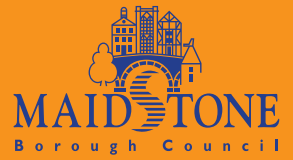


East April 2011



Borough Update

Your Maidstone Borough Council Newsletter



High Street gets green light

Free bulky rubbish service

Most weekends Maidstone council refuse lorries collect bulky household rubbish from locations in your area. Take your refuse to the Saturday Freighter Service at the times shown:

April 23

12:15 – 13:00. Grove Green. Grovewood Drive South
13:10 – 14:00. Grove Green. Grovewood Drive North
14:10 – 15:10. Madginford. Merton Road
15:10 – 15:45. Bearsted. Ashford Road/
Rosemary Road

May 21

07:45 – 08:30. Frinsted church
08:40 – 09:20. Wormshill. The Street
09:30 – 10:10. Harrietsham. Church Lane
10:20 – 11:00. Harrietsham Primary School
12:00 – 12:40. Lenham. Douglas Road
12:50 – 13:30. Lenham. Ham Lane/
Cherry Orchard
13:40 – 14:20. Lenham. Honeywood Road
14:30 – 15:10. Platts Heath. Green Lane
15:15 – 15:45. Grafty Green. Church Lane

May 28

07:45 – 08:30. Hollingbourne. Troys Mead
08:45 – 09:15. Lenham. Lenham Heath Road
09:25 – 09:55. Ulcombe. Lodge Gardens
15:15 – 15:45. Leeds. Brogden Crescent

June 4

07:45 – 08:30. Otham
08:45 – 09:45. Bearsted Village Green

Please note we no longer accept garden waste, very large bulky items and electrical or hazardous items.

You can dispose of these items through our paid for bulky collection service or at the household waste recycling centre at Burial Ground Lane, Tovil, Maidstone. It is open Monday to Saturday, 8am to 4.30pm, and Sunday and Bank Holidays, 9am to 4pm. For more information about our bulky rubbish services, including paid for doorstep collections, visit maidstone.gov.uk or call the cleansing hotline on 01622 602162.

Vinters Park Crematorium, new phone number

For all enquiries - call 01622 602656, Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 5pm and Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm or email bereavementservices@maidstone.gov.uk

Proms in the Park, Saturday, May 28

Picnics from 4pm, proms will start at 7.30pm and fireworks at 9pm.
Whatman Millennium River Park.
FREE



www.maidstone.gov.uk

Many Maidstone council services are now online, only a few mouse clicks from the council's website home page.

Applying for things such as parking permits and bulky waste collections are easily done online.

You can also find out about waste and recycling services, become an eCitizen to get electronic bills and report abandoned vehicles, flytipping and missed bin collections.

For information, reporting, applying and paying log onto www.maidstone.gov.uk

Borough Update

This is your council newsletter, produced up to six times a year in the Downs Mail newspaper. It is written, edited and designed by the council's communications team, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ. Email: pr@maidstone.gov.uk. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. It is typeset by AWdesign and printed by Uckfield Press.

If you are visually impaired and would like the newsletter text in large print, please call us on 01622 602807, and we will be happy to send you a copy.

Council tax freeze

Council tax payers in Maidstone will not be asked to pay any extra for Maidstone Borough Council's services next year, April 2011 to March 2012.

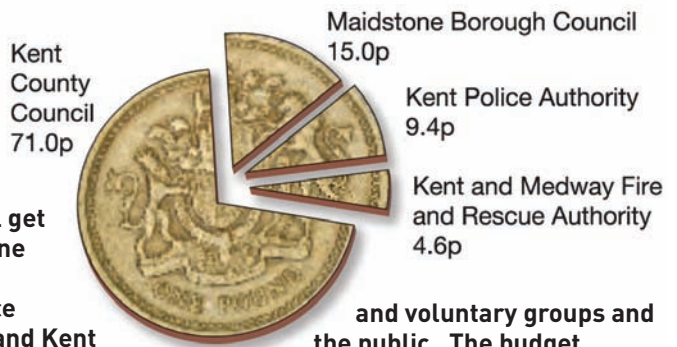
The council has set its budget for next year and kept the band D tax for its services at £222.39, the same as last year.

The Kent County Council, Kent Police Authority and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service are also freezing their charges at last year's levels.

That means that the total bill for a band D taxpayer, excluding parish council precepts, will remain at

£1,476.80 for 2011-2012. Kent County Council will get £1,047.78, Maidstone Borough Council £222.39, Kent Police Authority £138.68 and Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority £67.95. About 15p in every pound of council tax paid goes to Maidstone Borough Council.

The budget has been agreed following consultation with parishes, neighbourhood forums, community



and voluntary groups and the public. The budget preserves the services that are central to the council and those that are seen as important to the public during the consultation. Council tax payers in parish council areas may see an increase in their bill as parish councils cannot take advantage of government support.

Budget consultation

Consultation on the council's budget for 2011-2014 took place between August – November 2010.

It lasted more than 12 weeks:

- To raise awareness of the budget situation, the statutory services the Council provides, and the savings options considered by Cabinet Members.
- To find out which discretionary services matter most to local people.
- To encourage comments on the service options considered by Cabinet Members and ask for other suggestions for savings.

The 'MY Council, what matters to ME' road show visited supermarkets, shopping centres, Maidstone Leisure Centre, Staplehurst Library, Maidstone Mela, Maidstone Gateway, four neighbourhood forums, the rural conference, older persons forum, voluntary groups and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

More than 1,800 people took part to say what matters most to them. The results in order of importance were:

- 20% - Open Spaces - Open spaces, parks and recreation grounds
- 19% - Community Services - Community safety, CCTV and community development
- 16% - Transport Services - Bus shelters and rural bus services
- 13% - Recreation & Sport - Maidstone Leisure Centre, sports and youth activities
- 12% - Environmental Protection - Health promotion and toilets
- 10% - Economic Development - Tourism, visitor information centre, town centre management, conference venue marketing and Christmas lights
- 9% - Grants - Grants to voluntary and charitable organisations
- 1% - Democratic Representation - Civic occasions and events

Changes to Local Housing Allowance

Changes have been made to the rules for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) as part of the Government's plans to reduce the cost of welfare benefits. About 1,900 households in the Maidstone borough which are receiving housing benefit payments under the current LHA rules will be affected. The changes are:

- Maximum property size. If a family requires a property larger than four bedrooms they will be paid the four bedroom rate.
- A reduction in maximum benefit that can be paid. It is estimated that the level of rent to be met by housing benefit will drop between £4 and £11 per week. These reductions will apply to all new claims for benefit from April 2011. Existing claimants will not be affected until nine months after the next review of their claim.
- Removal of the excess award from April 1, 2011. Some claimants have been eligible for up to £15 per week above the actual rent charged. Existing claimants will have it withdrawn on the next anniversary review of their claim.
- Extra help with overnight care - from April 1 extra help will be available for those requiring overnight care and who need an additional room for a carer to sleep in. This room will be allowed for when deciding on the maximum amount of housing benefit in these cases.

For more information visit www.maidstone.gov.uk, email benefits@maidstone.gov.uk or call 01622 602557.

Red Nose Day 2011

Council staff held a dress down day for Comic Relief and raised more than £260.00 for the cause.

Uprockin

Skateboarding and BMX Competitions

Saturday, June 25 12pm-6pm. FREE event.

Skates and Bruises, South Park, Maidstone.

Volunteering in Mote Park



Volunteers, including children from Molehill Copse School, have planted new trees at Mote Park

People of all ages joined the first of Mote Park's volunteering days to start the lottery funded improvement project.

The work included planting new trees - Alder, Birch, Hornbeam, Sweet Chestnut, Indian Bean Tree, Eastern Walnut, Beech, Tulip Tree, Oak, Redwood and Lime.

Maidstone Borough Council was awarded a £1.8 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund and is also investing £700,000 in the project.

It is the biggest investment in the park since the council purchased it from Lord Bearsted in 1929 for £50,000.

If you'd like to volunteer to help out with the project or to become a Friend of Mote Park contact Alan Frith, Mote Park Audience Development Officer on 01622 602119 or email alanfrith@maidstone.gov.uk. Further details about the project can be found online on www.maidstone.gov.uk

Are you registered to vote?

Local Elections will take place on 5 May 2011 in 18 Wards of the Maidstone Borough – Allington, Bearsted, Boxley, Coxheath & Hunton, Detling & Thurnham, Downswood & Otham, East, Fant, Harrietsham & Lenham, High Street, Leeds, Loose, Marden & Yalding, North, Shepway North, South, Staplehurst, Sutton Valence & Langley.

Are YOU registered to vote? The deadline to register for the 5 May election is 14 April 2011 so don't delay, if you think that you are not registered telephone 01622 602007.

Polling Stations will be open from 7am to 10pm but if you prefer you can vote by post. The deadline to apply for a postal vote for the 5 May election is 5pm on 14 April 2011.

For help or information call electoral registration on 01622 602007.

There will also be a referendum on 5 May on the voting system for the UK Parliamentary Elections – everyone who is eligible will be able to vote in the referendum. Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm.

New views at Mote Park

Scrub and some poor quality trees have been removed to restore the landscape to how it was originally designed in the late 18th Century by the Earls of Romney.

The work has been completed with the help and advice of the Kent Wildlife Trust and care has been taken to ensure that the impact on wildlife has been minimised. This has been done by carrying out the works out of the bird nesting season; only removing a small percentage of scrub; cutting down scrub in stages to protect hibernating reptiles and having experts checking and leaving any trees where bats may roost.

Friends of Mote Park

The Friends of Mote Park help with the upkeep of the park and provide guided nature, wildlife, and bat walks. They act as a steering group for the council and represent the views of users.



You could be entitled to benefits?

You may think benefits to help you pay your rent or council tax are only for the retired, the unemployed or those unable to work, but Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are available to people of all ages and circumstances.

Those in paid work may receive help depending on the size of their household, the amount of money they have coming in each week and the amounts they have to pay

in rent and council tax.

To find out if you could be entitled:

■ Visit the Gateway in King Street, Maidstone for advice.

■ Call 01622 602557

■ Visit www.maidstone.gov.uk which includes a calculator for self-assessment to see what you could get.

Thank you for recycling your food waste



Just a couple of months in and Maidstone council's new food waste collection service is a big success. Since the end of January the facts speak for themselves:

- Up to 80% of households are using the new food waste scheme
- Every week more than 100 tonnes of food waste is sent for recycling into compost to grow more food.
- The amount of waste collected in grey rubbish bins and sent for disposal to the Allington Incinerator has decreased by 37%.
 - More than 60% of waste can now be easily recycled in Maidstone with the new food waste collections, mixed recycling collections and local recycling sites.
 - All paper, card, food and drinks cans, aerosols, foil, yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and ice cream tubs can be recycled in green recycling bins.
 - Textiles, books, shoes and glass can be recycled at local recycling sites.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to residents for their support which has pushed Maidstone's recycling rate to more than 40% already!

Garden Waste

Maidstone Borough Council's home compost bin offer is still available to help turn garden waste into compost. Information is available at www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Alternatively you can purchase Maidstone Borough Council's compostable garden sacks from more than 50 retailers throughout the borough or hire a garden waste bin for £30 a year by calling 01622 602600.

Making Maidstone Borough Count

The 2011 Census is underway and it is very important that everyone gets their forms in because the results determine the funding given to councils and health authorities.

In 2001, when the last census was held, 96% of forms were returned in our borough. This is a high rate of return but if everyone had replied Maidstone would have received an estimated extra £3 million a year to spend on services or to keep council tax rates lower.



Green light for Maidstone High Street

Maidstone council has agreed funding for a start to be made on Maidstone's flagship High Street regeneration project.

And the cabinet has agreed the design of the first phase from the Chequers Mall to Pudding Lane and all of Bank Street.



Kent Clinic on map by 2013

Six hundred new jobs, with an average salary of £53,000, will be created for the borough when a new medical centre opens at Newnham Park. It will provide advanced and highly specialised procedures and care in areas such as cardiology and neurology for private and NHS patients.

The Kent Institute of Medicine and Surgery will be built on the 28.5 hectare site next to Junction 7 of the M20.



Become part of the united voice of our business community

**NOW is the time to
join YOUR LOCAL**

Network of Rural Business Forums

The village Forums are voluntary and non profit making. It is an organisation run by a voluntary committee of fellow business owners. We are here solely to support you as a business in your local village.

£50 PER ANNUM MEMBERSHIP

FREE BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER

- Business Entries in Local Directory, Online Directory and Website:
 - In A-Z Section and three Classified headings
- Free Advertising on the website for:
 - Jobs • Commercial Property
 - Items for sale • Events
- Regular Forum Network business breakfasts
- Training Courses
- Business Exhibition annually
- Working with the Parish and Community
- Free advice on:
 - Legal matters • HR • Accounts
 - Counselling for you, your employees or any friends and family
- Inclusion in the Business Owners Exclusive email group:
 - Do you know? • Can you help?
 - Where can I find?
 - And almost anything required
- Crime Watch between businesses
- Supporting local organisations

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS ON THE FOLLOWING SERVICES

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Unique Private Health Scheme | ■ Janitorial Supplies | ■ Printing | ■ Electrical Supplies |
| ■ Training | ■ Groundworks | ■ Holidays | ■ Hair & Beauty |
| ■ Courier Services | ■ Oil | ■ Health & Safety Equipment | ■ Bathrooms |
| ■ Websites | ■ Office Furniture | ■ Flu Jabs | ■ Plumbing Supplies |
| ■ Landscaping | ■ Building Supplies | ■ Dentist Work | ■ Advertising & Printing |
| ■ Admin Services | ■ Driving Lessons | ■ Marketing Services | ■ Cleaning |

HOW TO JOIN please go to www.nrbf.co.uk and complete the joining form which can be found by clicking the to join button on the home page. Then please send a cheque for £50 annual membership made payable to "Network of Rural Business Forums" to NRBF, Forum House, Hunton Road, Chainhurst, Kent TN12 9TA. Alternatively if you would like to know more information before joining the forum please email your contact details to elainedcollins@aol.com and someone will contact you to discuss the forum further.

NRBF

Network of Rural Business Forums

www.nrbf.co.uk

Maidstone Museum holiday fun

Maidstone museum is a free fun place for the whole family – there is always something to explore, learn and discover. See the 2,000 year old Egyptian mummy, visit the dinosaur gallery, find out about local industries and explore the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum.

Easter craft activities:

April 16 & 17, 22, 23, 24 & 25 - Easter Egg Hunts, £1 per child

Monday April 11 – Wonderful Wings

Tuesday April 12 – Easter grass Heads

Wednesday April 13 – Farmyard Animal Petting drop in 11am to 3pm. FREE activity.

Thursday April 14 – Victorian Peg Dolls

Friday April 15 – Pop-up Easter Cards

Monday April 18 Sock Hop Bunnies

Tuesday April 19 Easter Egg Cosy

Wednesday April 20 Bouncing Bugs

Thursday April 21 Bonnie Baskets

May Half term craft activities:

Tuesday May 31 – Swooping Bird Kites

Wednesday June 1 – Egyptian Crowns

Thursday June 2 – Dinosaur Pop-up Cards

Friday June 3 – Clay Egyptian Artefacts

Activities are for the under 12s.

Weekday drop-ins are from 10.30am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Saturdays 10.30am – 4.30pm, Sundays 11.30am – 4pm. Cost: £2.50 per child.

Visit Maidstone Museum, St Faith's Street, Maidstone ME14 1LH, call 01622 602838 or log onto www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk

Maidstone museum gets energy efficient

Maidstone Museum's new East Wing Project will reduce the museum's carbon footprint.

The extension has a ground source heat pump and solar photovoltaic panels. Energy efficiency was also considered throughout the design process.

Ground source heat pumps work by extracting heat from the ground to provide a clean way of heating buildings. In the case of Maidstone Museum, heat collecting pipes will be buried in a number of boreholes in the grounds of the museum to extract heat to provide heating and cooling for the extension. The only energy used by ground source heat pumps is electricity to power the pumps. Typically, ground source heat pumps will deliver approximately three or four times as much thermal energy (heat) as is used in electrical energy to drive the system. This will be installed instead of a more common gas fired boiler, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the extension.

Solar photovoltaic panels will be provided on the southern facing parts of the roof of the new Japanese Gallery, which will be situated in the copper clad extension above the new museum entrance.

Solar Photovoltaic panels work by converting energy from the sun into electricity which can be used by the museum. The solar photovoltaic panels are due to be installed in combination with a north lighting system, which involves a pitched roof comprising solar photovoltaic panels and windows which will take advantage of north light, thereby reducing the lighting requirements in the gallery.

Abseil funds reach new heights

A group of council staff got into the spirit of fund-raising, while getting an injection of adrenalin at the same time. Ten staff took part in the Kent Messenger organised charity abseil on March 26 to help raise money towards the museum's East Wing Extension.

Statue to mark 36 Royal Engineers

Sculptor Mary Cox has been commissioned to create a life-size bronze statue of a 36 Royal Engineer, to be displayed in Brenchley Gardens, Maidstone. The statue will depict an engineer, in dress uniform. £35,000 must be raised by public subscription to pay for the statue. If you would like to make a donation, visit www.maidstone.gov.uk. The Maidstone Trust will administer the donations. The statue is expected to be unveiled in November 2011.



Keep up-to-date via our social networks

facebook

– www.facebook.com/maidstoneboroughcouncil

twitter

– www.twitter.com/maidstonebc

YouTube

– www.youtube.com/user/maidstonecouncil

Keep up-to-date with all the latest Maidstone Borough Council news by becoming a fan of our Facebook page. News, pictures and events are added regularly. You can watch our video news on YouTube. You'll find videos of the Fraser Hart robbery and the Gurkha statue unveiling. You can read our blog on twitter - follow the work of the council daily.



Hazlitt Arts Centre

COMEDY NIGHT MILES JUPP and KEVIN MCCARTHY – Exchange Studio – **Wednesday April 6 8pm £10**

Jupp appeared in series 3 of the political comedy *The Thick of It* as John Duggan, an incompetent press officer. Miles has also appeared in *Have I Got News For You* and *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*.

High School Rocks Monday April 18– Hazlitt 6.30pm £13.50. A high energy, foot stomping, totally interactive production featuring all the very best hits from High School Musical 1, 2, & 3, Hannah Montana, Camp Rock and Glee!

HILTON HALL'S SHOWCASE – Hazlitt – Thursday April 21 – Saturday April 23 7.30pm (Sat Matinee 3pm) £10 concs £7.50 (no concs on Sat evening). Hilton Hall presents its annual showcase with captivating choreography and dynamic dancers providing an action packed evening of entertainment.

COMEDY NIGHT Richard Morton, Nick Helm and Jimmy McGhie – WEDNESDAY MAY 4 – EXCHANGE STUDIO 8PM £10. Richard Morton is absolutely hilarious, he never fails to leave the audience in stitches.

REAL DIAMOND the JAZZ SINGER tour – FRIDAY MAY 27 – HAZLITT –7.30PM –£16 CONCS £15

Neil Diamond is an icon. John Hylton is Europe's foremost Neil Diamond Tribute performer.

Proms In The Park – Saturday May 28 – Whatman Millennium Park Riverstage – Picnics From 4pm – Concert 7.30pm – Fireworks 9.30pm (Approximate Timings) FREE EVENT

COMEDY NIGHT Andrew Lawrence, Inel Thomlinson and Maff Brown – EXCHANGE STUDIO – WEDNESDAY JUNE 1 8PM £10. Where he (Andrew Lawrence) truly shines is in his bilious streams of relentlessly cutting, staggeringly creative invective.

What's On!

To find out what's on in Maidstone Borough visit www.tour-maidstone.com

Maidstone Arts & Film Festival 2011

Saturday June 4 – Sunday June 12

Bigger and better than ever before - featuring great art, music and film in the heart of Maidstone.

FREE Family Art Workshops – Saturdays June 11, 18, 25 all drop in from 10.30-12.30 at Maidstone Museum, St Faith's St, Maidstone ME14 1LH

Maidstone Visual Arts Network are staging family workshops for the under 12s in Maidstone Museum on Saturdays throughout June/ July. Try your hand at casualty art, bookbinding and textile collage.

StARTle Art Prize 2011 – awarded Saturday June 4 6.30pm in the Graham Clarke Gallery. FREE EVENT

For budding artists, illustrators, photographers, sculptors and 3D designers out there. The winner receives their very own exhibition for the whole of June in the Graham Clarke Gallery. Simply email a good photo of your work and a short explanation of your work, your skills and your approach to mandyhare@maidstone.gov.uk by Friday 13 May, 2011. Shortlisting will take in the week beginning 23 May.

Festival Launch Saturday June 4 7pm Exchange Studio. FREE EVENT

7pm: The Hazlitt has teamed up with Maidstone Visual Arts Network and the University for the Creative Arts to launch their first ever Maidstone Art Trail around some amazing art works displayed in venues throughout the town including a competition to win cash prizes (runs until July 2). The trail runs throughout June. Visit www.mvan.info to find out more and to download a copy of the trail.

7.15pm: Join Graham Clarke and his youth band (average age 69yrs) in their crazy, fun-filled musical event... audience participation is a must!

8pm: Local lad and stand up comedian, Rob Callaghan, gives us wit, humour and irreverence.

8.15pm: Kent Young Musician of the Year – recital.

8.30pm: Sway and mingle to the cool jazz of Soul Spirit.

9.15pm: Close.

Casablanca – Monday June 6 7.30pm £5 Hazlitt Theatre

Maidstone Film Society has selected Casablanca as this year's festival film. This film is an absolute classic. Come dressed in 1940's garb – as Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, a gangster or moll! The best costume wins a pair of tickets to one of our comedy nights. Why

not try one of our special Casablanca Martini's to set the night off to a flying start.

Three Wise Men – contemporary film night Tuesday 7 June 7.30pm £3 Hazlitt Theatre

Directed by UCA student, Michael Intziagianni and produced by Craig Turner, this film explores art and religion through the eyes of three artists. For over 15s.

Mark Thomas – Friday June 10 7.30pm £15 concs £10 Hazlitt Theatre Cool, acerbic and funny.

Bootleg Shadows – Saturday June 11 7.30pm £15 concs £14 Hazlitt Theatre

A tribute show par excellence, relive the 50s and 60s.

Maidstone Singers – Saturday June 11 7.30pm £8 Methodist Church, Union Street, Maidstone

Opening Concert of the 19th International Maidstone Music and Dance Festival Sunday June 12 6.00pm at The Mote Hall, Maidstone £12. £10, £8 Hazlitt Box Office/ website and

tickets@themaidsingers.org.uk

This exciting community concert will feature the Maidstone Singers and local children performing music for choir and orchestra. The concert is in aid of Kent Association for the Blind.

The Vitality Project – Photographer Chris Brunt – Mall Chequers Shopping Centre June 4 - 11

...showcasing a preview of his ongoing project of photographs of local women involved in the arts, all over 40. **FREE EVENT**

Maidstone Arts Society's Exhibition at Maidstone Library, St Faith's Street, Maidstone ME14 1LH

During June. Open: Mon – Fri 9 – 6, Thurs 9 – 7, Sat 9 – 5 Be dazzled by the work of local artists. **FREE EVENT**

Through the Looking Glass, Rose Yard, Maidstone.

The window will exhibit the work of local artists Janet Jackson, Jo and Ken Savage during June.

(Organised in partnership with the Hazlitt Arts Centre, University for the Creative Arts, Maidstone Visual Arts Network, Maidstone Area Arts Council, Maidstone Film Society, Mall Chequers, Maidstone Town Centre management and Jupiter Workshops)

To book tickets go online at www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk or ring the Box Office 01622 758611.