

## **REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**21 MARCH 2023**

### **ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Report from: Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Hackwell

#### Summary

This report sets out progress made within the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Hackwell, which fall within the remit of this Committee.

#### 1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management are:

- Bereavement
- Community Wardens
- Emergency Planning
- Registration

1.2 Achievements are detailed by services area below.

#### 2. Bereavement

2.1 Cremation and burial statistics for the last 5 years are as follows (adult numbers are given as there is no charge for under 18s):

Table 1: Cremation and burial statistics 2018 – 2022 (calendar year)

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Cremations</b>	<b>Adult Cremations</b>	<b>Total Burials</b>	<b>Adult Burials</b>
2022	2,465	2,346	360	340

2021 (Covid pandemic)	2,794	2,666	442	413
2020 (Covid pandemic)	2,678	2,593	328	303
2019	1,936	1,845	322	299
2018	1,995	1,877	349	330

- 2.2 There are 4x main income streams for Bereavement Services, the table below shows the last 5 calendar years.

Table 2: Bereavement income streams 2018 – 2022 (calendar year)

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Cremation fee</b>	<b>Crematorium leased memorials</b>	<b>Burial fee</b>	<b>Grave purchase</b>
2022	£1.4 m	£148,000	£163,000	£193,000
2021 (Covid pandemic)	£1.48 m	£165,000	£215,000	£185,000
2020 (Covid pandemic)	£1.46 m	£135,000	£200,000	£175,000
2019	£1.1 m	£158,000	£201,000	£186,000
2018	£1.3 m	£191,000	£198,000	£191,000

- 2.3 It must be noted that there is also a revenue cost to the running of the service, this equates to around £890,000, additionally there are maintenance costs associated with all grounds and buildings. The income was also used to invest in updating the grounds to facilitate properly constructed paths etc.
- 2.4 Direct cremations (a cremation without a chapel service) continue to be higher than pre-covid levels. In 2023/24 Medway Crematorium is going to focus on promoting this service to local funeral directors and the wider Kent area to establish new agreements.

Table 3: Cremation only statistics 2018 – 2022 (calendar year)

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Cremations</b>	<b>Direct Cremations</b>	<b>%</b>
2022	2,465	178	7.2%
2021 (Covid pandemic)	2,794	306	11%
2020 (Covid pandemic)	2,678	225	8.4%
2019	1,936	104	5.4%
2018	1,995	94	4.7%
2017	2,046	89	4.3%

- 2.5 Medway Crematorium has been working with a private Cemetery (Blue Bell Cemetery) in Sevenoaks since 2019, whilst they had their own crematorium built (one built). This agreement was meant to expire April 2022, however due to installation delays we have continued with the agreement. In January 2023 Blue Bell Cemetery completed their first cremation and we expect this agreement to slowly fade out as they increase their own cremations.
- 2.6 In 2022 we have continued to see a large increase in the internment of Cremated Remains in the cemeteries.

Table 4: Internment of cremation remains 2018 – 2022 (calendar year)

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Burials</b>	<b>Cremated Remains Burials</b>	<b>%</b>
2022	334	121	36%
2021 (Covid pandemic)	409	143	35%
2020 (Covid pandemic)	297	59	20%
2019	309	86	28%
2018	326	96	29%
2017	323	94	29%

- 2.7 Obitus, the company who supplies Webcasting and Visual Tributes of funerals at the crematorium continue to be popular. In 2022, 522 services used the Webcasting facility, with 584 services opting to use a visual tribute. This is the first year where we have had a full year of data, going forward we will be able to compare data.
- 2.8 Bereavement Services won the 2022 Make the Difference award for Best Customer Service, following the successful management of the pandemic, how we treated our customers and kept them safe whilst on site.
- 2.9 2022/23 Investment Improvements**
- 2.10 Bereavement Services invested £250,000 Capital Projects to improve the roadways in the Cemeteries. Working closely with Highways and Volker each Cemetery has seen improvement works completed.



Photo of Woodlands Cemetery showing highway improvements

2.11 All Cemeteries have had their signage and site maps updated, redesigned, and installed.



Photo of new cemetery signage (St Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester)

2.12 Following numerous concerns in respect of cars parking / passing over the grass verges causing the road to become very muddy as well as cars driving close to graves in Chatham Cemetery (New), a one-way system was created, the road was made wider at pinch points as well as 2x separate areas created for additional parking. This has improved the situation significantly.



Photo of Chatham Cemetery showing road widening improvements



Photo of Chatham Cemetery showing additional parking spaces

2.13 The Crematorium has benefited from the investments in 2022/23 project with the following improvements:

- Creation of 3x new footpaths providing all year access to all glades for all visitors.
- Creation of 3x new areas for additional memorials
- Creation of a dropped kerb in the car park for disabled access to the footpath
- Relevelling / repointing of pathing slabs in 4x areas which were dangerous trip hazards
- Repainting of Chapel and Glade signage
- Repainting of all Lamppost columns and handrails
- Repainting of parking spaces / road markings



Photo of new footpaths leading to Podkin Glade (Crematorium)



Photo of new footpaths leading to Glade 41 (Crematorium)



Photo of footpaths improvements behind the Chapel of Meditation (Crematorium)



Photo of new disabled access and improved road marking (Crematorium)

### 3. Community Wardens

#### 3.1 Community Wardens (Enforcement) 'Street Scene'

- 3.2 The Community Wardens (Enforcement) who operate as the Street Scene Team continue to be extremely busy, they have adopted new smarter ways of working to ensure service provision during difficulties in recruiting suitable officers.

The Street Scene Team's overarching objective is compliance, which it achieves primarily through education and engagement with residents and businesses. The team takes an innovative approach to their work and responds dynamically to the emergent issues in Medway.

### 3.3.1 Refuse out early

- Refuse out early is often misreported as Fly Tipping, officers will visit and assess, if deemed refuse they will issue a Community Protection Warning (CPW), this year 352 Community Protection Warnings have been issued for household waste related issues.
- 17 Community Protection Notices (CPN) were issued for Non-Compliance of a CPW.
- 1 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) was issued for Non-Compliance of a CPN.
- Total Compliance was in excess of 99%.

### 3.3.2 Safer Streets

Street Scene successfully applied for funding from the PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) as part of a joint bid, the funding has allowed us to carry out a lot of work in the project area, since September (13 working weeks) we have carried out the below:

Table 5: Safes Street Outcomes September 2022

<b>Job Types</b>	<b>Running Totals</b>
Engagement	40
CPW/Refuse	222
CPN's	17
FPN's	3
Trade Waste	28
Flytip Investigations	45
Evidence Recovered	322
Total Jobs	805
Total Weight (t)	18.81

### 3.3.3 Abandoned Vehicles

Officers have dealt with 931 reports of abandoned vehicles.

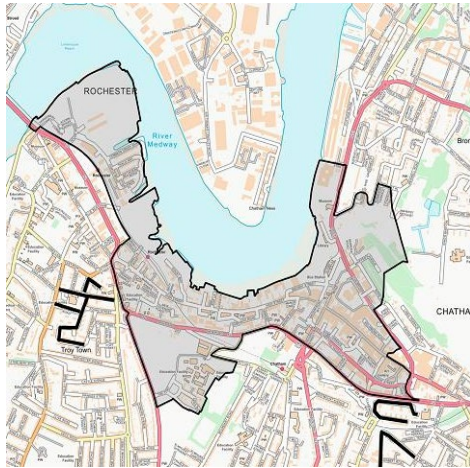
- 520 were not deemed as abandoned
- 123 were not found
- 129 were referred to contractors as untaxed
- 120 were duplicate reports
- 39 Vehicles have been removed as abandoned

### 3.3.4 Fly tipping removals and investigations

This year the Street Scene Officers have removed 837 reactive reports of fly tipping. A further 1850 incidents were cleared proactively, this varies from single items, detritus, refuse and fly tipping. 952 collections were made as part of a Service Level Agreement with the Housing Services to remove reported fly tipping from their property. The total tonnage removed this year by Street Scene team is a remarkable 177 tonnes (196 tonnes with Safer Streets). The areas in Chatham and Rochester highlighted on the map are covered in Safer Streets 4, we



also cover Luton, from the arches to Street End Road (Including Barnfield), Thorold Road, Pig Alley, Henry Street and parts of Castle Road.



Map showing Safer Streets 4 areas in Chatham and Rochester

### 3.3.5 Trade waste compliance

The year the Scene Officers have issued 20 s34(5) notices, dealing with Trade Waste. This resulted in 7 fixed penalty notices being issued for non-compliance with no further investigation for non-payment

### 3.4 **Waste Wardens**

3.5 The waste contract monitoring team has two waste wardens who are managed by the Environmental Contracts Manager. Their work is a combination of reactive activities, inspections, and planned monitoring.

#### 3.5.1 Waste warden reactive activities

Since April 2022 the waste wardens' have undertaken the following reactive tasks:

- 146 new visits to support residents who require assistance with their waste collection service through illness, disability, or infirmity. Medway Norse provided 1,101 assisted waste collections in March 2022 and currently 972 in March 2023. The overall number of assisted collections has decreased 129 homes due to changes in individuals' circumstances.
- 4 weeks of service monitoring at 16 properties with assisted collections to ensure they were receiving a good service.
- 29 follow up inspections to ensure stage 1 complaint remedies were implemented and waste collections were made. 1648 service requests for street cleansing including litter picking (74), general street cleansing (279), seasonal issues such as leaves, weeds and fruit fall (540), and "street not clean" (755). The waste wardens investigate each report to resolve these issues which may involve site visits, liaising with residents and neighbours and then instructing Medway Norse to rectify any problems. These can take

some time to resolve where issues are complex and may involve neighbours, require land searches or other council departments.

### 3.5.2 NI195 street inspections

The Waste Wardens conduct 1200 NI195 litter inspections yearly (100/month). to ensure a high standard of cleanse is achieved by Medway Norse. The inspections are spread across 22 wards which includes a selection of land classes: Main Retail and Commercial, Local Shopping areas, Residential streets, Main Roads, Waste Bins (litter, canine and combined) Rural Roads, Alleyways, Footbridge, and subways. Where unsatisfactory graded (C/D) the waste wardens have raised service requests/direct emails to Medway Norse instructing the areas to be cleansed to a grade A standard. The results from April 22 in Q1 98% Q2 97% and Q3 96% and Q4 ongoing at time of report writing.

### 3.5.3 Targeted street cleansing inspections

In addition to the NI195 inspections and reactive service requests, the Waste Wardens have an annual programme of street cleansing monitoring to ensure quality standards are met using the NI195 method. During Q1 and Q2, 2022, 111 Alleyway inspections have been logged where the standard is not met the waste wardens report issues for resolution with Medway Norse.

### 3.5.4 Weekly High Street Cleansing Inspections

High Streets are proactively monitored weekly to ensure the high street cleansing standards are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Any issues identified during the inspections are raised with Medway Norse who rectify the problems. The High Streets do not generate many service requests because of the continuous cleanse. However, it is important that we monitor the contract and at the same time look at the overall perception of the high street. In December 2022 increased monitoring of Gillingham High Street was led by the waste wardens to identified locations affected by graffiti. There was a total of eight service requests raised to Medway Norse to remove graffiti tags from Medway council street furniture and 11 location that required an indemnity pack to be sent to commercial premises to agree removal of graffiti.

### 3.5.5 Evaluation of on-street litter bin locations

In Q2 Council officers identified 265 sites where historic records indicated a street bin had previously been located. Each location was visited to determine if a replacement bin was required, or, if the location was no longer suitable because either another bin was near the location, or the footpath was too narrow. 87 sites across Medway were suitable for a bin to be replaced and this work will be completed in Q4 (weather permitting). 178 sites were assessed by officers as unsuitable for a street bin.

Table 6: August 2022 evaluation of bin locations

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Replacement bin required</b>	<b>Site Not suitable</b>	<b>TOTAL Site visits</b>
Chatham Central	7	5	<b>12</b>
Cuxton & Halling	4	4	<b>8</b>
Gillingham North	2	5	<b>7</b>
Gillingham South	3	11	<b>14</b>
Hempstead & Wigmore	2	3	<b>5</b>
Lordswood & Capstone	11	5	<b>16</b>
Luton & Wayfield	2	12	<b>14</b>
Peninsula	0	4	<b>4</b>
Princes Park	8	20	<b>28</b>
Rainham Central	3	4	<b>7</b>
Rainham North	0	12	<b>12</b>
Rainham South	1	3	<b>4</b>
River	4	17	<b>21</b>
Rochester East	3	3	<b>6</b>
Rochester South & Horsted	5	6	<b>11</b>
Rochester West	2	6	<b>8</b>
Strood North	12	29	<b>41</b>
Strood Rural	5	6	<b>11</b>
Strood South	6	15	<b>21</b>
Twydall	4	3	<b>7</b>
Walderslade	3	4	<b>7</b>
Watling	0	1	<b>1</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>265</b>

3.6 The Waste Wardens are mobile officers who spend much of their time attending waste issues, however they will report issues on behalf of other departments for example untidy land, green spaces, highway obstruction or graffiti.

### **3.7 Animal Wardens**

#### **3.8 Stray Dogs**

3.8.1 Animal Wardens are available to collect stray dogs Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm.

3.8.2 Outside of the above hours, reports can be made via the Council's out of hours line on 01634 304400. If an Animal Warden is not on duty, the public are advised to take a stray to a 24/7 emergency vets where it can be scanned for a microchip and, when necessary, held until an Animal Warden is on duty.

3.8.3 Once a dog has been collected, it will be scanned for a microchip. A picture of the dog will also be posted on Medway Council's Stray Dog Facebook page requesting that the owner makes contact.

- 3.8.4 The team no longer rehome unclaimed stray dogs directly to the public. In order to sufficiently provide this function, the team would be required to undertake adequate dog behavioural assessments and home checks which is vital to ensure a dog is rehomed to the most suitable home. The Council does also not have the resources to provide the required preventative health care such as neutering, vaccinations etc or provide a rescue back up should the new owner no longer be able to care for their dog.
- 3.8.5 As a result, since May 2022, the Council has entered into agreement with Battersea Cats & Dogs Home, whereby if a dog is not claimed within 7 days it will be relinquished to the charity to rehome. In this period, 45 unclaimed stray dogs have been relinquished to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.
- 3.8.6 The charity also offers residents of Medway free dog behavioural training for any dog that has been identified as causing an issue and referred by an Animal Warden, this can be for anything from dog barking to aggression.
- 3.9 The statistical data for this period:

Table 7: Animal warden key statistics

<b>STRAY DOGS</b>	
Total number of service requests for the Animal Warden Service	931
Stray dogs reported	418
Number of stray dogs not collected by AW (returned to owner prior to AW attendance)	222
Number of stray dogs returned to owner from kennels	47
Number of dogs returned direct to owner	25
Number of dogs passed to the Police	1
Number of dogs sent to rescues	10
Number of dogs relinquished under the Battersea Stray Dog Programme	45
Dogs rehomed (prior to BSDP)	4
Duplicate reports of stray dogs	46
Dogs PTS	2
Current open cases	15
<b>MISSING DOGS</b>	
Number of missing dogs reported	121
Missing dog found	54
Missing dog not collected by AW	26
Owner to provide update	21
Duplicate reports	17
<b>GENERAL</b>	
Notices served for non compliance of Microchipping of Dogs legislation:	17
Number of dogs microchipped	9
Community Protection Warnings served for dog related issues	10
Community Protection Notices served	3

### 3.10 Dog fouling

3.10.1 The team alongside the Street Scene Team, Medway Task Force and Environmental Engagement secured funding from the Crime Reduction Fund to develop a project with Luton Primary School.

3.10.2 Officers from the teams delivered an assembly to Luton Primary School on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to raise awareness of environmental issues including dog fouling and the implications of dog owners not picking up their dog's faeces. Local artists also attended and worked with the children for the day to development new signage for the area which will include dog fouling and littering.

3.10.3 The Animal Wardens have responded to 100 dog fouling complaints. These complaints will be investigated in a number of ways working closely with Waste Services to ensure any fouling is cleared and also making referrals to the District Team if the issue is a recurring problem. The District Team will then carry out patrol work in the area and issue an FPN should dog fouling offence be witnessed.

3.10.4 The team carry out stencilling of footpaths as part of their 'bag it and bin it' campaign and do have the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices should they witness an offence of dog fouling whilst on duty.

### 3.11 Dangerous Dogs

3.11.1 The team has received 169 reports of dangerous dogs. When an incident is regarding a dog attacking another companion animal such as a dog or cat, and is caused by irresponsible actions of the owner, the team will investigate the issue further. These cases have primarily been resolved through education but, if necessary, they will be pursued under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and joint visits have often been carried out with the Police.

3.11.2 Should any owner be seeking compensation for veterinary treatment or other costs associated with an incident, they are advised that it would be a civil matter.

3.11.3 The issues below are the responsibility of the Police. The public will always be advised to report the issue directly to the Police. However, if a report is anonymous or the reporter has agreed for their details to be passed to the Police, the team will refer the matter on their behalf:

- a dog injuring someone, or if someone is in fear of being injured
- a dog chasing livestock
- any incident involved a banned breed

### 3.12 Dog barking and nuisance complaints

The Animal Wardens assist the Environmental Protection Team with the investigation of Statutory Nuisances involving animals. This includes dog barking and odour complaints.

### 3.13 Animal Licensing complaints

Although the role of licensing animal activities falls to the Environmental Protection Team, the Animals Wardens take the lead in the initial investigation of complaints concerning unlicensed activity. This includes unlicensed home dog boarders and unlicensed dog breeders. Should the complaint require formal action, the case is referred back to the Environmental Protection Team. The team has investigated 52 complaints this year.

### 3.14 Responsible dog ownership

The Animal Warden service has programmed in a series of pop up events throughout Medway this spring / summer. The aim is to reach out to areas where the team are receiving dog related complaints offering advice and promoting responsible dog ownership. Free dog microchipping and free chip checks are undertaken to help ensure that owner details are kept up to date.

The following events have taken place this financial year:

- 5 July 2022 – Cozenton Park
- 8 July 2022 – Grain Coastal Park
- 24 July 2022 – Safety In Action Day, Chatham Dockyard
- 26 July 2022 – Beechings Way Recreation Ground
- 3 August 2022 – Chestnut Avenue, Open Space
- 4 August 2022 – Rainham Shopping Centre Community Showcase Day
- 8 September 2022 – The Strand Leisure Park
- 16 September 2022 – Riverside Country Park
- 25 September 2022 – Wild About Capstone
- 26 October 2022 – Luton Millennium Green

The team have also facilitated Dogs Trust Education Team to attend 5 schools within the borough to speak with children on how to safely interact with dogs.

### 3.15 Social Media

The Medway Council Stray Dog Facebook page has over 13,500 followers and is regularly used to promote responsible dog ownership messages and national campaigns. It is also an excellent tool to help quickly reunite dogs with their owners. The team are also posting regular good news stories including unclaimed strays in their new homes. The page has reached over 454,000 people during the month of January 2023.

### 3.16 Staffing

All members in the team undertook the BARTA Incidents Involving Canines course on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022. This training specialised in

handling dangerous and aggressive dogs using the correct equipment and PPE.

### 3.17 Service Awards

For the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row Medway Council has been awarded the RSPCA's Gold Pawprint Award for our work with stray dogs. These awards are designed to recognise and congratulate those services delivering high animal welfare standards and we are one of 36 Local Authorities to have won this nationally.

### 3.18 **Engagement Wardens**

3.19 There are three environmental engagement wardens who are managed by the Environmental Engagement Manager. The engagement wardens give talks and attend events to speak directly with residents from all areas and people of all ages. They promote recycling and environmental awareness. They co-ordinate the councils litter picking events and national Great British Spring Clean event activities.

### 3.20 Engagement activities, roadshows, events and talks

- Attended 70 community events and roadshows speaking to over 6000 people. Events included The English Festival (Riverside Country Park), The Gaia Exhibition (Rochester Cathedral), Recycle Week (Hempstead Valley and Dockside Shopping Centres), Isle Of Grain village Carnival, Christmas light switch on events at: Strood, Gillingham and Rochester and the 'Freshers week' at Mid Kent College.
- Attended 10 'Responsible dog ownership' events alongside the Animal Wardens speaking with 140 residents.
- Gave 25 talks to 3100 Medway residents (5 to adult groups, 7 to children's groups and 13 to schools).

### 3.21 Litter picking activities

- Organised 53 litter picks for the annual Great British Spring Clean event (March-April 2022) collecting over 500 bags of litter (2 tonnes of waste!). 306 individuals participated including a litter pick in the Wigmore Park and Ride car park with the Engagement Team, Street Scene team and colleagues from District Enforcement.
- Worked together with Guardians of the Deep and the RSPB to litter pick Jaynes Creek, Strood removing 23 trollies, a pole, traffic barrier and a hand basket from the creek.
- Supported local community litter picking groups attending their events, arranging waste collection and loaning equipment if required. Local groups include the Lordswood and Walderslade Community Litter Picking group, Rainbow Brownies and Guides, and volunteers in Frindsbury, Gillingham, Rochester and Grain.

### 3.22 Bring Site visits

Wardens continue to undertake monthly 'bring site' visits, checking all areas where recycle bins are located (bottles, textiles and paper) to ensure that they have capacity and the sites are clean and tidy. Any issues are reported on Confirm to Medway Norse. Since April 2022 212 inspections have been undertaken across 26 bring sites. The inspections generated 49 service requests to Medway Norse for attention (31 to empty banks and 18 to cleanse sites).

The Wardens are also active in promoting the bring sites on the Council's social media platforms.

### 3.23 Collaborative project Engagement and Waste Wardens: improved litterbin reporting and asset data

The waste contract, project and engagement team have collaborated on a joint project to improve public reporting of overflowing bins. The project initially tested the use of QR code on 110 most reported litter bins. The trial was successful, and the team began rolling out the QR codes to all Medway on-street litter bins in early 2023 (over 1400 locations). At the same time, the team are conducting a condition survey of the bins to prioritise future asset replacement which will be completed in Q1 of 2023-24.

The waste collection and cleansing service is managed by a small team of Medway Council officers. The team recognises the need for improved asset data while balancing the daily operational challenges to ensure the statutory functions are delivered. They anticipate the asset review will be completed in early 2023-24 baring operational issues which must take priority.

## 4. Emergency Planning

4.1 The Medway Council Heatwave Emergency Plan was researched and re-written to cover seasons from 1 June– 15 September 2022. The team assisted the Consultant Public Health in developing the Cold Weather Plan for 1 November 2022 – 31 March 2023. These plans are refreshed each season to reflect the arrangements set out in the National NHS & UK Health Security Agency National Emergency Plans.

4.2 The Emergency Planning team continues to monitor the Severe Weather Warnings and Alert Service, jointly run by the Meteorological Office and NHS/UK Health Security Agency, which advises Council services and voluntary organisations when trigger levels are met. To date response and action has been necessary on the following occasions:



Table 7: Emergency Planning response (2022-2023)

Thunderstorms Storms/Wind	Cold/Snow	Rain	Heatwave
14 Feb 22 Dudley Eunice Franklin	12 Dec 22 17 Jan 23 06 Feb 23		16 June 22 09 July 22 08 Aug 22 15 Aug 22

- 4.3 Medway Council has a duty to carry out a three yearly review, consultation, rewrite and development of the External Emergency Plans for Grain's Upper Tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites, currently we have two sites:
- National Gril LNG Storage Site Grain.
  - BP Oil Storage Terminal Grain.
- The Plans have been rewritten (Dec 21) and have been tested during a Teams meeting style tabletop Exercise on 5 May 2022 (Ex Combine 2022).
- 4.4 The Emergency Planning Team contributed to the planning and response for four multi-agency operations: Op Fennel/Stack Half Term traffic problems 9 Feb 22 and Dover Traffic Issues 1 April 22. The Team carried out an Internal Exercise to check Op London Bridge Plan and helped deliver the Operation on the Death of the Queen (9 Sep 23). The EP Team also initiated the Command & Control in relation to Ukraine Evacuees during the sponsor system stage.
- 4.5 The Emergency Planning Team Responded to/stood by to supply Oil Pollution Staff to an Oil Leaking Wreak which threatened to cover Thanet and Swale at the peak tourist Season on 28 June 22. We also were on call to supply support to Isle of Sheppey (13 June 22) during hot weather which burst the main pipeline to the island leaving 100 000 people and livestock without water for a prolonged period. The same weather burst water mains causing day long water disruption in Chatham.
- 4.6 Throughout the year the Team has responded to a number (11) of flood alerts ranging from:
- Surface Water – 8 events.
  - Coastal – 2 events.
  - Ground – 1 sustained event.
- 4.7 The Team has contributed to the following emergency plans/reports:
- KRF Drought Plan.
  - Network Rail Emergency Plan.
  - Medway London Peel Ports Oil Pollution Plan.
  - Pan Kent Strategic Emergency Response Plan.
  - Kent & Medway Shoreline Pollution Plan.
  - Medway Multi Agency Local Flood Plan.

#### 4.8 Other Projects the Team has been involved with are:

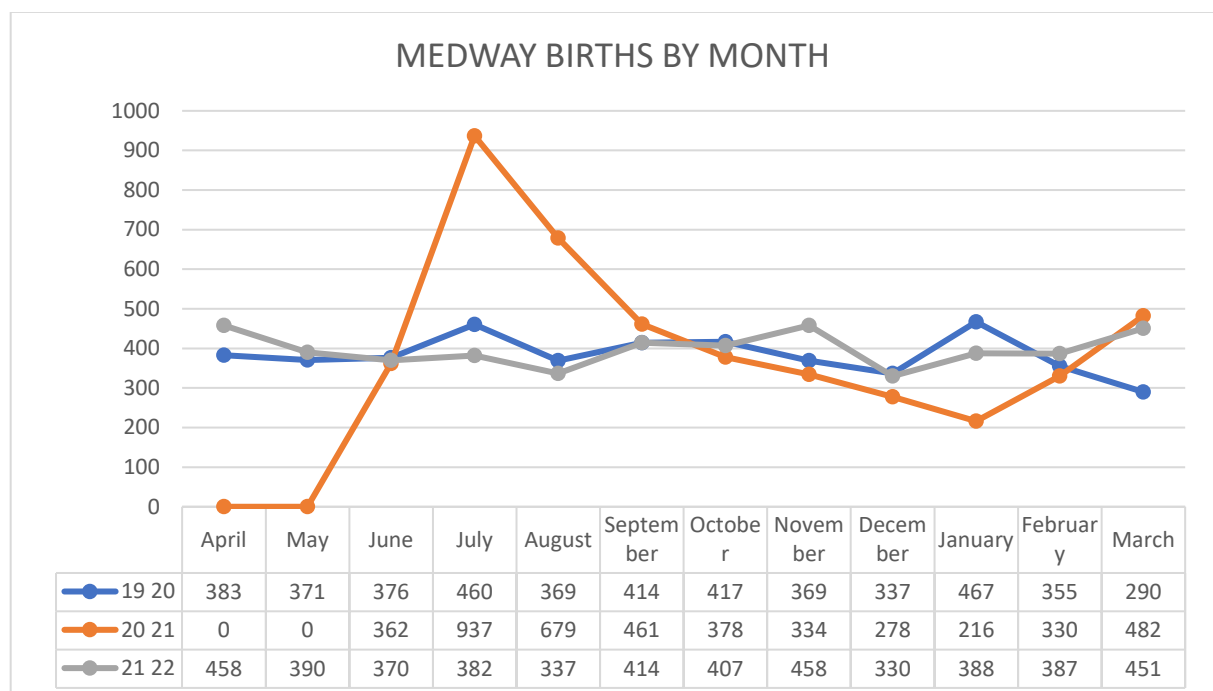
- Avian Flu Monitoring (Animal Health)
- Department for Transport planned works to the SS Montgomery (anomaly investigation prior to removal of the visible mast structure).
- Climate Change project.
- Council readiness for Counter Terrorism Threat Level changes and Incidents including passing information to relevant managers about the imminent “Martyn’s Law” (This law may affect how we protect public buildings, spaces and all Events).
- Just Stop Oil Protests.
- Kent and Medway Hazardous Pipeline Planning.
- Initiation of real time response (24 June 22) and Command & Control for Avian Flu in Wild birds (The Authority was able to pass information via media press and posters along our coastline and develop a team to pick up and dispose safely of all reported dead birds ensuring DEFRA had no interest in the dead bird. Command and Control was also able to create an eform to allow residents to report this type of incident). Information was also passed to those with domestic flocks.

4.9 2022 also saw the start of the Corporate Audit of Emergency Planning which produced a Green for Good outcome.

#### 5. Registration

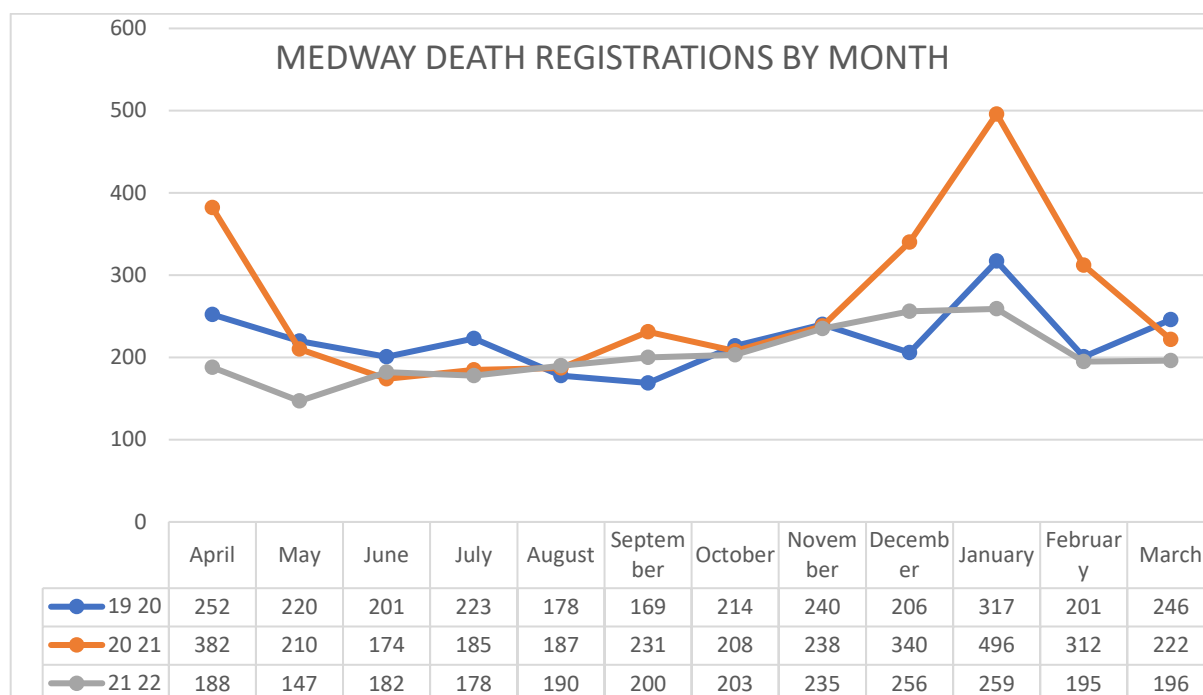
5.1 There were 4772 birth registrations in 2021/2022 with 92% being registered within the target 42 days of birth.

5.2 Priority of service provision has always been given to the registration of deaths for reasons of public health.



Data source - The General Register Office

5.3 In 2021/2022 2429 deaths were registered with 99.8% of informants being offered an appointment within the target 2 working days of notification. This is compared to 3185 death registrations in 2020/2021, a decrease of 756 registrations in total.



Data source - The General Register Office

5.4 To facilitate the registration of deaths during lockdown the Covid 19 Bill allowed for the registration to be made over the phone by the informant, and the electronic transmission of the required documents from the certifying Doctor to the Registrar. This bill expired in March 2022, and whilst primary legislation was laid to continue with the electronic transmission of the required documents, unfortunately this was not possible for the telephone element and the face-to-face registration of deaths became mandatory again.

5.5 713 marriages were registered in the 2021/2022 against 258 registered in 2020/2021. This increase marks a return to “business as usual” following the devastation that Covid lockdowns brought to the industry.

5.6 2626 Notices of Marriage were taken in 2021/2022 against 1954 in the previous year. Another indication that “pre Covid” levels of confidence have returned to couples booking their special day.

5.7 Medway Register Office facilitated the granting of British Citizenship to 256 foreign nationals in 2021/2022. These were all small personal ceremonies rather than the normal large groups. It is anticipated that large monthly group ceremonies will resume in April 2023 following the refurbishment of the Queens Hall in the Corn Exchange. These larger ceremonies give an opportunity for the Mayor and Deputy Lieutenant of Kent to engage with new citizens.

5.8 In June 2022 Medway submitted its annual performance report to the Registrar General's Office (the General Register Office) and received the following assessment.

"We would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank Medway Registration Service for the hard work undertaken during 2021/22. This has undoubtedly been a very challenging year for Local Registration Services as we move from the pressures of operating during a pandemic towards more conventional working practices, including the return of face to face appointments. The work of Medway Registration Service to maintain high standards of service delivery during this period should be commended."

"We acknowledge the focus of the Local Authority in continuing to designate registration as a priority service during this period, by enacting contingency measures in cooperation with key local partners to ensure continued service delivery to customers whilst maintaining Health & Safety protocols enabling your offices to remain open during the year."

#### Lead officer contact

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#### Appendices

None

#### Background documents

None