



# Town Clerk's Update

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

**30 January 2026**

## 2026 / 2027 Financial Budget



Sevenoaks Town Council has set its 2026 / 2027 Financial Budget at £2,117,684. This equates to Annual Cost per Household (Band D) £161.19 per year / £3.10 per week.

Sevenoaks Town Council in setting its budget for the financial year was very aware of the difficult financial climate, how this was impacting local residents and businesses, the reduction of services by other local authorities and the need to support local voluntary organisations who play such a vital role in the local community.

Wherever possible the Town Council aims to provide community facilities at the lowest cost possible to reduce the burden on the taxpayer. At the same time providing the facilities that the community wants and needs. This is often achieved by volunteers assisting in this for which the Town Council continues to remain grateful.

Wherever possible external funding is sought for Capital Projects. There are some facilities which are not commercially viable including maintenance of public open spaces and play areas and youth facilities, these do not generate income as they are free for public use.

Sevenoaks Town Council remains committed to supporting the Stag Community Arts Centre, local voluntary groups, and youth groups increasing grant funding from £67,100k to £70k to help charities continue vital community services in these difficult financial times.

### Challenges and Strategic Goals for 2026/2027

The 2026/2027 budget has been developed amid further challenging financial conditions, including a further rise in the minimum wage equal to a 4.1% uplift and increases in utility bills.

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Despite these pressures, the Council has identified the following key aims, in addition its day to day operation for the upcoming year:

1. Sustaining Service Delivery: Ensuring that all existing services including public open spaces, play areas, community buildings, community buses continue to be provided at the highest possible standard.
2. Recognising the importance of and supporting the Volunteer Sector: Reinforcing the invaluable work of local voluntary groups by enhancing funding opportunities.
3. Continued financial support for the Stag Community Arts Centre.
4. Prioritising completion of two Masterplans.
5. Completion of the Greatness Recreation Ground new Pavilion.
6. Continuing to provide “free to attend” community events.
7. Reviewing and consulting on the future of Community Assets subject to the local Government re-organisation.

Cllr Nigel Wightman, Chair of the Finance & Delivery Committee said: *“As usual we have had to balance very carefully the cost of providing public services and facilities with the amount that we ask households to contribute. Sevenoaks consistently ranks amongst the best places to live in the country. People here love our award-winning gardens, our parks and woods, our sports facilities and our festivals, our public buildings and cafes, and The Stag. They appreciate our support for youth groups and for voluntary organisations supporting the most vulnerable people in the town. We do all this in the face of consistent inflation, including that created by the government e.g. NI increases (for which, unlike the District Council, we have received no relief). After a careful budgetary process, in order to carry on our work for the community we have decided to ask households (in Band D) for an additional 14p per week.”*

For more details about Sevenoaks Town Council’s function and facilities see [www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk)

#### **Sevenoaks Town Council 2026 / 2027 Budget Precipis:**

Total Annual Revenue Budget: £2,117,684

Total Annual Precept (Council Tax): £1,624,084

Annual Cost per Household (Band D) £161.19 per year / £3.10 per week. An increase of £7.52 per year / 14 pence per week = 4.9 % compared to 2025/2026.

#### **My meetings this week included:**

- Community Asset (Open Spaces) Committee\*
- SLCC Practitioner Conference

\*All of Sevenoaks Town Council’s Meetings are open to the public and available to watch live on YouTube see [www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk) for details.



## Greatness Recreation Ground - New Pavilion

The new pavilion construction is progressing well. The bricklayers have completed their work required in order to facilitate the installation of all the precast stair sections. The entire 1<sup>st</sup> floor hollow-core floor system has also been completed. They are now working on block work to the ground floor. This will include the internal and external walls weather permitting.



## Common & Woodland Tree Management

The Town Council has now had its 5 year management plan approved by the Forestry Commission setting out recommended additional work to the Commons and Woodland that we operate, this is in addition to day to day management and a felling licence for 10 years.

A summary of this is:

- Increase biodiversity by planting, thinning and coppicing to provide a more varied structure.
- Provide an enhanced recreational experience for users by making the woodland more attractive to visit with wider, drier path networks.
- Eradicate invasive species as rhododendron or cherry laurel to prevent their future spread.
- Maintain public safety with regular inspection of trees.

Significant projects include:

- Middling Wood – continue to remove Ash as it succumbs to die back and replant with rowan and wild service tree.
- Sevenoaks Common adjacent Fernside, fell ½ acre of over mature sycamore and allow to regenerate. Additional planting of rowan cherry and oak to improve diversity
- Pontoise Woodland – cut a third of the central area to maintain open heath
- Mount Close – fell the poplar trees close to the boundary with neighbouring properties and replant with hazel and cherry
- Julians Meadow woodland – remove the cherry laurel from the roadside, replant with yew and holly.

Longspring Wood – generously purchased with public donations:

- Re coppice along the path edge to maintain a wide path
- Supplementary planting of wild service trees and cherry
- Coppice top third
- Supplementary planting of 20 oaks to recreate coppice with standards.



## Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour seems to be becoming more organised with tools being used. This piece of metal fencing at the Bat & Ball Centre was taken apart last weekend and dumped in the car park.



# 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.

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 at [IWD2026Sevenoaks.eventbrite.co.uk](http://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](http://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              |



I have been working with the Education Department of IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks) to recognise and align Clerk's UK professional qualifications with those at IIMC. I am grateful to the Education Departments at IIMC and SLCC for their work on this and that it is now finally resolved. I am proud to have achieved the MMC (Master Municipal Clerk) qualification and that other UK Clerks can now follow this path if they choose to.

Wishing you a good weekend  
Linda