

East November 2008



Borough Update

Your Maidstone Borough Council Newsletter



ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

See page 7 for
a chance to win
cinema tickets

Historic Maidstone
landmark returns home

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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 22 November

07.45 - 08.45 Platts Heath. Green Lane
09.15 - 10.30 Leeds. Brogden Crescent
11.30 - 13.00 Bearsted Village Green

Sunday 23 November

15.45 - 17.15 Vinters Park. Hampton Road

Saturday 29 November

12.30 - 13.30 Otham.
13.45 - 15.15 Madginford. Merton Road shops
12.30 - 13.30 Bearsted. Ashford Road/Rosemary Road

Saturday 6 December

12.15 - 13.15 Frinsted.
07.45 - 08.45 Walderslade. Impton Lane/Spenlow Drive
09.00 - 11.00 Bredhurst. Hurstwood Road
12.00 - 13.00 Detling village hall
13.30 - 14.15 Sandling. Tyland Lane/Old Chatham Road

Sunday 14 December

13.45 - 14.45 Senacre. Woolley Road shops

Saturday 20 December

13.00 - 15.15 Stockbury Village hall car park
07.45 - 08.45 Grafty Green. Church Road/Headcorn Road
09.00 - 10.30 Lenham. Lenham Heath Road/Boughton Road
11.30 - 12.30 Lenham. Ham Lane/Cherry Orchard
12.45 - 13.45 Lenham. Warren Street, Harrow Inn
14.15 - 15.15 Wormshill. The Street/Bedmorton Lane

Sunday 21 December

10.00 - 11.00 Walderslade. Gleamingwood Drive/Badger Road
15.45 - 17.15 Vinters Park. Marston Drive

Saturday 10 January

07.45 - 08.45 Hollingbourne. Troys Mead/Eyehorne Street
09.00 - 10.00 Harrietsham. The Roebuck car park
10.15 - 11.30 Harrietsham. Church Lane/Marley Road
12.30 - 14.00 Lenham. Honeywood Road green
14.15 - 15.15 Lenham. Douglas Road

Sunday 11 January

15.00 - 16.00 Grove Green. Provender Way

Saturday 17 January

12.00 - 13.00 Senacre. Betsham Road

Sunday 18 January

10.00 - 11.00 Walderslade. Impton Lane/Olivine Road
11.30 - 12.30 Vinters Park. Snowden Parade

Saturday 24 January

07.45 - 08.45 Vinters Park. Hampton Road

Sunday 25 January

10.00 - 11.00 Otham.
16.15 - 17.15 Madginford. Merton Road

Saturday 31 January

11.30 - 12.30 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive North
12.45 - 13.45 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive South
14.00 - 15.15 Bearsted. Ashford Road/Rosemary 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.



Back home

Maidstone's historic Russian cannon is back home. The large gun was taken away in August for repairs. But in October it was placed back on its plinth looking as good as it did when it was first presented to the town 150 years ago.

For eight weeks the cannon was in Bristol at

Dorothea Restorations undergoing repairs and re-coating costing £8,000. Fractures in the carriage were pinned and lost sections of the frame recast.

A further £4,000 was spent on repairing and cleaning the plinth.

Thanks for registering

In August the annual update of the Electoral Register started when 66,000 forms were sent out – one to every residential property in the borough.

A reminder was sent in September and then in October the community canvassers started knocking on the doors of people who still had not returned their form.

92% of households have responded. 11,227 households registered by telephone or internet and 49,000 posted back completed forms.

Thank you to everyone who replied but if you didn't you will lose your right to vote and you will have trouble obtaining credit, a mortgage or mobile phone.

School Litter Competition

Maidstone school children have been encouraged to help keep the borough clean and tidy. Year 3 children have been asked to enter a competition to win their own individually-designed anti-litter sign for their school.

The winner will be announced in January and will have their design mounted onto metal weatherproof signs for the school.

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 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.

Help with the credit crunch

Grants to improve your home

Home repair grants are available to owner-occupiers who are receiving a means-tested benefit such as tax credits, benefit credits and rebate on council tax bills or who have limited savings and live mainly on a state retirement pension. The grants can pay for roof repairs, rewiring and installing basic amenities such as a bath or toilet.

Applicants must have lived in the property for at least three years and will have to repay 50% of the grant when the property is sold.

Call the In Touch Home Improvement agency on 01622 765496.

Heating and insulation grants are available to owner-occupiers and private sector tenants who are receiving a means-tested benefit or who have limited savings and live mainly on a state retirement pension. The grants can pay for cavity wall or loft insulation, for a central heating system or to replace an old or inefficient boiler. And could save you £275 a year and reduce your carbon emissions - 33 per cent of your heat escapes through your walls and 26 per cent escapes through the roof.

Owner-occupiers must have lived in the property for at least a year.

For details ring 01622 602470.

First time buyers' grants are available for purchases of a council tax band A, B and C property that needs work to bring it 'up to scratch'. Work can include roof repairs, rewiring, central heating, baths and toilets.

Applicants must live in the property for three years after receiving a grant. Call 01622 602470 for details.

Disabled facilities grants help owner-occupiers and tenants who need facilities such as a stair lift or level access shower to be installed.

Applicants should contact KCCs occupational therapy bureau on 01622 691640 before applying to Maidstone council. These grants are usually means tested.

For information tailored specifically to your property or how to save energy and other energy efficiency schemes call the local Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512 012 or visit energysavingtrust.org/kss

Housing and council tax benefits

Call 01622 602557 to make a claim.

We can take all the details over the phone and tell you whether you are likely to qualify for help or not. If you do qualify, an appointment will be made for you to come in and see a benefit officer. Your benefit will then be decided while you wait and explained before you leave.

To find out more log onto - digitalmaidstone.co.uk/benefits. There's an online calculator to give you an indication of how much you could be entitled to.



Mortgage advice

If you are worried about your mortgage repayments the Council of Mortgage Lenders suggests you:

- Tell your lender as soon as possible. Your lender will be sympathetic and the earlier you tell your lender, the more options available to solving the problem.
- Get advice. There are lots of organisations which offer free and independent money advice such as Citizens Advice, Shelter, National Debtline, and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service. Debt advisors will help you assess your situation and advise you on the best course of action.
- Check the options available to you. If you become unemployed, have an accident, or are too sick to be able to work, you should check whether you have a mortgage protection policy.

For more information and advice log on to citizensadvice.org.uk or cml.org.uk

Free bus travel

Maidstone Borough Council has re-introduced free bus passes for companions travelling with disabled people.

Companion bus passes are available to disabled people who receive a high rate mobility component or higher rate attendance allowance.

It allows them to take an unnamed escort to help them with their bus journeys.

The council also supports a transport voucher scheme to help those who, through severe disability, are unable to use conventional bus services.

The scheme, run by Age Concern Maidstone, is only available to people who do not hold a free bus pass. The vouchers, up to £70 for a full year, pay for journeys on taxis and voluntary transport schemes.

All enquiries and new applications for bus passes and companion passes should be made to the Concessionary Travel section at Maidstone council by calling 01622 602334.

For details of the transport voucher scheme and an application form contact Age Concern Maidstone at 11 Mill Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6XW, call 01622 753618 or email info@ageconcernmaidstone.org.uk

Shopping in Maidstone this Christmas

Late nights

Whatever you are looking for this Christmas, make Maidstone the place to be. The town has top named shops such as House of Fraser, WHSmith, Boots, Primark and Topshop so there really is something for everyone.

And if you're looking for that extra special gift this year, Kent's county town can help with that too. Maidstone has a 50-50 split between household names and independent retailers. Gabriel's Hill, Market Buildings, Bank Street and Union Street have a great many hidden gems, from photography stores to china and glass specialists and from musical instrument retailers to jewellers.

Week Street is a must to visit with the likes of Marks & Spencer and Woolworths. Fremlin Walk has Zara, H&M and Clinton Cards and much more. The Mall Chequers includes BHS, Boots and TJ Hughes and the Royal Star Arcade has a number of independent shops including Karen Millen.

If you're on the prowl for that perfect party outfit on a budget take a look in Matalan and TK Maxx, situated just on the riverfront. Maidstone has a fantastic mix of shops – it is the only place to buy your presents this Christmas.

Park and Sail

On Saturdays from November 15 to December 20, there will be an hourly Park and Sail service along the River Medway between Allington Lock by the Malta Inn and Maidstone's Archbishops Palace. The fare will be £3 return for adults and £1 return for children. Free parking at the Museum of Kent Life.

The service is operated by Kentish Lady Hire Cruisers Ltd and is subject to river conditions. For more information call 01622 753740.

Park and Ride

Extra buses will be running on the council's park and ride services from London Road, Willington Street and Sittingbourne Road every Saturday from November 15 until Tuesday December 27.

On Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, there will be a normal service. There will be no services on Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day.

Parking

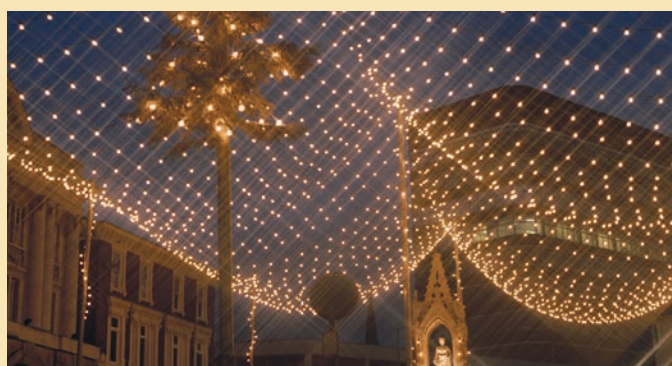
Maidstone is well served by bus and train but if you'd rather drive into town check out our website for details of our car parks - digitalmaidstone.co.uk



Maidstone shops are open:

Monday,	December 15	- open until 8pm
Tuesday,	December 16	- open until 8pm
Wednesday,	December 17	- open until 8pm
Thursday,	December 18	- open until 9pm
Friday,	December 19	- open until 8pm
Saturday,	December 20	- open until 7pm
Sunday,	December 21	- 10.30am - 4.30pm
Monday,	December 22	- open until 9pm
Tuesday,	December 23	- open until 9pm
Wednesday,	December 24	CHRISTMAS EVE - open until 5.30pm
Thursday,	December 25	CHRISTMAS DAY - closed
Friday,	December 26	BOXING DAY - 10.30am - 4.30pm
Saturday,	December 27	- Normal hours
Sunday,	December 28	- Normal hours
Monday,	December 29	- Normal hours
Tuesday,	December 30	- Normal hours
Wednesday,	December 31	NEW YEAR'S EVE - open until 4.30pm
Thursday,	January 1	NEW YEAR'S DAY - 10.30am - 4.30pm
Friday,	January 2	- Normal hours

Some shops may vary



Christmas markets

Maidstone Market will be open every Tuesday and Saturday throughout December, except Saturday 27. And there will be special turkey and fruit and vegetable sales as well as holly reaths, miseltoe and seasonal plants in the Agricultural Hall every day from Saturday, December 20 until Christmas Eve, Wednesday December 24.

Council opening hours

Maidstone Borough Council will be open as usual until noon on Christmas Eve, Wednesday December 24.

The offices will then be closed for Christmas, opening at 8.30am on Monday, December 29.

The offices will also be closed on Bank Holiday Thursday, January 1 and on Friday January 2.

The Visitor Information Centre at the Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone will close at 1pm on Christmas Eve. It will re-open on Saturday, December 27, from 10am to 5pm. It will be closed on Sunday December 28 and on Thursday January 1 and Friday January 2 for New Year.

Council information is available 24/7 365 days a year on our website – digitalmaidstone.co.uk. A 24-hour payment hotline is available on 01622 602544. For any Maidstone council emergencies over Christmas and the New Year, please telephone 01622 602000.

Don't miss your Christmas and New Year refuse collections

Normal collection day	Actual collection day
Monday December 22	Monday December 22
Tuesday December 23	Tuesday December 23
Wednesday December 24	Wednesday December 24
Thursday December 25	Friday January 2
Friday December 26	Saturday January 3
Monday December 29	Monday December 29
Tuesday December 30	Tuesday December 30
Wednesday December 31	Wednesday December 31
Thursday January 1	Friday January 2
Friday January 2	Saturday January 3

Recycling due for collection on Thursday December 25 will be collected on Friday January 2

Recycling due for collection on Friday December 26 will be collected on Saturday January 3

Recycling due for collection on Thursday January 1 will be collected on Friday January 2

Recycling due for collection on Friday January 2 will be collected on Saturday January 3

Extra side waste will be collected between 29 December and 9 January only.

Please put your refuse and recycling out by 6am over Christmas and New Year and put any extra rubbish, suitably contained, next to the bin. For more information, call 01622 602162 or visit digitalmaidstone.co.uk

recycle for Maidstone

This Christmas people in the UK will generate an extra three million tonnes of rubbish and use 83 square km of wrapping paper - that's enough to cover almost

7,000 football pitches. Here are our tips to reduce, reuse and recycle your rubbish.

Wrapping paper and cardboard packaging can be recycled at cardboard recycling banks at 'bring' sites around the borough or in your green bin or black box if you receive the new recycling collection service.

Larger boxes will be collected if presented alongside your recycling. Please do not put wrapping paper in the paper recycling banks or your kerbside paper box.

Glass bottles and jars can be recycled at 'bring' sites around the borough.

Mobile phones – Recycle your old phone at an Oxfam shop.

Real Christmas trees can be recycled at our household waste recycling centre at Burial Ground Lane, Tovil, or you can put it out with your garden bin or green garden waste sacks.

Christmas cards can be recycled in Maidstone council cardboard banks, in your green bin or black box if you receive the new recycling collection service and at special Woodland Trust banks at TK Maxx, Tesco, WH Smith and Marks & Spencers stores from 2nd – 31st January 2009



Remembering loved ones

Throughout Christmas and New Year Vinters Park Crematorium grounds, halls and the book of remembrance will be open from 9am to 4.30pm. The main gates at Maidstone Cemetery will be open every day during Christmas and New Year from 10am to 4.30pm. The pedestrian gates at Mangravet Avenue and Pheasant Lane will be open from 10am to 4pm.

Light up a life

The Heart of Kent Hospice will hold its Light up a Life event in the High Street, Maidstone at 5.30pm on Sunday November 23. It's a special remembrance for loved ones at Christmas, with choirs from St. Francis and Allington Primary Schools and a candlelit procession.

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Opening soon

Maidstone's new Gateway to Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and many other public and community services will open its doors for the first time on Monday January 5.

At the same time Maidstone Borough Council's temporary reception in the Mall Chequers, Maidstone will close, with all the council's services available a short walk away at the Gateway in King Street.

Many services at the Gateway will be available seamlessly with the different providers working together to give a full service at one location. It's the first time that services have been provided in this way in Maidstone, giving residents many more of the services that they want in the same place in a friendly and



welcoming environment straight off a main shopping street.

Maidstone council's office relocation and the Gateway were delayed but the additional costs will not be paid by the taxpayer. The delays were due the contractor and the costs will be borne by the contractor.

Maidstone Museum

The Bentlif Art Prize

Thursday November 13 to Sunday January 1. FREE

Maidstone's answer to the Turner Prize, emerging artists get to show off their work in this high profile exhibition. Cast your vote for your favourite piece. Sponsored by KM newspapers.

Time Talk - The Art and Techniques of Japanese Prints

Wednesday November 19, 6.30pm. £3
Marie-Therese Barrett talks on the popular art of Japanese prints which originated in the red-light districts of Japan's cities.

Reservations 01622 602838

The Story of Pinocchio - story and craft

Tuesday December 9, 10.30-11.30am.
For under 5s. £2

Book Binding - Adult Art Class

Wednesday December 10,
6.30-8.30pm. For 16+. £10.
Reservation 01622 602838

Wooden Snowman Decorations - Drop In

Wednesday December 10,
10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-3.30pm.
For under 13s. £2



The Nutcracker - story and craft

Tuesday December 23,
10.30-11.30am & 1.30-2.30pm.
For under 5s. £2

Origami Angel Decorations - Drop In

Tuesday December 23, 10.30am-
12.30pm & 1.30-3.30pm. For under
12s. FREE

Costume Calendar Cards - Drop In

Monday December 29, 10.30am-
12.30pm & 1.30-3.30pm.
For under 12s. £2

A Tale from Percy's Park - The Rescue Party

Tuesday December 30, 10.30-11.30
& 1.30-3.30pm. For under 5s. £2

Maidstone Museum, St Faith's Street,
Open: Mon to Sat 10 to 5; Sun 11 to 4.
Entry is free.

Tel: 01622 602838
museum.maidstone.gov.uk



Youth sport achievements

Maidstone council is asking families, friends, coaches and teachers to nominate young people who have made a sporting improvement, achieved success, or who have shown a positive attitude towards sport. The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2008.

To nominate an individual or team telephone Sarah Shearsmith on 01622 602222, email sarahshearsmith@maidstone.gov.uk or visit digitalmaidstone.co.uk/sports.

Next Council Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Full Council will be at 6.30pm on 17 December in the Council Chamber, Maidstone Town Hall. Residents can present petitions and ask questions, if they give prior notice. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Chris Garland, will report on current issues and the leaders of the other groups will respond. For more information call democratic services on 01622 602030.

Most council meetings are now web-cast and be viewed online at digitalmaidstone.co.uk.

Council TV and audio

Visit digitalmaidstone.co.uk/news to watch the latest council news on video or to listen to some of the press releases issued each week. These new services are brought to you by the communications team to let you know what is going on in the borough. If there is something you'd like to see on video or hear in audio call Karen Jeal on 01622 602759.



Place survey update

Thank you to everyone who completed the Place Survey sent out to a random sample of residents in October. We easily reached the government's target of 1,100 returns.

One lucky resident will walk away with £500, courtesy of our sponsor the Mall Chequers, Maidstone, for telling us what they think about life in Maidstone.

The findings will be used to decide what needs doing in the future.

Help build planning advice document

Maidstone council wants comments on draft design guidance for residential extensions. The guidance will form part of the council's Local Development Framework. The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning document sets out the criteria for house extensions.

It includes best practice and guidance on whether or not planning permission is required. It includes advice on sustainable design and construction, and impact on neighbours.

The consultation will run until Friday, December 19. The document can be viewed and downloaded from the Local Development Framework area of digitalmaidstone.co.uk. Hard copies are available at the council's temporary reception on the upper level of the Mall Chequers and at libraries in the Maidstone area.

To make a comment visit digitalmaidstone.co.uk or fill out one of the comment forms at the council's reception or at a library.

Through the looking glass

The window at the Hazlitt Arts Centre, Rose Yard, Maidstone will host Semi-automatic by Rosamund Farmer until Monday January 26. Rosamund's drawings represent an exaggerated view of domestic spaces ranging from kitchens to cinemas.

Win a night out for two

The Odeon cinema is offering our readers the chance of a free night out. We've got ten pairs of tickets to a film of your choice at the Odeon, Lockmeadow, Maidstone.



All you have to do is to tell us what you think about Borough Update in Downs Mail. Please complete and return the form below by Friday December 19.

Name

Address

..... Tel

Maidstone Borough Council publishes Borough Update in Downs Mail to keep Maidstone residents up to date with information about council services and general public information.

Do you like the overall look of Borough Update magazine? – YES/NO

Is it easy to read? – YES/NO

Is it interesting? – YES/NO

How do you rate Borough Update overall?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

How do you rate Maidstone borough council overall?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Please send your entry to Communications, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone ME15 6JQ.

Or email the above details and the words Borough Update in the subject line to pr@maidstone.gov.uk

One entry per Maidstone Borough resident – Not open to Maidstone councillors or council employees.

Autumn Clean Sweep

Captain Clean launched this season's clean sweep and it got off to a gleaming start. The aim is to encourage groups and individuals to organise clean sweeps of their own with support from the council. For help to organise a Clean Sweep contact Alison Sollis on 01622 602281.





Hazlitt Arts Centre



Hazlitt Comedy Club Night

Every first Wednesday of the month.
Jon Richardson – December 3, 8pm
 BBC6 host Jon Richardson's debut Edinburgh show, Spatula Pad, was nominated for best newcomer at the 2007 Fringe, and in 2008 he won the Chortle Award for best breakthrough act. £10 bookable in advance or on the door.

Hazlitt Music Night

Every first Friday of the month.
The Locrian Ensemble - December 5, 7.30pm
 Some of the most prominent string soloists in London, the ensemble has established an enviable reputation for its recordings, broadcasts and live performances. The group regularly performs at St Martin-in-the-Fields, presenting programmes of baroque and classical music. The Locrian have recorded works for BBC Radio 3 and Classic fm. £12 bookable in advance or on the door.

Playlitts

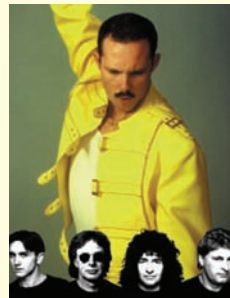
every Tuesday morning - 10 to 11am
 A brand new activity for little ones at the Hazlitt. Kinder drama for pre-schoolers. Let your child's confidence and imagination flourish through drama games, movement, improvisation and fun. To book or find out more call Natalie Price on 01622 753922. £5.

Jack and the Beanstalk

See Jake Hendriks from 'Hollyoaks' together with Michael Fenton Stevens from 'My Family' and Tom Swift as funny-man Simple Simon. November 29 to January 4. Tickets from £6.96.

Mercury – Queen Tribute Show

Recapture the sight, sounds and emotions of Queen with this skilful tribute band. Wednesday November 19, 7.30pm. £15, concs £14



Chas 'n' Dave

This legendary cockney duo was the hit of Glastonbury! Thursday November 20, 7.30pm. £17.50, concs £15

Sister Queens

This remarkable and uplifting piece of theatre traces Elizabeth 1 and Mary Queen of Scots from perilous childhood to deadly adulthood. The audience become subjects, courtiers and spies in this stunning production. Friday November 28, 8pm. £10 concs £8



Call the Box office 01622 758611 or visit www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk



Maidstone Music

'Appalachian Roots'

Saturday November 22, 7.30pm at Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall. 01622 751926/674001 - £8 under16s £4.

Maidstone Music Festival 08

Saturday and Sunday November 29 and 30, and Saturday 6 December at Invicta Grammar School. maidstonemusicfestival.org.uk

Maidstone Symphony Orchestra

Saturday December 6, 7.30pm in Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre.

Bearsted Choral Society Christmas Concert

Saturday December 6, 7.30pm at Holy Cross Church. 01634 066730.

Francis McCafferty – A Christmas Celebration

Friday December 12, 8pm at Leeds Castle.

Music in the Museum

Tuesday December 16, 7.30pm at Maidstone Museum. 01622 602838 - £20 (£17.50 MMF members)

Nine Lessons and Christmas Carols by Candlelight

Saturday December 20, 4.30 – 5.45pm at All Saints Church, Maidstone

Carol Concert

Saturday December 20, 7.30pm at the United Reform Church, Week Street, Maidstone

Christmas for all the Family

Wednesday December 24, 4-4.45pm, Christingle Service at All Saints Church, Maidstone

What's On!

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

Artists showcase

Maidstone's Market Buildings has been permanently allocated for artists, musicians and performers to use as a creative spot to showcase their talent - every Saturday, 11am to 3pm