Maidstone CAN Chat Monday 20th April 2026 Lockmeadow Foyer
Informal start 19.00 with items for discussion from 19.30

Attending…
Bernie Cumberland, Chin Waterfall, Sally Edwards, Duncan Edwards, Glyn Williams, Neil Nixon, Vincent Jasper, Lauren Sykes, Jeff Robinson. Tomas Thorndycraft. Polly Williamson, Geraldine Lawrence, Shirley McDonald, Ben Darlington, Coby Gardiner, Lynn Bryant, Chris Passmore

Apologies Maria Paez

Repair Cafe

Welcome by Duncan and a big thank you to Jeff for arranging a try out of Binosaurus into the Market Hall! It really looks impressive so a positive start for the May Repair Cafe event. A quick quiz on the size of the battery to run this truck & its fair to say some fairly widely spaced guesses. In reality the battery is very small around 40Kwh and it is only charged around twice a week as it concentrates on short local recycling work.

Can we please push via our own social media accounts this unique opportunity to have this huge statement truck at our event.

For Health and Safety reasons we can not have anyone disposing of rubbish into Binosaurus on the day but there will be a trained operative available who can do this so we can see it in operation! Please bring some recycling items along to feed this beast! It will also be possible to sit in the cab and learn how it operates and it is of course a fabulous photo opportunity. It's one of those times when the more pictures the better is what we are after.

There will be a press release via MBC and hopefully via other media outlets KM, BBC South East, Five Acre Wood Radio etc. If anyone has access to any other media outlet then please let us know and put us in touch if possible.

The Repair Cafe in April went very well with the most people through the door so far at 325. Duncan has aspirations to get us to 500!!! The April Sports and Exercise theme was fine but we had a fairly low turnout of exhibitors. Those that did attend fared pretty well and all enjoyed the event and stated it was

worthwhile coming along. There was good networking amongst/between the exhibitors as well, all of which broadens our reach.

We had 125 repairs with 87 fixed which is consistent with our past Repair Cafes this year.

Team Repair went very well although we do struggle to get kids along to this activity. Ideally we would love a waiting list but it is often under subscribed although when the kids do participate they have a great time. Aimed at ages 10-14 so if you know of kids who might like to get involved please let them know. We have moved to every other month for this activity.

We have advertised the Repair Cafe in general via the Program for The Gang Show @ The Hazlitt Theatre. We have also networked with the scout leaders so we are hoping to get more young people along to Team Repair & Bike workshops to line up & help with their badges.

Other elements that went well were the Easter Egg hunt and the old style toys are very popular so we are trying to focus on youngsters in a number of ways.They should basically have some fun if they come along and this is always the case when they finally get there.

For the future possible quizzes are an option as well as colouring sheets and possibly a Binosaurus colouring sheet could make an appearance.

The May Repair Cafe, although again on a Bank holiday, is shaping up really well with 16/17 exhibitors already confirmed and along with the huge Binosaurus truck, this should be quite a busy and fun environment.

There are several opportunities for the community to come together & help.

1. Weald Of Kent Rotary will be collecting some items of school uniforms to send to ‘The David School’ in Sierra Leone. These are the items they would like. Red Gingham Dresses, Grey Shorts and Trainers/Shoes (Black if possible)
2. Maidstone United Football Club would like children’s football boots (no metal studs) & shin pads. Good condition please.
3. There is also going to be a regifting table available, so if anyone has unwanted gifts or items they have been given that they will not use, then

please bring them along to the Repair Cafe on Sat 2nd May. This will be a great opportunity to get more items back into use.

We had a marvellous volunteer turnout last month, 49, but again if you can help or know anyone that would like to help then please get in touch.
Put simply, many hands make light work and the more of us that get involved the slicker the delivery of the Repair Cafe is. Even if you can't be there the whole time any help is much appreciated.

The interactions on the day are what The Repair Cafe is all about and we get to hear all manner of stories on the day. These help with our advertising as some of the stories behind the repairs are amazing & sentimental.
A rewarding and fun time with a positive vibe is the general consensus.

The themes for the rest of the year are

02/05/2026

Reduce / Reuse / Recycle

06/06/2026

Outdoors

04/07/2026

Health

01/08/2026

Children / Families

05/09/2026

Art

07/11/2026

Sustainable Christmas

So these are dates for your diaries plus if you know any individuals, groups or organisations that might be interested in attending or knowing more, then please put them in touch. Again it would be wonderful to have a waiting list and the problem of how do we fit them all in!

The National Emergency Briefing (NEB)

A fairly reasonable take up for tickets so far but we need to push harder and ideally we want people outside of our normal circles to get the message and add to our numbers. Change will only come about by increased public pressure and wherever possible can we encourage people to attend. At the time of writing we have just over 50 tickets booked, so please ask whoever you can.

No doubt we will learn some valuable lessons from how the Bearsted CAN NEB goes on the 28th April.

Meantime if you know of anywhere you can put up a poster for this event then please do so. Some commentary on the posters being black and that it may be counterproductive and not particularly welcoming. That said, it is a National campaign and the reason behind it not to make it flowery as the planet is in CRISIS!

We do need more volunteers to be facilitators on the night of the showing of the film. The intention is that people will split into small groups of 3 or 4 and facilitators will need to listen and make sure everyone is heard & tease out actions about what happens next & what we can do locally.

We need to build a community response and there will be a nationally produced questionnaire that we can encourage participants to complete on the night when they arrive & after they have watched the film.

We have a small facilitator group and if you want to join please shout out now please.

A4 Poster
A5 Poster

Station Planters

The planters are now in place after a very enthusiastic group of volunteers moved them across the railway tracks and into position. With a lifespan of maybe 50 years these planters will have ongoing lasting benefit to the community.

Great organisation on the day and a huge thanks to Vincent for all of the work he put in to make this happen.

Big Day Out

A date for your diary 13th June 2026. Venues are being promoted but it seems to all be about gaining traction & getting organisations to commit. A lot of work is being done to get this event celebrating Maidstone's green spaces & elevated into people's consciousness. Hopefully this will be a bigger success than the 2025 event.

This year's date does clash with the Kent Wellness event being held at Detling showground and Neil said he would put the organisers in touch with each other to see how they might work together.

Social Media

We are all working much harder on this front with more liking, sharing and comments on posts in evidence. That said we can all do better and this is an easy win so if you are on social media please look out for the posts and lets get some interaction going as it all helps.

AOB

Lynn continues to work on her mosaic education and the plan is for this to be utilised in time at the Maidstone West Station with potentially a cherry blossom type mosaic. There will be some financial help needed on getting this done but

we will learn more as Lynn moves forward and we await information with interest.

Ben who designed ‘Seaquer’ a communication network where participants are actively encouraged to contribute to the environment they visit via a QR code. Some 300 QR codes are out in the green spaces around Maidstone. He is getting 100 hits a day, but hopefully by September that will be 1000! Together we can all benefit and learn about our surroundings from this venture.