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NEW INDEPENDENT BODY TO HELP VISITOR BUSINESSES THRIVE

# Association aiming for tourism strategy boost

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MAIDSTONE'S tourism industry is being boosted by the formation of a new independent association.

Businesses – including tourist attractions, hotels and bed and breakfasts – are joining forces to create the Maidstone Tourism Association (MTA).

The goal is to allow businesses to share ideas and to work together to maximise the profit they each receive throughout the year.

And it is hoped if they get the combination right it could open doors to an increase in visitor numbers and the resulting benefit to the local economy.

After the Government's spending review there were fears that the tourism sector in Maidstone could be hit, with marketing budgets being slashed.

Alan Reading, an honorary member of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and the founder chairman of Marketing Maidstone Town & Country Group, said: "The MTA aims to bring together representatives from Maidstone town centre, Leeds Castle, Fremlin Walk, Maidstone Borough Council, B&Bs, hotels and others to try and work together to find out what the others are doing.

"For example, for the Maidstone River Festival, B&Bs and hotels can create a marketing strategy aimed at those people who may need to stay over for it.

"We could put together a leaflet which has all the events in Maidstone on it. This could range from a church bazaar all the way up to the Kent County Show. It will be very useful to



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ATTRACTION: The Archbishop's Palace is part of Maidstone's heritage and history

## Festival reveals more big names

HOP Farm Festival organisers have revealed more star names confirmed to appear.

They include former Blur guitarist Graham Coxon, Pretenders singer Chrissie Hynde and ex-James frontman Tim Booth.

They join a big-name line-up which will see the likes of the Eagles, Bryan Ferry, Brandon Flowers and the Human League perform on the Friday, of the two-day event, and Morrissey, Lou Reed, Iggy and The Stooges and Patti Smith on the Saturday.

The festival takes place at the Paddock Wood venue on July 1 and 2.

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## Carton recycling banks available

FIVE new collection banks have been set up to recycle drinks cartons.

The banks will be available at Parsonage Meadow, Headcorn; the library car park in Marden; Morrisons car park in Sutton Road; Tesco car park in Tovil; and Sutton Road in Penenden Heath.

Cartons can only be recycled by taking them to the new carton banks, and must not be put in the kerbside recycling black boxes or green-wheeled bins.

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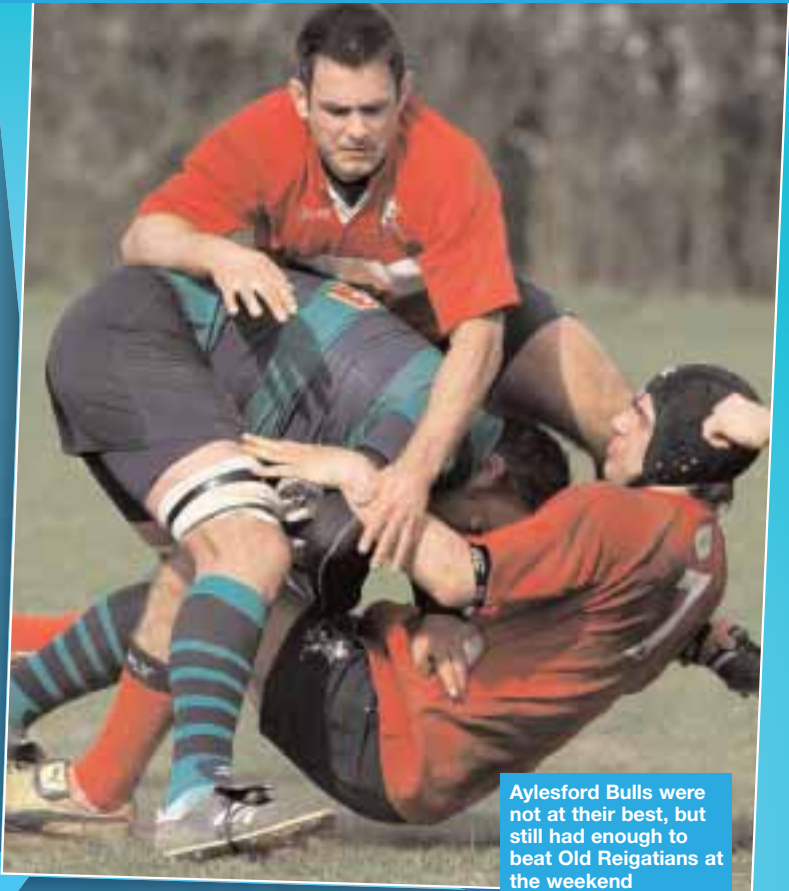
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# Sport



Maidstone United secured back-to-back wins for the first time this season, plus news on how close the club are to raising the £1.6 million needed to build a new ground in the county town



Aylesford Bulls were not at their best, but still had enough to beat Old Reigatians at the weekend



Maidstone RFC have altered their coaching structure as they look to rebuild following relegation this season



Rally driver Louise Cook found the going tough at the Bulldog International Rally of North Wales

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