



4th April 2019

Marden Planning Opposition Group & Marden Parish Council Information

A request was made by Marden Planning Opposition Group (MPOG) to meet and discuss with Marden Parish Council (MPC).

An agenda of questions was forwarded, and responded to. Following their response, no meeting has taken place.

Whether the Parish Council would be able to furnish us with any technical data and information that could inform the document that we are currently writing to send at the end of the call for sites process.

1. A number of documents that may be of interest to local residents are available to view on the Parish Council website. The Marden Village Design Statement, the Marden Community Plan and the draft Marden Neighbourhood Plan have been prepared with wider community involvement. Local residents might also be interested to view the various MPC policies, particularly the CIL (Developer Contributions) policy document.

2. Whether the Parish Council can share any of the major learning points from the rejected Gladman Church Farm Application

Planning permission was sought for under MA/16/504584/OUT: Outline application for up to 150 residential dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing), introduction of structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, land for potential train station car parking for up to 50 spaces, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, vehicular access point from Maidstone Road and associated ancillary works. All matters to be reserved with the exception of the main site access.

The application was refused under delegated powers (the application was not heard at Planning Committee). The delegated report on which the refusal was based can be viewed on the MBC website. This also includes the comments made by MPC.

https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/files/643105E0ABF4A34FEA73780BDC3226B9/pdf/16_504584_OUT--3809542.pdf (Note from MPOG - This document is unavailable for viewing at this time on Maidstone Borough Councils website 4th April 2019)

The application was appealed and a public inquiry was scheduled. However the appeal was subsequently withdrawn by the appellant.

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Please when reviewing the decision be aware of the significance of a five year housing supply. If a Borough can demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing then the spatial policies in its Local Plan which relate to housing development remain up-to-date. However if a Borough cannot demonstrate a five year supply those policies are considered out-of-date.

3. How the Parish Council intends to gather the public viewpoint in July/August i.e timetable for public consultation

The Parish Council will seek to make local residents aware of the outcome of the 'call for sites' exercise once the information is made public. The Parish Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process carried out a consultation following the MBC 2013 'call for sites' exercise. Two open days were held in March 2013 at the Vestry Hall. As a snap shot of public opinion residents were asked to assess the site puts forward and to give a green light (sticker) to the most suitable and a red light (sticker) to the most unacceptable. The results of this exercise can be found in Appendix 4 of the MNP Draft Consultation Statement. (Please be aware that this document is at draft stage only). It may be appropriate to carry out a similar exercise or perhaps there may be a more suitable method but be assured the Parish Council will be seeking the optimum way to inform residents.

4. Who would be our best contacts within the parish council for the following; Highways / Environmental / Planning

Marden Parish Councillors are volunteers and whilst happy to share experiences do not purport to be experts. Although some Parish Councillor are professionals in their own fields such Councillors do not offer professional advice in their role as a Councillor – this would be inappropriate. It would be best therefore to seek advice from the relevant organisations.

Highway:

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation if relating to the local road network

Highways England if relating to the strategic highway network (motorways and trunk roads)

Environmental:

Maidstone Borough Council Environmental Health if relating to air quality and noise issues

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Natural England if relating to habitat and biodiversity, particularly protected species

Kent Wildlife Trust if relating to local habitat issues

Environment Agency if relating to water quality and or flooding issues

Planning:

Maidstone Borough Council Planning Policy if relating to the 'call for sites' or Local Plan issues

Maidstone Borough Council Development Management if relating to a specific planning application

Historic England if relating to issues of heritage – listed building or conservation areas

5. Would they be able to timetable a slot at each planning meeting to give updates on the proposal as it goes ahead?

The 'call of sites' will not appear on the Parish Council Planning Agenda until the results of the exercise are made public. This is because the 'call for sites' exercise is likely to involve many sites, all of which will need to be considered in the update of the MBC Local Plan, but – depending on the overall level of response from landowners and developers across the borough – it is likely that a significant proportion of these will never be progressed.

All consultations regarding the Local Plan will continue to be agenda items once information is received and all planning applications are included in Planning Agendas and debated at public meetings. This will not change since making MBC's 'call for sites' a standing agenda item over an extended period even when (as will usually be the case) there is nothing new to say is likely to prove frustrating for all concerned.

6. Would they like to be more involved in the March for Marden on the 18th May - march with us, be involved in the publicity? It would be great to have a nominated spokesperson. Equally we have a social in the Village Club would they like to attend? (10th April)

Thank you for your invitation to be involved in your organisation. However it would be inappropriate for Councillors to be involved in anything which may prejudice their later

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involvement in formal debate and decision making. However Councillors would appreciate being kept up to date with all relevant issues. Please do not misconstrue Councillors' electoral responsibilities with an absence of interest. On the contrary Councillors are dedicated to the welfare of the village and this is demonstrated in their willingness to dedicate immeasurable voluntary work hours.

7. Specifics relating to Marden Parish Council and the Public Footpath by Church, and concern over Ancient Woodlands Bridgehurst Woods.

Issues relating to PROWs are dealt with the KCC PROW Officer. For ancient woodland designations contact Natural England.

8. Whether MPOG can place an insert or editorial in their next newsletter, given that they inserted the Countryside Developers Statement in the Spring Newsletter.

As already highlighted Parish Councillors cannot be aligned to a single viewpoint in advance of all information being received. It would not therefore be appropriate to include an editorial or insert without an element of balance. In the interests of parity the relevant landowner could be asked to contribute however this might further confuse local residents and this is unlikely to be in the best interests of residents as a whole.

Further to the above, the Parish Council may look to answer further 'Frequently Asked Questions' if required to fill gaps between the newsletter publication cycle in order to help keep residents informed.

Comment from Marden Parish - Councillors are happy to discuss issues and offer advice to the local community. However it must at all times be remembered that Councillors are unpaid volunteers and are all bound by a code of conduct that is in line with the Nolan principles. It is important therefore that any discussions are held in a public forum to ensure accountability and transparency. It must also be understood that Councillors are required to act in the best interest of the whole community.