

Sevenoaks TOWN Council



Annual Report

2019 / 2020

ADDRESS

Town Council Offices
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 3QG

CONTACT

01732 459953

council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk



holds the accreditation of a Quality Gold Award. The National Association of Local Councils states: “The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.”

Councillors continue to be committed to providing the finest services and best value for money for residents despite the challenges posed by the current economic climate. The Town Council has a policy, wherever possible, to seek external funding for capital projects and has been successful to date in doing this.

The Town Council has resolved to formally recognise the Government and Kent County Council declarations for aiming for Zero Carbon and to integrate this within the vision and throughout the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and within the Town Council’s general operation.

The Town Council will start work on creation of an Action Plan to review:

- Reducing cars/traffic particularly in relation to school traffic.
- Sevenoaks Town Council’s (STC) new buildings to be as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible. Existing buildings to be improved to be more sustainable with reduced carbon footprint where practicable.
- Planting of more trees, where possible fruit and nut trees.
- Continuing to promote Refill Scheme and Sevenoaks Plastic Free Pledge.
- Installing of cycle racks/planters.
- Installing of drinking fountains, where possible, at STC sites.
- Increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- NDP Transport Strategy recommendations including 20 mph, improved pedestrian facilities in town centre and shared space.
- Linking STC open spaces together with ‘green routes’.
- Encouraging increased use of public transport – buses and trains – by having improved facilities, including live running information.
- Installing electric car charging points at STC sites.
- Considering enabling community initiatives for sustainable living e.g. Toy Library, Zero Waste Shop, Community Orchards, Community Cycle Workshops, Repair Café, promotion of alternative resources e.g. nappies.

If members of the public are interested in participating in discussions to develop the local Action Plan to address Climate Change and Carbon Neutral initiatives they are asked to contact the council via council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Sevenoaks Town Council has active partnerships with the District and County Councils and lobby central government through the National and Kent Associations of Local Councils for the benefit of local electors and businesses. They also monitor government legislation being passed which directly affects our tier of government and local communities and will adopt any new policies and powers available for the enhancement of Sevenoaks Town.

Sevenoaks Town Council has weekly meetings at the Town Council offices in Bradbourne Vale Road, which the public are warmly invited to attend, to ensure the Council is performing to its optimum. These meetings are advertised on the Town Council’s website and on public notice boards.

1. The Mayoral Year & Civic Events

The Mayor, Councillor Nick Busvine OBE, was elected in May 2019. During his civic year, the Mayor has accepted in the region of 150 invitations to a variety of events in Sevenoaks Town and the surrounding area. On a further 29 occasions the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Dr Merilyn Canet, represented the Mayor at various events.

The charities the Mayor chose to support during this year were SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity and Sevenoaks Air Cadets.

Civic Events 2019/2020

D-Day 75 – 6th June 2019



The first civic event attended by the Mayor in 2019 was the informal wreath laying at the Vine War Memorial for the 75th anniversary on D-Day on 6th June, which was attended by former Service personnel, representatives from the Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Cadets and Councillors.

Armed Forces Day – 29th June 2019



The Armed Forces Day flag was raised on The Vine by the local cadets at a short service prior to the official opening of the Armed Forces Day Charity Fair on The Vine.



Merchant Navy Day – 3rd September 2019

The Red Ensign flag was raised at The Vine to commemorate Merchant Navy Day. The Mayor was joined by Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, Lord Sackville, representatives of the Royal Naval Association, the Royal British Legion, local veterans, cadets, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Sevenoaks District Council and Town Councillors.

Remembrance Day – Sunday 10th November 2019

On Sunday 10th November 2019 the Remembrance Day Service at the Vine War Memorial was conducted by Revd Canon Angus MacLeay from St Nicholas Church, and the Chairman of the Royal Naval Association, S M Fred Faircloth read The Exhortation and Kohima Prayer.



Armistice Day – 11th November 2019



On Armistice Day the Mayor laid crosses on the War Graves at Greatness Park Cemetery accompanied by fellow Councillors and local representatives. Prayers were read by Revd Canon Angus MacLeay.

Events



The Mayor's Fundraising Cocktail Party this year was held in a marquee on The Vine Gardens and, once again, was a resounding success, attended by local dignitaries and Mayors and Chairmen from all around Kent and the surrounding area.

The Cheese and Wine Tasting evening was held in the Town Council Chamber in November. This was well attended and was sponsored by a local cheesemaker and a supermarket in Sevenoaks.

On Friday 22nd November the Mayor held an inaugural breakfast for Armed Forces' veterans at the recently refurbished Bat & Ball Station Café in Sevenoaks. 20 veterans enjoyed bacon rolls and a chance to chat and meet with other service personnel in an informal setting. A further breakfast is being planned for 30th March 2020.



During National Tree Week the Mayor planted the third oak tree in a stand of seven at Sevenoaks Common.

A Tour of Knole House followed by lunch in Sevenoaks is being arranged in April and a luncheon at Chevening House in May.

2. Finance

In 2019-20, Council approved a budget of £1,882,554. General reserves brought forward were £318,758 (2018-19 £307,905) and earmarked reserves (including proceeds from the sale of Raleys) were £1,964,794 (2018-19 £1,622,818).

The 2019-20 Town Council budget includes income of:

- £1,141,385 from the precept paid for by Sevenoaks domestic ratepayers (council tax).
- £715,169 from fees and charges on facilities and services such as hire of community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, Café on the Vine, rents and leases and allotments.
- £26,000 from Council reserves to enable financial adjustments without increasing rates during the construction phase of the new Bat & Ball Centre.

The Council does not receive money from central government, as a result it continues to be creative in the way that it funds and delivers services to the community. Capital projects for new and improved community facilities are funded from capital receipts, earmarked reserves and grants, where possible. In 2019-20 Sevenoaks Town Council was successful in applying for a £1.4 million Public Works Loan (25 years fixed rate, annual repayment £74,202) towards the cost of the new Bat & Ball Centre. Earmarked reserves brought forward included £1,140,575 capital receipts, £517,322 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income and grants received for specific activities and projects. This money goes towards the funding of approved capital projects including the Bat & Ball Station building, ramp, cycle racks and storage, and the new Bat & Ball centre. In 2019-20 additional CIL funding of £1.2m was applied for and received for the new Bat & Ball Centre.

At the Council meeting held on 20th January 2020, Council approved a budget of £1,740,923 for 2020-2021. This will be funded by fees and charges of £519,647 (30%), a precept levy of £1,215,276 (70%), and a transfer of £26,000 from reserves balances to fund the final construction phase of the new Bat & Ball Centre, offset by an increase of £20,000 revenue reserves. For an average Band D house in Sevenoaks, this equates to £125.41 per year or £2.41 per week (an increase of £6.98 per year or 13p per week on 2019-20).

3. Sevenoaks Town Council's Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Sevenoaks Town Council continues to provide grants to local groups, who are invited to submit applications in September and January for consideration. The Council is also a major sponsor of the Stag Community Arts Centre and Sevenoaks Summer Festival.

Groups which have benefited from the Town Council Grants during the year 2019/2020 include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hi Kent• The Stag Theatre• PS Breastfeeding CIC• Sevenoaks Counselling• Stag Youth Theatre• Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival• The Children's Workshop• Sevenoaks Summer Festival• Kent Painters Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art in June• Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra• West Kent Mediation• Sevenoaks Art Club• Friends of Rheinbach• Friends of Pontoise• Sevenoaks Literary Festival• Sevenoaks Society• Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group
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4. Council Chamber



The Council Chamber is regularly used by Councillors on Monday evenings for Council meetings at which the public are welcome to attend. The meetings are listed on the Town Council website and advertised regularly in the local paper.

The venue is also available for hire by community organisations. For further information contact: hallhire@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

5. Community Investment Plan

2019 Community Investment Plan

In 2014 Sevenoaks Town Council set out its first ambitious £4m Community Investment Plan to restore and improve community facilities. The Plan was updated in 2019. Below is a summary of the projects achieved and those that are ongoing.

2014 Community Investment Plan

Ref	Project	Funds Invested	Funded by	Status
1	Replacement of Raleys Gym – investment into new facilities at Sencio Leisure Centre	£95,000	Sale of Raleys	Completed
2	Replacement of Indoor Cricket School – funds provided to Sevenoaks District Council in s.106 agreement	£150,000	Sale of Raleys	Ongoing
3	Café on the Vine – restored historic building and brought back into useful community use	£150,000	ICET grant and STC reserves	Completed
4	New Play Area near the Town Centre – Buckhurst Play Area	£100,000	Sale of Raleys CETB grant	Completed
5	Greatness Recreation Ground – new public toilet, fencing, additional benches and play equipment	£50,000	CIL ICET grant	Completed
6	Multi Use Games Area (to replace tennis courts at Community Centre) awaiting construction of new centre	£100,000	Sale of Raleys	Development Stage
7	'Free' recreational facilities – additional play equipment at Kippington Meadow	£4,000	Kent County Council Cllr Crabtree Member grant	Completed
8	Sports Strategy The Sports Strategy involving 40 local sports clubs has been completed and is an appendix to the Neighbourhood Development Plan. 3G Football Pitch installed at Greatness 3G Rugby Pitch at Knole Paddock 3G Hockey Pitch at Hollybush (contribution)	 £450,000 £500,000 £50,000	Sale of Raleys Sevenoaks Mayor's Fund	 Completed At Planning Completed
9	Neighbourhood Development Plan Completed to draft stage awaiting Local Plan development Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks developed and supported by approximate 70% of local community. Provides plan for regeneration and investment in the area.	£100,000	STC Budget	Development Stage

	No. 8 Bus – orbital bus route connecting residential areas to town centre. Winner of UK Community Bus 2018.	£150,000	KCC s.106 (Sainsbury development) and community transport fund	Completed and ongoing
10	Stag Community Arts Centre (STC has a 25-year lease) Capital investment including air handling system	£150,000	Sale of Raleys	Completed
11	Bat & Ball Centre Planning permission has been obtained and construction due to commence June 2019	£2,750,000* (core cost)	Sale of Raleys £1.2m CIL Public Works Loan Board	Development Stage
	Total capital investment into community facilities	£4,649,000		

*Plus contingency of £303,597 = £3,078,805.

Note ICET = Istock Cory Environmental Trust and CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy.

Projects not included in 2014 original Community Investment Plan

Ref	Project	Funds Invested	Funded by	Status
13	Bat & Ball Station building refurbishment (25 year peppercorn lease)	£1,452,000	Heritage Lottery Fund CIL Railway Heritage Trust STC Budget	Completed
	New Access Ramp to Platform 1	£60,000	CIL	2019
	Cycle racks at station entrance	£29,000	CIL	2019
	Cycle racks (including electrical charging) on community centre land adjacent to ramp	£45,000	CIL	2019
	New pedestrian access to Otford Road	£35,000	CIL	2019
	Additional capital investment into community facilities	£1,621,000		
	2014 Capital Investment Plan into community facilities	£4,649,000		
	Additional total Capital Investment Plan into community facilities	£1,621,000		
	Total Community Investment	£6,270,000		

6. Bat & Ball Station Project



Building Restoration

Bat & Ball Station building is a predominantly single storey Victorian property constructed in 1862 and is Grade II Listed. At the time it was built the station was a terminus of the branch line from Swanley Junction, prior to the line being extended to Sevenoaks Station in 1868. The station building had been vacant for more than 30 years and in places had become quite derelict. The station had also been identified as an area of concern by the public in relation to personal safety.

Sevenoaks Town Council secured a 25-year peppercorn lease from Southeastern and, thanks to National Lottery players, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £755,600, and additional funding from Sevenoaks District Council and the Railway Heritage Trust has enabled the building to be restored. New facilities include two community function rooms, café, internal and external toilets, heritage information and restored items.

As part of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant conditions the Town Council was required to commission an Evaluation Report. The full report can be viewed at www.Batandballstation.com or contact Sevenoaks Town Council.

Original Aims and Evaluation

1. Bring the Grade II Listed building back to life via a full restoration project.

One of the last Listed Buildings in Northern Sevenoaks. The building has been boarded up and not had public access since 1991. The building has been sensitively restored throughout. The restoration project has been short-listed for a RIBA South East prize.

“Great. After years of neglect and writing to Network South East or whatever the franchise was called telling them it was the worst station in Kent, have now got one of the best. Well Done”

“The quality of the work is first class. It’s been really well done...”

“It looks beautiful – its been so sympathetically done.”

“Refurbishment has been done very well. Now an asset for Northern Sevenoaks”

2. Provide a project with sustainable future for the building

Sevenoaks Town Council has successfully operated function rooms for hire for many years. The new provision alongside the new café with 5-star hygiene rating will provide the building with a sustainable future.

“The function room is a great idea.”

“Interested in using the rooms for hire.”

“What a magnificent achievement to restore this historical building for the use of the public and community.”

3. Enable community use of the building

New facilities including café, community rooms and public toilets encourage community use of the building.

In addition, a full Activity Programme has been put in place which includes Heritage Talks, Arts & Crafts Workshops, Restoration Talks, School Visits.

Alongside the heritage benefits and benefits from using the station, there are additional benefits to the wider community. All groups said that they felt prouder of the Bat and Ball area now than before the station redevelopment. This was particularly true of open day attendees and volunteers. In addition, both open day attendees and volunteers felt that the Bat and Ball area felt better connected to the rest of the Sevenoaks area and beyond.

“Extremely pleased that, for once, a redevelopment has been undertaken with a stylish but sensitive not to a traditional appearance. Fantastic project. Extremely well done. Will certainly be using the station more as a result”

"The café is fantastic! The renovation has been carried out to a high standard, the coffee is great, the menu looks varied and it is now quite a unique venue in Sevenoaks. I will definitely plan to use the café with friends. Well done to all involved!"

4. Provide a wider positive impact for the local community

The redevelopment has had benefits that go beyond the users of the station. This includes benefits to the local economy (contributing approximately £1.2m of GVA per annum) and to people who live in the area of a Social Value (evaluated at £500k per annum and £2.4m per year over time). In addition, the redevelopment will be a catalyst to further developments in the future.

Opportunities for 39 volunteers (to date) to become involved with an average of 55 hours per person.

"The redevelopment is excellent and appropriate – the station was an embarrassment to Sevenoaks before which is a shame especially because of its history."

"I love the fact that we get a chance to see and experience the station, as it was many years ago. It has been transformed from an abandoned and dilapidated station, into something that can be treasured and enjoyed by all."

5. Address public safety concerns and encourage more people to use the station

Early data and feedback suggest the station redevelopment has had a positive impact on passenger numbers. From the commuter survey 23% responded that they will travel more frequently and / or because of the redevelopment.

A recent survey also indicated that it would have a positive impact on some young people's ability to attend educational activities.

Improving the building, having a presence at the station, improved street lighting, opening the area has had a positive impact on reducing the number of crimes in and around the station. Crime statistics from the local police corresponds to a drop of 80%. All groups who were surveyed felt that the station was much safer than before it was redeveloped with a feedback score of 2.6 out of 10 before the redevelopment, and 6.5 after.

"It is more accessible and more convenient and safer as well. I am very pleased with this new redevelopment."

"A really brilliant job has been done! You have done a great job at breathing life into an old, unused building. It feels so much better and safer to use. I'm also hoping to use the community rooms for my son's birthday too!"

6. Enable awareness of the heritage of the station

In addition to regular Hard Hat Tours, Open Days, Heritage Talks, School Visits etc. a website was created for Bat & Ball Station which provided an opportunity for the public to observe the progress of the refurbishment, on a weekly basis in the form of a photographic timeline record of works – thanks to the Sevenoaks Camera Club. It is also a

platform for the public to learn about events, news, submit memories and comment on historical information.

The information leaflet response form indicated that 49% said the leaflet changed their view on heritage.

“Shows how important it is to the historical buildings in and around the town and, convert into useful space.”

“It is lovely to see this building restored and ready to be used again. Trashing it and building something modern would have been a shame.”

“...helped me think further on the impact of the coming of the railway on the town in the 1860s”



New Access Ramp to Platform 1

A key part of the regeneration project was to provide a step-free access onto platform 1. To enable this to happen the Town Council made available some of its land on the Community Centre site and made land agreements with Network Rail and Southeastern. The construction cost was met by Sevenoaks Town Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts and Sevenoaks District Council CIL contribution. CIL is a charge on most developments over a certain size to fund local infrastructure. The ramp was formally opened on 30th September by the Mayor.

Awards

Since completion, the restoration project has been nominated for several awards and has been recognised for retaining the building’s original character, enhancing its historic features with contemporary design, as well as bringing an unused building back to life for use by the local community.

The project was awarded the **AJ Retrofit Award 2019**; was joint winner in **Sevenoaks Society’s Frank Marshall Award for Townscape Improvement 2019**; and was also shortlisted for **AJ Architecture Awards** and the **RIBA South East Regional Award**.

In December, the Town Clerk and Heritage Engagement Officer were presented with the **Urban Heritage Award**, sponsored by the Arch Company, at **The National Railway Heritage Awards 2019**, by HRH The Princess Royal.



As well as the awards and nominations the building is providing an excellent example of good practice and is being used as a case study for other similar projects throughout the UK.

The Future

The Bat & Ball Station redevelopment is an important part of the **Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan** which includes several benefits for the area including new housing; good, safe, public transport links for the new homes through the station; the intensification and regeneration of existing business areas, creating a further boost to the local economy; environmental benefits – improved green infrastructure and protected and enhanced biodiversity; employment opportunities created by leisure activities in the area; improved well being created by the improved public realm and opportunities to take part in leisure activities in the area.

The redevelopment of the station has also been the catalyst for the development of a **Community Rail Partnership (CRP)**. This will link Bat & Ball Station with other stations on the line, and lead to opportunities for communities near all these stations. This is expected to lead to an increase in visitor numbers to Bat & Ball Station and other stations on the line, leading to economic benefits above and beyond those previously mentioned; recreation opportunities for local residents through increased awareness of, and access to, opportunities at other stations; specific CRP activities, for example, the CRP will be able to add additional carriages to trains for specific events, such as the promotion of cycling days for children and young people.

7. Bat & Ball Community Centre Project (previously known as Sevenoaks Community Centre)

Background

The Sevenoaks Community Centre, although used extensively as a community hub, was more than 30 years old, and the fabric of the building required costly maintenance and was uneconomic to operate. Public feedback also indicated that it was no longer a venue where they would want to hold a special family occasion e.g. wedding. Also, a larger venue had been requested by businesses and public for events with a sit-down capacity for 250. Currently people requiring such a venue need to go out of town.

Sevenoaks Town Council had made a commitment to the regeneration of the Bat and Ball area and believed that a new community centre was a key component to this.

Initially, the Town Council considered selling its office site and combining capital income to build a two-storey community centre, which would have STC's offices on the first floor. Unfortunately, there were planning problems relating to this idea on both sites. At the same time the Red Cross relinquished its building, and this provided an opportunity for its development.

Bearing all of this in mind the Town Council reconsidered its original plan and decided to retain its office site, refurbish the old Red Cross building and keep the current community centre site for its original purposes, which had benefits of the car parking not being so restrictive.

The proposal provided several advantages:

- Less pressure on car parking at the Bat & Ball Centre.
- Less pressure on car parking at STC office site, also enabling nearby residents to use some car parking spaces during non-office hours.
- Retained community assets.
- Enabled Sevenoaks Day Nursery to continue with its original plans (on community centre site).
- Enabled a new Business Hub to be created on the STC office site.

Plan for new Centre

The driving vision for the new Bat & Ball Centre was to replace the tired and no longer fit-for-purpose 30 year old Community Centre with a facility that will be characterised by being a high quality contemporary building, within accessible and vibrant public realm, enabling a lively and eclectic mix of daytime and evening activities. It is intended to complement and be interactive with the refurbished adjoining Bat & Ball Station building.

The new Bat & Ball Centre will be far more sustainable and economical to operate and will have improved aesthetics and extended community space.

Once the new building is constructed the external areas of the building will be landscaped to enable the exterior to also be a valuable community space.

What will the new Centre provide?

The plans have been considered to ensure that current usage can continue and provide more flexible accommodation to enable additional usages.

- Large main hall - extended in size to current with sliding doors to enable link to smaller hall
- Smaller hall for multi-use including play schools (meeting Ofsted requirements)
- Catering kitchen
- Meeting room

What will it cost and how will it be funded?

- Project budget £2,775,208 & contingency £303,597 = £3,078,805
- Funded by £1,200,000 CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Grant, £57,815 CIL Reserve, £420,990 Capital Reserves & £1,400,000 Public Works Loan Board (25 years fixed rate, annual repayment £74,202)

Programme

- **November 2019** Time capsule buried and contractors start on site
- **May 2020** Contract work on Centre finishes
- **June 2020** Works start on landscaping, new MUGA, car park
- **December 2020** New Centre opens

The burying of the time capsule to commemorate the rebuilding of the Community Centre took place in November.



8. Open Spaces and Leisure Committee

The Town Council continues with its successful management of both allotment sites in Sevenoaks: Bradbourne Vale Road and Quaker's Hall Lane.

Quaker's Hall Allotments

Quaker's Hall Allotments comprises 161 10-rod plots, but many are split in half, so there are currently 255 managed plots.

The Town Council is working closely with Sevenoaks Allotment Holders' Association (SAHA) on a new project to increase the number of water points on the site so that tenants have less distance to walk. Some taps are currently 100 metres from the furthest plots. We anticipate that the work will be carried out through the quieter winter months.

It is anticipated that a project started during 2019 to re-measure all the plots will be completed before the end of August 2020. At this point, it is hoped to convert the antiquated system of measurement known as 'rods' into the more modern and common system of square metres. This change will be brought in from the start of the new allotment year in October 2021.

There are two plots which would be suitable for converting into a community orchard and STC will work with SAHA on this project if it is decided to take it forward. Adverts for spare plots have been placed in on-site notice boards, in the Sevenoaks Chronicle and on social media, which has generated a regular stream of interest.

Bradbourne Vale Road Allotments

Bradbourne Vale Road Allotments comprises 31 plots of mixed sizes and there are no vacancies. There is a corner of the site which would be suitable for converting into a community orchard. The plots at Bradbourne Vale Road will also be re-measured and converted into square metres.

Vine Green Flag Award

In 2019 The Vine was re-accredited its Green Flag status. The Vine is among a record-breaking 1,797 UK parks and green spaces that have received a prestigious Green Flag Award, the mark of a quality park or green space. The judges' comments included: 'Continue the good work of promoting the site for the benefit of the local community'.



Sevenoaks in Bloom 2019

Sevenoaks Town was awarded Gold again in the South & South East in Bloom competition. The judges were particularly impressed with the 'incredible edible' displays of both vegetables and flowers in the annual displays and also the amazing community involvement in making the town so colourful. The Town Council hopes to build on this achievement in 2020 and is delighted to be one of ten finalists in the national Britain in Bloom Town Centre Category competition.



Happy to Chat Bench

On Wednesday 22nd January 2020, the Mayor launched the 'Happy to Chat Bench' at the Vine Gardens. Following a suggestion from a local resident, the Town Council allocated a bench for this initiative to combat loneliness.



Greatness Cemetery

Greatness Cemetery continues to provide a popular and peaceful refuge for the bereaved of all faiths and denominations. Between 1st April 2019 and February 2020 over 50 burials and interments of ashes took place. The site has a fine collection of mature trees from the old parkland estate and the Grade II listed Kraftmeier Mausoleum.



As in previous years, on Armistice Day, the 11th of November, the Town Mayor and others laid crosses on all graves of those known to have died in active service since 1914.

A Friends of Greatness Cemetery group is due to be launched in 2020.

Greatness Skatepark

The Greatness Skatepark event took place on 3rd August 2019. Professionals Daryl Dominguez and Jack Clark held workshops, competitions and pro demos for all those who attended, as well as a BMX demonstration.



Pontoise Play Area Refurbishment Project

In 2018 Sevenoaks Town Council was awarded a grant by Enover Community Trust, which was used to replace the swing set, repaint other play equipment and add an additional piece of all-inclusive play equipment. Work for the project took place in February 2019 and was completed on 10th April 2019.

Kippington Meadow Play Area

In 2018 a grant was awarded from Kent County Councillor Margaret Crabtree to install new play equipment within the Meadow. This was completed in 2019. The wooden play equipment included a balance beam course and scramble net. The new equipment has been enjoyed by many members of the public who attended two play dates at the Meadow, which included a children's entertainer.

Summer Play Provision

Each year Sevenoaks Town Council hosts free Summer Play Dates at a variety of locations around the town during the August school holidays. In 2019 there were four events held at the Greatness Recreation Ground, Hillingdon Rise, Vine Gardens and Pontoise Play Area. The events were enjoyed by hundreds of children and included bouncy castles, games, craft activities and magic shows.

Julian's Meadow



On the 21st October 2019 an outdoor gym was opened at Julian's Meadow play area. Grant funding was obtained from Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund and the new equipment includes a rower and health walker.

Greatness Inflatables Event

The Greatness Inflatables event was held during May and June. As well as inflatables, there were fairground rides and games.

Knole Paddock and Raleys Field

Sevenoaks Town Council was working with Sevenoaks Rugby Club to develop the provision of a 3G pitch, predominantly for rugby. The planning application was refused but the Town Council will appeal the decision.

Roadside Advertising and Highway Banners

The Town Council agreed to take over the responsibility for regulating road-side advertising within the town, which was previously a Kent County Council function. It also informally regulates the installation of posters at seven sites enabling advertising of local community events. Local interest groups pay a small fee to help cover the cost of administration of the scheme.

The Town Council enables local organisations to advertise via a highway banner, subject to terms and conditions, for a maximum period of two weeks. This restriction enables more local community members to advertise their events during the year.

For more information contact: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

9. Community Events

Sevenoaks Town Council works in conjunction with Sevenoaks Town Team (formerly Town Partnership) and other organisations to provide an annual calendar of events. These events help to create community interaction, address loneliness and derive economic benefits for the area.

To assist with this, Sevenoaks Town Team has created an Events Committee. The aim of the Events Committee is to enable Sevenoaks organisations to consider methods to share resources, experience, and knowledge for the benefit of all who are holding events in the town.

Armed Forces Day and Sevenoaks Charity Fayre

In June 2019 the Town Council hosted a combined Charity Fayre and commemoration of Armed Forces Day event in the Vine Gardens. Local Voluntary Organisations were invited to have stalls free of charge enabling them to raise their profile and promote their community services. Activities on the day included live music on the bandstand, Punch and Judy shows, dance performances and dance classes, plus demonstrations and stalls by the Air Cadets, Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and the Scouts.

Music at the Vine Bandstand

During the summer months the Town Council pays for local bands/performers to provide concerts free for the public to attend. A lovely way to spend relaxing Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons in the outdoors with friends and family.



Christmas Lights 2019

Another successful launch to the festive season in Sevenoaks took place on Friday 29th November 2019 with the switching on of the Christmas Lights in the town centre. It was a cold but entertaining evening with a large crowd enjoying the live entertainment, fairground rides, Santa's Grotto, charity and gift stalls, food and drink.

The main stage was positioned in the centre of the town outside Wagamama with a host of entertainment, including compere Matthew Highton, Amherst School Choir, Dance Worx, the Stag Pantomime Cast and Gospel Choir, Elsa and Olaf and Robbie White.

The Mayor and Panto Cast celebrated the switching on of the lights at 7.30pm.



10. No 8 Bus and Vintage Bus

Passenger numbers have steadily increased for the No 8 bus which operates on an hourly basis six days per week. The funding for the bus ends in 2021 and further funding has been applied for.

The popular Vintage Bus was not able to continue with its regular summer provision in 2019 as Knole management no longer thought it was feasible for it to operate in Knole.

11. Twinning

Sevenoaks is twinned with Pontoise in France and Rheinbach in Germany. Both twinning Associations continue to be supported by Sevenoaks Town Council. The Friends of Pontoise and the Friends of Rheinbach promote cultural understanding and exchanges, particularly between cultural and supporting organisations and schools.

12. Youth Provision

Sevenoaks Youth Council

Youth Council meetings are held approximately every six weeks in the Town Council Chamber. Since its inception in 2009, the Youth Council has become increasingly involved in initiating and developing events for young people. All young people are welcome to attend.

AGM 6th November 2019

The Youth Council Annual General Meeting took place in November, with the following elections to roles:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rose Spurling, Chairman• Phoebe Critchlow, Vice-Chairman | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Roberts, Treasurer• Jacob Watson, Representative on the Town Council's Youth Services Committee |
|---|--|

This year the Youth Council has focused on climate changes issues including promoting recycling, a Single-Use Plastic Free Sevenoaks campaign, and supporting the Town Partnership's water bottle refill scheme.



Youth Councillors have also highlighted teenage mental health as a concern and are fundraising for their nominated charity Stem4, a charity that supports positive mental health in teenagers, and have requested a Mental Health First Aid workshop (with funding provided by WKHA).



In June the Youth Council visited the Houses of Parliament and met with Sir Michael Fallon MP.

The Youth Councillors have been elected from those living within five miles of Sevenoaks Town or those who attend school within the town, and represent the schools and cadet group below to enable engagement for local young people:

- Judd School
- Knole Academy
- Sevenoaks School
- St John's C of E Primary School
- St Michael's Preparatory School
- Tonbridge Grammar School
- Trinity School Sevenoaks
- Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar
- Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys
- Westerham Sea Cadets

The presence of the Youth Council enables Sevenoaks Town Council to be confident that a young person's point of view will be heard and will assist in progressing their ideas. The Town Council is also pleased to form relationships with local schools.

Live on The Vine

The fourth end of term Summer Festival "Live on The Vine" event was held in July, organised for young people by the Youth Council. Bad weather resulted in a relocation to the Stag Plaza where the audience enjoyed performances by young people.

House in the Basement Youth Café

The Youth Services Committee, chaired by Cllr Rachel Parry, oversees the management and development of the House in the Basement Youth Café (known as HitB). It is a safe space for young people to relax, meet with their friends, make new friends, get information and advice, support with homework, and take part in a range of activities including music, art projects, chess, pool, board games and video games. Low cost hot meals are available.

The Sevenoaks Youth Council continues to be involved in the development of projects and events.

The Youth Café has now been open for approximately seven years and since funding from KCC stopped in November 2016 there are financial challenges to keeping the Youth Provision open.



We are very pleased to have obtained £10,000 National Lottery Community Funding for core staff for 2020 and a KCC Member Grant from Cllr Margaret Crabtree for staffing Art Projects.



HitB is managed by Chris Essex and supported by casual staff and volunteers from Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust.

Open Mic Nights (OMN) continue to be a great success. It is encouraging to see young performers gaining confidence at this event, many of whom then go on to perform at Live on The Vine or the Christmas Lights Switch On event.

Hire income is important to the sustainability of the Youth Café. During 2017 the Breast Cancer Support Group opened using the café every Tuesday morning. The support group is funded by the Province of West Kent Freemasons, who also funded a mini refurbishment. The Youth Café is available for hire, for further information contact:

hallhire@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Neighbourhood Scheme has continued with food being donated by local supermarkets. The availability of hot meals continues to be an important offer from the Youth Café.

13. Planning

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee meets every two weeks to discuss planning applications submitted within the Sevenoaks town area, and a wide array of associated planning matters.

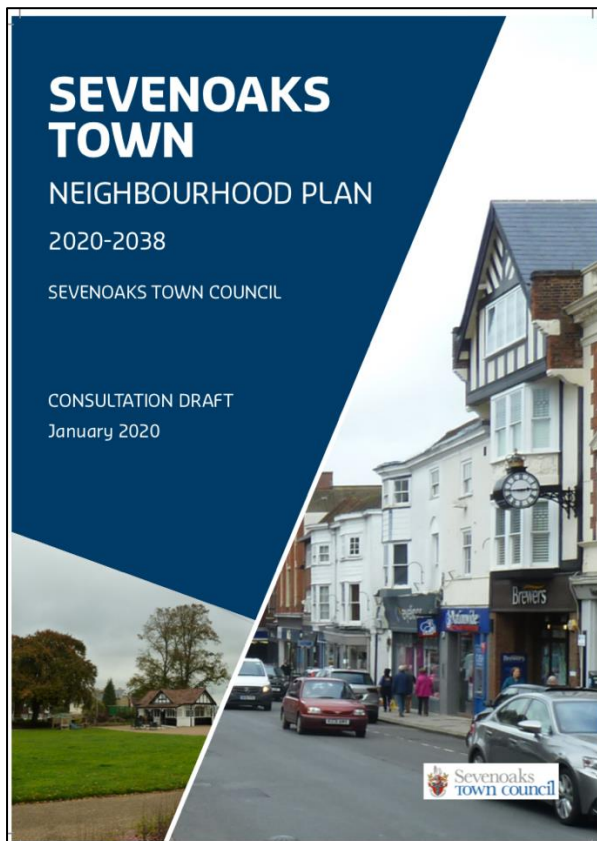
The committee actively seeks to maintain and enhance the positive features of Sevenoaks town, while promoting sustainable growth to help maintain the long-term economic and social stability of the town.

Planning Applications

During 2019/2020 the Town Council will have commented on circa 500 planning applications submitted within the Sevenoaks Town Council area and has supported Sevenoaks District Council in its refusal of applications via a number of written appeals.

The Town Council continues to monitor tree work applications in the area despite not being a consultee and will make representation when applications of concern are submitted.

Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan



**Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Development Plan
Public Consultation**

planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk
01732 459953

Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Public Town Meeting held on the 14th March 2013 residents signalled their support for the Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is a once in a generation chance for local people to shape and guide the future of the town and to ensure that future development is sensitive to the town's character and identity and to provide for the needs of future generations.

Since 2013 the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Committee have undertaken extensive public consultation and engagement activities, including a Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks to ensure that the content of the plan reflects what local people want. They have used this information to develop background work for the Plan and commission strategies and studies to support the emerging plan policies.

A six-week public consultation is set to run from Friday 31st January 2020 until Friday 13th March 2020. The public consultation will be launched in the Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery on Buckhurst Lane on Friday 31st January and Saturday 1st February 2020. An exhibition will be available to view at the launch and at locations across the town through the six-week period (see below for details). Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan and how to comment on it are available on the Neighbourhood Plan website at <https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com>.

Feedback from this initial consultation will be included where appropriate into the plan which will then be progressed through a statutory programme carried out by Sevenoaks District Council concluding in a referendum for the residents of Sevenoaks.

Dates	Times	Location
Friday 31 st January 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Library
Saturday 1 st February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Library
Friday 14 th February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Town Council Chambers
Saturday 15 th February 2020	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Sevenoaks Town Council Chambers
Monday 3 rd February – 13 th March 2020	10.00 a.m. – 4.45 p.m.	Stag Theatre Café
Monday 3 rd February – 13 th March 2020	Monday - Saturday Station Opening Times	Sevenoaks Mainline Railway Station Foyer

Enquiries to: Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG. planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan reached the stage of Public Consultation. The six-week consultation began on 31st January and was extended to 31st March 2020. The aim of this consultation period is to ensure that the Neighbourhood Development Plan continues to the next stages and is shaped by the genuine needs of the Sevenoaks community. As a result of this the Town Council has focused on publicising this document as widely as possible. Social media and the Sevenoaks Chronicle have both been useful to increase knowledge of this consultation process.

Printed feedback forms and an online survey link have been distributed to ensure the process is as accessible as possible to the public. Several events are taking place during this six-week period where attendance is encouraged as an opportunity to discuss with Councillors any concerns or comments the public may have. The events have taken place in the Kaleidoscope library and Sevenoaks Town Council chambers. There are also exhibitions in both Sevenoaks station and the Stag theatre where the printed copies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan are available to take away.

After the public consultation phase the Town Council will apply the feedback received to the document where appropriate. The Neighbourhood Development Plan will then be submitted for a statutory programme conducted by Sevenoaks District Council concluding in a referendum for the residents of Sevenoaks.

Despite the delayed status of the Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan, the Town Council have agreed to continue progressing the Neighbourhood Development Plan as a priority. However, the Council have publicly supported the Local Plan and will continue to do so.

For more information, please visit [Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) or email planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk to be added to the distribution list, which receives periodic updates and invitations to meetings.

14. Sevenoaks Markets

Sevenoaks Town Council continues to manage Sevenoaks Markets. These Saturday markets are well attended by members of the public. The Wednesday market has always been difficult to encourage footfall to in its recessed position behind the bus station. Attendance by public and stall holders reliant on each other has decreased sharply. For this reason, Sevenoaks Town Council is seeking permission to move the Wednesday market to the High Street as per the Saturday 'Charter' Market. Sevenoaks Town Council operates the following markets:

- Wednesday Market next to the Bus Station 8am till 2pm
- Saturday Bligh's Market 9am till 4pm
- Saturday High Street Market 9am till 4pm



15. Sevenoaks Town Partnership

Established in 2011, the Partnership is a Sevenoaks Town Council initiative bringing together a wide range of people from the local community to establish Sevenoaks as a prosperous and



vibrant place to visit, shop and do business. Cllr Andrew Eyre, Chief Executive of the Stag, is Chairman of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership, which recently changed its name to Town Team.

Contact:

admin.tp@sevenoakstown.gov.uk for further information and details of events.

Sevenoaks Business Show

Sevenoaks Town Partnership hosted its annual Business Show at the Stag Plaza in April with 30 businesses attending. The event was sponsored by Thackray Williams, The Stag, Sevenoaks District Council and Wagamama. The event continues to be an excellent chance for networking and an important event on the Town Partnership calendar.

Wellbeing Show

The annual Wellbeing Show took place in May sponsored by Specsavers, The Stag and Wagamama. The event aims to raise awareness around all aspects of mental and physical wellbeing with free talks and treatments taking place during the event.

Sevenoaks Vintage Bus

The Vintage Bus was used at the launch event of the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership and Heritage Open Day during the summer.

Ferrari Event



The first Ferrari event on The Vine was held in September. 26 Ferraris were on show to the general public, along with vendors and stalls. The event raised money for the Mayor's charities.

Sevenoaks Business Awards

The annual black-tie Business Awards took place in September at Knole Academy. The Business Awards have seven categories, six of which result from nominations from the general public. Over 100 attendees enjoyed a two-course meal cooked by students at the school, followed by the presentation of the awards. See winners below:



Winners of 2019 Business Awards:

Apprentice of the Year:	Alex Bill & Jared Humphries
Customer Choice Award:	Wagamama
Independent Retailer of the Year:	Cryojuvenate
Judges Choice Award:	Sevenoaks Summer Festival
Micro-Enterprise of the Year:	Curly Ellie
National Retail Chain:	Cook
New Business:	Cryojuvenate

16. Summary

The Town Council is committed to continue providing good quality facilities and a vibrant environment to ensure it is a town where residents want to live, businesses prosper, and which attracts visitors. Councillors believe it is important to continue to maintain and invest in a broad range of community assets including buildings, open spaces, play areas, vehicles etc.

This report highlights the work that has been undertaken in the last year. The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out the ambitions for the next 20 years. Sevenoaks Town Council continues to work with many community organisations and local businesses in setting its sights high for the future with these outlined ambitious plans.

There are many opportunities for residents to be involved in Town Council activities and help to make Sevenoaks a more sustainable and thriving community. All you need to do is to get in touch with us – please see the front page for contact details.

Functions & Facilities provided by Sevenoaks Town Council

Precept

The Town Council's portion of the Council Tax for the financial year 2019/2020 is £1,882,554 per year, which is equivalent to £118.43 per average Band D household. This is an increase of £3.48 per year, or 7p per week, compared with 2018/2019.

OPEN SPACES & LEISURE

- ALLOTMENTS:
Bradbourne Vale Road
Quaker's Hall Lane
- BETHEL ROAD BURIAL GROUND
- BRITTAINS COMMON
- BRITTAINS LANE WOOD
- THE GREEN, HILLINGDON RISE
- HANGING BASKETS
- HORSE TROUGHS (*Old Police Station, Rheinbach Gardens, St Botolph's Road*)
- JUDD'S PIECE
- LAND AT:
Letterbox Lane
Littlewood
Tonbridge Road
- MIDLINGS WOOD
- MILLPOND WOOD
- PLANTERS (*The Shambles, Dorset Street, Pembroke Road, London Road, Buckhurst Lane*)
- THE POUND, POUND LANE
- RALEY'S FIELD & KNOLE PADDOCK
- RHEINBACH GARDENS
- SEVENOAKS COMMON
- SPORTS PITCHES
- UPPER HIGH STREET GARDENS
- VINE CRICKET GROUND & PAVILION
- VINE GARDENS
Public toilet, telephone kiosk with defibrillator
- WAR MEMORIAL

- WHITE HART BEECHES
- WOODSIDE ROAD OPEN SPACE

CAR PARKS

- RALEYS CAR PARK

PLAY AREAS

- BUCKHURST LANE PLAY AREA
- GREATNESS RECREATION GROUND & PLAYGROUND
- HILLINGDON RISE PLAY AREA
- JULIANS MEADOW & PLAYGROUND
- KIPPINGTON MEADOW
- MOUNT CLOSE OPEN SPACE & PLAYGROUND
- PONTOISE CLOSE OPEN SPACE & PLAYGROUND

SERVICES

- BAT & BALL STATION BUILDING (*including Café and rooms available to hire*)
batandballstation.com
- CAFÉ ON THE VINE cafeonthevine.com
- CONSULTTEES (*Planning, Highways, etc.*)
- GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
- GREATNESS PARK CEMETERY
- HOUSE IN THE BASEMENT (HITB) YOUTH CAFÉ (*available for hire*)
- INFO-PODS & DIGITAL DISPLAY SCREENS
- LITTER BINS AND GRIT BINS
- MARKETS (*Wednesday and Saturday*)
- MASTERPLAN FOR NORTHERN SEVENOAKS
- NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- ORBITAL NO 8 BUS

- PUBLIC SEATS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS
 - PUBLIC TOILETS (*The Stag, The Vine, Lower St Johns, Greatness Recreation Ground*)
 - SEVENOAKS COMMUNITY CENTRE
Available for hire: meetings, conferences etc.
 - SEVENOAKS TOWN PARTNERSHIP
sevenoakstownpartnership.wordpress.com
 - STAG COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE
Defibrillator in foyer
stagsevenoaks.co.uk
 - STREET LIGHTS IN SOME UNADOPTED ROADS
 - TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES/CHAMBER
Available for hire: meetings, conferences etc.
 - TWINNING WITH PONTOISE AND RHEINBACH
 - VINTAGE BUS
 - YOUTH COUNCIL sevenoaksyouthcouncil.com
- ## EVENTS
- ARMED FORCES DAY TOWN SUPPORTERS
 - CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS IN TOWN
 - CIVIC FUNCTIONS
 - VINE BANDSTAND/FREE SUMMER CONCERTS
- ## PROPERTY
- BUSINESS HUB (*former Red Cross Building*)
 - BUS SHELTERS (*Dartford Road x2, St John's Hill x3, Bradbourne Vale Road x1, London Road x4, Seal Road x1, Tonbridge Road x1*)
 - JUBILEE CLOCK (*Old Market House*)
 - WARREN CLOCK (*above Brewers*)

Town Councillors 2019-2023

NAME	PARTY	NAME	PARTY
EASTERN WARD		ST JOHNS WARD	
Cllr A S Clayton	Liberal Democrat	Cllr S Camp	Liberal Democrat
Cllr T Morris Brown	Liberal Democrat	Cllr R M C Hogarth	Conservative
Cllr E T Waite	Liberal Democrat	Cllr S G Raikes	Conservative
KIPPINGTON WARD		TOWN WARD	
Cllr A Eyre	Conservative	Cllr K Bonin	Conservative
Cllr R J Parry	Conservative	Cllr N J L Busvine OBE	Conservative
Cllr R L Piper	Conservative	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Liberal Democrat
NORTHERN WARD		WILDERNESSE WARD	
Cllr M Canet	Liberal Democrat	Cllr Mrs R E Parry	Conservative
Cllr V Granville-Baxter	Liberal Democrat	To contact a Sevenoaks Town Councillor, please use the following email format: Cllr.surname@sevenoakstown.gov.uk eg. to contact Councillor Piper, the email address would be: Cllr.piper@sevenoakstown.gov.uk	
Cllr C Shea	Liberal Democrat		

Town Clerk/Chief Executive:

Linda Larter MBE:

townclerk@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Deputy Town Clerk:

Ann White:

dtc@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Town Council or its Committees meet on most Monday evenings at 7pm and members of the public are welcome to attend. For further details of the meetings please contact the Town Council Offices on 01732 459953.

council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Sevenoaks
TOWN COUNCIL

