



Town Clerk's Update

Council news and information from Sevenoaks Town Clerk, Linda Larter MBE



19 September 2025

Latest update on Saving our Stag



Previously, I reported on Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Finance & Investment Advisory Committee held on 2 September which was hopeful for the future, where all SDC Councillors on the Committee rejected the recommendation for a proposal offering a 100-year lease on a peppercorn rent to Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) in favour of the freehold being transferred to the Town Council, subject to overage and auditor advice. All agreed that the Stag was an important cultural facility for the district and Sevenoaks Town Council were the most appropriate owner of the facility. We are very grateful for their support.

Last night was a meeting of SDC Cabinet to consider all of this, the Councillors are still in favour of transferring the Stag to the Town Council however their auditor advice is providing serious challenges to this.

It was agreed that any further decisions would be deferred whilst the District Council and Sevenoaks Town Council work on a solution to address the auditors concerns.

Sevenoaks Town Council team

Over the last month, we have had Aksel at the Town Council undertaking work experience in between his university studies.

He has assisted the Town Council with preliminary research relating to registering open spaces sites for Biodiversity Net Gain.

We thank him for his hard work and wish him the best for the future.



Bat & Ball Station Café

It has been a long term aim to move the station café to an independent concession who will be able to provide a far wider offer. I am pleased to say that the final arrangements are being put in place for this transfer to take place on 1 October to Lilia's Kitchen. Lilia herself will need some time to set up as she wants to operate, but there will be exciting offers available in the near future and for local residents.

In relation to staff, unfortunately this means that Leila will leave us next week, we are very grateful for all her hard work over the last couple of years. Tom will remain at the café and be part of the new project.



Floodlights at Knole Paddock

The floodlights at the sports pitches at Knole Paddock are 30 years old. In 2022, the lights at the tops were replaced. When replacing the bulbs for the rugby season this year, one of the mechanisms for lowering the floodlights failed. This has brought into question the structural integrity of the old floodlights.

The Town Council will be obtaining a method ASAP to ensure that lighting is provided to enable rugby training to continue to take place in the evenings. It will also be progressing with replacing the old floodlights with modern, more environmentally friendly provision, at the same time being the least disruptive to the rugby season.



Buckhurst Play Area



Again, the extraordinary anti-social behaviour at Buckhurst Play Area continues. The fencing has again been removed from the toddler play area. The Open Spaces Team have found the fencing parts in the nearby wood area creating a pyre. The nearby Children's Workshop has CCTV, and we are hoping for some evidence of the perpetrators. In the meantime, the Open Spaces Team will once again erect the fencing.

The zip wire has been repaired; the new surface underneath the zip wire is due to be installed Monday 29th September subject to weather. The couple of parts of additional new equipment is ordered and awaiting delivery which is expected towards the end of next month. A refurbishment of current play equipment will take place at the same time hopefully when parts arrive.



Town Centre Masterplan – public consultation

Deadline for responses is 30 September!

Give your views on the Draft Town Centre Masterplan

The key purpose of the Masterplan is to set out a clear vision - informed and endorsed by local people - of what future development should look like within the Town. This includes:

-  **1** Design guidance - how can it be attractive and user friendly?
-  **2** It will look at enhancements to cultural attractions &
- 3** Improvements to the pedestrian environment for those walking around the town streets & different areas
-  **4** It will look at options for changing traffic management in the town centre
- 5** And greener infrastructure (like trees and planting) to enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Go to the Consultation page of our website: www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk or use QR code to go to survey



We continue to consult on the Town Centre Masterplan up to the end of September.

This is an important consultation wide ranging from how the town centre looks in the future to options to consider for changing traffic routes whether one way or potentially pedestrian areas.

Complete our survey to give your feedback on the plan on [our website](http://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk).

Sevenoaks Literary Festival

Sevenoaks Town Council is delighted to be the main sponsor of the Sevenoaks Literary Festival.

There are many exciting events taking place which can be viewed at:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/sevenoaks-literary-festival-2025>



SEVENOAKS LITERARY FESTIVAL

Author Line-up 2025

The poster features a grid of 15 author portraits arranged in three rows of five. The background is a green geometric pattern. The text 'SEVENOAKS LITERARY FESTIVAL' is at the top, and 'Author Line-up 2025' is below it.



Youth Council nominations

Sevenoaks Youth Council members are 11-18 year old and have a two year term, which is currently up for renewal. The Youth Councillors:

- Represent the views of young people in Sevenoaks
- Attend regular Youth Council meetings
- Organise events and campaigns
- Collaborate on community projects
- Work alongside local leaders and councillors
- Develop confidence, leadership and teamwork skills.
- Assist with the development of the House in the Basement Youth café

We have had an amazing response with over 45 nominations to date this year from young people who want to join the Youth Council. We are going to consider how best to address this unexpected positive issue. An election is likely to see those from the school with the most nominations be successful. We want to have a cross section of young people from all schools and home schooling.

For more information visit: sevenoaksyouthcouncil.weebly.com

Sevenoaks named best place to live – again

Kent Live provided the following report this week:

A fabulous Kent town has been named the best place to live in the county for 2025, according to a new poll. Lifestyle site Muddy Stilettos asked its readers to vote for the best local village, town or city to call home this year using its Top 300 Places to Live guide.

And taking the top spot is Sevenoaks with its "stunning countryside, strong commuting links, social scene and ideal location". The town topped the poll of 10 potential candidates in Kent.

This Reader Vote gives a truly independent view on the towns and villages with the most popular postcodes, schools, restaurants and amenities.

"From the Sevenoaks Summer Festival to the Sevenoaks Literary Festival there's a real buzz around town and a strong community spirit.

There are elegant period buildings, lots of shops and places to eat and drink, and perhaps a more genteel air than some other places in the county. The pavements are usually teeming with people in this historic market town, partly on account of the schools, and also because unlike other towns, it has supermarkets in the town centre.

In fact, Waitrose is on the High Street, turning residents of nearby Tunbridge Wells green with envy as they have to make do with one at a petrol station. And there's an M&S which does food.

It's one of Kent's most affluent and upmarket towns and could be described as a bit posh on account of its massive houses, surrounding countryside populated with the well-to-do, and the fact it's brimming with private schools. Meanwhile, the average price of homes sold last year was £848,635, according to Rightmove."



My meetings this week were:

- Community Asset (Open Spaces) Committee*
- Locality re Community Asset Transfers
- Ministry of Housing and Local Government re Community Asset Transfers
- Age UK
- National Association of Local Councils
- Sevenoaks Town Team
- Sevenoaks District Council Cabinet
- Lilia's Kitchen relating to concession for station café

All of Sevenoaks Town Council's Meetings* are open to the public and available to watch live on YouTube, see www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk for details.

Complete our survey about the transfer of local assets



The government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation are moving forward as the government says, 'At Pace'. Sevenoaks Town Council are not involved in the future of Kent County Council or Sevenoaks District Council, this is for them to agree plans with the government. However, the Town Council is very concerned about the future of local community assets which makes living, working and visiting Sevenoaks the town it is.

The Town Council already operates many community facilities but there are some which belong to Sevenoaks District Council and the concern is that when the District Council ceases to exist, these assets will automatically move to a new Unitary Authority who will be a considerable distance away and is likely to be overwhelmed with social care responsibilities and unable to have the capacity to worry about local parks or markets etc in Sevenoaks.

The Town Council is seeking feedback in a survey from local residents on this matter. The survey can be found at https://www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk/_VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=76535 or paper copies can be collected from the Town Council's office on Bradbourne Vale Road.

To date we have had over 450 responses to the survey and the top requested assets for transfer are currently:

1. Stag
2. Hollybush Recreation Ground
3. Land at High Street – Market Rights
4. Bradbourne Lakes
5. Land at Bradbourne Vale Road (Horses Field)
6. The Shambles



Save the date

We are all sorry that the organisers of the Sevenoaks Bike Festival needed to cancel this event due to staff sickness, we hope this can be rearranged for the future.

Visit our events page for more information: www.tinyurl.com/STCNewsEvents

Date	Event	Venue
Friday 26th September	Sevenoaks Literary Festival begins	Various
Saturday 4th October	Vegan Food Festival	Vine
Sunday 9th November	Remembrance Service	War Memorial
Saturday 29th November	Christmas Lights Switch-On	High Street
Saturday 7th February	Mayor's Fundraising Quiz	Bat & Ball Centre
Thursday 19th March 2026	Mayor's Charity Concert	Stag
Wednesday 22nd April 2026	Mayor's Civic Visit to Knole	Knole



My 100 days until Christmas Advent Calendar is now up at home. I am sure I am not the only one.

Wishing you all a good weekend.
Linda

