

Sevenoaks TOWN council



Annual Report

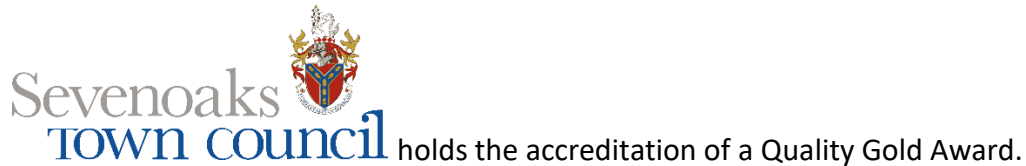
2018 / 2019

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The National Association of Local Councils states: “The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.”

Councillors continue to be committed to providing the finest services and best value for money for residents despite the challenges posed by the current economic climate. The Town Council has a policy to wherever possible seek external funding for capital projects and has been successful to date in doing this.

Sevenoaks Town Council has active partnerships with the District and County Councils and lobby central government through the National and Kent Associations of Local Councils for the benefit of local electors and businesses. They also monitor Government legislation being passed which directly affects our tier of Government and local communities and will adopt any new policies and powers available for the enhancement of Sevenoaks Town.

Sevenoaks Town Council has weekly meetings at the Town Council offices in Bradbourne Vale Road which the public are warmly invited to attend to ensure the Council is performing to its optimum. These meetings are advertised on the Town Council’s website and in the public notices section of the Sevenoaks Chronicle.

1. The Mayoral Year & Civic Events

Councillor Maxine Chakowa's Mayoral civic year ended in May 2018. Her chosen charity was Breast Cancer Care and Sevenoaks Breast Cancer Support Group and raised £40,000 during the year for these very worthwhile causes. The Sevenoaks Breast Cancer Support Group was newly created to provide weekly support for those affected (and their families) by the illness.

To date the Mayor, Councillor Roderick Hogarth, has accepted in the region of 200 invitations to various events throughout Kent and the surrounding area. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Nick Busvine OBE and other councillors have also represented the town on a further 12 occasions.



Sevenoaks Powerchair Football is the Mayor's primary chosen charity this year. They are also part of the Sevenoaks Mayor's Fund.

Originally named the Sevenoaks Fund it successfully enabled a new £450,000 3G Football Pitch to be built for and used by the Sevenoaks Town Football Club. Initially the intention was to have the Fund operational for one year. However, the Mayor thought that the initiative and the community benefits were too important not to continue. Therefore, it has been agreed to continue with the Fund and rebrand it the Sevenoaks Mayors Fund for all future Mayors to use. During Cllr Hogarth's year of office, he will be raising funds for the following four charities:

- Sevenoaks Powerchair Football
- Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club (3G pitch)
- Sevenoaks Day Nursery
- Stag

CIVIC EVENTS 2018

- **Commonwealth Day**
A 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth Ceremony' was held at the Town Council Offices in March. Local organisations and charities were invited to attend, and Westerham Sea Cadets raised the Commonwealth flag.
- **World War 1 Single Commemorative event**
For the past 4 years the Commonwealth Ceremony has been followed by a short Service to commemorate the First World War 1914-18 and a commemorative candle has been lit every year in the Council Chamber. The 2018 event signified the end of the First World War when the fourth and last candle was lit. Douglas Horner Deputy Lieutenant of Kent attended the Service and Ceremony
- **Armed Forces Day**
The Mayor and Councillors attended a Service and raising of the Armed Forces Day Flag at The Vine to show support for the UK Armed Forces who defend the UK its interests. The Vice President of the Royal British Legion, Pat Moore, Legion d'Honneur, read the Exhortation.



- **Remembrance Day Service & Parade**
The Remembrance Day Service and Parade at the Vine War Memorial is organised and co-ordinated by the Town Council. An organisational meeting is held three months in advance to co-ordinate with the Royal British Legion and representatives of the Armed Forces Associations. A road closure order is arranged and 30 charities, local organisations, including Cadet forces, Guides and Scouts attend with a growing congregation. 2018 was a particularly poignant service, as it was also Armistice Day and

the centenary of the end of WW1 and over 1,000 people attended the open-air Service and March Past.



- **Beacon Lighting**
In commemoration of the ending of WW1, the beacon was lit on The Vine. The Mayor read the 'Tribute to the Millions', a bagpiper played 'The Battle's Over' and 'A Cry for Peace' was read out to the local residents gathered round the brazier.

2. Finance

In 2018/19, Council approved a budget of £1,651,731. General reserves brought forward was £307,905 (2017/18 £351,117) and earmarked reserves (including proceeds from the sale of Raleys) was £1,622,818 (2017/18 £2,192,667). For the first time, Sevenoaks Town Council qualified for the NAL Super Councils' Network, a network of England's largest local council facilitated by NALC in 2018-2019.

The Council does not receive money from central government, as a result it continues to be creative in the way that it funds and delivers services to the community. Capital projects for new and improved community facilities are funded from capital receipts, earmarked reserves and grants where possible. Earmarked reserves include capital receipts, Community Infrastructure Levy income and grants received for specific activities and projects.

The Town Council budget includes income of

- £1,088,593 from the precept paid for by Sevenoaks domestic ratepayers (council tax)
- £555,826 from fees and charges on facilities and services such as hire of community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, Café on the Vine, rents and leases and allotments
- £7,312 from council reserves to make Bat & Ball Station building cost neutral in initial phase of operation.

At the Council meeting held on 21st January 2019, Council approved a budget of £1,882,554 for 2019-2020. This will be funded by fees and charges of £715,169 (38%), a precept levy of £1,141,385 (61%) and a transfer of £26,000 from reserves balances. For an average Band D house in Sevenoaks, this equates to £118.43 per year or £2.28 per week (an increase of £3.48 per year or 7p per week on 2018-19).

3. Sevenoaks Town Council's Grants to voluntary organisations

Sevenoaks Town Council continues to provide grants to local groups, it is also a major sponsor of the Stag Community Arts Centre and Sevenoaks Summer Festival.

Groups who have benefited from the Town Council Grants during the year 2018/2019 include:

- Sevenoaks Summer Festival 2018
- Matthew Ball for his book "Sevenoaks, The Great War and it's legacy"
- Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group
- Sevenoaks Literary Festival
- Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival
- Friends of Pontoise
- Friends of Rheinbach
- Sevenoaks Art Club
- Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra
- D'Vine Singers
- Sevenoaks Air Cadets
- A member of 2158 (Sevenoaks) Squadron ACO
- Stag Community Arts Centre
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival
- Sevenoaks Counselling Service
- Kent Painter's Group.

Sevenoaks Summer Festival 2019 also received a grant of £5,000 for the year 2019/2020 for its 50th Festival taking place Summer 2019.

4. Council Chamber

The Council Chamber is regularly used by councillors on Monday evenings for Council meetings at which the public are welcome to attend. The meetings are listed on the Town Council website and advertised regularly in the local paper. The venue is also available for hire by community organisations.

5. Community Investment Plan

In 2014 Sevenoaks Town Council set out its first ambitious £4m Community Investment Plan to restore and improve community facilities. Below is a summary of the projects achieved and those that are ongoing.

The Town Council also created a 'Development Fund' which enabled development work e.g. structural surveys, quantity surveyors report to be undertaken to provide a higher success rate when applying for grants. The fund would also cover the repayment of any loans required to assist with essential cash flow and finances for major capital projects.

A second Community Investment Plan will be published in 2019 setting out objectives for the next five years.

2014 Community Investment Plan

Ref	Project	Funds Invested	Funded by	Status
1	Replacement of Raleys Gym – investment into new facilities at Sencio Leisure Centre	£95,000	Sale of Raleys	Completed
2	Replacement of Indoor Cricket School – funds provided to Sevenoaks District Council in s.106 agreement	£150,000	Sale of Raleys	Ongoing
3	Café on the Vine – restored historic building and brought back into useful community use.	£150,000	ICET grant and STC reserves.	Completed
4	New Play Area near the Town Centre – Buckhurst Play Area	£100,000	Sale of Raleys CETB grant	Completed
5	Greatness Recreation Ground – new public toilet, fencing, additional benches and play equipment.	£50,000	CIL ICET grant	Completed
6	Multi Use Games Area (to replace tennis courts at Community Centre) awaiting construction of new centre	£100,000	Sale of Raleys	Development Stage
7	'Free' recreational facilities – additional play equipment at Kippington Meadow	£4,000	Kent County Council Cllr Crabtree Member Grant	Completed

Ref	Project	Funds Invested	Funded by	Status
8	<p>Sports Strategy</p> <p>The Sports Strategy involving 40 local sports clubs has been completed and is an appendix to the Neighborhood Development Plan.</p> <p>3G Football Pitch installed at Greatness</p> <p>3G Rugby Pitch at Knole Paddock</p> <p>3G Hockey Pitch at Hollybush (contribution)</p>	<p>£450,000</p> <p>£500,000</p> <p>£50,000</p>	<p>Sale of Raleys</p> <p>Sevenoaks Mayor's Fund</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>At Planning</p> <p>Completed</p>
9	<p>Neighborhood Development Plan</p> <p>Completed to draft stage awaiting Local Plan development.</p> <p>Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks developed and supported by approximately 70% of local community. Provides plan for regeneration and investment in the area.</p> <p>No. 8 Bus – orbital bus route connecting residential areas to town centre. Winner of UK Community Bus 2018.</p>	<p>£100,000</p> <p>£150,000</p>	<p>STC Budget</p> <p>KCC s.106 and community transport fund.</p>	<p>Development Stage</p>
10	<p>Stag Community Arts Centre</p> <p>Capital investment including air handling unit.</p>	<p>£150,000</p>	<p>Sale of Raleys</p>	<p>Completed</p>
11	<p>Bat & Ball Centre</p> <p>Planning permission has been obtained and construction due to commence June 2019</p>	<p>£2,750,000</p>	<p>Sale of Raleys</p> <p>£1.2m CIL</p> <p>Public Works Loan Board</p>	<p>Development Stage</p>
	<p>Total capital investment into community facilities</p>	<p>£4,799,000</p>		

Additional to Community Investment Plan

Ref	Project	Funds Invested	Funded by	Status
13	Bat & Ball Station building refurbishment	£1,452,000	Heritage Lottery Fund CIL Railway Heritage Trust STC Budget	Completed
	New Access Ramp to Platform 1	£60,000	CIL	2019
	Cycle racks at station entrance.	£29,000	CIL	2019
	Cycle racks (including electrical charging) on community centre land adjacent to ramp.	£45,000	CIL	2019
	New Pedestrian Access to Otford Road	£35,000	CIL	2019
	Total capital investment into community facilities	£1,621,000		
	2014 total Capital Investment Plan into community facilities	£4,799,000		
	Additional total Capital Investment Plan into community facilities	£1,621,000		
		£6,420,000		

6. Bat & Ball Station project



In 2014 a Bat & Ball Station Friends Group was created as a Committee of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership. The Friends Group identified the following main aims and created a strategy to support these:

1. Support regeneration of Bat & Ball area, highlighting benefits of the station
2. Promote the station
3. Promote the station building as a venue / facility
4. Encourage integration with other community / business projects e.g. Britain in Bloom, Vintage Bus, Summer Festival / Arts
5. Protect and inform re Historical / Conservation importance
6. Provide information to the public

Bat & Ball Station Building is a predominantly single storey Victorian property constructed in 1862 and is Grade II listed. At the time it was built the station was a terminus of the branch line from Swanley Junction prior to the line being extended to Sevenoaks Station in 1868.

The Station Building had been vacant for several years and in places derelict. Part of the building is understood to be the original station master's two storey house and this part of the building is now in use as a private residential dwelling. Therefore, this part of the building is not within the current project but should be earmarked as an aspiration should it come on the market in the future.

The station building is within the Sevenoaks Town Council's Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan for the regeneration of the area and complementing a new Bat & Ball Centre to be constructed on the opposite side of the railway and integral to wider development – new leisure, business, and homes.

The station was identified by the public as an area of concern in relation to personal safety. It is believed that a presence in the building and investment will improve this perception and act as a deterrent. It will also act as a magnet for both essential regeneration and footfall in the northern Sevenoaks area.

Thanks to National Lottery players a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £755,600 will provide a restored building with provide public toilets, two community rooms, and a café selling Kent produce and heritage information. All these facilities should encourage more people to use the station.

Construction of the station building commenced in June 2018. In November 2018 a Preview Event was held to thank those involved in the project. This coincided with a steam train passing through the station and was attended by Michael Portillo. Discussions are ongoing for a royal visitor to formerly open the project during 2019.



In addition to the station building refurbishment the following is being provided – new railings and gate, cycle racks, ramp for platform 1. Works will continue on these during 2019.

Sevenoaks Town Council wishes to publically thank the following for their support and assistance in developing the grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund – Members of Friends of Bat & Ball Station, Sevenoaks District Council, Railway Heritage Trust, Southeastern, Network Rail, Sir Michael Fallon, MP, The Project Team, Warners Solicitors, F M Conway, Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association and Knole Academy.

The Community Centre has three varied size rooms, the Large Hall, Small Hall and Bar Room offering hirers the choice of comfortable accommodation to suit their event, large or small, with kitchen facilities if required. All rooms are on the ground floor and are accessible via a ramped entrance to the building. There is a large free car park, which provides ample parking for hirers. The Community Centre continues to host a varied group of regular hirers, including dance classes, tea dance, exercise classes, professional business meetings, U3A, the Arts Society, Probus, bridge club, family history group, friendship group, exercise classes and children's playgroup. Weekend events at the Community Centre include private parties, children's parties, martial arts classes, faith-based group meetings and picture framing once a month. Children's parties are very popular using the Large Hall as this is an excellent size for entertainment and setting up party tables.

User Group Meetings are continuing at the Community Centre and contact with the hirers has been very helpful and informative.

The Community Centre will be closing its doors at the end of May 2019 for a period of approximately 18 months during which time extensive refurbishment and extension works will be carried out.

The current facilities although used extensively as a community hub are now more than thirty years old and the fabric of the building requires costly maintenance and is uneconomic to run. Public feedback indicates that the centre is no longer a venue where they would want to hold a special family occasion e.g. wedding. Also, a larger venue has been requested by businesses and public for events with a sit-down capacity for 250. Currently businesses go out of town for such facilities.

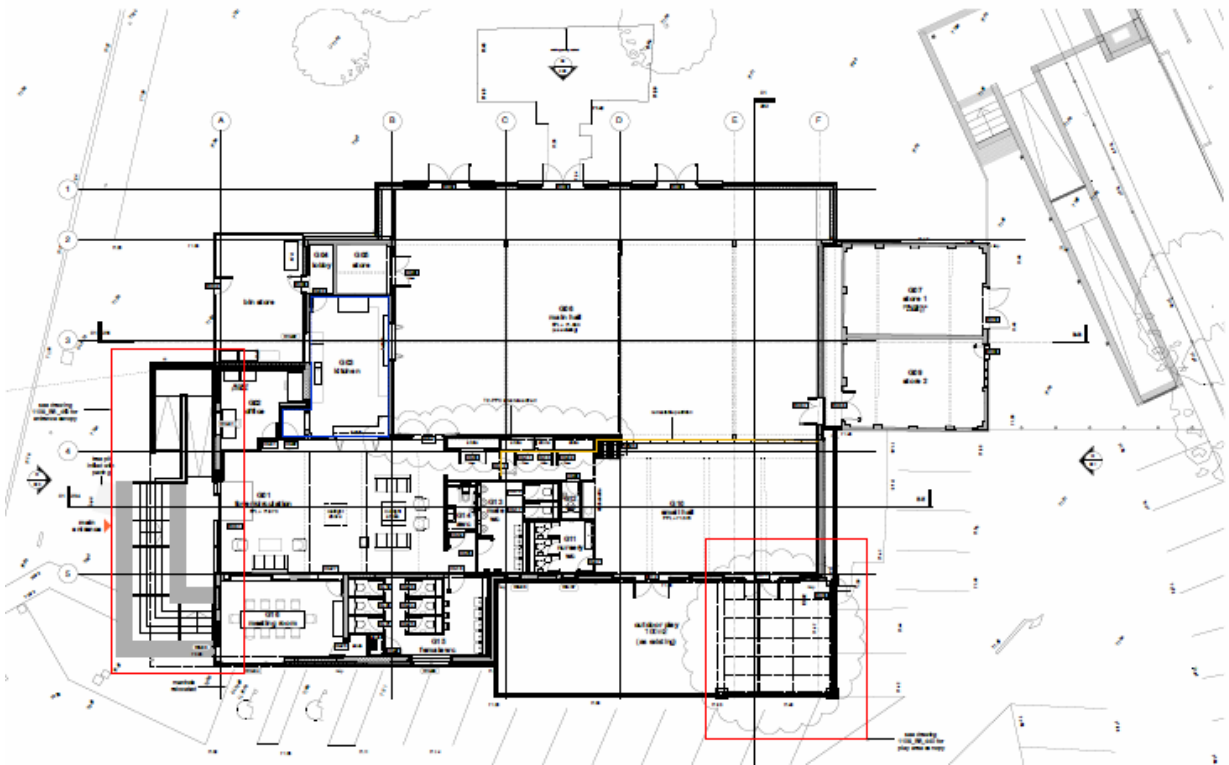
Sevenoaks Town Council has been through a public development period where various options have been tabled and discussed, including a two storey building with relocation of Sevenoaks Town Council offices.

The plan is now for a one storey facility with the Town Council offices remaining at its current location.

The new plan provides several advantages

- Less pressure on car parking at the Bat & Ball Centre
- Also, at STC offices site, enabling nearby residents to use some car parking spaces during non-office hours.
- Retains community assets

- Enables Sevenoaks Day Nursery to continue with their original plans
- Enables a new Business Hub to be created on the STC office site



The new refurbished Centre is within the Northern Ward of Sevenoaks, a ward that requires some overdue attention.

In the next eighteen months there are also likely to be new housing developments within walking distance of the centre e.g. at the Gas Works and South East Water site with more in the pipe line. It is believed that this community provision which was already a priority has become an even greater need.

It is envisaged that the new Bat & Ball Centre will be one of the key projects for the regeneration of the Bat & Ball area and complementing and interactive with the adjoining station refurbishment. The driving vision for the new Bat & Ball Centre is to replace the tired and no longer fit for purpose thirty-year-old community centre with a facility that will be characterised by being a high-quality contemporary building, within accessible and vibrant public realm enabling a lively and eclectic mix of daytime and evening activities.

Sevenoaks Town Council has been working on this project for some time and it has evolved as mentioned above. Unfortunately, it has also been subject to delays initially due to planning problems relating to the sale of Raleys land which was needed to provide the capital funds and subsequently due to planning problems with the proposed Centre. The project is now scheduled to commence construction in June 2019.

Following the completion of the building a second phase of the project will address landscaping of the site.

7. Open Spaces Committee

Allotments

Sevenoaks Town Council owns two allotment sites, one in Bradbourne Vale Road and the other in Quakers Hall Lane.

The Quaker Hall Allotments were leased to Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association. In 2017 the lease to the Association ended and Sevenoaks Town Council took over the management of the site on 1st October.

The Town Council has completed its first full year as manager of the Quakers Hall Allotment site. Eight large shed blocks had their roofs replaced with painted galvanised steel and gutters were installed with the run-off being collected in huge tanks. This project has been well received by the tenants.

There was a successful Working Party held in April 2018 when tenants and councillors worked together to empty and tidy out more than 30 sheds. Tools and equipment were recycled, and rubbish was dumped. More Working Parties are planned for this spring and autumn when routine maintenance will be carried out. The Town Council are continuing to research capital projects such as installation of a free-standing solar array into the Trading Centre, and they will apply for grants to cover the cost of such projects. There is a short waiting list for plots and a regular stream of enquiries.

Vine Green Flag Award:

In 2017 The Vine was awarded Green Flag status. The Vine is among a record-breaking 1,797 UK parks and green spaces that has received a prestigious Green Flag Award– the mark of a quality park or green space.

In 2018 The Vine was visited by the Green Flag's Mystery Shopper for an interim quality assessment who commented: *'It was obvious that there is a dedicated group of people involved in the ongoing management and maintenance of the park with flower beds prepared for winter and the park being generally well maintained.'*

When I visited, there was a display of knitted poppies to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1 in conjunction with In Bloom alongside a "Welcome Arch". It's positive to see the park being used to display this community project and that it is being used year-round. I think this demonstrates the key role The Vine plays in the local community due to its key location.'



South East in Bloom

Sevenoaks Town Council took part in the South & South East in Bloom competition the theme for 2018 was WW1 Commemoration.

To commemorate the end of WW1 Sevenoaks Town Council took part in the national Ribbon of Poppies campaign. People were asked to knit/crochet poppies that were placed on the Vine Gardens. On Monday 11th June at 3pm the Mayor of Sevenoaks, Cllr Roderick Hogarth and a host of members of the public installed the knitted poppies at the Vine which created a fantastic and very moving display. The Town Council are grateful to everyone who took part in the project.



School children and youth groups were asked to paint poppy designs on to stones to represent all 226 names on the Vine War Memorial. The poppy stones were collected by Sevenoaks Town Council and hidden in different parks for children to find. This project was so popular that three stones were received for every name. The Town Council wished to record

its gratitude to the following for their involvement in this project: Sevenoaks Brownies, Granville School, Shoreham School, Walthamstow Hall School, United Reform Church 6th Brownie Group, New Beacon and Cllr Robert Piper.



Further projects to commemorate the end of WW1 included a Willow Plane sculpture and replica archway at the Vine Gardens. Two Tommy figures, a Poppy Post Box (kindly donated by Terry Malone) and 'Letter to a Soldier' campaign.

Sevenoaks received the following South & South East in Bloom awards:

- Town Centre – Gold
- The Vine – Gold
- Upper High Street Gardens – Silver Gilt
- Greatness Cemetery – Silver
- Sevenoaks Common – Silver

It was a fantastic result for all involved, and the Town Council is sincerely grateful to those who assisted in the project particularly Sevenoaks Round Table, Sevenoaks Living Landscape and the Soroptimists. Plans for the 2019 entry are now underway. The theme for 2019 is edible planting and the colours Red, White & Blue.

Greatness Cemetery

Greatness Cemetery continues to provide a popular and peaceful refuge for the bereaved. From 1st April 2018 to January 2019 44 burials took place.

In 2018 during the events to mark the Centenary of the end of WW1 there were three talks organised by Sevenoaks Town Council and local historian Matthew Ball. The talks were well attended and a suggestion from participants was to create a Friends of Greatness Cemetery Group. The Friends of Greatness Cemetery will have their first meeting in 2019 to plan for events and planting work to be carried out at the Cemetery during 2019 and beyond.

Pontoise Play Area Refurbishment project

In 2018 Sevenoaks Town Council was awarded a grant by Enover Community Trust. The grant will be used to replace the swing set, repaint other play equipment and add an additional piece of all-inclusive play equipment. Work for the project takes place in February, 2019.

Kippington Meadow Play Area



In 2018 a grant was awarded from Kent County Councillor Margaret Crabtree to install new play equipment within the meadow. The wooden play equipment includes a balance beam course and scramble net. The new equipment has been enjoyed by many members of the public who attended two play dates at the meadow which included a children's entertainer.

Vine Pavilion & Disabled Ramp

Thanks to a generous £25,000 grant from Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund repair work has been carried out to the Sash Windows at the Vine Pavilion. A new disabled ramp was installed during December 2018 and January 2019. This vital addition to the area will allow people using wheelchairs and buggies access to the pavilion from the cricket field area.

Summer Play Provision

Each year Sevenoaks Town Council hosts free Summer Play Dates at a variety of locations around the town during the August school holidays.

In 2018 there were three events held at the Vine Gardens, Greatness Recreation Ground and Pontoise Play Area. The events were enjoyed by hundreds of children and included bouncy castles, games, craft activities and magic shows.

Roadside Advertising and Highway Banners

The Town Council agreed to take over the responsibility for regulating road side advertising within the town, which was previously a Kent County Council function. It also informally regulates the installation of posters at seven sites enabling advertising of local community events. Local interest groups pay a small fee to help cover the cost of administration of the scheme.

The Town Council enable local organisations to advertise via a highway banner subject to terms and conditions for a maximum period of two weeks. This restriction enables more local community members to advertise their events during the year.

Knole Paddock and Raleys Field

Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club is working with Sevenoaks Town Council to develop the provision of a 3G pitch predominantly for rugby. The project is at the early planning and fundraising stage.

7. Community Events

Sevenoaks Town Council works in conjunction with Sevenoaks Town Partnership and other organisations to provide an annual calendar of events. These events help to create community interaction and derive economic benefits for the area.

To assist with this, Sevenoaks Town Partnership has created an Events Committee. The aim of the Events Committee is to enable Sevenoaks organisations to consider methods to share resources, experience, and knowledge for the benefit of all who are holding events in the town.

Armed Forces Day and Sevenoaks Charity Fair – new combined event

In commemoration of the Centenary of the end of WWI in 2018, the Town Council decided to host the Charity Fayre plus the Armed Forces Day together in the Vine Gardens with a host of activities and enabling Voluntary Organisations to hold stalls free of charge to promote their community services.

The Vine Gardens has more space and thus enables the Charity Fayre to comprise of an additional 10 stalls for the benefit of the local community.

2018 included the Air Cadets, Army Cadets, Sea Cadets, Scouts, stall holders with entertainment on the Vine Bandstand with approximately 600 members over the course of the day joining in.



Bands on the Bandstand



During the Summer months the Town Council pays for local bands to provide concerts available free for the public to attend during Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons.

A fantastic way to enjoy the outdoors and relax with family and friends.

Christmas Lights 2018

In 2018 three lantern workshops were held for families to bring to the Preview Event at the Bat & Ball Station on 27th November 2018 and the Sevenoaks Strictly Christmas Lights Switch On event on 30th November 2018.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Pegasus Life/Wilderness House Sevenoaks sponsored these workshops. Heritage Lottery Fund for the Bat & Ball Station Community Projects and Pegasus Life for the Christmas Lights Switch On Event. One of the themes was for the Bat & Ball Station and train, which resulted in the following lanterns being made:



Sevenoaks Christmas Lights were switched on in the town centre on Friday 30th November 2018. It was superb evening with approximately 10,000 members of the public supporting the event, enjoying the entertainment and lights over the course of the evening.

The stage was positioned in the centre of the town outside Wagamama with a host of entertainment, including Matthew Highton as compere and Ian Waite from Strictly Come Dancing.

The special Christmas Website, now in its third year with a new permanent domain name of: www.sevenoakschristmaslights.com became increasingly popular attracting 7,869 hits. This represented an increase of 45.7% and 2469 on the 2017 hits of 5,400 hits.

8. No 8 Bus and Vintage Bus

The Sevenoaks Town Partnership Vintage Bus Service and the Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service were awarded top prize in the Transport Planning Society's inaugural People's Award for 2018. Judges praised schemes that put community engagement at the centre of local decision making and chose the two community transport initiatives in Sevenoaks as best reflecting what local people really want from transport schemes in the UK.

The People's Award, launched earlier this year, showcased transport planning initiatives that had made a significant difference to local people. The Transport Planning Society invited communities from across the UK to nominate projects that had put local engagement at the forefront in the planning and delivery of schemes.

The competitive judging process was led by Stephen Joseph, a former Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport. The panel looked at community schemes that had made a real difference to people's access to services, quality of life and wellbeing.

The Sevenoaks Town Partnership Vintage Bus Service was launched in 2011 as a partnership between Sevenoaks Town Council and the local community. Operating during the summer and now in its sixth year, it has helped contribute to a boon in visitor numbers to businesses in the town centre and the leading National Trust property at Knole. Such is the popularity of the service, residents also use the bus route often, instead of travelling by car. Older people say they can now visit the town independently rather than waiting for a relative to collect them and take them shopping.

The introduction of the Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service, an orbital bus route linking Sevenoaks town centre to residential areas, has seen the town council providing free bus travel to young people aged 11 to 18. Older passengers say they find the bus a social experience meeting the same neighbours and conversing with the bus driver and helps sometimes with loneliness experiences. Attracting nearly 500 passengers per week, the bus operates six days per week, linking the two train stations, bus station, residential areas and town centre.

Lynda Addison OBE, Chair of the Transport Planning Society, said: *"The People's Award is a great platform for us to recognise that when good transport planning and strong community engagement combine, they deliver lasting benefit to society. These winners have made a genuine contribution to improving people's accessibility, quality of life and wellbeing and have made such a huge difference to their local communities. Fundamentally, it is community involvement that makes good transport planning. Infact, delivering exemplary community engagement will make a good scheme great."*

Stephen Joseph, former Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport and Chair of the judges, said:

- "We received entries from communities across the country and reaching a decision on the final winner was very difficult. Each nomination demonstrated that schemes, such as the eventual winners in Sevenoaks, that had been developed with the community had made a positive impact both to the local economy and to residents' quality of life. This is incredibly important at a time when we must encourage a move away from car dependency. We're delighted to be able to recognise their vision and their hard work."

In February 2019 the No. 8 bus route was extended at the public's request to include bus stops close to Aldi and Sainsburys. The bus was also refurbished, painted in colours to link it to the Bat & Ball Station community transport initiative.

9. Twinning

Sevenoaks is twinned with Pontoise in France and Rheinbach in Germany. Both twinning Associations continue to be supported by Sevenoaks Town Council. The Friends of Pontoise and the Friends of Rheinbach promote cultural understanding and exchanges, particularly between cultural and supporting organisations and schools.

10 Youth Provision

Sevenoaks Youth Council

Youth Council meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks in the Town Council Chamber. Since its conception in 2009 the Youth Council has become increasingly involved in initiating and developing events for young people. All young people are welcome to attend.

The second end of term Summer Festival "**Live on the Vine**" event was held in July, organised for young people by the Youth Council, with more than 250+ members of the public of all ages enjoying the performances despite the poor weather.

In total there were eight stalls, comprising: the Mayor's charity's Wheelchair Football Association, the HOUSE in the Basement selling cold drinks, handing out free samples and loaning outside games for the public's interaction, a Wii Interactive games stall, West Kent Communities stall, an ice cream van, North West Kent Crime Prevention plus a photo booth.

The event was financially supported with grants obtained from both the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner including the sponsorship of the Photo Booth plus the One Stop Carriers for Causes sponsoring the stage set up on the night with technicians.

Following the success of the Live on the Vine Event, Youth Councillors continued with their monthly Open Mic Nights from September thereby enabling young performers to participate on stage at the Christmas Lights Switch On Event on 30th November 2018. From January 2019 youth councillors have arranged for FREE Music Drop in Lessons to be held monthly just prior to the Open Mic Nights. Auditions are held for these two annual events at the regular Open Mic Nights.

AGM 7th November 2018

2018 saw the Election of the 6th Youth Council term for 2018 to 2020, with an overwhelming 25 Youth Councillors joining keen to have their voice heard locally and to support the local youth.

- Tasha Dambacher was elected as Chairman
- Charlotte Foulds was elected as Vice Chairman
- Matthias Jammot was elected as Treasurer.

The new Youth Councillors also discussed what they would like to achieve in their two years of office.

The Mayor, Cllr Roderick Hogarth welcoming the Youth Councillors:



Roshni Agarwal, Eva Azazoglu, Alexander Black, Tom Chapman, Sam Chard, Samuel Crawford, Phoebe Crichtlow, Tasha Dambacher, Ronnie Day, Charlotte Foulds, Oscar Goodwin, Matthias Jammot, Meera Jassi, Ola Kujawinska, Emily Mahoney, Megan Ng, Louisa Phillips, Michael Roberts, Rose Spurling, Gabby Tan, Loic Thiry, Amy Vickers, Amber Warrender, Jacob Watson and Katie Willis.

The Mayor recommended that the new Youth Council to be ambitious as the Town Council likes positive outcomes and said, *“our ears are wide open to hear you”*.

The Youth Councillors have been elected from those living within 5 miles of Sevenoaks Town or attending school within the town and represent the schools and cadet group below to enable engagement for local young people:

- Judd School
- Knole Academy
- Sevenoaks School
- St John’s C of E Primary School
- St Michael’s Preparatory School
- Tonbridge Grammar School
- Trinity School Sevenoaks
- Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar
- Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys
- Westerham Sea Cadets

The presence of the Youth Council enables Sevenoaks Town Council to be confident that a young person’s point of view will be heard and will assist in progressing their ideas. The Town Council is also pleased to form relationships with local schools.

Youth Cafe



The Youth Services Sub Committee chaired by Cllr Rachel Parry oversees the management and development of the House in the Basement Youth Café. The Sevenoaks Youth Council continues to be involved in the development of events, behavioural rules, menus etc.

The Youth Café has now been open for approximately six years. Unfortunately, the Youth Café's funding from KCC stopped in November 2016. There are financial challenges to keeping the Youth Provision open and it is currently closed on a Thursday evening for this reason.



Previously on Tuesday evenings the youth café was open for children with special needs. This evening not only provides them with somewhere safe and comfortable to go, but also provides them with the confidence in the venue to attend at other times and integrate with the other young people, which has proved to be immensely popular.

A KCC Member Grant from Cllr Margaret Crabtree will enable the Tuesday evenings to continue during 2019/2020.

The House in the Basement Youth Café (known as HitB) is managed by Charlotte Marchant (previously a café member) and supported by two casual staff and volunteers from Sevenoaks Youth Trust.

Open Mic Nights (OMN) recommenced on a monthly basis and were a great success, especially with food being provided by Wagamama at each event. This will continue during 2018. It is encouraging to see young performers gaining confidence at this event, many of whom then go on to perform at Live on the Vine or the Christmas Lights Switch On Event.

Hire income is important to the sustainability of the youth café. During 2017 the Breast Cancer Support Group opened using the youth café every Tuesday morning. The support group is funded by the Province of West Kent Freemason who also funded a mini refurbishment.

In October HitB held a Halloween party where pumpkins were carved, and apple bobbing took place. Some people came in fancy dress and a good time was had by all.

In December, Sevenoaks Town Council granted HitB some monies to hold a Christmas party. The theme was old fashioned party games, and this included pass the parcel and the name game. Each person who attended received a small gift and enjoyed the free food that had been prepared.

The Neighbourhood Scheme has continued with food being donated by local supermarkets. Hot meals being served continues to be an important offer from the youth café.

11 Planning

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee meets every 2 weeks to discuss planning applications submitted within the Sevenoaks town area, and a wide array of associated planning matters.

The Committee actively seeks to maintain and enhance the positive features of Sevenoaks Town, while promoting sustainable growth to help maintain the long term economic and social stability of the town.

Planning Applications

During 2018/2019 the Town Council will have commented on around 510 planning applications submitted within the Sevenoaks Town Council area, and has supported Sevenoaks District Council in its refusal of applications via a number of written appeals

The Town Council continues to monitor tree work applications in the area despite not being a consultee and will make representation when applications of concern are submitted.

Major Development sites:

Aldi

Sevenoaks Town Council welcomed the introduction of a new, lower cost, supermarket. But raised concerns over the location and impact on traffic flows on the local area.

Trinity School

The Town Council raised concern about the cumulative impact of both the Trinity School and Knole Academy Annex being located on the same site.

This year proposals were put forwards to further increase the final capacity of the Trinity School. The Town Council continued to raise concern as neither school on the site is currently at full capacity, and the traffic situation is already deteriorating. The Town Council offered several constructive solutions to improve traffic flows and increase the uptake of sustainable transport to reach the school, including the implementation of new crossings and the reduction of the maximum speed limit on the A25 to remove an anomalous 40mph stretch.

Planning Documents

Over the course of the year so far, the Town Council has participated in the consultation process for several draft local and national planning documents, carefully tailoring responses to safeguard the interests of local residents.

Some of the key documents have included consultations on:

- Draft National Planning Policy Framework
- Viability Guidance
- Housing Delivery Test
- Draft Sevenoaks Local Plan
- South East Water – new water main proposal
- Kent Library Strategy

Development Control Meetings

The Town Council is frequently represented at Sevenoaks District Council Development Control meetings when there is a contentious planning issue.

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation [H&T]

The Town Council actively supported local residents and made representations to Kent County Council Highways and Transportation on several road safety issues. The Town Council regularly reports damaged highway surfaces and faulty street lights to KCC H&T.

Licensing

The Town Council continues to monitor licensing applications submitted within the town and make representation as required in order to safeguard the amenities of local residents.

Public Transport

The Town Council continue to lobby wherever possible to ensure that an adequate public transport infrastructure is maintained and has responded to several public transport consultations over the course of the year. Including supporting the retention of bus services, and the creation of new routes as part of Kent County Council's 'Big Conversation' project.

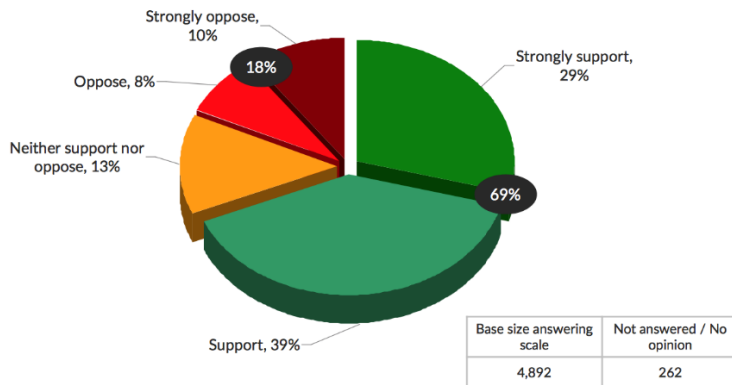
Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan



Objective 1: Promoting housing choice for all

Q3a. To what extent do you support or oppose the following concepts...

Draft Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan - Based on Sevenoaks wards, Otford, Dunton Green, Kemsing and Seal responses only



Base: Various for each question (Not relevant & not answered excluded - original base size 5,154)

9

As part of the Sevenoaks District Council Issues and Options Consultation last year, respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the proposals contained within the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan. This is an ambitious plan which includes comprehensive community-led redevelopment of the current Tarmac Quarry site when extraction ceases in the next 10-15 years.

Proposals include a new boating lake, a hire facility for boats / bikes, open recreation spaces, circular walking / cycle paths, new community facilities, residential accommodation, employment facilities, and greatly improved connections within Northern Sevenoaks.

District-wide support was 66%, but when only looking at responses from Northern Sevenoaks and the surrounding parishes this rose to 69%, indicating an incredibly strong level of local support for the proposals.

The contents of the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan have been finalised and Sevenoaks Town Council has begun working closely with Sevenoaks District Council to ensure the community-endorsed proposals are included within the emerging Local Plan. It is also progressing with its own Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan which will also support the proposals for Northern Sevenoaks.

Many of the proposals have been included in the District's emerging Local Plan, most importantly the community led redevelopment of the Tarmac site, including the potential for a limited number of homes to be delivered prior to finishing excavation works.

For more information please visit stnp.co.uk or email planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk to be added to the distribution list, which receives periodic updates and invitations to meetings.

Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Development Plan

SEVENOAKS TOWN

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2017-2040

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT

January 2018



Since consultation concluded on the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan (with an incredibly high level of community support), the Town Council has refocused its attention on the wider Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan. Urban Initiatives Studio (the consultants who worked on the development of the highly successful Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan) have been appointed to assist the Town Council in the final stages of the development of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Town Council is currently awaiting economic input from Sevenoaks District Council which will enable the Town Council to finalise the consultation draft. This draft will then be discussed further with Sevenoaks District Council to ensure basic compliance, before proceeding to public consultation.

Once public consultation concludes, and any necessary amendments have been made, the plan will proceed to inspection, and ultimately a referendum of residents.

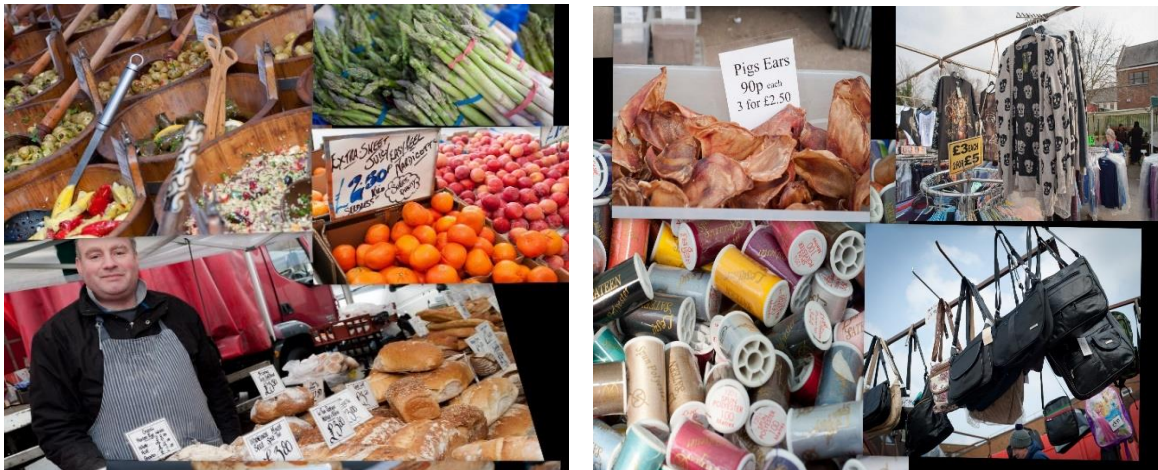
For more information please visit stnp.co.uk or email planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk to be added to the distribution list, which receives periodic updates and invitations to meetings.

12 Sevenoaks Markets

Sevenoaks Town Council continue to manage Sevenoaks Markets. These Saturday markets are well attended by members of the public. The Wednesday market has always been difficult to encourage footfall to in its recessed position behind the bus station. Attendance by public and stall holders reliant on each other has decreased sharply. For this reason, Sevenoaks Town Council is seeking permission to move the Wednesday market to the High Street as per the Saturday 'Charter' Market. Sevenoaks Town Council operates the following markets:

- Wednesday market next to the Bus Station 8am till 2pm;
- Saturday Bligh's Market 9am till 4pm;
- Saturday High Street Market 9am till 4pm.

The markets continue to participate in the annual Love Your Local Market Campaign which highlights the importance of supporting your local markets.



13 Sevenoaks Town Partnership

Established in 2011, the Partnership is a Sevenoaks Town Council initiative bringing together a wide range of people from the local community to establish Sevenoaks as a prosperous and vibrant place to visit, shop and do business. Cllr Maxine Chakowa, who is also a local retailer, is Chairman of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership.

Sevenoaks Business Show

Sevenoaks Town Partnership hosted its annual Business Show at the Stag Plaza in April with over 30 businesses attending. The event was sponsored by Index Magazine, Sanlam, Stag, Sevenoaks District Council and Wagamama. The event continues to be an excellent chance for networking and an important event on the Town Partnership calendar.

Wellbeing Show

The annual Wellbeing Show took place in May sponsored by Specsavers, Stag and Wagamama. The event aims to raise awareness around all aspects of mental and physical wellbeing with free talks and CPR training taking place during the event.

Sevenoaks Vintage Bus

The Vintage Bus returned for six weeks during the Summer taking passengers on a tour of Sevenoaks starting and ending at Knole. The bus cost £3 per all day ticket and under 10s travel free. As always, our fantastic and knowledgeable volunteer conductors were on hand for photos and snippets of information about our fabulous town and its attractions.

Sevenoaks Business Awards

The annual black-tie Business Awards took place in September at Knole Academy. The Business Awards have seven categories which the public can nominate a business for with nominations launched at the annual Business Show. Over 100 attendees enjoyed a two-course meal cooked by students at the school, music and presentation of the awards

Winners for 2018

Apprentice of the Year Barrel	National Chain Retailer of the Year Brisket & New Business
Customer Choice Dulce's Patisserie	Samantha Tilley from Lakeview Accountants Sevenoaks Bookshop
Independent Retailer of the Year Judge's Choice	Sevenoaks Round Table Sevenoaks Sports Magazine
Micro Enterprise of the Year	Wagamama

14. Summary

The Town Council continues to provide tangible new community facilities with many more in the pipeline. During the year of this report the following have been delivered - provision of a new public toilet at Greatness Recreation Ground, refurbishment of the Bat & Ball Station building, new ramp and refurbished sash windows at the Vine Pavilion, and new bus shelters.

During the next financial year, it is hoped that the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be put to a public referendum ensuring that the public's views are considered for the protection and sensitive development of Sevenoaks for the next twenty years and more. Construction work on the new Bat & Ball Centre and Sevenoaks Business Hub is scheduled to commence in June 2019.

Sevenoaks Town Council continues to work with many community organisations and local businesses in setting its sights high for the future with these outlined ambitious plans.

There are many opportunities for residents to be involved in Town Council activities. All you need to do is to get in touch with us – please see the next page for contact details.

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCILLORS 2015 - 2019

Town Councillors 2015-2019		Functions & Facilities Provided by Sevenoaks Town Council	
NAME	PARTY		
EASTERN WARD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALLOTMENTS • ARMED FORCES DAY TOWN SUPPORTERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat & Ball Station building • BETHEL ROAD BURIAL GROUND • BRITAIN'S COMMON • BRITAIN'S LANE WOOD • BUCKHURST LANE PLAY AREA • BUS SHELTERS (<i>Dartford Road x2, St John's Hill x3, Bradbourne Vale Road x1, London Road x4, Seal Road x1, Tonbridge Road x1</i>) • CHRISTMAS TOWN ILLUMINATIONS • CIVIC FUNCTIONS • CONSULTEEES (<i>Planning, Highways, etc.</i>) • FREE SUMMER CONCERTS/ VINE BANDSTAND • GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS • GREATNESS PARK CEMETERY • GREATNESS RECREATION GROUND & PLAYGROUND • HANGING BASKETS • HILLINGDON RISE PLAY AREA • HITB (HOUSE IN THE BASEMENT) YOUTH CAFÉ • HORSE TROUGHS (<i>Old Police Station, Rheinbach Gardens, St Botolphs Road</i>) • INFO-PODS & DIGITAL DISPLAY SCREENS • THE GREEN, HILLINGDON RISE • JUBILEE CLOCK (<i>Old Market House</i>) • JUDD'S PIECE • JULIAN'S MEADOW & PLAYGROUND • KIPPINGTON MEADOW • LAND AT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LETTERBOX LANE • LITTLEWOOD • TONBRIDGE ROAD • LITTER BINS AND GRIT BINS • SPORTS PITCHES • MIDDLEINGS WOOD • MILLPOND WOOD • MOUNT CLOSE OPEN SPACE & PLAYGROUND • NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN • ORBITAL NO 8 BUS • PLANTERS (<i>The Shambles, Dorset Street, Pembroke Road, London Road, Buckhurst Lane</i>) • PONTOISE CLOSE OPEN SPACE & PLAYGROUND • PUBLIC TOILETS (<i>The Stag, The Vine, Lower St Johns</i>) • RALEYS CAR PARK • RALEYS & KNOLE PADDOCK • RHEINBACH GARDENS • SEVENOAKS COMMON • SEVENOAKS COMMUNITY CENTRE - <i>Available for hire - meetings, conferences</i> • SEVENOAKS TOWN PARTNERSHIP • SEVENOAKS YOUTH COUNCIL • STAG COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE • STREET LIGHTS IN SOME UNADOPTED ROADS • THE POUND • TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES / CHAMBER - <i>Available for hire - meetings, conferences</i> • TWINNING WITH PONTOISE AND RHEINBACH • UPPER HIGH STREET GARDENS • VARIOUS PUBLIC SEATS, • VINE GARDENS (<i>including Public Toilet</i>) • VINE CRICKET GROUND & PAVILION (<i>including Tea Kiosk</i>) • VINE CAFÉ • VINE WASTE • VINTAGE BUS • WAR MEMORIAL • WHITE HART BEECHES • WOODSIDE ROAD OPEN SPACE • YOUTH COUNCIL 	
Clr E T Waite	Liberal Democrat		
Clr A S Clayton	Liberal Democrat		
Clr Mrs P C Walshe	Liberal Democrat		
KIPPINGTON WARD			
Clr A Eyre	Conservative		
Clr R J Parry	Conservative		
Clr R L Piper	Conservative		
NORTHERN WARD			
Clr Mrs R E Parry	Conservative		
Clr P E Towell	Conservative		
Clr M Canet	Liberal Democrat		
ST JOHNS WARD			
Clr M A Chakowa	Conservative		
Clr R M C Hogarth	Conservative		
Clr S G Raikes	Conservative		
TOWN WARD			
Clr N J L Busvine OBE	Conservative		
Clr E Parson	Conservative		
Clr O Schneider	Conservative		
WILDERNESSE WARD			
Clr S L Arnold	Conservative		

To contact a Sevenoaks Town Councillor, please use the following email format:

Clr.surname@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

i.e. To contact Councillor Piper, the email address would be:

Clr.piper@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

Linda Larter MBE

townclerk@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Deputy Town Clerk

Ann White

dte@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Deputy Town Clerk

Hugh D'Alton

deputy.clerk@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

The Town Council or its committees meet on most Monday evenings at 7pm and members of the public are welcome to attend. For further details of the meetings please contact the Town Council Offices - 01732 459953; council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk; www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk