

West Malling Headline



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February 2019

FLOODS FOLLOW COUNTY CUTBACKS

After pressure from local Lib Dem Councillors, work was authorised to sort out the floods at the New Road - London Rd junction near B and Q. But even we were surprised to hear the account of the drainage engineer on what happened next. He wrote " I can confirm that 9 soakaways, 3 catchpits, 27 gullies and about 280 metres of 150mm surface water pipes have been cleaned. We removed 70.18 tonnes of spoil and it took 8 nights working from 21.30 until 02.30 each night."

" KCC cutbacks, which resulted in drains no longer being cleared on a regular basis, were a really bad idea. Further cutbacks on grass cutting in this year's budget mean the longer grass will clog the drains even more. Together with record backlogs in road maintenance, driving conditions will be even less safe in the future."

Nick

(See back page article 'Everyone's a Pedestrian')



Nick with Gwyneth and Paul on Town Hill Speedwatch

Parish Councillor **Nick Stapleton** co-ordinates the West Malling Speedwatch scheme and has been working hard over the past year, alongside residents and fellow parish councillors, doing sessions in various locations across the town.



New Road - London Road junction near B and Q garage.

This Neglect Must Stop

Arundel House has been a blot on our High Street since 2013. It is owned by someone who lives outside the UK much of the time.

I understand this building is a tiny part of his property holdings. It appears he has no concern for the effect of the eyesore and the crumbling building on our town.



I have written to TMBC to request that that they make a Compulsory Purchase and restore this building to its former glory in the heart of the Conservation Area.

Trudy

WANT TO CUT TRAFFIC SPEEDS?

SIGN UP WITH SPEEDWATCH

The purpose of the Speedwatch scheme is to help educate drivers on their speed, as many are either not aware of local speed limits or how fast they are driving. The details of speeding vehicles get passed to the Police who send warning notices to re-offenders and drivers who are breaking the speed limits by a considerable amount. Persistent offenders may be visited. Data can also be used to get traffic calming installed. So, if you want to cut speed in your road, contact Nick and join a couple of Speedwatch sessions so we can provide data on your area to the Police.

Lib Dems - On Your Doorstep - On Your Side

LOCAL PLAN FOR HOUSING - UPDATE

The Borough Council deposited its final Draft Local Plan with Government on 23rd January. This was one day before the deadline, after which TMBC would have been penalised with a further increase of 23% on their housing targets from now until 2031.

The Good News is that the Borough Council agreed to support the campaign led by local Liberal Democrats to increase the size of the Green Belt. The Green Belt currently protects all the open countryside to the Offham/London side of West Malling High Street. The new Green Belt, if approved, would then cover much of the land separating the built up area of West Malling from the villages of East Malling, Kings Hill, Leybourne and Larkfield. The northern boundary would run along London Road to Winterfield Lane, and the eastern boundary would follow Chapman Way, New Road, High Street and Wateringbury Road, East Malling through to Wateringbury.

It is also good news that **NONE** of the large Green Belt sites submitted by developers in West Malling on Norman Rd, or Mr Betts Farm between Fartherwell Rd (not Avenue) and Offham Rd were included for house building in the Plan.

The Bad News is that the Borough Council ignored overwhelming opposition to the **extension of Kings Hill beyond the original boundary of the former Airfield**. As a result the Plan includes:-

890 more homes on Broadwater Farm, stretching as far as Pikey Lane and New Barns Conservation Area including two new access roads, one of which will join the bypass opposite the railway station.

1,720 houses in Borough Green former sandpits.

1,000 houses on the Maidstone side of Hermitage Lane on the corner opposite Macdonalds.

1,000 houses in South Aylesford between A20 and the railway line, and between Hermitage Lane and East Malling Research.

420 houses on East Malling Research divided between two sites on New Road East Malling, and Cherry Orchard, Ditton.

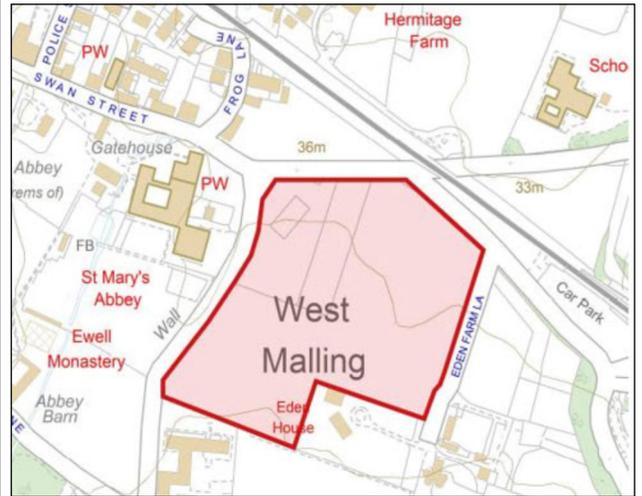
The Borough Council did NOT include housing on huge brownfield sites at former Aylesford Newsprint factory & Aylesford Quarry.

The Borough Council also did NOT support the proposal for a car park on land to the rear of properties on the London Road between Town Hill and Parkfoot garage. This idea was supported by WM Parish Council and the Chamber of Commerce, 40 shops and the majority of residents. West Malling desperately needs more parking if it is to fight off the High Street closures affecting many areas of the country. TMBC supported its use for residential properties instead. Planning permission has now been granted for a retirement village where none of the properties will be 'affordable'.

The Government will now appoint an Inspector to hold an "Examination in Public" hearing later in the year, where developers and objectors to the Plan can normally appear if they wish. The Inspector will then recommend a decision to the Secretary of State, who will normally accept it, and at that stage, the Plan becomes Approved and is the basis for all future Planning Applications.

Sorry this is long and complicated. That's the way Planning is!

'ESTATE WOULD RUIN OUR RURAL RAIL STATION'



Bellway have applied for planning consent for up to 90 houses with vehicle access off Swan St. on land opposite West Malling Station between the Station Approach road and Lavenders Road. West Malling Parish Council is working with local residents and a professional planner to strongly fight the application. The application would

- * **destroy the rural setting of the station,**
- * **put more traffic onto the narrow and congested Swan Street and Lucks Hill,**
- * **harm the setting of West Malling Abbey, which is a scheduled Ancient Monument enjoying the highest possible national protection for a heritage building, ranking alongside Stonehenge,**
- * **harm Lavenders Road status as a Rural Quiet Lane**
- * **allow residents of the development to look directly into the grounds of West Malling Abbey which is home to the closed contemplative order of nuns and people on retreat, requiring a peaceful environment.**

The application can be viewed on the TMBC website quoting ref. TM/18/020093/OA

You Asked.. "With all these new houses ... what about the roads, schools and doctors?"

KCC as highway authority says the A20 and other roads can cope with the increased traffic with new junction redesigns. These haven't been published yet or who will pay for them.

KCC has said how many new primary schools are needed for the new houses, but the law does not require a developer to pay for school places, roads and medical facilities to solve existing overcrowding.

The NHS have stated that a new medical facility is required for Kings Hill and possible expansion of other surgeries.

Trouble is, these predictions are often wrong, and the money is never enough.

That's why our roads, schools and surgeries are packed.

£60 hike in Young Persons Travel Pass as Kent County Council slashes budgets once more.

The government has given KCC £28 million to prepare for Brexit. But for all other services, the Conservative Government has cut Conservative KCC grant for services in 2019/20 from £37 million to £9 million and even more service cuts are being made as a result.

- ★ The Young Persons Travel Pass will soar from £290 to £350pa for travel to school for secondary pupils.
- ★ Subsidised bus services are being cut, threatening the number 58 route, our only bus link to Maidstone Hospital.
- ★ £555,000 cut in Library opening hours, West Malling from 40 to 25 hours per week, and Larkfield from 42 to 37 hours.
- ★ £1 million income from charging for the disposal of plaster board and bricks at Tip sites. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will start charging £35 for the collection of green waste with this year's new contract.
- ★ £100,000 cut in verge cutting, maintenance of bollards, drains and lit signs.
- ★ £8,800,000 of savings, and £2,000,000 from the Kings Hill Reserve are being used to balance the budget. Officers warn that KCC can only afford two more years of using up reserves in this way.
- ★ £71 million additional income will come from a KCC Council Tax increase of 5%.

KCC is very afraid the cost of Brexit will be much greater than forecast, and is protecting its savings in case it has to pay more. Other services are suffering as a result.



VISIT TO ANTARCTICA
Saturday 9th March 7.30pm
at East Malling Institute, Mill Street,
East Malling, ME19 6DA. Tickets £10 each.
Please use the **public** car park at the rear of
the hall through the 'King and Queen' car park.
Ring 01732 847415 or 07790 239915 for tickets.

New Waste Bin Collection Service

Urbaser, the new contractor, will start the new bin collection service on 30th September. They will also be responsible for clearing litter and emptying bins from streets and footways. Collections will continue on the normal days through Bank Holidays, including this Easter.

From September, there will be separate weekly collections of food waste and fortnightly collections of mixed dry recycling, including for the first time plastics and glass. In addition, there will be new "Opt In" collection of garden waste for an annual fee of £40 per year with a discounted price of £35 for people who sign up between the 7th May and Friday 2nd August. Such garden waste will not be collected from householders who do not opt in, so people would either have to compost or take to Civic Amenity sites such as Tovil or Cuxton.

The charge helps them bring in doorstep collection of plastic and glass. They promise Roadshows about the changes and leaflets during Spring and Summer. Headline will do our best to keep you updated.

WEST MALLING - LEYBOURNE - KINGS HILL GP SURGERY UPDATE

Dr Reichelm has left the practice and will be succeeded by Dr Andrew Swindlehurst. Dr Louisa Gibson has returned to the practice. The Business and Finance Manager has left, and the practice is seeking to employ new GPs, a practice nurse and specialist diabetic nurse. The surgery has been sold and is being leased back for an undisclosed period of time.

The out of hours service is now dealt with by a consortium of local practices. If a visit is needed outside normal hours, patients may be given a doctor from another practice. This is because a Government instruction requires practices to operate in this way, or risk out of hours work being allocated to private firms.

BILL BANKS

joins the Lib Dem team

I have lived in Leybourne with my family for 28 years. My first job after leaving school was to join the Merchant Navy as a Boy Rating.

This gave me my first opportunity to go around the world and wet my appetite for future travels. I have been asked to give a presentation on our recent trip to Antarctica. So do come along and say "hello". I am anxious to hear about what issues are important to West Malling people.



WILL YOU BE A POTHOLE SPOTTER?

The Government has given KCC £10 million to help sort out some of its backlog of £650 million of road repairs. The money must be spent by the end of March.

We must make sure we get **our** local road and pavement repairs done with this money. Will you be your street champion and list the potholes and pavement repairs in your road so we can send them all to KCC in good time? Give me a ring if you can help and let me know which road you are covering. Nick (07534 459491)

“Everybody is a pedestrian” Trudy

At County Hall, Trudy has obliged KCC to publish the Pavement repair backlog separately. This has shows our pavements are in an even worse condition than our roads, and a special fund for pavement repairs has now been set up.

During 2018, a KCC report showed levels of actual spending compared to what was needed to simply maintain the state of roads and footways as they are now.

Roads spending is £13 m when £45 m pa is needed.

Footways (Pavements) spending is £1 million p.a. when £4.8 million is needed,

Road markings, studs, lines and signs spending is £27.6 million when £77.3 million is needed.

THE TRAIN FROM WEST MALLING TO ST PANCRAS IS DUE IN DECEMBER.

Maidstone Lib Dem councillors have been successful in getting Secretary of State Chris Grayling to confirm that fast Thameslink train services into St Pancras will run to Maidstone, calling at West Malling, from December 2019. He has also approved overnight sidings in Ashford. The published plans say there will be two additional trains per hour throughout the day. Train speeds will be ‘competitive’ with the High Speed trains which currently stop at Snodland, Strood, Ebbsfleet, Stratford and St Pancras. Some services will go straight through to Cambridge.

LOOK UP THE SALTING ROUTES ON-LINE.

When KCC say on the news that it has “salted all the roads”, what it means is that they have salted all the ‘Primary Salting Routes’. These are generally A and B roads and busy commuter routes. Locally, just the A20, A228 (bypass) and the road from A20 into West Malling are Primary routes. Secondary Salting routes are meant to include places like Doctors, Care Homes, and Schools. **Last winter, none of the secondary routes were touched. Only Primary Routes were treated, leaving many people still unable to get to them.** Trudy has asked for Martin Square, Larkfield and The Malling School to be added to the Primary routes so the medical centre and school can remain open. Google “Road salting and snow clearance” on KCC’s website for a route map.

Got a Problem, Comment or Suggestion? Get in Touch



Headline is delivered by volunteers. Can you spare an hour every other month to help in your area?

Please tick

Are you interested in joining in a Speedwatch Session in your road or local area?

At election time, can you help us by displaying a window or garden poster?

If you feel you are not represented, have you thought about standing to be a Councillor for the Boro Council?

Bill Banks 07790 239915
Bill.banks1700@gmail.com

Trudy Dean 01732 843119
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Nick Stapleton 07534 459491
Nicholasgstapleton@gmail.com

To Sign up for our email local news Bulletin, email trudy.dean@kent.gov.uk

My idea, question, complaint is.....

Post or drop in to Nick Stapleton at Flat F Meadow Bank Court, or Trudy at 49, Offham Rd, or post to FREEPOST Kent Lib Dems (Yes , it really is that short an address)

Name..... Address.....

Tel Number email.....

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