MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER



LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY GOLD

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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL



Dear Residents

The arrival of autumn gave much relief after the relentlessly hot and dry summer preceded by the wet winter – something climate scientists have long warned us about as climate change takes hold. The Parish Council has so much to report on in this issue and we know life is very busy, but I encourage residents to read the newsletter (which is only issued three times a year) as it provides you with lots of information on what is going on.

With water shortage issues and the demand on water, burst pipes, the threat of more housing developments in the village (see article below), to speeding and the A229 gas works causing havoc in the summer in the village, it certainly is a worrying time.

The Parish Council understands how future planning developments might affect the village and we are determined to communicate as openly with residents as possible and act with the best interests of the parish. We would like to reassure you that we are here for you and we do listen.

I am very sad to announce the resignation of Cllr Paul Dobinson, the current Vice-Chairman, from the Parish Council. Paul served for 2 years and brought much experience particularly financial and other important qualities to our team. We are so disappointed he is leaving us and will miss his refreshing sense of humour and enthusiastic approach to parish council issues. Paul served as the Chairman of both Amenities and Finance Committees and latterly was appointed as Vice-Chairman. We wish Paul all the best wishes for the future and hopefully he will come back on board at some point.



On a lighter note, the summer brought us lots of village events including the annual Saints-v-Sinners match in July, cream teas at the Vicarage in August, Marden in Bloom's 8th Scarecrow Safari and the Marden Apple Festival in September - a joint event with Marden Church and Village Club.

Finally, the Parish Council will be holding their Marden at Christmas event on Saturday 5th December and this year we are pleased to be able to combine it with Marden Primary Academy PTA. So please come along and join in where village shops and businesses will also be participating. – see details on the opposite page and the poster on the back page.

Warmest wishes.

Cllr Anne Boswell

GENERAL UPDATE

Welcome to our new Deputy Clerk

Councillors were very sad to see our Deputy Clerk Rachel Weeks leave us in the summer after seven years of dedicated service, but we are delighted to announce that we have appointed Sue Smith as her replacement. We wish Sue all the best in her new role and look forward to working with her.



We are also sorry to hear that after 3 years, our Admin Assistant Lisa Crouch is leaving us soon. We would like to thank her for all her hard work and wish her all the best for the future.

Meet the Council

Councillors try to be 'visible' in the village, and we have held a few monthly 'Meet the Council' sessions on a Saturday morning outside Marden Library so residents have an opportunity to chat to us and raise any concerns. Unfortunately, we haven't had many people attending but we will continue to hold them for the time being. Our next session is on Saturday 28th November from 11.00am-12 noon and hope some of you can pop along.

Get it Hot Off the Press – Marden Village News

Why not sign up for the weekly e-newsletter providing information on what's happening at the Parish Council, plus roadwork updates, police communication, other village organisations' news etc.

The newsletter is especially helpful to those residents who are not on social media – so why not sign up and find out what's going on?

Marden at Christmas

Saturday 5th December

The day will start at 10am with carol singing, Morris Dancers and refreshments at The Allens. The Elf Hunt will be set up around the village - remember to pick up an entry sheet on the day to take part and come along to the Memorial Hall afterwards to claim your prize.

Pop into Marden Church to see the Christmas trees and enjoy some hot soup and look out for other treats along the road to the Memorial Hall.

Santa will be in his Grotto at the Memorial Hall from 12 noon, waiting to see the children and there will also be a craft fair, WI café, children's activity area and BBQ.

The Special Post Box for fast-track delivery of letters to the North Pole, will be at the Memorial Hall, ready for letters to Father Christmas.

We will also be encouraging residents and businesses to light up their properties as part of the Festive Trail.

You can find the poster on the back page and look out for more details around the village and on social media nearer the time.

Due to the Parish Council's insurance requirements at events, we have had to make the difficult decision to change our stallholder policy. This means that stallholders will now need to have their own public liability insurance, a food hygiene certificate if selling food, undertake a risk assessment at the time of booking, and initially only one table per booking. We do understand this will be disappointing for some of our residents, but if you would like to book a table or find out more details, please contact Sue at deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Festive Lights in the Village

With Christmas fast approaching, the Parish Council wanted to ensure residents understood our position on festive lighting as we know there have been a few negative comments in the past.

The Parish Council's intention is to fund festive lighting from the Memorial Hall in Goudhurst Road to the old farm shop building in the High Street. This year we hope to light all the lamp posts with festive garlands and in future years, if budgets permit, to extend the lighting further down other roads in the village. We will never be able to afford to provide festive lighting across the whole village but want to ensure that the centre of the village is lit during the Christmas season.

We know some residents have expressed disappointment at the type of lighting we have chosen but we can only provide lighting on lampposts because they have an electricity supply. Unlike other local villages, our lampposts are short and very spread out which constrains what we can do to provide a uniform display. Garlands hung between lampposts would not work as they would hang too low. Likewise, motifs hanging off lampposts would not work as they would impede high sided vehicles.

In conjunction with our festive lights supplier, the Parish Council concluded that festive garlands would be the most suitable option. As the garlands are hung from lampposts which are owned by KCC, we must apply for a licence for every lamppost. If for any reason KCC deems a lamppost to be unsuitable, then we are unable to light it. Hopefully all the lampposts we have chosen will be ok and provided none of them are damaged before the end of November, we can have the festive lights erected.

The Parish Council would like to encourage all residents and businesses to light their premises to make Marden a bright and welcoming place during the festive season and as part of the Marden at Christmas celebrations, we will be organising a Festive Trail again this year. Contact Sue to take part deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk.

Summer Playscheme

Congratulations to our wonderful Clerk Ali for organising yet another successful playscheme this summer and many thanks to Jen Ward who led the team and Amanda Payne-Cook for deputising on the first two days.

Numbers were increased by a further eight meaning that 56 children attended every day. County Councillor Brian Black kindly funded the purchase of a marquee to accommodate the additional children. However, due to the wonderful weather we had, this was not required but it is now available for future years.

Thanks are expressed to all members of staff who provided their energy and experience to encourage children to take part in different activities and sports including visits to Marden Church, Marden Library and Marden Sports Club. The end of scheme party on the last day saw many children (and staff) enjoying the inflatable assault course and party food.

Parish Council Website and Facebook Page

Our new accessible website now has a search facility, but the clerks are still in the process of setting up all the information that was on the previous website, so please bear with us: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Please also follow us on our Facebook page which provides regular information on a variety of topics: Marden Parish Council, Kent.

Marden Residents Meeting (previously known as Annual Parish Meeting)

The Parish Council decided to trial a new format for the Marden Annual Parish Meeting, which is a meeting of all the local government electors for the Parish. The meeting was held in April where the previous Chairman, Cllr Adrian Rabot, read out the Parish Council report along with the other Committee Chairmen followed by the usual Full Council meeting.

Councillors have now reviewed how the meeting went, and we have decided to run it in 2027 as an informal social event in April inviting all village organisations along with residents so everybody can interact. The Chairman, Cllr Anne Boswell, via the Clerk, will be sending out an invite in the New Year, and we really hope as many of you can attend – village engagement is so important.

MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION

Following Paul Dobinson's resignation we now have the authority to co-opt another new Councillor onto the Parish Council. As a Parish Councillor you have the opportunity to influence change and instigate projects that have a positive impact on our community. Councillors come from all walks of life and have many different types of experience.

If you are interested in joining our very committed team, you can find out more about the role of a Councillor, or if you wish to obtain an application form, please either call Ali or Sue in the Parish Office on 01622 832305, or email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

PLANNING UPDATE

There is a lot to update residents on planning in this issue, and we understand residents' concerns about the proposed large planning applications that are coming forward in the village. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications and can only submit our comments to the Local Planning Authority – Maidstone Borough Council who make the decision on whether to grant or refuse applications.

Land East of Albion Road/North of Copper Lane - 26/502754/REM

Approval of reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale sought) for the erection of 117 dwellings, together with associated landscaping, open space and other associated infrastructure, pursuant to outline permission 23/504068/OUT (allowed at appeal APP/U2235/W/24/3346817).

Many thanks to those residents who attended the Extraordinary Full Council meeting in August and Councillors took on board the various comments made. After much discussion, Councillors recommended refusal as follows:

The application was contrary to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policies: In6 Housing for Older People; BE1 Local Character; BE2 Residential Amenity; BE3 Sustainable construction; NE3 Landscape Integration and NE5 Landscape Planting.

However, if MBC were minded to approve, it was requested that this application be referred to Maidstone Planning Committee, and that the following conditions should be applied:

- A detailed plan of the proposed lighting on the site.
- Installation of double yellow lines between Stanley Road and the entrance to the new development on both sides of Albion Road.
- Installation of **LEAP** (Local Equipment Area for Play) play equipment and additional open space.
- A robust landscape management plan.
- A robust construction management plan including lorry movements/routing.
- Installation of solar panels.
- Ensure that the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on the site is at least 20% as outlined in Planning Statement 5.9.3

Additionally, consideration should be given to the incorporation of Swift Bricks/Boxes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th August 2026 (along with other meeting minutes) can be viewed at: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/meetings/full_council

As well as residents, Councillors are still very concerned with the agreed highways proposals made at appeal. However, as this did not form part of the reserved matters application, it was agreed that a separate letter be sent to the Director of Kent Highways explaining our concerns which can be found on the following link: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/page/planning

Land Off Plain Road Marden Kent – 26/501699 - *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.*

This outline planning application was discussed at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting in May for access only at this stage with all reserved matters for subsequent approval. The Parish Council recommended refusal, and you can find all documents via MBC's Planning Portal: www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/planning/search-for-a-planning-application

At the time of writing, no decision had been made by Maidstone Borough Council, but Kent Highways has raised a holding objection to the proposal on the basis that the applicant should be required to provide a considerable amount of additional information. As you will see from the next article, this site has been incorporated in the Maidstone Borough Council's Call for Sites consultation.

Maidstone Borough Council Call for Sites 2026

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has now released information regarding the newest Call for Sites consultation which closed on 23rd August. It is concerning that the newest Call for Sites includes Land North of Marden, Plain Road and Howland Road, but this process is at a very early stage, and the Parish Council will participate in the consultation and involve residents once a date has been announced.

The Call for Sites is an early stage in preparing a new Local Plan for Maidstone Borough and provides an opportunity for landowners, developers, community organisations and other stakeholders to submit sites that they believe may be suitable for a wide range of uses to meet the borough's future needs. The previously adopted Local Plan Review 2021 - 2038 remains the adopted development plan for the borough. It will continue to serve as the primary reference for planning decisions until a new plan is formally adopted.

To view details of the current Adopted Local Plan, updates on the new Local Plan and a map showing sites submitted so far, please visit: localplan.maidstone.gov.uk

20/505751/EIFUL – Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden
This application for the erection of a new free range egg farm consisting of 2 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 has been rumbling on for a number of years and has now gone to Appeal after Maidstone Borough Council refused the proposal. A public inquiry is expected to commence on 24th November (Appeal Reference: APP/U2235/W/25/3372984).

24/505235/FULL – Land West of Pattenden Lane, Marden
Maidstone Borough Council has approved this application for the construction, operation and maintenance of a ground-mounted solar farm with a maximum grid export capacity of up to 19MW, complete with landscaping, associated infrastructure, and temporary construction access. The approved application comes with an extensive number of conditions.

Marden Neighbourhood Plan Review (MNP) – Regulation 14 Consultation
The Parish Council has been reviewing and updating the MNP which is a legal document and is part of the planning policies within Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). Councillors refer to the policies when considering planning applications to ensure they are compliant, and MBC take them into consideration when assessing planning applications.

As part of the process to amend the plan, we undertook a public Regulation 14 consultation online and at an Open Morning in March on the changes we propose. We have taken into consideration your responses, changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and further amendments have been made by Councillors. It is hoped the proposed document will be submitted to the Planning Inspector shortly.

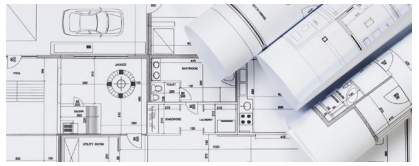
Government Planning Committee Reforms
As from 31st October 2026, changes have been implemented by the government about the decision-making with Local Planning Authorities (LPA) which aims to speed up decision making on planning applications and leave more technical decisions to planning officers.

Parish Councils will continue to be consulted, and responses will be thoroughly reviewed by planning officers. However, Parish and Borough Councillors' capability to 'call-in' a planning application to MBC Planning Committee has been removed. Only the Head of MBC Planning and the Chairman of MBC Planning Committee will be able to do this.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 is the government's updated planning policy document published on 17th August 2026, setting out revised national policies for plan-making and decision-making in England, including new rules-based structures, clearer policy separation, and reforms to housing delivery, Green Belt strategy, and infrastructure planning.

One of the concerning changes is higher density of housebuilding near railway stations which mandates minimum densities of 35 dwellings per hectare (dph) around well-connected stations rising to 45 dph near frequent services stations. Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) are investigating the implications of this policy and believe there are no stations in the borough that meet the criteria of coming in the top 80 of well-connected stations and the proviso of 4 stopping trains per hour. However, some stations may meet the criteria of being within 800m walking distance. This could put extra pressure on Marden.

MBC and Marden Parish Council's Biodiversity Net Gain criteria is currently 20%, but the government now requires no more than 10% so justification and deliverability on a specific site is required if more than 10% is wanted.



Another change is LPAs do not have to wait for statutory or internal consultees past the deadline before making a decision.

Maidstone Borough New Landscape Character Assessment
The final version of the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment Update 2026 is now available to view and can be found at: https://ws.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/landscapes/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

The aim of the landscape character assessment is to help ensure that changes to the landscape take place in a way which maintain the distinctiveness and diversity of local landscape character and retain and enhance positive landscape features. It can help to guide sustainable development and aid decision-making to promote nature recovery and the protection of heritage assets.

Maidstone Borough has five designated areas of Landscapes of Local Value which it aims to protect through planning policy. These are the Low Weald, Medway Valley, Loose Valley, Len Valley and Greensand Ridge. Marden is part of the Low Weald, so if you are interested in reading about Marden's landscape characteristics, please read pages 130 to 145 of the Landscape Character Assessment. For major planning proposals, the Parish Council will make reference to the document.

PROJECT UPDATE:

Marden Parish Emergency Resilience Plan – Cllr Adrian Rabot

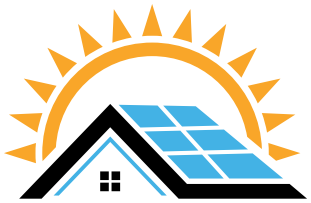
The Parish Council continues to work with neighbouring Parishes to share expertise in the event of the need to work together to tackle local emergencies. We will shortly publish an abridged version of our Resilience Plan in local venues and on our social media platforms.

Residents should also be aware of recent National Government advice on resilience and emergency planning:

- Keep a battery or wind-up torch (and spare batteries) at home. Torches are safer than candles. You probably won't want to use the torch on your mobile phone as this will drain its batteries more quickly.
- Keep some bottled water and non-perishable food that doesn't need cooking such as ready-to-eat tinned meat, fruit or vegetables and a tin opener. You should also include ready-made baby formula and pet food if needed.
- Check the **Priority Services Register** www.thepsr.co.uk to see if you are eligible for additional support during a power cut, a water outage or gas supply cut. If you have vulnerable or elderly relatives, neighbours or friends check that they have registered for additional support too.

Public Convenience Solar Panels

The Parish Council has finally made progress on moving forward with the installation of solar panels on the roof of the public toilets, and we have now received the signed Licence from Maidstone Borough Council. The structural work has been completed and the solar panels are due to be installed in the next couple of months.



When this work has been completed, it is hoped that baby changing facilities can be installed in both the ladies and gents' toilets.



Now we have received the licence for works, we will also consider installing a Water Fountain Station at the front of the building in the future.



Allotments at Highwood Green

'One step forward and two steps back' as the saying goes! This debacle has been going on for some years, and when the Parish Council thinks they are finally making progress with Redrow on the allotment transfer, Redrow presents stumbling blocks yet again. With constantly changing staff at Redrow, each one trying to pick up the progress of previous incumbents, it makes it a real challenge to make any headway.

We've agreed the layout and work Redrow will undertake before transfer of the land to the Parish Council, but they are bartering with us on the commuted sum amount and trying once again for us to take over the ownership of the adjacent car parking spaces which the management company at Highwood Green do not wish understandably to take on. The Parish Council do not want to take on the cost of repairs, fly tipping etc of these parking spaces and we don't have the necessary resources to do this.

We will update you in the next newsletter.



Marden Playing Field Changing Rooms/Pavilion Update

After community engagement in 2023, it was agreed that the changing rooms/pavilion on Marden Playing Field be refurbished and extended for other uses such as small gatherings, meetings for local groups, children's birthday parties, supporting activities on the playing field etc. The facility will be operated by the Parish Council as a community venue and will be available for use subject to terms and conditions.



After receiving a number of tenders, the costs involved in refurbishing and extending it was more than the current budget allowed (remaining developer S106 monies), so we have requested the architect give us costings on having the building work phased – phase 1 being the refurbishment of the building and phase 2 the small extension on the side for storage. Hopefully the works will commence in the next few months, and we will let adjacent residents know when the works are planned to start.

HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We all know the issues in the village with HGVs, speeding and a lot of traffic, but unfortunately there is no 'quick fix'.

Highways Improvement Plan – Cllr Kate Tippen

The Parish Council has been working with Kent Highways on our Highways Improvement Plan. Progress is slow but here is an update on where we are:

- As we have reported before there have been a number of accidents near the bend between West End Tavern and the Memorial Hall. Speed surveys have shown that the average speed does not exceed 25mph and therefore there will be no changes to the road. We have asked KCC to install warning signs either side of the bend.
- The bend on Howland Road by Rose and Crown Cottages is notoriously bad and after reviewing, the only action KCC could recommend is improved signage, which we are waiting for.
- We know there are a number of locations around the village where there are no dropped kerbs making it very difficult for those with reduced mobility, using walking aids and wheelchairs and pushchairs and prams. We are waiting for KCC to draw up plans to enable some work to start.

We have added some new requirements to the plan which KCC is now investigating:

- Speeding in Howland Road and Battle Lane - KCC will be using Telematic speed data to assess the average speeds on these roads to inform whether any changes to speed limits are needed.
- Continue the double yellow lines 10 metres beyond the junction of Pattenden Lane and West End as cars continue to park very close to the junction dangerously impacting the sight lines.
- Extending the double yellow lines in Albion Road to link with the existing double yellow lines as residents have raised concerns about road safety when exiting their properties.
- Extend the single yellow lines in Albion Road past the old farm shop to the junction to improve road safety when turning out of the small road between the farm shop and the Village Club.
- Provide warning signage on Plain Road by the blind bend near Marden Beech.

Where we are proposing parking restrictions we will be consulting with impacted residents and businesses to gain their view.

You can find the latest Highways Improvement Plan on the Parish Council website: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/highways-improvement-plan

Reporting Non-Urgent Highways Issues

We encourage residents to report any non-urgent highways problems such as potholes, damaged streetlights, broken signs, overgrown vegetation, or drainage issues online through the Kent County Council website. This includes roads, pavements, and public rights of way. Once submitted, KCC will assess the problem and schedule maintenance or repairs according to priority and available resources.
www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-or-track-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement



Speed Watch – Cllr Mike Summersgill

The Parish Council has carried out a few successful speed watch sessions in both Marden and Chainhurst over the past months, but we still need volunteers.

If you are concerned about speeding around the village, then why not sign up for Speed Watch? You just need to undertake some online training that doesn't take long and for further information, please contact Ali either by email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or call 01622 832305 with your details.

If you see a speeding vehicle, please make a note of the registration number and inform the Police via 101. Our Police Beat Officers do undertake regular speed checks particularly in Pattenden Lane where speeding is an issue.

DRAINAGE & WATER

Water, flooding and drainage are always high on the Parish Council's agenda, and we continue to lobby both Southern Water on drainage and South East Water on water supply/leak issues. We have also been lobbying our MP Katie Lam particularly with all the recent water shortages and questioning whether South East Water can provide an assurance that there is a sufficient water supply for any further housing developments in the village without compromising the existing supply – water boards have a statutory duty to supply water.

After much lobbying and complaints, the government is looking at greater control of water companies and a range of options including what the costs would be on updating water infrastructure. Another consideration is setting up regional boards and nationalisation.

AquaAlerter is South East Water's live service-update platform that provides real-time information on supply interruptions, repairs, leak reporting, water hardness, and SMS alerts across their network. We have asked South East Water if they can provide the Parish Council with specific statistics such as tracking how many leaks and other issues there have been over a monthly period specifically in Marden – we await to hear their response www.aqualerter.southeastwater.co.uk

Are you prepared?
After one of the hottest, driest summers on record it's hard to imagine the wet autumn and winter that is being forecast. If the forecasts prove to be right, are you prepared?

Check your flood risk by visiting: www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding. Even if your property is deemed low risk, it is still worth signing up for flood warnings and preparing alternative travel plans if your normal routes are prone to flooding.

The parish of Marden lies on very low land and has 2 main rivers – Rivers Teise and Beult - plus numerous streams running through the area. Every winter some of our roads flood – particularly Sheephurst Lane, Plain Road and Hunton Road/Green Lane. If you regularly use any of these roads make sure you know your alternative routes.

OPEN SPACE

It is wonderful to see so many residents enjoying the facilities at Marden Playing Field and Napoleon Drive play areas as well as Southons Field.

There have been a few issues in Southons Field during the summer such as damage to picnic benches, sightings of catapult use, children running into the woods at Appledown Grange (these woods are privately owned) and accessing the field via the telephone exchange in Howland Road where the fencing has been broken down. We would also request that usage after the field has closed is avoided as people must clamber over the gate which eventually could cause damage.

If you are looking to book a party or any other event, please contact Sue our new Deputy Clerk: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Opening hours Autumn/Winter:
November-January – 8am-4pm
February-March – 8am-6pm
(or dusk if earlier), but please remember it is a dog free space (apart from assistance dogs).

Our peaceful cemetery is full of wildlife and biodiversity, and our groundsman Neil keeps it to a very high standard. Unfortunately, most of the saplings that were planted in the winter to complete the hedge around the perimeter, did not survive the drought and we will be reviewing this during the Autumn months. You can check out the cemetery rules and regulations at: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/marden-cemetery



HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Parish Council tries to promote health and wellbeing in the community and provide as much information as possible in each newsletter and on social media. With pressure on public services, including the NHS, it is important that we continue to increase awareness on health-related matters across the community to make residents more aware of self-help and to continue to support Marden Medical Centre as much as possible.

Marden Community Health & Wellbeing Contact List
You can find this very useful Community Health & Wellbeing Contact List on the Parish Council website at www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing, it is also in PDF format and if you wish to have a printed copy, they are available in Marden Library, Medical Centre and Marden Church, or you can pop into the Parish Office.

Shout Out for an Age Friendly Co-ordinator Reaching Out to the Lonely and Vulnerable
The Centre for Ageing Better launched a new guide to help councils understand how to improve their services and spaces for our growing older population. Marden Parish Council has held a couple of meetings recently with various members of the community to work collaboratively on this project and how we can try to become an Age Friendly Community and reach out to all the lonely and vulnerable. Marden has so many wonderful village groups and residents who run events, or regularly check in and help their neighbours, but there are still loopholes.

So, we are putting a shout out for somebody who feels they could be an Age Friendly Co-ordinator in the parish who could look at the various ways that age friendly groups reach out to the elderly, lonely and vulnerable and how this could all be drawn together to identify the loopholes. The role would include liaising with village groups to advertise all events in one document and to make it available to residents and village groups especially those who are elderly, lonely and vulnerable. If you are interested in this volunteer role, then please contact Ali at: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or call: 01622 832305.

In the next newsletter we plan to issue a leaflet about reaching out to the Lonely and Vulnerable.

Winter Warm Hubs

With an increase in the cost of living and rising fuel prices, we never know what is going to happen over the winter period, but it's important that Marden residents can have a warm place to go. Staying warm in cold weather is important for everyone, but it is especially important for those people who are most at risk, including the elderly, very young and those with long-term medical conditions.

There are various places in the village where you can go to enjoy the warmth and Kent County Council Libraries are designated Warm Welcome Spaces, so Marden Library is available as a warm and safe place.

Marden Library

- **Tuesday - Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm**
- **Saturday 9am-1pm**

Vestry Hall

- **Monday Foodbank 9.30am-11.30am**
- **Monday Craft Group 2pm-4pm**
- **Friday Village Café 10am-11.45am**

www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/winter-health/keep-warm-this-winter

Compassionate Neighbours – Heart of Kent Hospice

Are you a kind and compassionate person and are you a good listener who enjoys a chat? If you can answer 'yes' to both these questions, then you have what it takes to be a Compassionate Neighbour. All it takes is one or two hours a week to lend a listening ear and offer your friendship and support just to brighten someone's day.

At the Heart of Kent Hospice, they provide engaging, informal training which will help you to feel confident in your role. It's also an opportunity to meet other like-minded people who are starting the same journey to become a Compassionate Neighbour.

Once your training is complete, you will be thoughtfully matched with someone who shares your interests and who could benefit from your companionship. If you are interested, then please either call: 01622 792200 Ext 259, email: cn@hokh.co.uk or check out the website: hokh.org/cn

We know there are a lot of you out there who are already a kind and compassionate neighbour and we are very grateful for what you are doing for those in need.

S.E.N.D Help Marden

S.E.N.D. (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Help Marden provides free, relevant information all in one place to help everyone on their individual journeys.

They hold bi-weekly term time only meetings in the Vestry Hall on Tuesdays from 9.30am-10.30am.

Next meetings:

- 3rd and 17th November
- 1st and 15th December

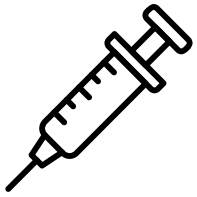
Check out: SEND Help Marden on Facebook for updates.

Marden Medical Centre Update – Mary-Jayne Bournes

Autumn Flu and Covid Vaccinations

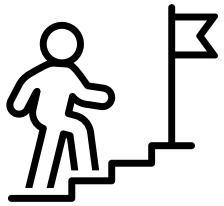
Once again, we look forward to vaccinating our eligible patients against flu and Covid. All eligible patients will have been contacted and invited to attend for their vaccine(s). Full details of who is eligible is available on the surgery website.

If you think you may be eligible but have not been contacted, please get in touch with our reception team. Please do support the practice by attending your appointment and helping us to protect our patients and our wider community this autumn.



Anima Update

Since we started using Anima to triage appointment requests in February, we have processed and completed over 13,000 requests up to the beginning of September.
We have listened to feedback from both patients and staff and to improve access have introduced AI Andi, to our telephone system. The best and preferred way to submit Anima forms is still via the online link however, Andi is now available for patients who are unable to submit a request online. Andi takes patients through condition-specific questionnaires and submits their request directly to our Anima dashboard, where it is triaged in the same way as an online request.



Marden Medical Million Step Challenge

The team fully embraced the walking challenge and far exceeded the initial target, completing a fantastic, combined total of 10,794,943 steps during July and August! Along the way, we raised a fabulous £1,015 for Andy's Man Club and £53 for Friends of Marden Medical Centre. A huge thank you to everyone who sponsored us. We really appreciate your support — and we plan to keep on walking!

Marden Dementia Friendly Community (MDFC) – Rachel Chacon

Marden can celebrate the arrival of more funds to support some of our most vulnerable residents. After a fantastic evening with 'Merlin and the Rockets' at The Unicorn and several grant applications, we are now on course for 2027/28. The great news is 'Play On' will continue with Sue Eltringham at the helm.

The lunches are now Afternoon Teas on the first Tuesday of the month - 3pm-4.30pm in Marden Village Club. Free to those living with dementia + carer - please donate £5 to funds if not. The next date is Tuesday 3rd November where the lovely Olga and her team at The Post Office Cafe will be serving tea. The seated exercise classes continue Mondays 1.45pm-2.45pm in Marden Village Club and on Fridays 10.30am-11.30am at the John Banks Hall.

We held our AGM in September where we discussed more ways to support those living with dementia and to support the whole community to reduce their own risk. Socialise, engage, volunteer, exercise (walking oxygenises the brain) and eat well - these activities will lower your own risk by at least 30%, help others to reduce theirs and help those already living with it to slow down its progress. Loneliness can be a cause of dementia, the research is now indisputable. Social activity is press-ups for the brain! If you know someone who lacks the confidence to engage, reach out and make a difference.

Leslie & Richard of Balfour Winery will once again be generously offering a special Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 2nd December for those living with dementia + carer. Please contact Rachel if you wish to go along.

For more information/to be added to our email list: mardendfcinfo@gmail.com or call Rachel on 07771 770541. Look out for our posters in Marden Library and on the planter by the phone box or follow us on Facebook and like our page: Marden Dementia Friendly Community

Marden Charity is here to help you

The charity has several aims one of which is to support education. Grants are given at trustees' discretion but are usually around £150. Village organisations can also apply for a grant.
Please email: mardencommunitycio@gmail.com or see more information on the link: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk/marden-charity

Marden Foodbank – Donations Urgently Needed

The foodbank operates out of the Vestry Hall every Monday morning between 9.30am and 11.30am. Anyone in need of food is welcome to come along and receive a bag. We would be grateful for donations of the following items: tinned soup and vegetables, tinned tuna, macaroni cheese, tinned ravioli etc, tinned meat or pies, jars of pasta or curry sauce, pasta and rice, tea & coffee, milk, fruit juice and squash, jam, tinned puddings and custard, toilet rolls, shampoo and soap.

All donations can be dropped to the Vestry Hall on a Monday morning or left on the Vicarage doorstep at any time – thank you. For further information about the foodbank, please contact Kathy Young on 01622 831890 or email: office@mardenchurch.org.uk

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.

Kent County Council – Health

There's a plethora of information on KCC's website on all sorts of health issues such as Mental Health, One You Kent, Release the Pressure, Drug & Alcohol support, Gambling, Pregnancy and the first two years, managing a long-term health condition, School Public Health Service, NHS Screening, Better Health Families and vaccinations. www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health

Nature Prescription

We all know the benefits of being in nature and as the leaves turn colour on our beautiful trees in Marden, why not go out and explore the connection between nature and health - just 20 minutes in nature can boost your health and 'tickles your immune system'.

Evidence from Natural England highlights that access to good-quality green space can boost wellbeing and strengthen communities, and NHS England continues to recognise the value of green social prescribing in improving health outcomes. We have miles of Public Rights of Way in our parish, and the Parish Council owned open spaces such as Southons Field, Marden Cemetery and Marden Playing Field.



SUSTAINABILITY BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Parish Council Environmental Sub-Group

The Parish Council Environmental Sub-Group have undertaken several initiatives over the last few years, and if you would be interested in helping with projects or have any ideas, please let Sue know either by emailing: deputyclerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk or calling 01622 832305.

Marden's Swifts - Securing their Future – Cheryl Mason

Swifts have been recorded in Marden before, but many RSPB Swift Mapper records were several years old and needed verifying. So, on three summer evenings, I was delighted to join local volunteers as a trustee of High Weald Swifts, supporting the Parish Council in its commitment to biodiversity.

We spent several enjoyable hours walking the village, looking and listening for signs of swift activity. The survey has given us a clearer picture of where colonies and nest sites remain. There was good and bad news: some previously recorded locations no longer appeared to have swifts, while we found evidence of nest sites in places not previously recorded. This information is vital as High Weald Swifts prepares to apply for funding later this year, with Marden identified as one of the key areas. Knowing where colonies remain means we can target practical support where it is most needed.

Swifts return to the same nesting sites year after year, so the loss of even a few roof repairs, renovation or redevelopment can put a colony at risk. This is why mitigation is so important. Thankfully, swifts readily take to artificial nest boxes, giving us a real opportunity to protect existing colonies and provide new homes.

I'll be talking about swifts at the Marden Wildlife AGM on Thursday 12th November at the Vestry Hall.

Marden's swifts are still here, but they are hanging on by a thread. Now is the time to act. For more info, email: cheryl.mason@highwealdswifts.co.uk

Marden Wildlife Update AGM - Thursday 12th November at 7.30pm, Vestry Hall - Ray Morris

Members braved the heat in the summer with surveying and recording, and giving talks about it to anyone prepared to listen. Audiences have included local village groups and even a national conference on meadows organised by Kew at Wakehurst. At the latter, there's a recording of our contribution on our website www.mardenwildlife.org.uk, where the nationally known Marden Meadow SSSI received a passing mention, the focus being on our newly emerging local meadows, created with rare plants sourced and raised locally by members. It seems we have had more success than Kew's experts with Dyer's Greenweed, a plant being raised almost in profusion here while they struggle with it!

Our joint venture with Marden Horticultural Society members to revive the fortunes of Chequer Trees in the Weald continues to pay dividends and many were sold at the Weald of Kent Ploughing Match.

The success of our turtle dove study with Kent Wildlife Trust - made possible by an increasing band of volunteer members – has underpinned a successful KWT application for a three-year, £0.5m grant (shared with RSPB and Natural England) to extend it throughout Kent.

Our AGM will be held in the Vestry Hall on 12th November. After the brief business part of the meeting, Cheryl Mason from High Weald Swifts will be giving an illustrated talk on what can be done to support this wonderful summer bird and halt its decline in Marden.

While swifts depend solely on insects, it's interesting to note that our local moth recorders have identified three-fifths of all the country's species here. So, there is still hope for swifts who feed on them – and for local fruit growers who depend on moths as well as bees for pollination!

Recycle Your Ink Cartridges

As part of Marden Eco Church initiatives, did you know you can recycle your printer ink cartridges at the church? Just inside the door of the church is a collection box, or you can leave them at the Vicarage. Each cartridge raises a little money for the church and prevents cartridges going into landfill. Unfortunately, they are unable to recycle toner or laser cartridges.

Green Homes Event

Marden Parish Council, in liaison with KCC, are planning to hold a Green Homes event in the spring. We are putting a shout out for any residents who have had a heat pump installed who wouldn't mind showing their heat pump to attendees at the event. We are also sourcing heat pump and solar panel installers to attend. The event aims to help residents to improve their home energy efficiency, making it easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

If you would like to talk at this event about any retrofit measures you have undertaken or showcase your heat pump, then please let cllrboswell@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk know.

POLICE AND CRIME UPDATE

Let's work together to keep our communities safe and peaceful

Our Police Beat Officers had a good result in the summer when a Marden drug dealer was sentenced after being caught throwing cocaine under a car and has now been jailed. Police were alerted to suspicious activity earlier this year and officers monitored ongoing activity at the property before carrying out a search warrant in May but as they arrived, a

PCSO saw the dealer exit a vehicle and discard a package under a parked car. He was arrested shortly after, and the discarded item was found to contain a quantity of cocaine. The person was later charged with possession with intent to supply Class A drugs.

The local beat officers continue to offer regular Police Surgeries, the next one being held on Friday 18th December at the Vestry Hall for residents to drop in for confidential advice.

They continue to focus on issues of local concern such as nuisance e-bikes, seizing such bikes where needed. They are also focussing on anti-social behaviour associated with the use of catapults, especially where posts have been uploaded to social media sites, again seizing catapults where possible. One persistent offender for causing a nuisance in the village has been arrested and dealt with by a custodial sentence. They also continue to deal with incidents reported about dangerous dogs seizing two in the last three months.

Kent Police have asked again that residents sign up to My Community Voice, (MCV) Kent Police's free messaging service, offering local policing news, crime prevention advice, witness appeals, and community updates directly from your neighbourhood officers. MCV isn't for reporting crime – please use 999 for emergencies and 101/online reporting for non emergencies.

You can sign up to MCV at: www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk/Content/Pages/Register

Please remember it is so important to report any incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other non-emergency incidents to 101 or help to keep the Kent Police phone lines free for emergency calls by reporting non-urgent incidents online to: https://kent.police.uk/report



Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs)

In September, Community Safety Units (CSUs) became known as Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs). This name is more recognisable for the public and better reflects the visible, local and problem-solving role of these teams. This is a change of name only – there will be no change to team structures, responsibilities, service provision or existing points of contact. Neighbourhood Policing Teams will still be made up of:

- **Beat Officers**: providing a visible and accessible policing presence, working closely with communities and partners to identify priorities, build trust and confidence, solve local problems and carry out targeted activity to prevent crime and reduce harm; and
- **Neighbourhood Task Forces**: visible and flexible teams working with partner agencies to tackle the issues causing the greatest harm in local communities. Their focus will remain on tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, protecting vulnerable people, and targeting the offenders, locations and issues that matter most to residents.

Neighbourhood policing remains central to Kent Police's approach to keeping people safe and reducing harm, and our partnership with councils and partners is fundamental to achieving this.



Waste Crime Action Team

Since April, several Waste Crime enforcement actions have been taken in Maidstone Borough and so far, 84 penalties have been paid generating more than £22,500. This money is reinvested into the council's fly-tipping budget to help cover the cost of clearing waste from our communities. Ten cases currently remain outstanding and will be heard in court and there are more than 30 cases under investigation.

It is so important for residents to report fly-tipping incidents as they help the Waste Crime Action Team to identify offenders and take enforcement actions where evidence is available. Their investigations use a range of methods including discreet surveillance cameras, drones, police intelligence and SmartWater technology. Where the law allows, vehicles used for fly-tipping may also be confiscated.

When disposing of waste, you have a legal duty of care to ensure that the waste is disposed of properly: check that your chosen waste collector is legal, don't pay cash and get a receipt and a waste transfer note. If your waste is found illegally fly tipped, you could be prosecuted.

To report fly tipping, check out: www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/street-care-and-cleaning/report-fly-tipping

YOUTH PROVISION

Kent Cricket Foundation – Cllr Adrian Rabot

The Kent Cricket Foundation held an event dubbed the 'Marden Sports Mash-Up' on the 19th and 20th of August funded by Marden Parish Council and Golding Homes aimed at capturing the interest of young people who may be less inclined to participate in traditional sports activities. The Marden Sports Mash-Up was an excellent example of partnership working coming together

to support youth engagement. The project provided young people with the opportunity to try sports and activities that are not readily available in the area, while creating a safe and welcoming space to meet, socialise, and build new friendships.

The Kent Cricket Foundation deployed the Street Cricket Engagement Bus to Marden Playing Field for two days, equipped with PlayStation consoles and reaction games and the bus is a powerful tool for capturing the interest of young people who may be less inclined to participate in traditional sports activities. Young people were encouraged to take part in a range of physical cricket activities, including a batting challenge using the bowling machine in the batting cage and mini cricket games on the field. As physical activity is proven to support mental wellbeing, it was fantastic to see so many young people engaging positively in the activities, developing new skills, and making new friends. We are hoping to run the event again next summer.

OTHER PARISH INFORMATION

Tribute to The Right Honourable Ann Widdecombe

It was such a shock to hear the very sad news about the passing of the Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe in July who served as Maidstone and the Weald's MP from 1987 to 2010. Ann was a caring and effective MP for Maidstone and came to Marden in 2008 when she was invited by the History Group to open the Heritage Centre in Marden Library. Ann also supported many local disabled groups.

We send our deepest condolences to Ann's family and friends. Ann was a prominent British politician and public figure becoming a household name leaving a legacy as a fearless, principled politician and beloved media figure remembered for her dedication to public service, her moral convictions and her distinctive presence in both politics and popular culture. Rest in peace Ann.

Local Government Reorganisation

As you will be aware, the Government had confirmed that the borough of Maidstone would become part of a new West Kent unitary council alongside Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells from April 2028 and the decision formed part of the biggest change to local government in Kent for 50 years. The government was planning to replace Kent County Council, Medway Council and the 12 district and borough councils that currently deliver services in the county, with four new unitary councils. It was proposed that those councils would deliver all of the services in their area including education, social services, highways, libraries, emptying your bins, leisure centres and housing services. However, government has announced that it has paused the Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and several other counties. It is hoped that we will have more information in the next newsletter.

Kent Association of Local Council's (KALC) Community Award

As reported in the Summer Newsletter, the Kent Association of Local Council Community Award was deservedly awarded to Pat and John Wilkins for their 36 years' service at West End Stores. John and Pat went above and beyond for the community what could not normally be expected from a village shop.

Each year at the Annual Parish Meeting/Residents Meeting, the Parish Council makes an award to a resident who has shown outstanding service to the community. This award is sponsored by the Kent Association of Local Councils, KCC and the High Sheriff of Kent. So, this is your chance to nominate somebody in the village who you think has served the community and made a difference. Please let Ali know: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk by 31st December 2026 with the reasons why the person you are nominating deserves an opportunity to receive this award. Councillors will then vote at the January Full Council meeting.

Marden Memorial Hall Car Park

Due to unauthorised use of the Hall car park and unacceptable rubbish being left by users, Trustees have reluctantly agreed that the car park will be closed when the Hall is not in use at weekends.

Trustees would also like to remind all residents that the Hall car park is only for Hall users - it is not a free for all car park especially at School drop off and pick up time.

Marden Library – Anna Pryor, Customer Support Assistant

Everyone is welcome at Marden Library – it's free to join, and we offer a wide range of services including free access to books, audiobooks, computers and the internet. Access is available to the printer and photocopier, prices start at 20p for an A4 page.

Marden Library opening hours:

- Tuesday – Friday 10.00am-1.00pm and 2.00pm – 5.00pm;
- Saturday 9.00am-1.00pm.

If you would like to contact the library, please call 03000 420 684 or email BR_MDN01@kent.gov.uk

Please take a look at our event schedule:

- Tuesday: Talk Time. 2.00pm-4.00pm. The game is currently Upwords. Held weekly.
- Wednesday: Lego Club. 3.30pm-4.30pm. Held Weekly. Term time only. 5-11 years olds - parents/carers do need to stay.
- Thursday: Talk Time 10.00am–11.00am. Chat about days gone by with tea and coffee. Held weekly.
- Thursday: Homework Club: 3.30pm – 4.30pm. Open to all children. Held weekly. Term time only. parents/carers do need to stay.

- Friday: Baby Rhyme Time. 10.15am-10.45am. Held weekly term time only. Bookable event.
- Friday: Toddler Sing Along. 10.45am-11.15am. Held weekly term time only. Bookable event.
- Saturday: Book Clubs meet to chat over the book for that month. Held monthly on the first and last Saturdays of the month.



As ever, we update our selection of fiction and nonfiction books regularly and can reserve a book from any of our Kent libraries. Keep checking social media for children's craft events in the library and up to date information of our clubs and sessions

Marden Pre-School Playgroup - Hayley Schlosser, Pre-School Manager & Trustee

Marden Pre-School continues to thrive at the heart of our community, with a strong waiting list reflecting the continued demand for our charity-run, not-for-profit setting. Since opening our doors in 1967, we have proudly supported generations of local children and families, and we are already looking ahead to 2027, when we will celebrate our 60th anniversary. We are excited to begin thinking about ways to mark this special milestone with the village that has supported us for so many years.

This year, we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our community. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Nisa at Church Green for their amazing donation of £1,500 and Marden Charity's kind donation. Combined with the tremendous fundraising efforts of our parents, staff and children, this support has enabled us to significantly enhance our outdoor environment with new astro turf, painting materials and additional resources for the children.
We would also like to give a special thank you to the team at Scarab Sweepers, who generously donated their time and expertise to help with our garden makeover, including painting fences and supporting improvements to our outdoor spaces. We are equally grateful to our dedicated staff team, who gave up part of their breaks to help with cleaning, fence painting and creating a refreshed environment for the children to enjoy.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support Marden Village Pre-School. It is because of the kindness, hard work and community spirit of local businesses, families and staff that we remain such a valued part of village life.



Marden Parish Church

You can find information on all services and other activities on the Parish Church website: www.mardenchurch.org.uk. If you would like to contact Rev Nicky about Baptism, Marriage, Blessing or arranging a Funeral (Crematorium or Church) or Burial of Ashes (still permitted in new or existing family graves), please email: rev.nickyharvey@gmail.com or call 01622 831379.



Remembrance Service - Sunday 8th November

The Remembrance Service will be held outside Marden Church on Sunday 8th November at 10.30am conducted by Rev Nicky and Rev Vicki. Everyone is welcome to go along and join in this very poignant and special service followed by our very own Siren sounding at the Library area.

Marden Church Christmas Tree Festival – Saturday 5th December

As part of the Marden at Christmas event, the Church will be holding a Christmas Tree Festival. It runs from Saturday 5th December until Sunday 13th December. Trees can be put up on Friday 4th December 2pm - 4 pm, and please remember if your tree has lights, they need to be battery operated. Trees will need to be collected on Monday 14th December before 2pm.

It would be lovely to see as many trees as possible in church representing our village organisations or a tree from a family or individual. If you would like to put up a tree do let us know so that we can reserve a space for you and make a name label to go with your tree. Do contact Kathy in the office on office@mardenchurch.org.uk for further details or to reserve a space for your tree.



Light it Up Tractor Parade 2026 – Sunday 20th December– 6.45pm in Marden

Weald of Kent Young Farmers Club 'Light it Up' tractor run is back for its fifth year! This year the lit-up tractors will be making their way through the villages on Sunday 20th December. The route and timings are planned as follows: 5pm Goudhurst, 5:45pm Cranbrook, 6:15pm Staplehurst and 6:45pm in Marden.

The tractor run is a wonderful Christmas spectacle for the local community and raises money for local charities. Donations can be made to fantastic volunteer bucketeers collecting along the route or via the club's JustGiving page. Last year, the event raised an amazing £21,000, supporting the club, KSS Air Ambulance and other local charities. Final beneficiaries for 2026 are currently in discussion.

Information can be found on our website: https://wealdofkentyfc.wordpress.com/light-it-up-tractor-run and club Facebook 'Weald of Kent Young Farmers Club' in due course.

So wrap up warm, wear bright colours, get your Christmas cheer ready and look out for the tractors as they pass through our villages!



Christmas Day Lunch – Friday 25th December

Are you a Marden resident, aged 30 or upwards? Are you on your own at Christmas? Or maybe you just find that you are struggling at home to cook, or just feel lonely at this time of year? Why not book in for Christmas Lunch in the Vestry Hall? Enjoy Christmas Day in the company of others, with a home cooked dinner with all the trimmings, served with some festive cheer!

12.45pm – Arrive at the Vestry Hall, Church Green, Marden
1.00pm – Traditional Christmas dinner
1 glass of wine/non-alcoholic drink
Christmas pudding served with cream or custard
3.00pm – Afternoon ends with King's Speech

Places are limited and on a first come, first served basis. A minimum donation of £5 per person required, to be received by 14th December.
Sorry – no dogs allowed
Places MUST be prebooked and paid in advance by calling Sue on 01622 833053 or via e-mail Sue.Eltringham@SEEOccupationaltherapy.co.uk
You can also pay by cash in advance and please state if you have any allergies:
SEE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY; BANK – MONZO; SORT CODE - 04-00-03; ACCOUNT 26277560 (Please use your surname for reference)

Come & Sing Group – Sarah Emmanuel

'Come & Sing' is a welcoming group that meets to sing together songs from musicals, folk, jazz, country and pop music from various times. We sing for the physical and mental health benefits music brings and for the spirit-lifting joy of making music together.



Afterwards there is tea and cake and time to chat with friends old and new. Come and join us on alternate Thursday afternoons: 5th and 19th November and 3rd and 17th December at 2.30pm in the Vestry Hall. We charge £2 per session to cover costs. For more information, contact Sarah on 01622 832925.

Little Fishes Baby & Toddler Group

Little Fishes Baby and Toddler Group runs in the Vestry Hall every Wednesday – term-time only- between 9.30am and 11.00am. 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 information, please contact Kathy: office@mardenchurch.org.uk

Girlguiding

1st Marden Brownies has arrived! Tuesdays 5.30pm-7.00pm – Vestry Hall - Lauren Whinder

We're delighted to be bringing Brownies back to the heart of Marden and, excitedly, this is the first new Guiding unit to open in the village since lockdown!

Our new unit gives local girls aged 7-10 years old the chance to meet other children from the community, make new friends, try new things, learn practical skills, build confidence and, most importantly, have lots of fun along the way.

We meet on Tuesdays at the Vestry Hall, and we still have spaces available. If you have a daughter, granddaughter, niece or know a local girl who might enjoy Brownies, we'd love to welcome her to our growing group.

It's not just about the girls - we'd love to grow our volunteer team too. If you've been involved in Guiding in the past, or you're simply looking for a way to get more involved in the local community, we'd be delighted to hear from you. No matter your previous experience, new volunteers are always welcome.

Find out more and register your interest at: www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved

Marden Bowls Club – Colin Smith, Secretary

Another season has drawn to a close and we have had a very successful one overall. The weather during the spring and summer has been very kind, too hot at times! Luckily, and through careful tender loving care, we have maintained our green to a good standard, which has been difficult given the extreme weather we have encountered.

We have had a full season of friendly fixtures, League, County & National competitions. We were successful winning the Maidstone & District (M&D) Triples leagues in the 1st & 3rd divisions and we also won the Maidstone & District 4's league. Club Members also won the M&D Singles & the 4'S finals held recently at Marden.

If you have ever thought of trying out the game, we are actively seeking new members, especially ladies to join us. We will set you up with a coach and welcome you to this small, friendly club who have a number of social activities, as well as competing locally and throughout Kent. If you are interested and would like to find out more, please look at our website for more information or alternatively email Colin at:
mardensecretary24@gmail.com
Website:
www.mardenbowlsclub.co.uk

Marden History Group – Jonathan Fenn, Chair

The History Group has been busy during the summer with exhibits at the Heritage Centre in the Library, organising the forward programme of events, as well as working on the photographs and accompanying commentary for the forthcoming 'Marden Past and Present' publication. We have almost completed the work in deciding the 'before and after' images for the planned publication, which we are hoping will be finalised soon, ready for printing and then sale to the public.

In September we were treated to an illustrated talk by Anne Cox about the history of White Lyon House – possibly the oldest village property in Marden – held in the Village Club, linked to the Heritage Open Days this year. We have another of Philip Day's amazing film presentations about World War II planned for Thursday, 26th November at the Vestry Hall starting at 7.00pm.

Keep a lookout on our website, social media and posters around the village for information about Marden History Group, including how you can become involved as a volunteer, or just to attend our many events and exhibitions organised during the year.

Marden Horticultural Society – Julie Nicol, Chair

This has been the hottest summer on record for 140 years, and with hosepipe bans the gardens have really suffered. As a society of keen gardeners, we have been keeping a close eye on which plants have survived with little, or no water, and sharing these details with members. We shall also be saving seeds from these plants to sow early next year for our plant sale.

One of the lovely sights of our hot summer was the abundance of Hummingbird Hawk moths enjoying the salvia nectar.

In July our coach trip was to Wisley gardens, which was a beautiful day enjoyed by all, and not too hot. If we had visited in August, it would have been a very different picture with dead lawns, and very little pond water!

One of our members held a cream tea in July in their garden which was a great success and made £400 for The Hospice in The Weald.

Our Autumn programme of speakers which started in September with 'A brief history of gardens open for pleasure' and in October a talk on 'The Abbey gardens in Tresco' and on November 10th 'Fabulous Foliage'.

Non-members are very welcome to join us at 7.30pm in the Vestry Hall. Check out our website:
www.mardengardeners.uk

MARDEN IN BLOOM

Marden in Bloom -Diana Rabot, Secretary

The 'Bloomers' had a very busy summer. Our Garden Safari in June was a great success, with eighteen gardens open to the public. We would like to thank everyone who either visited a garden or who opened their garden – this is always a bit nerve wracking!

We decided to postpone the Dog Show in view of the very hot weather, which was a wise decision, but hope to run it next May.

Speaking of the hot weather, we hope you noticed the sterling efforts of the 'Bloomers' involved in watering and maintaining the village planters over the summer despite the relentless drought – it was certainly a labour of love, but you must agree the planters looked stunning.



Our 8th village Scarecrow Safari in September saw thirteen entries with a 'films' theme. Congratulations go to the Giles family at Sutton Forge with their winning inventive Shrek entry along with Misty the Donkey. All the entries were amazing!



We are planning to plant 2,000 daffodil bulbs in November at Highwood Green and The Cockpit. We also celebrated our tenth anniversary in October as a group and will be planting a small crab apple tree in the area adjacent to the library to commemorate this event.

Our AGM is on Wednesday 4th November at 7pm in Marden Village Club and if you would like to know more about what we get up to, then please pop along.

Marden Motor Club
Donalda Wain, Secretary
Marden Motor Club meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 8pm for a relaxed and sociable evening. Our usual meeting place is Marden Village Club, but during the summer months we head out on rallies and Treasure Hunts as part of our annual Drivers and Navigators competitions.

With more than 50 members, there's something for every motoring enthusiast. Whether your passion is classic cars, modern cars, sports cars, trucks, motorbikes or motorsport, you'll find a warm welcome – and you don't need to own a particular type of vehicle to join us.

Throughout the year, we enjoy breakfast and dinner meets, quizzes, trips to interesting places and an annual weekend away. This year we visited Caister Castle in Norfolk, while next year we're looking forward to travelling to Laon in France.

Why not come along to one of our events and meet us? It's a great way to discover what the club is all about and decide whether Marden Motor Club is for you. For more details, contact memberships@mardenmotorclub.org

Marden Play On! – Thursdays 11.15am-12.30pm - Sue Eltringham
Play On! encourages members of the community to socialise and to stay active together, to take part in shared activities, team games and quizzes and mostly to laugh together. The group is run by Sue Eltringham and supported by three fabulous volunteers Fran, Jan and Phyl.

After a break over the summer, 'Play On!' was delighted to receive further funding; without this funding the group could not continue. The Marden Dementia Friendly Community committee have worked incredibly

hard applying for grants and fundraising, so a huge thank you to everyone involved and to all who generously donated to MDFC to help support Play On!

Before the summer, the group finished last season with an Ascot Bonanza including horse races with 'Escalado' – the old horse racing game. September kicked off with a catch up about the summer sports, starting with the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. It's not all sport; the group spend time reminiscing about 'times gone by'. In the autumn, a session was held about living or working on farms, past harvests, hop picking and Harvest Festivals.

The group is currently full. However, to register your interest or to add your name to the waiting list, please contact Sue: sue.eltringham@SEEOccupationaltherapy.co.uk

Marden Society – Steve McArragher
The Marden Society exists to monitor village developments, and we also organise monthly talks on a variety of subjects plus an annual outing. This year our summer outing was to Herstmonceux Castle, planned in June but postponed to September due to the heatwave in June. The visit was worth the wait with a fascinating tour explaining how the castle was built by the Fiennes family in 1441 but has come to be owned by a Canadian University.

Our talks for the remainder of the year are as follows:

28th October: Graham Tippen will tell us about *"The Railway and Marden"*. This is a repeat of the talk he gave to the History Group about the coming of the railway in 1842 through to the present day and how it has shaped the life of the village. It covers the history of train services, the movement of people and goods and the effect on society and economy as well as interesting events on the way.

25th November: *"Burma/ Myanmar, a journey through this Captivating and Enigmatic Country"* by Jane Scotchmer who will take us on a virtual tour through golden pagodas and among the friendly, inquisitive locals who are still, in many ways, shadowing the footsteps of their ancestors.

All talks start at 2.30pm in the Vestry Hall with a raffle followed by refreshments. For further information contact 07946 532591 or steve.mcarragher@btinternet.com

Marden Sporting Memories – Sue Eltringham
Marden Sporting Memories (MSM) meet to talk and reminisce about past sporting occasions and catch up on the weekly sports events. The group meet up every Tuesday at Marden Sports Club who give their support to this group; a special thank you to Martin and all the staff at the club who are incredibly supportive.

During the summer heatwave, MSM found shelter in the air-conditioned clubhouse, often having to postpone outdoor visits and events. The fishing trip to Monk Lakes was moved from June to September, but the group had a fabulous trip, with everyone catching a carp during the afternoon. This event is fully funded and organised by 'Cast a Thought' you can read more about this organisation here.
www.castathought.co.uk

Another 'away match' was in the beautiful vineyard at Herbert Hall. We were kindly hosted by Nick Hall and his team for an afternoon tea for one of our members as she celebrated her 90th birthday. A very special occasion.

Vanessa from Kent Tennis www.kenttennis.org.uk delivered a tennis afternoon for everyone, supported by tennis coaches Sam & Sean from Hot Shotz Tennis. All the team got involved whether playing a match on court or practicing tennis skills whilst seated. There is no reason to stop being involved in sports, whatever your age… even at 93!
For more information, please contact Sue at:
mardensportingmemories@gmail.com

Village Café

Our Village Café meets in the Vestry Hall on Fridays 10am-11.45am, where you can enjoy cake, tea and coffee, and meet new people for a chat.

Because of its popularity we always need more people to help run this event! If you feel you could take an occasional turn on the rota, please contact Heather Ferguson-Gow on 01622 832733.

Marden Walking Group – Steve McArragher

The Walking Group publishes the local Walks Guides which are available from "No 47" in the High Street and organises three series of regular walks:

- Saturday Strolls: held every Saturday afternoon, usually 1-1½ hours around Marden with no stiles. The last Saturday of each month is usually a car share to somewhere outside Marden. Meet at 2.00pm outside the Library. There are also "Train Treks" further afield, usually the first Monday of each month.
- Sunday Walks: These are generally held on the first Sunday of each month and are about 5-6 miles over paths around Marden (or other local villages) including stiles. Meet at 10.00am in the village car park.
- Long distance walks: These are long distance trails which are walked in sections of 8-10 miles on Tuesdays over a few weeks. Currently this group is walking the "1066 Way" in reverse from Battle to London.

Details of these walks are available in the Parish Magazine each month and on the Marden Society website https://mardensociety.org.uk or contact Steve at steve.mcarragher@btinternet.com or Sian at sianburr@hotmail.co.uk

PARISH COUNCIL COUNCILLORS, CLERKS AND OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

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Brian Black
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KENT POLICE

Emergency: 999
Telephone: 101
https://bit.ly/KPReportACrime
https://bit.ly/KPRuralCrime

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

@MardenParishCouncilKent @mardenkentpc @mardenparishcouncil

Marden Parish Council, Parish Office, Marden Memorial Hall, Goudhurst Road, Marden, TN12 9JX
Website: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk - Office Telephone: 01622 832305
Office Opening Times: Monday, Tuesday and Friday 10.00am to 12noon

Marden at Christmas

Saturday 5 December 2026

10am at The Allens, Albion Road:
Carol singing, refreshments, Morris dancing

12 noon at Memorial Hall:
Craft Fair, Santa's Grotto, BBQ and more

Elf Trail

Village shops, Local businesses,
Marden Leigh Academy PTA,
Marden Scout Group and
Marden Parish Church
all taking part