



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY FULL COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2ND JUNE 2026 IN THE OLD
SCHOOL ROOM, MARDEN MEMORIAL HALL, MARDEN
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

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

029/26 PRESENT

Cllrs Adam, Boswell (in the Chair), Dobinson, Gibson, Newton, Rabot, Summersgill and Tippen. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk, County Cllr Brian Black and 15 members of the public were also in attendance.

030/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Goda and Griffiths. Borough Cllrs Couch and Russell also gave their apologies.
Not in attendance: Cllr Turner.

031/26 COUNCILLOR INFORMATION

Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest

Changes to Register of Interest

There were no changes to Cllrs Registers of Interest.

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation.

032/26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Cllrs agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 12th, 19th and 26th May would be deferred until the June Full Council meeting.

033/26 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members of the public were in attendance for item 034/26.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow residents to speak for 5 minutes. Questions were raised mainly on drainage, Public Rights of Way and response dates back to Maidstone Borough Council.

The meeting was reconvened for the following item.

034/26 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Outline Planning Application

26/501699/OUT – Land Off Plain Road, Marden

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 115 dwellings, including affordable housing with public open space, landscaping, sustainable urban

drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access. All matters reserved except for means of access.

At the EFCM held on Tuesday 26th May Cllrs agreed to refuse this application and to draft a response to be sent back to MBC and circulate via email for agreement at tonight's meeting.

Cllrs discussed the contents, made amendments and agreed for this to be sent back by 4th June as required by Maidstone Borough Council Planning Department (at the time of the meeting no extension to this reply date had been received).

The response can be found at Appendix 1 of these meetings.

RESOLVED: Cllrs recommended Refusal of this application and wished it to be called in to MBC Planning Committee if MBC were minded to approve.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.13pm

Cllr Anne Boswell

Chairman

Date: 9th June 2026

Marden Parish Council, Parish Office, Goudhurst Road, Marden

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APPENDIX 1

Response to be sent back to Maidstone Borough Council.

Marden Parish Council Response to Maidstone Borough Council:

26/501699/OUT – Land Off Plain Road, Marden

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 115 dwellings, including affordable housing, with public open space, landscaping, sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access. All matters reserved except for means of access.

Marden Parish Cllrs met on Tuesday 26th May 2026 at an Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting (EFCM) to discuss the above with 45 residents in attendance. The floor was opened to residents for questions/concerns and majority of these are included in the Parish Council's response to this application.

Cllrs made the following comments, and these were agreed at the EFCM held on 2nd June 2026:

Site Location

This site is not included in the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review 2024 and therefore Cllrs have severe reservations about this planning application for the following reasons:

Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan

In terms of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review this site sits outside the settlement boundary so is not compliant with MBC Local Plan Policy LPRSP9 Development in the Open Countryside which states *“development proposals will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies and will not result in significant harm to the rural character and appearance of the area”*.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access is proposed along a newly installed footway in Plain Road which would reduce the width of the carriageway and takes pedestrians to a dangerous junction with Plain Road/Albion Road/Thorn Road. Even more concern is raised taking into account the highway proposals for approved planning application 23/504068/OUT Land East of Albion Road/North of Copper Lane. Pedestrian safety is critical and must be taken into consideration.

There should be adequate pedestrian footways without compromising traffic capacity between the proposed development, village centre and station. Active Travel England Standing Advice Notes should be taken into consideration when assessing this proposal.

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) linking to neighbouring developments (ie The Parsonage and Windsor Meadow) are field paths and therefore not suitable for use all year round. If the developers are using these footpaths for their assessment of a 10-minute walk to the station/school, then the PROW network around the proposed site need to be looked at to accommodate pedestrian access at all times of the year.

The Department for Transport's 'Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure' is therefore based on a minimum footway width of 2.0 m, with an absolute minimum of 1.5 m. As such, some areas of these PROWs could only ever act as a secondary route for pedestrians, and then during daylight hours/summer months only. Furthermore, any width less than 1.5m will be insufficient for pedestrians to pass any pushchairs or wheelchairs, the ground is currently not suitable for these, coming in the opposite direction (refer to Figure 6.18 of the Manual for Streets).

There is also a lack of connectivity into the neighbouring developments at The Parsonage and Windsor Meadow, other than via PROW network.

The lack of permeability to the site for walking/cycling is contrary to NPPF paragraphs 111 and 112 Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy In2 Sustainable Travel (see below).

NPPF Paragraph 111 – 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'

NPPF Paragraph 112 – 'Within this context applications for development should: (a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second, as far as possible, to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; (b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; (c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive, which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cycles and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; (d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles, and (e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.'

Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy In2 – Support will be given to developments designed to maximise travel on foot and by cycle and that provide direct links to village facilities and public transport services via off-road and lightly trafficked routes, or through improvements for non-motorised users on busier existing routes. Developments should not hinder existing walking and cycling routes unless a convenient alternative route is provided. Major sites should be designed to provide through routes for pedestrians and cyclists where this would help improve non-vehicular access from adjacent housing or business premises and to facilitate links with any nearby public rights of way or open space.

The short length of Footpath KM283 connecting to Bluebell Drive and Footpath KM281 that lies outside the red-line boundary is not shown in Appendix H of the Transport Assessment, but this connection needs a Section 278 agreement to provide an all-weather / all-year surface.

Highways

The proposed development will not only generate additional traffic but also movement of heavy construction vehicles during the build period along the narrow roads and lanes. The Transport Assessment fails to address the second aspect, and the applicant should be required to define proposed lorry routes and assess the consequential effects of construction traffic along Plain Road and more widely.

At the time of submitting MPC's response KCC Highways had not commented but the Parish Council has severe concerns about the proposed access, the suggested improvements to Plain Road and the junction at Albion Road/Thorn Road/Plain Road junction which is blind and dangerous for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Additional vehicle movements would be expected to increase vehicle conflicts and delays in the absence of mitigation.

Major concerns have been raised over the current status of Plain Road:

- It is not a two-lane highway
- It is a multi-use road with poor sight lines. From the bridge over the Marden Mill Stream to the western end of the road at the junction with the B2079 the road is narrow with a dangerous blind bend. The road is a bus route, it is not possible for the bus and another vehicle to pass at various places between the bridge and the B2079 junction.
- Large vehicles, such as farm machinery, buses, emergency services and lorries use this road on a regular basis and two vehicles cannot pass without one driving onto the verge and serious consideration needs to be given as to the type of vehicles using the road (farm machinery, buses, lorries, emergency vehicles together with pedestrians, cyclists etc) given that this road is heavily used especially when Goudhurst Road (B2079) is closed.
- The junction with Goudhurst Road (B2079) is narrow and condensed with no opportunity for widening.
- It is not clear if the developer has taken into account the highway proposals for the Albion Road/Copper Lane application 23/504068/OUT as this is likely to increase road usage and vehicle queuing in the future. More assessments need to be undertaken in view of the highways proposals in Albion Road.
- Plain Road is used as a cut through to the A21 and onward to the motorway network / Tonbridge / Paddock Wood/Tunbridge Wells/Sevenoaks (and vice versa to Staplehurst/Ashford etc). This will be further exacerbated with the Copper Lane/Albion Road development of 117 dwellings.
- Further choke points will become apparent within the village (Maidstone Road, Pattenden Lane, Goudhurst Road, Sheephurst Lane)
- A comprehensive Construction Management Plan would need to be in place regarding the movement of heavy construction vehicles using Plain Road along with the management of deliveries.

In terms of construction traffic impacts it is contrary to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy In3 Traffic Generation: *Developments within the Plan area which lead to additional traffic generation will be required to ensure that safe vehicular access arrangements are incorporated within the design of the development and be provided before the use commences. Where appropriate, traffic impact studies will be required for proposed developments and any off-side traffic mitigation measures as deemed necessary by the highways authority will be secured by agreements linked to planning permissions.*

Other

Flooding

Plain Road is subject to flooding from surface water runoff making the road impassable. It has been inaccessible for at least 17 times since 2019 due to severe flooding. A comprehensive report is needed to confirm that there will be no further detrimental effect on the road.

The developer proposes to route foul drainage to the existing sewerage network in Albion Road. The Copper Lane/Albion Road development also proposes to route foul drainage into the same network, but that Design & Access Statement stated; *“Foul discharge will be via the existing sewer network and is predicated on the condition / capacity of an existing pumping station in the vicinity. Otherwise, an onsite submerged pumping station will be required”*. The capacity of the existing sewerage network remains in doubt, with numerous incidents reported to Southern Water every year.

In the Maidstone Local Plan Review Spatial Objectives paragraph 4.7 it quotes *‘Developers and the council will work proactively with the sewerage service provider to ensure that any necessary upgrades to wastewater treatment works and/or sewer network resulting from new development are identified early to ensure that performance of wastewater infrastructure is not diminished by the connection of new development.*

There are severe concerns over surface water management, water supply and sewerage as well as electricity supply already being under great strain throughout the village and this proposed development must not exacerbate these issues. The application has not demonstrated conformity to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policies NE1 Surface Water Management, NE2 Water Quality and In1 Water Supply and Sewerage and the provision of sustainable drainage solutions is essential.

Environmental Impacts

There is concern over the environmental impact of this site particularly with the removal of some hedgerows.

MBC’s requirement of a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has not been reached in line with the standards set out in MBC Local Plan and developers are using residential gardens as part of the BNG calculations to achieve just over 10%.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be provided with a wider scope and focus on the likely negative impacts the site will have on the existing biodiversity

both on the site and in the adjacent area. This should also cover the cumulative impact taking into consideration the approved Albion Road/Copper Lane application.

Marden Station

This development will have impacts on train services which are already under strain and need to consider the route as a whole and not just the existing services currently calling at Marden. If reliant on train usage there is no further car parking capacity at Marden Railway station and there is no step-free access to the down line platform. Nor is there capacity to increase the peak hour trains or to increase the number of carriages.

Health Care and Primary Education

There is no mention in the documentation of primary school / health care provision and limited local employment opportunities.

Statement of Community Engagement

Whilst leaflets were distributed to 922 households (over 2,000 households in the parish), the applicant's engagement strategy was inadequate, and no effort was made to engage with residents on a face-to-face basis, this was only provided online via a website and therefore details of the proposal were not available to a proportion of Marden residents

No planning site notice has been seen on the site and residents without digital access were disadvantaged on making any response to this application.

Summary

Following the discussion on the points above Cllrs recommend **REFUSAL** and wish this application to go to Committee if MBC are minded to approve. Reasons for refusal are that Cllrs consider the application contrary to:

- NPPF Paragraphs 111, 112 and 113
- Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review Policies:
 - LPRSP9: Development in the Open Countryside;
 - LPRSP12: Sustainable Transport;
 - LPRSP14(C): Paragraphs 6 and 10 – Climate Change;
 - LPRTRA2: Assessing the Transport Impacts of Development; and
 - LPRQD4: Design Principles in the Countryside
- Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policies
 - NE1: Surface Water Management;
 - NE2: Water Quality;
 - NE4: Biodiversity and Habitats;
 - In1: Water Supply and Sewerage;
 - In2: Sustainable Travel;
 - In3: Traffic Generation;
 - In4: Marden Station;
 - A3: Primary Education;
 - A4: Healthcare Facilities; and
 - E1: Business & Employment.

Should MBC be minded to approve this application MPC would wish to see mitigation to all the above through conditions and Section 106 planning obligations.