Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council
Held on Monday 15th June 2026 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:
https://youtube.com/live/_Rh08qQAOi8

Meeting commenced: 19:00 Meeting Concluded: 19:23

Present:

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

In attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer and Planning Committee Clerk.

Members of public present: 4

PUBLIC QUESTIONS
Council received and noted a presentation by Helena Gieniusz providing her own insights into the impact of The Stag on the town, on her own experience as a performer, the aspirations for the future of the Stag, and the current options presented by Sevenoaks District Council.

All Town Councillors congratulated Helena on providing such an informative presentation highlighting the educational and well-being element of the Stag for the younger and future generations.

167 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED: To receive and note apologies for absence as shown above.

168 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Noted that all Councillors who were also Stag Trustees had a pre-approved dispensation, reference Minute 171 below regarding the Community Asset Transfer request for the Stag freehold.

169 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

170 - MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 8TH JUNE 2026

RESOLVED: To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 8th June 2026 as a true record.

171 - COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER - THE STAG

Sevenoaks District Council had set out its Options in its agenda papers for the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee (and Cabinet Meeting 16th June 2026) for the future of the Stag and the potential to transfer to Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) either by Freehold or Lease – to read the full report see

https://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=359&MId=3767&Ver=4&J

To summarise there were 3 options

	SDC Option	Sevenoaks Town Council's Considerations
Option 1	Transfer Freehold to STC at a cost of £650,000	STC does not have the funds required available. Potential options for financing • Some funds from Capital Receipts could be used. • Borrowing if that is possible • Crowd fundraising • Increase to Precept Stag Petition • It should be noted that over 7,000 members of public signed a petition requesting SDC to hand over the Stag at Nil cost. Benefits • STC and the local community would finally own the asset • Security for long-term investment – see plans at end of report. • Such 'negotiations' would not be needed again in the future. Re Indicative Heads of Terms • Clawback/overage conditions should be reducing over the years • As per similar previous agreements on assets • Clawback/overage should not be payable on development relating to improving the building.

Option 2	Provide 30 year Peppercorn Lease	Currently the agenda papers state peppercorn rent but do not reflect rent reviews which is a concern. In a liaison meeting 2.6.26 SDC stated verbally that the peppercorn rent could be set for the entire lease without rent reviews. The current lease has no Tenancy Rights; this could result in a similar 'negotiation' happening in years to come after investing considerably in the venue.
Option 3	Keep with the status quo and remaining lease of 9 years. Freehold transfers to new Unitary Authority.	With only 9 years left on the lease, and no Tenancy Rights there are serious concerns about the long-term future of the asset and its community arts. In the current agenda papers SDC states (Para 57) "*an alternative option for the Council could be to declare the asset surplus to its requirements and dispose of the Stag at an open market disposal, where it could potentially realise a capital receipt of between c.£1.0m - £1.5m. this option is not being considered as the Council considers the asset to be a strategic community asset that should remain under local stewardship."* However, this may be of interest to the new Unitary Authority

It was noted that this was one of the biggest decisions Sevenoaks Town Council has had to make, and it is believed that there was a time limit to do this to inform the District Council Cabinet Meeting to take place on 16th June.

Legal Advice

Due to Sevenoaks District Council continued public reports and statements that Sevenoaks Town Council was requesting the District Council to act illegally by requesting that the Stag Community Arts Centre could be transferred at a nominal value, the Town Council sought legal advice, a copy of the legal advice as **Privileged Information** had been circulated to Town Councillors and the District Council as per advice from KC. The Legal Advice was not currently in the public domain. However, it should be noted that the Legal Advice clearly stated that SDC could legally transfer the Stag at a nominal value.

Negotiations

The Town Council had hoped to be able to meet with representatives of Sevenoaks District Council during the previous week. Unfortunately, Sevenoaks District Council stated that they would prefer not to meet prior to Cabinet meeting. In the meantime, Sevenoaks Town Council put forward the following offer which was rejected by the District Council for not being one of its Options. In addition, District Council Officers stated that they were not able to predetermine a CIL Application; it was thought that Officers had some delegated powers regarding this up to a value of £200,000.

If Sevenoaks District Council maintain that it is not legal to transfer the Freehold at a nominal value the offer from Sevenoaks Town Council, Subject to Contract is for £300,000 and subject to a successful CIL Application for £150,000.

In reviewing Sevenoaks District Council's agenda papers in relation to the Stag Community Asset Transfer, Town Councillors also noted the attached document relating to Quaker Hall Allotment Funds.

RESOLVED:

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) has previously stated it was not legal to transfer the Freehold of the Stag at a nominal fee and for this reason and others set out by SDC therefore must charge Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks residents £650,000.

Sevenoaks Town Council does not believe the public should be asked for public money to retain a public asset in community use just because it was moving from one local authority to another as confirmed by recent KC legal opinion.

Having received legal advice **Sevenoaks Town Council would want to enter into negotiation for the Freehold of the Lease to be transferred.**

If Sevenoaks District Council says it is unwilling or unable to agree a negotiated sum recognising cultural, social, economic, educational and environmental value, Sevenoaks Town Council would accept the Option of a 30 year peppercorn lease on terms to be negotiated, however this would be strictly without prejudice to the Town Council's continuing position that the Freehold should be transferred.

Acceptance of the lease would not diminish, replace or detract from Sevenoaks Town Council's ongoing position that the Freehold should be transferred for the reasons set out in its Stag Business Proposal.

To be very clear Sevenoaks Town Council do not want to progress with Option 3 as it would be detrimental to cultural facilities in the town and district.

172 - PRESS RELEASE

RESOLVED: To consider Press Releases following the Sevenoaks District Council Cabinet decision on 16th June 2026

There being no further business the Mayor closed the Meeting.

Signed …….. Dated ……..
Mayor

Sevenoaks Town Council

Town Council Offices – Compensation from District Council - QH Allotments

1. Background

The former Urban District Council purchased approximately 43 acres of land for allotments in 1924. Between 1927 and 1972, around 32 acres of this land were subsequently appropriated for housing purposes.

Following the reorganisation of local government on 31 March 1974, the remaining 11 acres of allotment land were transferred to Sevenoaks Town Council.

Under the provisions of the Allotments Act, a separate account must be maintained in respect of allotments. The Act further stipulates that any surplus on such an account may not be applied for the benefit of the General Rate Fund, nor used for any purpose other than capital expenditure on allotments, without the consent of the Secretary of State.

As a consequence, at the time of local government reorganisation, the balance held in the allotment account should have been transferred to the allotment authority, namely Sevenoaks Town Council. It was agreed that this would be settled by way of an annuity, payable over an 80-year period from the date on which the land ceased to be used for allotments.

For the sites identified, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) has been paying Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) an annual annuity. The final payment under this arrangement was due in 2052, with the annual payment amounting to approximately £29,000.

Payments were made annually on 31 March and credited to the earmarked reserve Capital Receipts – Quaker Hall, which may be used solely for capital expenditure.

2. Payment

Sevenoaks Town Council requested that Sevenoaks District Council consider making a single payment in respect of the remaining principal sum. SDC subsequently provided a full and final settlement figure of £351,146.30, which has now been sent to Sevenoaks Town Council.

	Quakers Hall Lane Allotments				
		Balance 01/04/2017	Principal	Interest	Balance 19/12/2025
		£	£	£	£
1	Hillingdon Rise	485.58	59.73	1.34	0.00
3	5 Acres	2,273.67	1,557.71	56.12	0.00
3	Adj		0.00		0.00
8	Link Road	200.83	169.53	7.48	0.00
12	Play Area	78,478.47	73,163.84	3,953.85	0.00
13	5.75 Acres	276,981.05	258,222.08	13,954.60	0.00
		358,419.60	333,172.89	17,973.41	0.00
			BP010 YSFLSF	57000 YARA	10 YSFLSF

The interest rates on the land were as follows and if the principal sum had not been paid off SDC (and future Unitary Authority)would have paid an additional £426,303.78 in interest payments:-

Ref	Site	Interest Rate	Annuity Terms
1	Hillingdon Rise	3.125%	80 yrs 1946/47-2025/26
3	5 Acres	5.000%	80 yrs 1955/56-2034/35
8	Link Road	6.125%	80 yrs 1964/65-2043/44
12	Play Area	7.500%	80 yrs 1972/73-2051/52
13	5.75 Acres	7.500%	80 yrs 1972/73-2051/52
	TOTAL		

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) in its June Finance & Investment Advisory Committee agenda papers has referred to the following financial transaction in relation to the Stag Community Asset Transfer:

SDC Finance & Investment Advisory Committee 9th June 2026
Para 70

"Sevenoaks Town Council also requested that an annuity payment received from this council relating to Quakers Hall Lane Allotments be replaced by a final payment to settle the debt. This Council agreed and made a payment of £351,146 to Sevenoaks Town Council in December 2025. At no time did Sevenoaks Town Council suggest writing off this amount as it was a transfer between two councils. Also, presumable Sevenoaks Town Council could use this amount to contribute to the payment for The Stag."

It should be clearly noted and recorded that this financial transaction does not relate to a Community Asset Transfer, it is not transferring an asset or land from one local authority to another.

Note: The original sum was £390,820, over £1.5m paid and settled in December 2025 at £351,146.

Ref	Site	Interest Paid to March 2026	Principle Sum Paid to March 2026
1	Hillingdon Rise	£3,158.02	£1,870
3	5 Acres	£11,109.89	£2,142.29
8	Link Road	£872.36	£80.47
12	Play Area	£332,566.55	£11,836.16
13	5.75 Acres	£1,173,762.70	£41,777.92
	TOTAL	£1,521,469.52	**£57,706.84**