

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 10th June 2024
in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:
<https://youtube.com/live/qNNGydnAtB4?feature=share>

Meeting Commenced: 8.13 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 8.20 p.m.

Cllr Libby Ancrum, Mayor	Present		Cllr Sally Layne	Apologies
Cllr Sue Camp	Present		Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present		Cllr Lionel O'Hara	Absent
Cllr Tony Clayton, Deputy Mayor	Present		Cllr David Skinner OBE	Present
Cllr Catherine Daniell, Deputy Leader	Present		Cllr Claire Shea	Present
Cllr Dr Peter Dixon	Present		Cllr Nick Varley	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville	Present		Cllr Gareth Willis	Present
Cllr Chloe Gustard	Present		Cllr Nigel Wightman, Leader	Apologies

In Attendance: Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

Also Present: None.

Representations received from Members of the Public: None

157 Apologies for Absence: as shown above

158 Requests for Dispensations: none received.

159 Declarations of Interest: none received.

160 Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 13th May 2024
It was noted that Cllr Lionel O'Hara's name had been omitted in error from the list of those attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: subject to the amendment of the minutes to include Cllr O'Hara in the list of those attending the meeting, to accept and sign the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 13th May 2024 as a true record.

161 Minutes of Committees

Planning & Environment Committee – 20th May 2024

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 20th May 2024 as a true record.

Planning & Environment Committee – 3rd June 2024

RESOLVED:

- 1) To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 3rd June 2024 as a true record.

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- 2) To formally adopt the updated Green Investment Plan 2024, as an appendix of the Town Council's Community Investment Plan 2023-2027 (attached).

162 Finance Reports

162.1 Review of System of Internal Control

RESOLVED: to note that the Statement on the System of Internal Control, signed by the Responsible Finance Officer, was approved at the meeting of the Finance & Delivery Committee, held immediately preceding this Council meeting (*Minute 146.3, F&D 10.06.24 refers*), and signed by the Chair of that Committee.

162.2 Annual Return for Year Ended 31st March 2024

The Town Council considered the recommendations of the Finance & Delivery Committee meeting, held immediately preceding this Council meeting (*Minutes 146.4 F&D 10.06.24 refers*), regarding the Annual Governance Return and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, signed by the Town Clerk, be approved and signed by the Mayor;
- 2) the Accounting Statements 2023/24, signed by the Responsible Finance Officer, be approved and signed by the Mayor;
- 3) the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24, including the Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Accounts to 31st March 2024, and supporting papers for submission to the External Auditors, be adopted by full Council; and
- 4) the approved accounts be made available for public inspection for 30 working days, from 12th June to 23rd July 2024.

163 Notice of Proposed Amendment to Standing Orders: Financial Regulations

RESOLVED: to receive notice that Sevenoaks Town Council would be amending its Standing Orders, in line with updated financial regulations, at the meeting of the Town Council to be held on Monday 22nd July 2024.

164 Councillor Reports: Town Council Representatives on External Organisations

None received at this meeting.

165 Mayor's Engagements

RESOLVED: To note and accept the reports relating to Mayoral activities:

- a) functions attended by the Mayor or her representative up to 2nd June 2024.
- b) the forthcoming Civic Events being organised by the Mayor during 2024-25 including the Civic Service on 23rd June 2024.
- c) Councillors were also reminded of the invitation to attend the Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees "Desperate Journeys" on Monday 17th June.

166 Press Release: None

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There being no further business the Mayor closed the meeting.

Signed
Mayor

Dated



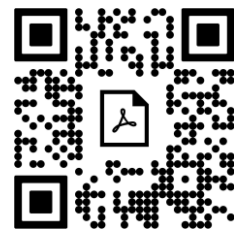
Sevenoaks
TOWN council

Green Community Investment Plan 2024

Extension to Community Investment Plan 2023-2027

Adopted by Planning & Environment Committee 03/06/2024
Adopted by Council on 10/06/2024

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Green Community Investment Plan 2024

Extension to Community Investment Plan 2023-2027

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1. Summary

In November 2023, Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) resolved to make further development of the Green Community Investment Plan its second priority – after implementing actions and policies of the STNP.

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan, “made” following a successful referendum in May 2023, includes a focus on climate and green issues. The Town Council’s Green Community Investment Plan provides more detailed aims and implementation of green projects.

STC believes it should communicate more to the public about the practical local initiatives it was already undertaking and its plans for the future, and that STC should take a local leadership role, providing information about simple measures that can be taken in helping the local community to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to help the planet. This was reflected in the first Green Community Investment Plan, which this document seeks to update and replace.

Friends of the Earth states: “*Parish and Town Councils may not be as powerful as local authorities, but they can ‘do their bit’ in addressing the climate and nature emergency and be a force for change.*”

Impact: Community Carbon Calculator – provides the following information for average household carbon footprint of Sevenoaks residents for November 2021 (when STC published its first Green Community Investment Plan) versus May 2024.

Sevenoaks – <u>November 2021</u>	
<p>20.1t CO₂e* per-household consumption footprint (p.a.)</p>	
Consumption of goods and services	7.17
Housing	4.48
Food and diet	4.36
Travel	4.02
Waste	0.03

Sevenoaks – <u>May 2024</u>	
<p>13.4t CO₂e* per-household consumption footprint (p.a.)</p>	
Consumption of goods and services	4.14
Housing	3.78
Food and diet	2.78
Travel	2.6
Waste	0.06

*CO₂e stands for "carbon dioxide equivalent" and is a standard unit of measurement in carbon accounting. It expresses the impact of a number of different gases collectively as a common unit.

For further information see the Impact calculator developed by Exeter University
<https://impact-tool.org.uk>

STC’s overall aim is to put in place affordable and practical initiatives with long term green

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benefits for the local community and to support and encourage residents to pursue individually. Little steps together, reducing Sevenoaks' carbon consumption footprint = big changes to the planet.

STC's Green Community Investment Plan (appendix to STC Community Investment Plan 2023-2027) brings together all of its climate change initiatives to publicise to and involve the local community and progress practical delivery under the following five themes:

Theme 1	Buildings
Theme 2	Transport & Movement
Theme 3	Making Sevenoaks Greener
Theme 4	Consumption
Theme 5	Information & Access to information

2. STC Community Investment – 2023-2027

In 2014 Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) set out its first ambitious £4m Community Investment Plan to restore and improve community facilities. Building on the success of that Community Investment Plan the 2019 second document continued with the original 2014 plan and set out additional priorities for the next four years which increased investment to £6.5m+. This document builds upon the third Community Investment Plan 2023-2027, which proposed additional £2,771,000 investment into the Town.

The STC 2023 Green Community Investment Plan moves away from primarily investing in community facilities and towards investing in the local environment and making Sevenoaks greener.

3. Theme 1 – Buildings

- 3.1 Sevenoaks Town Council's buildings and assets
STC when constructing new buildings will aim for them to be as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible. Existing buildings to be more sustainable with reduced carbon footprint where practicable.

The new Bat & Ball Centre is as eco-friendly as possible.

- Rebuild instead of new build.
- Eco friendly and sustainable materials.
- Solar panels.
- Motion sensor lighting.
- Additional insulation.
- Improved heating and ventilation systems.



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STC has agreed to research costs and practicalities for the following for its buildings:

- Solar panels.
- Motion sensor lighting.
- Additional insulation.
- Improved heating and ventilation systems.
- Energy audit for each building

3.2. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan, which was successful at Referendum and subsequently “made” or adopted by the Local Planning Authority in May 2023, can be viewed at <https://sevenoaksndp.wordpress.com/>. A draft Monitoring & Implementation Strategy has since been prepared, which includes actions and projects identified within the STNP for further pursuit throughout its lifetime:

<https://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Draft%20Strategy%20for%20Annual%20Report%2023-24.pdf>

The STNP is based upon a vision and accompanying set of objectives. An important focus for the plan is to improve the health and well-being of the people that live within the NDP area. The plan also recognises the importance of addressing the nationally declared climate emergency and supporting sustainability.

The STNP draws upon the town’s existing strengths, reflects the positive qualities identified by the local community and identifies the following number of challenges and opportunities:

Respond positively to climate change and encourage a more sustainable approach to both land use and lifestyle choices.	Deliver a sustainable expansion at Greatness, on land currently being worked to extract gravel by Tarmac Ltd (subject to release from Green Belt) in order to deliver new homes to meet local needs.
Enhance and preserve the town’s heritage assets and special open spaces.	Unlock new opportunity for leisure, recreation, and community infrastructure – including a new watersports lake as part of this development.
Enhance the arrival experience into the town to create a more welcoming impression.	Grow the town’s economy and support the creation of new jobs.
Enhance the town’s network of roads, footpaths and cycling routes to improve connections and create a safer and more attractive environment for users.	Deliver new community assets including a new community centre at Bat & Ball and new health and education provision.
Improve access to, and better connect, the town’s open spaces	Deliver enhanced recreational and sports facilities for the town.
Regenerate and revitalise the Northern Sevenoaks area around Bat & Ball Station	Enhance the town’s thriving cultural scene.

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Objective 15: to promote high quality development that enhances the town and consolidates vacant or underutilised land.

Objective 16: to deliver a range of new homes to meet local needs.

Objective 17: to provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact.

3.3. Energy Audits for Buildings

STC will carry out Energy Audits for its buildings. It is noted that other Transition Towns (*Transition Towns is a voluntary movement focusing on benefits of Local Money, Local Skills, Local Power with the aim to improve the local climate*) had initiated Energy Audits for homes. STC will research further and signpost residents to such initiatives and provide practical cost effective solutions for residents to improve energy use in their own homes.

4. Theme 2 – Transport & Movement

4.1. Reducing cars / traffic particularly in relation to school traffic

The STNP which was successful at referendum in May 2023 includes relevant proposals which have since been moved to the Monitoring and Implementation Strategy. See section 3.2. for further details.

4.2. Cycle Racks

New facilities to park 30 bikes have been installed at the Bat & Ball Centre. Previously also at Bat & Ball Station.

Plans are in place with Kent County Council (KCC) for the installation of cycle racks, which double as planters, in the town centre.

Cycle planters will be installed at STC office / Business Hub site.



STC will consider opportunities to install cycle racks on the rest of its estate and public open spaces.

4.3. Increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists

The STNP which was successful at referendum in May 2023 includes relevant proposals which have since been moved to the Monitoring and Implementation Strategy. See section 3.2. for details.

4.4. Proposals for 20 mph, one way systems, and shared space

The STNP which was successful at referendum in May 2023 includes relevant proposals which have since been moved to the Monitoring and Implementation Strategy. See section 3.2. for details.

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A public consultation was held at the end of 2023 with a positive response for the implementation of 20mph. Kent County Council are designing the scheme which is hoped to be implemented in 2024.

4.5. Encourage increased use of public transport – buses and trains – by having improved Facilities

STC wants to encourage increased use of public transport – buses and trains – by having improved facilities.

STC is committed to working with the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership (DVCRP) to encourage more local sustainable travel. The DVCRP aims to:

- Bring together six separate stations: Swanley, Eynsford, Shoreham, Otford, Bat & Ball and Sevenoaks
- Encourages passengers to visit local tourism attractions along the line
- Connecting communities to their railway and boosting local economy
- Working to improve station facilities, accessibility, and the natural environment
- Linking the use of the train to sustainable modes of transport e.g., walking and cycling
- Raising awareness of local heritage and culture including the artist Samuel Palmer

Subject to funding availability – STC considers proposals to increased bus usage is important. Building on the success of the introduction of the No 8 Bus and subject to funding availability STC would want the provision to move to a half hourly provision and available in the evening and use of electric buses. STC would also support where possible other bus initiatives. STC provides the wooden bus shelters within the town.

One of STC's priorities is to obtain external funds for a pilot scheme to have an electric bus for the No. 8 bus. It would also work with the local bus companies to obtain external funding for electric buses. STC's funds come from the domestic rate payers, and it is unlikely to be able to fund bus companies.

4.6. Electric Vehicles & Charging Points

STC has purchased its second electric vehicle and will continue to invest in electrical vehicles and equipment where possible as it replaces its vehicles.

STC aims to install electric car charging points at its sites. Electric charging points have been installed at the Bat & Ball Centre as well as at the STC Office / Business Hub site.

STC will recommend and encourage additional vehicle charging points within new developments (current planning policy) and work with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) & KCC on provision of these throughout the town.



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4.7. Car Club and Car Sharing

A Car Club operating similar to other towns should be supported by STC, potentially by grant funding, but not operated by STC. STC launched a Car Club in collaboration with Enterprise in May 2024.

4.8. Create liaison between individual schools' safety and travel schemes to reduce overall town congestion

STC are supportive of School Safety & Travel Schemes and will seek to arrange a meeting between schools to discuss these and review the overall school travel congestion.

4.9. Programme of installing QR codes on signposts identifying walking and cycling routes

STC will include and encourage other providers to provide information on signage to include walking and cycling routes – include QR codes where possible.

4.10. Continue to support Cycling Strategy for Sevenoaks

STC would continue wherever possible to work with SDC / KCC and other agencies to improve local cycling provision. STC would also support schemes that enables cycle renting.

4.11. Feasibility study for cycle path from Bat & Ball Station to Dunton Green Station

Within the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan commissioned by STC was a proposal to link Bat & Ball Station and Dunton Green Station via a cycle path. STC believes there are potential benefits to current and new residents, commuting to London, commuting locally to schools and for shopping and leisure. STC has commissioned a feasibility study of this which is currently underway.

STC will also lobby for the inclusion of the proposal in KCC / SDC Cycling Strategies / Movement Strategy / LCWIP and also liaise with Dunton Green Parish Council.

4.12. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

Objective 7: to work with the District Council, and Kent County Council, in consultation with neighbouring Parish Councils, to identify a long term strategic approach to transport in Sevenoaks to respond to and mitigate any impact of new development on the existing network.

Objective 8: to promote a co-ordinated approach to transport and movement that encourages use of sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling, and reducing pollution levels, whilst ensuring that the centre is still accessible by car.

Objective 9: To deliver public realm enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience in the town.

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5. Theme 3 – Making Sevenoaks Greener

5.1. Trees (Noting: Right Tree – Right Place)

A particular feature of Sevenoaks is its trees. Sevenoaks is famed for its oaks but there are many other species and individual trees that are important to the character and ecology of the town.

STC maintains and manages more than 38 hectares of public open space of which approximately 26 hectares are covered in trees. STC wants to plant more trees and where possible fruit and nut trees.

Since 2020 STC has planted 1318 trees and plans for 2024 are progressing with permission being sought from Kent County Council for additional planting at various locations. STC would keep a running total – clearly available for public to view e.g., on its website and linked to the national database.

Where there used to be tree lined avenues, STC will encourage the public via resident associations to plant trees in their front gardens (subject to KCC permission). STC will consider providing grants for trees to voluntary organisations and will support the Queen’s Jubilee Tree Canopy initiative.

When there is a need to fell trees STC will repurpose for posts and bollards where possible.

5.2. Adopt a Tree

In 2021 STC launched an Adopt a Tree in Sevenoaks project.

Why Adopt a Tree?

- Trees benefit the local environment
- Help improve air quality
- Provide homes for wildlife
- Food for insects
- are visually attractive

Where can the trees be planted?

There is a list available of land owned and maintained by Sevenoaks Town Council. These areas vary in size and many of the trees to be planted would be understorey trees and hedgerow bushes, but all of them would be extremely beneficial to the local environment.

Can I plant the tree myself?

If your tree is going to be planted in a Town Council park or open space, then you can come along and help with the planting. If your tree is going on a roadside verge, unfortunately you will not be able to help as safety guidelines must be followed when working on a public highway.

The Choice of Tree

It is important that the right tree is chosen for the right location to enhance its chance of flourishing. Native species will be chosen for the most part with an emphasis on fruit and nut trees. You are encouraged to water and nurture your tree and watch it grow over the years.

The Cost

Your tree can be planted at one of our parks and following the planting, you will receive a certificate with a picture of the newly planted tree and a plan showing its location. If you would like to be in the photograph, this can be arranged. Individual plaques are not provided, but if you would like to provide your own, we can attach to the stake. Standard tree - £100 (10/12 cm bare root wrapped tree). This price includes purchase of

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the tree, digging a hole for its roots, adding compost, installing an irrigation pipe, backfilling, mulching, and staking.

Planting

The best months for planting trees are December and January. So that we can plant new trees during this time, our deadline for applications is 30th September. This gives enough time to order the trees agree and mark the final locations and organise planting.

Once the tree is planted Sevenoaks Town Council will be responsible for maintaining the tree. Please be aware that we cannot guarantee the lifetime of the tree, and we will not be able to replace any trees, which do not establish themselves. If the tree is near your home, you can increase its chances of survival by giving it water during periods of drought and hot weather. For queries, please email osl@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

5.3 Link Sevenoaks open spaces together with ‘green routes’

Via its STNP proposals STC will improve access to, and better connect, the town’s open spaces.

5.4 Give it a Grow project

In 2020 the then Mayor, Cllr Dr Canet launched the Give it a Grow project encouraging all residents to become involved in making Sevenoaks greener.



5.5. Sevenoaks in Bloom and STC Planting

The annual Sevenoaks in Bloom garden competition plays a vital role in celebrating and directing focus onto the value of plants and their impact on the community and environment. This in turn transforms areas into better places to live, work and visit and help to make residents, businesses, and communities proud of their town. STC will continue with its edible gardening project. Including edible foods within planting in public open spaces and encouraging residents to pick and use. Planting will be chosen that encourages bees. STC are indebted to its many volunteers who participate in helping to make Sevenoaks in Bloom a success.

STC in its horticultural processes will minimise the use of fungicides and pesticides and has created a Biodiversity Policy. Sustainable planting will also be used.

5.6 Sustainable boundaries

STC is aware of the considerable environmental benefits to creating sustainable boundaries to properties e.g., hedging compared to fencing. STC will review its following policies for Planning Committee recommendations (it should be noted that STC does not make the final decision relating to planning applications, this is with Sevenoaks District Council, the Planning Authority):

- Sustainable boundaries e.g., hedging
- Porous front drives
- Trees – planting 2 for each 1 removed
- Signs – not internally illuminated – light pollution and energy.
- 1m boundary distance

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5.7 Hedgehog holes in fences

Where boundary walls and fences are proposed in a planning application, STC will recommend in its capacity as a Statutory Consultee to the Local Planning Authority, that the wall or fence be made porous to local wildlife. This can be achieved via hedgehog holes, as recommended in the STNP as a means of enhancing biodiversity and providing links between habitats.

5.8 Streetlighting to LED provision

STC owns and maintains some of the streetlighting in Sevenoaks and has been putting in place a plan of conversion to LED.

Where floodlights are provided on STC land it will be planned to move to LED and decrease light pollution.

Christmas Lights will also be planned to move to LED.

5.9 Acquisition of Land

Very rarely, but occasionally land does come up for sale in Sevenoaks. STC will consider putting in place process and 'in principle' resolution to enable STC to obtain additional land if it could be used for community benefit e.g., additional woodland or community orchard.

An example of this policy is the purchase of Longspring Woods. In 2024 the woods already registered as an Asset of Community Value came up for sale. The Town Council agreed to invest £100,000 and a further £100,000 was raised by the local community in 23 days.

5.10. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

As a result of the government declaring its aim for Zero Carbon by 2030, the STNP was amended to put a greater focus on supporting and achieving this goal, with 26 of the 34 policies and 6 of the 13 aims having been designed support its delivery.

Objective 4: to protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity and respond to climate change.

This is supported by 2 policies – L1, which requires new development to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and which preceded the government mandate for developers to provide this by 9 months. Policy L2 requires new development to manage surface water and incorporate sustainable urban drainage into their schemes, which will have a positive impact on flooding issues within Sevenoaks.

Objective 5: to recognise the significant contribution that trees and hedgerows make to the town's character and biodiversity.

This is supported by an important policy which requires trees and hedgerows to be retained and protected as part of development proposals, further requiring their replacement, should removal be absolutely necessary. Justification for removal includes poor condition or inappropriate species.

Objective 6: to protect, improve and enhance access to existing publicly accessible

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open spaces and create new publicly accessible open spaces and green infrastructure

This is supported by two policies and two aims – in particular L8 which supports provision of additional allotments and protecting of existing – making affordable allotment space available to residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Objective 17: to provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact

This is supported by two policies – D5 and D6 which encourage new homes to be energy efficient and existing homes to be retrofitted to increase their efficiency.

5.11. Sevenoaks Town Council’s Biodiversity Policy

STC has a Biodiversity Policy which can be viewed at www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk or upon request and will be reviewed against best practice at regular intervals.

6. Theme 4 - Consumption

6.1. Promote Refill Scheme

STC will continue to promote the Refill Scheme encouraging people to use refillable bottles rather than plastic; install as many drinking water facilities as possible and encourage businesses to provide free drinking water.



Public drinking fountains have been installed at the Vine Gardens and Greatness Recreation Ground.

STC will continue to lobby for drinking fountains to be provided at Railway Stations.

6.2. Sevenoaks Plastic Free Pledge

In response to the global problem of plastic pollution, Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks Youth Council have committed to phasing out single-use plastic across all its facilities. This also means it strongly encourages groups and organisations to find alternatives to single use plastic when using Town Council venues.



We recognise that crowded events such as fetes, parties etc real glasses can provide a safety hazard. In these circumstances STC encourages the use of sturdy plastic cups that can be cleaned and reused and ultimately can be recycled.

Where single use items are unavoidable, we encourage the public to provide genuine compostable alternatives, and take responsibility for their proper disposal.

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STC will continue to campaign and support campaigns for reducing litter and encouraging more recycling.

STC will raise awareness of these matters to all users of its facilities.

STC would be participating in a recycling scheme for the banners for them to be used as flooring for horse stables, dumbbells, traffic cones, punch bags etc. It was also noted that they could be used on allotments to suppress weeds.

6.3. Installation of drinking fountains

Drinking water refill facilities have been installed at the new Bat & Ball Centre and Bat & Ball Station Café.

External drinking water refill facilities have been installed at The Vine Gardens and Greatness Recreation Ground during 2021 / 2022.

6.4 Enabling community initiatives for sustainable living e.g., Toy Library, Community Orchards, Community Cycle Workshops, Repair Café, promotion of alternative resources e.g., nappies.

STC will – where possible – support and develop community initiatives for sustainable living. STC will work with partners including KCC, SDC and Abacus to progress this provision.

6.5 Zero Waste Shop – research viability and support provision in Sevenoaks

STC would support the provision of a Scrapbox* facility, working to reduce waste. It was noted that a building and volunteers would be needed. STC to work with KCC, SDC and Abacus to try and progress a project.

Good example in Norwich: - The aim of Scrapbox is to educate people about the re-use of clean, safe Commercial and Industrial 'waste' as re-usable resources. Scrapbox collects from businesses waste materials such as 'overs', reject goods, ends of ranges etc. which would otherwise be thrown away and makes them available for art, craft, drama, technology and even recycling lessons. The project helps to delay resources being sent to landfill or incineration, which takes time and energy.

Organisations and individuals then pay affordable amounts for the resources they purchase for their projects. Particularly useful to groups who provide art, crafting, music, drama, and technology activities for communities such as schools, nurseries, care homes, crafting groups for the elderly and vulnerable plus community artists etc.

6.6. Food Waste

Sevenoaks currently operates a Foodsafe scheme where supermarkets and other businesses offer surplus, close to sell by date to voluntary organisations. STC will support this where possible.

6.7. Supporting Businesses

Via the Town Team which includes membership from Sevenoaks District Council, Chamber of Commerce, local stakeholders, and businesses there is an appetite to coordinate and support local businesses in progressing likeminded climate change

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initiatives. This could include commercial waste services, recycling, green electricity, carbon offsets. Sevenoaks doesn't currently have a BID (Business Improvement District), however there is much that can be learned from BIDs in other locations on such projects and this is currently being investigated

7. Theme 5 – Information & Access to Information

- 7.1 Signpost residents to existing schemes e.g., compost provision, energy audits
Bearing in mind that *“Household consumption is responsible for more than 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions.” (Gale, 2020, The Sustainable(ish) Living Guide).* STC will research how to signpost residents to existing schemes, including subsidised compost bins. STC is aware that there is considerable information available from many sources and that sometimes public want this filtered and diluted to enable them to consider their own personal practical measures to make a difference to the climate change agenda.

- 7.2 Facilitate a Reduce, Reuse & Recycle programme of informal education events – sewing / mending; repairs; plant based home cooking; gardening
STC could facilitate a programme of informal education events – sewing / mending; repairs; home cooking; gardening etc, with the aim of Reduce, Reuse & Recycle.

A monthly Repair Café operates in St Luke's Church, STC has provided support with this.

- 7.3. Information to enable residents to make practical changes
STC will aim to increase communication to the public about the practical local initiatives it was already undertaking and its plans for the future and to take a local leadership role, providing information about simple measures that can be taken in helping the local community to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to help the planet.

STC's overall aim was to put in place affordable and practical initiatives with long term green benefits for the local community and to encourage residents to pursue individually. Little steps together = big changes to the planet.

STC will clearly identify its Green Initiatives and plans on its website and on social media however is also aware that not all its residents have easy access to or able to use 'smart phones', 'apps' and the 'wider internet' and will bear in mind methods of communication to avoid where possible 'digital exclusion'.

- 7.4. Liaison
STC will liaise with other statutory authorities, voluntary organisations, churches etc to avoid duplication of resources.

- 7.5. Climate Fair
Sevenoaks Town Council has worked with Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN) to enable a Climate Fair to take place in 2023 and 2024.

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8. Implementation

8.1. Produce Green Community Investment Plan and publicise widely

STC to create a 'Green' Community Investment Plan setting out aims and objectives – to be an appendix to the current 2023-2027 Community Investment Plan.

The 'Green' Community Investment Plan to be heavily promoted providing information about STC aims and objectives and encouraging stakeholders, partner organisations, resident associations, community and voluntary groups, schools, and residents to work with STC on these and other initiatives they may have.

8.2. Create STC Green Grant Fund for voluntary organisations

STC to create Grant Fund (similar to Community Resilience Fund) to be able to provide grant funding for Green Initiatives e.g., planting trees.

8.3. Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring & Implementation Strategy

Following its successful Referendum in May 2023, a [Monitoring & Implementation Strategy](#) has been created.

8.4. Review STC Planning Committee Recommendations policy

STC is aware of the considerable environmental benefits to creating sustainable boundaries to properties e.g., hedging compared to fencing. STC will review its following policies for Planning Committee recommendations (it should be noted that STC does not make the final decision relating to planning applications, this is with Sevenoaks District Council, the Planning Authority):

- Sustainable boundaries e.g., hedging
- Porous front drives
- Trees – planting 2 for each 1 removed
- Signs – not internally illuminated – light pollution and energy.
- 1m boundary distance

8.5. Agree procedure for appropriate Land Acquisition

STC will consider putting in place process and 'in principle' resolution to enable STC to obtain additional land if it could be used for community benefit e.g., additional woodland or community orchard. See 5.8.

8.6. Involve the next generation

The Youth in a Changing Climate Report 2021 from Groundwork indicates the following key findings:

- Young people do not need convincing about the threat posed by climate change; almost all young people feel that tackling climate change is important to them personally.
- Most young people want to be involved in climate action and feel that knowing more about local environmental activity would help them to do so.

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- Young people are less confident in their knowledge about climate change; most feel that they do not learn enough about climate change in school, with documentaries and social media more likely to be their primary source of knowledge.
- The pandemic created a greater opportunity for some young people to explore nature and learn about climate change independently and by connecting with groups online, but also made it more difficult for some other young people to engage because of worries about work and health.

STC will continue to work with Sevenoaks Youth Council, local schools, local youth groups to encourage involvement in local community environment and climate change initiatives.

8.7. Priorities

STC has agreed that in addition to Sevenoaks Town Council's current Priorities as Resolved by Council and actions which were currently in progress the following would be Recommended to Council to be considered as Priorities. Those items marked with an asterisk are subject to verifying with Sevenoaks District Council its progress on the topics to avoid a duplicate of use of resources.

1. Seek quotes for a Pedestrian Audit*
2. Continue to support and encourage progress with the SDC Cycling Strategy Including audit of cycle parking, including appropriate for electric bikes*
3. Creating a Car Club*
4. Continue with Tree Planting
5. Progress with providing information to residents and businesses*
6. Youth Climate Forum created.

9. Where does the money come from?

Wherever possible Sevenoaks Town Council aims to provide community facilities at the lowest cost possible to reduce the burden on the tax payer. At the same time providing the facilities that the community wants and needs. This is often achieved by volunteers assisting in this for which the Town Council continues to remain grateful.

There are some facilities which are not commercially viable including maintenance of public open spaces and play areas, these do not generate income as they are free for public use.

Sevenoaks Town Council has a policy that wherever possible external funding should be sought initially for Capital Projects. External funding could be from grants, sponsorship, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Sevenoaks Town Council has a good track record for obtaining external funding for projects.

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Where does the £1,907,304 2024-2025 Sevenoaks Town Council budget come from?

Annual Precept £1,437,614 75% Of the budget comes from the domestic ratepayer's precept (council tax). The Town Council does not receive any portion of business rates or government grants.	Income from Services £428,800 23% Of the budget comes from fees and services such as community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, and cafes.	Earmarked Reserves £40,890 2% Of the budget will be from Town Council's Earmarked Reserves. £40,890 supports Bat & Ball Station project during initial years of opening. External grant funds*
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10. How can I make a comment or become involved?

Sevenoaks Town Council welcomes comments on its Green Community Investment Plan. Comments can be forwarded to the Town Clerk, Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG. Alternatively emailed to townclerk@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Town Council and its Committees meet most weeks, and each meeting has a time allotted for the public to address Councillors. A schedule of meetings can be obtained from the website at www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk or by contacting the Town Council on 01732 459953 or emailing council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Town Council will work with community, voluntary groups including Resident Associations and businesses which would like to make a contribution towards Greening Sevenoaks.

Sevenoaks Town Council wherever possible will include public participation in its projects and currently there are opportunities for the public to be involved via the following – please contact the offices if these are of interest to you:

- Friends Groups – Cemetery, Parks & Open Spaces, Bat & Ball Station
- Bat & Ball Centre / Bat & Ball Station User Group
- Sevenoaks Youth Council (11-18 Age)
- Sevenoaks in Bloom
- Give it a Grow campaign – using and learning gardening skills
- Sevenoaks Town Team
- Repair Café

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Appendix

Sevenoaks Town Council Community Investment Plan 2023-2027 Further information

In 2014 Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) set out its first ambitious £4m Community Investment Plan to restore and improve community facilities. Building on the success of that Community Investment Plan the 2019 second document continued with the original 2014 plan and set out additional priorities for the next four years which increased investment to £6.5m+.

The STC 2023-2027 Green Community Investment Plan moves away from primarily investing in community facilities and towards investing in the local environment and making Sevenoaks greener.

STC remains mindful of the financial resources required to maintain current community facilities and meet the ambitions of its Community Investment Plan and also to be adaptable for future opportunities which benefit residents of the town.

The Community Investment Plan enables public and partner organisations to be aware and comment on the STC's long term plans. The Community Investment Plan and related strategies has also assisted STC in being successful in obtaining external funding for its capital projects.

It should be noted that capital projects are in addition to STC's provision and maintenance of community facilities, for a full list of these community facilities please see www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk The capital projects are normally delivered 'in house' by professional staff supported by appropriate paid professionals e.g., architects, and quantity surveyors. The STC staff carry out these roles in addition to their 'day job' which is maintaining and administering community facilities. This creates real value for money but does mean the availability of all resources need to be considered when implementing ambitious plans.

Ref	Project	Draft Budget
1	Masterplan for Town Centre & St John's Hill	£65,000
2	Feasibility Study – Green Link	£16,000
3	20mph Signage Scheme Implementation	£130,000
4	Pedestrian Crossing at Dartford Road near Vine	£25,000
5	Pedestrian Crossing at Seal Hollow Road	£25,000
6	Electrifying No 8 Bus	£300,000
7	Wayfinding Signage	£170,000
8	Business Improvement District (BID) development	Tbc
9	Greatness Recreation Ground – consider and implement outcome of consultation	Tbc

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10	Greatness Football Sports Pavilion	£2,000,000
11	Refurbish St John's Hill Car Park Public Toilets	£40,000
12	Redevelop Oast House for Community Use	Tbc
	Total draft Project Budget	£2,771,000