



**NOTES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-GROUP MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30TH
APRIL 2024 AT 6.00PM IN THE PARISH OFFICE, MARDEN MEMORIAL HALL,
GOUDHURST ROAD, MARDEN**

50. Present:

Cllrs Matt Besant, Anne Boswell, Adrian Rabot, Mike Summersgill, Andy Turner. Also in attendance: Cllr Richard Ash, Staplehurst and Silvia Ferrero.

51. Apologies:

Cllr Ian Newton gave his apologies.

52. Notes from Environmental Sub-Group held on Tuesday 20th February 2024

The notes of the meeting on 20th February 2024 were agreed.

53. Action List from Environmental Sub-Group

The Clerk has updated this document and AB will run through with the Clerk and Admin Assistant.

**54. Action Points taken to Amenities Committee on 23rd April 2024:
Earth Charter Project**

Cllrs gave their endorsement at Amenities on 23 April to take the project forward but keep it simple. It was agreed to hold a brainstorming session on Monday 3rd June at 6pm in Marden Village Club. Map out where we are and what we can do going forward and tie in with a few principles of the Earth Charter.

Engagement with current/prospective MPs – Hope for the Future:

<https://www.hftf.org.uk/write-to-your-mp> - and <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

Climate & Ecology Bill

It was agreed at Amenities on 23rd April to send one letter to existing/prospective MPs, but keep it simple, short and relevant to Marden issues. Also to include step-free access at Marden Station and why this would boost sustainable travel – more people could travel by train such as disabled/buggy users etc.

55. Parish Councils Environment Network (PCEN) Meeting 20 March 2024

MS chaired and AB and MB attended – notes circulated. This is a good way to share good practice.

56. Carbon Literacy Training and Carbon Literacy Action Day 14th November

AB, AR & MS Carbon Literate accredited. MS/AR gave an update on their training and felt it was a good exchange of information across Maidstone Borough Parish Councillors. Those carbon accredited now have an ambassadorial role to promote and put into practice carbon issues in the Parish. It was felt that newly elected Borough Councillors should undertake the training and also MPC Councillors.

It was felt that the **Carbon Literacy Action Day on 14th November**, which coincides with COP29 in Azerbaijan, was not relevant to MPC, but SF will look at possibly attending and feedback.

57. Next NALC Climate Emergency Network Session – Thursday 9th May

AB unable to attend but the notes should still be forwarded.

58. Hedgerow Management Policy

At January Amenities Committee it was proposed that we have a separate Hedgerow Management Policy and agreed to keep the Tree Management Policy as it is. AB has started to draft a policy and it was suggested it be called Hedgerow and Borders Policy. Cllrs expressed how important hedgerows are in the parish and the following points were discussed:

- Develop a MPC Hedgerows and Borders Policy and how we maintain/improve them going forward. To be taken to Amenities and ratified at Full Council.
- Link the policy into the Marden Neighbourhood Plan as well as the Tree Management Policy.
- Use Pear Technology to map the parish hedgerows by using layers – look at the ancient hedgerow links on MagicMap.
- Take a parish-wide approach by linking in with the local farming network/Farmers Cluster/Marden Wildlife to work together to protect and enhance the hedgerows in Marden and surrounding parishes. Look at linking up hedgerow gaps both on MPC land and the parish as a whole.
- Offer free hedgerow saplings via MPC's existing suppliers.
- This could be an opportunity for both Marden and Staplehurst parishes to work together via RA.

59. Solar Panels on the Roof of the Public Toilets

Quote circulated to Cllrs from the Little Green Energy Company to install 5 solar panels to provide 2,280kWh of electricity for the year during sunlight hours at an installation cost including scaffolding of £4,990 to help towards the cost of Marden Library's electricity. MB mentioned there could be local companies who could be approached to help fund and burnish their social credentials.

60. Making Space for Nature Project

AB gave an update on this project and the Clerk/AB have mapped the MPC open spaces and some of its wildlife, trees etc on the MS4N mapping system to help develop Kent's local nature recovery strategy.

61. Ponds

Cllrs discussed ponds in the parish which could be restored such as the ponds at the back of Marden Playing Field (owned by Millwood and Redrow) and the pond at the back of the Cemetery. MS, who is a pond warden, explained that if the ponds are restored by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership, then they would need fencing off, but there could be funding available centrally re Great Crested Newts. Data is held by Natural England on GCNs and co-ordinates go into a register.

62. Thermal Imaging Camera

Look at the loss of heat from dwellings such as the Memorial Hall and MPC changing rooms.

63. Action plan for Climate Emergency

Extend Flood Warden scheme to include Heatwave Wardens – this is not currently in the Kent Resilience Forum.

64. MBC Climate Change & Biodiversity March Newsletter

There was nothing relevant to include in the Summer Newsletter.

65. NALC Draft Biodiversity Net Gain document

It was felt that the spreadsheet the Government had compiled for BNG is not accurate and it will be a lot of work for the Planning Officers to undertake. MBC have a new Landscape Officer.

66. Carbon Footprinting Tool

Already undertaken this exercise which showed Marden's footprint to be high and above Maidstone's which is higher than the national average. This is partly as a rural community we are a consumer rich area e.g. residents rely on shipping/delivery of goods. SF explained that the calculation of Carbon Footprint tools is subjective and doesn't rely on the same criteria.

67. Retrofitting

Cllr Besant has asked a resident to provide an article for the newsletter. We could look at getting a group of volunteers together e.g. local builders to explore the benefits and speak to the Little Green Energy Company.

68. Great Big Green Week – 8-16 June

It is too late now to arrange anything but to explore what we could do in 2025. SF suggested we should choose a theme and work around the theme. This could be a good way of engaging with village organisations and businesses on their environmental and biodiversity plans.

69. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 2nd July at 6pm in Marden Parish Office.

70. Item to discuss at next meeting:

- The Great Collaboration