

**Notes of the Sevenoaks Town Team Executive Virtual Board Meeting  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**Meeting started 6.30 p.m.**

**Meeting concluded: 8.16 p.m.**

**Executive Board Attendance:**

Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville Baxter	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Linda Larter, Town Clerk	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Avril Hunter	Sevenoaks District Council	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Present
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
Elliott Waters	Southeastern	Apologies
Jane Parish	Sencio	Absent
Hannah Kay	Knole, National Trust	Absent
Andrew Eyre, Chairman	Stag	Present
Julie Phillips	Chamber of Commerce	Present
	Blighs Meadow	Absent
	Sevenoaks Chronicle	Absent
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Maxine Morgan Vice Chairman	Specsavers	Absent
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Present
Glenn Ball	Architect	Absent
Cllr Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush Residents Association	Present
Byron Brown	Bradbourne Residents Association	Present
	Round Table	Absent
	Police	Absent

**In attendance:** Cllr Richard Parry, Cllr Roddy Hogarth, Emily Haswell and Helen O’Sullivan, Amanda Turnbull, Cllr Dr Canet, Mike Reid

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** as indicated above.
- 2. Declaration of Interest:** none received.
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

Agreed as a true record.

Andrew Eyre then introduced Mike Reid, the new Town Team Facilitator who in turn gave a potted history of his experience in the field.

The Agenda items were then changed in order as below:

**9. M & S Site Art Project**

Cllr Roddy Hogarth introduced the subject and expressed his delight that there had been huge interest from designers with dozens of entries (38) having been received. In order to narrow down the entries he had worked with two experts in the field of public art, Matthew Wood and Pam Williams who considered design and sustainability etc. In this way the finalisats had been narrowed to two. That said, there were many entries

which had great merit and Cllr Hogarth hopes that some might be used for different applications elsewhere.

Linda Larter then put imagery of the two finalist entries on screen and comments were invited. There was support and criticism for both entries and discussion then revolved around how the winner would be chosen. The final arbiter will be Cllr Hogarth. To help him reach a decision he would be inviting “public reaction” through publicising the finalist entries. This process had stated in the most recent edition of “In Shape” and the entries will go live on the SDC website from 12<sup>th</sup> April - May 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

#### **4. Post Lockdown – Sevenoaks being ready and encouraging use of local businesses.**

Emily Haswell reported that there are many businesses which have not applied for Covid related grants. In summary the grant situation features on the SDC website with the following advice

##### ***Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for businesses***

*Financial support for businesses affected by Coronavirus restrictions.*

*Financial support is currently available for Sevenoaks District businesses impacted by Coronavirus restrictions during one or all of the following periods:*

- *5 November to 1 December 2020 – second national lockdown*
- *2 December 2020 to 4 January 2021 – Tier 3/Tier 4 restrictions*
- *5 January 2021 to 15 February 2021 – third national lockdown - period 1*
- *16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021 – third national lockdown – period 2*

*In addition to this financial support, the Government has announced one-off grants for businesses ordered to close during the third national lockdown (Closed Business Lockdown Payment).*

*We do not yet have any detail regarding the Restart Grants (available from 1 April 2021) announced in the Budget on 3 March 2021. As soon as guidance is published, information will be provided on the website.*

*The closing dates for grant applications is as follows:*

- *5 November to 1 December 2020 – 31 March 2021*
- *2 December 2020 to 4 January 2021 – 31 March 2021*
- *5 January 2021 to 15 February 2021 – 31 March 2021*
- *16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021 – 31 May 2021*
- *Closed Business Lockdown Payment – 31 March 2021*

*We are prioritising support payments and one-off grants for periods of national lockdown since these seek to offer more immediate support to affected businesses. This*

*means that you may receive payment for the November and January-March lockdowns before you receive support payments for Tier3/Tier 4 restrictions.*

*If you have applied for a support payment under the Tier 3/Tier 4 restrictions and received an acknowledgement, there is no need to submit a further application, email or call to enquire about payment. We are in the process of assessing these claims and payment will be made as soon as possible.*

There will also be re-start grants available with details awaited from Government. They will be in two categories:

Phase 1 – non-essential retail etc

Phase 2 – hospitality

Linda Larter reported that:

- SDC is putting up new Covid signage around the town.
- Organisation for the Pop Up Market is underway. The installation and furniture is on order. PR is starting and leaflets have been distributed by Mike Reid to businesses in the town which might well be interested in taking a pitch. Mike reported that the initiative has been welcomed by business owners and Linda read an appreciative “thank you” email from The Anchor PH. Life on High has offered to sponsor the re-cycling bin.

Emily Haswell reported that Bank Street is to be closed for six months to allow for two catering businesses to use the area for tables & chairs. The meeting questioned the level of the licence fee for this and it is £100. Although the tables and chairs are to be provided by the two businesses it was observed that in practice people generally might use them, even when buying refreshments from another take-away.

Emily further reported that there is a £100K Recovery Grant available to Councils, though details are not yet available. It seems that Councils will need to spend the money first and then claim back, but it is likely the rules could be open to interpretation and so nothing should be spent in hope, but to wait for the detail.

## **5 The Business Hub**

Linda Larter reported that the Business Hub is progressing well albeit that there are going to be delays and additional costs in upgrading the electrical supply and telecoms. Terms & Conditions of hire are now drafted. The first viewings are beginning to be organised.

Julie Phillips reported that the Chamber is planning to gradually move to the Hub from 1<sup>st</sup> May and be operational by 1<sup>st</sup> June. The Chamber has published this news in its Road Map. The Chamber is taking on a Kick Start employee so there will soon be three people staffing the office. They have a number of plans for the Hub with the most prominent being to use it for sector specific meetings and events. Julie advised that her

successor has now been appointed but she was not in a position to name them just yet, though she said everyone would be very pleased with the choice.

## **7 Proposal for Business Awards – September 2021 and Business Show March 2022**

Linda Larter explained that these dates have become impractical due to Covid and proposed that the dates should be reversed with The Business Show to take place in September 2021 and the Awards in March 2022. Julie Phillips observed that there is a Business Show taking place in Swanley during November. There was general support for the proposed switch and Linda Larter and Mike Reid are to progress accordingly.

## **8 Vegan Market opportunity**

Mike Reid reported that STC had been approached by a company called Vegan Markets UK to consider holding a market or series of markets in Sevenoaks. This is a UK operation with about 20-25 towns in which they operate with usually about 50 -70 stalls. Linda Larter and Mike Reid are meeting with their principal on 22<sup>nd</sup> April to consider sites and options.

## **10 Reports from Partnership Members**

### Warners

Elizabeth Dolding reported that Warners had just had their year end and that she was pleasantly surprised that the year had gone well for them. There are presently just seven staff working in their office and she is looking forward to when more will return.

### ClIr Purves

There is now a new bench installed by the Hollybush Residents Association near Serpentine Road.

### SDC – Dawn Blee

SDC is launching a new campaign to revitalise “The High Street”. It is focussed on: SHOP, EAT, DRINK, BREATHE, LOCAL. A new video is being created by Pillory Barn with all traders being given the opportunity to showcase themselves. The concept is to demonstrate to the public that when buying local you are dealing with a person who cares that this is a personal service, and that the customer is dealing with a personality.

### SDC – ClIr Avril Hunter

A reassurance was given and is to be given to anyone who asks, that particularly in the evenings the Bank Street closure and conversion to a seating area will be well policed by the police and Town Ambassadors and that CCTV is operating in the area.

ClIr Hunter also stated that SDC were installing “Smart” litter bins which notify the refuse collectors when they are full – particularly useful in the more rural locations.

### Sevenoaks Library

The Library will be re-opening on 12<sup>th</sup> April on a Covid compliant basis so numbers will have to be restricted for the time being. There are several computers available at the Library for public use.

### Sevenoaks Society

Roger Walshe said that members were disappointed with the outcome of the Tesco application at 136 High Street and especially due to the poor provision of parking spaces. He said there are other planning applications coming through with low parking provisions and that in the view of the Sevenoaks Society they must be resisted.

### Go Coach

Austin advised that from 12<sup>th</sup> April many services would be resumed and then gave a detailed report on these, fare structures and the new tailored buss services which have been introduced. Full details are on the company web-site and booking app. Andrew Eyre opined that Go2 is a national leader and congratulated Austin for the initiative.

### Sevenoaks Travellers Association

Tony Clayton reported that the Association is working to get the train services back to normal and reducing the length of intervals between trains. He said that many commuters were planning on continuing to work from home, or facilities such as The Business Hub.

### Cllr Dr Canet

Merilyn welcomes the Go2 bus service as there is "now a new crop of oldies who will no longer be using their cars".

### Francis Jones Jewellers

Roberta has noticed that many of the town centre businesses are preparing for re-opening by decorating and refreshing their premises. She also said that the former B&O shop is to become a butcher shop.

### Cllr Parry

Off peak train services were being planned to run at 30-minute intervals in the near future.

### STC - Cllr Raikes

Congratulations were extended to Linda Larter and her small team for having coped so well over the last year and for having been able to deliver The Bat & Ball Community Centre and now the Business Hub with such limited resources.

### Chamber of Commerce

Covid has hit the finances of the Chamber and it is presently £2.5K in the red. However, membership has held up reasonably well and while there has been a loss of existing members, new ones have been joining and presently there has been a net loss of just 15. Thanks were received by Julie from Andrew Eyre for having been so successful in rebuilding the Chamber during her tenure.

### Helen O'Sullivan

Concern that train capacity should be increased so that social distancing can be maintained as lockdown eases. Concern also about the lack of parking provision in new developments and the sub-letting of car spaces in existing schemes where the buyers of a flat might find that the associated parking space was in the hands of a third party. Helen was pleased that there has been a flurry of signatures supporting the proposed 20 zones.

### The Stag

During lock down some £200,000 of grant money has been invested in the fabric of the building. This was spent mainly in respect of rewiring, wi-fi, security cameras and the refurbishment of the toilets.

### Hollybush Residents Association

Cllr Purves congratulated both Councils for the success of the recent litter picking scheme.

### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### **Press release**

Not discussed

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.