



# Town Clerk's Update

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

**12 December 2025**

## Good News - Grant for Youth Café



Pleased to report that STC has been successful again in obtaining a £10,000 Awards for All lottery grant towards the salaries at the House in the Basement Youth Café. Thank you to Georgina for her work on this.

## Mayor's Donation of Painting to Art Collection



On Monday evening the Mayor continued the annual tradition of donating a painting to the Town Council's Art Collection.

For over 50 years Mayor's have donated a painting which had traditionally been of a scene in the town and by a local artist. This has enabled an impressive art collection which also depicts social history as many of the scenes and buildings no longer exist.

This year the painting was a print of ducks on Bradbourne Lake by Carole Aston.

## Team Updates

Pleased to welcome Bryan Nicholls as a new member of Grounds Staff.



## Christmas Lights Switch-On

Thank you again to members of STC staff involved in the arrangements for the Christmas Lights Switch-On. We would estimate attendance at 6,000. Overall, it was a very successful event.

All of the arrangements are mainly coordinated by Alison who we are very grateful to and all other members of staff who undertake being involved in addition to their normal job description.

We are also grateful to Town Councillors and volunteers who attended on the day and to the business sponsors who have been very generous this year.



## Sevenoaks Community Bus

Our new community bus has been delivered and will now be 'wrapped' for STC branding. There are several practical operational matters for us to work through as well. Next year, the bus will be available for community groups to hire out.





## Children's Christmas Light Competition

Earlier this year, Sevenoaks Town Council invited local children to take part in a festive challenge to design a Christmas light. A fantastic array of creative artwork was received from talented young people aged 11 and under.

This year's winner was Edeline, who drew a wonderful illustration of a Christmas Gonk – a whimsical figure with a long, bushy beard and pointed hat pulled over its eyes. Often compared to gnomes, Gonks originate from Scandinavian folklore.

This winning design has been brought to life and is now displayed in Sevenoaks, above the House in Basement youth café entrance, along with previous competition winners' lights.

On Thursday 4 December, Edeline and last year's winner, Caleb Wood, attended an official switch-on ceremony with their families. They were joined by the Mayor of Sevenoaks Cllr Tony Clayton, Cllr Libby Ancrum, as well as Chris Hugo and Ayush Gurung from the competition sponsor, Knocker & Foscett.

Last year's winning design by Caleb featured a candle shaped like an acorn with the word "Joy" written across it – a fitting symbol for Sevenoaks. Caleb's brother, Joseph, also received recognition for his competition entry.

Following the lights switch-on, the families were invited to enjoy refreshments at House in the Basement youth café.

Sevenoaks Town Council thanks all the children who submitted their marvellous designs for this year's Design a Christmas Light Competition. Shops in Sevenoaks are proudly displaying the entries in their windows, so keep an eye out for them as you explore the town this festive season!



## Holly Party



Mike our Town Team Facilitator reported back on the Holly Party. “What a night! The 2025 Sevenoaks Holly Party was the best one yet – Jonahs Wail are a brilliant band and kept a packed Bat & Ball Centre on its feet for much of the evening which was just as well as Perfect Cuisine had created a sumptuous and very generous buffet enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Barry and the team from the Anchor Pub for having run a very professional bar – even if demand meant that they had to send out for more prosecco.”

The Town Team created the annual Holly Party as an economic alternative to small and independent businesses to have a ‘staff Christmas party’. Thank you to Mike for all his hard work on this.

## Christmas Dates for Market Stalls

The High Street Market will be open on the following dates in December:

- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December
- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December CLOSED
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January (then back to normal)



Blighs Market stalls will be operating continuously 11-24 December, 9am to 4pm.

### My meetings this week included:

- Council Meeting\*
- Govt High Street Sector Leaders Group
- Chair & Vice Chair 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.



## House in the Basement Youth Café – December events



There is a lot going on at the youth café this month in addition to normal activities. Florence from Perfect Cuisine is once again providing the meal free of charge for all the young people at the Christmas Party.



### Government High Street Sector Leaders Group

I was pleased to be invited to become a member of the new Government High Street Sector Leaders Group representing SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks).

Membership of the group includes ATCM (administrator), Government Departments, British BIDs, National Association of British Market Authorities, British Retail Consortium, Institute of Place Management, Libraries Connected, British Property Federation, Assoc of Convenience Stores, LGA, Booksellers Association, Independent Pharmacies Association, Cinema Association.

This week the main topics of discussion were – High Street Task Force, Business Rates, Licensing and Martyn's Law.





## Sevenoaks Town Council assets

The Town Council operates a wide variety of assets which need maintenance and improvements from time to time, we are currently managing:

**Vine Pavilion** – installation of new skylights. This Wednesday as the weather was kinder, the delayed work started on the rotten wood under the flat roof covering being addressed which had been preventing fixing of the new skylights.

**Buckhurst Play Area** – continuing with improving play equipment.

**Raleys Car Park** – works to address overgrown tree roots will commence next week.

**Rugby Pitches** – arranging demonstration to purchase new portable floodlights and seeking tenders for replacement of permanent floodlights.

**St John's Hill Car Park public toilets** – unfortunately somebody set light to the changing mat in the public toilet which has caused extensive damage and will take some time to repair. Insurance queries are also causing some delays.

**Greatness Pavilion** – the building project continues to progress well at these early stages with the contractor reporting being approximately two weeks ahead of schedule. Although some of this has been eaten up by waiting for delivery of steel. Find out more by reading weekly update reports at:

[www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/Greatness Recreation Ground Community Sports Pavilion 50170.aspx](http://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/Greatness_Recreation_Ground_Community_Sports_Pavilion_50170.aspx)



## Mayor's fundraising activities

### Christmas raffles

Each year there is a Fundraising Raffle of food and drink hampers at the Christmas Council meeting. We are pleased to report that the raffle raised £252.50. Thank you to everyone who supported this. Staff also do this separately for their Christmas event, again raising funds for the Mayor's charities.

### The Story of Knole Park

Also to assist the Mayor with fundraising, STC are helping to promote sales of Bob Ogley's new book – The Story of Knole Park – a recommended Christmas Gift! Books are available to purchase at STC offices at £20

The Book Launch at Knole which sold out quickly was very successful.

## The Story of Knole Park

Bob Ogley



'I was never frightened of Knole. I loved it and took it for granted that Knole loved me' - Vita Sackville-West

## Save the date

Visit our events page for more information: [www.tinyurl.com/STCNewsEvents](http://www.tinyurl.com/STCNewsEvents)

Date	Event	Venue
Wednesday 24 December	Carols on the Bandstand - Vine Baptist Church	Vine Gardens
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

Wishing you a good weekend.  
Linda

