

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Delivery Committee

Held on Monday 21st July 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

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

<https://youtube.com/live/Umpdn1ltDRQ>

Meeting commenced: 7:27 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.08 pm

Present:

Cllr Nigel Wightman, Chair	Present	Cllr Catherine Daniell, Deputy Leader	Apologies
Cllr Claire Shea, Leader & Vice-Chair	Present	Cllr Dr Peter Dixon	Present
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Present	Cllr David Skinner OBE	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton, Mayor	Apologies		

Cllr Lise Michaelides	Substitute for	Cllr Catherine Daniell
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In attendance: Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

No Members of the Public were present.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS: None

236 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

237 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations were received.

238 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

239 - MINUTES OF FINANCE & DELIVERY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Delivery Committee held on 9th June 2025 as a true record.

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240 - FINANCE REPORTS - MAY 2025

240.1 Responsible Finance Officer's reports to 31st May 2025

Statement of Accounts

The Committee received and considered the Statement of Accounts, together with the Responsible Finance Officer's report for the month ended 31st May 2025, including Income and Expenditure by cost centre, Variance Analysis, Fund Balances, Statutory Balance Sheet, Earmarked Reserves and Operating Income & Expenditure, together with:

Supplier's Accounts

- 1st to 31st May 2025, total gross invoices £56,974.51

List of Payments

- Sevenoaks Town Council Nat West Account - 1st to 31st May 2025, total £713,316.82
- Mayor's Charity Account - 1st to 31st May 2025: None

Payroll Account

- 1st to 31st May 2025, total £113,866.13

Petty Cash Account

- 1st to 31st May 2025, total payments £439.75

It was noted that the year-to-date position at the end of May, gave a revenue surplus of £20,180.

RESOLVED: That the Management Accounts 1st to 31st May 2025 be received and accepted.

241 - FINANCE REPORTS - JUNE 2025

241.1 Responsible Finance Officer's reports to 30th June 2025

Statement of Accounts

The Committee received and considered the Statement of Accounts, together with the Responsible Finance Officer's report for the month ended 30th June 2025, including Income and Expenditure by cost centre, Variance Analysis, Fund Balances, Statutory Balance Sheet, Earmarked Reserves and Operating Income & Expenditure, together with:

Supplier's Accounts

- 1st to 30th June 2025, total gross invoices £71,414.02

List of Payments

- Sevenoaks Town Council Nat West Account - 1st to 30th June 2025, total £684,876.94
- Mayor's Charity Account - 1st to 30th June 2025: None

Payroll Account

- 1st to 30th June 2025, total £101,465.00

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Petty Cash Account

- 1st to 30th June 2025, total payments £618.97

It was noted that the year-to-date position at the end of June, gave a revenue surplus of £52,104.

The Committee noted that:

- in the first quarter there was not too much deficit for the cafes, but it was expected to increase in the second half of the year
- Zurich had queried the insurance claim for St Nicholas' Church wall but had now approved payment of £8,000 which would be paid imminently
- CCLA was changing ownership having been bought by a company called Jupiter
- The Greatness Community & Football Pavilion project was progressing and a schedule of payments and cash flow would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee. Sevenoaks District Council had approved the transfer of £787,5000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and funds were awaited

The Committee was advised that the debt of £5,000 for drainage works on Sevenoaks Common to be paid by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) through a grant, had been outstanding for 15 months. The Committee agreed that there should be a further attempt to obtain payment but if unsuccessful consideration would be given to pursuing through the small claims court.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) That the Responsible Finance Officer follow up with SDC the outstanding debt of £5,000 for drainage works on Sevenoaks Common
- 2) The expenditure of £5,950 exclusive of VAT for the valuation of the Stag as part of the Business Plan submitted in the Community Asset Transfer process, be noted
- 3) The Management Accounts 1st to 30th June 2025 be received and accepted

241.2 - Hospitality & Gift Register

RESOLVED: To note the following Hospitality or Gifts received by Councillors or staff for the period 1st May to 30th June 2025:

Date of Offer	To	Accepted /Declined	From	For	Estimated Value
6.5.25	Town Clerk	Accepted	Association of Democratic Service Officers	Invitation to Annual Conference, Awards Dinner, and Accommodation in Liverpool 11 th & 12 September 2025.	£400
17.06.25	Town Clerk	Declined	Summer Festival	2 tickets to Sackville Theatre Show on 30 th June.	£

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**242 - RECOMMENDATION FROM COMMUNITY ASSETS (OPEN SPACES) COMMITTEE:
ALLOTMENT RENTS**

The Committee considered the recommendation from the Community Assets (Open Spaces) Committee regarding allotment rents for 2025/2026. (*Minute 168.1, C&A, 23.06.26 refers*)

RESOLVED:

- 1) That 2026/2027 allotment rents for Quakers Hall Allotments be increased by no more than 4.5% i.e. to 25p per square metre.
- 2) That 2026/2027 allotment rents for Bradbourne Vale Allotments be increased by no more than 4.5% i.e. to 24p per square metre.
- 3) That any increase be communicated to the tenants in September along with their renewal letter and invoice, with the increase effective from 1st October 2026.

243 - KENT PENSION FUND CONSULTATION: POOLING OF TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS

Consideration was given to the Formal Consultation with town and parish councils regarding proposals by the Kent Pension Fund to form a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funding pool specifically for town and parish councils as at 31st March 2025, with a possible universal LGPS pooled employer contribution rate for all involved, operative from 1st April 2026. The consultation deadline was 4th August 2025.

It was noted that the Chair and Responsible Finance Officer would be attending an annual fund meeting later in the year. Councillors asked for a copy of the Kent Pension Fund's investment strategy and risk appetite, and whether there were any exclusions (e.g. fossil fuels, tobacco).

Regarding the consultation on the funding pool specifically for town and parish councils, it was **RESOLVED** to write to Kent County Council asking:

- for more detailed information about how it would work
- for some reassurance about liabilities
- requesting a meeting with KCC and town and parish councils to discuss collectively
- what would happen if KCC or other large organisations pulled out of the scheme and how it would impact those left in

244 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION - TRANSFER OF ASSETS UPDATE

The Committee considered the update report on the Local Government Re-Organisation Community Transfer of Assets, which set out the:

- Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Timetable
- Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) public consultation timetable and receipts to date
- STC's requests submitted in Round 1

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- SDC's response and STC's concerns

It was noted that Cllr Hogarth, leader of SDC, met with the Town Council and community representatives on 14th July 2025 to discuss the process. He advised that the Community Transfer of Assets process would be reviewed and amended. It was not clear how and when this might happen or the implications for the Assets the Town Council had already submitted Expressions of Interest for.

RESOLVED:

- i) Sevenoaks Town Council continue where possible to negotiate with SDC and prepare required information, including Market Value Reports if required for the following asset transfers – Hollybush Recreation Ground, Horse Field Bradbourne Vale Road, Land on High Street & Market Rights, St James Car Park, St John's Hill Car Park.
- ii) To continue with public consultation to demonstrate support for requests for transfer of community assets to Sevenoaks Town Council.
- iii) For Town Councillors to consider following receipt of public consultation and any criteria update which assets to submit Expressions of Interest to SDC for Tranche 2 (1st September 2025)

245 - REPAIRS AND HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR BUCKHURST PLAY AREA

The Committee noted progress against the programme of capital investment in the Town Council's play areas agreed in 2021, subject to availability of funds.

Buckhurst Play Area is situated in the Environmental Park on land leased from Knole Estates. The lease is due to expire this year and is currently being negotiated for a new lease up to 2034.

It was noted that in the last couple of weeks, the play area has suffered considerable vandalism, resulting in some areas being closed off which is unfortunate as summer school holidays are about to begin. The annual ROSPA report has also identified numerous wear and tear issues which need to be replaced as a matter of urgency. Some of the wear and tear relates to the use of wooden equipment in this play area, some wooden timbers sited within metal sleeve have rotted without evidence and then fail suddenly. The wear and tear issues also include substantial repairs required to the safety matting under the popular zip wire.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) £25,000 be allocated from CIL to enable the Buckhurst Play Area and minor improvements to other play areas to be restored to good working order.

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- 2) That the Community Asset (Open Spaces) Committee review the programme for improvements to Play Areas.

246 - SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Committee received and considered the Town Council's Risk Assessment and noted that there was an Action Plan in place in relation to one risk: Financial Management (risk of County or District Council going bankrupt). The Town Council aimed to control this risk by increasing its revenue reserves by £20,000 per year.

RESOLVED: That Sevenoaks Town Council's Risk Assessment and Action Plan be received and accepted.

247 - CURRENT MATTERS & PRIORITIES

Consideration was given to updates on Current Matters and the Town Council Priorities.

Councillors were pleased to note the Town Council's success in being awarded CIL grant funding by the District Council as follows:

- £100,000 toward the new Greatness Play Area
- £20,000 towards the new pedestrian crossing on Dartford Road

Councillors were also pleased with the resurfacing of the Vine Gardens which had improved the aesthetics and accessibility of the public space.

RESOLVED: To receive and note updates to:

- a) Current Matters
- b) Priorities of the Town Council

248 - PRESS RELEASE: None

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed
Chair

Dated