

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
16 FEBRUARY 2010**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman)
Councillors Yates, Butler, Mrs Gooch, Hinder, Mrs Joy,
Wilson and Mrs Smith

APOLOGIES: Councillor Verrall

82. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

Resolved: That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

83. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor Verrall.

84. Notification of Substitute Members.

There were no substitute Members.

85. Notification of Visiting Members.

It was noted that Councillor F Wilson was a visiting Member and wished to speak on Agenda Item 9, 'Update on the Implementation of the Community Toilet Scheme'.

86. Disclosures by Members and Officers.

There were no disclosures.

87. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

Resolved: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

88. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2010.

The minutes of the meeting dated 19 January 2010 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

- The sixth bullet point of Minute N^o 79 be amended to read 'It was *clarified*';
- 'Councillor Smith' in Minute N^o 79 be amended to 'Councillor Mrs Smith';

- Recommendation b (ii) of Minute N^o 79 be amended to 'those areas *where* scout groups' and recommendation b (iv) to 'poor recycling *rates*'; and
- The word 'the' be removed from recommendation e of Minute N^o 80.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2010 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman subject to the requested amendments.

89. Litter Enforcement Update.

The Chairman welcomed the Assistant Director of Environmental Services, Steve Goulette, and the Environmental Enforcement Operations Manager, Martyn Jeynes, to the meeting. The Committee received a presentation, attached at Appendix A, updating the Committee on the work of the Environmental Enforcement team and the Committee then discussed the following:

- Although there were more calls regarding nuisance complaints compared to other Environmental Enforcement calls, the time taken to resolve these issues were typically less;
- There was a greater focus on partnership working with Kent Police, Police Community Support Officers, Kent County Council Wardens and Housing Associations, as part of the Safer Maidstone Partnership; this ensured an intelligence driven response to environmental crimes. Members agreed that it was important that partnership work with stakeholders continued to ensure continued best value;
- Kent Police's work with the Council with regard to responding to environmental nuisance had increased as a relationship between negative perceptions of the environment and fear of crime had been proven;
- 'You Say, We Did' promotional adverts had been produced as part of a public reassurance campaign. The Committee asked that these adverts be made available to all Councillors to distribute to local community groups as appropriate to support the Council's work;
- Members were concerned about the impact of loud car exhausts and loud car stereos on resident's perceptions of Maidstone and agreed that the matter should be referred to the Public Reassurance Group for consideration;
- The Council was applying for 'full partner' status with Keep Britain Tidy; this was free to Councils and provided complimentary advertisement materials to help support the Council's work. It was felt that the Council's work in developing a GIS package with regard to environmental crimes would support its application;
- Noise complaints were considered under statutory nuisance legislation. A nuisance was not determined by the number of decibels emitted, but considered with regard to its reasonableness, including in relation to time of day, frequency and where appropriate, the sensitivity of the complainant;

- There had been some problems with the Police contact centre about the remits of the Police and the Council with regard to noise complaints. A Member noted that it had been unclear who to contact out of hours and the Committee agreed that the telephone number be circulated to Parish Councils and Ward Members;
- A review of noise complaints had shown that many had been received from residents as part of an ongoing disputes with their neighbours and mediation services were therefore being promoted as necessary;
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had clarified that the powers initially used to identify car owners under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 were restricted to fly-tipping occurrences and could not be used for car occupants throwing litter out of their car windows. Dealing with car related litter was more difficult and Keep Britain Tidy was seeking legislation changes to make the owner of the vehicle accountable for any litter dripped from the car;
- The number of incidences of fly-tipping had increased and it was considered that this was as a result of the downturn in the economy. The Council was working with businesses to combat fly-tipping from its source. A fly-tipper had recently been prosecuted and it was hoped this would serve as a notice to would-be fly-tippers;
- Following a Scrutiny recommendation, officers had explored the use of Smart Water to target fly-tippers, however the Council had not been consulted on a pilot scheme launched by Clean Kent. Members agreed that the Council should keep abreast of Smart Water developments to see if there were any other opportunities to utilise this technology in the future; and
- A large number of requests for the reinstatement of the chewing gum boards had been received from young people since their removal; initiatives to target chewing gum disposal continued to be explored.

The Committee congratulated the team for its ongoing work and thanked the officers for an informative presentation.

The web cast from this session is available at:

<http://clients.westminster-digital.co.uk/maidstone/archive.aspx>

Resolved That:

- a) The issue of loud car exhausts and car stereos be referred to the Public Reassurance Group;
- b) The partnership work with stakeholders continue to ensure continued best value;
- c) The Environmental Enforcement Team keep abreast of the Smart Water developments to seek opportunities for the Council to use the technology in the future to help prevent fly tipping;
- d) The telephone number for reporting out of hours noise disturbances be distributed to all Parish Councils and Ward Members; and

- e) The 'You Say, We Did' promotional adverts be made available to all Councillors for distribution to reinforce the Council's public reassurance work.

90. Update on the Implementation of the Community Toilet Scheme.

The Chairman invited the Assistant Director of Environmental Services, Mr Goulette to respond to the Committee's comments regarding his written community toilet scheme update. The Committee considered the update and discussed the following:

- Businesses signed yearly agreements and their provision was monitored on a random basis to determine whether improvements to the service were required. A number of Members had visited all the participating facilities in the town centre and highlighted some issues with cleanliness and access. The Committee agreed that their survey results be considered by officers to inform monitoring and that improvements to the existing monitoring system were required to ensure a better quality provision;
- Mr Goulette confirmed that the signing was being reviewed and improvements were to be made. The Committee supported this and agreed that this must be addressed to ensure the community toilet scheme was successful. Members were particularly concerned with regard to the ambiguity of directional signs and the lack of shop window stickers, and the size of these when displayed;
- The Council was considering new community toilet scheme members in consultation with Town Centre Management. Furthermore, Mr Goulette advised that conversations with Parish Councils were ongoing and they were considering the management of the existing public conveniences. The Committee agreed that the Council should actively seek new community toilet scheme members and suggested Mothercare be approached to make its baby changing facilities available as part of the scheme;
- The Committee requested information on the number and types of complaints received regarding the community toilet scheme;
- Mr Goulette clarified that each participant in the scheme had been advised to discuss the issue of liability with their individual insurers; and
- A Member raised concern that the Palace Avenue public conveniences were still featured on a tourism map on the Council's website and the Committee agreed that the map be updated.

Councillor F Wilson informed the Committee that she had recently visited the Gateway to request a map of the locations of the community toilet scheme but that they had been unaware of the existence of the map. She also highlighted concerns regarding the poor customer service she had received when she asked for a map. It was also noted that the information at the town hall had been readily available and the staff had been very helpful. The Committee agreed that the service received by Councillor Wilson be investigated. Members also agreed that hard copies of the community toilet scheme maps be provided at tourist points including the Gateway.

The Committee thanked Mr Goulette for his hard work in getting the scheme up and running and for responding to the Committee's queries. A further update in four months time was requested.

The web cast from this session is available at:

<http://clients.westminster-digital.co.uk/maidstone/archive.aspx>

Resolved That:

- a) The information regarding public conveniences be updated on the Council's website;
- b) The customer service issues highlighted by Councillor F Wilson be investigated by the Assistant Director of Environmental Services;
- c) Hard copies of information and maps depicting community toilet scheme members be made available at tourist points, including the Gateway;
- d) The signage to community scheme toilets be improved in the town centre, including car park maps;
- e) The number and types of complaints regarding the community toilet scheme be circulated to the Committee to inform its future monitoring of the scheme;
- f) The Councillor's survey results be considered by officers to inform their monitoring of the community toilet scheme and that the existing monitoring system be improved;
- g) Mothercare be approached to provide its existing baby changing facilities as part of the community toilet scheme;
- h) Opportunities for new community toilet scheme members be actively pursued; and
- i) The Committee receive a community toilet scheme update in June 2010.

91. Future Work Programme and Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

The Committee considered its future work programme and noted the Local Government Association 'what do the latest climate projections mean for you' guidance; Members felt that it was an important issue to consider and agreed to add an item on climate change projections to its future work programme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed Members that the Air Quality Action Plan item had been removed from the Committee's work programme because it was felt that the Committee could have a more tangible input once the draft had been completed. The Committee felt that it was important to continue receiving Air Quality Action Plan items and agreed to recommend this item to the 2010/11 Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the work programme.

A Member noted the progress of fundraising for the museum and the Committee agreed to receive an update at its meeting on 20 April.

Resolved That:

- a) An item on Climate Change Projections be added to the Committee's work programme;
- b) The 2010/11 Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to continue receiving items on the Air Quality Action Plan; and
- c) The Committee consider an item on fundraising for the museum at its meeting on 20 April.

92. Duration of the Meeting.

6.30 p.m. to 8.40 p.m.



Environmental Enforcement OSC Update – February 2010

Martyn Jeynes

**Operations Manager
Environmental Enforcement
Maidstone Borough Council**



Who are Environmental Enforcement?

- A bespoke team of enforcers dealing with a range of Nuisance and Environmental Crimes
- Team of 6 ½ officers with various specialties and work experiences that allow us to deal with a broad remit of work



MAIDSTONE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environmental Enforcement Remit



3



Public Health

Drainage



Pests / Filthy Properties





Statutory Nuisance

- Noise
- Odour
- Smoke
- Light
- Premises
- Accumulations
- Pests

Animals and Licensing

- Animal Welfare
- Stray and Lost dogs
- Licensing of Animal Establishments and Dangerous Wild Animals
- Dangerous Dogs & Sheep Worrying



you said → **we did**

You were concerned about people playing excessively loud music late at night.

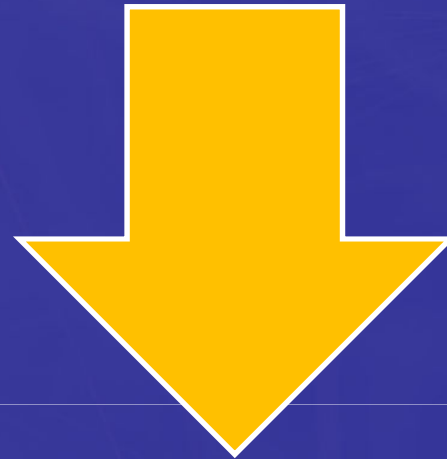
Maidstone Borough Council work with Kent Police and other agencies to reduce noise nuisance. In the last six months seven abatement notices were served. If ignored, offenders could face a fine or have their sound equipment seized. If you hear it, report it

Maidstone Borough Council work closely with Kent Police to deal with noise nuisance where you live. To report domestic or commercial noise nuisance, contact Maidstone Borough Council on 01622 602202. For actions on priorities where you live visit: www.kent.police.uk/yousaidwedid

Kent Police **MAIDSTONE** **Safer Maidstone**



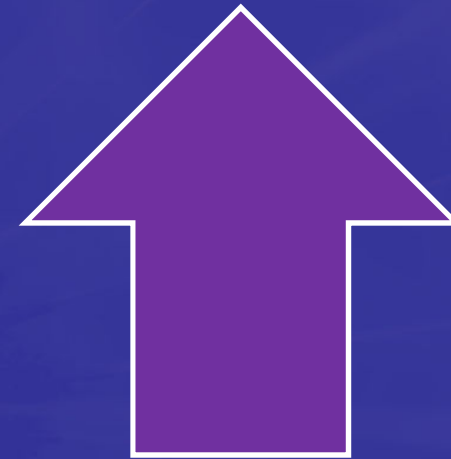
What is the hardest job?



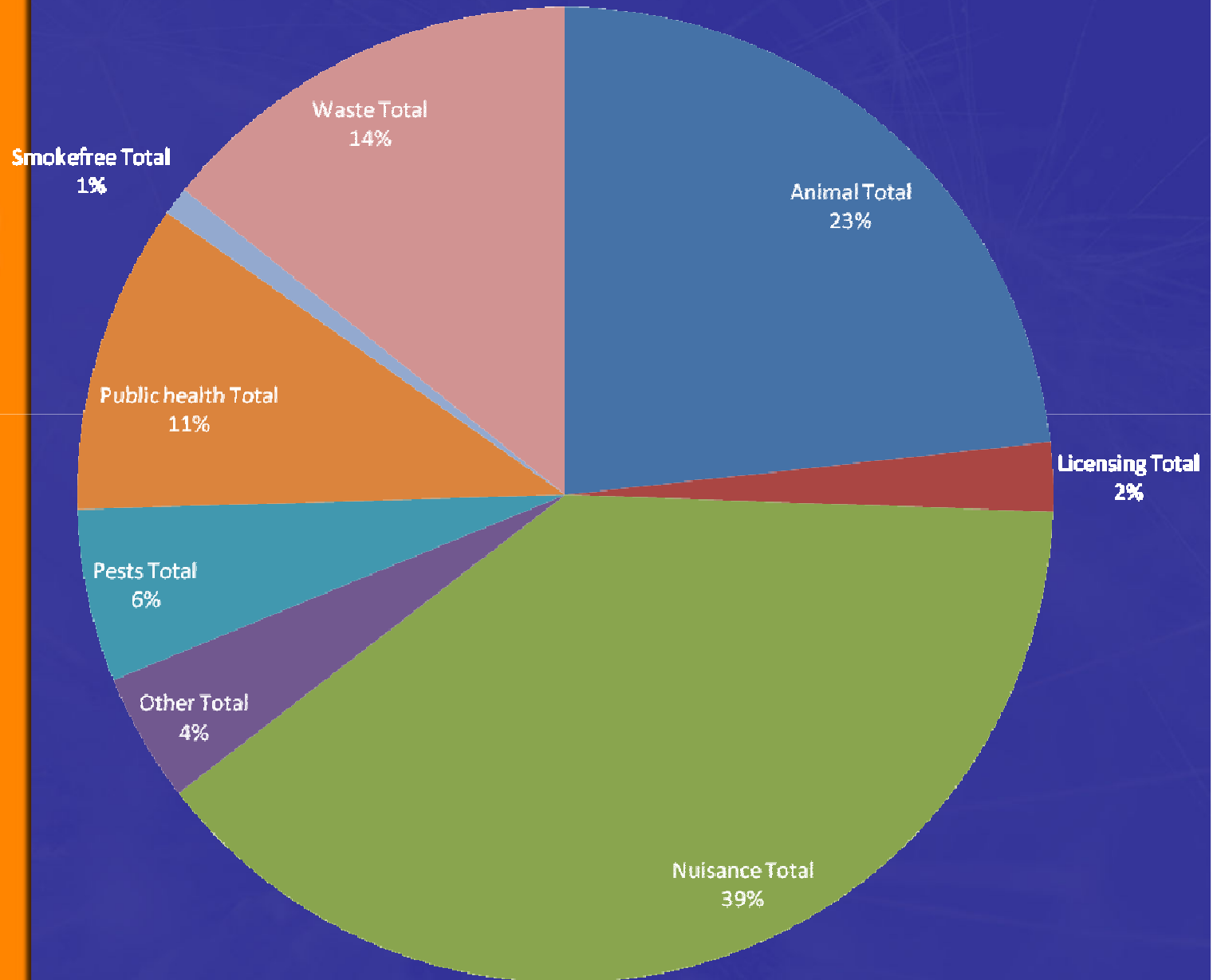
Statutory
Functions



Powers,
Political
will and
Public
desire



2009 % Breakdown Chart of Environmental Enforcement Service Requests



Campaign's 2009

January 2009

57% decrease in fast food litter



July 2009

Keep Britain Tidy consolidating national data to lobby parliament about car litter



August 2009

21% decrease in chewing gum measured after second count

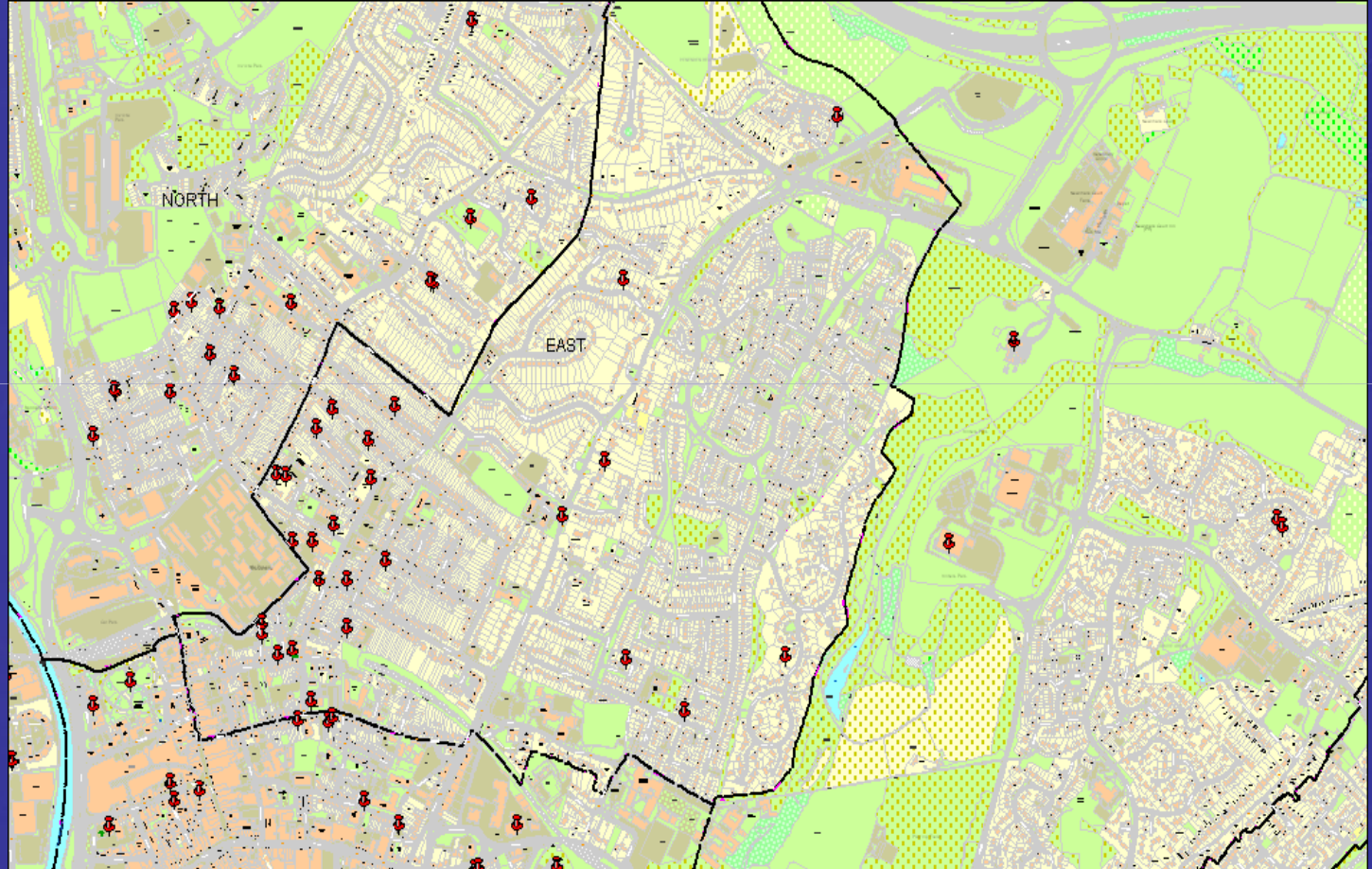


Moving from Reactive to Responsive

- Intelligence Driven
 - GIS mapping
 - Those in need vs. those who shout loudest
 - Intelligence sharing
- Partnership
 - Safer Maidstone Partnership
 - Kent Police/PCSO's
 - KCC Wardens
 - Housing Associations
- Public Reassurance Joint Measure
 - Greater emphasis on partnership



GIS Mapping Software



Safer Maidstone Partnership Fly tipping



You were concerned
about fly-tipping in
Maidstone Rural



Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Police identified 6 illegal waste carriers and fly-tippers who have been fined or will face prosecution. If you see it report it



For actions on priorities where you live visit: www.kent.police.uk/yousaidwedid

To report fly-tipping where you live, contact Maidstone Borough Council on 01622 602202 or visit www.cleankent.com



Safer Maidstone Partnership Noise



you said → **we did**

You were concerned about people playing excessively loud music late at night

Maidstone Borough Council work with Kent Police and other agencies to reduce noise nuisance. In the last six months seven abatement notices were served. If ignored, offenders could face a fine or have their sound equipment seized. If you hear it, report it

12



**Kent
Police**



Maidstone Borough Council work closely with Kent Police to deal with noise nuisance where you live. To report domestic or commercial noise nuisance, contact Maidstone Borough Council on **01622 602202**. For actions on priorities where you live visit: www.kent.police.uk/yousaidwedid

Plans for 2010

- March 2010
 - Launch of Front Office
- May 2010
 - Dog Fouling Campaign
 - Work in progress
 - Whole week of campaigning in 5+ locations around the borough
 - Stakeholder and perception exercise
 - 1 week education followed by focussed enforcement



Plans for 2010

- May - July 2010
 - Noise Campaign
 - SMP literature
 - New policy on web
 - Media Campaign
 - Late night noise operations with the police
- July 2010
 - Cigarette Litter
 - Urban campaign
 - Education / Enforcement Patrols
 - Liaison with businesses



MAIDSTONE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Plans for 2010

- September 2010
 - Dog Fouling campaign
 - Keep Britain Tidy Partner
 - Implementation of stakeholder ideas
 - More high profile patrols of identified hot spots

Thank You

Any Questions?

CONTACT

Martyn Jeynes

martynjeynes@maidstone.gov.uk



MAIDSTONE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dog Fouling

- Estimates put the UK dog population between 6.5 and 7.4 million, producing 1,000 tonnes of faeces every day.
- Most dog owners are responsible and clean up after their pets, but a small minority continue to cause problems
- Exempted land:
 - Carriageways with a speed limit of more than 40 mph
 - Land used for agriculture or woodlands
- Once bagged, dog faeces is considered as litter
- Maidstone Borough Council maintains 350 dog bins and thousands of other bins in the borough
- Parish Councils are starting to buy and maintain their own dog bins

