



# Town Clerk's Update



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

**23 March 2026**

## Sevenoaks sets its sights on UK's first 'Town of Culture' title

Sevenoaks is competing to become the UK's first Town of Culture. Launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, this national competition aims to boost local pride, highlight the contribution communities make to the UK's cultural landscape, and widen access to the arts.

Sevenoaks will submit its Expression of Interest by 31 March. The strongest applicants will be shortlisted and awarded £60,000 to help develop their final bids.

The first title will be awarded for 2028, when the winning town will run a year-long programme of cultural events and celebrations. The winner will receive £3 million, while two runners-up will each receive £250,000 to support their cultural programmes.

The competition invites towns of all sizes to showcase their local visions and voices, through arts venues, performances, workshops and more. The contest runs alongside the existing UK City of Culture competition.

Sevenoaks has a wide range of cultural venues and spaces, including The Stag, The Vine event space and bandstand, the Environmental Park and Amphitheatre, The Space at Sevenoaks School Performing Arts Centre, Knole House, Knole Conservation Studio, Kaleidoscope Gallery – Museum, Library and Art Space and the restored heritage Bat & Ball Station.

Sevenoaks' entry builds on the town's Cultural Strategy, endorsed by the community in a public referendum in May 2023, as part of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan. Developed with local arts groups, the strategy sets out an ambition to strengthen, enrich and promote the town's cultural offer.

The Town Council's Arts & Culture Working Group oversees the implementation of the strategy through an action plan, and its priorities include:

- Improving signage and wayfinding to cultural venues
- Enhancements to The Stag, including additional seating and a new gallery space
- Developing proposals for affordable working spaces for artists
- Further developing Sevenoaks' year-round cultural events programme, including revitalising the Summer Festival
- Appointing a dedicated cultural liaison to help coordinate projects and partnerships.

Sevenoaks Town Council already provides in excess of £40,000 of grants to cultural voluntary organisations in the town. If Sevenoaks is successful in this competition, funding would help accelerate initiatives and expand the town's cultural ambitions.

Cllr Victoria Granville, Chair of the Arts & Culture Working Group, commented, "This is a positive opportunity for Sevenoaks to extend and enrich the creative potential of our diverse artistic community."



## Greatness Recreation Ground new play area & outside gym equipment

We are very pleased to have received a good number of exciting tenders both for the new play area and outdoor gym equipment for Greatness Recreation Ground.

Ward Councillors have reviewed before we commence the public consultation exercise. It is hoped to have these new facilities installed for the autumn – once the building work at the Pavilion has finished.



## Mayor's Fundraising Concert

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the Mayor's Concert a success, especially John Levett.

Settlements and funds are still being calculated but it looks as if a very healthy amount was raised for the Mayor's charities.



## Low-cost parking permits for retail workers

### Raleys Parking Permits

Permits for parking at Raleys Car Park now available for 2026/27 renewal

For 14 years the Town Council has made provision in Raleys Car Park for low threshold retail workers in the town. We are offering this again for this year 2026/2027 for 35 permits priced at £68.00 per registered vehicle.

Applications are considered on a first come first serve basis following the criteria below:

1. Applicant must be a Sevenoaks Town worker from an independent retail premises.
2. Application form must be co-signed by employer confirming salary.
3. Permits are car registration specific (not driver).
4. Permit will be valid from 01/04/2026 until 31/03/2027.
5. Parking is only permitted between Monday - Friday.
6. Cost of permit is £68.00 per annum.
7. Applicants with greater difficulty accessing the town centre will be given priority.

Completed application forms must be returned by post to:  
Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3QG  
Payment will be requested after application has been accepted.  
This can be issued by cheque or BACS

If posting your application, you must mark your envelope: 'APPLICATION FOR RALEYS PARKING PERMIT'

For further information please contact: [osl@sevenoakstown.gov.uk](mailto:osl@sevenoakstown.gov.uk)



## Bat & Ball Station



Thank you to Derrick our Caretaker for repainting the benches outside the Bat & Ball Station building.

We are currently liaising with Southeastern for the repainting of the external of the station building as they will be painting the other stations in the near future, and it is more economical for them to do this at the same time.



# Future of the Stag Community Arts Centre

## SIGN THE PETITION

Petition for Sevenoaks District Council to transfer the freehold of the Stag Community Arts Centre to Sevenoaks Town Council at no further cost



PLEASE SIGN HERE



[www.change.org/  
stagfreehold](http://www.change.org/stagfreehold)



**3600**  
signatures



On Friday, Nigel Wightman, Chair of Stag Trustees delivered the Petition of 3,600+ signatures to Sevenoaks District Council. The Petition is asking Sevenoaks District Council to transfer the Freehold of the Stag at no cost to the public to Sevenoaks Town Council.

It is expected that the Petition will be considered at the Sevenoaks District Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April. Additional signatures received between these dates will also be submitted.

Sevenoaks Town Council is actively requesting and trying to negotiate with Sevenoaks District Council for certain assets to be transferred prior to the District Council's dissolution and the creation of a new unitary, starting with:

- Stag Community Arts Centre
- Hollybush Recreation Ground
- Land at Bradbourne Vale Road (Horses Field)
- Land at High Street – Market Rights
- The Shambles

Unfortunately, the Sevenoaks District Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March where these matters were due to be discussed was needed to be cancelled.

Sevenoaks Town Council believes that the local Town Council is the most suitable authority to own and operate these community assets and be custodians for current and future generations, rather than a remote new Unitary Authority who will have considerable financial and operational constraints on resources particularly surrounding social care. The Town Council have also agreed to 'overage' conditions to prevent the Town Council trying to gain financially from the transfer of the asset. Town Councillors maintain that devolution should strengthen local stewardship of assets, rather than impose additional financial burdens on residents.

**SIGN THE PETITION - [www.change.org/stagfreehold](http://www.change.org/stagfreehold)**



## Fall trees

We recently had 4 trees down due to strong winds.

- 2 across the road in Windmill Lane – STC staff removed
- 1 across the road Ashgrove Road – KCC removed
- 1 on path in common near Letterbox Lane – STC will move

Thank you to Kevin and Brian from the OS Team for working on these so promptly.

## Public toilets

Due to works needing to take place at the Town Council's public toilets they were temporarily closed.

We had trouble at Lower St Johns with people getting locked in accidentally, and also a similar issue developing with the locks at the Vine. The locksmith visited and ordered all the parts; we took the decision to lock these two toilets to avoid public inadvertently being locked in. So hopefully we will now have a couple of years without this problem occurring again.

Greatness toilet needs more work to clear the blockage, and may need parts, work on this is continuing and hoped to be finished soon.

## My recent meetings included:

- Mayor's Fundraising Concert
- Movement & Net Zero Working Group
- Planning & Environment Committee\*
- Chelmsford Borough Council re Community Asset Management
- Sevenoaks Larder
- Personnel Committee
- Youth Council
- Society of Local Council Clerks – Kent AGM
- Communications Working Group

\*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.

## Local Government Reorganisation – public consultation

The Local Government Reorganisation consultation will finish on 26 March.

Please see [www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk) for links to further information.

### Local Government Reorganisation

What does it mean for you?

The consultation runs from  
**5<sup>th</sup> February to 26<sup>th</sup> March**

A printed summary is available at  
Sevenoaks Town Council offices



## Save the date

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

Date	Event	Venue
Friday 27 March	Great British Spring Clean - volunteers needed!	Pontoise Mill Pond Wood
Saturday 4 April	Vegan Market	Vine
Saturday 2 May	Climate Fair	Vine
Saturday 30 May	Health & Wellness Fair	Vine
Friday 5 June	Sevenoaks Business Show	Bat & Ball Centre
Friday 12 and Saturday 13 June	Beer on the Vine	Vine
Tuesday 4 August	Family Fun Day	Greatness Recreation Ground
Friday 20 November	Sevenoaks Business Awards	Bat & Ball Centre

Wishing you a good weekend,  
Linda

