

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Sevenoaks Town Council - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026**  
**Held in the the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG**

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Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.39 pm

**PRESENT**

**THE MAYOR, TONY CLAYTON IN THE CHAIR**

|                         |           |                        |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Cllr Libby Ancrum       | Apologies | Cllr Sally Layne       | Present   |
| Cllr Sue Camp           | Present   | Cllr Lise Michaelides  | Present   |
| Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet   | Present   | Cllr Lionel O'Hara     | Present   |
| Cllr Tony Clayton       | Present   | Cllr Claire Shea       | Present   |
| Cllr Catherine Daniell  | Apologies | Cllr David Skinner OBE | Apologies |
| Cllr Dr Peter Dixon     | Present   | Cllr Nick Varley       | Present   |
| Cllr Victoria Granville | Present   | Cllr Gareth Willis     | Present   |
| Cllr Chloe Gustard      | Present   | Cllr Nigel Wightman    | Present   |

**Also Present:**

Mayoress, Gill Clayton; Town Clerk; Responsible Finance Officer & Deputy Town Clerk; Senior Committee Clerk, Planning Committee Clerk; Community Engagement Manager, Youth Committee Clerk: Richard Baxter; Pauline Nugent; Dawn Hallam; Helen Beckerson; John Levett; Andrew Eyre; Homa Ansari; Explorer Scout Holly Maystone; Explore Scout Alex Davies; and Cadet Sgt Luca McKenna.

40 members of the public.

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/BjYiX1CqY98>

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** *No matters raised.*

**AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Mayor Tony Clayton made the following presentations:

**1) Presentation of Cheques to Mayor's Charities: Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust (SAYT) and the Sevenoaks branch of Citizen's Advice North West Kent.**

The Mayor's chosen charities for his fundraising during his year of office were Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust (SAYT) and the Sevenoaks branch of Citizen's Advice North West Kent.

The Mayor thanked all those who had made his fundraising presentation possible, including: the Mayor's Quiz organisers and participants; Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra, Green St Blues and Sevenoaks Sings for the concert at the Stag; Bob Ogley who donated over £1,000 from the sales of his book The Story of Knole Park; the West Kent Masons for their generous donation; and everyone who contributed to or bought tickets for raffles through the year.

The Mayor was delighted to present Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust and the Sevenoaks branch of Citizens Advice North West Kent with a cheque each for £5,836.47.

**2) Andrew Eyre, Chief Executive of the Stag Community Arts Centre**

The Mayor paid tribute to Andrew Eyre as he retires from the position of Chief Executive of the Stag, commenting that in his fifteen years at the helm, Andrew had given a huge amount to Sevenoaks in developing and rebuilding the Stag, making many improvements to the building, to the way it operates as a charity, seeing it through the Covid pandemic, cementing its place as the cultural heart of Sevenoaks, and leaving a successful legacy. He thanked Andrew for all he had done.

**3) Mayor's Award: John Levett**

Throughout the year of office, the Mayor becomes aware of many people who voluntarily provide time and resources for the benefit of the community of Sevenoaks. For this reason, it was decided to create a Sevenoaks Mayor's Award to recognise these contributions. The first Mayor's Award was presented in 2014.

This year's award was presented to John Levett in recognition of his volunteering in Sevenoaks and his commitment to live music in the town. The Mayor commented

*"If there's live music anywhere in Sevenoaks – it's almost certainly down to John Levett. John runs the Listening Room, is Chairman of the Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra, helps with Music on the Bandstand, is an active member of the Sevenoaks Summer Festival Committee, has more charity concerts coming up in the next few weeks, and this year was the key person in making the fundraising concert for the Mayor's charities in March work. For a town with so much musical energy, John makes it happen. "*

**4) The Mayor's Outgoing Cadets**

The Mayor thanked Explorer Scout Alex Davies and Explorer Scout Holly Maystone for their efficient service as Mayoral Cadets, supporting him at civic events during his year of office, and at the Christmas lights event, when they brought along a team of scouts to assist with the event.

The Mayor presented Alex and Holly with certificates and glass awards.

**5) KALC Community Award: Homa Ansari**

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Community Awards are presented to acknowledge and recognise those who have made a significant contribution to their community. The Mayor presented the award for 2025/26 to Homa Ansari for her tireless contributions to the community, including through Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees and the Repair Café.

## **80 - ELECTION OF MAYOR**

The Town Clerk read the notice convening the Meeting.

Mayor Tony Clayton invited nominations for the Office of Mayor.

It was proposed by Cllr Gustard and seconded by Cllr Camp that Cllr Victoria Granville be elected Mayor for the ensuing year. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr Victoria Granville be elected Mayor.

## **81 - DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY MAYOR**

Cllr Granville read aloud and signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The retiring Mayor welcomed his successor and invested her with the Mayoral Chain of office.

Cllr Granville presented Cllr Clayton with his Past Mayor's Badge.

### **MAYOR VICTORIA GRANVILLE IN THE CHAIR**

a) Mayor Granville thanked councillors for her election to office.

*"I would like to thank you for electing me Mayor of Sevenoaks and to welcome everyone here tonight.*

*With us tonight is Nick Farthing, Chief Executive Officer of Hospice in the Weald. I am delighted to announce that Hospice in the Weald is my nominated charity for this mayoral year. Many of us might not have personal experience of hospice care, but our fellow councillor Nick Varley has educated me and the council team on what vital support the hospice has given him as he navigates his own diagnosis. Cllr Nick Varley and I will be working alongside hospice staff to augment the fundraising that he's already achieved, which is substantial, and as he says himself hospice care is not just about dying it's about living which is what he's doing and we're all doing and that will be the focus of my year supporting hospice in the Weald. "*

b) Cllr Clayton gave a retiring speech and addressed the Council:

*"Thanks to everyone who has made this year as mayor such an exciting one for Gill and I:*

- to all the organisations - schools, sports clubs, scouts, choirs, orchestras, arts and music creators, gardeners, care organisations, faith communities, guide dogs, refugee support, business groups and the rest - who have invited me to see what they do. There's an incredible range of volunteer work in our community*

- *to my councillor colleagues who have helped us; when I started out on this journey two years ago just as I was diagnosed with cancer, I made it clear that I would turn to you for support at key events I couldn't make - and you've all responded. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I have*
- *to the Town Council staff who have kept me organised - not an easy task - and helped me turn up on time and in the right place for 180 events*
- *to Gill .... who has been with me at most of them*

*We have met so many amazing people during the year, working in our community. It's been a real delight to promote as many of them as I could in the mayoral blog.*

*It's a real privilege to be Mayor of Sevenoaks - the best place to live in Kent!*

*You represent more than the Council. You also have a chance to support the voluntary and professional groups and the residents who make this town what it is. We can help bring them together and encourage what they do.*

*This Town Council is about collaboration. What brings us together in this chamber - whatever our political views - is that we love Sevenoaks and we want it to be the best it can possibly be. That's why so many of you invest your time and skills in it.*

*Only Sevenoaks Town Council has the motto 'May Sevenoaks Flourish'. That's why it's so important this Council continues into future decades, doing what it says on the badge!*

*Thank you."*

c) Cllr Shea thanked Cllr Tony Clayton and Gill Clayton:

*"We cannot look forward to this year's Civic Year for Cllr Granville without looking back a little to your year and express our heartfelt gratitude to you for taking on the important, and very time-consuming role.*

*You started this year with a certain amount of uncertainty in your lives and embraced a very inclusive way of working with the whole team to ensure that no local event was left without a civic presence and that the town was able to be present at networking events throughout the year.*

*You have brought new and very welcome initiatives to the role as well, particularly with your blog which serves as a really fantastic "report back", alongside the Town Clerk's weekly report, to residents, and sometimes to colleagues. It's been a real success, and I hope will be an initiative which will last and continue to keep the town's citizens in touch with the issues and organisations which make the town what it is.*

*You have talked often of the importance of community and volunteer groups, and the very long list of events and engagements in tonight's papers speaks to the very wide range of groups, charities, businesses, schools, clubs and societies which makes this lovely place tick.*

*You have had your fair share of historical events too, not least working with Bob Ogley on his new book and generous support of your charities. You have also represented us at more sombre events, and I would particularly like to mention the memorial services for two former mayors – Roger Walshe and Maurice Short.*

*Your community focus has been evident in your continued involvement in the Repair Café, your campaigning for community assets and your work across boundaries to encourage emerging town councils in West Kent to come and talk to us about their plans.*

*At the beginning of the year, Tony and I talked about what the year might look like for him, and I suggested that he might leave the writing of letters to the Chronicle to others for a bit. It lasted, I think, about a month! One day, Tony, I hope that we can create a compilation of all your letters to the Chronicle from your years as councillor – it will make a very complete social history. Maybe it could be a new project with Bob?*

*Gill, no-one comes into this expecting to do 180 events in one year particularly when they are not the one that stood for election in the first place. Thank you so much for all the time and energy you put into it, supporting Tony and supporting all of us in your role.*

*Tony, your dedication to the people of Sevenoaks, throughout your year of office has been breathtaking at times. You and Gill have given your time, your energy, and your commitment to this town with great generosity, and the Council and the community are all the richer for it.*

*Thank you both for being wonderful ambassadors for the town. “*

Cllr Shea presented Cllr Clayton with a gift, and Gill Clayton with flowers.

d) Cllr Gustard was pleased to welcome the new Mayor:

*“On behalf of all her Town Council colleagues I am delighted to welcome Cllr Victoria Granville as the Mayor of Sevenoaks for the coming year. An architect by trade and an artist at heart, Victoria brings a passion for excellent design and a real commitment to enhancing our public spaces and community life. As Sevenoaks continues to grow and evolve, those qualities will be a tremendous asset to our town. We offer Victoria our full support and look forward to working with her in the year ahead including supporting the very important charity that is so close to our hearts which I know she will champion during her mayoral year. We know she will be a wonderful ambassador for our town and its people.”*

## **82 - ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Mayor invited nominations for the office of Deputy Mayor.

It was proposed by Cllr Canet and seconded by Cllr Wightman that Cllr Lionel O'Hara be elected Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Lionel O'Hara be elected as Deputy Mayor.

## **83 - DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Lionel O'Hara, read aloud and signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Mayor provided the Deputy Mayor with his Badge of Office.

## **84 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED:** To note and accept apologies received from Cllr Ancrum, Cllr Daniell and Cllr Skinner.

## **85 - ELECTION OF LEADER OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL**

The Mayor invited nominations for the office of Leader of Sevenoaks Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Michaelides and seconded by Cllr Dixon that Cllr Claire Shea be elected Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing year. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Claire Shea be elected Leader of Sevenoaks Town Council.

## **86 - ELECTION OF DEPUTY LEADER OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL**

The Mayor invited nominations for the appointment of Deputy Leader of Sevenoaks Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Willis and seconded by Cllr O'Hara that Cllr Catherine Daniell be elected Deputy Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing year. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Catherine Daniell be elected Deputy Leader of Sevenoaks Town Council.

**87 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no requests for dispensations had been received.

**88 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED:** To note no declarations of interest were made.

**89 - COUNCIL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** To accept, adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 20th April 2026 as a true record of the meeting.

**90 - COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and adopt the minutes of the following Committee Meetings:

**90.1 - Planning & Environment Committee**

- 27th April 2026

**90.2 - Finance & Delivery Committee**

- 20th April 2026

**91 - APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS, VICE-CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**

**91.1 - Appointment of Standing Committees and their Working Groups for the ensuing Civic year**

**RESOLVED:** That Standing Committees and Working Groups be appointed as follows  
**(Appendix A):**

**FINANCE & DELIVERY COMMITTEE**

- Community & Wellbeing Working Group
- Community Engagement Working Group
- Sports Strategy Working Group
- Arts & Culture Working Group
- Quarry Liaison Working Group
- Greatness Recreation Ground Working Group

- Town Team/Business Improvement District (BID)
- Bat & Ball Centre User Group
- Town of Sanctuary Liaison Group

#### **COMMUNITY ASSETS (OPEN SPACES) COMMITTEE**

#### **PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

- Movement & Net Zero Working Group
- STNP/Master Plan Working Group

#### **YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

#### **STAG TRUSTEES**

### **91.2 – Appointment of Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of Standing Committees and Working Groups for the ensuing Civic year**

It was noted that Cllr Dr Dixon's name had been added to the list of appointees to the Town Team in error and it was agreed that this be removed.

**RESOLVED:** That subject to the amendment above, the report appointing Chairs, Vice-Chairs and members of Standing Committees and Working Groups for the ensuing civic year be received and adopted (**Appendix B**).

### **92 - REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**RESOLVED:** That the schedule of representation on Outside Bodies be received and adopted (**Appendix C**).

### **93 - SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL SCHEME OF DELEGATION, INCLUDING TERMS OF REFERENCE OF STANDING COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS**

**RESOLVED:** That the Sevenoaks Town Council Scheme of Delegation, including Terms of Reference of Standing Committees and Working Groups for the ensuing Civic year be received and adopted (**Appendix D**).

**94 - SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of meetings for 2026/2027 be received and adopted **(Appendix E)**.

**95 - STANDING ORDERS**

**RESOLVED:** That Sevenoaks Town Council's Standing Orders for 2026/2027 be approved and adopted **(Appendix F)**.

**96 - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

**RESOLVED:** That the Financial Regulations for 2026/2027 be approved and adopted **(Appendix G)**.

**97 - COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

**RESOLVED:** That the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 be adopted for 2026/2027. **(Appendix H)**.

**98 - ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**RESOLVED:** That the schedule of Annual Subscriptions for 2026/2027 be received and agreed. **(Appendix I)**.

**99 - VARIABLE DIRECT DEBITS**

**RESOLVED:** That the schedule of Variable Direct Debits for 2026/2027 be received and agreed. **(Appendix J)**.

**100 - GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the Town Council, having 100% of its councillors elected on 4th May 2023 and having a Qualified Town Clerk [including S7 of CiLCA 2012], has adopted the General Power of Competence [Minute 84, 15.05.23 refers].

**101 - SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026**

**RESOLVED:** That the Sevenoaks Town Council Annual Report 2025/2026 be received and noted.

**102 - GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION POLICIES [GDPR]**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the Town Council continues to adopt GDPR practices as required by statute throughout all its day-to-day business, and that the relevant policies will be reviewed at the Finance & Delivery Committee meeting on 8th June 2026.

**103 - MAYOR'S CADET 2026/2027**

**RESOLVED:** That Army Cadet, Sergeant Luca McKenna be appointed as the Mayor's Cadet for the ensuing Civic year. The Mayor presented him with his Mayor's Cadet Badge of Office.

**104 - CIVIC EVENTS AND MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS 2025 to 2026**

**RESOLVED:** To note:

- a) The functions attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or representative during the 2025/2026 civic year.
- b) The Civic Events held in 2025/2026.

**105 - PRESS RELEASE**

**RESOLVED:** That press releases be issued in respect of the outgoing Mayor and his fundraising and the election of Cllr Victoria Granville as Sevenoaks new Mayor.

There being no further business the Mayor closed the Meeting.

Signed .....  
Mayor

Dated .....