



Community Toilet Scheme Report February 2025

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Background

The Environment and Leisure Committee approved the award of a service contract for minor maintenance and cleansing of public conveniences. A contractor was then appointed on a 1 + 1 basis from 1st April 2024.

The +1 option available within the tender was enacted for 25/26, the costs in excess of budget are c. £196k, due to both contract inflation and to the application of a further £100k budget reduction, as proposed by Finance Sub in 2023. This was corrected in the 25/26 budget setting but with the intention of conducting a full review during 25/26 to achieve the savings required in future.

Subsequently, a range of options are being explored to bring the budget into alignment with the costs. This includes partnership provisions with private businesses.

Many local authorities offer Community Toilet Schemes to supplement existing public toilet provisions.

Local Business Partnerships in Kent

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone Community Toilet Scheme

Community Toilet Scheme

Maidstone Borough Council is working with local businesses like shops, restaurants and pubs, to help improve the provision of public toilet facilities within the Town Centre. Through this scheme you will have more access to clean, safe and accessible toilets.

A number of organisations are participating in the scheme which means that you are able to use their toilet facilities during normal opening hours without having to make a purchase.



1
Maidstone Museum
St Faith's Street • Tues to Sat 10am - 5PM,
Sun 12pm - 4pm (1 Apr - 31 Oct only)



2
McDonalds
Broadway • Sun to Wed 6pm - 11pm
Thurs to Sat 6am - 12am



3
McDonalds
Week Street • Sun to Wed 6am - 11pm
Thurs to Sat 6am - 12am



4
Mall Chequers Centre
Mon to Sat 9am - 5.30pm
Sun 10.30am - 4.30pm



5
Maidstone Market
Lockmeadow • Mon 7am - 4pm,
Tues 5am - 4pm,
Wed & Thurs 7am - 5pm,
Fri 7am - 1pm, Sat 6am - 3pm



6
Muggleton Inn
High Street • Mon to Thurs 8am - Midnight
Fri and Sat 8am - 1am
Sun 8am - Midnight



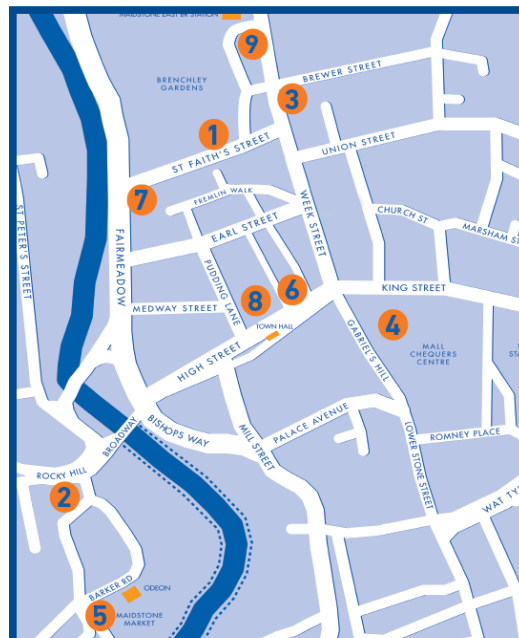
7
Royal Albion
St Faith's Street • Mon to Sun
11am-11pm



8
Royal Star Arcade
Market Buildings • Mon to Sat
9am - 5.30pm



9
Society Rooms I Wetherspoons
Week Street • Mon to Thurs 8am - Midnight
Sun 8am - 12pm, Fri & Sat 8am - 1am



Need a toilet?
Look for this
sticker!



www.maidstone.gov.uk

MAIDSTONE
Borough Council

Maidstone Borough Council's Community Toilet Scheme was first introduced in 2008, following a review of public conveniences. The scheme currently has 9 members. Most businesses in this scheme receive an annual payment of £300 from the Council to cover the cost of any additional supplies, however one establishment receives £600 as this is the only toilet which opens after 11pm.

Community Toilet Scheme

Ashford Borough Council is working with local businesses to help improve the provision of safe and hygienic toilet facilities in the town centre. Through this scheme you will have access to clean, safe toilets during the normal opening hours of each establishment listed. No purchase is required for the use of these toilets.



www.ashford.gov.uk/community-toilet-scheme

Maidstone Borough Council's Community Toilet Scheme was first introduced in 2016, following a review of public conveniences. The scheme currently has 11 members. The average payment is approximately £857 per business per year.

Benefits

There are several benefits of operating a community toilet scheme, such as;

- Increased Availability
The more local businesses that take part in a community toilet scheme, mean there are more public toilet options available for residents and visitors. This can make areas more attractive to tourists, enhancing the overall visitor experience.
- Cost Savings
Local authorities that that operate community toilet schemes are able to reduce the costs of public toilets provision. The maintenance and upkeep costs are shared between the local business and the local authority.
- Economic Boost
Residents and visitors who use the nearest public toilets available leads to increased foot traffic to well-placed participating businesses. This increase in foot traffic can lead to higher sales and economic benefits for the local economy.
- Well maintained
In addition to Council Officers inspections, local businesses regularly inspect and clean their toilets. This often leads to high hygiene standards and are less likely to be vandalized compared to standalone public toilets.
- Positive Publicity
Participating businesses can benefit from positive publicity and enhanced reputation for contributing to the community. Businesses that are a part of a community toilet scheme have a sense of pride and responsibility.

Drawbacks

Similarly, community toilet scheme have several drawbacks, such as;

- Inconsistent Quality
The quality and cleanliness of facilities can differ from one business to another. Additionally, each business may have its own standards for maintaining consistency in quality and cleanliness
- Potential Misuse
There is a risk of misuse or overuse of facilities, which could lead to increased maintenance needs and costs for businesses. Participating businesses may face increased operational costs and responsibilities, which could be a burden, especially for smaller establishments.
- Limited Access
Access to facilities may be restricted based on business operating hours. Some businesses may open and close later in the day compared with others and vice versa. Weekend hours of operation may also be limited.
- Limited Awareness
Residents and visitors may not be aware of the participating businesses or of the scheme itself. Likewise, where there are changes to businesses newly participating or no longer participating, many people may not be aware of this.
- High Demand
Where there is a strong demand for free facilities, this can lead to overcrowding, impacting the primary business operations. Businesses may also struggle to keep up with the increased maintenance demands, leading to potential hygiene issues.

Opportunities

Swale Borough Council has the opportunity to increase the number of public toilet options available for residents and visitors, while not taking on the full financial responsibility.

There already exists private establishments that offer publicly available toilets free of charge.

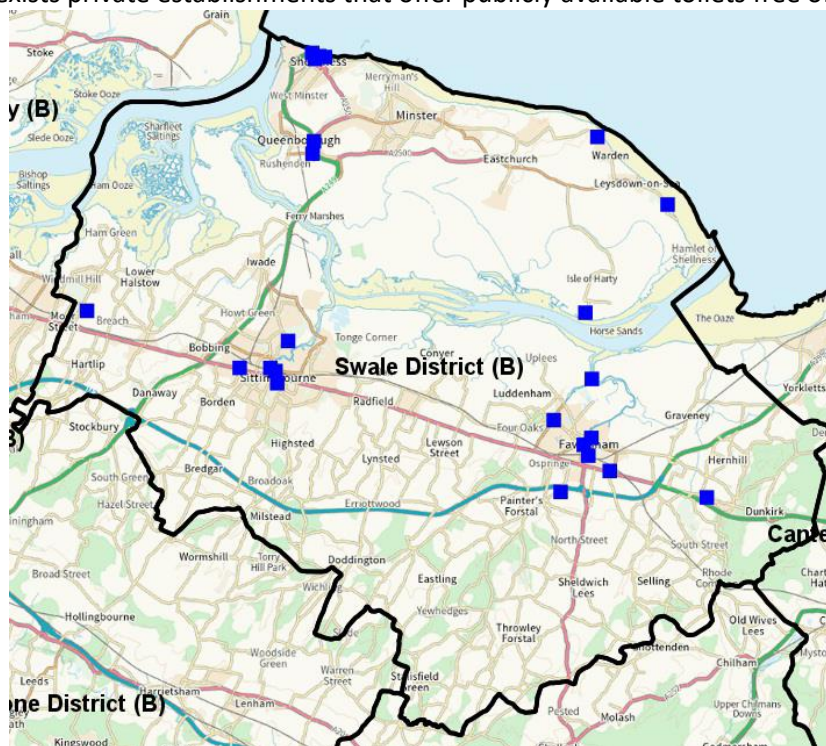


Figure 1: Map of Non-Swale Borough Council Maintained Toilets

These include The Barnyard, Esso Filling Station, Asda Superstore, Morrisons Supermarket x2, Sittingbourne Station, Queenborough Service Station, Tesco Extra x2, Warden Springs Caravan Park, Neptune's Beach Café, The Ferry House, The Shipwright's Arms, Sainsbury's Superstore, Faversham Railway Station, Shell Filling Station and Brogdale.

These toilets are however not inspected by Council Officers and no support is provided by the Council.

Other publicly available toilets within the borough include community halls and leisure centres.

Mitigation Measures

Swale Borough Council can address known issues with Community Toilet Schemes through;

- Appealing to local businesses
Businesses who have been a part of Community Toilet Schemes or expressed an interest in taking part have identified needing support with cleaning costs and supplies. Offering a token incentive presents a willingness to work in partnership to provide public toilets for residents and visitors. Particularly, where there are well established businesses with extended opening hours.
- Advertise Public Toilets

There are a number of ways publicly available toilets can be publicised, promoting participating businesses and access to residents and visitors.

- Signs informing passers-by placed in several locations informing readers of the community toilet scheme
- Signs at all participating business locations informing passers-by that their toilets are available, and of the types of toilet that they provide.
- Online information can help residents and visitors plan their journeys. Additionally, where no signs are visible an online resource can be used to locate the nearest facility.

- Vetting

The Community Toilet Scheme aims to attract businesses with well-maintained toilets that serve families in need of baby changing facilities and individuals with disabilities, and that are open for business a variety of hours. However, to ensure that core values of the scheme are adhered to, only businesses that can provide facilities where they are needed will be approved.

- Monitoring

Regular inspections by Council Officers ensure that participating businesses uphold the cleanliness quality standards expected of publicly available toilets consistently. Officers regularly monitoring participating businesses also means that the information available to the public is kept up-to-date.