

East March/April 08



Borough Update

Your Maidstone Borough Council Newsletter



From Fly-Tipping Hotspot to Wildlife Haven

Free bulky rubbish service

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

Saturday 12th April

0845 - 0930 Senacre. Woolley Road

Saturday 19th April

1200 - 1300 Vinters Park. Marston Drive
1330 - 1515 Walderslade. Gleamingwood Drive
0745 - 0845 Lenham. Lenham Heath Road
0900 - 1000 Lenham. Ham Lane
1015 - 1100 Lenham. Warren Street
1200 - 1300 Wormshill. The Street
1330 - 1515 Grafty Green. Church Road

Sunday 20th April

1000 - 1130 Stockbury Village Hall

Saturday 26th April

0900 - 1000 Grove Green. Provender Way

Sunday 27th April

1000 - 1100 Harrietsham. The Roebuck
1115 - 1215 Harrietsham. Church Lane
1300 - 1400 Lenham. Honeywood
1415 - 1515 Lenham. Douglas Road
1530 - 1715 Hollingbourne. Troys Mead

Saturday 3rd May

1200 - 1315 Walderslade. Impton Lane
1400 - 1515 Vinters Park. Snowden Parade
1130 - 1230 Senacre. Betsham Road

Saturday 10th May

0745 - 0845 Platts Heath. Green Lane
0915 - 1100 Leeds. Brogden Crescent
1115 - 1215 Bearsted Village Green

Sunday 11th May

1530 - 1715 Vinters Park. Hampton Road

Saturday 17th May

1145 - 1245 Otham
1330 - 1515 Madginford. Merton Road
0745 - 0845 Dean Street. Near Adbert Drive
0915 - 1015 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive North
1030 - 1130 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive South
1145 - 1245 Bearsted. Ashford Road

Saturday 24th May

0745 - 0830 Ulcombe. Lodge Gardens
1130 - 1230 Frinsted Church
0745 - 0845 Walderslade. Impton Lane
0900 - 1100 Bredhurst. Hurstwood Road
1115 - 1215 Detling Village Hall
1300 - 1345 Sandling. Tyland Lane

Sunday 1st June

1345 - 1445 Senacre. Woolley Road

The household waste recycling centre at Burial Ground Lane, Tovil, Maidstone 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 digitalmaidstone.co.uk or call the cleansing hotline on 01622 602162.



Recycling on the up

Maidstone's new fortnightly recycling and weekly rubbish collection service has got off to a flying start. Recycling rates have increased by 39% in the first 20,000 homes to receive the new service. That's an extra 37 tonnes of paper, cardboard, tins, cans and plastics saved for recycling every week. Another 20,000 households will receive the service in October and everyone will have the improved fortnightly recycling collection service by March 2009, along with a weekly rubbish collection.



Boxley Warren

Our cover illustrates the transformation of Boxley Warren. It was once a notorious hotspot for flytipping and a paradise for dirt bikes and 4x4s. Now a haven for wildlife, it has recently been declared a local nature reserve.

Glass recycling

14,000 Maidstone residents who had a kerbside glass collection no longer have to put their glass out into yellow boxes to have it recycled.

Now that the Allington waste to energy plant is working, all glass put in with household rubbish will be recycled. It will be collected and used as aggregate in road construction - exactly the same end product from the old yellow box collection.

Of course, if you prefer, you may take your bottles and jars to bottle banks, where the separated colours will be recycled into new bottles and jars.

Refuse collections - no change for bank holidays

From now on we will collect refuse and recycling on all bank holidays, except Christmas and New Year.

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, London House, 5-11 London Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8HR. Email: pr@maidstone.gov.uk. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. It is typeset by DesignZero6 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.

We're moving

Maidstone Borough Council is moving to new offices in King Street, Maidstone to provide all its services and many more, for the first time at a single location. The council will lease the offices from the Mall Chequers, Maidstone - surrendering leases and selling the freeholds of its existing offices to pay for the move.

A new Gateway, provided in partnership with KCC, will provide access to borough and county council services and many other public and community services.

The council will be moving on 16 June with a temporary reception in the Mall Chequers before the new Gateway opens in September.



Lowest in Kent

Maidstone council has kept its council tax increase down to 2.94%, the lowest district council increase in Kent.

When Kent County Council's increase of 3.9%, the Kent Police increase of 4.99%, and the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue service increase of 3.5% are taken into account the overall increase for 2008/2009 will be 3.8%.

That means that B and D bills will increase by £51.79 to £1401.57. Kent County Council will receive £1,001.79, Maidstone Borough Council £207.72, Kent Police £128.25 and Kent and Medway Towns Fire and Rescue £63.81.

Maidstone council found savings of more than £1 million to keep its increase to 2.94%.

Despite the overall savings there will be increased spending in some areas such as CCTV and concessionary fares and improvements in other services such as recycling and waste collection.

With 46% of Maidstone properties in bands A to C many residents will pay less than the average Band D figure. The charge for every band is- A £934.38, B £1090.11, C £1245.84, D £1401.57, E £1713.03, F £2024.49, G £2335.95, H £2803.14.

Out of every council tax pound - 71p goes to Kent County Council, 15p goes to Maidstone Borough Council, 9p to Kent Police and 5p to Kent Fire and Rescue.

All the figures above are excluding parish council precepts, which range from £5.37 for Boughton Malherbe to £65.16 for Bredhurst (Band D values).

Your vote counts

Maidstone councillors make decisions on your behalf, so you should have a say in who is elected on Thursday 1 May. The deadline for applications to be included on the register of electors in order to vote in the next election is 16 April 2008.

Polling stations in the wards where borough and parish elections will be held will be open from 7am until 10pm but you can vote by post if you prefer. Postal votes are:

- Convenient
- Easy – you just have to fill in a few details, and
- Hassle free

To apply for a postal vote call registration services on 01622 602007 or email registrationservices@maidstone.gov.uk

The last dates for completed application forms are:

Postal Voting - New applications and cancellations or amendments to existing arrangements – 5pm, 16 April
Proxy Voting - Cancellations or amendments to existing arrangements – 5pm, 16 April. New applications – 5pm, 23 April.

Maidstone Borough Council holds elections by thirds so this year elections will be held in each of the following wards only -Allington, Barming, Bearsted, Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton, Boxley, Bridge, Coxheath and Hunton, East, Fant, Headcorn, Heath, High Street, Marden and Yalding, North, North Downs, Park Wood, Shepway North, Shepway South, South.”

Poll cards will delivered by 13 April 2007. You don't need one to vote but you can only vote at the polling station you have been allocated.



Volunteer drivers needed

If you have some spare time and would like to help others, you could become a volunteer driver and help frail, elderly and disabled people, who cannot use public transport. You'll need a clean driving licence, a reliable car and comprehensive car insurance. You'll receive a mileage allowance. You can get involved with other volunteering projects too – contact Maidstone Volunteer Bureau on 01622 756662, call into the Maidstone Community Support Centre, Marsham Street or visit www.mvbhub.org.uk.

Spring into Clean Sweep

Volunteers are needed for a Spring Clean Sweep - Monday 31 March to Sunday 25 May.

If you are fed up of fly tipping, tired of graffiti and irritated by litter and want to do something about it – you can lend a hand. Community groups, residents associations, parish councils and individuals can all help.

We will provide litter picks, gloves, sacks and hi-visibility jackets, and get rid of everything you collect.

For more information about joining this year's Clean Sweeps, call Alison Sollis on 01622 602281 or email alisonsollis@maidstone.gov.uk

Youth Sport Achievement Awards

Young people across the borough have been recognised for their contribution to sport. The Youth Sport Achievement Awards recognise sporting improvement and success, rewarding young people who have achieved high level competitive success or have excelled in their sport through their dedication and positive attitude.

Junior Awards

Individual - Courtney Tulloch, Pegasus Gymnastics Club

Team - Morgan Hellen and Tim Grant, Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club

Senior Awards

Individual - Alex Torbica, Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club

Team - Maidstone Tennis Club

Outstanding Personal Achievement Award

Alexandra Adams, Black Lion Swimming Club

Outstanding Youth Service to Sport

Lorna High, Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club

KM Service to Sport Award

Ray Long, Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club and Oakwood Park Grammar School

Five training grants were awarded by The Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent, to Alexandra Adams (swimming), Lauren Lethbrige (gymnastics), Alex Torbica (rowing), Toby Hoskins (gymnastics), and Jordan Lown (korfbal).

The awards are sponsored by Maidstone council, Serco - Maidstone Leisure Centre, Personnel Health & Safety Consultants, Rotary Club of the Weald of Kent, Hubble and Freeman and the KM Group.



Alexandra Adams

Heroes' homecoming

Maidstone's 36 Engineers received a hero's welcome on its return from Helmand province in war torn Afghanistan. Crowds lined the route of the welcome parade through Maidstone. A book of condolence in memory of Cpl Ivano Violino and L Cpl Jake Alderton, who died on the tour, has been opened at Maidstone Town Hall.



Keeping Maidstone tidy

On cold and blustery mornings a group of dedicated people work tirelessly towards one goal. Their job isn't glamorous but without them we'd soon notice the difference. They are our street cleaners and park attendants, working hard to keep Maidstone tidy.

Come rain or shine, stormy weather, snow and even on Christmas Day, the teams are out and about in our town centre, villages and parks and open spaces.

Setting out from 5am, our street cleaners have often taken a break before many people have woken up.

Dedicated teams keep our villages clean and tidy. Another looks after our urban areas, such as Grove Green, Downswood and Vinters Park.

The crews often perform duties beyond their job

description – giving directions to motorists and reporting broken street lamps or paving.

The parks team braves the elements on a daily basis, clearing leaves, litter picking, cutting grass and keeping the public toilets clean. The attendants at Whatman Park look after the play area and skate park, and help at events such as Peace One Day and Proms in the Park.

We may not always notice them, but our street cleaners and park attendants work hard to keep our borough tidy.

Radio 1's Big Weekend



Mote Park was bought by the Maidstone Borough Corporation in 1929 for £50,000 for the enjoyment of the people of Maidstone. Since then it been used for county shows, Scout Jamborees, fun fairs, The Race for Life and the Maidstone Mela, and now it is to host its biggest event, which will be shared with a worldwide audience.



Radio 1's Big Weekend will be held in the park on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 May, with the majority of FREE tickets going to Maidstone residents.

The annual Radio 1 flagship event

attracts top UK and international artists, and will kick start this year's festival season, putting Maidstone firmly on the map. Artists at last year's Radio 1's Big Weekend in Preston included Kaiser Chiefs, Razorlight, Rihanna and Stereophonics. Preston had a £1.3million boost to the local economy, and with all that's on offer in Maidstone, we expect to do just as well.



How to get tickets

Radio 1 will announce on-air in mid April how listeners can register online for free tickets at www.bbc.co.uk/radio1.

Tickets will be allocated randomly, with the majority going to residents of Maidstone and the surrounding Kent area. **There will be no tickets on the gate.**

Working together

Maidstone council is working with Radio 1, the Police and SJM Concerts to look after concert goers, nearby residents and park users.

Transport

We are working to minimise traffic disruption, and will provide extra Park and Ride buses for people attending the event. Arriva and South Eastern Trains will run extra bus and train services.

Road closures

Residents close to the park will be protected. Road closures will stop concert goers from parking in their roads but the residents and their visitors will have access at all times.

Mote Park

From 28 April to 19 May the Mote Adventure Zone will be closed so that stages can be set up safely, but during that time Maidstone Leisure Centre will give **FREE** access to Polar Adventure and the Ice Hills. And over the bank holiday weeked – 3,4,5 May – there will be **FREE** bouncy castles in Mote Park, close to the leisure centre.

Don't forget our new Penenden Heath and South Park play areas will be open too.

The main car park, off Willow Way, will be closed from 28 April to 19 May during the set up and clearance but park visitors can park at Maidstone Leisure Centre except on 10 and 11 May.

The Radio 1 Big Weekend will take place on the flat football pitches near the main entrance, away from the lake and wildlife. There will be litter picks during and after the event.

Maidstone Leisure Centre

Special parking arrangements will be provided for all centre users, including blue badge holders on 10 and 11 May – otherwise it's business as usual at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

Noise

We are working with SJM Concerts to make sure noise levels, during the sound checks on 9 May and during the event, are acceptable and comply with the Code of Practice of Environmental Noise Control at Concerts. SJM Concerts is an experienced events company and promoted last year's Big Weekend in Preston, which was also in a public park. Sound checks will be restricted to 4.30 – 7.30pm on 9 May and there will be no amplified noise after 11pm on 10 and 11 May.

More information is available on our website digitalmaidstone.co.uk/bigweekend, or at our residents' meeting on Monday 14 April - 7.30pm Maidstone Grammar School for Boys.

Maidstone's Environmental Footprint

According to Sir David King, the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, "Climate change is the most severe problem that we are facing today."

In Maidstone, we've had firsthand experience of climate change - the floods of 2000, the heat wave of 2003 and the recent two year drought. They were the result of climate changes that can be traced back to the 1950s so the positive steps that we take now will also take several years to have any impact.

In 2005 Maidstone Borough residents produced 7.2 tonnes of carbon per head. That's equivalent to the weight of more than 80 people for each and every one of us!

And that's why we will be asking every resident and business in Maidstone to make a carbon pledge - to agree to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions.

The council has already developed, adopted and started to implement its own climate change plan to make the council carbon neutral by 2010.



We have:

- Introduced low emission vehicles for Park & Ride and refuse vehicles
- Set CO2 limits on our cars
- Bought 'green' tariff electricity for council buildings and fitted energy saving lights
- Replaced all computers (at end of life) with low energy flat screens and laptops
- Educated staff to 'switch off' computers, lights and electrical devices when not in use

And this June we are moving to new energy efficient town centre offices, close to public transport routes, with

reduced staff parking and a wood-fuel boiler.

The Carbon Trust is carrying out energy audits of our major buildings such as the theatre, town hall, museum and leisure centre and is establishing an environmental management system to reduce energy use and costs. We have piloted a voluntary scheme for staff to offset carbon emissions from their cars through tree planting. We are considering joining a new local government Carbon Trading Scheme in April 2008.

And along with KCC and the other Kent districts, we have agreed to reduce per capita carbon emissions by 12% by 2011.

If you would like more information about Maidstone's environmental footprint, please visit the council's website digitalmaidstone.co.uk and look for climate change, call Jim Boot on 01622 602246 or email jimboot@maidstone.gov.uk

Finance and Performance

In our last Annual Report we provided information on our accounts. This followed consultation with residents which revealed that whilst 96% found the information useful, you wanted to know more!

In the last Borough Update we reported on the results of our budget consultation, which allowed you, our residents, to consider council tax levels against spending considerations.

Full performance data will be available in June 2008 but in the meantime we have produced a summary based on estimates.

Whilst we continue to make strong improvements, achieving Value for Money is at the heart of the Council's philosophy. We estimate that we will make £632,000 of efficiency savings this year; and in 2008-09 we will be seeking a further £648,000. We will do this by delivering more for less.

Performance Indicator	Actual 2006-07	Estimate 2007-08	Target 2008-09
Council Tax collected	98.60%	98.65%	98.70%
Non-domestic tax (NNDR) collected	98.93%	98.95%	99.10%
Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstances related to Housing Benefits (calendar days)	4.4 days	4.2 days	4.1 days
How the Council compares against a checklist of best practice for Environmental Health	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of Council buildings open to the public accessible to people with disabilities	70.59%	70.59%	70.59%
Household waste recycled or composted	19%	24%	27%
Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	95.57%	96.49%	97.00%
Planning applications determined within 8 weeks	96.2%	92.0%	92.0%
Streets and open spaces with litter and detritus	7.3	7.6	9.5

The Battle of Maidstone 1648

This year is the 360th anniversary of the Battle of Maidstone, one of the bloodiest battles of the English civil war, and one of the most important events in Maidstone's history. In May and June events, talks and workshops will be held, culminating in a full scale re-enactment of the battle in the town centre.



Battle of Maidstone talks

Print and Propaganda by Jason Peacey

Thursday 24 April, 6.30pm, Maidstone Club, Earl Street
Tickets £3. Call 01622 602838.

The Battle of Maidstone by Professor Richard Holmes

Friday 30 May, 7.30pm, Hazlitt Arts Centre
Professor Holmes, leading expert on the English Civil War, on the events leading up to, during and after the Battle of Maidstone.
Tickets £15. Call 01622 758611 or visit www.hazlitttheatre.co.uk.

The Battle of Maidstone weekend

Proms in the Park - FREE family event

Saturday 31 May, Riverstage, Whatman Park.

The theme will be the Battle of Maidstone, with traditional flag waving anthems and the all time prom favourite – the 1812 Overture.

Picnics from 4pm. Concert from 7.30pm. The evening will finish with a spectacular fireworks display.

Battle re-enactment

Sunday 1 June, Maidstone town centre
10.30am-4pm, Local Food Fayre and Craft Market in the High Street.

11am, a full scale re-enactment of the Battle of Maidstone up Gabriel's Hill and Week Street.

11am-4pm, a Living History exhibition on life during the English Civil War at Maidstone Museum.

2pm, plaque unveiling at Gabriel's Hill.

New Hazlitt Arts Centre

The Hazlitt Arts Centre will burst onto Maidstone's arts and cultural scene in May.

The former Hazlitt Theatre and Exchange is undergoing a transformation to include a new 150 seat studio and rehearsal room. This stunning new studio will be the focal point for musical performances and contemporary drama. It will be ideal for small intimate productions.

It will have 'The Graham Clarke Gallery', for local artists, a new café, and a foyer and reception in Rose Yard.



Hazlitt Theatre... see it live

The Big Ballet

Sunday 27 April 2.30pm & 7.30pm
£17.50, £16.50 concs

An Audience with Jimmy Greaves

Wednesday 30 April 7.30pm
£16.50, £14.50 concs

An Evening with Gervase Phinn

Thursday 1 May 7.30pm £15.50

The Fureys and Davey Arthur 2008 - 30 Years On.....Tour

Sunday 18 May 7.30pm
£15, £14 concs



Nina Conti – Complete and Utter Conti – UK Spring Tour 2008

Friday 23 May 7.30pm
£14, £12 concs

Andy Fairweather Low

Saturday 24 May 7.30pm
£16, £14 concs

A Feast of Gilbert and Sullivan Stars of the D'oyly Carte Opera Company

Sunday 25 May 7.30pm
£14.50, £12.50 concs

We'll Meet Again 'Hits from the Blitz'

Thursday 5 June 2.30pm
£11, £9 concs

There's a 10% discount at Mexxa Mexxa when you show your theatre ticket at the restaurant.

What's On!

Kent Wildlife Trust 50th Anniversary
22 April
Tyland Barn, Sandling 01622 662012

Maidstone Vintage Toy Fair
26 April

Maidstone Market, Lockmeadow
01622 735396

Horse Show and Craft Fair
26-27 April

Leeds Castle 01622 765400

Crea+ive Maids+one Exhibition

3-31 May
Graham Clarke Gallery
01622 758611

Maidstone Goes Wild

3 May
Fremlin Walk 01622 662012

May Day Celebrations

5 May
Museum of Kent Life, Cobtree
01622 763936

Maidstone Symphony Orchestra

17 May
Maidstone Leisure Centre
08451 552277

Italian Market
23-25 May
Fremlin Walk 01622 356580

May Holiday Fun

26-30 May
Museum of Kent Life, Cobtree
01622 763936

Embroidery Activity

26 May
Maidstone Museum 01622 602838

Jousting Tournament

27 May-1 April
Leeds Castle 01622 765400

Lobster Pot Helmet Activity

28 May
Maidstone Museum 01622 602838

Arms and Armour Activity

29 May
Maidstone Museum 01622 602838

Quill Writing Workshop

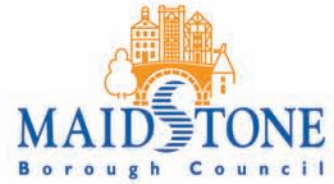
30 May
Maidstone Museum 01622 602838

Maidstone Music

Maidstone has a great variety of music on offer, and from May it will all be brought together under the banner of Maidstone Music. Whether it's Youth of Generation bands, the Jazz Festival, Proms in the Park or artists at the Hazlitt, music fans will find them all in the Maidstone Music brochure, or on the new website

www.maidstonemusic.co.uk.





**NOW
YOU
CAN
VOTE,
DON'T
STAY
SILENT**

A photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a pearl earring and a pearl hair clip. Her mouth is covered with black tape, symbolizing the 'Don't stay silent' theme.

**BOROUGH & PARISH
ELECTIONS
1st MAY
2008**

YOUR VOICE



**YOUR CHOICE
MAKE IT COUNT!**