

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 23rd February 2026

Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

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

<https://youtube.com/live/FOn28Qlx9BY>

Meeting commenced: 19:00

Meeting Concluded: 19:20

Present:

Cllr Tony Clayton, Mayor	Apologies	Cllr Sally Layne	Absent
Cllr Victoria Granville, Deputy Mayor (In the Chair)	Present	Cllr Lise Michaelides	Absent
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Present	Cllr Lionel O'Hara	Apologies
Cllr Sue Camp	Present	Cllr Claire Shea, Leader	Present
Cllr Dr Marilyn 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	Apologies	Cllr Nigel Wightman	Apologies

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

Members of public present: 2

Cllr Richard Streatfeild, Sevenoaks District Council & Kent County Council (KCC), advised that:

- KCC had agreed its budget 2026-2027, with a precept increase of 3.9% lower than maximum allowed; there was a lot of discussion about the risk in the budget.
- The situation had been eased somewhat by additional funding from the government
- An overspend of £50m on adult social care this year would impact next year
- Care home fees had been set at 0% increase which was concerning in view of the huge demand and the number of care homes that had closed
- Political instability continued at KCC with another member leaving Reform UK to join a new group, Restore Britain
- The government had written off a SEN overspend of £150m
- Investment in a new SEN school at Swanley was going ahead, due to complete in 3-4 years.

Cllr Streatfeild thanked the Town Council for initiating and contributing to the funding for the new Dartford Road zebra crossing.

644 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 23rd February 2026

645 - REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations.

646 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

647 - MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2026

RESOLVED: To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 12th January 2026 as a true record.

648 - MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: To receive and adopt the Minutes of the following Committee meetings:

Planning & Environment Committee

- 19th January 2026
- 2nd February 2026
- 16th February 2026

Finance & Delivery Committee

- 12th January 2026

Community Assets (Open Spaces) Committee

- 26th January 2026

649 - INTERNAL AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2026: SECOND INTERIM REPORT

The Council considered the second interim report received from the Town Council's internal auditor, Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Receive and note the Internal Audit 2025/2026 Second Interim Report (January 2026)
- 2) Note that no audit points had been raised
- 3) Congratulate the officers on receiving a clean audit

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 23rd February 2026

650 - OUTCOME OF COMPLAINT PANEL HEARING

RESOLVED: To receive and note the outcome of the Complaint Panel Hearing set out below:

Date complaint received	Date of Hearing	Subject	Outcome
19.12.25	02.02.26	The MUGA is in a very poor condition not suitable for tennis coaching The charges for booking / hire by a tennis coach are excessive.	The Panel acknowledged the difficulties faced by the complainant following the loss of the courts he previously used for coaching. The complaint was not upheld, as the facility is a multi-use games area, with its primary purpose being free community access rather than dedicated tennis provision.

651 - SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGY 2026-2027

RESOLVED: To receive, approve and adopt Sevenoaks Town Council's Strategy 2026-2027 (attached as Appendix).

652 - KENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION CONSULTATION

RESOLVED:

- 1) To note that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was seeking views on the proposals submitted by councils for the reorganisation of local government in Kent and Medway.
- 2) To note that full details on the consultation were available via the following link, and that the survey will remain open until 11:59pm on 26 March 2026: [Local government reorganisation in Kent and Medway - GOV.UK](#)
- 3) To note the consultation questionnaire
- 4) That a small Working Group of Councillors consider the consultation and prepare a draft response on behalf of Sevenoaks Town Council, to be submitted to an Extra Ordinary meeting of the full Council for approval.

653 - REPORTS TO COUNCIL - STC REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports were received.

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 23rd February 2026

654 - MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

RESOLVED: To receive and note:

- a. Functions attended by the Mayor or his representative up to 8th February 2026
- b. Forthcoming Civic Events being organised by the Mayor during 2025/2026

655 - PRESS RELEASE: None

There being no further business the Deputy Mayor closed the Meeting.

Signed
Deputy Mayor

Dated

Sevenoaks Town Council's Strategy 2026-27

Introduction

Sevenoaks Town Council has worked since publication of its last Strategic Plan to deliver the aims of its then Strategy agreed, cross-party. This renewed Strategy builds on the achievements since then and recognises new challenges.

Aims

Sevenoaks Town Council aims to offer community leadership to ensure Sevenoaks remains one of the best market towns in Kent to live, visit and do business in.

Challenges

- 1 Climate Change – e.g. carbon reduction, impact of droughts and flooding.
- 2 Financial challenges both for the Town Council and local businesses via significant rates increases and inflation. Potential loss of Community Infrastructure Levy funds currently used for capital projects and maintenance of community assets.
- 3 Local Government Reorganisation and uncertainty around ownership of key assets and provision of community services.
- 4 Significant population and housing development creating additional strain on current services.

Priorities

1 Climate Change

Using the Town Council's Green Community Investment Plan and Carbon Reduction Action Plan climate change initiatives to publicise and involve the local community and progress practical delivery under the following five themes:

- Theme 1: **Buildings**
- Theme 2: **Transport & Movement**
- Theme 3: **Making Sevenoaks Greener**
- Theme 4: **Consumption**
- Theme 5: **Information & Access to Information**

2 Community Voice & Engagement

Increasing opportunities for all residents, enabling inclusive and equitable opportunities to influence decisions through enhanced communication channels (social media, newsletters), "listening" at events, and stronger volunteering opportunities.

3 Neighbourhood Planning & Environment

Implementing the 2023 adopted Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Plan and working towards its renewal in 2028 to enable recommendations and policies to carry weight alongside Sevenoaks District Council's / new Unitary Council's Local Plans – to guide local development, improve public spaces, and protect heritage with a focus to biodiversity and protecting the natural environment.

4 Economic & Health Support

Supporting and promoting local businesses and collaborating with partners to provide mental and physical health support, particularly in response to the cost of living crisis.

5 Sustainability & Public Realm

Investing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds into green spaces and community assets and promoting sustainability through Sevenoaks Town Council's [Green Community Investment Plan](#).

6 Community Grants

Support voluntary groups, prioritising those in need and continuing with activities relating to Town of Sanctuary.

7 Good Governance

Retain good governance and robust financial management.

8 Community Assets

Be custodians of community assets for current and future generations. Invest in new leisure, sporting facilities, green spaces or the expansion or enhancement of existing facilities including the Stag Community Arts Centre, those items identified in the Community Investment Plan.

Resources

Sevenoaks residents are the Town Council's greatest asset, and the community has benefitted hugely from their contributions, both financial and practical, when it has really mattered. Big project examples include the Stag and Longspring Wood, but also in volunteering in the day-to-day delivery of community projects.

To achieve the Council's ambitious aims it requires a financial strategy to raise additional income and capital. This strategy would combine the following elements, rather than treat the precept as a first recourse to funding:

- 1 Ensuring rents, fees and charges are within limits set by the market, in line with trends, and to meet core objectives.
- 2 Using grants and other resources to support community organisations, for pump-priming, in most cases.
- 3 Contracting out facilities and services, where appropriate.
- 4 Considering the disposal of assets, where appropriate and as per legislation, which are not relevant to strategic objectives.
- 5 Borrowing for major capital projects or purchases.
- 6 Applying, where appropriate, for external funding to underwrite town projects.
- 7 Consider entering into agency agreements to carry out contracts on behalf of other organisations for the benefit of the town – either through new initiatives, an improved service and/or cost saving.