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

Although there were no elections in Maidstone this May, there was a bit of a hiatus on formal Council business this month, with the ritual Mayor-making Council (and Civic Parade) on Saturday morning 16th, and then the Planning Committee on 21st. Mike is no longer a member of the MBC Planning Committee, but he watched online a couple of deferred items from previous involvement; there was a lot of public attendance and concerns raised in the press over one item, where a 'No' vote became a 'Yes' after directions from the Chair and Senior Planners about potential Appeal costs

The new Mayor is Brian Clark, a long-time Loose resident and local LibDem Councillor; one of his first duties was to open the annual Duck Race on Loose Stream on a sweltering Bank Holiday Monday (one of Mike's grand-children won the last race, and now treasures her 'gold medal'!). The Deputy Mayor is Conservative Denis Spooner, from Bearsted (coincidentally, a grandad with Mike of two grandchildren, as his 2nd son and my 2nd daughter got married, long before either of us were elected)

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 expected in July, but recent government decisions on other Counties caused concern that what most Boroughs proposed may not occur... Maidstone could still be part of a West Kent grouping, but possibly also tied into Ashford & Folkestone!

The Council Leader (along with some other Boroughs) had also met with South East Water in April, regarding concerns about future supply and capacity constraints and MBC is asking for more clarity and specific details concerning a letter we had from SEW about supply planning for the next decade. The recent water outages in the May heatwave have only reinforced the need for answers/actions.

Grace met with the Interim Deputy Director for Policy and Strategy at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to continue discussions with charity 'This Ends Now' to reduce victim blaming language in police press releases.

Mike & Grace attended a Teams meeting with the 'River Medway Matters' group, bringing together council representatives which the Medway flows through, ensuring decisions are made collectively. MBC updated on Rights of Nature work and how this can help protect rivers; 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.

Updates for Newsletters/Sharing with Residents:

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

Maidstone's 'Big Day Out' - Saturday 13th June - asking everyone to get out and enjoy our amazing parks and open spaces: www.bigdayout.info. This is also the Pride day - 'Maidstone's Big Gay Out'.

The Museum is holding a 'Regency Ball', celebrating Jane Austen on Saturday evening 27th June, which is the same date that a Caribbean food & drink festival happens in Mote Park.

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

There are to be 25th Anniversary celebrations this year for Whatman Millennium Park, and some initial publicity jaunts are being organised, including a free concert there on the afternoon of 18th July – a call has gone out for anyone involved originally (who donated their hand print) to attend.

Consultations:

A Pump Track Survey (for the Willington Street Park'n'Ride site) is now open to Borough residents here, until mid-June: https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/pump-track-2026

Not in our Ward, but close to Mike's heart (having lived there for two decades) is an update and enlargement of the boundary of the Loose Valley Conservation Area, open until mid-July: https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/loose-conservation-management-plan

Parish Matters –

Collier Street – Neither Grace nor Mike could attend last PC meeting, but we noted a new Councillor.

Hunton – The residents' consultation on The Square access/turnout has resulted in KCC agreeing to take some parking restrictions forward. The Annual Residents' meeting was well attended on 18th. We continue to await details of the proposed polytunnels along Lughorse Lane, by Clockhouse. The same company caused significant problems for West Street residents during one week, by delivering 12 new mobile homes to their Cheveney site without providing residents or Parish with any notice; residents were woken at 6am to move their parked cars to allow a very wide load to progress, and the next delivery was attempted at school pick-up time! A Road Closure barrier was also removed.

Marden – Mike & Claudine attended a Parish meeting with residents on 26th, about the speculative housing proposal for homes off Plain Road – we have all had several emails from residents on the issues; a decision to oppose it was taken by the PC on 26th, but details are to be finalised next week. A second residents meeting was also held on 19th May about the Copper Lane housing development (with the Developers presenting plans), the PlanAp for which is yet to be submitted in detail. Unfortunately the Green Homes Parish initiative, to be held at Marden Club on 17th, was postponed due to a lack of participants. Mike continues to visit residents at Stilebridge Caravan Park, on issues

Nettlestead – The Pelican Crossing is at 'funding stage' with KCC; it has appeared on a long list of projects for CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds to be disbursed by MBC, which is needing Cabinet review and prioritisation. A further Planning application at Hempstead Lane has gone in.

Yalding – Grace has secured a meeting next week with the external affairs team at the Post Office to continue discussing suitable temporary outreach services after Tim & June retire next month. All Borough Councillors and Parish representatives will be in on the call on 4th June.

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

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