

Maidstone Borough Council Briefing – Update for Downswood Parish Council

Date: 1st September 2026.

By Cllr Ciaran Oliver

Apologies that this is coming so late in the day.

Call for Sites & Infrastructure Impact While the Call for Sites process is at an early, technical stage of assessment by officers, I want to assure Downswood Parish Council and local residents that the broader picture is not being lost. Val Springett's update correctly outlines the mechanics of the submission stage; however, my clear focus is on the cumulative impact that any future development will have on our existing infrastructure. I would encourage everyone to read up on how the process continues and where we can input our views.

I share the strong concerns expressed by local residents regarding traffic flow through the estate, road safety along Church Road, water and drainage capacity, and the pressure on wider public services. Cross-boundary impacts do not stop at parish lines. Downswood cannot simply be treated as an access corridor or absorb incremental traffic from neighbouring sites without full scrutiny of local infrastructure limits. I am watching these submissions closely as they progress through spatial planning assessment.

Planning Regulations & Local Accountability While central government policy shifts continue to alter high-level planning frameworks, it remains vital that local communities have a clear voice. My priority at Borough level is ensuring robust oversight so that development pressures are challenged rigorously, and that infrastructure requirements are placed front and centre before any sites move forward in the process. Let's not lose that local voice at the borough level and above.

Community Safety & Joint Working I note the ongoing discussions around anti-social behaviour and Bearsted Parish Council's exploration of CCTV options. Ensuring our shared open spaces—such as the Mallards and surrounding footpaths—remain safe for families is essential, and I encourage close liaison between our local councils to address these issues effectively.