

Green Party Councillors' Report of July/August 2025, for Marden & Yalding Ward Parishes –

Things continued to be busy again within the Borough Council in July, but then took a bit of a break in August (except for a Planning Committee). Discussions with other Kent Councils, and more separately with the new KCC authority, continued towards resolving a 'common' position on Local Government Re-organisation and financial effects, with proposals/options supposedly to be agreed between the 14 Kent district/borough Councils in first week of September; the County authority threw a bit of a spanner in the Works early August, with a single Authority proposal being tabled and now Medway Council has come up with a different proposal combining Maidstone with Ashford.

We had a public Council meeting on 16th July, quickly followed by a Cabinet meeting on 23rd July, and several decisions were made at those meetings; a couple of Public questions were tabled at the Council meeting, but none at Cabinet. Items passed at Council, as well as receiving Reports from several Committees, included a Petition to place a memorial on Penenden Heath to the 'Maidstone Witches' wrongly convicted and executed in 1652, a Motion to re-consider Padel provision in Maidstone town centre (on Coronation Square, behind Lockmeadow) and the funding of rental costs for Fusion Healthy Living on Parkwood estate. At Cabinet the next week, matters concerning SPD's for HMOs, Gypsy & Traveller site identification procedures, the Arts & Culture Strategy for 2025-2030, Community funding and Council Tax Reduction for certain residents were discussed, along with Budget forecasting and a site acquisition proposal in Farleigh (for our own housing needs).

Ward Councillors have also been presented with Developer proposals during August, concerning the detail of 112 houses scheduled at Kenward Road (Yalding), and a scheme going through pre-planning discussions for land north of Marden. Also, 85 houses at Coxheath were approved at PlanComm.

After the resignation of all three Independent Councillors in the Harrietsham, Lenham & North Downs Ward during August, an election for 3 new Councillors will take place on 2nd October. Depending on who gets elected, there may be some changing around of Committee priorities, and possibly re-alignment of the Cabinet (as one of them was a Cabinet member); a Full Council meeting will be held on 13th October, to confirm any changes, replacing a scheduled 1st October Council date.

Updates for Newsletters/Sharing with Residents:

Please check out www.visitmaidstone.com/whats-on for details of things happening in and around the town; the Titanic exhibition at the Museum ends on 20th September, and the last Sunday Bandstand event in Brenchley Gardens is on 7th Sept. Heritage Open Days run from 12th – 21st September, when there are free tours of some of the features of the town, including the Town Hall & Mote Park, and also Marden & Detling have events listed. The annual Literary festival takes place with authors in various locations from 4th - 11th October; details on www.maidstonelitfest.org.

Parish Matters –

Collier Street – A 'duck problem' made national & regional news... Mike met residents and the livestock owner on site in early August, and things seem to have quietened down... for now.

Hunton – Parish meeting on 21st July...which welcomed a new Councillor. More fly tipping on several lanes; discussions about buying a mobile ANPR camera to combat this perennial problem. Mike has called in a retrospective PlanAp on new caravans, and reported another to Enforcement.

Marden – A proposal for a new property on Lucks Way has caused a considerable number of residents to contact us: Cllr. Russell called this in. Mike has continued liaison about illegal occupation on a riverside site, alongside MBC/EA enforcement activities – Mike will attend a residents' meeting with MP on 18th Sept. A pre-planning meeting and presentation/discussion about a possible new housing scheme north of the railway line in Marden was held (with Parish & MBC's Planning Committee members in attendance) on 28th August; Ward & Parish Councillors spoke at it.

Nettlestead – Mike has visited Retreat Caravan Site in July, and engaged with the Cabinet Member for Waste Services, to try and resolve the collection & recycling problems; which so far have resulted in residents now being able to recycle and put out food waste, with MBC using same waste truck!?

Yalding – The August Parish meeting dealt with a lot of recent Planning enquiries, and the George applications will now be taken together at Planning committee, after representations to Officers. Mike & Grace have received requests from two residents for help with Planning proposals/repeats.

The detailed proposals for the 112 housing site on Kenward Road were published in late July, and MBC members attended a meeting about this on 14th August in Maidstone House, after which Mike asked for some clarification on drainage aspects from Fernham Homes. Grace has been in touch with Kenward House about their solar farm initiative and been responding to residents about outdoor music noise & licensing at The Boathouse. Mike met the Medway River Pilgrims, who stayed overnight in Yalding on 22nd July, and walked with them some of the way; a seminar was held at Aylesford on 24th to discuss 'Rights of River' with other Councils & interests along the river route.

Borough Councillors Grace Couch & Mike Summersgill – 29th August 2025

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