



SEVENOAKS TOWN PARTNERSHIP SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon KCB MP, Patron of Sevenoaks Town Partnership



It is no surprise that the Sevenoaks Town Partnership continues to thrive. Working alongside the Chambers of Commerce, Sevenoaks Town Council, the *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, and with local businesses and retailers, it provides an essential service in supporting local enterprise. I would like to congratulate them for all their hard work over the past year.

I have met several exciting and innovative local businesses in the past 12 months. April's Sevenoaks Business Show was yet another fantastic showcase of the impressive local economy. I look forward very much to meeting more over the next year.

Not only are businesses growing across the constituency, they are also growing across different sectors. I was delighted to learn that 2 local companies made it into this year's London Stock Exchange Group's flagship '*1000 Companies to Inspire Britain*': G K R Logistics Limited (building and landscape services); and Insurance Factory Limited (insurance). Further proof, if it were ever needed, that Sevenoaks is far more than a commuter town.

Nevertheless, we must continue to embrace our excellent transport and trading links to London and the continent, offering our young people greater opportunities and flexibility post-education. Youth unemployment remains at a record low – but I won't be satisfied until that number keeps falling to zero.

In Parliament, I will continue to support local businesses. For this year's Budget, I have suggested to the Chancellor that HM Treasury look again at ways to improve employee share ownership schemes, which would give workers extra money in their pockets each month and a stake in the company's fortunes.

By the time I provide my next report, we will be out of the European Union. I know full well that businesses and investors require more certainty. It is not yet clear what kind of negotiated agreement we will reach with the other EU27 member states, but I can assure local businesses that I will be voting for the smoothest possible exit, ensuring that our firms can continue to trade freely with our largest trading partner, the EU, as well as the rest of the world.

An introduction by Cllr Stephen Arnold, Chairman of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership



This is the eighth Sevenoaks Town Partnership Annual Report and I am very pleased to report, on behalf of the Executive Board, the Partnership continues to thrive.

It is a credit to the Board and the resilience of its members, that the majority of members are those who joined the board at the very beginning, business owners and representatives who attend meetings, events and activities in support of our quintessential town. My grateful thanks to them for their support and contributions over the years.

During the year, minor changes were made to the Board structure. This change has provided the Partnership with a more focused business representation together with a small number of very welcome new Board members.

2019 will be an interesting year. One word appears not have escaped most people and whilst it begins with a 'B' I can affirm I am not thinking of Boris. Everyone will be affected by future political decisions and events. Whilst this uncertainty continues, our local business community will not be immune from the decisions of government which is why the Partnership is looking to create a Business Improvement District (BID) in the near future. With tentative steps already taken with this important initiative – unfortunately thwarted by pressing council projects – the coming year provides a great opportunity to reboot the BID through the Partnership to deliver additional services to our local businesses. I hope we will be able to deliver fundamental added value with this project and bring together the business community to work together in support of all our town businesses and commercial sectors.

The Sevenoaks Town Partnership continues to host a variety of very successful annual events such as the consistently sold out Business Show, the Wellbeing Show and the increasingly popular Vintage Bus service.

In addition, the Business Awards annual event is a great reflection of local business diversity and a wonderful testament to the business community and its commitment to the Sevenoaks economy. Each year, the Chairman and nominated Board members have the very enjoyable, privileged task of assessing nominated business applications from across the varied awards categories. Believe me, our local entrepreneurial flair is alive and well. Just reading the applications provides a real insight into how focused and hard working all our business owners are – from the small independent to the national chain – proud of their brand, proud of their service and proud of Sevenoaks, All helping to shape the future of our town.

Thank you for your support over the last year and I look forward to another successful year for the Partnership.

Sevenoaks: the best place to shop, live and do business.

1. Sevenoaks Town Partnership – Strategic Aims

Since 2011 the Executive Board have been working to develop the following key strategic aims:-

1. Increasing visitors to Sevenoaks Town
2. Branding Sevenoaks
3. Investigating and investing in different forms of digital marketing
4. Developing a branded Town Partnership website
5. Providing a calendar of events
6. Marketing the town as a clean and safe place to live and visit
7. Produce initiatives to address the empty shop issue
8. Improve engagement between public, private and economic sector partners in order to use this combined expertise to improve the town
9. Encourage inward investment into the town and make Sevenoaks attractive for businesses looking to start up
10. Improving the accessibility and environment of Sevenoaks town

2. Sevenoaks Town Partnership – Executive Board

The Executive Board consists of the following members:-

Representing	Number	Current Member	Current Organisation
Sevenoaks Town Council	3	Cllr Stephen Arnold (Chairman) CEO / Town Clerk Cllr Maxine Chakowa	
Sevenoaks District Council	1	Cllr Avril Hunter	
Transport	2	Tony Clayton Austin Blackburn	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association Go Coach
Leisure Facilities	3	Jane Parish CEO Andrew Eyre (Vice Chairman) Knole	Sencio Stag To be confirmed
Chamber of Commerce	1	Nick Brooker	
Blighs Meadow	1		Savills, agent for Bligh's owners Standard Life Investments
Sevenoaks Chronicle	1		
Sevenoaks Society	1	Roger Walshe	
Large Business	2	Neil Jackson Elizabeth Dolding	Coolings Warners Solicitors
Small Independent Business	2	Roberta Ware Glenn Ball	Francis Jones Jewellers Local Architect
Resident Association	1		
Round Table	1		
Police	1		
	20		

3. Digital Projects

3.1. Information Screens

The Town Partnership currently manages two information screens, one at Sevenoaks Mainline Station and one at the Stag Community Arts Centre. A further screen is planned for the refurbished Bat & Ball Station building.

3.2 Infopods

Infopods enable access tourist information, including bed & breakfast accommodation, events, businesses, travel information, restaurants and much more.

Infopods are located in:

- Stag Foyer
- Sencio Leisure foyer
- Sevenoaks District Council Foyer
- Sevenoaks Bus Station
- Sevenoaks Town Council Foyer
- Sevenoaks Community Centre
- Café on the Vine

A further infopod is planned for the Bat & Ball Station Building.

During the next year it is the intention to invest in a new website similar to the Bat & Ball Station website www.batandballstation.com

4. Sevenoaks BID Proposal



Sevenoaks Town Partnership has held two initial consultations with local rate payers (hereditaments). The purpose of the initial consultations was to raise awareness of the Business Improvement District (BID) project and to identify the projects which were important to local businesses.

It was originally envisaged that if agreed at a referendum all local business rate payers would pay 1% of their Rateable Value (RV) to the Sevenoaks BID providing a total annual income of £298,657 to be spent on projects for the benefit of the BID area.

Following representation from local businesses the STP has had some further thoughts on this matter. By enabling businesses with a Rateable Value of less than £15k to provide a voluntary levy of ½ % this would reduce the guaranteed non-discretionary annual income to £269,169 (@ May 2017).

Feedback from businesses who were currently 'undecided' has been that they need to see more detail to the proposed projects and the BIDs to make a final decision.

Due to other capital projects requiring resources the development of the BID has been postponed until mid 2019.

5 Vintage Bus

The introduction of the Vintage Bus Service was designed to circulate footfall and increase the number of visitors to the Town Centre in particular from Visitors Centre in Knole. Using a hop-on, hop-off ticket (£3.00 day ticket). The partnership was pleased to be able to operate the bus for a sixth year during 2018. The circular route includes additional stops - Knole, The Stag, Sevenoaks Railway station, The Vine, Blighs, Bus Station, Knole and has proved to be a tremendous success.



There are various individuals and organisations who share in the success of this project. In particular our sincere thanks to:

- Go Coach, for their patience and positive attitude in making our bus project happen
- Our volunteer bus conductors

On 10th October it was announced that the Vintage Bus was in the final of the Transport Planning Society's People's Choice Awards with the winners announced on 13th November.

6. Sevenoaks Business Show

The Business Show was held on Friday 27th April at the Stag Plaza Suite. The event showcased some of the best local businesses and involved a fantastic talk and workshop by the Next Generation Business Chamber. Feedback indicated that all exhibitors obtained worthwhile business from the event and would exhibit again.



Business Show 2018

Friday 27th April
10:00 - 2:00

Stag Plaza
London Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1ZZ

Business Networking, Presentations, talks
and Exhibits, all free

To book a stall simply e-mail;
admin.tp@sevenoakstown.gov.uk



7. Wellbeing Show

Sevenoaks Town Partnership held its second Wellbeing Show at the Stag Plaza on Friday 18th May. With free talks in the House in the Basement and a variety of exhibitors this was a fantastic event enjoyed by all. Feedback indicated that all exhibitors obtained worthwhile business from the event and would like to be involved in future events.



8. Sevenoaks Business Awards

The black tie Award Ceremony held on 14th September at Knole Academy was an exciting evening, well supported by both sponsors and finalists.

The winners and finalists were as follows:-

Independent Retailer of the Year sponsored by Manak Solicitors

3rd Place – Devine on Dorset Street



2nd Place – The Chocolate Shop



Winner – Sevenoaks Bookshop



National Chain Retailer of the Year sponsored by Wildernes House, Pegasus Life

3rd Place – Waitrose



2nd Place – Neal's Yard Remedies



Winner – Wagamama



Apprentice of the Year sponsored by Cllr Margaret Crabtree

2nd Place – Ben Tompkins from Specsavers & Rebecca Schreur from F M Conway



Winner – Samantha Tilley from Lakeview Accountants



New Business Award sponsored by Sevenoaks District Council

3rd Place – My Sevenoaks Community



2nd Place – Sevenoaks Sports Magazine & Reuthe's Nursery



Winner – Brisket & Barrel



Customer Choice Award sponsored by Specsavers

3rd Place – My Sevenoaks Community



2nd Place – Brisket & Barrel



Winner – Dulce's Patisserie



Micro-enterprise of the Year Award sponsored by Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce

3rd Place – Bradshaw & Sons Ltd



2nd Place – My Sevenoaks Community



Winner – Sevenoaks Sports Magazine



Judges Choice Award sponsored by Warners

Winner: Sevenoaks Round Table



9. Sponsoring of Events and Events Committee

As previously mentioned the Sevenoaks Town partnership is involved in a variety of events aimed at both the local community and businesses. Sponsoring opportunities may be available for different events throughout the year. If you are interested in sponsorship please contact the Sevenoaks Town Partnership Administrator on 01732 459 953 or email admin.tp@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

10. Sponsorship / Grant Funding

Sevenoaks Town Council supported the creation of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership and has demonstrated this by providing facilities and staff resources. In addition to the Town Council provided funding of £5,000 for each financial year. This however is subject to matching sponsorship either in cash or 'in kind' services.

During the last 12 months Sevenoaks Town Partnership has been successful in obtaining the following funds:-

Funding From	Purpose	£
Local Businesses	Advertising Vintage Bus	2,050.00
Sanlam	Business Show	500
Sevenoaks District Council	Business Show	500
Specsavers	Wellbeing Show	500
Manak Solicitors	Business Awards	500
Specsavers	Business Awards	500
Warners Solicitors	Business Awards	500
Sevenoaks District Council	Business Awards	500
Kent County Council	Business Awards	500
Wilderness House	Business Awards	500
Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce	Business Awards	500
Sevenoaks Town Council	Match funding for projects	5,000
Total		£12,050.00

11. Friends of Bat & Ball Station

The Friends of Bat & Ball Station was created in 2014 with the following Strategic Aims.

Aims for Bat & Ball Station Friends Group

1. Support regeneration of Bat & Ball area, highlighting benefits of the station.
2. Promote the station.
3. Promote the building as a venue/facility.
4. Encourage integration with other community/business projects e.g. Britain in Bloom, Vintage Bus, Summer Festival/Arts.
5. Protect and inform re Historical/Conservation importance.
6. Provide information to the public.
7. Improve community safety and perception of community safety.

Following 4 years of meetings and discussions the group has gone from strength to strength and is now an integral part of the new Bat & Ball Station Refurbishment project.

12. The future of the Sevenoaks Town Partnership

With the support of partners and other income generating initiatives the Sevenoaks Town Partnership's future, although challenging, should be secured for the coming year.

The forthcoming year will be demanding and challenging in progressing the opportunities relating to the Sevenoaks BID proposal which will ultimately enable over £250,000 to be reinvested into the local economy each year.

Future development will rely on the success of our strategies in particular the Business Improvement District (BID) proposal and in particular the support of our community and businesses.