Green Party Councillors' Report of **JUNE 2026**, for Marden & Yalding Ward Parishes –

After the slight May hiatus, Council meetings resumed in June with PACs (Policy Advisory Committees) in the first week and a Cabinet meeting on June 17th; decision made then will be debated at Full Council on 1st July. The first PAC discussed the expected outcome for last financial year of a £700,000 surplus (much higher than in 2024/25), and asked various questions on that; what to do with the MBC surplus will be discussed next month. Democracy & General Purposes Committee on 29th June will have discussed details of the 'shadow' operation of the proposed Town Council, which will come into formal being on 1st April 2027, and also set out its first year budget.

Of slightly more importance to our Ward, the Housing PAC on 3rd June discussed the Gypsy & Traveller DPD (Development Plan Document) Regulation 19 submission, and recommended that it was NOT adopted nor taken forward to the Planning Inspector for evaluation (there is a deadline of end of 2026 to do so now for DPDs, newly imposed by central government); the Cabinet agreed with that recommendation and Council will now debate/confirm. A significant problem with the Reg19 (after 'instructions' from the Planning Inspectorate as to what MBC should add/include, or not) was that existing & new sites put forward under Reg.18c 'Call for Sites' were now being evaluated to take their maximum 'footprint' capacity, not their application numbers – this meant a new potential site in our Ward put forward for a family occupation would now be 'suitable' for 12 caravans; not good!

We are still waiting to hear from Central Government about the future make-up of Kent for Local Government Reorganisation in 2028; a decision is still expected in mid-July, but recent government changes may mean that date could be brought forward, or postponed... Maidstone could be part of a West Kent grouping, but possibly also tied into Ashford & Folkestone! Or it could all go backwards.

Grace supported Maidstone Big Day out events, including Maidstone Pride, and she asked a question to Cabinet on June 17th after several homophobic attacks over that Pride weekend, along with a request to continue to support community groups.

Mike & Grace continued liaison with the 'River Medway Matters' group; there is going to be a repeat of last year's 'Source to Sea' pilgrimage, and this will pass through the Ward on 21/22 July. Mike and some fellow Councillors will be on the Medway on 4th July, as part of the annual 'swan upping' count

Updates for Newsletters/Sharing with Residents:

There is now a weekly Farmers' Market on Jubilee Square, by the Town Hall, every Saturday

Maidstone River Festival also returns on 25th July, with bands all day on Coronation Square.

Brenchley Bandstand Concerts start again every Sunday, 2-4pm, from 26th July; they are Free!

www.visitmaidstone.com/whats-on/events-calendar for full details of July events. There are a substantial number of free events being held at the Museum for schoolchildren in the holidays.

Consultations:

A request to do a Survey on Rural Business Support, with £500,000 potentially available, is open until 12th July: https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/rural-business-survey-2026

The 'Call for Sites' for the next Local Plan Update is now 'open', and closes on 23rd August.

A consultation on how to transform Earl Street in town for public access is open until 19th July.

Parish Matters –

Collier Street –Grace and Mike attended the last PC meeting, and Mike ran a SpeedWatch 'running' track for the kiddies at the Junior School fete on 20th June (but didn't see any Councillors there?). All Ward Councillors received an email about Council Pesticide usage in early June, which the MBC Biodiversity Manager responded to technically (via Claudine) from the same person in February.

Hunton – We continue to await details of the proposed polytunnels along Lughorse Lane, by Clockhouse Farm, but rainwater is accumulating in the new reservoir there. No Parish meeting this month, but preparations for the Village Hall Centenary celebrations were discussed at a Planning Committee; we have a band from Madrid coming on June 25th, ten years after they last played there. Grace had a positive response from the Police Inspector, regarding Beat Officers' visits to the Parish - responses from Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Inspector forwarded to the Parish Clerk.

Marden – Mike & Claudine attended a second meeting of the Parish Council on 2nd to discuss the final Parish submission about the Plain Road 'hostile' PlanAp for 115 houses; the deadline for Comments to MBC Planners has now extended into July, and the views of KCC Highways and other statutory consultees are keenly awaited. Residents in Chainhurst have been sending co-ordinated emails from an 'Action Group' about a potential traveller site in Dairy Lane; Councillors have responded separately, but the withdrawal of the DPD Reg.19 (see above) wasn't known at the time.

Nettlestead – The Pelican Crossing is at 'funding stage' with KCC; it has appeared on a list of projects for CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds to be disbursed by MBC, which is still undergoing Cabinet review and prioritisation. A Planning Appeal against Enforcement at Hempstead Lane (concerning extension of hard cover in the flood plain) will be held by the national Inspector.

Yalding – the Post Office managed to arrange suitable temporary outreach services after Tim & June retired, which seem to be working suitably albeit only on two afternoons a week. An Appeal against Planning Enforcement on a Site in Symonds Lane, where brick-built buildings were started last year, will be held at MBC offices in August. A second Appeal about 3 houses on Vicarage Road was lost. Grace has new casework at Cleavesland (Laddingford) being raised with Golding Homes, after a resident contacted the Ward Councillor for Harrietsham & Lenham with several concerns; these are not all new matters, and local Ward Councillors have dealt with some of these concerns before.

Borough Councillors Grace Couch & Mike Summersgill – 30th June 2026

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