



Town Clerk's Update

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



5 September 2025

Saving our Stag – again, but hopefully for the last time

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Finance & Investment Advisory Committee held on 2nd September 2025 was hopeful at this stage for the future. All SDC Cllrs on the Committee rejected the Recommendation for the 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.



There was also some reassurance from officers that if the lease option went ahead, first rent review could be set up for 25 years and landlord consent not needed for non-structural changes.

The Town Council is left with two concerns:

- 1) Permission for structural alterations if leasehold – if the Town Council wants to invest millions for additional facilities and to attract major shows, the permissions for structural changes would need to be determined by new UA, who may prefer us not to compete with Maidstone for example.
- 2) Removal of current car parking spaces which is in current lease – this not just for obvious car parking but also enables shows to 'get in' and lorries to access the external stage, it does demonstrate a lack of understanding re operation. Also difficult for people to perform if they are worrying about 'feeding a meter'.

SDC Officer Recommendation	SDC Cllr Recommendation
Council approves the disposal of The Stag Community Arts Centre as a Community Asset Transfer to Sevenoaks Town Council on a 100-year Full Repair and Insuring (FRI) lease (with restrictions) in accordance with the adopted Disposals Policy. <i>Note Lease could include first Rent Review at 25 years and no requirement for landlord consent to non-structural changes.</i>	Council approves the disposal of The Stag Community Arts Centre as a Community Asset Transfer to Sevenoaks Town Council by Freehold in accordance with the adopted Disposals Policy. <i>Subject to overage clauses and confirmation that this is compliant with MHCLG legal advice and Grant Thornton Auditor advice.</i>

The next meeting where SDC discusses this is their Cabinet Meeting on Thursday 18th September 2025. It then needs to be considered by SDC Full Council meeting.



Sevenoaks Town Council team

Our colleague Liz had a special birthday with a 0 on it so we took the time to all have lunch together to celebrate. Chris Conlan, our Town Crier, also turned up to help us embarrass her in a suitable fun way.

We were also pleased to welcome back our colleague Avril to the office.



Sevenoaks Town Council Green Community Investment Plan

Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks Town Football Club have been working in partnership to deliver an exciting new community and football pavilion at Greatness Recreation Ground. After receiving a major funding boost a few months ago, plans were able to progress. Now, after further funding has been approved by the Town Council, the pavilion will include important environmentally friendly features.

The process of obtaining the funding required to start this pavilion project has been lengthy, and during that time the costs have increased, not least by inflation.

Earlier this year, the Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation approved much-needed grant funding. Both Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks Town Football Club were keen to progress the project with the available funds and within funding timescales. Therefore, some eco-friendly elements had to be omitted.

Sevenoaks Town Council strongly supports the environmental aspects of this project, which are in line with the Council's commitment to sustainability, climate responsibility and Green Community Investment Plan. As such, this week, Councillors approved the allocation of £133,600 from Community Infrastructure Levy funds from developer contributions towards the project to reinstate the originally identified eco-friendly features. This will ensure the pavilion delivers on both its community and environmental objectives.

This additional funding will enable the following features to be included:

- Air Source Heat Pump – £60,000
- Living Green Wall – £51,600
- Photovoltaic (solar) system – £22,000

Image: Offset Architects



These measures will significantly improve the environmental performance of the pavilion, reducing its long-term carbon footprint, improving energy efficiency, and creating wider community benefits through sustainability leadership.

On a smaller scale, the Town Council is moving over to having 'naked toilet paper' in its facilities. This is toilet paper which has not been bleached white and therefore better for the environment.



Anti-Social Behaviour

Unfortunately, we had some anti-social behaviour at Greatness Recreation Ground – racist graffiti was put onto the skateboard park and the public toilet door and window damaged so not currently usable.

The timer on the lock on the St John's Car Park public toilets has been broken, resulting in undesirable trouble there at night. The toilets are therefore currently closed. The locksmith has been contacted, but it will be a couple of days before repairs can happen.

Yet again, despite strong terms and conditions, hirers at the Bat & Ball Centre taped down a 'runway' to the polished spring floor. Unfortunately, this really spoils the floor and costs easily £1,000 to repair each time. This is recharged, but when being repaired it causes disruption as it requires stopping other people hiring the venue whilst repairs are taking place. The Town Council must therefore be stronger in its representations about this matter to people using the facility.

Also, sadly one of the post box knitted toppers has been stolen. We hope this does not deter our young volunteer who knitted these from being involved in the future.

Planning matters

The Town Council has a pre-planning consultations protocol which enables developers to outline their proposals prior to a formal planning application being considered. This is part of the formal meeting and therefore open to public, however only Town Councillors would be permitted to ask questions and engage during the presentation and meeting.

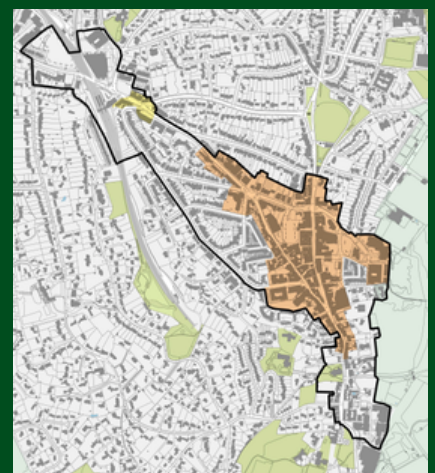
The reason the Town Council does this is to ensure that any pre-planning matters are discussed in an open and transparent manner, it should not be seen as any indication of supporting planning proposals.

At the next Planning & Environment Committee on 8th September, Croudace Homes will present regarding revised proposals for land off Brittain's Lane. This was subject to a planning application in 2021 which was refused at Appeal in 2023, and they are now publicly consulting on revised plans.

Town Centre Masterplan – public consultation

We continue to consult on the Town Centre Masterplan. 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.

For more information and to complete our survey, [please visit our website](#). Town Councillors will also have a stand at the Street Food Festival at the Vine on Saturday 6 September.



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 420 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

Last Bandstand concert – Oxted Band

Come and see the summer out with the last Bandstand concert of Summer 2025, on Sunday 7 September, 3pm to 5pm. Bring the bubbly, wave a flag. Enjoy a picnic on a rug or bring a folding chair. After all, it's 'Almost the Last Night of the Proms' with Oxted Band!



My meetings this week were:

- Town Council*
- Finance & Delivery Committee*
- SDC Finance & Investment Advisory Committee
- Bradbourne Lakes
- Communications Working Group
- International Institute of Municipal Clerks
- Chair & Vice Chair's Meeting

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.



Sevenoaks Town Crier Magazine – Autumn issue out now

The Town Crier quarterly magazine produced by the Town Council contains lots of information about local events including the forthcoming Sevenoaks Literary Festival 26th September to 5th October.

The newsletter will be delivered to homes in Sevenoaks town and you can read it on our website too:

<https://tinyurl.com/STCautumntowncrier>

Subscribe to receive the next Town Crier to your inbox:

<https://mailchi.mp/sevenoakstown.gov.uk/6oh0ls6oi3>



Save the date

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

Day	Date	Event	Venue
Saturday	6th September	Sevenoaks Street Food Festival	Vine
Sunday	7th September	Bandstand: Almost the Last Night of the Proms with Oxted Band	Vine
Saturday	20th September	Sevenoaks Bike Festival	Vine
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

Next week, I am attending the Association of Democratic Officers conference, so I'll write my next newsletter the following week. Wishing you all a good weekend. Linda

