



Sevenoaks
TOWN COUNCIL



SEVENOAKS IN BLOOM 2026

South & South East in Bloom
Entry 2026



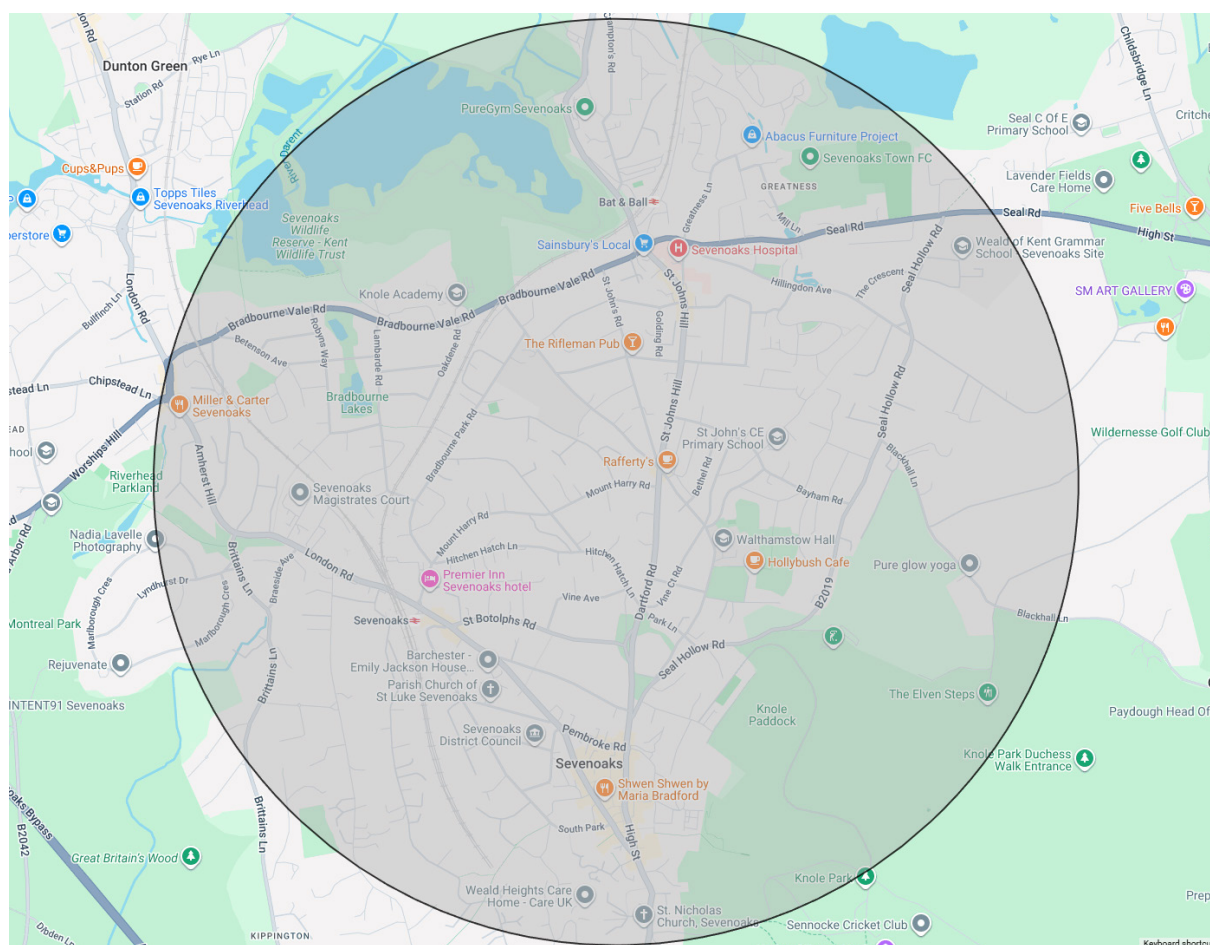


Sevenoaks in Bloom – Entry 2026

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Sevenoaks Town Centre Entry





Introduction



About Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks is situated in the County of Kent in the South of England with a population of around 29,000.

It is believed that the original seven oaks from which the town derived its name stood near the church of the southern side of the town. Indeed, the motto for Sevenoaks is 'Floreat Septem Quercus' [may the Seven Oaks Flourish]. This also forms part of the Sevenoaks Town Council crest.

Sevenoaks is an ancient market town, that grew up where historic roads from North Kent and London crossed the greensand ridge, overlooking the Kentish Weald, surrounded by Green Belt. In 2022, it celebrated its 900th anniversary.

Due to its proximity to London, traditionally the

majority of people commute to London to work, however, Sevenoaks has a very active community ethos and sense of place.

A large part of Sevenoaks Town Centre is pedestrianised, with many individual specialist and independent shops.

There is a vibrant café culture, and the Stag Community Arts Centre with its busy schedule of events in both the theatre and cinema boosts the visitor and night-time economy.

Sevenoaks made the world headlines in 1987 when six of

the seven oaks which had been planted in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII were blown over in the 'Great Storm' in October of that year. The King Oak, now 124 years old, is the only survivor. In 2017, 30 years after the Great Storm a plaque was unveiled by the Mayor to commemorate this momentous event. One of the fallen tree trunks was





also transformed into a piece of artwork, 'After the Storm' by Glen Morris, now homed in the Bat & Ball Centre.

History of Sevenoaks in Bloom

Initially, Sevenoaks Town Council commissioned floral hanging baskets to decorate the town centre. Local residents and visitors commented on how attractive these were, making it a pleasure to visit. Sevenoaks first entered In Bloom in 2011 and in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 the town centre and won a Silver Gilt and since 2018 Sevenoaks has received the accolade of winning Gold awards.

At the national RHS Britain in Bloom Awards 2025, Sevenoaks in Bloom won four awards as well as Gold Standard in the Town Centres and City Centres category, and the campaign also featured on BBC's The One Show. The town's campaign won a Judges' Highlight Award, celebrating important partnerships, particularly with Rockdale Housing Association. Rockdale's Head Gardener, Annette Whitney, was awarded the Community Champion Award. And two young volunteers, Willow and Bonnie won Young Champion Awards.

The town's success over the years in the South & South East in Bloom competition has helped contribute towards increased tourism,

pride in local heritage, revitalising less popular parts of the town with an increased sense of community and raised awareness of sustainability and climate change issues.

2026 Theme

The theme for Sevenoaks in Bloom 2026 is 'Celebrate Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday'. Sevenoaks in Bloom is also raising awareness of the importance of insects to the pollination of plants and preservation of biodiversity.

The floral display colour scheme for 2026 is blue green and yellow. Since 2019, Sevenoaks has included edible plants and herbs in the public displays for people to help themselves if they so wish.

The aim is to include a wide range of people with activities designed to appeal to young and old, as well as being an educational tool. Apart from participating in gardening tasks, there are opportunities to contribute towards In Bloom creatively through painting, sculpture, knitting and crochet.





(Above left) Sir David Attenborough in his groundbreaking gorilla documentary and (above right) Sevenoaks in Bloom celebrated Sir David Attenborough's birthday in May with a painted rock display.



(Middle left) Rock painting class with Sevenoaks Adult Social Services and (middle right) Knit & Natter Group crocheted insects.

(Left) Sevenoaks Town Council's Town Crier magazine celebrating In Bloom success and (far left) volunteer gardeners from the Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project.



Horticulture Achievement

Overview

Trees and hedges contrast with built form at the southern end of the High Street with some fine mature trees defining spaces to the front of buildings contributing strongly to the special character of Sevenoaks.

In 2024, to celebrate 50 years since the inception of Sevenoaks Town Council, 14 acres of ancient woodland was purchased with the enormous generosity of the public ensuring a lasting community use legacy. The woodland is identified as a biodiversity opportunity area.

Key to all horticultural endeavours is the Town Council's Biodiversity policy adopted in April 2022:

Sevenoaks Town Council is committed to addressing the climate crisis and championing biodiversity through leadership, policy, and practical action.

Its Neighbourhood Development Plan embeds climate response at its core, with 26 of its 34 policies supporting Net Zero by 2030 – including one that introduced a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement 11 months before it became a national standard.

The Council practices sustainable land management, creating

habitats, protecting native species, reducing chemical use and scheduling all tree and grassland maintenance works around wildlife migration and nesting patterns. It supports residents by investing in and providing free access to tools such as two thermal imaging cameras, wildflower seeds, and a reusable party kit, in addition to awarding grants to local community groups towards their green projects such as solar panels for both The Stag Theatre and the Sevenoaks Bowling Club.

Community engagement is central, with annual events such as the Climate Fair on The Vine, in addition to various educational events, and discounted Car Club access.

Staff and Councillors are trained in biodiversity and carbon literacy, ensuring that environmental priorities guide all activities and further embed biodiversity and climate resilience into all its practices

Planting

There are 85 hanging baskets, 27 troughs and one tower supplied by a local company which are watered by the contractor at night 2-3 times a week. The planting consists of Petunia, Bacopia, Brachycome, Tomato and Basil. These are located in the town centre





and secondary shopping areas.

Over recent years, cycle-planters in the town were introduced, which are both practical and visually attractive. Volunteers help with weeding and watering the planters.

The public gardens are planted for year-round interest. Hand weeding the flower beds encourages healthy plants, avoiding the use of chemicals and pesticides.

Planting includes drought resistant varieties, particularly herbs, and RHS recognised pollinators with planting where possible being completed in the autumn to reduce the amount of water needed in spring.

This year's planting list includes pollinator friendly and drought tolerant plants:

- Hardy annuals: Echium 'Blue Bedder' and Phacelia tanacetifolia
- Herbaceous Perennials: Geranium, Pulmonaria, Marjoram, Nepeta, Linaria purpurea and Lavender and winter Heathers

In addition to the Council's horticultural supplier, gifts of vegetable, herb and flowering plants have been generously donated by the Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association and In Bloom volunteers.

Edible Gardening

Edible gardening continues to play an important part of Sevenoaks in Bloom encouraging more people to grow their own.

Initiatives this year include growing ingredients for tomato and basil soup and an accompanying recipe.

Adopt-a-Tree

The 'adopt-a-tree' campaign is a popular initiative to encourage local residents

to plant fruit and nut trees, not just as memorials, but also for special occasions, e.g. births, anniversaries and special birthdays. This scheme benefits the local environment, improves air quality and provides homes and food for wildlife.

New cherry and crab apple trees were planted at The Vine in 2025 providing additional blossom and nourishment for insects.



Sevenoaks Railway Station

For several years at Sevenoaks railway station, volunteers from Sevenoaks Soroptimists refurbished and tended a flower bed in the centre of the car park, which is now being managed by the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership. And instead of a weedy unloved patch, commuters enjoy the visual delights of colourful flowers. Pupils from Sevenoaks School constructed 'Bugington Palace' insect hotel to provide shelter for visiting insects.

Southeastern Trains are active supporters of Sevenoaks in Bloom providing colourful planters on the platforms which are looked after by the station staff, in addition to the flowering troughs welcoming commuters to the station.





Environmental Responsibility

Local Identity

Sevenoaks as a market town is a quintessential part of the traditional image of the English countryside and a vital part of the local economy.

The Town Council, in conjunction with other local authorities, businesses and the community are striving to ensure Sevenoaks continues to be an attractive place to visit, with an interesting built environment and a sense of civic pride and identity.

In the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Sevenoaks, a questionnaire was sent to all residents of the town asking for the opinions and comments on all aspects of the town, particularly with regard to its character and how this should be preserved and enhanced over the next 10 to 20 years. The preservation

and conservation of the town's open spaces and verdant environment was a key topic.

Urban Environment

In 2019, Sevenoaks Town Council resolved to formally recognise the Government and KCC declarations for aiming for Zero Carbon and to integrate this within the vision and throughout the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and within the Town Council's general operation.

The Council's number one priority was to create an Action Plan to review:

- Reducing cars / traffic particularly in relation to school traffic.
- Sevenoaks Town Council (STC)'s new buildings to be as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible.

- Existing buildings to be improved to be more sustainable with reduced carbon footprint where practicable.
- Include planting of more trees, where possible fruit and nut trees
- Promote Refill Scheme, Sevenoaks Plastic Free Pledge, Reusable Party Kit hire and Thermal Imaging Camera hire
- Cycle racks/planters to be installed
- Install drinking fountains where possible at STC sites
- Increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- NDP Transport Strategy recommendations including 20 mph, one-way system in town centre and shared space, and car club
- Link STC open spaces together with 'green routes'
- Encourage increased



use of public transport (buses and trains) by having improved facilities including live running information

- Install electric car charging points at STC sites
- Consider enabling community initiatives for sustainable living e.g. Toy Library, Zero Waste Shop, Community Orchards, Community Cycle Workshops, Repair Café, promotion of alternative resources e.g. nappies.

The Green Community Investment Plan was adopted in 2022 and is an extension to the Community Investment Plan 2023-2027.

Sevenoaks Town is extremely proud to be able to say that it has already met the majority of the above targets ahead of 2027.

One of the greatest successes was the introduction of the 20mph scheme for the town centre in 2024, increasing safely for pedestrians and cyclists, and a new pedestrian crossing in Dartford Road has been completed in 2026.

A new electronic community bus for use by voluntary organisations and charities was commissioned and put into service in 2026.




Sevenoaks
 TOWN council

Reusable Party Kit!



Planning a party? Ditch disposables and borrow our Reusable Party Kit. It's **free** for **Sevenoaks Town residents**, and perfect for birthdays and family gatherings!

Kit for 32 people includes:

• Plates		✓ Eco-friendly
• Side plates		✓ Community-friendly
• Bowls		✓ Hassle-free alternative
• Jugs		
• Cups		
• Cutlery		
• Bunting		



If you are interested in booking the Party Kit, please email: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk



Carbon Reduction

The Town Council invested in two electronic vehicles for open spaces staff and new rechargeable handheld machinery is replacing petrol models. Electronic charging points have been installed at the Council offices and Bat & Ball Centre, together with a community car club. The Town Council's Green Community Investment Plan includes comprehensive actions to address carbon reduction.

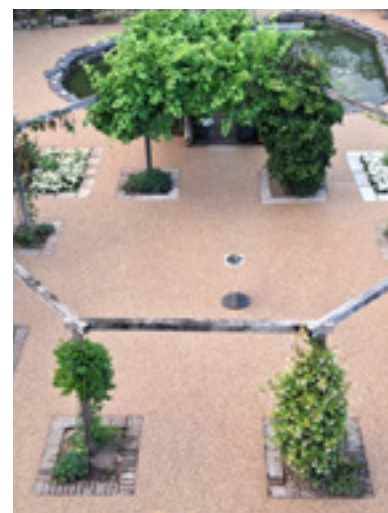
This year, the Climate Fair was held on The Vine by Sevenoaks Climate Action Network and Sevenoaks Town Council on 2 May with talks and workshops by various stakeholders. The event is very popular and has become an annual fixture on The Vine with an ever-increasing number of environmental and community groups participating.

Graffiti

The Town Council and District Council remove graffiti from buildings at the earliest opportunity. The Town Wardens regularly monitor and report any incidents of vandalism to the appropriate authority and works closely with the PCSOs to ensure that there is no negative impact on the local environment. The Town Council also has a graffiti removal kit for residents to use.

Paving Treatments

Particularly unusual and distinctive features of the Sevenoaks streetscape are the small areas of historic paving that survive. The historic, archaeological and aesthetic importance of much of this paving is valued for its contribution to the character of the area. The Animal Welfare Officer at Sevenoaks District Council monitors the town centre to ensure that dog fouling does not become an issue.





Lighting and New Surface in Vine Gardens

New lighting around the base of the trees in Vine Gardens installed in 2025 provides a safer evening environment for visitors and helps deter anti-social behaviour. The lighting can be adjusted from plain white to coloured lighting for special events.

Last year, a new resin surface was laid at the Vine, using a million recycled plastic straws replacing the crazy paving, providing a safer and more accessible surface for all users.

Natural Environment

Living Wall

Over a decade ago, Marks & Spencer opened a store in the town, which comprises one of the largest retail developments in the town centre. Despite the size of the development, Marks & Spencer used a range of traditional materials to reflect the character of Sevenoaks, sustainable techniques, solar panels, a green sedum planted roof and living wall and rainwater harvesting. These green features provide additional insulation and improved energy efficiency.

The species, all indigenous to the UK, were chosen for their ecological value, to





boost biodiversity in the area. In summer, the flowers of *Geranium dalmaticum* and *Phlox douglasii* bloom in pink and mauve, whilst *Hebe pinguifolia* and *Sarcococca humilis* flower in white. The living wall maintains its lush green cover all year round as the plants are all evergreen, except for the sole addition of one deciduous plant – white Snowdrops peek out from the green foliage from late winter to spring. The inclusion of *Heuchera* ‘Palace Purple’ gives further seasonal variation with its deep purple leaves. Additional plants have been added over time to the green wall adding more colour and interest as it has become more established.

Bees’ Needs Awards

Sevenoaks was delighted to receive a Bees’ Needs Award, a competition run by DEFRA under Green Flag parks and gardens. The Town Council, with the dedication and support of volunteer Adrian Cheeseman of the Sevenoaks Living Landscape project, Kent Wildlife and Sevenoaks Soroptimists, has enabled the establishment of ‘green corridors for bees and pollinators’ through the town.

The number of bees seen in the various gardens has increased enormously on all three sites: the bus station, land adjacent to the main railway station and the sensory gardens at The Vine. It is hoped through this

creativity to encourage further planting for food and habitat for bees in Sevenoaks and to encourage bigger, joined-up, diverse and high-quality flower-rich habitats.



Sevenoaks Pound

A project which commenced in 2021 introduced a new wildlife meadow in Sevenoaks Pound. Pounds were originally used to house stray animals safely until they could be re-united with their owners.

The Town Pound is not only a rare example of how our ancestors looked after the welfare of their animals, but an important link with the past. It is possible that it has

existed since medieval times when pounds were provided by the Lord of the Manor and there is mention of a pound keeper in the 17th century in a book at Knole. During the 21st Century the meadow at The Pound will become a safe haven for wildlife and bees and pollinators will have a safe refuge in the ‘bug hotel’.

Vine Pond

Five years ago, a complete refurbishment of the pond at The Vine was undertaken by the Town Council’s Open Spaces staff. Over the years, the ornamental stonework had deteriorated and allowed the water level to drop dramatically threatening the welfare of the fish and amphibians. A net is installed over the water to protect the fish from hungry herons.

Quality and Resources

Close attention is paid to protecting the environment and preserving resources. Vinegar-based weedkiller is used on hard surfaces in the gardens, electronic tools are employed, peat-free compost utilised and grey water used for watering the tubs and troughs.

The majority of planting is drought tolerant where possible with minimum use of bedding which is used in key areas only to provide a splash of colour.



Community and Business Participation

In Bloom Committee

The Town Council is very grateful to the In Bloom Committee comprising of local businesses and volunteers:

- Sevenoaks Town Council staff and councillors
- Rockdale Housing Association
- Local residents
- Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project
- Sevenoaks Soroptimists
- West Kent Housing (Incredible Edibles)
- South Eastern Railway
- Stag Community Arts Centre

In Bloom initiatives are publicised on the Sevenoaks Town Council website, social media and in the Council's quarterly magazine 'The Town Crier'. Noticeboards in the town promote In Bloom, as well as a highway banner and decals in shop windows.

Tidy-Up Days

Volunteers from businesses, voluntary organisations and local residents join in with Tidy-Up Days to support Sevenoaks in Bloom and spruce up the town ready for judging. This year, two days have been scheduled on 23 June and 3 July.





Sevenoaks in bloom



Can you help us with Sevenoaks in Bloom 2026?

Gardening and tidying

We'll be seeking extra support with weeding and tidying before judging.



Please join our Community Tidy-Up Days
on Tuesday 23rd June and Friday 3rd July!



You can also help by 'adopting' a planter in Sevenoaks, caring for the flowers in it and making sure it's free of weeds. We're also looking for support from businesses who can give staff time to volunteer.



Knitted caterpillar



Knitted/crocheted bugs



Crochet butterfly

We welcome any knitted/crocheted butterflies or caterpillars for our displays around town, but here are some example patterns:



Painted rocks and sculptures



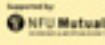
We're asking young people to help by creating their own David Attenborough-themed sculptures to display in the Vine Gardens.

We're also seeking painted rocks with animals and bugs from little ones!

For more information, email communityeng@sevenoakstown.gov.uk, call 01732 459953 or visit www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk







Sevenoaks in Bloom is celebrating David Attenborough at 100

Join our Tidy-Up Days on:

- Tuesday 23 June at 1pm
- Friday 3 July at 10am





Do you want to get involved with gardening, tidying or artwork?

Email communityeng@sevenoakstown.gov.uk or visit www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk



School Involvement

Sevenoaks in Bloom is engaging many primary and secondary schools with this year's entry. Students are participating by creating David Attenborough-themed artworks and carrying out In Bloom activities suited to different ages.

Name of School	Project
Sevenoaks Primary School	Insect Rock Painting
Dunton Green Primary School	Insect Rock Painting
Lady Boswell's C of E Primary School	Insect Rock Painting
West Heath School	Globe Sculpture
Tonbridge Wells Boys Grammar School	Animal Sculptures
Sevenoaks Preparatory School	Globe Sculpture & Rock Paintings
The New Beacon	Globe Sculpture – Woven
Sevenoaks School	Bug Audit – Vine Gardens and Upper High Street Gardens
Weald of Kent Grammar School	Insect Rock Painting



Woven Globe Sculpture made by students at The New Beacon School



*Pitfall Trap used in Bug Audit
by Sevenoaks School*



Other Young People's Involvement

After the success of last year's Bug-tastic Trail, this quiz has been continued at The Vine to encourage young children to look and appreciate nature. On completing the trail, they receive a special sticker saying 'I'm a Bug Boss!' to inspire the next generation of horticulturists.

At this year's Climate Fair, the Sevenoaks Youth Council produced 'Stay Green 2026' bracelets with an information sheet printed on 'seed' paper. Recipients were encouraged to plant the paper rather than throwing it away as it was impregnated with wildflower seeds to encourage more meadow planting.

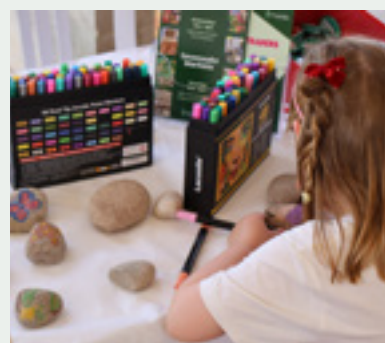
Young people are involved with growing plants and vegetables at the Youth Café and are designing a mural depicting flowers and pollinating insects.

A children's theatre production of Professor Slug's House of Bugs was a free interactive show in May, full of educational information about the wonderful world of bugs and their importance to the environment.

On the same day, there was a children's insect rock painting workshop to promote Sevenoaks in Bloom. Both events were very well attended, and the next generation got an opportunity to learn about insects and pollination, as well as having the prospect of having their artwork displayed in the public gardens in the town.



An additional community Sevenoaks in Bloom rock painting session was held in the town centre to celebrate 'Love your Local Market'.





It is rewarding to note that the two Britain in Bloom Young Champions, Willow and Bonnie are again contributing to this year's entry.

Bonnie, Emma and Lilly undertook a sponsored litter pick this year and raised £60 and bought yellow and blue Bidens and Verbena in for the planters at The Vine Bandstand, together with yellow trailing tomatoes for the water butt planter on the corner of the cricket pavilion.

And Willow has created special crocheted postbox toppers celebrating Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday.



Knitting groups and volunteers

We are grateful to all the volunteers and knitting groups who were busily knitting and crocheting bugs to be displayed around our open spaces to promote In Bloom.



Seed Swap Boxes

Seed swap boxes were made by a local carpenter and there is an active exchange of seeds from the boxes located in Vine Gardens, Bradbourne Vale Road and Quakers Hall Allotments.



Business Support

Sevenoaks Town Council's entry in South & South East in Bloom is being supported by local businesses, who have been encouraged to:

- Provide floral displays
- Ensure their premises are clean, litter and graffiti free
- Display a 'Sevenoaks in Bloom' sticker
- Provide ideas for themes for future years entries into S&SE in Bloom
- Encourage their employees to assist with In Bloom tasks
- Assist with sponsorship
- Donate towards the floral displays
- Sign the Plastic Free Sevenoaks pledge
- Host and become part of the Refill Campaign.

South Eastern Trains

The Station Master and the staff from South Eastern trains have fully supported In Bloom over the past few years and have made considerable improvements to the station buildings and surrounding estate, as well as introducing floral displays and environment habitats for wildlife, including green corridors and wildlife rail-side planting.



Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership

A well-known artist, Kit Boyd, was commissioned to design posters celebrating the heritage, environment and culture of Sevenoaks and the Darent Valley stations. Copies of these artworks have been reproduced on the hoardings opposite Sevenoaks railway station as a community art project adding to the pride of place.

The Community Partnership has also installed planters at each of the Darent Valley stations. A couple of years ago the DVCRP commissioned an artist to paint murals at both the town's train stations providing a warm welcome to visitors to the town.

Pubs and restaurants have installed flowering troughs and baskets to attract more visitors to the town.

Retail businesses in the town are backing Sevenoaks in Bloom through themed window displays and promoting the campaign with vinyl window stickers made of plastic waste.



Sevenoaks District Council

The District Council supports In Bloom by:

- Endorsing the scheme and providing assistance in partnership
- Street cleaning and refuse collection
- Hanging baskets outside Sevenoaks District Council Offices
- Renovating flower bed at Suffolk Way/Pembroke Road junction
- Joining In Bloom Committee

Kent County Council

Kent County Council is responsible for roads and rights of way throughout the town and have been contacted to ask for their assistance with overgrown hedges and weed control

Owing to local government reorganisation and the

abolition of Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council and the subsequent reduction in partnership funding and assistance, beginning in July 2026 there will be a new dedicated member of Sevenoaks Town Council designated to look after the maintenance of Sevenoaks Town Centre

Sevenoaks Town Team

The Sevenoaks Town Team is an energetic and pioneering team, who are committed to combining resources and developing innovative and achievable projects to boost the Town's footfall and local economy. The Executive Board consists of representatives from Sevenoaks Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Sevenoaks Chronicle, Bligh's, Knole and most importantly retailers and local businesses. They have





instigated improvements in the public realm resulting in refurbished and repainted railings, signs and street furniture.

Previously they have worked with the Round Table to renovate and restore a much-loved red telephone box in the town centre to house a defibrillator.

Sevenoaks is blessed with a long and interesting history, yet unknown to many so the Town Team created a trail for visitors and residents alike. They also instigated the Town Trail which is a “self-guided” using a smartphone. It features a map of the 3 mile circular route and for each point of interest there is at least one photo and a potted history. The trail is hosted by TrailTale and is accessed by downloading their app from TrailTale or the App Store.

An ongoing Town Team project is an ambitious scheme to introduce a co-ordinated Pedestrian Wayfinding signage scheme throughout the town to aid residents and visitors to the town.

House in the Basement

House in the Basement Youth Café has grown from strength to strength over the past couple of years. Young people have taken part in The South & South East in Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood and have been awarded 'Outstanding'

status.

Planting undertaken by the young people and staff has made the outside of the café more inviting to passers-by and has encouraged more young people to attend. Two Duke of Edinburgh volunteers are helping with the planting, weeding and watering of the flowers and vegetables at the House in the Basement café.

Housing Associations – Rockdale Housing Association and West Kent Housing Association

Rockdale Housing Association is a key partner in Sevenoaks in Bloom. They have large gardens in the centre of the urban area for the benefit of residents and visitors. Apart from the well-tended gardens, the gardeners help elderly residents with their own floral displays. Sustainability and biodiversity play a large part in the maintenance of these grounds.

A couple of years ago a gardening group was formed which has become immensely popular with residents. Rockdale also has a member of staff on the In Bloom committee. A local school helps with community gardening and a pre-school is also actively involved. There are also a very active knit and natter and wood working groups.

This year, Rockdale residents have also been making bird boxes and hedgehog houses West Kent Housing Association aka Incredible Edibles in horticultural circles has created a wonderful roadside garden full of edibles and flowers.





Churches

The Town Council looks after the Closed Churchyard at St Nicholas and has encouraged the development of the wildflower meadow by volunteers at the church. A couple of years ago an 'insect hotel' was opened.



Community Gardening Volunteer Support

Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project

The Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project, together with other volunteers have helped transform and revitalise neglected areas of the town encouraging more wildlife. The Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project is a Kent Wildlife Trust initiative to encourage the people of Sevenoaks, whether schools, businesses, community groups, local authorities or individuals to support the natural environment.

They have weeded and replanted a small area by the main train station which was very overgrown. Assistance

Sevenoaks Youth Council

Sevenoaks Youth Council launched a Plastic Free campaign to reduce the use of single use plastic and encourage more recycling and one of their key aims is the protection and enhancement of the environment.

Stag Community Art Centre

The Stag attracts up to 20,000 people per month. Hanging baskets adorn the front of venue and troughs of flowers along the walkway leading to the public car park to the rear of the building.



and bee friendly plants have been donated by Riverhill Himalayan Gardens for this much appreciated project. A local restaurant, the Raj Bari, has also helped the group by permitting them access to a tap nearby to be able to water new plants.

Adrian Cheeseman, a volunteer with The Sevenoaks Living Landscape Project, has been an active promoter of Sevenoaks in Bloom for several years and apart from the flower beds, he tends all year round at the bus station, he has made up hanging baskets filled with peat free compost for Buckhurst House Dental Practice and the bus station.

Rheinbach Gardens Volunteer Group

A new community initiative run entirely by local volunteers is looking after the planting and maintenance of Rheinbach Gardens. Planting includes drought resistant perennials.

Sevenoaks Soroptimists

Volunteers from the Sevenoaks branch of Soroptimist International have helped restore the sensory bed and planting a herb section. in the Vine Gardens giving freely of their time to weed and plant. As well as looking after a bed full of pollinators at Sevenoaks Station.





Key Areas and Architectural Descriptions

A large proportion of the town centre is in the Sevenoaks High Street Conservation Area and contains buildings from seven centuries with a wealth and variety of architectural detail.

The basic spatial structure of the 17th Century town still remains today with a series of alleys and footways leading to small courtyards and gardens. This is clearly seen in the areas around the Upper High Street, St Nicholas Church and the Shambles.

Sevenoaks School

Sevenoaks School was founded in the fourteenth century by William Sevenoke, Mayor of London. Today there are 1,000 students and the grounds extend to 110 acres. Several of the flower beds were designed by landscape and garden designer Jo Thompson, who was a Chelsea Flower Show winner.

Knole House

Knole House is situated within 1,000 acre park and is one of England's largest houses. The surrounding deer park has also survived with little having changed in the 400 years since 1600 although its formerly dense woodland was permanently scarred by the loss of over

70% of its trees in the Great Storm of 1987.

St Nicholas Church

The closed churchyard is maintained by Sevenoaks Town Council who keep the area tidy. The attractiveness of the graveyard is augmented by herbaceous borders tended by volunteers from the church community.

Upper High Street Gardens

This small public garden maintained by the Town Council provides a quiet spot away from the High Street with several benches for repose. It has an access ramp ensuring equal access for all. Shrubs and bushes have been planted in conjunction with local charities and organisations to commemorate various

centenaries.

The Upper High Street Gardens date from 1949 when the garden, a site which was owned by Miss Constant who lived in the 'Old House' on the opposite side of the road, was given by her to Sevenoaks as a tribute to her parents. The keys were handed over by two great-grandchildren of Mr & Mrs Constant. A memorial tablet is set in the northern boundary wall.

Six Bells Lane

A picturesque area off the High Street, Six Bells Lane is a footpath leading steeply downhill past a series of white painted and weather boarded cottages. Several of the cottages have exquisite cottage gardens visually enhancing this quiet backwater.





The Shambles, Dorset Street and Bank Street

Linking London Road and High Street are a series of narrow lanes, partially closed to traffic, with an intimate atmosphere and a smaller scale than the two main roads. This is an important area within the commercial part of the town and includes picturesque streets and paths with some interesting details and the type of specialist retail outlets, arts and craft shops, galleries and restaurants that encourage shoppers to linger.

The Town Council has worked in conjunction with the District Council, and the café owners to enhance this area and encourage great use of this intimate public space.

There are planters provided by the Town Council and the café owners which has resulted in an historic area of the town being brought back to life.

Dorset Street and Bank Street, particularly in the area around the Old Market House, have a special small-scale character, as does Well Court and the link to the Shambles. The pedestrian priority of these streets has contributed significantly to their economic use and vibrancy.

Sevenoaks Bus Station

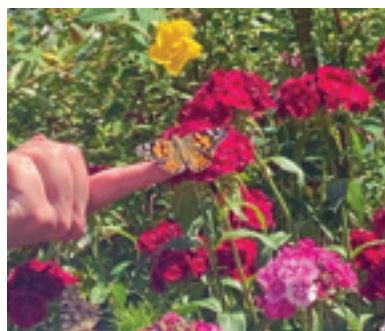
The flowerbed was renovated by volunteer Adrian Cheeseman. It is planted with wildlife friendly bulbs and perennial shrubs to provide a source of nectar and pollen from February till October – no pesticides are used to protect the wildlife.

Bligh's Meadow

The Bligh's Meadow area is the main pedestrian shopping area of the town with major chains, cafes and independent shops. The owners of the shopping area invest in hanging baskets and planters. They encourage their leaseholders to take part in the Best Window competition.

Lime Tree Walk

Lime Tree Walk, to the north west of London Road, includes an interesting terrace of artisan's houses designed by Sir Thomas Jackson in 1878. What makes Lime Tree Walk of great social significance is the fact that it was originally intended for working men and has a distinctive character of its own.



The Vine Gardens, Cricket Ground and Surrounds

The Vine cricket ground, which is one of the oldest in existence, was given to the town by the 3rd Duke of Dorset in about 1778. He was at this time the owner of Knole, and the town's main landowner. The first fully reported match between Kent and Sussex took place here in 1734.

The pavilion was erected in 1850 and the bandstand in 1894.



The former band practice room, now a community café, is also from the turn of the century.

The Vine gardens have a rustic feel with a timber bridge and pergola that supports a magnificent wisteria. The low timber fence to the cricket pitch and the traditional park seating are in keeping with the spaciousness of the area.



The fishpond has been allowed to establish its own oxygen level and is a wildlife habitat for larvae and small amphibians, as well as the carp.

In 2018, a traditional red telephone box was renovated and relocated to The Vine to house a defibrillator for community use.

The bandstand was refurbished with the help of grant aid which is regularly used on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons for free concerts.

In 2019, through grant funding, a new ramp was constructed to enable people with mobility issues and families with prams to use the Vine Pavilion and in 2022 all the buildings at The Vine were renovated and repainted and new welcome signage installed at the entrances.

A variety of events are arranged in The Vine

Gardens in addition to the regular cricket matches taking place on the historic pitch.

During 2025/2026 financial year considerable capital investment was made at The Vine:

Painting of Vine Hut and Vine Bridge	£1,327
Repair work to the Bridge	£3,220
Fence Works	£1,162
Resurfacing resin Works	£23,130
Repairs to Vine Café	£3,685
Repairs to Vine Pavilion Roof & Replacement skylights	£16,000
Total	£48,524

Vine Cricket Ground

Cricket has been played on the Vine since 1734 making it one of the oldest and most historically significant cricket grounds in the Country. It was bequeathed to the community by the 3rd Duke of Dorset in 1773 for the playing of cricket in perpetuity and thereafter in a Deed of Gift of the Vine Ground dated 21 Sept 1936 from Lord Sackville to the Urban District Council of Sevenoaks which provides:

"The year 1934 being the bi-centenary of the playing of a certain historic cricket match upon he said cricket ground in the year 1734 with a view to ensuring the preservation of the said cricket ground for the playing of cricket thereon for ever hereafter during the appropriate seasons in every year and for the general benefit of the residents in Sevenoaks ... the purpose for which and the conditions upon which the said piece of land is hereby conveyed are that the same shall be used as a public recreation ground and for the playing of cricket and other games thereon and for no other purpose whatsoever ..."

The Vine War Memorial

An Annual Remembrance Day Service and Parade is organised at the Vine War Memorial and is attended by more than 900 people.



An information leaflet and two books have been produced about the War Memorial which have generated more interest from school children, residents and visitors to the town.



Buckhurst Lane Play Area

In 2025, the children's play area located in the centre of the town including play equipment for younger children and a zipwire for the more adventurous was refurbished. The area includes bird and bug boxes to encourage greater wildlife habitat



Hidden Gardens

In the town centre there are several hidden gem gardens which can be accessed by the public and add tremendously to the atmosphere of the town including the restaurant garden at Well Court which provides a quiet setting in the middle of the urban environment.

Cattle troughs

Once a common sight, Sevenoaks is fortunate in having several water troughs in the town provided by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. Founded in 1859, it provided clean drinking water in public places in London, but soon extended to include animals and also outside the capital. With the decline in horse drawn vehicles many were lost, these historic landmarks are now used for floral displays.

The Drinking Fountain Junction London Road/High Street

The fountain erected in 1882 was the spot where Sennockians always sang in the New Year. In 1925 a Sevenoaks resident, Bill Carter fashioned the unusual structure on the fountain at the junction of the High Street and London Road.





Millenium Walk



A Sevenoaks Millennium Walk with brass plaques set into the paving takes people through the town highlighting famous personages associated with the town

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | H G Wells 1866-1946 | 2 | Diana Princess of Wales 1961-1997 |
| 3 | Emily Jackson 1840-1916 | 4 | William Pett 1709-1786 |
| 5 | Lady Margaret Boswell died 1692 | 6 | Sir Thomas Jackson 1835-1924 |
| 7 | W H Davies 1871-1940 | 8 | Archbishop Thomas Bourchier 1404-1486 |
| 9 | John Donne 1571-1631 | 10 | Charles Dickens 1812-1870 |
| 11 | William Lambarde 1536-1601 | 12 | Jack Cade died 1450 |
| 13 | William Sevenoke | 14 | Vita Sackville-West 1892-1962 |
| 15 | Jane Austen 1775-1817 | | |

Review of the Past Year

Key:

Green Horticultural

Yellow Environmental

Purple Community

2025/2026	Achievements
January	Adopt a tree campaign
March	Ongoing promotion of communal car club for residents
May	Climate Fair at The Vine Thermal Imaging Camera loan
June	Green Community Investment Plan promoted Vine Events brochure



August	Green Flag Award - The Vine Sevenoaks 2025/2026
September	Official opening of Longspring Wood for Community use South & South East in Bloom Gold Awards: Town Centre, The Vine and Upper High St Gardens. It's Your Neighbourhood – Thriving – HOUSE in the Basement Sevenoaks Bike Festival on The Vine Successful listing of six open spaces as Assets of Community Value Street Food Festival
October	Implementation of 20MPH limits in Sevenoaks Town Illumination of trees at Vine
November	On going public realm improvements
December	New Electric minibus for Age UK
2026	
January	Adopt a tree campaign
March	Spring Planting Increased biodiversity plan for Longspring Wood Installation of Pedestrian Crossing in Dartford Road Solar Panels installed at Quakers Hall Allotment site
April	Vegan Market Entry into 'Town of Culture' competition New electric bus for community use Support for East to West Cycle Route Funding for Darent River Preservation Society
May	Hanging baskets & troughs No Mow May Professor Slug Children's Theatre at The Vine 'Love Your Local Market' Campaign Health & Wellness Fair Climate Fair
June	Tidy up Day with volunteers Beer Festival on The Vine
July	Tidy up Day with volunteers Vine Cricket week Music on the Vine Bandstand on Thursdays and Sundays
August	Alice in Wonderland Children's Theatre



Development & Future Plans

- Continue raising awareness of 'Greening Sevenoaks' Survey
- Ongoing promotion of cycling and walking routes
- Promote Longspring Wood Biodiversity Plan
- Continue tree planting programme in the Autumn
- Encourage increased community engagement 'Give it a Grow' resulting in lower food miles
- Focus on value of plants and gardening for benefits of physical and mental health
- Promote 'In Bloom' to increase visitor numbers and give attention to 'green' aspects of the town resulting in better visitor experience and more return visits
- Budget for ongoing improvements to Open Spaces in forthcoming financial year
- Creation and implementation of the Pedestrian Wayfinding Scheme
- Promote Sevenoaks Town Council Green Community Investment Plan and increased biodiversity ecosystem and sustainability in line with Town Council's priorities
- Support local environmental campaigns
- Attract more volunteers and community involvement including hard to reach groups
- Work in partnership with other Local Authorities
- Ongoing training of Open Spaces Team
- Seek sponsorship and donations from businesses
- Explore grant funding available.

Thank you to everyone for making the Sevenoaks Town Centre entry such a success with particular thanks to volunteers, partner organisations, businesses and for the financial support given by:



Sevenoaks Town Council, Council Offices,
Bradbourne Vale Road,
Sevenoaks TN13 3QG
www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk
email: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk