

Sevenoaks Town Team Executive Board Meeting

6:30pm: Wednesday 22nd February 2023

Held at

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

Meeting started 6.30 p.m.

Meeting concluded: 8.33pm

Executive Board

Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Linda Larter MBE	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Mike Reid	Town Team Facilitator	Present
Cllr Avril Hunter	Sevenoaks District Council	Present
Cllr Richard Streatfeild MBE	Kent County Council	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Apologies
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
South Eastern	Vacant	Absent
Jane Parish	Sencio	Absent
Cllr Andrew Eyre, Chairman	Stag	Present
Hannah Kay	Knole	Absent
Dawn Blee	Chamber of Commerce	Absent
Steve Butler	Workman (Blighs)	Absent
Sevenoaks Chronicle	Vacant	Absent
Geraldine Tucker	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Maxine Morgan, V Chairman	Specsavers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Apologies
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Glenn Ball	Local Architect	Present
Helen O'Sullivan	Eardley Road RA	By Zoom
Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush RA	Apologies
Byron Brown	Bradbourne RA	Present
Mike Williams	Round Table	Absent
Police	Vacant	Absent

In attendance: Jim Hughes, Cllr Richard Parry, Jess Gibson

1. Apologies for Absence

Elizabeth Purves
Elizabeth Dolding
Emily Haswell

2. Declarations of Interest

None expressed

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Town Team Annual General Meeting and Board Meeting of 14th December 2022 were agreed.

4. TN Card

The founder, Jess Gibson gave a presentation about this loyalty card which operates in Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. It costs businesses nothing other than a discount, gift or similar to users of the card. The public pay £25pa for the benefit of the card. There are 75 Sevenoaks independent businesses in the scheme.

Using the TN Card databases regular social/networking functions are run in each town.

Jess has run one successful childrens' trail in Tonbridge and is planning one in Sevenoaks for Easter 2023. TT is working with Jess to avoid trail duplications and to enable joint promotion of both our activities.

From subscription income, where 10% is reserved for charity approx. £18,000 has so far been donated to West Kent Mind.

5. Update on 20mph proposals and consultation process

Cllr Richard Streatfield reported that the sub-group to review the original 2022 proposals has met twice. The new proposals will be going to the JTP on 15th March for a decision on whether to proceed with the process for adoption of the modified scheme.

6. Sevenoaks Business Hub

At the last Board meeting TT members asked for an overview report on the type of businesses and their origins, and this is attached to these minutes.

The pods remain very popular with almost 100% occupancy, save at a change over. Marketing by TT/STC is producing a small but growing number of hot desk users and meeting room bookings.

A loose consortium of the Hub, Lime Tree Workshop and Helpsuites is looking to do some joint promotion of "Sevenoaks co-working spaces".

As the pods are doing so well consideration is being given to creating another in the lounge area which does not appear to be used by anyone. A scheme has been designed and is out for costing.

7. Wayfinding Project

A meeting to discuss the first iterations of the actual sign designs was due to be held on 20th February but postponed as the designer had contracted Covid.


Glenn Ball volunteered and was accepted as helping with consideration of the designs.

8. Sevenoaks Business Awards and Business Show

There is a revised date for the Business Show being 9th June 2023. The Business Show will be as previously, be on 20th October.


9. Town Trail

There have been 269 downloads of the Sevenoaks trial which compares very favourably with others created at the same time. TT will continue to undertake regular social media marketing. This is the most recent post:



SEVENOAKS
TOWN TEAM

On the Sevenoaks Town Trail find out about.....



Sevenoaks Almshouses

These impressive listed buildings are at the southern end of Upper High Street. The two long buildings, ornate with statues, are the two wings of the Sevenoaks Almshouses. They replaced earlier timber-framed cottage almshouses, and were built between 1731 and 1732, along with Sevenoaks School.

Both the School and Almshouses were designed by the Palladian architect, Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington.

The funds for the school and almshouses came from William Sevenoke. When he died in 1432, he left his wealth to churches and to start both Sevenoaks School and Sevenoaks Almshouses. His instructions were to provide 20 men and women 'in greatest want' in Sevenoaks with housing and alms. His charitable act became the oldest charity of Sevenoaks. Sevenoaks Almshouses are now nearly 600 years old.

There have been almshouses in Britain for over 1000 years. They provide accommodation and a weekly allowance for the elderly and poor, making them the first kind of social housing for the elderly.

The history of Sevenoaks Almshouses is quite well recorded due to the survival of account books since the late 16th century. They can show us how much the residents were paid in allowance, how often, and when someone was reprimanded. For example, Elizabeth Wallis was admonished in 1670 for keeping chickens against the rules.

Those who benefited from the almshouses had to be the elderly residents of the parish for at least 12 years. They also had to be 'of good character' and attend the services at St Nicholas Church. The Almshouses were refurbished in the 1990s and modernised in 2007.

Follow the Sevenoaks Town Trail featuring 23 of the town's historic locations starting at Sevenoaks Market House in Bank Street.

The tour takes about 2-3 hours and can be done in stages. Its free!

Download the TrailTale app and search for "Sevenoaks Town Trail"

The question was asked; whether TrailTale could provide stats relating to the location of those people who downloaded the app? With the qualifier that we would not want any GDPR relevant info.

Post meeting note from Trail Tale:

“We indeed do not have such data collected, but this is something that more places now would like to see. As a result, it is now on our future development plan for the next version.”

10. Sevenoaks Best Dressed Window

The winners of the Christmas competition were:

Retail

1st - Sevenoaks Haberdashery

2nd – Oxfam

Non-retail

1st - NFU

2nd – Jackson-Stops

The Chamber has kindly offered to provide the prizes for a similar competition for the Coronation.

11. Childrens’ High Street Safari

The Christmas Safari had over 250 people taking part and through a prize draw, one family won six months swimming membership at Sencio Community Leisure.

As TN Card is going to be running an Easter “Bunny” trail the next TT Safari will be organised for the Coronation.

12. Public realm

The red phone box refurbishment is now complete with the defibrillator installed. The signage is awaited whereafter a presentation will be organised. Thackray Williams and SDC funded the equipment and the refurb was undertaken by Sevenoaks Round Table.

The street lights which form part of the fountain at HSBC are now working again.

13. Shop, café, restaurant and pub occupancy survey

Whereas a survey of just the town centre was undertaken for Britain in Bloom, a survey of the whole town is underway. This can then be used as a comprehensive benchmark. On the survey work undertaken to date, the results are very encouraging and if this carries through to the end the survey could be used in publicity to show (hopefully) that Sevenoaks is bucking the national trend. As a valuable by-product the TT email address list is growing extensively as the survey proceeds.

14. Spring Vegan Market

The next market, with music, will take place on Saturday 1st April 2023 on The Vine.

15. Police letter

At the December meeting it was agreed that the Chairman would write to senior Kent Police advising of the TT's concern about the adequacy of policing in the town. In the interim there have been meetings and discussions with Roberta Ware who has appraised the police of her concerns and therefore the letter has not been sent.

The Chairman is going to invite both the Chief Inspector and Matthew Scott to attend the next Board meeting to talk about policing in the town and how they plan to improve the service.

16. Public loos

At the December meeting concern was raised that the loos at the bus station were closed due to damage, and that the public should be advised of the location of alternative facilities.

Post meeting note

SDC have agreed with the modified idea of displaying information showing the location of all public facilities in the town and are creating notices to that effect.

17. Sevenoaks Fireworks Display

Sevenoaks School has advised that by virtue of the probable legislation relating to "Martyn's law" which is planned by Government to place increased security and safety regulations on large event organisers, that the School will no longer be able to host the Round Table fireworks. They expressed their disappointment at this decision and the effect it will have on Table's fundraising.

A discussion on alternative venues, local to the town centre for the parade, ensued and no solution has been found.

18. Coronation Street Party

STC is planning to hold a celebratory party in the High Street. The initial organising meeting drew a substantial attendance from a very wide spectrum of organisations and individuals. An application to close the High Street has been submitted and the outcome is awaited.

19. Events Committee

Martyns Law, if enacted, is likely to come into effect in the Autumn at which time STC will organise a training meeting for local organisations which host public events.

20. Reports from Town Team Members

Linda Larter

Both the Warm Welcome and Forget Me Not Café initiatives at the Bat & Ball Station are proving very popular with growing attendances.

The Neighbourhood Plan Referendum will take place on 4th May 2023 alongside the Local election.

STC is developing a programme to retrofit carbon saving equipment in its buildings.

Anti-social behaviour is a rapidly growing problem at the Vine, with large crowds of youths gathering at weekend evenings. They are causing significant damage to the buildings, and though the police are now aware, no action to curtail the nuisance has yet taken place.

Cllr Avril Hunter

The SDC budget for the coming year was passed on 21/2/23

To enable voting at future elections it will be necessary for people to bring and show ID to vote. As this is a change to the current system, and despite relevant notifications it is envisaged that many people will not be aware and that there could be issues at the polling stations.

Emily Haswell

In her absence the following note was read:

Update from Sevenoaks District Council, Economic Development Team to provide clarity on previous discussions:

Sevenoaks District Council are considering plans for District wide business awards event as part of our approach to promoting businesses across the District as outlined in the Sevenoaks District Council Economic Development Strategy (2022-27) and linking to our ongoing More Sevenoaks campaign, we will continue to keep Town Team updated as plans progress.

Sevenoaks District Council will be reviewing sponsorships for the coming year and this may affect contributions to Town Team events.

The UK Shared Prosperity funding has now been agreed and will be administered through the Economic Development team in line with the Investment plan, which has received Government approval. This funding will support businesses, town centres, community projects and People and skills activities until end March 2025. We are also awaiting approval from Government for the Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum.

Any queries on this please direct to emily.haswell@sevenoaks.gov.uk - I hope to attend a future meeting to discuss the UKSPF projects in more detail.

Roberta Ware

Francis Jones is very busy though she is concerned about recent town centre retail property closures.

Cllr Richard Streatfeild

KCC is planning to relocate its local community services to the Library. This is the consultation document [Community Services Consultation | Let's talk Kent](#).

KCC has pedestrian footfall counting kit and he will investigate how Town Team might be able to use it or information provided by it.

Austin Blackburn

Austin to supply a summary of his fulsome verbal report.

Cllr Richard Parry

Provided the following:

8th May – Mayors quiz

29th May – A tour of Knole

10th May – The Mayor's Evening at the Stag

Geraldine Tucker

The Sevenoaks Society has been busy responding and objecting to the Croudace planning application to build 70 homes on land at Brittain's Lane.

The Society has organised an exhibition for 22 February – 11th March featuring the work and vision for Sevenoaks of Roger Fitzgerald RIBA at the Kaleidoscope Gallery.

Jim Hughes

Reported that the lighting at the car park ticketing machines is poor or inoperative. The Chairman advised the machines are about to be replaced which should deal with the problem.

Glenn Ball

Volunteered to help with the design stage of the Wayfinding Scheme.

Maxine Morgans

Expressed frustration with the processes to acquire Specsavers new premises.

Andrew Eyre

Sales at The Stag are still about 25% down on pre-pandemic and recovering slowly. The project to instal solar panels is about to commence. They will not provide all the power needed to run the venue but should account for about 70%.

Helen O'Sullivan

Pleased that her road has been resurfaced – after 38 years.

21. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2023.