



Town Clerk's Update

Council news and information from Sevenoaks Town Clerk, Linda Larter MBE

23 January 2026



Stag CEO to retire after 14 successful years

This week it was announced that Andrew Eyre, CEO from the Stag will be retiring, see details below.

I would like to thank Andrew for the many years of partnership working that we have enjoyed and been beneficial to the Stag and wish him every happiness in his retirement when it happens later in the year.

Andrew Eyre the current Chief Executive of the Stag has announced that he will be retiring from his role this summer. Andrew has fulfilled fourteen very successful years developing The Stag, its business, its community links, its ethos and the building and we wish him well in his deserved retirement.

Andrew Eyre said: "It has been an honour and a privilege (and not least a lot of hard work) to develop The Stag since we rescued it from closure. I think The Stag is now in an excellent position – commercially and financially strong and stable in both business and artistic terms. The hall-hire model has consistently proven to be the best route forward in a world of reducing public sector financial backing. The support of the District Council's finance committee to keep The Stag local shows the way forward. The Stag's team is settled, stable and excellent and I am proud of them and the work they do. Deciding to change is always a challenge but now is the time for me to step back and for The Stag to take its next steps with a new leader."

The Stag has been operating its current business model since Sevenoaks Town Council introduced this in 2009. The Town Council currently has a lease for the building from Sevenoaks District Council and provides a sub lease to The Stag which operates as an independent charity.

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The Stag receives an annual grant of £27,000 from Sevenoaks Town Council and in addition as a charity, business rates are waived by Sevenoaks District Council. The key to the success of The Stag is to operate a low risk 'hall hire / receiving house' business model under which is provided first class facilities for artists and performers, but we do not underwrite shows. The business plan is reinforced by a small, dedicated staff and a wonderful team of volunteers.

Laura Trott MBE, MP said: "Andrew has played a pivotal role in The Stag's success, none more so than during the darkest days of Covid, when the theatre's future was in real jeopardy. Andrew and his team have transformed what was once a struggling venue into the thriving, much-loved community theatre it is today. I congratulate him on all that he has achieved and thank him for his outstanding service. He will be missed".

But the Show (s) Must Go On!

The Stag Trustees have now started the recruitment process for a new Chief Executive, and we hope to have Andrew's successor in place by early summer. The clear aim is to build on Andrew's legacy and to have a vibrant and financially stable arts centre serving the people of Sevenoaks and the wider district. It's our clear expectation that, as public assets are redistributed before the District Council is abolished, the freehold of The Stag will remain locally owned as is the recommendation of the District Council's Finance and Investment Advisory Committee.

Once this happens the Trustees and new Chief Executive will be able to move forward with a range of ambitious plans that have been developed with architects over the past two years.

These include

- increasing theatre seating initially to 600
- improving facilities and access
- then adding further seating, perhaps to 750, with a fly tower and developing more rehearsal and teaching space.

My meetings this week included:

- Planning & Environment Committee*
- Kent Family Hub Launch
- Sevenoaks Town Team
- Sevenoaks District Council – Clerks Meeting

*All of Sevenoaks Town Council's Meetings are open to the public and available to watch live on YouTube - see our website for details.



You wait ages for an Electric Bus – and the 2 come along!



**Funded by
UK Government**

Sevenoaks Town Council is delighted to announce that its Community Transport Grant application to Kent County Council has been successful, securing funding for a new wheelchair-accessible electric minibus for Age UK Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge.

Age UK supports around 500 beneficiaries living within Sevenoaks Town, many of whom face significant barriers to accessing services without dedicated transport. One of the main uses for the minibus will be to transport older and mobility-impaired local residents to Age UK's Hollybush Day Centre in Sevenoaks. This centre provides people in later life with valuable opportunities to meet others, make new friends, enjoy a nutritious hot meal, and take part in a wide range of recreational activities. In addition to door-to-door transport for Day Centre users, the minibus will also be used to take local residents to GP and hospital appointments, shopping trips, and other essential journeys.

The grant will enable Sevenoaks Town Council to purchase the minibus, which will be operated by Age UK. The vehicle will be owned by Sevenoaks Town Council, but Age UK will manage bookings, scheduling, and transport provision, with the service run on a not-for-profit basis.

The Mayor of Sevenoaks, Cllr Tony Clayton, said, "We're delighted that the bid for this bus, supporting Age UK, has been successful. It will help one of the key voluntary organisations in Sevenoaks making life better for older citizens, providing them with a dedicated way of transporting people to appointments and events. In addition, it will 'green' another vehicle on our roads, reducing pollution as well as costs."

The CEO for Age UK Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, Louise MacPherson, commented, "We couldn't be more grateful to everyone at Sevenoaks Town Council for their support in helping to secure this grant. The new minibus will make a significant difference to our services, enabling us to provide safe, reliable and comfortable transport for those who depend on it to access our Day Centre and other essential services. This minibus will provide a sustainable solution to help ensure that people in our community can continue to stay connected, supported and engaged, long into the future."

Kent County Council has awarded a Community Transport Grant of £75,795 to help fund the electric minibus. This scheme has been provided using BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) Funding awarded to Kent County Council as part of the Government's National Bus Strategy.

Sevenoaks Town Council's own community minibus will soon be ready to hire out to community groups in Sevenoaks, following another successful Community Transport Grant application last year. This minibus will be available for community groups in Sevenoaks to rent for the day.

These electric minibuses support Sevenoaks Town Council's Green Community Investment Plan, and its continued commitment to environmentally responsible projects that benefit the local area.





International Women's Day Event

Sevenoaks Town Council is delighted to host its annual International Women's Day networking event on Friday 6 March at Bat & Ball Centre. The event will bring together professional women and students to network, connect and celebrate.

Attendees can enjoy a delicious three-course lunch while hearing from a line-up of accomplished speakers from a range of professional backgrounds. Sevenoaks Town Council thanks the event's generous business sponsors: Specsavers, FM Conway and Berry & Lamberts.

Around 50 students will be invited to attend free of charge providing an excellent opportunity for young people to meet and network with businesswomen. For many of the pupils, the event offers a first experience of a networking environment, providing access to guidance and encouragement at a key stage when they may be considering future career pathways, training opportunities or university applications.

The event will raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities: Citizens Advice in North & West Kent and Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust. Tickets cost £35 per person, which includes a three-course sit-down lunch. The event runs from 11:45am to 2:40pm. Tickets are available via Eventbrite at IWD2026Sevenoaks.eventbrite.co.uk. For further information, please contact Sevenoaks Town Council on 01732 459953

Save the date

Visit our events page for more information: www.tinyurl.com/STCNewsEvents

Date	Event	Venue
Saturday 7 February	Mayor's Fundraising Quiz	Bat & Ball Centre
Friday 6 March	International Women's Day Event	Bat & Ball Centre
Thursday 19 March	<u>Mayor's Charity Concert - Swing into Spring</u>	Stag
Saturday 30 May	Health & Wellbeing Event	Vine



Having been a voluntary Board Member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) for three years, I now have the opportunity to campaign for the position of Vice President, which if successful would lead to President of this international organisation. For further details please see <https://lindaforiimcvp.com/>. It is very odd being the other side of elections.

Wishing you a good weekend

Best Wishes. Linda

