

East October 08



Borough Update

Your Maidstone Borough Council Newsletter



Hollyoaks'
Jake Hendriks is appearing in Jack and the
Beanstalk at the Hazlitt Theatre
www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk or box office 01622 758611

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 4th October

07.45 – 08.45 Vinters Park. Hampton Road

Sunday 5th October

10.00 – 11.00 Otham

16.15 – 17.15 Madginford. Merton Road

Saturday 11th October

11.30 – 12.30 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive North

12.45 – 13.45 Grove Green. Grovewood Drive

South/Provender Way

14.00 – 15.15 Bearsted. Ashford Road/Rosemary Road

Sunday 12th October

12.15 – 13.00 Platts Heath. Green Lane

14.00 – 15.15 Leeds. Brogden Crescent

15.30 – 17.15 Bearsted village green

Saturday 18th October

07.45 – 08.45 Sandling. Tyland Lane/Old Chatham Road

09.15 – 10.45 Walderslade. Impton Lane/Spenlow Drive

11.45 – 12.45 Bredhurst. Hurstwood Road

13.15 – 15.15 Detling village hall

Sunday 19th October

11.15 – 12.30 Ulcombe. Lodge Gardens

13.45 – 14.45 Frinsted Church

Saturday 25th October

08.45 – 09.30 Senacre. Woolley Road

Saturday 1st November

12.00 – 13.00 Vinters Park. Marston Drive

13.30 – 15.15 Walderslade. Gleamingwood Drive/
Badger Road

07.45 – 08.45 Lenham. Lenham Heath Road/
Boughton Road

09.00 – 10.00 Lenham. Ham Lane/Cherry Orchard Estate

10.15 – 11.00 Lenham. Warren Street near the Harrow Inn

12.00 – 13.00 Wormshill. The Street/Bedmorton Lane

13.30 – 15.15 Grafty Green. Church Road/Headcorn Road

Sunday 2nd November

10.00 – 11.15 Stockbury village hall

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.



Place Survey

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



A random sample of 5,000 people will be asked to take part in the new 'Place Survey' in October. Residents will be asked what it's like to live in their area so that Maidstone Borough Council can make sure it is dealing with the issues that matter most to local people.

The questionnaire asks for people's views about aspects of the quality of life in their local area, such as community safety and local services.

The findings from this research will be used to see how well Maidstone Borough Council and its partners, like the police and health organisations, are doing at delivering the services that matter to residents and to decide what needs doing differently in the future.

The 5,000 residents will be selected randomly to try to get a mix of views from across the whole of Maidstone.

As a thank you for their time, everyone who takes part will be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win £500 to spend in The Mall Chequers, Maidstone.

The Place Survey is a national requirement, which will be carried out by all councils across the country. It replaces the former Best Value surveys, last carried out in 2006 and the new survey will be completed every two years.

We would like to encourage everyone who is sent a survey to have their say. It really will help to make a difference to life in Maidstone.

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.



Safer Maidstone Partnership

Kent Police, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Fire and Rescue, the Probation Service, Kent County Council and the local Primary Care Trust are working together through the Safer Maidstone Partnership to reduce crime and anti social behaviour in Maidstone Borough.

Operation 'Safer Summer'

This summer the Safer Maidstone Partnership launched a series of initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour. There was a hard-hitting start to the operation with a series of drug arrests to disrupt drug dealers and users.

Most of those arrested were remanded in custody. This was followed up by outreach work with users by Turning Point, the drug support agency. This had a big impact on the availability of street level drugs and the intensive police activity appears to have been an important deterrent to anti social behaviour.

A mobile police station was used as a focal point for increased police patrols and youth workers seeking to engage with young people. Key locations like Brenchley Gardens, Mote Park, South Park, as well as open spaces in Park Wood and Shepway had regular visits and there was a noticeable reduction in seasonal anti-social behaviour.

Alcohol control powers were used to seize of alcohol from street drinkers.



Recycling roll out

Maidstone's new fortnightly recycling service will be rolled out to the whole borough by May 2009 and everyone will keep a weekly refuse collection.

20,000 homes already have the new service. Another 26,000 homes

will receive it in March 2009 and everyone will have the improved fortnightly recycling service for paper, cardboard, plastics, tins and cans by May 2009.

Most households will be getting a new 190 litre grey bin for their weekly rubbish collection. Residents will be asked to use their existing green bins for their fortnightly recycling collections. Special arrangements will be made for people who don't have wheelie bins or space for a second bin.

Garden waste will continue to be collected fortnightly in the same containers as usual.

Maidstone council will be writing to residents before they receive the new service.

Maidstone is safe

Recorded crime continues to fall. The year up to June 2008 has shown some marked reductions.

All Crime: Down 17.2% to 10,703

Burglary Dwelling: Down 22.5% to 341

Violent Crime: Down 5.3% to 2,502

Vehicle Crime: Down 33.8% to 1,062

Criminal Damage: Down 14.6% to 2,430

Operation Cubit

The multi agency Operation Cubit is ridding our streets of unlicensed and abandoned vehicles, before they can become targets for deliberate fire setting and other low level criminal activity.

The team - Maidstone Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the DVLA - actively target areas of Maidstone. They look for abandoned vehicles 'at risk' of arson and any that are untaxed but still in use. These tend to be uninsured, have no MOT and are more likely to be used in criminal activities before being dumped illegally.

Vehicles are removed and if they are not claimed by their owners, who usually face a hefty fine for the return of their vehicle, are crushed into cubes of metal for recycling. This summer alone Operation Cubit has removed and impounded 60 vehicles in the Maidstone Borough.

This is an emergency

The chances of being caught up in a major emergency or disaster are low. But it may happen and this information shows you how you can be better prepared to protect yourself and others.



What emergencies might we face?

Flooding; severe weather, storms or snow; large chemical fires or gas release; power failure; an explosion or large scale transport accidents.

In any of these situations you must keep family and friends' phone numbers with you. Choose someone living away to be your family contact and make plans for possible emergencies. Make sure your children know what to do and practice the plans. If you live near an industrial site, you will be told if there are special emergency arrangements for your area.

Pack an emergency kit and keep it to hand.

It should contain - a radio, a torch with spare batteries, a first-aid kit and medication, food for 3 days, a can opener, and bottled water, which should be replaced every 6 months.

If there is an emergency:

Go indoors, and don't go outside until advised by the police. Extinguish naked flames, close all doors and windows and keep away from windows. Continually assess the risks - tune into local radio or TV and follow official instructions. Limit use of the telephone - keeping lines free for emergency use. Don't collect children from school - they will be properly cared for.

Toxic, chemical or radiation release

As soon as you are aware of an incident go indoors and stay there. Bring all pets inside. Close all windows and air vents, switch off air conditioning ventilation and fans. Cover unsealed fresh food.

Extinguish naked flames. If you think you are contaminated - don't leave the scene to go to hospital - wait for specialist advice. Don't go outside until you are told you can and don't collect children from school until told you can - they will be looked after.

Severe weather or power cuts

Put together an emergency kit, make sure you have batteries and a radio, be aware of severe weather warnings and plan ahead for what you may need to do.

If you are evacuated follow instructions from the emergency services. Check if neighbours know what is happening, or need help. Gather family members and prepare to leave your home. Don't forget pets - they will need food, leads and baskets. Take prescribed medicines with you and don't return home unless you're told you can.



Flooding

If you live in a flood risk area make a plan of action and make preparations such as installing products to prevent water coming in. Make sure your property and its contents are insured. When flooding is imminent put your plan into action. Move furniture and valuables upstairs (including photographs, passports, deeds, birth certificates). Put sandbags or barriers in position and tune into local radio or TV for updates.





Fire

Following these simple safety tips could save your life.

- Fit smoke alarms on each level of your home.
- Make a fire action plan, so everyone in your home knows how to escape.
- Keep the exits from your home clear, and ensure everyone can find keys for doors and windows.
- Take extra care when cooking especially when tired or when you have been drinking.
- Consider buying a

thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer instead of using an open pan for deep frying.

- Don't overload electrical sockets - remember one plug for each socket.

Free home fire safety checks are carried out by fire crews who help identify fire hazards, provide fire safety advice, assist with fire planning and if necessary fit free smoke alarms. For details call: 01622 692121.

Smoke Alarms

- Test the battery once a week, pressing the test button until the alarm sounds.
- Change the battery once a year or if it fails when tested.
- Replace alarms every 10 years.

If there is a fire

Fire officers will examine the building after it has been extinguished and may advise you of any apparent defects or to seek professional advice depending on the damage.

- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible.
- Keep a list of items which are damaged - if you don't have insurance contact your local benefits agency.
- Don't switch on gas, electricity or water if turned off by the fire brigade - get them checked and repaired by a qualified person.
- If your home is unusable after a fire arrange temporary accommodation with family or friends, contact the council's housing officer or ask the fire brigade or police to do this for you out of hours.
- When the emergency services leave, you are responsible for the security of your property. If you have to leave the property unattended, remove valuables if safe to do so, and inform the police of your situation.

Chip pans hazards

- Never fill a chip pan more than 1/3 full of fat or oil
- Never leave the pan unattended when the heat is on.
- Never put food in the pan if the oil smokes - turn off the heat and leave the oil to cool.
- If the pan catches fire don't move it. Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so but never lean over the pan. Make sure you cover the pan with a damp cloth or a damp tea towel and leave to cool for at least 30 minutes.

Useful contact numbers

Ambulance -
01622 747010

www.secamb.nhs.uk

NHS Direct - 0845 4647

Maidstone Hospital -
01622 729000

Medway Maritime Hospital -
01634 830000

Emergency - 999

Kent Police - 01622 690055

Crime Stoppers - 0800 555 111

Anti Terrorism Hotline -
0800 789 321

Electricity faults - 0800 668877

Gas leaks - 0800 111999

Environment Agency Floodline -
0845 9881188

Kent Benefits Agency -
01892 507300

Kent Emergency Planning Unit -
08458 247 247

Kent Fire and Rescue Service -
01622 774160

Government website -
preparing for emergencies -
www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk

Kent Power Station Emergency
Planning information
www.british-energy.com

Radio Stations - BBC Radio -
96.7fm, Invicta FM - 103.1fm
and KMFM (Maidstone) 105.6fm

Make a note of your own
important numbers -
Family/friends, Doctor,
Hospital and Police

Helping OUT: Volunteer with Voluntary Action Maidstone...

Whether your motivation to volunteer is to help others, increase your skills, gain experience to get a job or just meet people, go along and see Charlotte Osborn-Howard at Voluntary Action Maidstone.

Bubbly Charlotte will get you off to a good start. She can offer a range of volunteering opportunities from gardening and youth work to secretarial and acting as an ambassador for children in Africa. It's Charlotte's aim to help match volunteers to jobs available, as well as develop new volunteering opportunities with charities and employers. She helps everyone, particularly those who would not normally volunteer - people who need a confidence boost or are unsure about their skills. Charlotte registers around 400 volunteers a year; two-thirds of these are recruited face-to-face. Of these, 70% become active volunteers and really enjoy their voluntary placement.

One success story is Tim, who works in the Transport Call Centre at Voluntary Action Maidstone. He receives calls from the over 60s who have mobility problems and need transport to

get them to and from hospital appointments, trips to the doctor or just shopping. The job involves logging calls from customers onto the computer system and allocating drivers. They are always on the look-out for people to help out in the call centre or as drivers. Drivers are paid

by the mile and customers pay a booking fee of £2.50. Tim says: "The job is very pressured with calls coming in by the minute. We set up around 9,000 trips every year. However, the up side is we have great fun, it's very rewarding and it keeps me active."

Volunteers can normally claim expenses so they are not out of pocket. If you fancy volunteering give Charlotte a ring on 01622 677337, email her at charlotte@vam-online.org.uk or apply online www.mvbhub.org.uk



New events at Maidstone Museum



There are plenty of FREE activities and events at Maidstone Museum. The Museum's special exhibition '**Kaleidoscope: 150 years of colourful collecting**' runs until 26 October and celebrates its 150th birthday. It explores the historical, weird, interesting and rare objects; telling stories of the collectors and museum

benefactors along the way. Objects range from a huge tiger skin and flamingos to hands by Henry Moore and a watercolour of Joanna Lumley.

In October, the focus will be on **Black History Month with the 'African Tales'**, mini exhibition. It runs from 20 October to 23 November and showcases African objects, artwork and stories from local schools.

Drawing on Africa... The Big Draw is on Saturday 25 October. Drop-in from 10.30 – 11.30am and 1.30 – 3.30pm. Adults can draw and explore materials and textures with a professional artist, whilst children can contribute to our mural with charcoal, bamboo sticks and projected images.

Stories, Music and Activities all week from Monday 27 October...

Monday is African mask and tail making; Tuesday is story time; Wednesday is make an instrument day with music from U'Zambezi; Thursday is 'hands-on' stations and Saturday make a ghoulish mobile for Halloween. Activities run from 10.30 to 12.30pm and 1.30 to 3.30pm.

Time Talks for the over 16's...

Wednesday 22 October talk focuses on Hopping Down in Kent, Wednesday 19 November talk looks at the Art and Techniques of Japanese Prints. Talks are £3 (£1.50 to members of Maidstone Museums' Foundation). Ring the museum to reserve.

Maidstone Museum, St Faith's Street, Maidstone 01622 602838
Open: Mon to Sat 10 to 5; Sun 11 to 4. Entry is free.

Green Park

Clare Park on the Tonbridge Road has been awarded a green flag which will be flying high for a year. It's the first in Maidstone to achieve the top award for parks.

The park, which has tennis courts, a play area, a multi-use games area and a bowls club, is welcoming and well maintained with the support and

involvement of the community. Brian Moss, Cabinet Member for Leisure said: "This is the first time a park in Maidstone has won a Green Flag Award, so it's a real achievement. A number of people have helped make it possible, with a lot of hard work and community spirit." Julia Brundish of the Friends of Clare Park said: "It has been two years of hard work to get our park to the high standard required to gain this award. Our park has improved in safety and visually over the last two years. It is a little gem on the outskirts of town. It goes to show if local people get together, voice their opinions and work with the council then anything is possible."



Don't lose your vote

Have you registered to vote yet? If you haven't there's a reminder form on its way to you and everyone who hasn't returned the original form or registered by phone or by internet.

Don't ignore the reminder or you might lose your right to vote.

And you will not be able to obtain credit, a mortgage or mobile phone if you are not on the electoral register. Remember every reminder form we send out increases the cost of the canvass and ultimately your council tax. Don't delay - register to vote today!

Next Council Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Full Council will be at 6.30pm on Wednesday 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. The leader, cabinet members and committee chairmen will answer questions from councillors and the full council will debate and decide on the important business. For more information call democratic services on 01622 602030.

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

Getting things right

We always try to give the best possible service. We monitor our performance and we listen to what our customers are saying to us, so that we can improve our services.

This year we moved offices, to be in the centre of Maidstone. Our reception stays open longer in line with shop hours and we have introduced new machines to make it quicker and easier to make payments. We have improved our web site.

In the New Year the Maidstone Gateway will open and Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council, together with partners from the voluntary sector and other organisations, will provide a single point of contact for a whole range of services. It will be a more personal service and there will be improved self help facilities for those who want them.

Putting things right

We always try to get things right first time and if we make a mistake we'll always try to put things right quickly. Our complaints policy is available on our website

digitalmaidstone.co.uk/complaints. You can make a complaint, compliment or suggestion by:

- Calling 01622 602000
- Emailing customer care@maidstone.gov.uk
- Completing a form on our web site
- Writing to Customer Care, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone ME15 6JQ.

We acknowledge all complaints and try to answer them within ten working days. Complaints are considered by the service manager in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with their response you can ask Paul Fisher, our Complaints Monitoring Officer, to review the matter.

If you are still not satisfied you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, in writing to PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH or by telephone on 0845 602 1983 or 024 7682 1960 (You can text 'call back' to 0762 480 4323.

Complaints

Although the numbers of complaints we receive each year are small they are all logged and we monitor the progress of each. Last year we received 329 complaints and we answered 94% within our ten day target.



Hazlitt Arts Centre



Buddy Holly and the Crickets

Hazlitt Comedy Club Night

Laugh until it hurts every first Wednesday of the month.

Ian Moore - 5 November 2008

Direct from the Comedy Store in London, moody mod Ian Moore is a comedian in the Jack Dee mould. Most of his routine is very much grounded in the everyday; it's when he allows himself a small diversion into the surreal that provides his best moments such as a wonderfully inspired segment about hamsters flying remote-controlled aircraft.

£10 on the door. Doors open 8pm.

Classical Music Night

Wonderfully relaxing every first Friday of the month

DivaDivo - 7 November 2008

DivaDivo are a professional classically trained soprano-tenor duo with experience of performing in London and at international venues. Described in the Sunday Telegraph as 'outstanding'. £12 bookable in advance. Doors open at 7.30pm.

Ha Ha Hamlet

Plenty of laughs and loads of killing at the end. Saturday 1 October, 8pm at the Exchange Studio.

Tickets £12, concessions £10

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

Unforgettable – The Nat King Cole Story

Smooth, soulful sounds. Wednesday 1 October, 8pm at the Hazlitt Theatre
Tickets £15, concessions £14

The Sound of Music Hazlitt Theatre Trip to the West End

Join the Von Trapp family. Wednesday 8 October. The Coach leaves at 12 noon from the Hazlitt Theatre and drops you off at the theatre.
Tickets £50

Chris Cox 'Control Freak'

BBC Radio 1's resident magician. Saturday 18 October, 8pm at the Exchange Studio.
Tickets £12, concessions £10

Beauty and the Beast

Technology and live storytelling with puppets! Sunday 19 October, 2.30pm at the Exchange Studio.
Tickets £8.50, concessions £6.50 and family tickets £25

The Death and life of Sherlock Holmes

A humorous tale of murder, mystery and the occult. Saturday 25 October, 7.30pm at the Exchange Studio.
Tickets £12, concessions £10

Sister Queens

Become subjects, courtiers and spies in the court of Elizabeth 1 and Mary Queen of Scots. Friday 28 November, 8pm at the Exchange Studio
Tickets £10, concessions £8

Seussical the Musical presented by Hazlitt Youth Theatre

A fantastic family musical based on the Dr Seuss books. Tuesday 28 October to Saturday 1 November, 7.45pm at the Hazlitt Theatre. (Tuesday 28 Oct is 'Pay What You Can' preview night)
Tickets £6 to £12.

Buddy Holly and the Crickets – Official Anniversary Tour

Sing along and dance in the aisles. Saturday 15 November, 7.30pm at the Hazlitt Theatre.
Tickets £14, concessions £13

Mercury – Queen Tribute Show

It's a kind of magic! Wednesday 19 November, 7.30pm at the Hazlitt Theatre.
Tickets cost £15, concessions £14

Chas 'n' Dave in Concert

See the legendary cockney duo live. Thursday 20 November, 7.30pm at the Hazlitt Theatre.
Tickets cost £17.50, concessions £15

Jack and the Beanstalk – 29 November 2008 to 4 January 2009

See dishy Jake Hendriks from 'Hollyoaks' in the flesh! Together with Michael Fenton Stevens from 'My Family' and Tom Swift as funny-man Simple Simon. Tickets from £6.96.



Maidstone Music

Musical highlights in Maidstone this autumn:

Maidstone Symphony Orchestra

Saturday 18 October, 7.30pm at Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre

Haydn Creation

Saturday 8 November, 7.30pm at Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre

Appalachian Roots

Saturday 22 November, 7.30pm at Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall

Maidstone Music Festival

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 November, 9am at Invicta Grammar School, Maidstone

For all musical listings in Maidstone visit www.maidstonemusic.co.uk

What's On!

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

