

Sevenoaks Town Team Minutes of the AGM and Executive Board Meeting

6:30pm: Wednesday 11th October 2023

Held at

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

Meeting started 6.30 p.m.

Meeting concluded: 8.00pm

Executive Board

Cllr Chloe Gustard	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Linda Larter MBE	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
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	Present
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
South Eastern	Gemma Louro	Absent
Andrew Eyre	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
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society	Now retired
Maxine Morgan, V Chair	Specsavers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Apologies
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Glenn Ball	Local Architect	Apologies
Avril Hunter	Redlands RA	Present
Helen O'Sullivan	Eardley Road RA	Apologies
Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush RA	Apologies
Byron Brown	Bradbourne RA	Present
Mike Williams	Round Table	Absent
Police	PC Nick Hubbard	Apologies
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum	Present

In attendance: Cllr Varley, Sam Shoesmith, Jim Hughes, Dennis Glasspool, Cllr Skinner, Cllr Ancrum, Cllr Wightman, Cllr Layne, Cllr Willis.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Clack, PC Nick Hubbard, Elizabeth Purves, Elizabeth Dolding, Helen O'Sullivan, Glen Ball and Linda Larter, Glenn Ball

1. Election of Chair of Sevenoaks Town Team

Mike Reid took the chair in order to conduct the election of a Chair for 2023/4. Cllr Tony Clayton was nominated by Maxine Morgans and seconded by Richard Streatfeild and being the only candidate, was unanimously elected.

2. Election of Vice Chair of Sevenoaks Town Team

Having re-taken the Chair, Cllr Tony Clayton sought candidates and with multiple nominations and seconds, Maxine Morgans was duly re-elected.

3. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Clack, PC Nick Hubbard, Elizabeth Purves, Elizabeth Dolding, Helen O'Sullivan, Glen Ball and Linda Larter

4. Declarations of Interest

None

5. Minutes

To receive and approve the minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Team Executive Board meeting held on 2nd August 2023. There were no amendments or matters arising which would not be covered in this meeting.

6. Annual Report

The Annual Report had been circulated with the meeting papers, and while noting how actively the Team is performing there were no comments arising.

7. Finance Matters

It was explained that STC has not, until recently, had a Responsible Finance Officer in place and that some reporting areas were not up to date, including reports on Town Team and the Business Hub. It was explained by the Chair that he had seen figures from July and that both the Team and Hub were operating well with both in profit.

8. Constitution of the Town Team Executive Board.

It has been noted that some groups or businesses on the Executive Board have not been present at meetings for some time. Members were reminded of this extract from the Town Team Terms of Reference:

"Members of the Executive Board who miss more than 3 months of meetings will cease to be members. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis".

Those members which have not attended for some time are asked to do so, so as to update themselves on the purposes and activities of the Team and to discuss how their business or organisation can contribute.

The Chair opined that the Team is missing some fundamental parts of the Sevenoaks Community, notably Education, Sport and Youth.

There was a consensus of agreement that these sectors should be encouraged to join the Board and current Board members are going to canvass their contacts in these sectors.

The Chair observed that past Board member, Elliot Waters who represented South Eastern while being station manager at Sevenoaks has now been nominated in a national competition details of which he would circulate to the Board encouraging members to vote for him, as he had been so helpful during his stationing in the town.

9. Business Improvement District (BID).

Cllr Clayton put forward the proposal that Sevenoaks returns to its plans to create a Business Improvement District (BID).

It was unanimously agreed to pursue this.

A BID is a separate legal entity and not run by a Council. It needs its own board of directors and will only come to exist if a referendum of businesses in the BID area produces a majority in favour.

The first step will be to create Business Plan in order that the project can be explained to prospective board members. TT members were asked to consider who they feel should be approached, but not to do so until the plan is produced and agreed.

Both Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne BIDs have offered to help with describing their experiences in both setting up and running their BID.

10. Wayfinding.

Work is proceeding towards the production of a tender document. An application to SDC for CIL monies has been made and it is hoped that an invitation will be received to attend a CIL meeting at SDC on November 29th. While the application is for the major part of the funding, STC will also be contributing to the project.

A request was made to ensure that the new signage would be accessible to people with disabilities. It was confirmed that the fonts, colours and positioning of information would account for this. It was further asked if the signs would carry braille and that will be investigated.

It was repeated that before committing to the new signage the design of the scheme would be widely shared.

11. Public Realm

The railings at the junction of Seal Hollow Road and High Street have been substantially painted, waiting for scaffold around the Constitution building to be dropped. At the same time KCC have agreed to paint the Pembroke Road railings opposite SDC.

The blue lamp posts, belisha beacons, road signs and bollards in the lower part of St Johns Hill and belisha beacons in Dartford Road have been painted. This work was paid by the Levelling Up Fund.

12. Business Awards 2023 Report

28 entries have been received and 22 businesses are in the Customer Choice vote. The Awards evening takes place on Friday 20th October.

13. Business Hub Report

Occupancy of the pods remains good with new hirers usually taking them within a couple of weeks of one becoming available.

The condition of the building remains good with no major repairs or decoration required.

14. Fireworks (cancelled) & Christmas Lights

Plans for the Christmas Lights Switch On are progressing and the event should follow the established pattern. There is though a major problem in that the Purlake development is about to start and the site for the stage is unavailable. Negotiations are in hand to move the stage to Blighs Walk between Danish Collection and The Oak.

15. Childrens Christmas High Street Safari and Christmas Best Dressed Window competition

Both events will be held in 2023.

16. Holly Party

Board members were provided with posters and asked to promote it to their business colleagues.

Last year was the first such party at the Bat & Ball Centre, and with the experience of running that, the catering will be indoors, and the entertainment expanded so that this year there will be a Jersey Boys tribute band playing. Tickets are deliberately at a very modest £25.

17. Reports from Members Organisations

Dennis Glasspool

He and Roberta Ware had attended a meeting convened by Laura Trott with senior police and a range of retailers to discuss crime affecting them. A copy of his report is appended.

Richard Streatfeild

KCC is having to find savings of £30m this year which means that discretionary services are under serious review.

However school bus services are receiving more support through the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Geraldine Tucker

The Sevenoaks Society AGM has been held and the Society is in “good shape”. The series of Autumn talks has now started.

Jim Hughes

Jim is concerned that some societies and clubs in the town are closing, mostly due to dwindling numbers and people willing to run them. He volunteered to undertake investigations in co-operation with the Town Team Facilitator, to investigate and consider how Town Team might help reinvigorate them.

He also asked if there is an opportunity to install real time bus information in the town, maybe using potential BID investment.

Austin Blackburn

Staffing remains an issue despite offering very flexible working arrangements. Concessionary passenger numbers are now back to 80% of pre-covid. Dartford and Tonbridge are presently the principal areas where delays are taking place, mainly due to lots of roadworks.

Route No 3 is re-opening serving Sevenoaks, Orpington and Locks Bottom.

Roberta Ware

A freedom of Information request informs that the police are paying SDC £19,700 pa for their accommodation at the SDC Office where at least the front desk is closed and the back office is supposedly under-used.

Andrew Eyre

It seems that in addition to cost of living issues many people have simply lost the habit to visit cinemas and theatres.

However film distributors have changed course and are more frequently releasing new films to cinemas before streaming services, which had until recently been the other way round.

Byron Brown

Heritage Lottery Offices are working with consultants to improve Bradbourne Lakes. It has been discovered that the North lake is heavily polluted with sewage.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6th December 2023