

Monday, 14th April 2025

ARTS & CULTURE WORKING GROUP

To be held in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices,
Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 2.00pm

Town Councillors are reminded that they have a duty to state a Declaration of Interest prior to the appropriate agenda item and to consider the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.17 when reaching a decision.

Working Group Members:

Quorum minimum of 3 elected members:

Cllr Victoria Granville (Chair)	Cllr Lise Michaelides (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Libby Ancrum (Mayor)	Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet
Cllr Sally Layne	Cllr Claire Shea

Town Clerk

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

AGENDA

1	INTRODUCTIONS
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive and note apologies for absence.
3	REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS To consider written requests from Members which have previously been submitted to the Town Clerk to enable participation in discussion and voting on items for which the Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. (s.31 & s.33 of the Localism Act 2011).
4	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest from members in respect of any items of business included in this report.
5	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 OF DECEMBER 2024 To receive and adopt the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11th of December as a true record.
6	Arts & Culture Working Group Terms of Reference To receive and note the Terms of Reference for the Arts & Culture Working Group.
7	SEVENOAKS CULTURAL QUARTER STRATEGY To receive and note the updated Sevenoaks Cultural Quarter Strategy document.

8	STUDY TOUR OF FOLKSTONE CULTURAL QUARTER To consider a study tour of Folkstone Cultural Quarter.
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Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Arts & Culture Working Group
Held on 17th February 2025 at the Town Council Offices

Meeting Commenced: 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 3:34 p.m.

Present:

Cllr Victoria Granville (Chair)	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides (Vice-Chair)	Present (Left at 3.23)
Cllr Libby Ancrum (Mayor, Ex-Officio)	Apologies	Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet	Present
Cllr Sally Layne	Apologies	Cllr Claire Shea	Present

In attendance: Linda Larter, Town Clerk; Roger Lee (SDAC); Ieuan Chander-Wilson, Youth Committee Clerk.

321. Apologies for Absence: Received and accepted as noted above.

322. Requests for Dispensations: There were no requests for dispensations.

323. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

324. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th of December 2024

It was agreed to receive and accept the minutes of the meeting as a true record.

325. Sevenoaks Cultural Quarter Strategy

The Working Group received the amended copy of the Sevenoaks Cultural Quarter Strategy and recommended further amendments and updates to be added to the Cultural Quarter Strategy document. This is shown in Appendix One.

1.2- Bus Station

It was noted that SDC had sent out a press release prior to the meeting suggesting the redevelopment of the current bus station site.

The Councillors noted that some of the sections in the document should be split into separate headings and that an accessibility section should be created.

2.4- Creative Promotion

Councillors noted the great work carried out by Helen Cook, Community Engagement Manager Last year in creating an event booklet detailing the events that were taking place on the Vine and asked if information similar to this could be created for 2025.

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Held on 17th February 2025 at the Town Council Offices

3.4- Marketing and Promotion

It was noted that many of the events facilitated and hosted by Sevenoaks Town Council have appeared in a range of different magazines and digital promotion platforms.

326. Britain in Bloom

It was noted that Sevenoaks was in the National Britain in Bloom 2025 Competition. The working Group hear that Sevenoaks Town Council has reached out to local Schools and their art departments to create Bug sculptures to go around the different open spaces across the town. It was noted that both Trinity and Weald of Kent schools had agreed to create sculptures. Councillors heard that to help get the town ready for the judging the town council would need volunteers, especially volunteers to help look after the different bike rack planters and other planters across the town, potentially placing one volunteer per planter. The Working Group welcomed a list of planters in the town.

327. Terms of Reference

It was agreed to include the terms of reference on the next agenda.

328. Press Release: No press releases issued at this time.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed
Chair

Dated

**Sevenoaks Town Council
Arts & Culture Working Group – 23rd April 2025**

ARTS & CULTURE WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

As approved: 13th May 2024

As amended on: 25th November 2024

1. To pursue Objective 13 of the STNP (to develop and promote a cultural quarter in the town centre and to enhance the town's cultural offer and improve access to existing cultural assets)
2. To implement Policy COM2 (the Town Council will promote the development of a cultural quarter in the town centre together with an arts and cultural strategy)
3. To liaise with the Sevenoaks Summer Festival and consider all other opportunities to promote the arts in the town.
4. To receive regular reports from the Stag Theatre & Cinema as to its performance and consider all requests from the Stag for funding
5. To recommend to the Community & Wellbeing Committee the priorities for annual grants to all art groups

Sevenoaks



These murals and panels represent
some of the trades present here
during the medieval period.
Juliet Simpson, Tom Cousins, 1999
Sponsored by Sevenoaks District Council

A Thriving Cultural Town

Updated: 24/02/2025

Sevenoaks – Review of Vision for a Thriving Cultural Town (STNP)

Background to the Vision for a Thriving Cultural Town (see STNP document for full details)

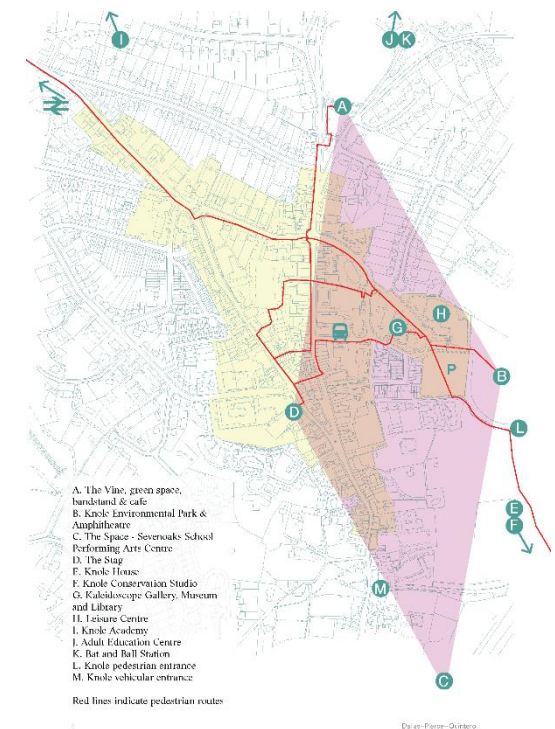
The Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan (STNP) covers many important topics. During the creation of the STNP it was believed that a cultural strategy was needed within the STNP to create a Vision for a thriving cultural town for the future. The STNP and its appendices including the Cultural Vision was successful at a public referendum in May 2023 and is now a statutory planning document providing recommendations and guidelines for the development of Sevenoaks.

Arts, culture and creativity can help a town to feel welcoming, enhance the public realm and support the growth of a creative community. In Sevenoaks Town we are prioritising the following focus areas:

Distinctiveness
Animation
Growth
Community

The Cultural Quarter Vision focuses on a diamond shape geographical area and incorporates the current cultural facilities – The Vine event space and bandstand, Environmental Park and Amphitheatre, The Space at Sevenoaks School Performing Arts Centre, The Stag, Knole House, Knole Conservation Studio, Kaleidoscope Gallery – Museum, Library and Art Space, Leisure Centre, Knole Academy School, Adult Education Centre, Bat & Ball Station (restored heritage building and event space).

The Cultural Quarter Vision was created in consultation with various cultural groups within the town.



Policy Principles

The ambition to strengthen culture focused around a cultural quarter hub in Sevenoaks Town is consistent with local policy within the (SDC) Sevenoaks Local Plan, (STC) STNP and (KCC) The Kent Cultural Strategy Inspirational Creativity Transforming Lives Everyday 2017 - 2027.

STNP Themes

There is exciting potential for culture to support delivery of all seven themes in the STNP, with a particular focus on promoting the following objectives within a Cultural Quarter:

- Welcoming Gateways
- Sustainability & Green Environment
- Creative Enterprise
- Character, Heritage & Identity
- Improved Public Realm
- Health & Wellbeing
- Creative Skills
- Enhanced Community Assets

Review

This review follows the themes and headings provided within the Vision for a Thriving Cultural Town for a Cultural Quarter within the STNP.

Sevenoaks – Review of Vision for a Thriving Cultural Town (STNP)

Development Aspiration				
	Location	Aspirations	Updates	Working Group Comments
1.1	South Park Area	<p>Development of Post Office site to sit alongside the Stag to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative workspace with public facing exhibition space • Creative retail on ground floor facing onto the street • Modest outdoor space • Expand on rear and side of Stag to create walkway (potential art gallery) 		<p>Noted site had been submitted for consideration as part of SDC's Local Plan process.</p> <p>Noted that Stag had been registered as an Asset of Community Value.</p>
1.11	South Park Area- Post Office		The Post Office site has not come forward for development to date, although owners are aware of STC's aspirations.	<p>Suggested improvements to footpath from London Road to Stag Car Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mural on wall • additional lighting • use noticeboard at entrance from car park, to mark entry point to town & Sevenoaks Cultural Quarter

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Development Aspiration				
				<p><u>Action</u> Investigate ownership of the footpath and buildings backing onto it (Post Office & Telecommunications site).</p> <p><u>Action</u> To communicate with the Post Office and see if they will permit the painting of a Mural or a simple white colouration to the wall to the back of the building between the Post Office and the Stag Theatre to help brighten up the walkway from the car park to the Highstreet.</p>
1.12	South Park Area-Busking			<p>It was felt that the area in front of the Post Office was looking tired. Whilst it had a modern planter and a new bench – they were visually different styles. It was felt the area needed to be looked at as a whole.</p> <p><u>Action</u> Investigate with SDC whether open space in front of the</p>

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Development Aspiration				
				<p>Post Office could include designated space for buskers.</p> <p>This area is within STC's premises licence and has been used for entertainers in the past.</p> <p>Sevenoaks District Council have confirmed they do not have a Busking Policy. STC has prepared a draft policy, circulated separately, however this might be helpful to progress if and when a BID is put in place.</p>
1.2	Bus Station	Location scope for regeneration – incorporating culture. Open up access routes to improve permeability and improve access around the town centre.	This development is within SDC's proposals for 'Land East of High Street'.	<p>Noted SDC had approved £435k to progress the project.</p> <p>Subject to redevelopment as put forward by SDC on the 17th of February 2025.</p>
1.3	Connecting Routes	Improved signposting to help people navigate the town and locate cultural facilities and a welcoming environment.	'Tesco' walkway to be enhanced in size in new development and enable cross highway art installations (see attachment).	

Sevenoaks – Review of Vision for a Thriving Cultural Town (STNP)

Development Aspiration				
		Key routes to be identified and promoted.		
1.31	Connecting Routes-Wayfinding		<p>Wayfinding project has identified walking routes to be promoted, awaiting funding opportunity.</p> <p>Town Trails assist visitors and vibrancy of the town.</p>	<p><u>Action</u> Requested numbers of people that had engaged with town trails.</p> <p>See separate STC report (184695-2024 10 09 Agenda - A and CWG- Draft.pdf Pages 18-19).</p>
1.4.	Animating the Public Realm	<p>Improve public spaces to help animate the town centre, could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Arts • Outdoor Arts • Dance & music • Public Art • Share creativity 	<p>STC has a Premises Licence for Town Centre (except Blighs) which enables public entertainment to take place – the Summer Festival Fair Day is a good example of this. It would be good subject to funding and resources to extend the opportunities for this.</p> <p>Many towns have introduced Public Art, sometimes using outside enablers. Subject to permissions and finances initial walls for public art in keeping with Sevenoaks could be 1) side wall of</p>	

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Development Aspiration				
			<p>Stag, 2) side wall of Up & Running, Pembroke Road, 3) new buildings to be developed by SDC 'Land East of High Street'.</p> <p>Town Trails assist visitors and vibrancy of the town.</p> <p>In addition to Wayfinding Signs, use of different colours, public realm e.g. coloured bollards, flags can be introduced to indicate key walking routes between cultural facilities.</p> <p>Sharing creativity – it is hoped that the new STC Arts & Culture Working Group will assist with this. It would also be helpful if other authorities and organisations considering cultural elements in the town could liaise with STC and or Town Team.</p>	<p><u>11th of December 2024 Minute- 251:</u></p> <p>To encourage partnership between landlords and artists for STC aspiration of unused buildings.</p>
1.41	Animating the Public Realm- Tesco's Site (Chandlers Walk)		<p>'Tesco' walkway to be enhanced in size in new development and enable cross highway art installations (see attachment).</p>	<p>Noted that developers, had submitted public realm details to SDC for approval.</p> <p>Noted that Section 106 attached to Purelake planning</p>

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Development Aspiration				
				<p>permission included a Public Art Contribution of £10,000 for the provision of public art within the development to be installed prior to the first occupation.</p> <p><u>Action</u> Officers to investigate whether this was something SDC would be progressing.</p> <p>It was noted that Councillors hoped that some of the funding could be put towards the creation of a form of Public Art depicting the social history of prominent Sevenoaks women.</p>
1.42	Animating the Public Realm- Post Office			See section 1.1 South Park Area- Post Office.
1.5	Young People & Skills	Seek ways to identifying involving young people and their skills.		<p>Suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Council and House in the Basement be consulted on ideas and creative projects • Working with youth workers to get young

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Development Aspiration				
				<p>people more engaged with projects</p> <p>Recent workshops include Photography, Street Dance, Skate Sessions, Open Mic nights with professional support taking place on the 30th of October 2024.</p> <p>It was noted that Open mic nights at House in the Basement are continuing with two further dates confirmed for 2025- Friday 28th March and Friday 16th May.</p> <p>It was also noted that on Wednesday 19th of February House in the Basement will be hosting a Photography session from 1:30 pm to 4 pm. The Stag Theatre offered space for the young people who took part to display their photography.</p>
1.6.	Street Greening	<p>Integrate planting schemes</p> <p>Support pocket parks</p>	Some relevant proposals will be included in the STC Town Centre Masterplan.	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Suggested discussions take place with shop owners in</p>

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Development Aspiration				
				<p>The Shambles area regarding ways to improve the appearance of refuse storage within the area. Noted that seating, similar to Bligh's and outside the Stag, together with more planting, would help make the space more inviting.</p> <p>To note the Shambles is SDC responsibility.</p>

Inspiration				
2.1	Creative Workspace	<p>Affordable artist and maker studios in the heart of the town centre</p> <p>Studios open to the public couple of times per year.</p> <p>Flexible event space</p>	<p>See. 1.1.</p> <p>Continue to promote High Street Studios facilities.</p>	<p>Noted that art studios currently available above Hospice in the Weald shop in town centre.</p>
2.2	Festivals	<p>Combine local arts and professional culture providers</p> <p>Spaces in town centre to enable performances.</p>	<p>Encourage collaboration.</p> <p>STC has Premises Licence for all of town centre except Blighs.</p>	<p>It was noted that a range of festivals and events are held each year, supported by the Town Council, including this year:</p>

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Inspiration				
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sevenoaks Summer Festival (22nd of June – 29th of June 2025) • Sevenoaks Literary Festival (date TBC) • Sevenoaks Street Food Festival (6th September 2025) • Sevenoaks Bike Festival (20th September 2025) • Vegan Markets (5th of April and 4th October) • Band Stand events (every Thursday and Sunday from Sunday 20th of July- Sunday 31st August 2025) • Children's Theatre Shows (4th May 2025 on the Vine Gardens and Tuesday 19th of August – Friday 22nd of August 2025, finishing on the Vine Gardens) <p>Noted also that National Trust - Knole hosts events such as an open-air cinema event.</p>

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Inspiration				
				Proposed BID could achieve more.
2.21	Trails	To “audit” current trails, create new trails, and Encourage involvement of commercial trails.		
2.3	Architecture & Heritage	<p>Telling local stories about places to help solidify unique locations for example via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital trails • Text on public realm e.g. plaques • Public art • Live walking tours • Performances 	All in place however with more funding and resources could be expanded.	<p>Noted that Town Crier’s historical tour is being developed and that a self-guided tour and a Millennium Trail are available.</p> <p>It was noted that Bob Ogley had contacted Sevenoaks Town Council with a request to create and place Plaques at specific sites/buildings that were bombed during the Blitz.</p> <p>It was also noted that in Deal the Deal Historical Society have created a trail of blue Plaques on shops detailing the history of that shop as well as other buildings in the town. Deal Historical Society criteria for the Plaques is shown below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They must have been dead for at least 20 years, or

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Inspiration				
				<p>were born more than 100 years ago.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. They must have contributed substantially to the Area and/or the Nation. 3. They must be persons of good repute, and eminent in their profession or calling. 4. They should preferably have been born in our Area, or 5. They should have been resident during the time of their endeavours for which they achieved prominence. 6. Those of Foreign birth must have had an International reputation or significant standing in their own country, and their time here must have been important to their life and work. <p>It was noted a similar installation could be done for shops in</p>

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Inspiration				
				<p>Sevenoaks as well as the School buildings.</p> <p>It was noted that Councillors hoped that some of the 106 funding for street art in Chandlers Walk could be put towards the creation of a form of Public Art depicting the social history of prominent women in Sevenoaks.</p>
2.4.	Creative Promotion	<p>Creative approaches to promoting local cultural and creative activity via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke signage • Maps • Websites <p>Joint marketing increases footfall.</p>	<p>Events programme for activities on the Vine produced for summer 2024.</p> <p>Wayfinding proposals in place subject to funding and planning permission.</p>	<p>See 2.5 below.</p> <p>It was noted that Councillors would like another Programme for activities on the Vine similar to the one produced in 2024 for this year.</p>
2.5	Culture Online	Local website and app linked to cultural events and local businesses.	To be pursued when BID created	<p>It was agreed that an online Town Calendar drawing together information on all events provided within the town would be invaluable. QR code linking to calendar could be placed around town. It was felt that this was</p>

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Inspiration				
				<p>something that could be undertaken by the BID.</p> <p>Note that SDC has recently produced a website for this initiative.</p>
2.6	Future of Arts & Culture in Sevenoaks	Sharing resources and projects		<p>Councillors would like to invite Kaleidoscope Gallery/Sevenoaks Visual Arts Forum, Sevenoaks District Arts Council, Sevenoaks Bookshop, Sevenoaks Summer Festival and Sevenoaks Literary Festival to future meetings to talk about their projects/plans.</p> <p>It was noted there will be an impact from local government reorganisation.</p>

Recommended Actions				
3.1	Planning	Engage with planners and developers to secure long term sustainable opportunities to enhance the cultural offer.	Former Tesco site is a small example of collaboration includes wide open green link to Suffolk Way cultural facilities and opportunity for overhead art.	<p>Noted that stakeholder consultation events being held for Town Centre & St John's Masterplans in November 2024. It was hoped that representatives from arts and cultural organisations could participate.</p>

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Recommended Actions				
				It was noted that the St John's Masterplan is going to consultation in March 2025, however the Town Centre Masterplan has been delayed due to the potential for significant changes to the Town Centre local asset ownership in the upcoming local government reorganisation. The delay was expected to be by a maximum of three months, once more detail is known. It was also noted that information boards on the St John's Masterplan consultation would be available to view during the Annual Town Meeting on 17 th March, with the Masterplan consultants also scheduled to attend in order to answer questions.
3.11	Land East of High Street	SDC consulting on new plans.		
3.12	169 High Street	SDC consulting on new plans reference "Cultural Hub".		
3.2	Community & Stakeholder Engagement	Facilitate community and stakeholder engagement including with young people	New STC Arts & Culture Working Group will assist with this.	Once Working Group had clearly defined its goals and set an agenda, it would be beneficial to draw together a forum of local

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Recommended Actions				
		Creation of a Cultural Forum engaging key stakeholders for progressing cultural plans.		arts and cultural organisations and groups.
3.3	Public Art	Commission public art and procure and programme cultural activity Development of Public Art Commissioning Guide	Subject to funding and resources Subject to funding and resources	Councillors noted this could perhaps be pursued through the BID.
3.4	Marketing and promotion	Oversee marketing and promotion Development of process for joint marketing of the town's cultural offer. Coordinate communications to maximise engagement	To be pursued when BID created	To consider producing a "What's Happening in Sevenoaks" leaflet, available for people to pick up in town centre areas. See also 2.5 above.
3.5	Wayfinding	Good quality wayfinding signage is needed to encourage public to use cultural facilities.		
3.6	Premises Licence	STC currently has a Premises Licence for most of the public spaces within the town centre. This may need to be extended.		

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Recommended Actions				
3.7	Schools	To include school provision when considering the cultural strategy.		

STC – Background to involvement in Arts & Culture in Sevenoaks	
<p>STC does not normally initiate its own and arts and culture projects unless it is connected to its current project and initiatives.</p> <p>STC aims to act as an enabler where resources are available to enable those experienced in the arts and culture to provide these community activities.</p> <p>This can be via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Grant Funding • Bands on the Vine – Thursday evenings & Sunday afternoons during summer • Promotion of cultural events via road banners, leaflets, Town Crier • Stag – continued investment • Literary Festival – sponsor, free double page coverage in Town Crier • Summer Festival – sponsor, free double page coverage in Town Crier • Public Art – murals, Infinity project • Exhibitions – various, sponsored and enabled. • Children’s art competitions • Providing venues and licensing e.g. Premises Licence for Vine and Bandstand, Premises Licence for Town Centre for Summer Festival. • Cultural Strategy – planning for the future. • Input in planning e.g. walkway in new (Tesco) development to enable provision for similar to attached. 	

Cross highway art installations and illuminated trees seating examples

