

Sevenoaks TownCrier

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



From Sevenoaks Town Council for the community of Sevenoaks

Spring 2020



In the ordinary course of events, I would be writing a few words of reflection as my mayoral term comes to an end. But these are not ordinary times. The nation is in a state of crisis as together we confront the enormous

challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. I am drafting this article a month into lockdown. There has been a nightmarish toll of Coronavirus victims. The economy has come to a shuddering halt. Offices, shops, pubs and cinemas are closed. Most of us are stuck at home. Families are prevented from meeting with loved ones. If someone had told me that this was where we would be when I wrote my last update for the *Town Crier* in late January, I wouldn't have believed it.

January seems like an eternity ago. Now we are all involved in the fight of our lives. It is scary, it is worrying – and it is devastating for those of us who lose loved ones or who face financial disaster. There is only one thing for it: to work together as a community to battle through this crisis. I am very proud to say that Sevenoaks residents are doing precisely that. When the crisis began my message to you was: 'Be a good neighbour, your community needs you.' It has been amazing and humbling to see how you all have responded to the crisis. Lockdown rules have been observed. Residents all over the town are looking out for vulnerable neighbours, checking they are ok, doing their shopping and helping in all sorts of ways. It is lovely that so many people are making a special effort to say hello to complete strangers in the street when they pass each other (at a safe distance, of course!).

May I take this opportunity to add my personal tribute – and say thank you on behalf of the people of Sevenoaks – to all our brave NHS and Social Care workers, as well as to all other key workers. The Mayoress is a primary school

teacher, and I am so proud of the fact that she and her colleagues not only go in to look after children of other key workers, but are developing online schooling to make sure that pupils don't fall behind. I would also like to pay tribute to Peter Fleming and his team at the Sevenoaks District Council for the work they are doing to coordinate the local government response to the crisis. Our new MP, Laura Trott, is also really beginning to make her presence felt, and is working hard both to represent our concerns and to keep us all briefed on the government response to Coronavirus.

Your Town Council continues to do all it can to support the community fightback. To keep track of what we are doing, please check our website: sevenoakstown.gov.uk. We have set up a Community Resilience Fund of £30,000 to make grants to local groups leading the response to Covid-19. As of the end of April, I am delighted to report that we have made grant awards to Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge, PSB Breastfeeding, Citizens Advice Bureau North & West Kent, The Hygiene Bank and Care for Our Community. We would welcome further applications from any group that is working to support our local community during this difficult time. I also want to make a special mention of Care for our Community, who run a volunteer support group via Facebook. They are working closely with the District Council, coordinating with the Town Council and are doing an absolutely fantastic job. Another example of a great local initiative is the AreWeOK site on Facebook that is run by Sevenoaks resident Dan Keeley. The emphasis is on mental health and well-being – basically, cheering people up. He broadcasts daily and it has been a privilege to act as a panellist on a couple of his shows.

I want to end on a positive note. We will get through this crisis and then learn from it to build an even better local community. Meanwhile, we should try to make the best of lockdown. I was asked recently to do a video clip for the Walthamstow Hall Junior School. I reminded the children that without aeroplanes and traffic noise and blessed with sunny weather, this Spring has been even more stunning than usual. And we now also have the time to really appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds us in Sevenoaks. I concluded with a poem by

W H Davies, who lived in the Weald close to Sevenoaks in the early years of the 20th century:

Leisure By W H Davies

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

With the lockdown still in place, I am set to continue as Mayor beyond May – in line with the response of other councils around the country. I would like to thank the Deputy Mayor Dr Marilyn Canet, who has done a great job over the past year and indeed to all Town Councillors and officers, who continue to work tirelessly on behalf of our local residents.

I leave you with a final thought: 'Don't count the days, make the days count.'

Very best wishes

Nick Busvine OBE, Mayor of Sevenoaks

From the desk of Linda Larter MBE, Chief Executive / Town Clerk

During this challenging and worrying time in our history, work carries on as normally as possible, subject to national health guidelines, at Sevenoaks Town Council. The Town Council offices are - at the time of writing - closed to the public; please be reassured that all emails and answerphone messages will be responded to as soon as possible.

- Parks and open spaces are open and being maintained as much as possible to enable people to enjoy these much-needed facilities for their allocated exercise, especially those who do not have gardens. Public toilets continue to be cleaned daily.
- Allotments remain open and have received a surge in interest as people have more time.
- The cemetery continues to be open for visitors to loved-ones' graves and for funerals, although the chapel is not open.
- Following public health guidelines, play areas, outdoor gyms, skateboard park and the House in the Basement Youth Café have been closed.
- Café on the Vine and Bat & Ball Station Café are currently closed, and we have used this time to carry out internal decoration. We hope that they will be open again soon, if only for take away menu.

- Food stalls at the market on Wednesday and Saturday remain open.
- Sevenoaks Town Team is producing a Weekly List of businesses who are providing services direct to homes. They have also started a consultation process with local businesses to create a Sevenoaks Town Centre Recovery Plan which will need to address changes to consumer behaviour and changes to business practises and encouraging people to shop local when they can.
- Hall hires for meetings and events are currently no longer being taken. The construction work on the new Bat & Ball Centre is progressing well - please see the separate article on this.

Supporting the local community

The Mayor recently participated on an online interview explaining how the Town Council is continuing, where possible, and providing support for the community.

We have produced leaflets which can be distributed to residents enabling people to help their neighbours. Please contact us if you would like a supply of these leaflets to be posted out to you.

The Town Council continues to receive applications for its £30,000 Community Resilience Fund, enabling local voluntary groups who are helping the community

during the pandemic to access financial grant assistance. See page 3 for details of how to apply for a share of this fund.

Sevenoaks District Council has set up a Community Care Distribution Centre in Sencio Leisure Centre, and although the Town Council has limited resources we have offered to help if needed.

Community organisations are having financial difficulties, too, by not receiving their normal income. The Town Council has agreed a three-month deferment of rents for local sports clubs.

Town Council meetings

Meetings are being held differently, still follow the original meeting schedule, and public feedback on all items including planning applications, is being discussed and is still welcomed.

We have started to have E-Meetings via 'Microsoft Teams' which have been, in general, successful, and will probably get even better with practice.

In mid-April, emergency legislation was introduced to enable the Town Council to legally hold Virtual Meetings subject to guidelines. The recommended method of doing this is via Zoom to enable the public to participate. Further details will be available on our website.

Linda Larter MBE

Sevenoaks Town Council

£30,000 Community Resilience Fund

Grants available for voluntary organisations supporting others during COVID 19

Councillor Nicholas Busvine OBE, Mayor of Sevenoaks, stated at the Council Meeting held on 23rd March 2020: “We have all been shocked by the speed with which the Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted our local community. We are poised on the cusp of an intensification of this crisis. None of us knows quite how the situation will evolve – and that uncertainty makes matters more difficult for all of us. But, in dark days such as these, it is important to remember that ultimately things will get better and that life will go on. For now, we – as a Town Council – must buckle down and do our duty to the best of our ability. As your Mayor, I am proud to be part of such a wonderful team of councillors and council officials and employees. I know that we will not be intimidated by the challenges that face us and that we will continue to do our utmost to support our local community in these testing times. Thank you to you all.”

Sevenoaks Town Council will continue support our local community. For this reason, we have created a £30,000 Community Resilience Fund for those who are putting in place voluntary arrangements to help those in need.

For those wishing to apply for a grant from this Fund they should complete the Sevenoaks Town Council Grant Application Form on its website www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk. Traditionally, applications have been reviewed twice a year; however, bearing in mind the circumstances, applications will now be reviewed as swiftly as possible, as and when received.

It is also noted that applicants may not be able to comply with providing all the information normally required. Applicants are asked to complete as much information as possible and forward to Sevenoaks Town Council for consideration.

Here is a list of the awards made to date:

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND 2020 - GRANTS AWARDED				
Applicant	Amount applied for	Grant awarded	Total Grants awarded	Balance
				£30,000
1. Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£28,000
2. PSB Breastfeeding CIC	£1,805	£780	£2,780	£27,220
3. Citizens Advice North & West Kent	£611	£611	£3,391	£26,609
4. The Hygiene Bank	£3,000	£1,500	£4,891	£25,109
5. Care for Our Community	£1,000	£1,000	£5,891	£24,109

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM:

ANNUAL PRECEPT

£1,215,276

70%

of the budget comes from the domestic ratepayer's precept. The Town Council does not receive any portion of business rates nor government grants.

INCOME FROM SERVICES

£519,647

30%

of the budget comes from fees and services such as community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, and cafes.

RESERVES

£6,000

of the budget will be from Town Council's reserves, being the net effect of £26,000 to fund final construction phase of the new Bat & Ball Centre, offset by an increase of (£20,000) revenue reserves.

Wherever possible, the Council aims to provide community facilities at zero net cost to reduce the burden on local taxpayers.

However, exceptions enable community facilities to continue to be provided even if not commercially viable. This includes maintenance of public open spaces and play areas, which do not generate income as they are free for public use.

Capital investment plans are funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), grants and asset disposal and public works loan.

WHAT IT WILL COST PER BAND D HOUSEHOLD:

COMMUNITY SERVICES	ADMINISTRATION & FACILITATION	COMMUNITY INVESTMENT	LOCAL REPRESENTATION
Public Open Space - £378k (net £316k)	Council Administration - £453k (net £445k)	Public Works Loan - £72k	Planning - £37k
Community Events - £100k (net £27k)	Council Offices - £67k (net £50k)	Contingency - £36k	Democracy Costs - £23k
Cemetery - £127k (net £34k)	IT - £27k	Local Grants to voluntary organisations - £59k	TOTAL: £60K (3%)
Community Venues - £218k (net £22k)	Insurance - £20k	TOTAL: £167K (10%)	Total:
Markets - £73k (net £8k)	Professional Fees - £16k	Annual revenue budget: £1,740,923	
Youth Provision - £34k (net £28k)	TOTAL: £583K (34%) NET COST £558K	Annual cost per band D household: £125.41 per year (£2.41 per week)	
TOTAL: £930K (53%) NET COST £435K	An increase of £6.98 per year or 13p per week compared to 2019-20		

A precis of the budget is shown above. A full list is available to view on request or via the council's website. Please forward any queries or comments you have regarding the budget by email to Linda Larter, Town Clerk.

In response to the Covid-19 situation, Go-Coach has launched a brand new on-demand service



Sevenoaks bus services 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8, operated by Go-Coach, have been temporarily replaced by an on-demand service.

The three-month trial period is taking place because of falling passenger numbers and uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

The protection of bus services for key workers, such as NHS staff, and for those that have no choice other than bus, has been the key task of operators and Kent County Council's public transport team over the past few weeks.

KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Michael Payne said: "I'm grateful to Go Coach and my team at Kent Public

Transport who have been able to react to the current situation and put this trial in place which offers the best possible service they can with the limited bus driver resource currently available.

"As the coronavirus pandemic continues with a country-wide shut down, bus passenger numbers in Kent have dropped dramatically. Kent Public Transport have worked hard with the operators to ensure services continue as best as they are able, whilst at the same time supporting the sustainability of their business operations.

"With this bookable service, which we have helped fund, residents will continue to be able to make crucial journeys to the shops, work or for medication, at no extra cost beyond their regular bus fares at this time.

"Those booking the service will be able to travel to anywhere within Sevenoaks, without the need to change bus, and additional links to Pembury, Orpington, Queen Mary's and Princess Royal hospitals have been added to support those NHS workers who rely on public transport."

Branded Go2, the service will be bookable using a mobile app devel-

oped and powered by ViaVan, operating like a shared taxi, meaning that journeys will be made only when and where they are required. Users can download the app in the iOS and Google Play store.

The service will run between 6am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday and will usually pick passengers up within half an hour.

Austin Blackburn, owner of Go Coach said: "I'm very proud to be doing something positive to help our passengers during these very difficult times and whilst I appreciate it is not ideal, I hope it will help those that need to travel.



"Developing Go2 would not have been possible in such a short time without the commitment of our staff and our partners at KCC and ViaVan, which has provided the technology to make this work.

"I'm also pleased to say that passengers will be able to exercise social distancing on this new service."

Via the Go2 app, users will be able to track their bus's movements both for pick-up times and any changes to arrival estimates.

Chris Snyder, CEO of ViaVan said: "We are proud to partner with Go Coach to provide residents in Sevenoaks with a convenient, affordable, and efficient new form of public transport. And knowing that getting critical staff to work reliably and safely has never been more important, we are eager to adapt the Go2 network to support essential mobility for critical healthcare workers during these challenging times."

Current bus fares will continue to apply, and people with bus passes can continue to take advantage of the concessionary schemes.

The new service started on 14th April and further information can be found at www.go-coach.co.uk



Network Rail has painted the shelter at Platform 1 of Bat & Ball Station. These works and colours were at the request of STC to match the refurbishment work of the station building. Hopefully, you will all agree it looks a lot smarter.

Brightening up Sevenoaks

These dark times of Covid-19 will pass and summer days will come!

The Town Council will be arranging for the annual floral hanging baskets to go up in the High Street and London Road with bright golden colours.

As a community it would be wonderful to plant as many joyful flowers as possible to celebrate the summer.

The colour scheme for this year's planting in Sevenoaks is vibrant reds, orange and yellow with a splash of blue, with the continued theme of edible plants.

Get children involved!

We would like to invite children to grow a plant which could then be planted in the Vine Gardens in the summer:-

The best plants would be those that:



Attract butterflies – possible plants include marigolds and nasturtiums



Are bee friendly – such as sunflowers



Are edible – tomatoes, strawberries, rainbow chard or herbs



All pots should include a marker with child's name and plant name.

A day will be announced for the planting as soon as the current restrictions are lifted.

Please watch Sevenoaks Town Council website and social media for information.

Please contact Ann White on dtc@sevenoakstown.gov.uk for more details.



As announced in the Winter 2020 edition of *Town Crier*, Sevenoaks was honoured to be selected as one of 70 finalists in this year's Britain in Bloom competition.

Since the lockdown, the judges at the Royal Horticultural Society, who run the competition, have had to cancel the competition altogether.

However, the South and South-East In Bloom competition, which the town is also involved in (and has been for many years) is going ahead with a slightly different format.



The Town Centre, The Vine and Upper High Street Gardens are all being entered, but we are sending a portfolio of photographs with explanations to the judges instead. Depending on how restrictions are lifted, judges may still come to the town.



Bat & Ball Centre (formerly Community Centre)

Work continues apace at the Bat & Ball Centre with contractors continuing to be on site working under public health guidelines. They travel to the site independently not by public transport and have their temperature checked prior to accessing the site where social distancing is maintained. Progress has been good internally, with the electrical variation and the AV works proceeding. Externally the front entrance canopy has been completed.

The steelwork for the sliding wall is booked in, pending their labour being confirmed and the bin store steelwork being delivered and installed.

Currently the construction is on time.

Linda Larter MBE, Chief Executive / Town Clerk



Rear extension

Entrance canopy



**Looking for work,
or just need a change?**

WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

We can offer support with the following

- Creating a bespoke CV
- Supporting you with job applications
- Helping you to access training courses which will help you find employment
- Internet job search and help with uploading documents
- Confidence building
- Digital support
- Interview skills and techniques
- Careers advice
- Apprenticeships

At House in the Basement at The Stag, Sevenoaks every Wednesday 9.30 -11.30am

Contact Pauline on 07715 993293 or Dawn on 07850 506383
alternatively email us at westkentworks@wkha.org.uk

visit westkent.org  @west_kent  WestKentHA  @westkenthousingassociation

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
- MIDLINGS 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
- CONSULTEES (*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:

dtc@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

