Marden Links Parish Hub Working Group Meeting
7 pm Tuesday 10th November 2026
In the lobby area New Parish Hall

Summary Notes

1. Present: Chris Wathen, Maggie Hopkins, David Bennett, Lesley Hayward, Lorna Taylor, Angela Sasso, Mike Blake, Kate Ryan

2. Apologies: Sally Postlethwaite

3. **Community Café Update**
    a. Feedback from Volunteers
    Hub name perceived to carry connotations of being just for older people. Multiple people independently raised this sentiment. Suggestion: refer to it publicly as "community cafe" or "community bar" instead.
    Two new attendees today, both said they'd return
    Layout flagged as potentially off-putting to newcomers: circular table arrangement looks closed-off. Proposal to spread furniture out more, bistro-style, to feel more welcoming
    Three people have reported being unable to find the venue
    Entrance confusion: visitors don't know to use the builder's site entrance
    Proposals discussed: Repurpose one of the two old parish council notice boards: fill the "Parish Council" lettering, repaint in blue (matching website), place in the gap near the pavement
    A-frame sign (donated by parishioner) for weekly schedule: current event one side, calendar of events on the reverse
    Event banners from Angela's garage: could be tied to poles near the hedge
    Consensus: a proper repainted notice board is the preferred permanent solution; temporary signage until then
    Arrow or sign at the site entrance to direct people to the main door

    b. Volunteer rota for November/December
    Most shifts covered a couple need a second person
    c. Items required to purchase from donations
    A colander

d. Food Hygiene – Hand-washing: EH inspector suggested adjacent toilet sink is acceptable; Kate has asked for a visit to discuss options and give definitive advice

4. Repair Café Update

a. Feedback from volunteers 1st session at new hall went well the larger space was appreciated
b. Repair tools – items needed to purchase from donations? Batteries, Bulbs, plugs, head torch, stanley knife, magnifying lamp, heavy duty disposable gloves
c. Discuss plans for storage - will have room for much of the very frequently used items at the hall, large folding work benches may have to wait until dedicated storage available

5. Community Garden

a. Next volunteer day next spring – TBC. Until then Laurence to be booked to maintain paths, weeding and potentially plant bulbs

6. Parish Hall Events

a. Discussion re suggestions to put forward to MPT.
- Monthly bikers' meetup: bacon butties, tea; Kate/David to contact bar manager at Clungunford village hall for contact details
- Colours Fashion Show: high-street brands, own models, ~75 guaranteed attendees needed, ~£10 ticket; church ran one successfully
- Halloween event: pumpkin carving for kids, adults invent Halloween cocktails for judging
- Food nights: taco bar, jacket potato bar, chilli night, curry night, Italian night; could tie to quiz or Flicks nights
- Valuation/antiques roadshow night: Kate Bliss suggested as evaluator
- Pamper night (women) and a separate men's grooming night
- New Year's Eve gala: band, dress code, ticketed; family-friendly option discussed (kids dress up, no babysitter needed); flagged as a big undertaking
- Race night: already set for March
- Second quiz night: likely April; music quiz format being explored
- Car wash: on hold until spring

b. Christmas Cracker

- Start time moved back to 5pm (was 6pm last year; attendance felt lower)
- No fixed end time: "from 5 onwards," especially with the bar open

- Food: Aldo's Pizza van + Street 1984 (fries/burgers) outside
- Drinks:
    - Free: mulled wine, hot chocolate, squash, tea, coffee
    - Boozy hot chocolate (Baileys): £1 donation
    - Bar: beer and cider for sale; alcohol-free options to be stocked
- Mince pies: contact Cook (frozen, ready to eat); order ~200, ask about charity discount
- Carols/Christmas songs: need a singer; vicar no longer available
- Fire pits: confirmed; Kate and Lesley will bring on the night
- Ryan Doolan (local electrician) and David to manage event power and lighting
- Ted and Chris will supervise fire pits Tables inside and outside (school PE benches around fire pits as before)
- Setup: 3:30pm on the day; some equipment can be set up the evening before
- Budget: previous years ~£500; £1,000 community events budget incoming once bank account opens
- Trustee approval needed before spending

c. **December 30th** Drop-In Event Proposal for a casual all-ages drop-in on Wednesday 30th December
Format agreed: pizza (Aldo's van from Canon Pyon), board games, and a film
Pizza van handles food; drinks and ice cream served from the bar/kitchen
Games in one room, film in another to keep pizza away from games
Start time: 12:30pm
Trustees meeting needed to assign roles and approve budget before committing

d. **Flicks and Sticks** Next screening:
Rental Family 7.30pm doors open 7.pm 28th November
Needs to go in News and Views (deadline: Sunday)

Marden Links

Link the film trailer on social media to drive interest
19th December A boy called Christmas 6pm doors open 5.45pm
30th January ? Wild Mountain Thyme TBC 7.30pm doors open 7.pm

7. Date & time of next meeting **12th January 2027 7pm** at the New Parish Hall