

DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2026

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT BY CLLR DENIS SPOONER

There is little to report on the key issues affecting MBC at the present time. We await further announcements from Central Government about Local Government Reform. We await the outcome of public consultation on the Heathlands and Lidsing Supplementary Planning Documents; on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document; and on the potential creation of a town council or several community councils for the unparished areas of Maidstone Borough. There is little progress so far on the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

1 December: I attended an online planning training session conducted by MBC Planning Officers dealing with the layout and design of new development. This training is open to all parish councillors and it was good that Richard Wingett attended.

I thought that the presentation by Officers was excellent. It fully explained with many photographs the differences between the poor and good design of buildings and between the poor and good layout of new housing estates. It was clearly aimed at seeking higher quality designs and higher densities of layout for all the new housing developments planned within the Borough.

I was very disappointed and embarrassed at most of the subsequent questions posed by some Borough Councillors – who should know better. Few questions related to design and layout and, instead, related to compliance with conditions of planning permissions, grass cutting on public open space and tidying up an overgrown area of land!

3 December: I attended a full meeting of MBC. There were no items on the agenda that had any direct relevance to Downswood residents.

4 December: I attended a meeting of the MBC Planning for Healthier and Safer Communities Policy Advisory Committee. There were no items on the agenda that were of direct relevance to Downswood.

16 December: I attended a full meeting of Bearsted Parish Council as both a Maidstone Borough Councillor and as Bearsted Parish Councillor.

18 December: I attended a meeting of the MBC Planning Committee. There were no items on the agenda that were of direct relevance to Downswood.

Borough Councillor Denis Spooner

Bearsted and Downswood Ward

4 January 2026