

# Valley Conservation Society

*doing nothing is not an option*

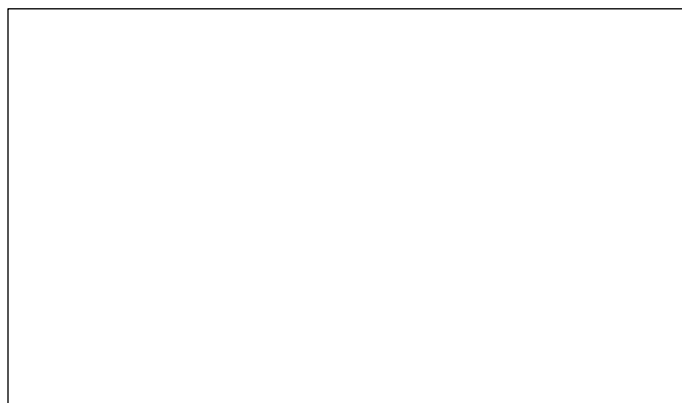


Members' newsletter No 175

We are a non-political organisation

November 2021

## Join with us in a Kent-wide Day of Action



We often blame Maidstone Borough Council for the incessant house-building going on around us. But although the borough is responsible for deciding where the houses go, it is the Government which sets the housing targets which all local authorities have to adhere to.



It is of no comfort, but we are not alone – local authorities across the South East are imposing similar unwelcome and unsustainably high levels of housing on their populations too.

Recently, at the Conservative Party Conference, the Prime Minister said that housing should “Not be on green fields, not just jammed in the South East, but on brownfield sites in places where homes make sense.”

Unfortunately, despite Mr Johnson’s words, there has been no change in Government policy, it seems it was all hot air.

On **Sunday, November 28**, residents and amenity groups across Kent are holding a Joint **Day of Action** on the theme of **Save Kent’s Green Spaces**.

There will be peaceful and law-abiding protests across the county. The intention is to show the Government by the sheer numbers of people taking part that ‘Enough is enough’.

The VCS contribution will be a walk to the greenfield site behind the historic Abbey Gate Place, and adjacent to our Walnut Tree Meadow Nature Reserve, that the borough council has selected as suitable for 250 homes in its Local Plan Review.

We invite you to join us at the entrance to Ivy Mill Lane, just in front of Bockingford Steps, (ME15 6DP)

**at 11am on Sunday, November 28.**

We will walk up Bockingford Lane and right along Stockett Lane (within the field boundary) till we reach the farmgate that marks the entrance to one of the huge fields that the borough is proposing should be built on.

Then we shall retrace our steps to Abbey Gate and walk along the footpath there that takes us into the Walnut Tree Meadows Nature Reserve. Having walked part way around the reserve we shall look back across the area where the council proposes a new road will be built *across the nature reserve* to take traffic from the new estate out onto Dean Street.

The walk should take less than an hour. It does involve negotiating one stile at Abbey Gate.

You are very welcome to bring your own posters, placards etc to hold up for a photo shoot.

We appreciate our protest is not going to be seen by scores of people on the day, that is not the key point. Save Kent's Green Spaces want us to submit photographs of our event for use in their social media campaign illustrating how many groups there are across Kent fed up with the loss of greenfields.

For further information about the day, visit: [www.facebook.com/savekentsgreenspaces](http://www.facebook.com/savekentsgreenspaces)

Or read the KM story:

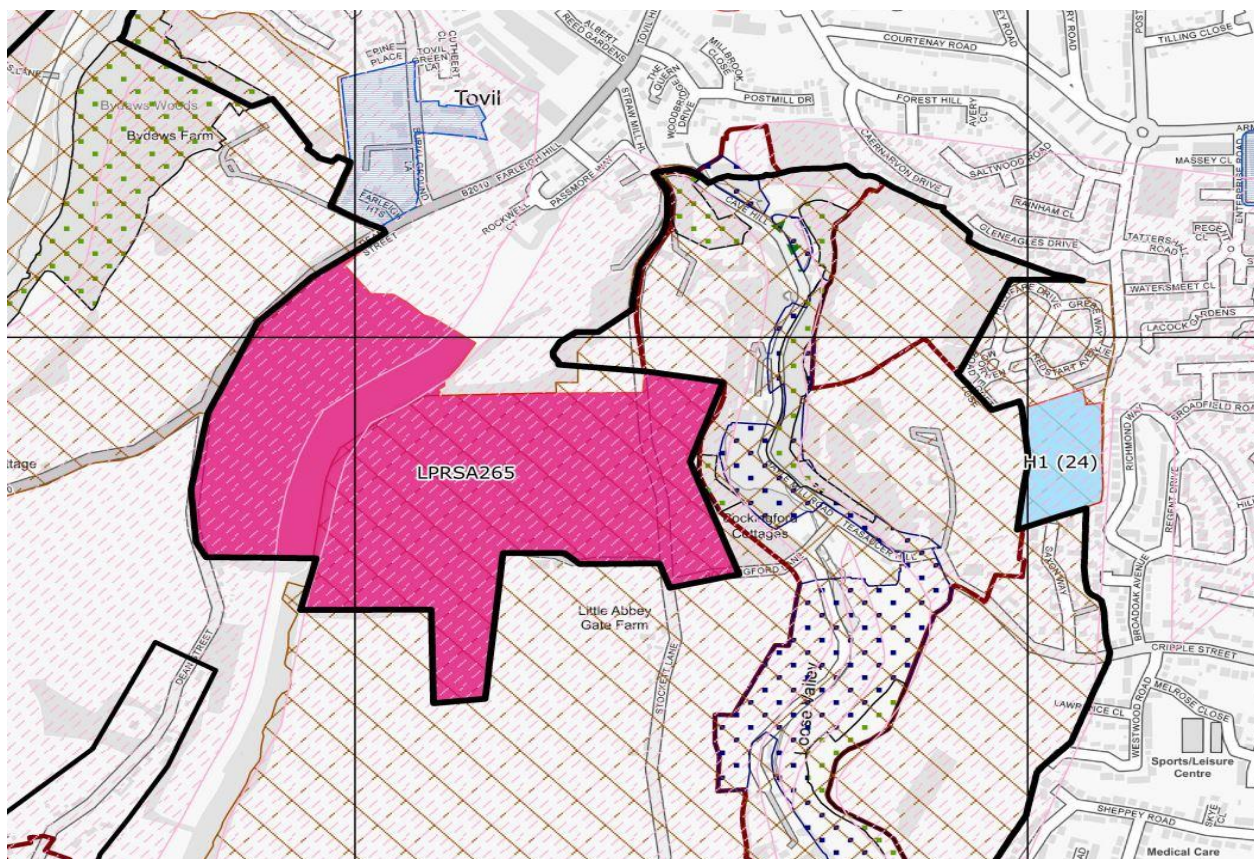
[www.kentonline.co.uk/weald/news/call-to-join-county-wide-day-of-action-against-house-buildin-257281/](http://www.kentonline.co.uk/weald/news/call-to-join-county-wide-day-of-action-against-house-buildin-257281/)

## Local Plan Review

You are probably aware that Maidstone council has put out the final draft of its "Local Plan Review" for public consultation.

Many communities are upset by some of the proposals in the plan, which once adopted will shape the future development of Maidstone for the next 15 years.

The proposal that most closely affects the Loose Valley Conservation Area is the one mentioned above and shown in pink overleaf..



Allocation LPRSA 265 is for 250 homes on agricultural land at Abbey Gate Farm. The development as shown, stretches from just above Bockingford Cottages on the valley side of Stockett Lane, right across to Dean Street.

MBC specifically states that vehicular access for the main part of the site will be via Dean Street. Although that certainly makes more sense than having the traffic exit onto the width-restricted Stockett Lane, it is still not a sustainable, as 1) it means driving a road across the Walnut Tree Meadows Nature Reserve, and 2) there is no footpath from the proposed site down into Tovil; the new residents will inevitably use their cars for every journey.

On top of that of course is the concern that once again the proposal is to use prime agricultural land for house-building. How are we to feed ourselves in future if we carry on like that?

You can let MBC know what you think of its proposals via <https://maidstone-consult.objective.co.uk/kse>

You need the section "Local Plan Review Regulation 19"

Alternatively, you can just email the council on

**ldf@maidstone.gov.uk**

Or write to **Strategic Planning, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ**

***Your response must contain your full name and postal address or it won't be counted and must be submitted by December 12.***





# Crisbrook Meadow wall

Turning to more cheerful news. The volunteers of the work party have completed the repairs to the rag-stone wall at Crisbrook Meadow which collapsed in October 2020

They have included additional buttresses and water drainage this time, to ensure that they don't have to re-build it again!



Some of the work party volunteers pose in front of their handiwork

## Make a date with us for Christmas

We thought it was a good time to produce a calendar – and this year a VCS calendar will be on sale featuring photographs of sites closely connected to the Society's land. Each month has an ample day-plan for making note of appointments..

The calendar will be available from Tuesday, November 30, and can be purchased from the Conservation Cabin during the Tuesday work party sessions, or ordered by calling our chairman Bryn Cornwell on 01622 746514..

The cost is £5, with the small profit from each sale going to the Society's funds. The calendars are A4 size for posting, but open out to make an A3 size when hanging on the wall.

If successful, it is an idea we will look to repeat next year, when of course we shall require a whole new set of pictures.

[So here is an invitation to all the photographers among you.](#) Why not use your lens to focus on some aspect of the Lower Loose Valley? We will be looking for a photograph from each month, illustrating the changes of the seasons. You can start right now by snapping one for November. Images can be

emailed (with details of date and location and your telephone number please) to Alan Smith on [a128smith@btinternet.com](mailto:a128smith@btinternet.com)

By submitting your photo, it will be deemed that you have granted us copyright permission to use your image in a future calendar if it is selected. Thank you.

## Fun guys

The work party like to have a laugh when they are busy each Tuesday, but there have been some other strange fungis in the valley recently.



*Strange sights in the valley*

*Left, the work party have laid wood chippings, kindly donated by Hood's Tree Services Ltd, on the footpath through Crisbrook Meadow in anticipation of the wet and muddy weather to come. Enjoy!*



## Another year almost gone

Sadly another year has almost slipped by. Come January, it will be time to renew your membership of the Society once again. You will find an application form overleaf. The membership fee remains at £2 per person, though of course, donations are always welcome.

Why not bring the completed form with you to the walk?

# Valley Conservation Society

## Membership Application 2022

Names: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode.....

Email(s) **please print** .....

Phone ..... Mobile .....

Membership is £2 per person per year (50p for 14 to 18 year olds). **It would greatly assist us if you are able to pay by online bank transfer or standing order.** Please email [VCSMembership@btinternet.com](mailto:VCSMembership@btinternet.com) with your name and address if you choose this option.

I enclose a cheque/cash for £ ..... (Donations welcome)

Cheques/cash can be delivered with your form to Tony Day, Membership Secretary, 57 Mayfair Avenue, Maidstone ME15 6BY. Cheques should be payable to Valley Conservation Society

### STANDING ORDER MANDATE

*(please allow at least 14 days to start date for bank processing)*

To: **The Manager**, (add name and address of your bank/building society)

.....

Name(s) of Account Holders

.....

Account Number: ..... Sort Code: .....

Please pay:

**Lloyds Bank plc**, Week Street, Maidstone (309537) Branch, PO Box 1000, Box BX1 1LT

For the credit of: **Valley Conservation Society**

Account Number: **02166853** Sort Code: **30 95 37**

The sum of £ ..... starting on .....2022  
and thereafter on 1st day of January every year until further notice.

Signature(s) ..... Date: .....

**General Data Protection Regulations:** *Our legal basis for holding and processing the data you provide is our legitimate interest as a membership organisation and we will use it to send you newsletters and other information we consider relevant and useful. We will not disclose it to any third party.*

Please tick the box if you consent to VCS retaining the details on this form

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