

Green Party Councillors' Report of May 2025, for Marden & Yalding Ward Parishes –

Things have got busy again within the Borough Council after (KCC) election 'purdah' in April, and Cabinet have been rapidly catching up with projects and proposals that have been 'on hold' during that period, as well as finally getting a letter from Government about Devolution confirming a November reply date for Kent's future governance proposals. Obviously with the significant change of control at KCC with much of Maidstone changing 'colour', yet with no Reform councillors on the Borough Council, there is going to be rather a hiatus until we/MBC hear what they/KCC decide to do.

All Borough Councillors attended the (mayor-making) Council meeting and Civic Parade on Saturday 17th May. With no changes to Cabinet membership or to the Council's programme for the next three years, the meeting went ahead with little debate. Mike remains as the Cabinet Member for climate & nature recovery, and on the Planning Committee (but has stepped back as vice-chair of the latter), and Grace continues as vice-chair of the climate/environment Policy Advisory Committee (CTC PAC)

Other items expected to be brought to Cabinet on 18th June will include approving Mike's updated Biodiversity & Climate Change Strategy (detail of the Action Plans) and an update on Refurbishment proposals for Maidstone House; other matters will be chiefly Financial and Budget setting, but it does appear that MBC will declare a small surplus for 2024/25 (unlike in 2023/24). The next Council meeting is due on 16th July, which will be chaired by the new Mayor, Cllr. Martin Round of Headcorn.

Updates for Newsletters/Sharing with Residents:

Maidstone's 'Big Day Out' - MBC is inviting everyone to get out and enjoy our amazing parks and open spaces, and to be part of the first community-led 'Big Day Out.' Being held on Saturday 14th June, this inaugural one-day festival is all across the Borough; see website <https://bigdayout.info/>

Don't forget the River Festival in town on July 26th, and the Battle of Britain festival at Headcorn on June 28/29th. And there will be a return of Bandstand concerts on Sundays, and Art in the Park on Fridays, in Brenchley Gardens this Summer + a new Titanic exhibition at the Museum from 12th July.

Parish Matters –

Collier Street – Mike & Grace attended PC meeting and had earlier emails from residents about The Old Coach House application, which seemed to be similar to previously decided PlanAps.

Hunton – Liaison continues with residents about activity causing concerns on an agricultural site. Sorted a 'new' bin problem on Bank Holiday Monday (due to parking issue preventing lorry access)

Marden – Mike attended the Car Club Show on 24th publicising SpeedWatch (as local co-ordinator) alongside the new PC chair – very well received by the public, and maybe a couple more volunteers.

Nettlestead – Mike & Grace publicised the zebra crossing petition to the wider M&Y Ward.

Yalding – The Repair Café event in May was attended by Mike, and seemed a big success; the Repair Café at Tovil is also being repeated on 31st May, which shows there was an unmet social need. Grace spoke at Planning Committee to support a resident. Grace attended VE Day event, and made a cake.

Laddingford landlines are currently working again, but Trooli are still in talks with BT about their equipment so that may be a temporary fix. Grace is working with MBC's emergency planning team to find a liaison contact at Trooli, as they have done with other providers. Same concern in Hunton.

Grace met with Kenward Trust - looking at opportunities for their Youth Street Outreach team to support beat officers tackling ASB (anti-social behaviour) in the summer months.

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

Emails: michaelsummersgill@maidstone.gov.uk, gracecouch@maidstone.gov.uk