

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Town Council
Held on Monday 14 April 2025 in the Council Chamber,
Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG**

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/cVFuZ3t8mDg>

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm.

Meeting Concluded: 7.09 pm.

Cllr Libby Ancrum, Mayor	Present	Cllr Sally Layne	Present
Cllr Sue Camp	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present	Cllr Lionel O'Hara	Apologies
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	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville	Present	Cllr Gareth Willis	Apologies
Cllr Chloe Gustard	Apologies	Cllr Nigel Wightman, Leader	Present

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer, and Senior Committee Clerk

Members of the Public in Attendance: 0

Representations received from Member of the Public: None

18 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

18.1 RESOLVED: To receive and accept apologies for absence as shown above.

18.2 RESOLVED: To agree extended apologies for absence for Cllr Nick Varley.

19 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensation received.

20 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

21 - MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 3RD MARCH 2025

RESOLVED: To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks Town Council held on 3rd March 2025 as a true record.

22 - MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

22.1 - Planning & Environment Committee

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 10th March 2025, 24th March 2025 and 7th April 2025.

22.2 Minute 631 of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 24th March 2025

RESOLVED: To ratify the following Minute 631 of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 24th March 2025:

“631 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW - SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL PROCESS FOR POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF ASSETS

a) The Committee received notice that Sevenoaks District Council is proposing to introduce a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process in response to the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation, which would see the District Council, amongst other neighbouring District and Borough Councils within Kent, merged into several unitary authorities.

b) It was noted that, in order for the District Council to consider transferring an asset to the local Town or Parish Council, there must be a clearly defined reason - being economic, social or environmental benefit to the local community - which demonstrates the benefit of the asset's service being transferred to the Town or Parish Council as opposed to being retained by the District Council and its successor. It was further noted that the interested party must also demonstrate its ability to manage the new assets sustainably and maintain their affordability to residents.

c) It was noted that the deadline for Expressions of Interest for any assets which the Town Council would wish to acquire is June 2025, with the second application / business phase of the CAT process expected to take place in October 2025.

d) The following key topics of note were discussed:

- While asset transfers processed prior to the pending Reorganisation cannot be overturned by the succeeding unitary authority, it was noted that there was an expectation that a moratorium will eventually be placed to stop further transfers, closer to the date of reorganisation.
- Due to the potential pending moratorium period, it was agreed that the Town Council submit an initial priority list of assets that it considers would be best managed locally, in order to direct Officer's time on the most pertinent of assets. A further second tranche may be submitted by the Town Council at a later date, once the biggest priority items had been processed.
- Members emphasised their intention to submit a second wave of proposed asset transfers which would benefit from being managed locally. Among the list of potential assets for future consideration is the Shambles and Bradbourne Lakes.
- Councillors agreed the importance of consistency in the approach of all District and Borough Councils in Kent towards any transfer of assets to their Town and Parish Councils, in order to maintain equality of opportunity and benefit of the local ownership for the Town or Parish's residents.
- The Councillors' view that any emerging asset transfers should be cost-neutral to both interested parties was further clarified to encompass the entirety of the asset transfer list collectively, as opposed to per item. This in order for assets with higher maintenance costs to be offset by the income from the more self-sustaining assets, thus achieving an equilibrium of maintenance costs transferred from the unitary to the Town Council.
- It was noted that the land on which the markets are hosted is not officially registered on HM Land Registry. This was in need of urgent rectification due to the basis for market charges by the District Council depending on its claim to the land's ownership. Councillors hoped that this could be done in conjunction with transfer of the asset to the Town Council.
- It was noted that the St John's Hill Car Park proposal is inclusive of the toilets, and that the Stag proposal similarly inclusive of the adjacent land to facilitate any future development. It was agreed that these clarifications be made clearer in the resulting submission to Sevenoaks District Council.
- On query as to the method of consultation on the assets which the Town Council was proposing to submit an Expression of Interest for, the Town Clerk clarified that a meeting would be arranged to engage with representatives of local Residents Associations in April 2025, and consultation held shortly thereafter with residents. This would likely include an exclusive Town Crier publication sent to all Sevenoaks Town addresses, with a survey to gather opinions on whether residents agree the assets would be better managed at a local level, and with awareness that this could incur more costs locally and resource implications that the transfers could have.

e) It was **RESOLVED** that:

Sevenoaks Town Council – 14th April 2025

- Sevenoaks Town Council seek the transfer of assets, some of which have income generation and some which only have outgoing costs, with the aim that the collective asset transfers be cost neutral both to the new unitary council, and to the local taxpayer.
- Sevenoaks Town Council apply for the following assets in its first round of Expression of Interest and subsequent Business Proposals, for transfer from Sevenoaks District Council as part of the Local Government Reorganisation:
- Sevenoaks Town Council consider applying for additional assets in a second round of Expressions of Interest submissions at a later date, following completion of the below requests having been processed.
- Sevenoaks Town Council consult further with the local community in progressing the above and future asset transfer requests.

Asset to be applied for	ACV	Income Generating	Benefits for the Assets Being Transferred
Stag (including section of car park)	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity <p>STC currently has long term lease.</p> <p>Key component of STNP Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Car park areas expansion in the future to increase sustainability.</p>
St John's Hill car park (including Freehold of Public toilet building)	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity <p>STC currently has lease and recently invested into refurbishment of public toilets</p>

Sevenoaks Town Council – 14th April 2025

			Key component of St John's Hill Masterplan and future development of community spaces and cycle path.
St James car park	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity <p>Key component of St John's Hill Masterplan and future development of community spaces and cycle path.</p>
Sevenoaks Market Rights (including the land on which it is hosted, which is currently unregistered on HM Land Registry)	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity <p>5th March 1974 Sevenoaks Town Council Minutes relating to Local Government Reorganisation state:</p> <p><i>That the Saturday market be the responsibility of the Sevenoaks District Council be accepted but that as this is regarded as part of the ancient history of the Town, the District Council be asked to enter into a covenant to retain the ancient history of a Saturday market and also to the right of the townspeople to reduced stallage rate.</i></p> <p>STC operated and invested in the local markets for over 10 years following petition from market traders and local community.</p>

Bradbourne Vale Road Land	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity <p>Allocated as allotment land in STNP</p>
Hollybush Recreation Ground and Related Assets	No	Some income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Control & Decision Making • Improved Maintenance & Use • Financial Efficiency • Greater Community Engagement • Preservation of Identity

22.3 - Finance & Delivery Committee

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Delivery Committee held on 3rd March 2025.

22.4 - Personnel Committee

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 19th March 2025.

22.5 - Community & Wellbeing Committee

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Community & Wellbeing Committee held on 31st March 2025.

23 - REPORTS TO COUNCIL - STC REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Dixon provided an update from the Friends of Rheinbach, advising that this year was the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Town Twinning Charter which would be celebrated on the trip to Rheinbach in the summer. The Deputy Mayor would write formally to mark the occasion. Events coming up for the Friends of

Rheinbach were a chat with Sir Sebastian Wood, former British Ambassador to Germany, and a walk.

24 - MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported her at events or attended on her behalf, and in particular the Deputy Mayor.

She reminded members of forthcoming civic events: Knole House Tour on 23rd April 2025 and Lunch at Chevening House on 7th May 2025.

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

- a. Functions attended by the Mayor or her representative up to 4th April 2025
- b. Forthcoming Civic Events being organised by the Mayor during 2024/2025

25 - PRESS RELEASE

No Press Releases were requested.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed: Dated:

Mayor