Minutes Maidstone CAN Chat
Monday 21st September 2026 Lockmeadow Foyer 7.30pm

Attending…
Duncan Edwards, Sally Edwards, Bernie Cumberland, Glyn Williams, Geraldine Lawrence, David Harman, Polly Williamson, Vincent Jasper, Neil Nixon, Coby Gardiner, Chin Waterfall, Callum Stevens.

Apologies… Lynn Bryant, Lauren Sykes

A welcome to Callum at his first MCAN Chat meeting and always nice to see new faces.

1. **Last month's minutes** here for reference but not discussed specifically as no points raised. **LINK**

2. **Repair Cafe** - Good footfall at 297 with 82 repairs and 59 fixed so our usual ratio of fixes met. The theme was the Arts and overall feeling this went well with a good vibe in the hall. For the first time we had live music & some mixed feelings about the noise level & duration. Also perhaps the hall is not the best acoustically. The saxophone group were rather more in number than anticipated, 8 in total and therefore a bit too loud for a networking event as people had trouble talking to each other! Both groups of saxophonists and concertinas are keen to come again. The music did add a nice atmosphere but we need to decide whether this is too overpowering for the repairers & exhibitors trying to communicate. Action Duncan- to follow up either way with the bands.

   The Footfall was up on previous months, but no way of working out why! Maybe plenty of posts and reels which may have helped.

3. **November Repair Cafe Theme** - 'Sustainable Christmas'- Thinking about reducing waste at Christmas ie buying fewer presents/food & thinking of sustainable ways to avoid the waste! Such as donation of time or skill for the future instead of physical presents ie make a cake, baby sitting, cinema vouchers, trip to a nature park etc. Also make your own christmas cards, wrapping paper, regifting.

Action ALL- If anyone knows of any individuals or groups that fit into this theme, then please ask them to get in touch!

Action ALL- If anyone has any new items that could be re- gifted, then please let us know.

We have access to a Rosie James (textile artist) design image of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and this could be used in any way we see fit for Maidstone CAN / Maidstone Repair Cafe.

4. **2027 Repair Cafe Themes** - Themes for the Zone have only been running this year and it's fair to say they have been very successful.

   There has been lots of interest & positivity from all the organisations and groups who have been involved.

   There is a bigger idea for 2027 to try & bring Maidstone together working on the same themes so the impact is higher! MBC has a good range of advertising platforms that will help with this and hopefully we can get some coordination underway.

   There is a Calendar of Events and Groups here **LINK** that we can add to. So please take a look and see how wide we can cast this net. If you are aware of other activities or events/groups that tie in with this then please let us know.

5. **River Festival Litter Issue** -After the River Festival this year, Shirley & team noticed there was a lot more litter around after the river festival. We have communicated this to MBC & will work with them for next year to see if we can help in some way.

   The question was asked “Why do people drop litter”? & generally there is no one answer to that question but we all agreed we feel sad to think people think it’s ok to just drop litter!!!

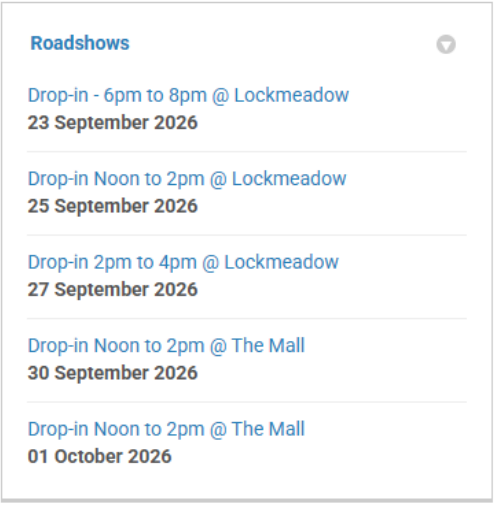
   It was suggested, getting in early in children’s education is an area where this could help. But getting into the schools is notoriously difficult. Some schools do take this on but the curriculum & lack of time doesn’t allow this.

Meantime groups such as ours carry on with our endeavours which work very well in keeping the local area clean and tidy.

Discussion around the three pocket parks recently put in place in Maidstone. These are sited at Union Street, Brewer Street and St Faiths Street. MBC are actively seeking Guardians for these sites who can look after them. Ideally, they would need to live close by due to the very nature of what is required. MBC Press Release here on the Pocket Parks themselves **LINK** if there is anyone interested in getting involved.

6. **Save Oaken Wood** - Possibly the biggest and most important thing we can throw our weight behind locally. Ancient woodland is totally irreplaceable and it will be a travesty if this scheme moves ahead. We urge everyone to view at least one of the videos concerning this scheme and what is being done to stop it happening. You can find the various videos of what is happening here **LINK** .They are all about 10 minutes but if you need to choose just one then please watch this one **LINK** as it will very clearly explain why we **ALL** need to get behind this campaign to **Save Oaken Wood.** Please do this asap so that you can add your own voice to the Joint Community Response which will be released soon.

7. **Market Hall future plans** - The Market Hall is a huge open space of 1,000 metres or so that the Council is looking to place under different stewardship. We would like to be involved as we want to be part of whatever the plan turns out to be and have access to this unique site for our very successful Repair cafe. MBC love the idea behind the Repair Cafe & what it stands for ie Repair Reuse, Recycle & community is something they can buy into. The Market Hall could be a vibrant multi purpose community area for environmental activities and organisations and our input is seen as being very valuable. MBC are in the very early stages of this project re who will take this on. The consultation is open now until the 19th October 2026. Any views, thoughts or suggestions are very welcome. A mini presentation here to get your creative juices flowing **LINK**



Contribute to the MBC Consultation here:
https://letstalkmaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/lockmeadow-survey-2026

8. **Litter Picker Lunch** - MBC have invited our litter picking team to a lunch on Thursday 1st October 9.30am - 2.00pm. There will be speakers and of course a big thank you to all those involved in litter picking.
Our very own thanks goes to Shirley for organising our regular monthly litter picks & all the team who support her.

Maidstone Canoe Club is doing a river litter pick on 23rd September.

9. **Community Skills Event** - Friday 30th October from 1pm - 4pm in The Market Hall. This is a KCC run event for young people who are coming out of care and are historically dumped back into the community. The event is set up to help & educate young people in life skills. If you have a skill to offer and want to get involved then please let us know.

AOB

Neil Nixon from Pennies- has been speaking with Big Chalk **LINK** who have some grant money available for 'Pollinator Patches'. These are small areas that can be appropriately planted to attract pollinators and improve biodiversity. The catchment area is quite specific for the funding & grants no smaller than £1,000. For Pennies the issue is their intended site is not big enough so they need to join forces with another group or project. At present the map is unclear of the boundaries so a clearer map has been requested.

In the meantime if you have an area you think might be suitable, then please get in touch as soon as possible as the deadline is at the end of November.

Action Duncan- to approach Boxley Parish Council as this may be a candidate.

Maidstone CAN Nature Project - Polly/ Lauren/ Duncan had a meeting today (21st Sep) with MBC to find out the future plans about 'Nature' in Maidstone. This project is in the very early stages of discussion.
Our aim is to try & encourage the public to be more aware about biodiversity in their own garden's & to help, educate & support them, where we can.
We are keen to understand what the Councils future plans are & how we can work together & what they might be interested in supporting us with.
Resilience might be the way forward given the difficulties experienced this Summer! Kits for small spaces & communal activities were also discussed.

Big Day Out - Thinking caps on again please. We are looking for green spaces around Maidstone to host a Big Day Out event. This is **June 12th 2027** so can be on or near that date as well. Any suggestions are welcome. Richard Conyard has already started work on this.

Take the Jump - Uniting Communities a six session online training course.

"Are you worried about the growing division in society? Feel we're falling out about marginal issues while we ignore the shared stake we have in our society, environment and economy? Do you want to communicate with others about sustainability but find conversations are often difficult? Why not join the 350+ people who have already completed this ground breaking and entirely free online training course."

Don't delay, it starts on 24th September. **LINK**