



**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Fiftieth Annual Assembly of the Townspeople of Sevenoaks
held at Bat & Ball Centre, Crampton's Road, Sevenoaks, TN14 5DN
on Monday 11th March 2024
7:00 – 8.45pm**

Livestreamed on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/live/ZVwBJbfp-DA?feature=share>

Chair: Cllr Claire Shea – Mayor of Sevenoaks

In attendance: 115 members of the public and the following:

Cllr Libby Ancrum Cllr Sue Camp Cllr Dr Merylyn Canet Cllr Tony Clayton Cllr Catherine Daniell Cllr Dr Peter Dixon Cllr Victoria Granville Cllr Chloe Gustard	Cllr Lionel O'Hara Cllr Nick Varley Cllr Nigel Wightman Cllr Roderick Hogarth (SDC) Cllr Elizabeth Purves (SDC) Cllr Richard Streatfeild (SDC & KCC)
Linda Larter, MBE Andrew Eyre Georgina Jackson Alison Futtit Georgie Elliston Anna Rosinska Liz Hodgson	Chief Executive/Town Clerk Chief Executive, Stag Theatre Responsible Finance Officer Senior Committee Clerk Planning Committee Clerk Open Spaces Committee Clerk Hall Hire Manager

Apologies for absence were received from: Laura Trott MP, Cllr Sally Layne, Cllr Lise Michaelides, Cllr David Skinner & Cllr Gareth Willis.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting members of the public had the opportunity to visit an exhibition of stands provided by local voluntary groups who had received grants from Sevenoaks Town Council and to meet local Town Councillors.

There had also been a collection of food items for Sevenoaks Larder, one of the Mayor's Charities.

1. WELCOME BY THE MAYOR, CLLR CLAIRE SHEA

The Mayor welcomed everybody to the Fiftieth Sevenoaks Annual Town Public Meeting.

She gave a particular welcome to visitors from Bodegraven-Reeuwijk in the Netherlands, colleagues of the Town Clerk from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC):

Cllr Els Oliwkiewicz-Borsboom

Cllr Bas Otting,

Lucia Uijterwijk, Wietse Bruinsma

Henk Verdonk

The Mayor drew attention to the fundraising concerts being held at the Stag Theatre by one of her nominated charities, Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees, on 27th April 2024.

2. MINUTES OF THE SEVENOAKS ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING 2023

The Minutes of the Forty Ninth Annual Town Public Meeting of the Townspeople of Sevenoaks held on 13th March 2023 were received and adopted and it was RESOLVED that the Mayor sign the Minutes of that meeting as a true record.

3. PRESENTATION OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

The Mayor introduced the Town Council's Annual Report April 2023 to March 2024, which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk gave a presentation outlining the Town Council's achievements during the year, additional to regular functions and facilities, setting out activities each month.

Highlights included: the 10th Anniversary of the HOUSE in the Basement Youth Café; supporting the first Climate Fair in Sevenoaks; introducing twice yearly Vegan markets; hosting dementia friendly Forget-me-not cafes; art activities and heritage talks at Bat & Ball Station; the election of a new Council in May; holding Coronation Big Afternoon Tea in the High Street; winning gold in Sevenoaks In Bloom; becoming the first Town of Sanctuary; conducting Greatness Recreation Ground Survey; working with the Football Club to obtain CIL funding for a new football pavilion; refurbishing the Skatepark at Greatness Recreation Ground; election of a new Youth Council; holding Sevenoaks Business Show and Business Awards; beginning Sports Strategy Review; holding Christmas Lights Switch On event; conducting public consultation for 20mph scheme; refurbishing public toilets at St John's Hill car park; and, following a very successful public pledge campaign which raised £102k, proceeding with the purchase of Longspring Woods, an Asset of Community Value.

4. PRESENTATION ON TARMAC LTD PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR SEVENOAKS QUARRY, NORTHERN WARD

Michaela Kekerri from Tarmac and Joseph Baum from Meeting Place gave a presentation on the proposals for the development of Sevenoaks Quarry in relation to the outline planning permission obtained (giving approval to the development in principle), the future reserved matters to be considered via additional planning applications, the

finalising of the S106 Agreement, and previous and future consultation and engagement with the community.

It was noted that Tarmac was in discussion with The Town Council regarding the best community use of the Oast House, and with the Scouts regarding the use of the barn.

Comments/Questions raised were:

Comments/Questions	Response
<p>While broadly welcoming the development, it is only acceptable if access arrangements improve, and it properly provides affordable housing.</p> <p>You have offered 40% with this development.</p> <p>Definition of affordable housing is important, being only slightly cheaper than market value is not what is needed. Sevenoaks needs social/rented housing. What are proposals for rented housing in this scheme?</p>	<p>There is a legal obligation to provide affordable housing. Intend to deliver on commitment.</p> <p>Affordable housing comprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 80% of market rate 2) social rent - 60% of market rate onwards. 3) Shared ownership <p>Developments will have a mix of these.</p> <p>Overall, the development will provide 320 affordable homes, of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 208 will be social rent units (65%) • 80 will be first homes (25%) • 32 will be intermediate (10%)
<p>Will affordable housing be included at each phase of development?</p>	<p>Affordable housing is proposed to be included all the way through the development, with a minimum of 25% at each phase.</p>
<p>In relation to the pedestrian & cycle route from Childsbridge Lane to Kemsing, hope plans won't be lost during development process?</p>	<p>Can assure that this won't happen. Its delivery will be secured as part of the S106 agreement.</p>
<p>When will first phase of building start?</p>	<p>This is dependent on the finalising of the S106 agreement and planning applications on the reserved matters. Nothing would be on site for the first 2 years.</p>
<p>Noted the proposed open spaces and retail units, but there seems to be a gap as no medical facilities included.</p>	<p>West Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board has advised that the scheme on its own does not warrant dedicated medical facilities on site. This does not mean that a contribution won't be made; discussion will continue with the Integrated Care Board and consideration</p>

<p>A contribution to improve the offering at Sevenoaks Hospital would be good.</p>	<p>given to the District Council's emerging Local Plan.</p> <p>Contribution to the hospital will be picked up by the S106 agreement.</p>
<p>Access to the site is the key issues, with some feeling that issues at the Bat & Ball junction won't be easy to address. Need to address for cars, pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Also, will the current pedestrian footbridge from the site to Sainsbury's be retained and improved.</p>	<p>Once at the point that access proposals at the junction are shared with the Steering Group, the concerns can be discussed.</p> <p>As part of the retail proposals on site, discussions will be held with the Town Council regarding potential use of existing bridges. There are no current plans for Tarmac to pursue these works itself.</p> <p>Intention is to provide links to existing facilities as well as new retail on site.</p>
<p>Cllr Richard Streatfeild commented that consultation process has been done well, keeping all elected representatives well informed and providing opportunity to comment. With the Integrated Care Board, there will be more opportunities to adjust plan as it develops.</p> <p>Highways element is also key, KCC very focussed on dealing with issues.</p>	

The Mayor thanked Michaela and Joseph for their presentations. She advised that the Steering Group met regularly to feedback to the Tarmac team and asked that residents speak to their local councillors and residents' associations if they had any issues they would like raised.

5. SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The Mayor thanked local community organisations for all they did to support the town and its residents.

Awards had been made during the year, under the Town Council's Grants Scheme, to the following local community organisations, who had attended the meeting to provide a display demonstrating what the funds had been spent on:

Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group	£750	Sevenoaks PHAB	£450
West Kent Mediation	£800	The Children's Workshop	£540
Friends of Pontoise	£350	Sevenoaks Counselling	£2000
Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival	£600	Hi Kent	£1000
Sevenoaks Literary Festival	£500	Baby Umbrella	£2600
South East Open Studios	£250	Art in June Open Studios	£250
STEM Repair Workshops for HOUSE in the Basement	£375	Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival, Young Musician of the Year	£600
Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra	£500	Sevenoaks Scouts- Litter Pickers	£250
Youth Resilience UK	£1,600	Sevenoaks Scouts – Room Hire	£1,335

Displays were also provided by: Friends of Rheinbach, Sevenoaks Bowling Club, West Kent Housing Youth Services, Sevenoaks Samaritans, Tarmac Ltd.

Further Grants were also agreed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 27th November 2023 and 26th February 2024, and the awards presented by the Mayor to:

Sevenoaks Summer Festival	£5,000	South East Open Studios	£250
Friends of Pontoise	£250	Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival	£600
Friends of Rheinbach	£250	West Kent Mediation	£900
Sevenoaks Bowling Club	£1,000	Baby Umbrella	£500
Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group	£1,000	West Kent Mind	£2,500
Sevenoaks Samaritans	£1,488	Stag Community Arts Centre	£4,000
Art in June	£500		

6. PRESENTATION OF THE STAG'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Andrew Eyre, Chief Executive of the Stag Community Arts Centre, presented its Annual Report for the financial year 2022-23.

Andrew advised that the Stag was successfully fulfilling its charitable aims of providing theatre and cinema for the people of Sevenoaks and beyond. Thanks to the support of the Town Council, government grants and generous donations from members of the public, the Stag had survived the pandemic. Cinema attendance had now reached 80% of pre pandemic levels.

Andrew reported on works undertaken to reduce the Stag's carbon footprint, including the installation of solar panels and back-up batteries, upgrading to LED lighting and replacing old gas boilers.

He commented that the Stag continued to be a valuable asset for the town bringing people into the town centre, its shops and especially the restaurants and car parks.

Members of the public commented that:

- The Stag was the beating heart of the community.

- The cost of hire was difficult for local community groups wanting to put on performances.
- They would like the Box Office to be open on Saturday mornings.
- Adverts in the Sevenoaks Chronicle should include details of how to book tickets.

7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM LOCAL PEOPLE ON MATTERS RELATING TO SEVENOAKS

Comments/questions raised at the meeting were:

Comment / Question	Response
Motor vehicles continue to dominate Sevenoaks high street to the detriment of pedestrians. Is there a will to make the high street one way and widen pavements, and if so, what needs to happen to encourage this idea forward?	This is not within STC's control. However, STC has commissioned a Masterplan for the Town Centre & St John's area where all options will be considered for this strategy document.
20 mph Consultation: When will the Council provide a copy of the results of the recent 20 mph consultation? The Council's Website records that the 20 mph Survey Results will be published in the New Year; today, the 14th of March, is the start of the 11th week of this year.	STC prepared a report and forwarded it to JTB on 12 th February. It was hoped would be made public via the JTB route. However, as STC has not been told this is happening, full details (in addition to key results mentioned earlier) will be published Tuesday 12 th March 2024 with STC's Planning Committee Agenda.
Many congratulations to the Council for its Longspring Wood initiative. Other "New" Land Opportunities A1. Will the Council designate and register the Green Belt land on the "West" side of Britain's Lane [i.e. the unbuilt side] as a community asset? A2. Will the Council then plan to purchase this land? Buying this land would protect Sevenoaks and, importantly, would provide much needed land for public use, including recreational opportunities and also formal and informal sports facilities and use.	Cllr Varley paid tribute to the Town Clerk and Planning Committee Clerk for their hard work on this initiative. The Mayor explained the process to register Assets of Community Value and advised that registration gave the Town Council the right to bid, not the right to buy, if an asset came up for sale. There were a lot of assets in the Town that could be looked at and councillors were considering those within their wards.
Given all the research, academic and empirical, even the report commissioned by Prime Minister Sunak, which he has subsequently tried to bury because it	STC will be publishing its report and the analysis of its independent consultant on 12 th March.

<p>found against what he believed, that traffic calming measures and low traffic neighbourhoods, (LTNs) are overwhelmingly popular, that measures such as 20mph zones, reduce the seriousness of accidents when they occur, reduce emissions, reduce fuel consumption, encourages more active travel within the community and have a minimal impact on journey times, and given we ourselves here in Sevenoaks witnessed a multi-car pile up only 10 days ago on St. Johns Hill, adjacent to where I live, when is the Town Council going to make the whole of Sevenoaks Town a 20mph zone?</p>	<p>This will need to be considered by the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) and KCC Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>If the scheme is agreed it is hoped to roll it out over a few months, funded by Community Infrastructure Levy.</p> <p>It is hoped this would include a zebra crossing at the top of Dartford Road.</p>
<p>Does the Town Council have much to do with local Residents' Associations?</p> <p>Is there a forum for Residents' Associations to get together?</p>	<p>The Town Council has a lot of contact with Residents' Associations and welcomes more. Residents' Associations have been instrumental in activities in the past year including the Longspring Woods campaign and 30mph on Seal Road.</p> <p>Sevenoaks District Council used to have a Forum but this is no longer active. If there is an appetite for this amongst Residents' Association, the Town Council could facilitate.</p> <p>It was noted that the Sevenoaks Society had held a meeting for Residents' Associations in November. It was agreed that the Town Council would liaise with the Society.</p>
<p>There are a lot of empty buildings and land, such as the Farmers site. There should be a law against this. Is there anything that can be done? Can fines be issued?</p>	<p>There is no law to compel landowners to deliver what they have obtained planning permission for. It is a matter of the District Council discussing with developers. There is no mechanism for issuing fines.</p>
<p>There are obstructions to pavement on St John's Hill due to overgrown vegetation, can property owners be encouraged to cut back.</p> <p>Also, a problem with cars parked on the pavement.</p>	<p>Kent County Council's Highways team can deal with the overgrown vegetation issue; there is a tool for reporting via their website.</p> <p>Parking issues should be reported to Sevenoaks District Council.</p>

<p>Proposed improvements to the Bat & Ball junction seem to get pushed back all the time, what can the Town Council do to push this forward?</p> <p>Crossing the road on foot at the junction, there is no pedestrian phasing.</p>	<p>The junction improvements are linked to the start of the development at the Quarry. The Town Council's representatives on the Steering Committee will continue to keep pushing for this.</p>
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8. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Mayor thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8:45pm.

Signed

Dated

The Mayor