

MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL: Quality Gold Criteria 5

Engaging with the Community on Issues Relating to the Environment and Climate Change.

MPC Environmental Group was formed in 2022 and consists of a number of Councillors who report to the Amenities Committee. The group has been extended to residents in the Parish of Marden and all actions and relevant information is advertised in Parish Council newsletters, social media and on the MPC website.

Actions to date:

- The Environmental Group has formulated Terms of Reference, an Environment Policy, Estate Management and Grounds Maintenance plans which look at realistic and manageable ways in which the Parish Council operates and can be found on the MPC website: <https://www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/community/marden-parish-council-13394/mpc-environment-sub-group/>
- A Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan is being drafted in accordance with the duty imposed on Parish Councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021. The main aim of the policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of the parish of Marden. This will be cascaded to all residents in the Spring 2024 newsletter.
- There are various policies in the adopted Marden Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) on the environment and specifically biodiversity and habitats and Councillors consider the impact on biodiversity when discussing planning applications. The Parish Council undertook a public consultation on the MNP in 2022 which is currently being updated and biodiversity will be further strengthened.
- A Carbon Footprint report for Marden was undertaken in 2022 and the results published in the newsletter which is circulated to all households in the parish.
- Relevant articles are published in newsletters such as: solar together, insulation grants, ECV charge point grants, retrofitting your home, sustainable warmth grants, Maidstone Eco Hub and useful climate change links posted on the MPC website.
- The Parish Council engages with local businesses and the community such as the annual litter pick event, participation in the Queen's Green Canopy by planting 1,000 saplings in the parish with the assistance of residents, the Kent Police Cadets (*see photos below*), Marden in Bloom etc.



- The Parish Council works in partnership with other organisations such as Marden Primary Academy, the Community Payback team, KCC, Maidstone Borough Council and Marden Church along with helping to promote the work of the Marden Wildlife Group. A charter has recently been signed with local housing associations and other organisations to help promote a clean, safe and green environment in the parish.
- 2,000 saplings were planted on land at Marden Cemetery in February 2024 as part of the Kent Plan Tree initiative assisted by Kent County Council (KCC) and the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership assisted by residents and Kent Police Cadets.
- Attend NALC Climate Change Emergency sessions which is a useful forum for information gathering.
- MPC installed a dog bag station on one of its open spaces to help tackle the issue of dog fouling.

Future Plans:

- To arrange a Community Engagement event and/or a survey for residents to complete.
- Offsetting events emissions – this will be used for future events in the parish.
- Net Zero Goals – Councillors to attend training.
- Good Practice template.
- Review local nature recovery strategies e.g. pond restoration in liaison with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and liaise closely with the Marden Wildlife and Farming Cluster group.
- Consider participating in the Earth Charter project.
- Exploring funding opportunities.