

Sevenoaks Town Council is grateful to everyone who is stepping up to help the community.



From Sevenoaks Town Council for the community of Sevenoaks

Summer 2020

My last *Town Crier* article was drafted in early April, within two weeks of entering lockdown. Now, as I write in early July, we are looking forward – perhaps with a little temerity – to life after lockdown. Pubs re-open on 4 July. I, for one, plan to celebrate with a sensible, socially distanced pint of something very traditional.

Of course, I should not be writing to you at all, because my mayoral term was supposed to end in mid-May – on the day of rather a significant birthday for me, in fact! But no: in line with council policy around the country, I was extended as an 'emergency' mayor for up to another year.

This has been a difficult time for all of us. But your Town Council has been doing its best during lockdown to follow the local community's example in responding to the crisis. I would like to thank our key workers, including the Mayoress, who is a primary school teacher, who have done so brilliantly over the last three-and-a-half months. Local charities such as Care for our Community have worked incredibly hard to make a real difference to those in difficulty. I also want to pay a particular tribute to the Town Clerk, Linda Larter, and the Town Council team, who have carried on regardless during the crisis, often putting in very long days indeed. It has been a heroic effort.



Raising the flag on The Vine on Armed Forces Day

My ability to get out and about, meet people and raise money for charity has been somewhat constrained. It was an honour to celebrate our Armed Forces on two occasions: VE Day in May and Armed Forces day in June. Fulfilling these obligations without any invited participants gave both events a real sense of poignancy. I am also delighted to say that over the past year I have managed to raise over £6,500 for the veterans' association SSAFA, my

main charity. I also managed to raise over £4,000 for the Sevenoaks Air Cadets. I look forward to handing over some giant cheques soon...

My main concern now lies with the future. The Covid-19 pandemic has been incredibly destructive, not just to peoples' lives, but also to the economy. The Town Council, working in close partnership with the Town Team (which draws membership from the local business community), have put an immense amount of work into drawing up a Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan. Those of you who read the *Chronicle* will have seen that one component of that plan has been to consider a temporary alteration of the traffic arrangements in the town centre to give pedestrians extra space for social distancing. We await a final decision on this from Kent County Council.

The pandemic has acted as something of a catalyst in forcing more urgent consideration of the economic and social challenges facing all high streets around the country. The Town Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan already contains proposals for a one-way traffic system to be permanently instituted in the town centre. In early July, the leading architect, Roger Fitzgerald, presented a fascinating vision at a virtual Sevenoaks Society event of how the town centre could be developed into a shared space where people really want to be. It was a great presentation, and left me convinced that we need to be bold about developing transformational ideas. But to get it right, we will need very active community participation and consultation.

For now, my most pressing single priority is to do all I can to support the Save our Stag campaign. The Stag is the beating cultural heart of Sevenoaks and key to the future of our town. On 29 June, I chaired a really important meeting of the Town Council, at which we agreed unanimously to put in place a financial package to sustain the Stag operation during the current financial year. In a first for us, we streamed the debate live on YouTube. Strong views were expressed, but all Councillors were united in wanting to do all we reasonably can to save the Stag. But, the Town Council



cannot do this alone. The plan depends on public donations, which will be match-funded by the Town Council. The response so far has been truly amazing. As I write, some £21,000 has been donated. The Council has also been inundated with messages of support for the Stag – over 1,600 letters and emails so far. This shows how much we all value the Stag. On 30 June I presented a cheque to the Stag for £750 from funds I have raised over the past year. A very big thank you to everyone who has donated thus far. Please, please keep it coming: we still have a long way to go.

Very best wishes

Nicholas Busvine OBE, Mayor of Sevenoaks



VE Day

On Friday 8 May 2020 at 11.00am Councillor Nicholas Busvine OBE, Mayor of Sevenoaks, laid a wreath at the Vine War Memorial, followed by a two minute silence, when the traffic spontaneously stopped and vehicle occupants also paid their respects, together with the small group of residents gathered near the Memorial. The Mayor said: "Thank you to the great generation who sacrificed so much to secure our freedom. We will never forget you."

In the nearby Vine Gardens, peace doves are displayed in the sensory bed tended by Soroptimist International Sevenoaks. These will remain in place for the commemoration of VJ Day 75 on 15 August. One member made 26 doves as part of the 2.6 Challenge to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK.

During the afternoon, residents celebrated VE Day by decorating their homes with bunting and flags, having doorstep parties and raising a toast to the National Heroes of WW11.



Armed Forces Day



On Saturday 27 June, the Mayor of Sevenoaks, Cllr Nicholas Busvine, OBE, attended the raising of the Armed Forces Day flag at The Vine in Sevenoaks.

Following a 2 minute silence, the Mayor, witnessed by the Town Clerk, Linda Larter, MBE, signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of Sevenoaks Town Council.

The Mayor said: "It is always a privilege to have the chance to take the opportunity on Armed Forces Day to offer thanks on behalf of our local community for the wonderful work these brave men and women undertake every day on our behalf. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the extra-ordinary work done during the Covid-19 pandemic, including: the creation of the Nightingale Hospitals; the establishment of military mobile Coronavirus testing units; direct support to the ambulance services; and delivery of PPE. Thank you for your brilliant contribution."

Sevenoaks Town Council rescues the Stag Theatre and Cinema – for a second time

At the Sevenoaks Town Council Meeting held on 29 June 2020 Town Councillors unanimously voted to provide the Stag Theatre and Cinema with a financial lifeline to enable it to re-open and progress with its Recovery Plan from the impact of Covid-19.

The Mayor, Cllr Nicholas Busvine OBE said: "It was a tough two hour meeting – as anyone watching on YouTube will have seen – but I am very glad to say that your Town Council was able to reach a unanimous consensus on a strategy to Save Our Stag. However, this still relies on ongoing participation from the local community."

In 2008 Sevenoaks Town Council took the bold step to take over the management of Stag using a different business model following its second bankruptcy by other management companies.

The Town Council's original aims were set out in its 2008 Business Plan and remain the same today:

- Assisting the sustainability of the local economy of the town, particularly the night-time economy and tourism economy.
- Retaining the valuable social and leisure facility for both performers and audiences.
- Enabling the development of youth services both in performing arts and youth outreach services.
- Retaining an iconic building in the town and preserving the street scene.

An independent charity was subsequently created to operate the Stag and the Town Council supported with an annual grant of £27,000. Town Councillors, trustees, staff, volunteers, customers and local businesses invested considerable time and effort to make the Stag the success it had become, a vibrant local leisure facility underwriting the local economy. Pre Covid-19 the Stag was 99%

grant- free and debt-free.

Unfortunately, the Stag's finances, as per many other leisure facilities' finances, are now critical due to the impact of Covid-19 and social distancing restrictions.

Town Councillors initially considered financially assisting the Stag at a Meeting on 8 June 2020. At the meeting, Town Councillors stated that they wanted to see evidence of public support for the facility both in communications and fundraising.

Three weeks later Town Councillors were delighted to receive 1,600+ emails of support for the Stag and offers of practical help. In addition, the public had raised £30,000 by 10 July via the Save Our Stag campaign.

Sevenoaks Town Councillors unanimously voted for the following:

Sevenoaks Town Council is committed to keeping the Stag open and operating for the benefit of the residents of Sevenoaks. Therefore, Sevenoaks Town

**PLAY YOUR PART IN
THE STAG'S
FUTURE**

Thank you to all our customers for their support. It is because of you The Stag has become so successful as a community arts venue. Please keep supporting us, so we can keep giving you the opportunities to enjoy live theatre shows, watch films, perform, meet, volunteer and visit.

DONATE
The Stag is a not for profit charity. Every pound really does make a difference and will help fund much-needed projects which benefit you, our customers. Visit www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk.

JOIN
Sign up to our focus group to share your views and ideas on the future of The Stag. Contact us: Lisa.whitbread@stagsevenoaks.co.uk

BOOK
There are many events coming up so check www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk regularly and book your tickets.

VOLUNTEER
Our volunteer team is an essential part of The Stag. Help out on shows, sell refreshments or offer your skills in other ways. We'd love to hear from you. Contact: volunteers@stagsevenoaks.co.uk

**STAG
SEVENOAKS**

Search Stag Sevenoaks

Council proposed to help the Stag achieve funding in the current fiscal year, in line with the Stag's Recovery Plan. It is noted that the Stag's Recovery Plan will develop as circumstances change and will need to demonstrate how the Stag will recover to a viable operation, as follows:

1. Sevenoaks Town Council will initially grant the Stag £65,000 in line with the request in the Recovery Plan, to cover the first three months of the Stag reopening.
2. The Stag launches a fundraising appeal, with Sevenoaks Town Council agreeing to match fund up to £60,000 achieved by the Stag.
3. Sevenoaks Town Council commits to revisit the Stag's financial situation on a quarterly basis, offering further grants if needed at the same time, being mindful that the Town Council's revenue reserves should not fall to levels which would put at risk its own services to the Town.
4. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to regularly review the financial position of the Stag and its Recovery Plan.
5. A Working Group of 4 Town Councillors and appropriate Town Council and Stag officers to review alternative governance arrangements to those currently operated.

Town Team

The Sevenoaks Town Team is a new and energetic team led by Chairman Cllr Andrew Eyre.

They are business-led (Andrew is Chief Executive of the Stag in the town) and are committed to combining resources and developing innovative and achievable projects to boost the Town's footfall and local economy.

The Executive Board consists of representatives from Sevenoaks Town Council, Sencio, the

Chamber of Commerce, Sevenoaks Chronicle, Bligh's, Knole and - most importantly - retailers and local businesses.

If you would be interested in learning more about the activities of the Town Team, or becoming involved in the Team's projects, please do get in touch with us, attend one of our regular meetings or sign up to the weekly electronic newsletter by emailing us at admin.tp@sevenoakstown.gov.uk.

www.sevenoakspartnership.org/



First electric van for Sevenoaks Town Council

In November 2019 Sevenoaks Town Council made Climate Change and Carbon Neutral initiatives a No 1 Priority. The priority will be included in consideration of all Town Council activities.

One of the Town Council vehicles was long overdue for renewal and it was agreed that an electric charge van be purchased. The van will be branded to enable members of the public to see it more easily around the town.

The new van is fully electric and covers 174 miles per charge. It will be used by the Town Wardens who inspect play areas and carry out day-to-day tasks on the Town Council's public open spaces.



Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet, Chairman of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee said: "Sevenoaks Town Council is leading the way forward in improving the environment with its new vehicle. We now have an electric powered van for use around the town's lovely parks, gardens and cemetery. Especially during these difficult times residents have enjoyed using the well-maintained green spaces in Sevenoaks. The Town Council is investing in a more sustainable future for our shared community assets." Cllr Dr Canet welcomed the arrival of the new electric vehicle at the Open Spaces meeting on Monday 6 July.

Sevenoaks Town Council has also arranged for public accessible vehicle charging points to be installed at its Council Offices site in Bradbourne Vale Road and at the new Bat & Ball Centre. Unfortunately, the installation of these facilities has been delayed due to Covid-19.

Who we are

Why do eight women with the total age of 578 years get down on their hands and knees monthly and then weekly in the run up to In Bloom competitions for Sevenoaks town ?



We are members of the largest global service organisation for women affiliated to the United Nations. We are pledged to raise awareness and act on their 17 sustainability development goals which include promoting good health and wellbeing, education, sustainable cities and communities, climate action, partnership for the goals. These goals come under the umbrella of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership.

Our partnership with Sevenoaks Town Council started three years ago when we responded to a request for volunteer gardeners. We undertook to restore the Vine Sensory garden and surrounds. Last year we started work on restoring the herb garden.

Our work means that we meet the United Nations goals particularly for the elderly, dementia sufferers, people suffering from mental health problems and families who use the areas to educate their children on edible plants introducing them to the natural world. A calming and also educational place with a sensitive choice of plants helping community inclusivity needed for sustainable cities and communities.



During lockdown we supported the Town Council by making doves of peace intended for a WW11 celebration event on 8 May. It was planned to hang these doves on the trees in the Vine and on the railings. It is now not possible but hopefully they might 'fly to the trees' on VJ day on 15 August.

We have a win-win situation here in that we really love our work on the Vine. It benefits our own health and wellbeing and hopefully the gardens give much pleasure to the people of Sevenoaks by improving their quality of life.

Isobel Groves , SI Sevenoaks Programme Action officer

Edibles are back in Sevenoaks!

It may not be quite on the same scale as Todmorden in Lancashire, the first Incredible Edible town, but the Town Council has upped its game this year after receiving lots of positive comments about last year's edible displays in Sevenoaks Town. The initiative was started by West Kent at their office on London Road, and the Council was keen to get involved.

Most of the beds and troughs, which are changed twice a year, have edibles in them again this summer, including various herbs, tomatoes, courgettes, chard and even physalis!

So don't be shy... if you see an 'Eat Me' or, in the case of the Moroccan mint, 'Drink Me', do help yourself and enjoy the fruit - and veg - of summer!

WestKent

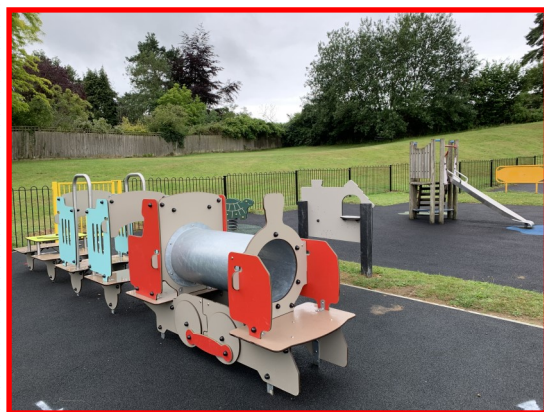
Places to live. Space to grow.



Courgettes, thyme, rocket and flowers in vibrant colours all grow happily together in the trough near the Rheinbach Gardens on St John's Hill

New play equipment at Mount Close Play Area

Sevenoaks Town Council were pleased to be able to give the Mount Close Play Area a bit of an up-grade recently and has just had installed a new play-on train for the under 5 age group, complete with a ticket office play panel and safety surfacing.



A second gate to the site has also been installed along with new bow top fencing.

All of this was installed by Proludic with the help of an Enovert Community Trust grant.

The Town Council has an ongoing programme of day-to-day maintenance and cleaning of seven play areas within the town.

During lockdown this year, playgrounds were required to close between 23 March and 4 July 2020. Prior to re-opening Sevenoaks Town Council arranged for all play equipment, gates, benches etc. to be treated professionally with a sanitising solution to combat viruses, and then treated with a further sanitising solution which can continue to work up to 30 days to combat enveloped viruses.

Additional signage was installed on the ground indicating one way routes, and boards indicating public health guidelines; including washing hands, restriction of numbers and times and keeping social distances.

Sevenoaks TOWN council



Grant funding available for voluntary organisations, groups and charities in Sevenoaks

Do you need money for a good cause or project to benefit the community?

Applications can be made using the grant application forms via the website www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk or obtainable from the Sevenoaks Town Council Offices.

For more information please contact Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG. Tel: 01732 459953 or email council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

citizens
advice

North &
West Kent

Debt Advice

**Are you struggling
to manage your debts?**

**Has the COVID-19 crisis put a
strain on your finances?**



**NOW is the time to take action
to sort out your finances...
BEFORE landlords, bailiffs or creditors
take action against you.**

**Our friendly advisers are here
to help and support you.**

**For the quickest response, please email
debt@nwkent.cab.org.uk**

**with your phone number &
we'll call you back.**

**If you can't email, please call 0300 330 9001
and ask for a Debt Assessment.**

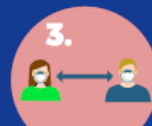
LET'S HELP EACH OTHER TO STAY SAFE



**1. Please keep your
hands clean.
Sanitise or wash
them**



**2. Wear appropriate
face coverings if
required**



**3. Give each other room.
Please keep social
distanced**



**4. Be patient and be
kind to each other**



**5. Please dispose of
any rubbish
sensibly**



**7. Please social distance
when using the benches**



6. Follow the routes

**STAY
ALERT**

**CONTROL
THE VIRUS**

**SAVE
LIVES**



Functions & Facilities provided by Sevenoaks Town Council

Precept

Sevenoaks Town Council's total revenue budget for the 2020/21 financial year is £1,740,923 per annum. The average Band D house would pay £125.41 per annum equating to £2.41 per week.

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
- MIDDLEINGS 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
- CONSULTÉES (*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:

dte@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

