

Sevenoaks Town Council

AMENDED Minutes of the meeting of the Arts & Culture Working Group Held on Thursday 12 March 2026 in the Harry Garret Hall, Bat and Ball Centre, TN14 5DN

Meeting commenced: 14:00

Meeting Concluded: 15:50

Present:

Cllr Victoria Granville (Chair)	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides (Vice-Chair)	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Present	Cllr Tony Clayton (Mayor)	Present
Cllr Sally Layne	Apologies	Cllr Claire Shea	Apologies

Also present:

Linda Larter MBE- Town Clerk and CEO of Sevenoaks Town Council,
Mathew Wood- Owner of Second Floor Art Studios,
Liz Botterill- Curator of Sevenoaks Museum,
Ian Hooper- The Beatles in Sevenoaks,
Andrew Mason- The Beatles in Sevenoaks,
John Levette- Sevenoaks Summer Festival, Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra, The Listening Room,
Deborah Gjeloshaj- The Kitchen Youth Opera,
Roger Lee- SDAC & Sevenoaks Camera Club,
Alan Pett- Chairman of SDAC,
Andrew Eyre- CEO of the Stag Theatre,
Charles Dymoke – Chair of Sevenoaks Arts Society,
Michael McKee- Secretary of Sevenoaks Arts Society,
Lee Kings- Chairman of Sevenoaks Arts Club,
Susanne Beard- Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery,
Ros Barker- Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery,
Ewan Harris- Work Experience Young Person for Sevenoaks Town Council,
Ieuan Chandler-Wilson- Youth Committee Clerk.

67 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that the following had sent apologies,

Mandy Turnbull-Sevenoaks Library,
Kim Silver- Sevenoaks Literary Festival,
Amy Sabine- National Trust,
Audery Franks- Sevenoaks Summer Festival
Ray Russell- Sevenoaks Summer Festival
Fleur Sinclair- Sevenoaks Bookshop

68 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

REOLVED: To note there were no requests for dispensations.

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69 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED: To note there were no declarations of interest.

70 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12TH OF NOVEMBER 2025

It was noted that a request for Minute Number 56 to be amended had been received. This was amended to the following wording:

Lee Kings informed the Working Group that 2026 would mark the 125th anniversary of Sevenoaks Art Club, which was founded in the town in 1901. It was noted that they had booked an exhibition of club members' work at Kaleidoscope in November 2026, which will conclude their year of celebrating their 125th anniversary.

It was also noted that Sevenoaks Art Club had welcomed a number of new members to the club, including some younger members.

RESOLVED: That these amendments be made and the amended minutes be adopted.

71 - SEVENOAKS CULTURAL QUARTER STRATEGY

It was noted that the following updates be made:

2.1- Creative Workspace: Sevenoaks District Council are now in talks with its preferred contractor for the plans for Land East of High Street. It was noted that once talks had been finalised, a public consultation would be held.

2.3- Architecture & Heritage: In addition to the historic commemorative plaques recently installed by Sevenoaks Town Council, it was noted that the Working Group liked the idea of placing plaques to mark historical places and/ or people in the town. It was noted that a similar project had been done in Frittenden by their Historical Society in 2024; these were done as purple plaques around 30 buildings of Historical importance to the Town. This was done as part of the society's 50th-year anniversary, culminating with a booklet published by the society with a map showing the location of the Plaque and a more detailed history of each building.

2.4- Creative Promotion: It was noted that in 2024 and 2025, STC had produced a booklet on the upcoming events happening over the summer. Councillors found this very useful and noted for this to continue.

3.5- Wayfinding: The Working Group noted that the Town Council had carried out a feasibility study for wayfinding within the town and had applied for funding to progress this. It was also noted that if the grant application was successful, the next stage would be to apply for planning to implement the Wayfinding.

3.9- Kaleidoscope Building: It was noted that when the Kaleidoscope building was constructed over 20 years ago, metal hooks were placed under the ramp for Banners. It was noted that a meeting between the Town Council, Kaleidoscope, the Library and the Museum

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could take place to further discuss this. The Councillors also heard that the walkway between the Pure Lake development and the Buckhurst car park is due to be reopened. It was hoped that this might increase some foot traffic to the Library and Museum.

4.1- Stag Community Arts Centre: It was noted that the Town Council had previously requested a Community Asset Transfer of The Stag Theatre from Sevenoaks District Council. Members further noted that the District Council had asked for a financial contribution as part of asset transfers to other parish Councils.

Members also noted concerns regarding the current lease arrangement for The Stag building. It was highlighted that, with the potential introduction of a new unitary authority, there was uncertainty as to whether the existing lease would be reissued upon its expiration in a few years. In addition, it was noted that retaining the building under a lease rather than through Freehold could make it more difficult to secure external funding for future development works, including those projects identified in the feasibility study previously commissioned by the Town Council.

The Town Council and the Trustees of The Stag considered that it would not be appropriate for public funds to be used to purchase a public building. As a result, a public petition had been launched calling on Sevenoaks District Council to transfer The Stag Theatre to the Town Council at no cost.

It was reported that the petition had received approximately 2,900 signatures.

To receive and note the updated Sevenoaks Cultural Quarter Strategy document.

72 - GOVERNMENT SEEKING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TOWN OF CULTURE COMPETITION

The Working Group heard that Sevenoaks Town Council plans to enter the Town of Culture Competition. It was noted that there were a large number of other local councils submitting applications. It was noted that if STC's application was shortlisted, it could receive £60,000 to help continue its applications. This could help to progress a number of ideas outlined in the application, such as Wayfinding infrastructure.

The members were asked if they had any amendments to the entry to let the Town Clerk know by Friday, 20th March. It was noted that the final deadline for entries was the 31st of March 2026.

RESOLVED: For STC to progress with the Competition entry, and for a press release to be issued on the Town's entry.

73 - SEVENOAKS SUMMER FESTIVAL

It was noted that the Sevenoaks Summer festival was not going ahead this year and was taking a break while they find people who would take on the running of the event, with the hope that it would return next year.

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However, it was noted that the Summer Festival Committee would still help promote any events going on during the summer this year and asked that people send them any information about their events.

74 - UPDATES FROM ATTENDEES

Liz Botterill reported that the Museum had been holding still life drawing days for people who wanted to come into the museum. It was noted that these had been put on hold while the new storage shelves were installed. Liz reported she is hopeful that it will restart shortly, but would email all those on her list to let them know when these sessions will restart.

It was also noted that the Museum had received some funding from the Arts Society to allow them to fund another museum Loan box for the Medieval and Tudor periods. These boxes can be loaned from the Museum to Schools and other groups to allow them to handle artefacts.

Mathew Wood reported all was going well; they currently had three of their 19 studios that were previously unoccupied, and two out of three of the Studios were now occupied. The third studio had sustained significant water damage, which had rendered it inoperable, and they were currently talking to the district to find a solution to this. He also noted that they were still looking for a development in the town to grow the number of affordable studios for artists in Sevenoaks.

Lee Kings reported that members of Sevenoaks Art Club were enjoying a varied programme of visiting artists, meeting every fortnight, with new members continuing to join. In the summer, club sessions would move outside for painting in various locations in the Sevenoaks area. The club would be holding its annual exhibition of members' work in November at the Kaleidoscope Gallery.

Ros Barker reported that the Kaleidoscope gallery was now fully booked for 2026; they were starting to take proposals for 2027. It was noted that they were starting to revive the community pony project that was started in 2017. In 2019, they had planned to use the pony to help act as a way to guide people through the displays at the Kaleidoscope gallery. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, this project did not fully go ahead. It is hoped that with this year being the Chinese Year of the Horse, the project could be revived. The Project invites people aged 2-92 to create a horse, which would be later mounted on banners that will be displayed from the ceiling in the gallery.

Charles Dymoke reported that Sevenoaks Arts Society's membership continued to grow with a myriad of Lectures and events taking place throughout 2026, with one due to take place about Istanbul on the 27th March. It was noted that they had also funded an arts workshop at House in the Basement Youth Café and a new loan box for Sevenoaks Museum.

Cllr Alan Pett reported that Sevenoaks District Arts Council (SDAC) was a group formed by the District Council alongside the Sports Council to help promote Art and Culture throughout the district. He noted that with the proposed removal of the District Council via

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the Local Government Reorganisation, the future of SDAC funding is uncertain. They currently support over 50 organisations, ranging from fine arts to performing arts groups.

Roger Lee reported that the Sevenoaks Photography group continues to gain members with more young people engaging in the sessions. It was noted that they are currently looking to update their website. Roger also mentioned that they are still doing their displays in railway stations and at times in pubs. They were exploring the idea of using some of the hoardings and/ or the empty shops around the town.

It was also noted that Roger had an exhibition in June at the Kaleidoscope gallery of portraits of 29 artists from Sevenoaks, to help raise awareness of the talented individuals within the town and some of their work.

Debbie from the Kitchen Youth Opera reported that they had been running for over 30 years and performed regularly at the Stag. While the last performance had sold out, they noted they had found it hard to get the word out about the event. They asked if there was a way to collaborate with those who attend the meetings to help spread information about each other's events. It was agreed that the newly formed Arts & Culture Working Group was a good way to address this.

John Levette reported that while the summer festival was not running this year, they would be helping to promote any events that would happen during the festival dates. It was noted that the festival only puts on a couple of events each year and asks for other groups and organisations that are doing things during the summer to send them a list of what they are up to, and they will help promote those events. It was noted that John also runs the Listening Room, which puts on music at the Anchor two nights a week as well as putting on music at the Ship theatre and Floodlights bar in the stag.

Ian Hooper reported that in 2027, it will be the 60th anniversary of the Beatles coming to Sevenoaks for the filming of Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane. It was noted that a Mayor's Concert had been arranged to take place at the Stag with a Beatles tribute band for the 6th of Feb 2027, which would be 60 years to the date. Ian circulated Appendix 1, asking for comments and help with the ideas listed in the document. It was noted that Ian had also written a book about the Beatles and was hoping to give a talk in the Stag on the morning of the 6th of Feb. Ian also reported that some of the ideas such as a Art Trail and walks had been done 20 years ago for the 40th anniversary with an event at the Kaleidoscope making it all about the 60s era.

Ian also mentioned that they would like some help designing a logo that could be used for coherent branding across any events that groups do throughout to link it to, in order to make it almost like a festival.

It was noted that the Councillors had taken a photo similar to the iconic Beatles Abbey Road photoshoot to celebrate the completion of the new crossing on Dartford Road.

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The Mayor of Sevenoaks Cllr Tony Clayton announced that he had two events upcoming one was a Charity Concert at the Stag Theatre with bands such as Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra, Green Street Blues and Sevenoaks Sings all performing on Thursday the 19th of March 2026 at 7.30 pm with proceeds of the evening going to his Charities, North West Kent Citizens Advice and Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust. The Mayor also reported that Bob Ogley would be giving another talk following the ones at Knole and at the Sevenoaks Bookshop about the Story of Knole Park. It was noted that this would be taking place at Sevenoaks School on Monday, 30th March at 7.30 pm.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed
Chair

Dated

The Beatles in Sevenoaks 60th Anniversary Ideas

Event	When
Mayor's Charity Concert: Imagine The Beatles at The Stag	06-Feb-27
The Beatles in Kent talk at The Stag	06-Feb-27 (Morning)
Other talks from professional authors or speakers in conjunction with Sevenoaks Bookshop	TBC
Unveiling of blue plaque on 44a High Street (where John Lennon bought the Mr Kite Poster)	06-Feb-27
Strawberry Fields Tree Monument	TBC
Art Trail	TBC
The Beatles in Sevenoaks book and launch	2026
Guided walk around The Beatles sites in Knole Park and the town	30-Jan-27 -
Performance of Beatles Music by Local Musicians at The Anchor and other Venues	TBC
Beatles Karaoke night at The Anchor	30-Jan-27
Exhibition of archive photos of The Beatles filming in Knole Park displayed in The Stag Bar and/or The Library	Jan-27 - Onwards
Beatles inspired photo and art exhibition	Jan-27 - Onwards
Beatles films at The Stag	06-Feb-27
Publicity: Contact The Beatles, their estates and Media	N/A
Promotion and Merchandise	N/A
Abbey Road Crossing Outside of Olafs	06-Feb-27