If you would like to feel more confident preparing meals or are a beginner with little or no cooking experience the workshops run on Thursdays from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Choose from:

- 15th October
- 22nd October
- 29th October

To book, email sue.shaw@blackthorn.org.uk or call 01622 828374

All workshops take place in Blackthorn Charity's training kitchen at its St Andrew's Road site in Maidstone, ME16 9AN

Find out more at [the Blackthorn Trust](#)

Council makes decision to help unlock more affordable homes in Maidstone



Maidstone Borough Council will reopen its [Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\)](#) on 1 October 2026, strengthening its ability to invest in council housing and supporting its ambition to deliver 1,000 affordable homes across the borough.

The move represents a step forward for council housing in Maidstone and will provide a dedicated framework for managing and growing the council's housing stock.

The HRA will open with 103 affordable homes already in management, with a further 63 council homes currently under construction across three sites. These developments are made up of 28 homes at Britannia House (Granville Road), 12 homes at land in Granville Road and 23 homes at Corben's Yard Phase 2 on Tonbridge Road. Plans are also progressing to bring forward hundreds more homes as part of the council's wider affordable housing programme.

The reopening follows a Cabinet decision and supports the council's commitment to increasing the supply of high-quality, genuinely affordable homes for local people.

The reopening of the HRA forms part of the council's wider commitment to delivering Quality Homes for All, one of the four priorities within the council's Corporate Strategy 2025-2035.

The council's housing programme includes homes for social rent and affordable rent, alongside investment in temporary accommodation and wider initiatives to tackle homelessness and housing need across the borough.

Funding Opportunities

There is currently an opportunity to apply for funding via the KCC [Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme](#) Click the link for more details.

Other funding opportunities, when available can be found at the below:

[Grants and funding for groups - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

[Local support | Kent 4 Community](#)

Celebrate Black History

Join us for a day of celebrations as part of Black History Month.

The activities will start in Jubilee Square at 10:30am

on Thursday 22 October in Jubilee Square.

The days celebrations will include steel pans, performances and vibrant carnival costumes.



Find out more here:

[Celebration Day | Black History Month - Performance in Maidstone, Maidstone - Visit Maidstone](#)

If you have news you wish to share or celebrate please let us know and we would be happy to include in the Parish Newsletter.

Contact: Parishliaison@maidstone.gov.uk

