Sevenoaks Town Council

Tuesday, 01 September 2026

You are hereby summoned to attend an **Extra Ordinary meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 3QG** on **Monday 7th September 2026, at the conclusion of the Planning & Environment Committee which commences at 7pm**. 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.

Please note, proceedings of this meeting will be streamed live to YouTube for the public to watch via the following link: https://www.youtube.com/@sevenoakstowncouncil1647 and may be recorded in line with regulations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. A copy of Sevenoaks Town Council's procedure for the recording of meetings is available online at sevenoakstown.gov.uk or by request.

Members of the public wishing to address the Council Meeting should notify the Town Council by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Members of the public not wishing to be recorded should put this request to the Clerk at the earliest possible opportunity.

L. Lake

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.

Council Members – Quorum minimum of six members

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

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To enable any questions previously submitted by members of the public on any matter to be drawn to the attention of the Town Council.

Sevenoaks Town Council Offices,
Bradbourne Vale Road,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG

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AGENDA

1	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** To receive and note apologies for absence.
2	**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).
3	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** To receive any declarations of interest from members in respect of any items of business included in this report.
4	**MINUTES OF MEETING OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 1ST SEPTEMBER 2026** To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 1ST September 2026 as a true record.
5	**PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD** Dependent on the resolution of the meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 1st September 2026, to consider the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing process in respect of the Community Asset Transfer of the Stag Community Arts Centre.
6	**PRESS RELEASE:** To consider any agenda item, which would be considered appropriate for a press release.

Minutes of the Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council – 1st September 2026
Held in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:
https://www.youtube.com/@sevenoakstowncouncil1647

Meeting commenced: 19:00 Meeting Concluded: 20:05

Attendance

Present: Councillors Granville (Mayor) (Chair), Ancrum, Camp, Dr Canet, Clayton, Daniell (Deputy Leader), Gustard, Michaelides, O'Hara (Deputy Mayor), Shea (Leader), Skinner, Varley, Willis, Wightman.

Apologies: Councillors Dr Dixon, Cllr Layne.

Also present: Town Clerk / Chief Executive, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer, Senior Committee Clerk.

Members of the public present: 3

PUBLIC QUESTIONS
Representation was received from Tony McEwen, Chief Executive of the Stag Community Arts Centre, in relation to the item on the Community Asset Transfer of the Stag Community Arts Centre (Minute 311 below refers).

Tony McEwen commented that

- *He understood and shared the discomfort regarding the decision to consider spending public money for property that in every meaningful sense is already a public asset*
- *The question was whether to protect the asset for the town or to leave its future exposed to uncertainty……leaving future councillors, residents and generations facing shifting rents, changing terms and risks they cannot fully control*
- *Paying for the freehold is not an endorsement of the circumstances that have brought us here, it is:*
  - *a practical act of stewardship*
  - *a decision made with an eye towards security that also preserves opportunities for growth into the future.*
  - *it says that however imperfect the route, the Town Council is prepared to secure this place permanently for the community that it serves.*
  - *it is a decision that gives the town certainty, control, and protection for the long term.*

306 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Dr Dixon and Cllr Layne.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

307 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Noted that all Councillors who were also Stag Trustees had a pre-approved dispensation, reference Minute 311 below regarding the Community Asset Transfer request for the Stag Community Arts Centre freehold.

308 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

309 MINUTES OF EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 24TH AUGUST 2026

It was **RESOLVED**: to receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Sevenoaks Town Council held on 24th August 2026 as a true record.

310 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following Committee meetings, which had been circulated separately, were presented for consideration and adoption:

Planning & Environment Committee

- 27th July 2026
- 10th August 2026
- 24th August 2026

Finance & Delivery Committee

- 20th July 2026

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the above Committee meetings be received and adopted.

311 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER – STAG COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL

The Council considered a report detailing the latest position in relation to the request for the Community Asset Transfer of the freehold of the Stag Community Arts Centre ("the Stag"), including clarifications established through correspondence with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and its legal representatives.

It was now established that it was legal and lawful to transfer a Community Asset at a nominal value. SDC had, however, maintained its position that Market Value or Existing Use Value should be charged for the Stag freehold. Sevenoaks Town Council acknowledged that SDC may lawfully decide to charge for a Community Asset Transfer and noted SDC's stated position that this was required for its own fiduciary reasons.

Town Councillors remained firmly of the view that the public should not be charged for the transfer of a public asset between local authorities but felt that it was necessary to act prudently and consider the long-term interests of the town.

The Town Council noted the following three options offered by SDC to Sevenoaks Town Council in

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

respect of the request for the Community Asset Transfer of the Stag:

- Transfer of the freehold at a cost of £650,000
- Entering into a new 30-year lease
- Remain with current lease

It was noted that details of the terms and conditions of the first two options remained to be clarified.

Councillors carefully considered the options before them and concluded that freehold ownership would offer permanent security, remove exposure to future landlords' decisions and provide the confidence needed to attract major, long-term investment to upgrade the venue and for the wider town.

The tremendous public support shown for the transfer of the Stag freehold to the Town Council was noted, including the petition with 7,700 signatures.

It was agreed that the purchase price could be met as follows:

Public Works Loan	£350,000
Town Council Capital Reserves	£200,000
Community Fundraising target	£100,000
Total	£650,000

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and officers for all their hard work during this process.

It was moved by Cllr Shea, seconded by Cllr Varley, and **RESOLVED** that:

1) Sevenoaks Town Council acquire the freehold of the Stag Community Arts Centre, at the cost of £650,000, the purchase being contingent on a successful community fundraising campaign and satisfactory agreement on heads of terms

2) That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of the Council to begin negotiations with Sevenoaks District Council

It was also noted that the Town Council had previously Resolved that if the Freehold could not be negotiated it would opt for the 30-year lease, even noting all the difficulties relating to this.

312 - REPORTS TO COUNCIL - STC REPESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports were presented at this meeting.

313 MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

RESOLVED: to receive and note:

a. Functions attended by the Mayor or her representative up to 21st August 2026
b. Forthcoming Civic Events being organised by the Mayor during 2026/20

314 PRESS RELEASE

It was agreed that a press release be issued in respect of the Community Asset Transfer of the Stag Community Arts Centre.

There being no further business, the Mayor closed the meeting

Signed: _____

Mayor

Date: _____

Report on Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) Borrowing Process for the Acquisition of The Stag Theatre through Community Asset Transfer

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines the statutory borrowing approval process, public consultation requirements and Council resolutions required should Sevenoaks Town Council wish to apply for borrowing approval from the Secretary of State and subsequently obtain a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to facilitate the acquisition of The Stag Theatre through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) arrangement.

2. Background

Sevenoaks Town Council is considering the acquisition of The Stag Theatre as a community asset through a Community Asset Transfer from Sevenoaks District Council.

As the acquisition constitutes capital expenditure, the Council may seek approval to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). Parish and Town Councils require borrowing approval from the Secretary of State before any loan can be taken out.

3. Borrowing Approval Process

The borrowing process generally follows the stages below:

1. Initial discussions with the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) County Officer.
2. Preliminary eligibility and affordability checks.
3. Preparation of the borrowing application and supporting documentation.
4. Public consultation with residents.
5. Submission of application to MHCLG.
6. MHCLG assessment against published criteria.
7. Approval decision by MHCLG acting on behalf of the Secretary of State.
8. Loan drawdown from the PWLB (if approved).

MHCLG indicate that the assessment and approval stages typically take between 6 and 12 weeks following submission of a complete application.

4. Information Required within the Borrowing Application

The Council will be expected to submit:

a) Resolution to Borrow

A formal resolution passed by Full Council must clearly state:

- The name of the Council.
- The date of the meeting.
- The full resolution.
- That approval is sought from the Secretary of State.
- The amount proposed to be borrowed.

- The proposed loan term.
- Estimated annual loan repayments.
- Whether a precept increase is required.
- If a precept increase is required, the amount and percentage increase.

b) Business Case / Report to Council

A comprehensive business case needs to address the following (STC has completed a Business Case for the Community Asset Transfer and this will be used):

- Strategic need for acquiring The Stag Theatre.
- Community benefits.
- Financial implications.
- Project timescales.
- Risks and mitigation measures.
- Alternative options considered.
- Long-term sustainability and governance arrangements.

MHCLG specifically require councils to demonstrate their "Plan B" if future financial pressures arise.

5. Public Consultation Requirements

Public consultation forms a key part of the borrowing approval process.

MHCLG guidance requires residents to be given an opportunity to express views on:

1. The proposed project.
2. The proposed borrowing.
3. Any associated precept increase.

6. Consultation Questions

As per KALC advice the Town Council has to demonstrate public support for the acquisition of the Stag Community Arts Centre.

7. Recommended Council Resolution

The following resolution is suggested for consideration by Full Council:

> That Sevenoaks Town Council resolves to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for borrowing approval in the sum of £350,000 over a period of 25 years for the purpose of acquiring The Stag Theatre through a Community Asset Transfer arrangement.
>
> The estimated annual loan repayments are £28,150.74 per annum. Sevenoaks Town Council will not be increasing the precept as it will be redirecting the annual grant to the Stag to pay for the loan.
>
> The Council further resolves to undertake public consultation on the proposed acquisition and borrowing prior to submission of any formal borrowing application."