

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