

FOCUS

Your Community Newsletter from
Cllr Tony Harwood and Cllr Chris Passmore



Exposed: Shocking State of Maidstone's Rivers



Cllr Tony Harwood exposes the shocking state of the river Len at the Palace Avenue Mill Pond whilst doing the Waterblitz.

Local Lib Dem County Councillor Chris Passmore and Maidstone Council's Cabinet Member for Planning Tony Harwood recently took part in the Great UK Waterblitz, testing water quality in the River Len and Medway.

Disturbingly, all eight survey sites in urban Maidstone showed a 'poor ecological status.'

The worst pollution was found at the Palace Avenue millpond. After overnight rain, Common Bream—normally tolerant of pollution—were seen gasping for air at the water's surface.

Test results revealed a sharp increase in nitrate and phosphate levels in the River Len compared to last June.

Local Lib Dems have worked hard alongside Southern Water and the Environment Agency to boost investment in infrastructure, aiming to reduce sewage and farm runoff.

However, evidence shows that polluted road runoff is causing significant harm. Every time it rains, toxic microplastics, metals, and hydrocarbons wash into our rivers. One of these polluting outfalls is just south of Maidstone Bridge.

“Bream were seen gasping for air at the water's surface.”

Worryingly, Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan consultation fails to address this issue. Our rivers are an essential feature of our natural and recreational environment in Maidstone and must be maintained in not only for nature but for the safe use of all river users.

Tackling the slow lane

The increasing traffic on Hermitage Lane is becoming a significant issue for West Maidstone, with slower speeds and more hospital staff and visitors parking in nearby estates.

Chris Passmore and Tony Harwood are working with the hospital, our MP, and local councils (KCC, MBC, and TMBC) to develop coordinated improvements aimed at preventing further deterioration, which is also affecting the hospital's efficiency. They are also ensuring that new housing developments contribute fully to addressing congestion.

Tony Harwood noted, *“While residents welcome the investments in the Community Diagnostic Centre and Oncology Unit, making Maidstone Hospital a medical hub, this has increased the number of staff, patients, and visitors using Hermitage Lane on top of what is already a busy thoroughfare”*

Chris Passmore added, *“It's unfortunate that Hermitage Lane has seen piecemeal development without an overarching plan. Now, our focus is on making small improvements to help through-traffic flow better and improve safety for bus users, pedestrians, and cyclists, reducing the need for car use.”*



Hermitage Lane congestion is heavily impacting West Maidstone travel as well as the hospital's efficiency

LOCAL NEWS



Regretably the 3 year application to register Bunyards Farm Allington as a Village Green was unsuccessful and the land will now be developed for housing. We are still attempting to see what can be done to keep some of it 'green'.



We are delighted that our colleague Cynthia Robertson has been recommended to be an Honorary Alderman in recognition of her exceptional 37 years of service as an MBC Councillor.



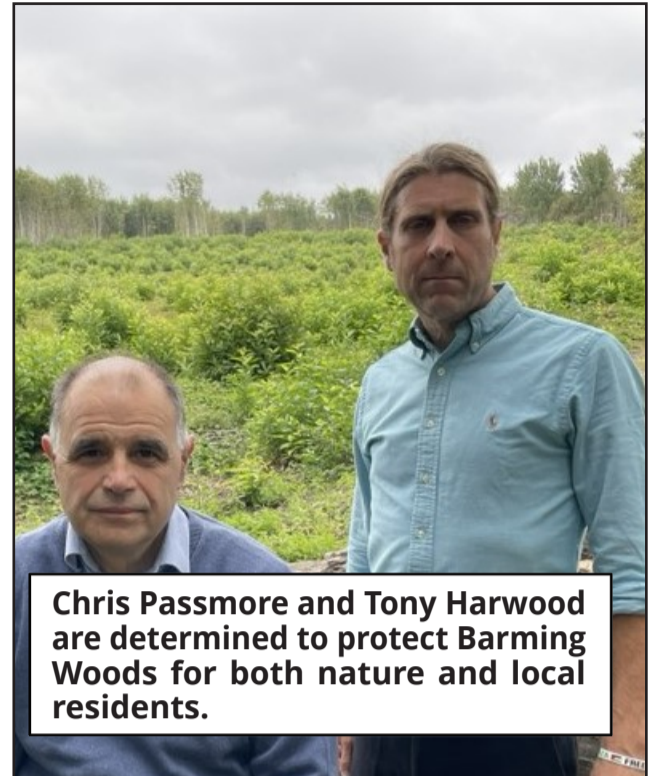
After a lengthy period of consultation and considerable opposition at the outset it has been agreed that Hart Street by McDonald's in the Broadway will become a permanent one way street .

MBC to defend Ancient Woodland at Barming

One of the first actions of Maidstone's new leadership was a formal commitment to protect ancient woodland in Barming, threatened by plans to extend Hermitage Quarry. Reversing the previous Conservative administration's support for the extension has been a top priority for Cllr. Tony Harwood, the newly appointed Cabinet Member for Planning Policy.

In a strong message to the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority at Kent County Council, Tony confirmed that Maidstone Borough Council had changed its stance and would do everything possible to protect Oaken Wood and its wildlife.

Cllr Chris Passmore adds "I have enjoyed walked in these woods nearly all my life and it is essential that they are not only protected for their wildlife, but also for current and future local residents"



Chris Passmore and Tony Harwood are determined to protect Barming Woods for both nature and local residents.

Cleaning up Our Environment



A team of Lib Dems working to clean up our environment and thanks to others who are already doing their bit in other parts of our borough

Local Lib Dems have been tackling litter and fly-tipping in areas like Giddyhorn, Buckland Lane, Oakwood Road, and more. All collected waste was swiftly removed by the Borough Council.

Along with typical litter, we were alarmed to find Nitrous Oxide cylinders, stolen cabling, and soiled clothing.

Littering and fly-tipping are unacceptable. Reporting issues early and targeted enforcement are key. If you spot a problem area, let your Lib Dem team know, and we'll take action.

Thanks to those already helping clean up. If you'd like to join, we can provide gloves, pickers, and sacks.

GET IN TOUCH

If you've got an issue you need help with, please let us know:



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How can we help you?



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