Maidstone CAN Chat Minutes 19/01/2026 held @ Lockmeadow Entertainment Centre 7pm

In attendance : - Lauren Sykes, Lynn Bryant, Sally Edwards, Duncan Edwards, Glyn Williams, Geraldine Lawrence, Chin Waterfall, Coby Gardiner, Jeff Robinson, Maria Paez, Polly Williamson, Gemma Parker, Andy Woodward, Brian Wallace, Shirley McDonald, Diane Sergeant, Leslie Roberts, Anne Dawes

Repair Cafe 3 January 2026 - A very successful event albeit footflow a little down. It was bitterly cold and that is undoubtedly part of the reason.The first themed event with Health as the topic and the energy in the room was felt to be excellent and possibly overall the most enjoyable and successful Repair Cafe to date.

Lots of engagement across the board.225 customers with 14 Health Professionals plus the Mayor and we saw 125 items brought in with 87 fixed and 27 repairable with 11 end of life.

Stats may be inflated going forward as sharpened items are being counted as individual items given the amount of time needed for each one.

This year will see us busier than ever with not just repairs going on but the various themes being incorporated. You can see the theme list **HERE** and who is involved with each one thus far. We had a decent show of hands for those interested in manning an exhibitor table/stand but we desperately need some help with organising each themed event. PLEASE if anyone can assist we would dearly like to hear from you and email maidstonecan@gmail.com

Some things happening are potentially boards at the Allington Waste Disposal Centre along the drive in asking if people have considered charity shops, refuges, repair cafes etc before they actually throw their items in the skips.

Of note is that for the May Recycling theme there will be a full size refuse lorry in the hall with us which will be a powerful statement. Pretty sure they will give it a hose down first!

There was some valid discussion about renaming it to something other than Recycling as that is a last resort when things can be repaired/reused and this was taken on board.

Website - The question was asked if we are using the website as much as we perhaps should? This is an excellent source of information not just about what we have done but what is coming up that people may wish to get involved with.

The site is moving to a different platform that will allow Google and ChatGPT etc to find us better. Visibility is key and if we can all use the site more this in itself tells the search engines people are interested in the content and the site benefits as a result. Can you all kindly make as much use of the site as possible please

The site is currently here https://www.maidstonecan.eco/
The new site that we need comment on and will go live at the weekend is here:
https://b4a442203fcc8c1c35e014519f257510-12987.sites.k-hosting.co.uk/

Please take a look and see if there are any omissions or changes that need to be done. Thank You this will help enormously.

We also need further content that will develop the FAQ section as an example. Please send in any questions folk have asked you about the Repair Cafe or MCAN as that will help us develop this area. We do already have a FAQ type section which you can see **HERE** Geraldine has already added a lot to this particular section but there may well be more. Everybody has edit access so please feel free to add questions.

We would also like to add anything you have that gets our message out there so any events you may have been to that align with our aims or even products and services that we might all find interesting and useful.

Anyone can add things directly to the website and if you want to do this then please email maidstonecan@gmail.com in the first instance

Maidstone West Station Plan - Vincent has been travelling the length and breadth of the Downs line looking at what other station adoption teams are doing. There should be some interesting observations for us to consider.

Meantime Vincent had updated us on the activity at the station which of late has been centred on getting the planters as we want them with some outside help. The cost is an issue for the moment but that is being worked on.

National Publicity - Some great things going on and several short film clips watched including a call for a televised emergency briefing which you can see **HERE** this was as well as Greenwashed a Chris Packham featured documentary. The Trailer is **HERE** but search YouTube and you can watch the entire film.

Like him or not Chris Packham has a platform and a voice and has positioned himself central to many climate initiatives which is the core of our aims. He works hard and he is clearly passionate on the subject and he will be at the Marlowe Theatre on the 18th November 2026 for The World of Wonder a Planet on the Edge. We are putting together a trip and tickets likely to be in the £40-£50 range. We are trying for a block booking but need to book as soon as tickets go on sale at the end of this week. Please email Duncan at maidstonecan@gmail.com Of course if you want to arrange tickets individually that is fine and we hope to see you there.

Lauren asked a question as to whether we should be a pressure group? There was some discussion around this subject and the following is a summary of that discussion.

The group's constitution says the purpose of Maidstone CAN is to work on:

- **C**limate (and environmental) initiatives in Maidstone.
- By helping to make **A**ction happen locally.
- Through a broad **N**etwork of local people and groups collaborating together.

We aim to encourage and motivate everyone in Maidstone to respond to and mitigate climate change, and to support the health of the environment on which we all depend. To achieve this, we may apply pressure where necessary. However, our approach is rooted in the community: working positively with people to make changes that they genuinely want to make.

We see our work as operating on three connected levels:

Grassroots level
Initiatives that work directly with local people to change and improve everyday activities in response to climate and environmental challenges. This includes reducing the use of non-renewable resources, avoiding environmental damage, and finding ways to improve how we live.

Community level
Sharing and communicating our successes with friends, families, and the wider community, in order to inspire more people to get involved. This helps increase renewable practices, reduce harm, and support positive progress.

Administrative level
As consumers, voters, and constituents, we have a voice. Our work shows the importance of being informed, engaged, and communicative to ensure our voices are heard. We use this voice to make informed purchasing choices, vote for effective representatives, and lobby those in power to act in the best interests of people and the environment.

In summary, We aim to generate positive change within our community, which is a form of pressure but we are probably not a pressure group in the terms most people would understand.

Updates - Some brief updates on Earth Champions where still progressing in the background and researching funding and a local office to coordinate etc.

Community Energy where we are working with KCC for community buildings to be utilising things like solar and this can cover everything from shops to schools and the Government is pushing this initiative.

Seaquer an app that uses QR codes for people to use at a whole variety of locations to input how they are feeling about nature, what they are seeing and this will populate a database that will generate a history of any site and how it changes and will be useful when considering uses for that site in the future.

Sweeep Visit 12th Feb 2026- We have been to this superb electrical recycling centre in Sittingbourne on a couple of occasions. Everyone who has visited has had their eyes opened and it is fun and informative plus they generally provide a bit of lunch. There are still a couple of spaces available and if interested complete this **FORM**

Action - We can all do this The Big Plastic count **CLICK HERE** and

The Big Garden Birdwatch (This does not mean you need a Big Garden!) **CLICK HERE** this subject led to a discussion on hedges and the UK has many old, damaged and practically dead hedges and Hedgelaying in the UK is a traditional winter craft (Nov-Mar) for managing hedges, involving cutting stems partly through and laying them at an angle (pleaching) to create a strong, stock-proof barrier that encourages new growth from the base, enhancing wildlife habitat and landscape. This process revitalizes old hedges, creating dense, living fences. Learn more **HERE** Could this be your hedge that could become the centre of biodiversity in your garden?

Light Up Maidstone - February 6th at 5pm - 7.30pm. A FREE evening of lights, music and entertainment with a spectacular lantern parade through the Town Centre. Learn More **HERE** Is anyone interested in getting us involved and sorting that out? Email as usual please.