



Town Clerk's Update

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

4 July 2025



A busy week

Another really busy week in Sevenoaks and for the Town Council. The combination of the wonderful weather and Summer Festival activities have seen a huge number of people using our public open spaces, cafés and other venues in town. It also created a record amount of refuse for disposal, a not insurmountable problem but time consuming.

Littlewood & unauthorised vehicle use

We are aware that due to road works on the junction of Hillingdon Rise and Littlewood, drivers are cutting across through pavements and the Town Council's green space to avoid the road closure. Not only is this detrimental to the open space it is also a hazard using the space.

This has been reported to KCC Highways who advised they'll speak to South East Water and investigate. It has also been reported to the Community Safety Team and police who will investigate number plates in photos of those who have done this.

Sevenoaks Town Council team

If you are an organisation that delivers youth services from time to time, there will be a need to deal with safeguarding matters. This week was one of those times. Our youth café dealt with the matter immediately, and without drama and I am grateful to them for the manner in which it was handled.

As mentioned last week, we had two work experience students this week. Our thanks to Jamie who has been helping the Open Spaces Team in extreme heat conditions and Olivia who has been helping out in Central Services.

Also, a special mention to Avril our Birthday Queen this week on her 91st birthday – no typo, yes 91. She is amazing working in our office and keeps me in check.



Britain in Bloom judging and help needed

You may have seen members of the Lion Clubs out and about around the station this week. They have done an amazing job clearing weeds and rubbish. We are very grateful to them for their assistance.

The Mayor and Lisa Maley from our sponsors Berry & Lamberts were out and about judging the In Bloom Shop Window Competition this week. The winner was Oxfam and the runner up was Hospice in the Weald.



Spadework based in Offham is primarily a horticultural and garden centre providing support to its service users, known as Trainees, to develop independence and personal skills. Trainees acquire and use practical and varied horticulture skills. Many people from Sevenoaks and the surrounding area attend Spadework. It is a worthwhile charity and well worth a visit, see www.spadework.org.uk for further details.

In addition to having a personal link with Spadework, I am pleased that Sevenoaks Town Council has been able to support them. On Thursday, the Mayor welcomed a delivery of plants as part of the Sevenoaks in Bloom project.

Some of our knitted bugs have started to appear around the town. Including a lovely letter box top created by 11 year old Willow Loudon.

I make no apology for again asking for help as we are now getting close to our first judging date on 11th July. We have two Community Tidy Up days 8th July and 5th August. Every weed that is removed helps us get nearer to achieving a GOLD award. We welcome assistance with the following:

- Weeding, watering and looking after plants in individual planting areas.
- Help removing weeds from pavements along judging route (map can be provided) ideally the weekend prior to judging.

If you or you know of any organisation who can help in any way, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact osl@sevenoakstown.gov.uk.



Free skateboard events

A reminder that Sevenoaks Town Council has secured funding to provide exciting, free skateboard, scooter and BMX events for young people.

Skate Jam 2025 is on 25 July at Greatness Skate Park.

Every Thursday until 17 July, we have free skateboarding sessions. These can be booked at

www.samsarasport.co.uk/greatness.



Town Centre Masterplan – public consultation

We launched the Town Centre Masterplan at the successful Sevenoaks Society Open Day on Saturday 28th June. There was so much interest and request for information we are increasing print runs of information and arranging more public consultation during the six week timescale.

Sevenoaks Town Council sponsored events & activities

Still a lot happening with the Summer Festival, see www.sevenoaksfestival.org.uk. I have bought tickets to see Pam Ayres on Sunday and I'm looking forward to it.

The free concert on Sunday on the Vine at 3pm is the Russ Kearton Trio. Expect jazzy chords and blues as heard on BBC Radio Kent.



Public realm

Sevenoaks Town Council have arranged for much of its heritage public realm e.g. white lamp posts, white bollards etc. to be jet washed. They definitely look improved and will stop the build-up of moss etc.

We do have a 'guerrilla cleaner' amongst our midst who clearly thinks Dartford is a special place. We welcome any volunteers who can help with such activities.



STC projects

We are always busy, when managing a £2m turnover council budget and providing a wide range of functions and facilities, no two weeks are ever the same. In addition to the day to day work, we try to continually provide maintenance and new projects.

Tree maintenance

Our contractors, Down to Earth, are carrying out essential pruning and felling of trees in the following locations: Julians Meadow, Brittain's Lane Wood, Pontoise Close, Woodside Road and Kippington Meadow. Trees play a vital role in our environment, and we are committed to managing them responsibly. Trees will only be felled when absolutely necessary. We hope the public will be patient and understanding while this important work takes place.



Water drinking fountains

We have two of these installed at both Greatness Recreation Ground and the Vine Gardens. With huge frustration, they stopped working in this hot weather and the replacement parts have been very difficult to source. This was finally sorted this week, and they are back in action.

Adult Education Centre Classes

This facility owned by KCC has now closed. We hope that the community organisations looking to re-open it will be successful. In the meantime, we have managed to find space for some of the displaced Adult Courses and hope to be able to help with more.

Vine Gardens new surface

Our current big project is laying the new surface around the pond. This will mean that temporarily this section of the Vine will not be open to the public. We hope that when it is finished everyone will like the result.

££££££

Sevenoaks Town Council only receives funds from a portion of the domestic Council Tax equal to a Band D house of £153.67 per annum of £2.96 per week. It does not receive any part of the Business Rates or government grants. In addition, the Town Council obtains income from operating its facilities e.g. cemetery, community halls and sports pitches. To progress Capital Projects in the most economical way for the local community we always wherever possible seek external funding.

This week I attended the Sevenoaks District Council CIL Board meeting and presented on our request towards two projects. I am pleased to report both applications were recommended for approval – awaiting Sevenoaks District Council Cabinet Meeting ratification – £100,000 towards the £250,000 new Greatness Play Area and £20,000 towards the £100,000 new Pedestrian Crossing on Dartford Road.

Following the meeting I did my bit for the local economy and visited the recently refurbished Chequers Pub – well worth a visit!



Planning matters

Sevenoaks Town Council have the opportunity to comment on all planning applications within the town's boundary. In doing so, it takes into account any representations from residents, policies and aims within the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan and national planning policies.

All of Sevenoaks Town Council meetings are open to the public and can be viewed on YouTube, details available via www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk.

This week at the Planning Committee meeting, 13 plans were considered, a low number for us. Amongst them was the Farmers Site. The Town Council commented:

Sevenoaks Town Council continued to maintain its objections to the application, including its concern about the lack of any contribution to the affordable housing needed for the residents of Sevenoaks and recommended refusal on the following grounds:

- The scale and massing of the development is out of character with other existing and new developments in the area
- It would have an overbearing impact on houses on St Botolphs Avenue, with the potential for serious overlooking into neighbouring gardens and houses
- As currently proposed, the application does not include a Transport and Travel Plan, which is needed to demonstrate that the site and existing transport facilities can indeed support a carless development
- There is a serious deficit on Biodiversity gain, given the original green state of the previous permission and the requirement under Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policy L1 for new development to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity
- Lack of any affordable housing or contribution towards delivering it offsite – both of which the Town Council notes were conditioned on the previous Appeal decision for development on this site.

The other significant planning application was SDC's Council Depot Otford Road:

Sevenoaks Town Council reiterated its previous recommendation for refusal on the following grounds:

- Non-compliance of the Fast Food element with National Planning and Policy Framework – Paragraphs 96 and 97
- Non-compliance of the proposals with the following Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policies:
 - a) C9 (protecting and enhancing the landscape setting and character of town and visibility to and from the open countryside),
 - b) C10 (enhance the gateways and arrival points into the town)
 - c) M9 (supports measures that will encourage a shift towards the use of greener modes of transport by businesses and residents)
 - d) D1 (design guidance on nearby sites for Carpetright/Wickes and Travis Perkins, which recommends that light industrial uses be relocated to the Vestry Industrial Estate in order to remove the inappropriate siting of them within residential areas and resolve the conflict between light industrial employment and residential accommodation in this area.



- Non-compliance with Sevenoaks District Council Policy EN2 (safeguarding amenities of current and future residents with regard to noise, odour, activity or vehicle movements, visual intrusion), as well as EN7 (noise pollution)
- The lack of pavement and safe crossing point across the A225 to access the fast food restaurant, which is likely to attract school children, poses a highway safety concern, and no mitigation has been proposed to manage the traffic leaving and entering site at a point with low visibility. The Town Council noted the newly submitted transportation information, however due to the absence of detail on how pedestrians will safely cross, maintained these strong pedestrian-safety concerns
- The Town Council considered that the existing level of light industrial use in the area reduced the justification for further such development, placing greater emphasis on safeguarding the area's residential nature, as well as the visual impression of the Town that it provides, as an important gateway location.

Save the date

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

Day	Date	Event	Venue
Tuesday	8th July	Bloom Tidy Up Day	Town Centre
Friday	11th July	South & South East Bloom Judging Day	Town Centre
Friday	25th July	Skateness Event	Greatness Rec
Tuesday	5th August	Bloom Tidy Up Day	Town Centre
Tuesday	12th August	Britain in Bloom Judging	Town Centre
Thursday	19th March	Mayor's Charity Concert	Stag

I am having a couple of days leave next week and then on Friday there will be the first of our Bloom judging, so I'm sorry there'll be no Town Clerk Update next Friday.

Wishing you all a good weekend.

Linda

