MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell

Dated: January 2026

Happy New Year! I look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2026.

Council

There are a number of consultations running at the moment although the timeline for them is now quite short. They are as follows;

- Landscape Character Assessment – to inform planning and decision making for new developments and nature recovery in the borough. I note that many of these responses have been put in by sitting councillors so far, not from our area, so I would encourage participation in this if you wish to preserve/protect the views you love.
- Violence against women and girls – help to shape the discussion on VAWG.
- VAWG youth consultation.
- Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople DPD – the maps and future plans for this type of accommodation across the borough.
- Community Governance Review stage 2 – views invited on the Maidstone Town Council Proposal.

All of the above can be found at https://bit.ly/3Y8u8wR

The budget meeting will be held in February and we have had a budget briefing with officers.

My group received cross party support for our motion to start the urgent work of obtaining Article 4 direction on Invicta House following the news that KCC have an idea to sell it to the highest bidder, with one of the options being to convert it into an extremely large House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). We look forward to hearing from the administration as to how this progresses.

Ward Work

I have reported a number of pot holes across the patch as they open up again due to the winter conditions.

I was made aware of the Marden Primary School alarm sounding continuously over some of the Christmas period and contacted their maintenance team to get that switched off. I have emailed them to suggest putting the contact number clearly on their school sign for those that don't have easy access to the internet.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at
claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk