

26th September 2023

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 3QG** on **Monday 2nd October 2023 at the conclusion of the Town Council Meeting which commences at 7.00 pm.** Town Councillors are reminded that they have a duty to state a Declaration of Interest prior to the appropriate agenda item and to consider the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.17 when reaching a decision.

Please note that the proceedings of this meeting will be streamed live to YouTube for the public to watch via the following link: <https://youtube.com/live/lieOh7pTrwM?feature=share> and may be recorded in line with regulations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. A copy of Sevenoaks Town Council's procedure for the recording of meetings is available online at sevenoakstown.gov.uk or by request.

Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should notify the Town Council by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Members of the public not wishing to be recorded should put this request to the Clerk at the earliest possible opportunity.



Town Clerk

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

Committee Members:

Cllr Tony Clayton (Chairman)	Cllr Peter Dixon
Cllr Nigel Wightman (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Victoria Granville
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Cllr Chloe Gustard
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Cllr Claire Shea, Mayor (ex officio)
Vacancy	Cllr David Skinner OBE

AGENDA

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To enable any questions previously submitted by members of the public on any matter to be drawn to the attention of the Town Council.

1	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> To receive and note apologies for absence.	Town Council Offices Bradbourne Vale Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3QG
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5.2	<p><u>TO 31ST JULY 2023</u></p> <p>To receive and consider the following reports for the month ended 31st July 2023:</p> <p>Appendix 1 - Income and Expenditure by cost centre</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Variance Analysis</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Working Capital</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Statement of Funds</p> <p>Appendix 5 - Capital Expenditure & Funds</p>	Reports to follow
5.2.1	<p><u>Suppliers' Accounts</u></p> <p>To authorise payment of the accounts listed in the schedules for the period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st to 31st July 2023 	
5.2.2	<p><u>List of Payments</u></p> <p>To note list of payments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sevenoaks Town Council Nat West Account: 1st to 31st July 2023 • Mayor's Charity Account: 1st to 31st July 2023 	
5.2.3	<p><u>Payroll Account</u></p> <p>To confirm payments from the account listed in the schedules for period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st to 31st July 2023 	
5.2.4	<p><u>Petty Cash Account</u></p> <p>To confirm payments from the account listed in the schedules for the period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st to 31st July 2023 	
5.2.5	<p><u>Hospitality and Gifts Register</u></p> <p>To receive and note Hospitality or Gifts received by Councillors or staff for the period 1st to 31st July 2023: None</p>	—
6	<p><u>CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2022/2023</u></p> <p>To note conclusion of audit, year ended 31st March 2023.</p>	Attached
7	<p><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OPEN SPACES & LEISURE COMMITTEE</u></p>	
7.1	<p><u>ST JOHN'S HILL PUBLIC TOILETS</u></p> <p>To consider recommendation regarding refurbishment of toilets.</p>	Attached
7.2	<p><u>GREATNESS CEMETERY CHAPEL</u></p> <p>To consider recommendation regarding installation of screens within the chapel.</p>	Attached
8	<p><u>FIRE ALARM SYSTEM – STC OFFICES</u></p> <p>To consider installation of new wireless fire alarm system at the Town Council offices.</p>	Attached

9	<u>WOODSIDE ROAD LAND – SOIL REMEDIATION</u> To consider soil remediation work at Woodside Road.	Attached
10	<u>SEVENOAKS TOWN TEAM</u> To receive and note the minutes of the meeting held on 2 nd August 2023.	Attached
11 11.1	<u>GRANT BUDGET UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED</u> To note grant budget position 2023/2024 and consider grant applications received.	Report attached. Grant applications in separate document
11.2	To note grant subsidies for room hire and budget position.	Attached
12	<u>CURRENT MATTERS</u> To receive and note list of Current Matters	Attached
13	<u>PRESS RELEASE:</u> To consider any agenda item, which would be considered appropriate for a press release.	–

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on 24th July 2023 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/8UIZPugmFE0?feature=share>

Meeting commenced: 7:38pm

Meeting Concluded: 8:16pm

Present:

Cllr Tony Clayton (Chair)	Apologies	Cllr Victoria Granville	Present
Cllr Nigel Wightman (Vice-Chair)	Present	Cllr Chloe Gustard	Apologies
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Present	Cllr Claire Shea, Mayor (ex-officio)	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present	Cllr David Skinner OBE	Present
Cllr Peter Dixon	Present		

Substitute	For
Cllr Nick Varley	Cllr Chloe Gustard

In attendance: Cllr Gareth Willis, Town Clerk and Senior Committee Clerk.

Representations received from Member of the Public: None

249 Apologies for Absence: As noted above.

250 Dispensations: There were no requests for dispensations.

251 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

252 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 12th June 2023
RESOLVED: to receive and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12th June 2023 as a true record.

253 Finance Reports to 31st May 2023

253.1 Management Accounts to 31st March 2023

The Committee received and noted the following accounts to 31st May 2023:

- Income & Expenditure by Cost Centre
- Variance Analysis
- Working Capital Summary
- Statement of Fund Balances
- Capital Expenditure & Funds

It was suggested that Cllr Wightman and Cllr Dixon meet with the new Responsible Finance Officer once she was in post (September 28th) to review the current investment of funds to seek an increase in returns.

Sevenoaks Town Council

253.2 The Committee received and noted the following:

Suppliers Accounts

- 1st to 31st May 2023, total gross invoices £66,033.14

List of Payments for Town Council's Nat West Account

- 1st to 31st May 2023, total £156,256.68

List of Payments for Mayor's Charity Account

- 1st to 31st May 2023, total -£80.00

Payroll Accounts

- 1st to 31st May 2023, total £91,299.13

Petty Cash Accounts

- 1st to 31st May 2023, total payments £609.98

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Management Accounts for the Year Ended 31st May 2023 be received and accepted; and
- 2) Cllr Wightman and Cllr Dixon meet with the new Responsible Finance Officer, once in post, to review the current investment of funds to seek an increase in returns.

253.3 Hospitality and Gifts Register

The Committee noted the following hospitality/gifts received during the period 1st to 31st May 2023:

Received by	Date	Item	From Whom	Value
Town Clerk	04.05.23	Flowers	Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN)	£15
Open Spaces Manager	04.05.23	Bottle of wine	Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN)	£10
Climate Project Officer	04.05.23	Bottle of wine	Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN)	£10

253.4 Internal Audit Fees 2023/24 and Internal Audit 2023/24 Work Programme

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Internal Audit Fees for 2023/24 be received and noted; and
- 2) the Internal Audit 2023/24 Work Programme be approved.

254 Recommendations from Open Spaces & Leisure Committee

The Committee considered recommendations received from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 10th July 2023.

254.1 Review of Allotment Rents

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 208.1, OSL 10.07.23 refers*] regarding allotment rents.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) allotment rents for Quakers Hall Allotments be increased by no more than 10% i.e., to 23p per square metre, slightly more than the rate of inflation, with effect from 1st October 2024; and
- 2) that allotment rents for Bradbourne Vale Allotments be increased by 0.2p to round up to 22p per square metre, with effect from 1st October 2024.

254.2 Sevenoaks Greensands Common Project

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 206.2, OSL 10.07.23 refers*] regarding the continuation of the Sevenoaks Greensands Common Project for a further four years.

RESOLVED: that it be agreed in principle that funding of £5,000 per annum for the Sevenoaks Greensands Common Project be considered as part of the budget setting process.

255 Recommendation from Youth Services Committee – Skateboard Park

The Committee considered a recommendation received from the Youth Services Committee [*Minute 185, YSC 28.06.23 refers*] regarding refurbishment options for the Skateboard Park at Greatness Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Option 1 set out in the report (replace all existing boards and resurface, retaining and strengthening existing frames) as recommended by the Youth Services Committee be approved; and
- 2) £40,000 of CIL funding be allocated to this project.

256 Minutes of Town Team Meeting held on 21st June 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Team held on 21st June 2023 be received and noted.

257 Sevenoaks Town Communications

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Communications Working Party revising the Town Council Social Media Policy; the proposed updating of the Communication Engagement Strategy; and noted the snapshot record of communications January to June 2023.

It was agreed that the scope of the Communications Working Party and its membership be extended: the Town Clerk to email all councillors to confirm who would like to participate.

Sevenoaks Town Council

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the revised Sevenoaks Council Social Media Policy be approved and adopted:
- 2) the Sevenoaks Town Council Communications Engagement Strategy be reviewed by the Communications Working Party and submitted to a future meeting; and
- 3) the snapshot record of Town Council communications be received and noted.

258 Current Matters & Priorities

The Committee considered the updates received.

It was noted that the Town Council Priorities would be reviewed at the Blue-Sky meeting in September.

RESOLVED that the updates on the Current Matters and Town Council Priorities be received and noted.

259 Press Release: None

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting.

Signed
Chairman

Dated

Ms R Shaw
Sevenoaks Town Council
Town Council Offices
Bradbourne
Vale Rd
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 3QG

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 19 September 2023

Dear Ms Shaw

Completion of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2023

We have completed our audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the audit, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2022*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

Action you are required to take

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the audit. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement:

- that the audit has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website but this period must be reasonable.

Minor scope for improvement in 2023/24

The Council did not provide minutes demonstrating that the 2021/22 audited AGAR were discussed as there were no recommendations or points to note from the report to take action on. In future, the Council should ensure that the minutes fully record the basis of any report, whether matters have been raised or not.

The bank reconciliation provided by the Council did not include cash book figures to reconcile to the bank statements. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.

The bank reconciliation provided by the Council included unpresented cheques that have been outstanding for more than 12 months. In future, the Council should consider writing off any cheques which have remained outstanding for a significant period of time.

In undertaking the review of the 2022/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return it came to our attention that in 2023 the Council has not met the requirements of the 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations to start the period of 30 working days for the public to inspect the accounts the day after the AGAR was published and to do so as soon as possible after it was approved. The Council should ensure that in 2023/24 they comply with the Regulations.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at <http://www.localaudits.co.uk/fees.html> will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Cameron Waddell

Partner

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialised.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Sevenoaks Town Council

www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

29/09/2022 02/12/2022 10/02/2023

Louise Taylor

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

LTaylor

Date

19/05/2023

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Sevenoaks Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

12 / 06 / 2023

and recorded as minute reference:

136.2

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clare E. Shea

Clerk

L. Carter

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Sevenoaks Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,770,526	1,677,639	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,239,898	1,295,675	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	765,823	817,269	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	956,618	987,827	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	71,602	71,602	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,070,388	1,159,335	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,677,639	1,571,819	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,710,009	1,665,479	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	10,546,348	10,691,724	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	1,289,486	1,243,702	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

12/6/23

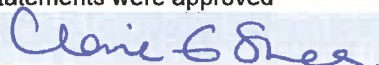
I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

12/6/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

136.2

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Sevenoaks Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Mazars LLP

Date

19 September 2023

Sevenoaks Town Council

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2023

Section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015

1. The audit of accounts for Sevenoaks Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 has been concluded.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of the Sevenoaks Town Council on application to:

The Town Clerk, Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices,
Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN133QG

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is available for review at Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN133QD, Monday to Fridays 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

2. Copies will be provided to any local government elector on payment of postage if required for each copy of the Annual Return.

Announcement made by: Linda Larter MBE, Town Clerk

Date of announcement: 20th September 2023

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**Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee - 2nd October 2023**

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

1) St John's Hill Public Toilets

Renovation of the St John's Hill Public Toilets has been under discussion for some time. On 18th September 2023 the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee recommended the following to the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

- i) To proceed with the refurbishment of St John's Hill Public Toilets to create two unisex accessible toilets.
- ii) To use budget within Earmarked Reserves
- iii) To use an additional £15,000 from CIL providing an overall budget of £40,000 including contingency.

RECOMMENDED: The Finance & General Purposes Committee Resolve to accept the three recommendations of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee.

2) Greatness Cemetery Chapel

On 18th September 2023 the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee noted Improvements made at Greatness Cemetery Chapel and considered the proposed installation of screens within the Chapel.

The Committee recommended the following to Finance & General Purposes Committee:

That £4,000 be allocated from CIL for the installation of two screens at Greatness Cemetery Chapel to allow the showing of still and video images during a service.

RECOMMENDED: The Finance & General Purposes Committee Resolve to accept the recommendation of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee.

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**Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee - 2nd October 2023**

Town Council Offices – Upgrade to Fire Alarm System

Following a site attendance earlier in 2023 and review of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors at the Town Council's various sites a need was identified to install a new wireless fire alarm system in the council office building.

The current fire alarm system installed in this building is a manual system only (call points) and has no automatic detection. At some point (previous Facility Manager) several stand-alone domestic smoke detectors had been installed into the building in various areas to provide automatic detection.

Under British Standards a mixed system is not recommended, and all devices should be linked to the main fire alarm panel and should sound at the same time, not individually. In order to achieve this, it is recommended a new wireless system is installed to replace the existing manual system and individual smoke detectors. The system would be same type that has been installed in the Building Hub building.

The cost to install the new wireless fire alarm system is £4,275.00 using our current fire protection contractor.

RECOMMENDED: To install the new wireless fire alarm system is £4,275.00 using our current fire protection contractor. Expenditure to be taken from Contingency Budget.

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Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee 2nd October 2023

Land at Woodside Road – Soil Remediation

Sevenoaks Town Council owns and maintains a small site on the corner of Woodside Road and Bradbourne Park Road known as Woodside Road Open Space. The small triangular shaped area contains many trees and is preserved as a natural site, albeit mown grass. The edges are left to enable wildflowers to flourish.

In 2017 Sevenoaks District Council used the piece of land to detonate some war time unexploded bombs. Unfortunately, this was not undertaken using a metal skip as is the normal process and this resulted in a serious contamination of the land.

Sevenoaks Town Council worked with the joint District Environmental Health Departments to ensure that the land was made safe, this was at considerable cost to the Town Council.

Following initial discussions with local residents Sevenoaks Town Councillors wanted to make the following changes to the land and agreed a public consultation process relating to this.

Proposal	Progress to Date
Removal of all the ash trees with dieback disease along with tidying of some of the other species.	Quotation requested for felling the 5 worst affected Ash trees. There are several more Ash trees showing very early stages of die back but at this stage it would be premature to remove them.
Creation of low-level bug hotels along the fence.	
Planting of wildlife friendly shrubs, plants, and trees	
Set aside an area of the grass as a wildflower meadow	
Installation of birdboxes	Bird boxes have been made and donated by a generous member of the public.
Installation of a new fence bordering the land	The front fence has been tidied and being assessed prior to considering its complete renewal.
Ask pupils of the nearby primary school to be involved in some of the tasks.	Environmental Health report required.
Public Consultation exercise re above.	A draft public consultation document has been prepared and agreed.

Officers have approached the Environmental Department and recommended Environmental consultant to discuss the necessary work to ensure there is no contamination likely to pose a risk to health if the site was dug over and disturbed in any way. Please see below their response and quote.

As previously discussed, with a potentially discrete but seriously hazardous material such as white phosphorous, to certify remediation of the impacted area it will be necessary to physically process/screen the Made Ground in question with the appropriate safety measures in place. Fortunately, there does not appear to be a large volume of soil to inspect/certify and as such we estimate that this should only take 3no. days and our availability for this is currently good.

Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee 2nd October 2023

Please note that we have assumed, as discussed on site that the Council will be able to Heras the area off, provide a portaloo and a skip (for any phosphorous to burn off in should any be found).

Introduction We understand that the site currently comprises an approximate triangular shaped plot of land comprising wooded area at the corner of Woodside Road and Bradbourne Park Road. We also understand that an old bunker was uncovered containing ~150 Phosphorous Sip Incendiary grenades near to this site on Woodside Road. and that MOD when they came in to dispose of them, dug a trench ~3m long and ~0.70m deep on site within which to detonate them. Since a skip was unavailable at the time.

The detonation resulted in phosphorous being scattered around the site following which the MOD conducted a clean-up exercise. A subsequent site inspection was carried out by the Councils EHO, which identified fragments of phosphorous remaining on site still. As a result, Veola conducted a further remedial exercise. Neither of these remedial exercises have been validated and as such understand that we are required to help certify that the remediation was successful. As discussed, in order to do this with a discrete rather than diffuse, and hazardous material such as white phosphorous (which is flammable in air) it will be necessary to physically inspect the disturbed material (Made Ground) in the affected area.

Geology From a brief review of the BGS Geological Mapping, the site is underlain by bedrock geology comprising the Folkestone Formation (Sandstone) and Sandgate Formation (Sandstone and Mudstone) with no overlying superficial deposits. There was 1 no. BGS Borehole located ~799m south-east of the site (ref: TQ55NW288) which recorded Topsoil up to 1.00m bgl, underlain by brown Clay up to ~3.00m bgl, underlain by sandstone and ironstone bands up to ~33.00m bgl, underlain by sandy clay up to ~111m bgl. Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd. – Registered in England 5330038 - VAT Registration No. 851 0732 49 - 2 - Groundwater was recorded within this borehole at ~80m bgl but the record was unclear if this is groundwater or drilling fluid.

Soil Remediation To affect a suitably robust remedial solution for the area in question. We have included within our quotation following scope of work:

- Purchase of a basic set of Statutory Service Plans on standard turnaround (required in relation to health and safety if not already available).
- Project Management and provision of RAMS (Inclusive of initial safety searches and Preliminary UXO Risk Assessment).
- Full time site supervision by a suitably qualified and experienced SEC Engineer to inspect the in-question soil (subject to findings and progress on site), record ground conditions encountered and deal with any fragments of white phosphorous encountered.
- Provision of a Mechanical Excavator with operator and buckets (subject to findings and progress on site) to facilitate soil remediation including for delivery, collection, rotating screening bucket and fuel.
- Supply of appropriate PPE/RPE for operatives including suits and face masks.
- Conduct of a Topographic Survey to record the remediation area; and
- Provision of a Validation Report to certify the remediation.

We have also provided some Rate Only items (if required): • Provision of a 6-yard Skip; • Provision of Welfare facilities, inclusive of a wash station; and • Provision of Heras fencing.

Access It should be noted that the vehicles supporting the investigation are required to be on or immediately adjacent to the site whilst carrying out the Site Investigation. Any local parking charges would be passed on at cost plus 10%. For the purposes of this quotation, we have assumed that the ground conditions on site will be stable to the depth of test pits required and that ground collapse will not occur during the conduct of the soakage tests. Should ground collapse occur preventing the completion of the tests then additional equipment will be required at additional cost including the following (which currently have not been included for); e.g., trench

Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee 2nd October 2023

boxes with lifting chains, coarse washed gravel/cobbles and viewing pipework. Should ground collapse occur we will discuss this with you as well as any additional work and costs required to achieve the testing prior to incurring them. We assume that any permissions (e.g., landowner, archaeological, UXO etc) and site access will be organised for us in order to complete the works required.

Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd. – Registered in England 5330038 - VAT Registration No. 851 0732 49 - 3 –

We have also assumed that a Skip, Welfare facilities and Hera fencing will be provided to us, if these are not then we can provide costs for this. Reinstatement Our quotation assumes that damage to ground surfacing (e.g., by the digger) would be acceptable (e.g., vehicle ruts and ground disturbance) and as such we have not included for any specialist ground protection or reinstatement works. We have not allowed for specialist reinstatement beyond the simple backfilling of holes with arisings. ‘Grave’ like scars may be left that will settle over time. We have not included to re-attend to site to top up any future settlement. Health & Safety We have assumed that the site will be secure and free from public access. It would also be prudent to conduct a site visit prior to mobilise to confirm access and health and safety requirements. We have also assumed that welfare facilities will be available for use on site. If you would like us to include for these items, please let us know and we’ll provide you with associated costs. Please note that under CDM Regulations it is the responsibility of the Client to provide accurate service location drawings. We will require sight of the service plans for the site prior to breaking ground and have included a Rate Only item for the procurement of service plans if they are not already available. In addition to reviewing service plans, we also take other precautions to help avoid buried services which include speaking with any site personnel, lifting local manhole covers and using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT Scanner) however we cannot accept liability for any damage caused to buried services.

1a	Statutory Service Plans in relation to H&S	£225.00
1b	Project Management, RAMS including UXO Risk Assessment	£385.00
2a	Provision of Skip	STC
2b	Provision of welfare facilities including wash station	STC
3	Heras fencing	STC
4a	Full time site supervision by a suitably qualified and experienced SEC engineer to manage, inspect / certify the soil remediation and deal with any white phosphorus fragments if encountered in the soil (subject to findings and progress on site) and record ground conditions within exploratory holes to BS5930 / Eurocode 7 and CIRIA 574.	£1,950.00
4b	Mobilisation to site inclusive of a Mechanical Excavator, buckets, rotating screening bucket and fuel	£525.00
4c	Provision of a Mechanical Excavator with operator ditching buckets and road plates (subject to findings and progress on site.	£2,925.00
4d	Provision of a mini-Rotating Screener Bucket to sieve and facilitate inspection of the potential impacted soil.	£850.00
5	Supply of PPE / RPE for operatives including suits and face masks	£300.00
6	Conduct of a Topographic Survey to record the remediation area	£750.00
7	Provision of a Validation Report to certify the remediation	£995.00
	Total (excl. VAT)	£8,905.00

RECOMMENDED: that the work as outlined be undertaken and the funds taken from Contingency Budget.

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Sevenoaks Town Team Executive Board Meeting

6:30pm: Wednesday 2nd August 2023

Held at

The Council Chamber, Sevenoaks Town Council, Bradbourne Vale Road TN13 3QG

Meeting started 6.30 p.m.

Meeting concluded: 8.05pm

Executive Board

Cllr Chloe Gustard	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Linda Larter MBE	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Mike Reid	Town Team Facilitator	Present
Cllr Graham Clack	Sevenoaks District Council	Apologies
Cllr Richard Streatfeild MBE	Kent County Council	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton Chair	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Apologies
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
South Eastern	Gemma Louro	Absent
Andrew Eyre	Stag	Present
Hannah Kay	Knole	Absent
Dawn Blee	Chamber of Commerce	Apologies
Steve Butler	Workman (Blighs)	Absent
Sevenoaks Chronicle	Vacant	Absent
Geraldine Tucker	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Maxine Morgan, V Chair	Specsavers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Present
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Glenn Ball	Local Architect	Present
Avril Hunter	Redlands RA	Present
Helen O'Sullivan	Eardley Road RA	Present
Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush RA	Present
Byron Brown	Bradbourne RA	Present
Mike Williams	Round Table	Absent
Police	PC Nick Hubbard	Present

In attendance: Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet, Cllr Varley, Sam Shoesmith

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Clayton, Cllr Granville, Cllr Gustard, Cllr Clack, Dawn Blee, John Levett.

In the absence of Cllr Clayton, Maxine Morgans took the chair.

1. Declarations of Interest

None expressed.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Town Team Board Meeting of 21st June 2023 were agreed subject to clarification of two points relating to policing in Sevenoaks:

- That a Google search for Sevenoaks police shows incorrect information. While the address is correct the image shows the old High Street police station. The Argyll Road police desk has been closed for over a year but still shows opening hours, and should show “closed”.

PC Hubbard said he would ask for these changes to be made.

- The manager of MS is very worried that the police will not respond to crime at the store unless there is a serious assault on a staff member. He also wants it to be known that he and other retail managers in the town are very concerned about the level of high value thefts which are now taking place.

The minutes of 21st June have been amended.

3. New Board Member request for representation

Cllr Marilyn Canet had proposed that Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum (SDSAF) is invited to become a **voting** member of the Town Team Board on the premise that someone able to speak on behalf of the 1200 members, some 250 of whom live in Sevenoaks, would make a useful contribution to the discussions and actions on behalf of the town. This motion would require Town Team to change its Terms of Reference which are attached.

It was reported that a number of organisations would like to be considered for membership of the Board and that this is a healthy sign. A full list would be prepared for the AGM which takes place in October and meanwhile it was agreed that SDSAF should be admitted in this role as of now.

4. 20 MPH Speed Limit

Cllr Streatfeild reported on continuing slow progress of the proposal. The working party is to report at the end of August and the September JTB meeting will then consider the revised scheme.

5. Sevenoaks Business Show

After the show exhibitors were asked to complete a survey seeking their views on various aspects. 50% of the exhibitors responded and a summary of their responses is attached. The detailed response sheets run to several pages and can be provided if requested. However, the main findings are:

- As a building, the Centre is ideal.
- The Centre's location is good for parking reasons, but poor for attracting the public. There are calls for moving to the Stag, which was used prior to the Centre being re-developed, although there are some parking problems there.
- The catering is highly regarded.
- Lack of visiting public
- The level of promotion was inadequate.

Cllr Eyre did not agree that the level of marketing was inadequate. Linda Larter expressed the opinion that having large numbers of general public would not necessarily be productive, and that most of the exhibitors were pleased that the event gave opportunity for exhibitors to network business to business, most reporting that they do make new business as a result. As the show sells out every time, and makes a small profit, she feels that it should continue in much the same way with increased Town Team members promotion. However, West Kent Business is planning a substantial business show for Spring 2024 which will probably take place in Tunbridge Wells, and that might influence whether TT runs its own event next year.

6. Wayfinding project

This project has moved to the design stage. Cllr Granville has invited local artists to submit design ideas for the totem signs, and has given them a deadline of 16th August. Linda Larter circulated one of the most suitable designs so far submitted.

The working party is comprised of:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| • KCC | Cllr Streatfeild |
| • SDC | Cllr Clack / Cllr Hogarth - tbc |
| • STC | Cllr Granville |
| • Town Team | Cllr Clayton |
| • Admin | Linda Larter & Mike Reid |

7. Sevenoaks Business Awards

This black tie/business suit event will take place on Friday 20th October at the Bat & Ball Centre. Manaks Solicitors have kindly offered to be main sponsor once again. Category Sponsors are: Warners, Specsavers, Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce, Hoath House, Knocker & Foskett and STC.

Key dates (updated since preparation of the agenda for this meeting):

14th August – Launch the event and invite public to nominate businesses

Three weeks later

4th September - Nominations close

5th September – Invite businesses to enter

Ten days later

15th September – Entries Close

18th September – Public voting opens

Two weeks later

2nd October – Public voting closes

4th October – Judging date and trophies ordered

Sixteen days later

20th October – Awards Evening

The judges:

2022 Judges	Capacity	2023 Judges	Capacity
Andrew Eyre	TT Chair	Cllr Tony Clayton	TT Chair
Austin Blackburn	TT Member & Sponsor	TT Member	TT – Large Business
Avril Hunter	TT – SDC Rep & Sponsor	Cllr Graham Clack	TT – SDC Rep
Cllr Richard Streatfield	TT – KCC Rep & Sponsor	Cllr Richard Streatfield	TT – KCC Rep & Sponsor
Maxine Morgans	TT – Retail Rep & Sponsor	Maxine Morgans	TT – Retail Rep & Sponsor
Dawn Blee	TT – Chamber of Commerce	Dawn Blee	TT – Chamber of Commerce & Sponsor
Elizabeth Dolding	TT – Business Rep & Sponsor	Elizabeth Dolding	TT – Business Rep & Sponsor
Linda Larter	TT – STC Rep	Linda Larter	TT – STC Rep & Sponsor



The speaker is Michael Gietzen, CEO of Identity www.identityglobal.com which brought us the London New Year Fireworks, much of the Coronation and a whole host of other major national and international events.

8. Shop, café, restaurant, and pub occupancy survey

Making use of the lists of occupiers, work has been undertaken to source the email addresses of the occupiers. It was found that about 30% of businesses do not publish their email address being a mix of national retailers and some independent businesses.

The lists have been created on a street name basis and have greatly expanded the data held previously.

Members expressed the view that to prevent having to deal with responding to large numbers of emails from the public some businesses deliberately do not publish an email address.

9. South and South East in Bloom



Judging took place on June 30th with the outcome expected in September.

10. Meeting with Sevenoaks District Council

A meeting to introduce the new SDC Town Centre Project Officer (covering all SDC towns) was held on 18th July to discuss wide ranging matters which involve both Councils. The main subjects covered were:

A request from Linda for an update and clarity on the adopted SDC Town Centre Strategy for Sevenoaks and SDC thinking on how to progress the major schemes. The response was that there were no plans to currently pursue the recommendations. Cllr Streatfeild observed that this important subject is high on the list for the new SDC administration to review, and that will happen when the new SDC Council is better established.

STC has been allocated £15,000 from the Levelling Up fund for capital expenditure over the period 2022 – 2025. £3,735 of this has been agreed for painting the blue lamp posts and Belisha beacons in St Johns Hill and Dartford Road. Depending on quotations most of the balance will be spent on installing a tree lighting scheme at The Vine. Work is to progress on a co-operative scheme to market the businesses hubs in Sevenoaks and Swanley.

There is also some revenue money available for events and this will be considered on a case by case basis.

Annette Theobald, the STC Town Centre Project Officer will be working jointly with Town Team as and when relevant projects arise.

11. Autumn Vegan Market

This takes place on Saturday 23rd September on the Vine.

12. Christmas Lights Switch On – Friday 24th November 2023

Purelake, the developers of the former Tesco site have moved their plans forward and subject to gaining planning consent for some minor amendments to the scheme, will be moving the build phase of the development from the New Year to this Autumn which means that the site will not be able to accommodate the stage this year.

There was an inconclusive discussion about alternative locations for the stage, and STC/TT will continue to work on this.

13. Town Team website

It is recognised that the present site is aged, cumbersome and rarely visited by the public. Investigations into a more dynamic destination marketing site have revealed that there are two major software providers, and each has been considered.

The main features that are fundamental to any town's marketing are an "Events" and "Business Directory" pages, plus the ability to search statistics on user numbers and sources etc.

The companies identified are www.destinationcore.com and www.simpleviewinc.com and Board members had been requested to take a look at their sites prior to the meeting.

The costs of a new site are dependent on which modules are incorporated. Example sites are:

Destination Core

- Orpington 1st - <https://www.orpington1st.co.uk/>
- Trafford Palazzo - <https://traffordpalazzo.co.uk/>
- Taste Lincolnshire - <https://tastelincs.co.uk/>

Simpleview sites are generally more tourism orientated but Stoke fits well with Town Team's requirements.

- Stoke - www.stokeontrentcitycentre.co.uk
- English Riviera - [English Riviera Tourism BID](http://EnglishRivieraTourism.co.uk)
- Cambridge - [Meet Cambridge](http://MeetCambridge.co.uk)

For commercial confidentiality prices are not shown against these products. Depending on what packages are bought then the cost is likely to fall within the region of £15,000 with annual costs for maintenance and support in the region of £5000. Some of the maintenance cost could be recovered through the sale of advertising.

There was unopposed agreement that the present TT website is very inadequate. Some members were concerned about the costs of creating a new site and its maintenance. One avenue which would deal with this would be if Sevenoaks created a Business Improvement District (BID), the revenue for which would easily cover the costs, plus many other

enhancements to the town. STC is to consider whether promoting a BID, which would have to be approved through a voting process involving the business rate payers in the town.

It was agreed that investigation into the value of such sites to a town would be researched, but overall it was considered a high priority to upgrade.

14. Martyn's Law

As a public event organiser Byron Brown is worried about how this law would affect The Bradbourne Lakes events over which the organisers have no control over the numbers of people attending. This would be the case for many organisers across the UK, including STC/TT.

However, it was pointed out that the legal processes for creating Martyn's Law have a very long way to go and that it is almost inevitable that the requirements would be watered down. All parties will keep a watching brief.

15. Reports from Town Team Members

Go Coach

Passenger numbers on some routes have risen dramatically in recent weeks with no obvious explanation – highest by 200%.

New routes and timetables started on 31.7.23 with enhancements to routes 1 and 6. The company is now operating a flat fare of £3 per journey. During August 2023 concessionary passes can be used before 9.30 am.

Hollybush RA

A Summer Tea and children's events are planned. A donated tree on the Vine has been vandalised. Anti-social behaviour on the Vine is being combatted with the police using Dispersal Orders and the police reporting that, with the power to take youngsters home or arrest, that most people respond well to them. The police then target the ringleaders/organisers to reduce chances of further problems. There are extra patrols in "hot-spot" areas. The police are liaising with schools and transport police further asking parents to control their children.

KCC

The Council has set aside £200m to deal with road maintenance with potholes being the worst problems. There are efforts being made to stop Deliveroo and other food delivery bike/motorbike drivers from using footpaths and other pedestrian ways.

Sevenoaks Society

Delighted that the Croudace planning appeal had been lost and at the teamwork shown by all interested parties in creating opposition to the scheme.

Roberta Ware

Francis Jones has suffered another burglary, which makes this the fifth incident in five years. Apart from the losses and damage to the business, insurance costs and requirements increase each time. The MP had visited last week.

Roberta is keen that ALL crimes, however small are reported to the police. She would like to see extended camera coverage around the town. While still not happy with the police in general she is very grateful for all that PC Hubbard does for her and the town.

Roberta is keen to find out the rent paid by the police to SDC for a desk at Argyle Road which has been closed for over a year.

Bradbourne Lakes RA

Pleased about the outcome of the Croudace planning appeal. Concerns expressed by many residents about the LCWIP proposals, as the planned cycle routes need more thought to mitigate possible problems in the area.

Kent Police

Repeat offenders are being targeted. Some are issued with Criminal Protection Orders preventing them from returning to the town. Funding is being sought to extend the CCTV camera operating hours.

Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

The proposed closure of railway ticket offices is worrying members. An inconclusive discussion ensued on whether it was better to have ticket office staff selling tickets or (if they are retained) to be on the platform assisting people.

Stag Theatre

The summer blockbusters are doing extremely well. Once a week a subtitled film is shown, but the number of ticket sales for these performances is very low.

Cllr Varley

Repeated that it was good to have seen so many local groups working together to defeat Croudace. He volunteered his expertise to help with reviewing the proposed website choices and applications. He also advised the Board that STC has a working party considering all aspects of STC's communications.

There is a Literary Festival taking place in September when both Clive Myrie and Mike Brearley will be attending.

Linda Larter

Linda observed that the then emerging Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan had been used as “material consideration” in the Croudace appeal and that now it is approved, it will create a strong base for protecting the town against other unwanted development.

As a result of a recent election the STC is now comprised of 16 Lib Dems. The new Council will be holding a “Blue Skies” exercise in September to decide on plans and policies etc. STC is reviewing its Sports Strategy. The Mayors Garden Party fundraiser will be on 10th September at the Bat & Ball Centre. STC is progressing with plans to retrofit its buildings with carbon reduction initiatives.

John Levett had apologised and sent a message:

SEVENOAKS SUMMER FESTIVAL. In September 2023, The Festival Committee will decide on whether to hold a Sevenoaks Summer Festival in 2024

THE ANCHOR PUB The Anchor Pub would like to thank the Town Team for the support given to the THE ANCHOR Summer Festival

Date of the Next and Future Meetings

Wednesday 11th October 2023 – AGM

Wednesday 6th December 2023

Wednesday 21st February 2024

Wednesday 10th April 2024

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Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee – 2nd October 2023

Grant Applications

1. Budget – Grants to Local Voluntary Organisation 2023/24

Each year the Town Council agrees a budget for grants to local voluntary or charitable organisations which provide services to residents within the Parish of Sevenoaks Town.

Local community groups are invited to submit applications in August & January of each financial year, for consideration by this Committee and the Youth Services Committee (as appropriate).

The budget for 2023/24, and the balance to date is as follows:

Budget	2023/24	Sept 2023
	Budget	Balance
	£	£
Grant Subsidies Bat & Ball Station	0	-161
Grant Subsidies Sevenoaks Community Centre	5,493	3,276
Grant Subsidies Chamber *	340	96
Local Organisations F & GP & Youth Support Services <i>Of which Play Days £2,000 (Theatre Shows)</i>	12,000	9,000
Twinning Support	1,000	1,000
Youth Outreach *	3,887	627
Stag	27,000	0
Community Rail Partnership	3,000	0
Total	52,720	13,838

**Following grants awarded at Youth Services Committee on 6.09.23*

2. Youth Services Committee Grant Awards

The Youth Services Committee has delegated authority to:

- 1) Approve grants within the Youth Outreach Budget; and
- 2) Recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee decision on grants exceeding the above budget.

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At its meeting held on 6th September the Youth Services Committee [*Minute 309, 06.09.23 refers*] **RESOLVED:** That grant requests be awarded under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 Sections 1-8 refers) as follows:

Grant Ref No	Organisation Name & Charity Reg	Purpose of award	Grant Application	Grant approved
76	Sevenoaks District Scout Council Charity Reg: 303435	Venue costs to host an event for each of Beavers, Cubs & Scouts groups in Sevenoaks District at Bat & Ball Centre	£1,725	£1,335
76	Sevenoaks District Scout Council Charity Reg: 303435	Purchase of litter pickers and hoops to loan out to groups across the Sevenoaks District.	£500	£250
6	Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival, Young Musician of the Year Charity Reg: 1031815	Towards cost of hire of a local school, having a piano of competition standard.	£600	£600
Total awarded				£2,185

3. Applications for Consideration

This Committee is requested to consider the following Grant Applications received:

Grant Ref No	Organisation Name & Charity Reg No If Applicable	Purpose of award	Previous grant history	Grants 2022/23	Current Grant Application
10	Stag Community Arts Centre	A “Green Christmas Schools Tour” to promote and encourage a more environmentally friendly Christmas	£500 – 2019 Annual operating grant from STC Survival grant in 2020 - £125k £5,000 – 2021 Stag Town Takeover	None	£5,000
45	Hi Kent	Funding for free monthly drop-in support clinics for NHS hearing aids users at Hollybush Day Centre	£1,000 – 2016 £500 – 2017 £1,000 – 2019 £1,000 – 2021 £1,000 -2022	£1,000	£1,000

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Grant Ref No	Organisation Name & Charity Reg No If Applicable	Purpose of award	Previous grant history	Grants 2022/23	Current Grant Application
68	Baby Umbrella	6 months funding to serve 65 1:1 support appointments for Sevenoaks Town residents	£500 – Sep 21 £500 - March 22 £1,380 – Sep 22	n/a	£2,600
78	Bob Ogley	Printing costs of book on the story of Knole Park	None – new applicant	n/a	£8,000
77	Kent Wildlife Trust	Purchase of plants and willow structures for multi-function sensory garden	None – new applicant	n/a	£2,000
11	Sevenoaks Counselling	To supplement reserves to subsidise clients who are unable to afford recommended contribution for counselling services	Funding since 2005, between £400 & £2,000, including £1,500 from 2019 to 2021	£1,500	£2,000
Total grant funding requested					£20,600

The Grant Application Guidance notes for applicants are attached for information.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to consider the grant applications detailed above.

GRANTS TO LOCAL VOLUNTARY OR CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Please read these notes carefully when completing the form. It will help to ensure that all the necessary information has been supplied.

ABOUT THE GRANT SCHEME

The Town Council wishes to assist approved Local Voluntary or Charitable Bodies which provide services to residents within the Parish of Sevenoaks Town by making them grants or loans. Applications must be supported by financial statements and/or balance sheets over the previous two years, or business plan as appropriate.

The Council has various powers under which it can fund organisations by way of a grant. The Council can also make grants at its discretion to various organisations provided that **the grant will be spent for the benefit of Sevenoaks Town area or its residents**. Please refer to the maps attached to the application form. **The amount of the grant must be in proportion to that benefit.**

Aims of the Grant Scheme

- To encourage and support the activities of voluntary organisations within Sevenoaks Town
- To promote new community initiatives where real additional benefits are offered to the community

The Grant Scheme is to support projects at local level so applications benefiting the town area will be given priority.

Terms and Conditions of Grant Awards:

Our terms and conditions for grant awards are that:

- grant monies are used for the specific purpose approved only
- grant recipients submit a report to us by the second Friday in January 2024 detailing funds spent on residents of Sevenoaks Town Wards of Wildernessee, Town, Northern, St John's, Eastern and Kippington
- the Town Council's logo is used to advertise and promote our support
- a representative attend next year's Annual Town Meeting, scheduled for 7pm on 11th March 2024 at Bat & Ball Centre, Sevenoaks. Grant recipients will be asked to provide a stand to demonstrate to the general public how the grant funds have been spent and the benefits accrued.

Where to get further information and an application pack

Application Forms and Guidance Notes are available on our website

www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/Grant

Or on request from: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

PART 1

Who can apply?

Any organisation which:

- Provides services that will directly benefit the area and residents of Sevenoaks Town Wards: Town, Kippington, St Johns, Eastern, Wilderness and Northern.
- Is independently established for charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic purposes.
- Has a constitution or written document setting out its aims and objectives
- Has a bank or building society account in its own name
- Can provide audited or, for smaller organisations, signed accounts for the last two financial years
- If starting up, has a feasible project or business plan

We will not grant aid

- National organisations, or local bodies with access to funds from national 'umbrella' or 'parent' bodies unless funds are not available from their national bodies, or funds available are inadequate
- Private concerns operated as a business
- Charitable trusts seeking capital to add to their investments
- "Upward funders", i.e. local groups whose total fund raising is sent to their Central HQ for redistribution
- Church Councils or Faith Groups although applications from voluntary groups linked to a church or religious body will be considered
- Individuals seeking sponsorship. [There is a separate Youth Services grant scheme which may be able to assist]
- Parent teacher organisations

Environmental Impact

The Town Council is committed to climate change initiatives, seeking to use practical methods to reduce its carbon footprint within its general operation, including changes to its buildings and assets. The Council would like to hear how your organisation's activities seek to make a positive impact on the environment, and whether you adopt environmental policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or increasing biodiversity.

Membership/Beneficiaries

Please give the number of people who live in the Sevenoaks Town area only (exclude those living in the surrounding villages e.g., Riverhead, Seal, Otford, Kemsing etc.) Please refer to the maps within the application forms.

PART 2

The Grant Scheme could support the following types of expenditure:

- Equipment
- Training
- Hire of premises
- Information or publicity
- Other project costs
- Start-up or development costs for new community groups

Please note that:

- Grants are not made retrospectively.
- The Town Council would not normally support funding the core costs of any organisation.
- Any grant that is not used for the purpose for which it has been made must be repaid

PART 3

If your group benefits people from the surrounding area, please apply to the appropriate Parish Council for assistance and give details on the application form.

The application form asks - Does your Project:

- Cover a geographical area beyond the parish of Sevenoaks Town Council?
- If the answer on the application form is yes, have you also contacted the respective parish councils for grant funding?
- Please provide details of which other parish councils you have contacted.

PART 4

The Council will not normally fund organisations who have reserves in excess of twelve months operating costs.

The Council requires recipients of grants to submit a brief report within six months confirming how the money has been spent and explaining what difference the grant made. Photographs of the project would also be appreciated.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Timetable

Applications will normally be considered only in September and February/March.

- Please advise which tax year the money is to be used by you in.
- The deadline for applications is the **second Friday in August**, for the September meeting and the **second Friday in January**, for the February/March meeting.
NB Late applications received after these dates will be reviewed at the following grants meeting.

All applications must be signed: electronic signature is acceptable.

Applications may be submitted by email to: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

or by post to:

Sevenoaks Town Council
Council Offices
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks TN13 3QG

If you are not sure whether you meet the criteria, please phone Alison Futtit on 01732 459953 or via email to council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

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Grant Subsidies – Room Hire

Sevenoaks Town Council offers grants subsidies on room hire at its venues to local organisations and for activities benefiting the local community.

The free room hires are considered on an individual basis on request.

The following groups are approved to receive free room hire:

- Friends of Rheinbach
- Friends of Pontoise
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Sevenoaks Greensands Commons
- Tea Dances at Bat & Ball Centre
- Dorothy Parrott Trust
- Sevenoaks Samaritans
- KALC
- Darenth Valley Community Rail Partnership

The annual budget and balance to date for Grant Subsidies 2023/24 is:

Budget	2023/24	Balance at Sept 2023
Grant Subsidies Bat & Ball Station	0	-161
Grant Subsidies Sevenoaks Community Centre	5,493	1,310
Grant Subsidies Chamber *	340	-25

RECOMMENDATIONS to:

- 1) Review and agree which organisations can continue to receive a grant subsidy; and
- 2) Within budget setting process, to review allowances.

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Sevenoaks Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee – 2nd October 2023

Current Matters**NB: Updates shown in red**

Item	Minute No		Status	Latest update
1	<i>Update from Town Clerk 24.07.23</i>	Street Lighting		<p>All private roads have now agreed to contribute towards their streetlights. There has been some delay with the procurement of lighting for Woodside Road due to supply problems, but delivery is now due by 11th August.</p> <p>All seven lights were replaced on 25 August and baffles fitted to the one outside No.16.</p>
2	<p>44 F&GP 24.04.23</p> <p><i>Update from Town Clerk 24.07.23</i></p> <p>244 Town Council 24.07.23</p>	<p>Market Tenders</p> <p>Wednesday Market</p>	Ongoing	<p>Wednesday & Saturday Markets, Sevenoaks</p> <p>It was noted that the Town Council had been successful in its tenders to Sevenoaks District Council to operate the Wednesday and Saturday Markets in Sevenoaks Town.</p> <p>Sevenoaks Town Council has previously requested that the Wednesday Market be relocated to the High Street. Decision to be reviewed at STC Council meeting 24.07.23</p> <p>The Town Council had been considering the location of the Wednesday market but had been advised by Sevenoaks District Council today that there was no possibility of relocating to the High Street. It was agreed therefore that opportunities to expand the market in its current location at Buckhurst Lane be pursued. At its Blue-Sky meeting in September the Town Council would be reviewing the town centre, including detailed consideration of the future of the markets, potentially within a Town Centre Masterplan.</p>
3	260.3 - F&GP 13.09.21	Pension Deficit	Ongoing	Responsible Financial Officer, Chairman, and Vice-Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee to meet Kent County Council to discuss deficit.
4	45 F&GP 24.04.23	Sencio Funding Agreement	Ongoing	<p>The Committee noted the terms of the Sencio Funding Agreement under which the Town Council was entitled to a partial refund of grant funds (on a sliding scale) due to the breach of conditions following the closure of Sencio due to insolvency. The Town Council had followed its fiduciary duty to residents and registered its financial interest with the insolvency agents, Evelyn Partners.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted</p>

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Item	Minute No		Status	Latest update
5	46 F&GP 24.04.23	Provision of Electric vehicle Charging Bollards at Raleys Car Park	<i>Ongoing</i>	<p>RESOLVED: That the proposal to work with Ubitricity to install 12 EV charging bollards at Raleys Car Park be approved, on the basis set out above.</p> <p>Project progressing slowly due to electric connection complications.</p>
6	127 F&GP 12.06.23	Participatory Budgeting	<i>Ongoing</i>	<p>RESOLVED: That a working group comprising Cllr Clayton, Cllr Ancrum, Cllr Dr Canet and the Town Clerk be established to look at ideas and the process for a <i>[Participatory Budgeting]</i> project, and report back to a future committee meeting.</p>
7	128 F&GP 12.06.23	Current Matters & Priorities	<i>Ongoing</i>	<p>To be reviewed at Blue Skies Meeting 09.09.2023</p> <p>Report to be provided to Community Infrastructure Committee on 30.10.23</p>
8	253.1	Investment of Funds	<i>Ongoing</i>	<p>Cllr Wightman and Cllr Dixon meet with the new Responsible Finance Officer, once in post, to review the current investment of funds to seek an increase in returns.</p>
9	257 F&GP 24.07.23	Town Council Communications	<i>Ongoing</i>	<p>It was agreed that the scope of the Communications Working Party and its membership be extended: the Town Clerk to email all councillors to confirm who would like to participate.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:the Sevenoaks Town Council Communications Engagement Strategy be reviewed by the Communications Working Party and submitted to a future meeting</p> <p>Meeting of Working Party to be held Friday 29th September at 3pm.</p>