

Town Team

Sevenoaks Town Partnership Meeting

6:30pm: Wednesday 17th June 2020

To be held via Zoom (see joining instructions below)

Executive Board

Representing	Number	Current Member	Current Organisation
Sevenoaks Town Council	3	CLlr Simon Raikes CLlr Victoria Granville-Baxter CEO / Town Clerk	
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 (Chairman) Knole	Sencio Stag Hannah Kay
Chamber of Commerce	1	Julie Phillips	
Blighs Meadow	1		Savills, agent for Bligh's owners Standard Life Investments
Sevenoaks Chronicle	1		
Sevenoaks Society	1	Roger Walshe	
Large Business	2	Maxine Morgan (Vice-Chairman) Elizabeth Dolding	Specsavers Warners Solicitors
Small Independent Business	2	Roberta Ware Glenn Ball	Francis Jones Jewellers Local Architect
Resident Association	1		
Round Table	1		
Police	1		
	20		

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notes of Meetings held on:
 - (i) 30th April 2020 (copy attached)
 - (ii) 4th June 2020 (copy attached)
3. Sevenoaks Recovery Plan
 - (i) Consultation Responses Received (copy attached)
 - (ii) Highways & Social Distancing – KCC Proposal
 - (iii) Consistent and Strong Campaign to promote Sevenoaks as a safe place to shop and do business – *information to follow*

Town Team

- (iv) Supporting key attractions – Stag and Knole
- (v) Town Trail - *information to follow*
- (vi) Proposals for Cultural Quarter
- (vii) Events
- (viii) Utilising public open space – Vine Gardens, Buckhurst 1 car park
- (ix) Markets
- (x) Promoting businesses – weekly newsletter and press advert
- (xi) Back to Business Guide
- (xii) Offers of support from local businesses

4. Reports from Partner Organisations

Linda Larter is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Town Team

Time: Jun 17, 2020 06:30 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83814453469?pwd=TGlrV0ZUdTRNL21mV0xiZlA5VGtIQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 1445 3469

Password: 126717

One tap mobile

+442034815240,,83814453469#,,1#,126717# United Kingdom

+441314601196,,83814453469#,,1#,126717# United Kingdom

Dial by your location

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 838 1445 3469

Password: 126717

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcONL6iI5>

**Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020**

Discussion relating to Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan

The meeting was held via Zoom. A transcript of the 'Chat' is at the bottom of the meeting notes.

Present:

Cllr Andrew Eyre	Town Team Chairman, Stag CEO, Town & District Cllr
Linda Larter	Sevenoaks Town Council CEO / Town Clerk, Town Team Executive
Steph Harrison	Sevenoaks Town Council / Town Team Committee Clerk
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Town Team Executive, Senior Action Forum, Town & District Cllr
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Assoc. Town & District Cllr
Cllr Victoria Granville Baxter	Town Team Executive, Sevenoaks 2020, Town Cllr
Samantha Walshe	Space NK
Maxine Morgan	Town Team Vice Chairman, Specsavers
Cllr Elizabeth Purves	Town Team Executive, Sevenoaks 2020, District Cllr
Julie Philips	CEO, Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce
Rob Cundy	Edge Recovery
Jamie Wilson	Sevenoaks Pantomime
Matthew Ball	Local Historian and Corporate Affairs Consultant (Property & Planning)
Nick Brooker	Chairman Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce, Handelsbanken
Katrina Walker	Warners Solicitors / Chamber of Commerce
Kelly Love	Space NK
Jenna Cooper	Thompson Snell and Passmore
Elliott Walters	Town Team Executive, Station Manager
Roberta Ware	Town Team Executive, Francis Jones Jewellers
Gabrielle Argent	PR & Marketing volunteer
Andrew Raby	Thackray Williams Solicitors
Jane Beer Jones	Sevenoaks Rugby Football Club (SRFC)
Laura Stamboulieh	Alison Young Beauty
Paul Jackson	Court Management Consultants
Paul Baker	Wealden Properties
Cllr Avril Hunter	Town Team Executive, Sevenoaks District Councillor
Emily Haswell	Sevenoaks District Council
Panos Giannakis	Entrepreneur
Ruth Hyde	Cryojuvenate
Rich Mills	Co Working Group
Michael Barrett	FM Conway
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society
Mark Tuvey	Local Businessman
Elizabeth Dolding	Town Team Executive, Warners Solicitors
Kathryn McKerlie	Sevenoaks & District Chamber of Commerce

1. Aim of the Meeting

Andrew Eyre introduced himself as Chairman of the Town Team and set out the key points to be discussed at the meeting. He would then invite introductions from those attending and open the meeting to discuss proposals for consideration to include in the draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan.

**Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020**

- i) The new business environment is going to look very different to what was known pre COVID 19. The Association of Town Centre Management had originally predicted that the high street would change radically over the next 5 years and are now stating that this has been condensed into 5 months. Many of the changes to consumer behaviour and business practice may not revert to pre COVID 19.
- ii) In his role as Chief Executive of the Stag he explained how he was very aware how this pandemic has affected businesses.
- iii) Prior to the meeting an outline of the nationally accepted four stages of a Recovery Plan for a Town Centre had been distributed:

Stage 1 Crisis	The Government, Kent County Council and Sevenoaks District Council supported by the Chamber of Commerce, Sevenoaks Town Partnership and Sevenoaks Town Council are providing information to enable financial assistance where it is available.
Stage 2 Post COVID 19 Framework for Recovery	We need to collectively think of ideas to encourage footfall back to the Town Centre and other shopping areas in the town. Putting in place plans and ideas ready for the Post COVID 19, rather than thinking about them when we reach this stage. Innovation should be encouraged.
Stage 3 Pre-Recovery	This stage is about building capacity for recovery and transformation Working together on good ideas and plans to encourage people back to our high streets. Putting Stage 2 into action.
Stage 4 Recovery & Transformation	Establishing what the new ‘normal’ is going to be for the Town Centre and how businesses will work within this. In the short time that COVID 19 has impacted the UK businesses have shown their creativity and ability to adapt and this might need to continue in the future.

- iv) The meeting had been arranged to focus on Stage 2

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

- v) He stated that there was work taking place on a draft Recovery Plan with our own ideas and would want to also include the ideas from those at the meeting and then circulate widely to see if people agree with the content? Or have other ideas to add? – we hope to do this asap.

2. Introductions

All present at the meeting introduced themselves to each other.

3. Open Discussion relating to ideas and information to include in the Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan (see also Chat transcript)

1. Sevenoaks would **follow national public health guidelines** and where appropriate national best practice as identified by the Association of Town Centre Management. Lessons will also be learned from other countries who are coming out of lock down ahead of UK.
2. **Public confidence** will need to be restored to encourage them back into shops and businesses.
3. Social distancing is likely to remain for some time. Could the **High Street be closed to cars e.g. as a trial for 3 months?** Currently there are few businesses open and public can queue on pavement if more opened this would become congested. The space in the road would enable more social distancing and the opportunity for pop up businesses e.g. street food for restaurants that are unable to open. Note: need to consider buses and deliveries.
4. With our narrow paths could we organise that **pedestrians only walk in one direction**, preferably facing traffic, enabling pedestrians to step into the kerb if needed.
5. **Car parking** – people will need longer to shop. Giving benefits to those who have walked into town, rather than bringing their cars. Parking initiatives for those who have to travel by car.
6. Could there be a **benefit for more buses / park and ride?**
This could contribute to pedestrian safety – less traffic would make it easier to introduce one-way pavements for pedestrians. Previously it did work in Sevenoaks during the Blighs development, using the site off Otford Road, which is still available. At the time the plan was to develop further, using space by Morley's Roundabout to the South. Anything which could reduce vehicle use in the centre of the town would be helpful, and so maybe a joint plan with the National Trust to cut traffic using the Knole access off the High street would be worth looking at.

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

7. Businesses have already started to work differently, delivering and extending opening hours as examples.
8. Need a **consistent and strong campaign to promote** Sevenoaks as a safe place to shop and do business.
9. **All businesses** regardless of sector to be encouraged to **sign up and promote the same key message.**
10. What is **Sevenoaks USP?**
11. Remember the **target audience** for the campaign including all age groups.
12. **Stag** did attract up to 300,000 visitors per annum which had a positive impact on the local economy. Like many leisure facilities it is at risk due to COVID 19 – consider public crowdfunding / virtual fundraising events.
13. **Promotion and marketing activity:** social media (including WhatsApp groups, physical marketing – shop window competition, marked trails, flags in flag holders throughout the town, overhead banners.
14. **Events** to encourage people back into town.
 - Open-air cinema's or activities that can be held as an easier way of socially distancing.
 - Food event on the Vine, or restaurants serving outside of their restaurants.
 - Interactive entertainment.
 - Photographic Exhibition to be held at Kaleidoscope Gallery of Sevenoaks Businesses 2020.
 - Could we plan events with a moveable date to avoid adverse weather conditions?
 - Can the Fireworks, Christmas Lights Switch On, Pantomime go ahead? If so, how can it be made safe.
 - We need to make sure that when we come out of lockdown Sevenoaks is a bright and cheerful place to come to. Could we aim for our best ever Sevenoaks in Bloom? It could be a real community spirit and perhaps people who don't have gardens in Sevenoaks might like an area to attend to. It could bring a real pride into the Town centre.
15. Utilise all **public open space** – potentially for different uses to previous.

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

16. The **market** could be a key component in attracting footfall into the centre of the town. Maybe a covered market could be the right use for the Tesco site?

17. Add a **list of businesses that are trading now** to the Town Team's weekly newsletter. Maybe a video of Andrew highlighting that the town is preparing a Recovery Plan. Comment from one member – *"When I was thinking about this I went onto the Town Team website and found the weekly newsletter. This hasn't been advertised anywhere that I was aware of and we need to think about how we push traffic to the website, and I found it interesting and informative. I immediately circulated the link to my road WhatsApp group. We need to get that circulated so that the Town Team website is the go to website for information and perhaps a link with other parish councils websites (I live in Otford but it is relevant to people in my area too and it is people from these surrounding areas also that we want to encourage into the town)"*. Perhaps businesses operating could also promote a link?

18. Could the town be **open to different groups on certain days or times**?

19. Could shops operate a **click & collect** service in their shops or **By appointment only** schemes.

20. Encourage more **local workers**. Will commuting to work become a thing of the past. Engage with as many local groups as possible.

21. Produce **Back to Business Guide**.

22. **Business to Business** - Businesses (such as solicitors, accountants, estate agents, Stag etc) could team up with restaurants/ cafes/ shops etc so that people who come in to use the business services stay in town longer. People who used to commute may be partially working from home in future so we may have more people around to come into town. Encourage businesses and business people to use local businesses more.

23. **Sponsorship** needs to be about working together not just money to get your business name up. Sports clubs have sponsorship from businesses and perhaps they should be

**Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020**

speaking to each other as a way of encouraging business between local clubs and businesses.

- 24. Sevenoaks should **acknowledge the huge debt** we owe to all those people working on the front line during the crisis, often putting themselves at risk, and celebrate what they did and recognise their achievements.
- 25. Sevenoaks should also **celebrate the businesses and voluntary organisations** which found new ways to make life more bearable for the community.
- 26. Before the shutdown the number of **secondary school students** in Sevenoaks was due to increase to nearly 6,000 by 2025. This is a big element in Sevenoaks social and economic life, making the streets safe for them and ensuring young people can access schools will also be a priority.

4. Next Steps

Notes of Meeting and Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan circulated.
Review responses and incorporate where appropriate
Produce Action Plan with designated tasks to different organisations or groups of organisations.

BE READY AND UNITED FOR COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN

The meeting was held via Zoom. A transcript of the 'Chat' is below. It should be noted that these comments were sometimes answered verbally and do not appear on the 'Chat'. Some of LL comments are recording verbal conversation.

LL	The aim of the meeting is to collectively think of ideas to encourage footfall back to the Town Centre and other shopping areas in the town. Putting in place plans and ideas for post COVID 19 rather than thinking about this when we reach this stage. Innovation should be encouraged. Regain confidence for public and business sector. Ideas coming forward are events, retail more friendly for older generation, Stockholm evidence that people do not feel safe in shops and cafes.
MB	Lockdown will only be eased gradually, focusing on certain age groups / types of businesses, should we think about who these groups are likely to be and how we promote social activities / businesses in a targeted way
LL	Need to bring confidence that town is a safe. Narrow pavements, shutting the High Street to cars to enable more pedestrian space? Walk facing the traffic?

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

JBJ	That is a great idea, we are all scared to get too close and this could be a great and easy solution.
LS	Sorry to ask, but I did admit at the beginning that I wasn't a local! Can I ask members what role they believe their town plays in its context? What is its USP? Who are you hoping to tell 'we are open' too – as each will need a different message? The Government (to seek funding if it emerges), shoppers to encourage spending? Businesses (to bring workers in), inward investors?
GA	I think the Stag has a great role to play – The Big Night In was a great example of how artists can still entertain – musicians, comedians can successfully promote content. This could be free to celebrate an event or by donation.
LL	Encourage people to 'Use it or Lose it' of local businesses – new marketing campaign.
JBJ	Could also start crowd funding for the Stag, none of us want to lose it.
LL	Parking initiatives?
RH	What about a free bus into town from places? Love Local Card?
JBJ	Like a park and ride? Again, would need social distancing.
GA	An online auction would engage audiences – supermarkets and retailers to offer items and items would need to be collected / or delivered to get people dropping in?
AH	If High Street is shut what about access for buses?
GA	An open air cinema – in cars – in Knole Park – bring your own picnic
RH	What about staging a socially distance show from the Stag – on line! People pay to view from home.
LL	Will follow national public health guidelines and best practice from Association of Town Centre Management – but the idea is for Sevenoaks to have a Recovery & Marketing Plan ready to go
EW	We need to be realistic. Road closure of the High Street is sensible to allow social distancing, especially if we want to get people back into Sevenoaks and using the town.
VGB	Important to look at welcoming public spaces in Sevenoaks, streetscape etc. traffic management to be built around that.
EW	Transportation needs to be considered though, such as the buses and access for those who may not be able to walk as far. Parking is a rabbit hole, however do bear in mind the car parks around the station are currently absolutely empty and could be considered for use. What we have done at Southeastern is a marketing strategy, to promote and push 'support local'. These have been dropping in to our customers in boxes where they have chosen to receive emails.
JBJ	Can you save the Chat at the end and share via Chamber as I cant seem to copy it and there are great points that I want to take back to the Rugby Club.
EW	There was one recently about the Sevenoaks area, I can enquire from our Marketing Team to do a Sevenoaks specific article – once we have got a strategy.
AC	Right now there are about 3,000+ usual commuters who are working from home – and not spending their money anywhere. What can we do for them?
LL	Who are we marketing too? What is are USP?

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

JP	If shop opening hours will be extended this could be a good opportunity to engage with restaurants and encourage later appointments followed by a dinner offer for customers?
GA	Radio needs to be used to inform and engage – a weekly advice spot for ‘how to...for businesses’ would be helpful.
RM	I think it is a bit too early to start coworking right now due to health and safety concerns, but as government restrictions are gradually lifted, this could be a great way to bring people back to the high street. In particular would be commuters and people struggling to work from home (due to poor internet / distraction / loneliness etc). it could work in pretty much any space with a decent internet connection – possibly a large room at the Stag? E.g. place the desks around the edge of the room 2m apart. This could provide a little income for the Stag, but perhaps more importantly, it means more people in the town spending their lunch money there. It may even encourage people to consider working more locally post COVID instead of commuting into London every day.
LL	More people walking – include walking and cycle trails.
GA	A treasure map ride for families? Keeping groups separate but engaged in outdoor activity.
LL	Town Centre – an extension of people’s homes?
PG	Feeling of safety and implementing measures for ensuring people’s safety are really important for people to start feeling comfortable walking around. As I have seen and been researching for the past few weeks from other European countries it might be worthwhile considering adopting few new measures. Things like wearing face masks and generic sanitization process that could be installed and used publically and privately (for the Stag as an example) in the town.
JC	Through the local card we can reward people who have walked into town.
ED	I think that with social distancing there are a lot of people who will not want to go to Bluewater immediately because of social distancing we need to encourage those people to come into Sevenoaks instead.
GA	A list of open businesses and take our services would be helpful for all residents.
LL	Can we move loyalty card to electronic?
MB	As well as supporting existing businesses, is there also an opportunity to encourage pop-ups / startups? Low rents to see if new businesses can grow?
GA	The loyalty card on an app would be good
RH	Perhaps promote tourism in Sevenoaks
LL	Neighbourhood Plan – move forward with Cultural Strategy
GA	Use Zoom to offer 1:1 business advice – is this being done already?
MB	Car parking obviously important but an opportunity to seize on the climate benefits or reduced pollution – target young people / more community transport
GA	Culture on line would be good now – art and artists from the local area – celebrating skills
NB	Some joint initiative with the national trust to make use of Knole Park to promote our history and culture
LL	What can we do for the commuters / businesses who are normally going to London and are now in Sevenoaks - make Sevenoaks feel safe?

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

EP	Is there any way we can encourage people who are around with time to get involved in Sevenoaks in Bloom and make the town a really colourful place to come into when we come out of lockdown?
GA	Commuters need walking trails, culture online, plays streamed online, takeout maps
RC	There are some great ideas coming forward. We should not fool ourselves that everything will be back to 'normal' in 6 months.
LL	Train services will be different with social distancing measures
RC	There are two issues, individual businesses and the town
GA	Click and collect is the safest way to shop – communicate via this pick up area – offer extra services here
LL	Flexible and co working spaces will be needed more.
KM	How about a mobile testing hub on the Vine when they become available?
GA	Farm shops are doing particularly well – box schemes to the door. Is this the way to keep retail going generally?
RC	The way to avoid failure is to work together. A consistent regular message to everyone's social media to update them with new openings, activities and events
LL	Support each other, help prevent businesses from failing
GA	Give people some advice on how to use social media
JBj	Should we start a #hashtag, we can then share posts with the hashtag
LL	Same marketing consistent message from all businesses – what is open now? What is next stage?
AH	Social media is great but what about elderly who cannot use this? We are not all computer literate. Who will help them?
JBj	Hashtag is a great way and we would have to think of other ways for those not on social media
LL	Sevenoaks Back to Business – Bigger and Better!
JP	We have a social media workshop arranged specifically for retail and restaurants, all welcome – sevenoakschamber.com
NB	Agreed some great ideas here. A small working group to sift through and capture key points?
MB	Agree – perhaps a role of libraries and volunteer groups that have emerged
EP	In response to Gabrielle's comments about farm shops what about another food fair on the Vine when we reopen the town?
MB	FM Conway recently assisted with re-opening Southwark market by creating controllable queuing systems allowing locals there to buy fresh produce. Could this be an option for the immediate term for the grocery side but possibly to assist stores with smaller footprint to sell stock in a market format instead of bringing people inside the store? Is there a space that could cater for this?
LL	Sevenoaks food market stalls are still open and doing very well and being really appreciated by the public. Use public space for more pop ups including restaurants who could not comply with social distancing. Aware that not all businesses can operate in new normal and will need to adapt.
VGB	It would be great to commandeer Tesco building with co-operation of Freshwater, as public covered space for markets, co working, gathering for the elderly.

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

LL	Old fashion notice boards help with people walking around for those who do not use social media.
RH	How about biz's who are closed collaborating with the ones that are open – pop up stalls or banners within these – even if only to promote within the open shops??? The elderly who go out would see this information – social distancing of course.
MB	How about young people to help support older people? And local stores and businesses? School holidays coming up but no opportunities for gap year travel, so how can we help them gain skills / occupy time?
LL	Public safety idea – walk one direction?
EP	What about the Town Council producing the list of businesses / retailers still open and local businesses with link to the council website which would link all of the businesses to the Town Council
LL	The Town Team are doing this weekly can be expanded to include this idea
SH	That's on our website now
VGB	We must really encourage businesses to join this.
GA	A flier given to at click and collect, sponsored by local businesses can signpost websites, maps and locations for where to access services
LL	Using on line – e.g. make up lessons and link to selling brands
JP	Could we produce a Back to Business Guide? An opportunity for local businesses to advertise in a printed and delivered guide to local homes also using the content from social media?
Paul	We have to remember that there is only one way into the town, traffic is too fast with people now walking in the road to self isolate
GA	All businesses can engage with customers on a central website. Call it 'Sevenoaks Open for Business' – promote one address and communicate with individual businesses from there. Easy to remember for customers and can be promoted via click and collect
AC	If we want a key message to be 'Sevenoaks is Safe' get businesses and other organisations to say what they are doing to keep users safe.
LL	Events including open air cinema? Sponsorship for activities?
RC	Andrew, do you have the facility to put separated chairs in the Stag car park for open air cinema?
JB	Bit like TED talks
GA	The Tate has amazing films on artists – all free
JB	What about our huge community of sports clubs? What are your thoughts?
GA	Andrew Lloyd Webber has been screening his musicals – for free. Amazing things can be done over the internet.
JB	How are the other clubs coping? The rugby club is keeping its head above water but for how long?
LL	Cultural events from people's homes?
GA	Schools could do an art competition – virtual exhibition to celebrate end of isolation. Can teenagers do D of E virtually?
PB	Dialing in and drive ins are good but the headline was how to get footfall into local businesses?

Sevenoaks Town Team
Virtual Meeting held at 11 a.m. on 30th April 2020

LL	Remember to include all age groups to contribute to the Recovery Plan
GA	Maybe the businesses need to go to the people – at an open air event and offer experiences rather than a brick and mortar shop
LL	Is sponsorship a thing of the past?
RC	There are lots of businesses in trouble. Trouble does not mean closure and failure. Restructuring and time to pay options are already available.
JB	Don't say that! We rely on sponsors very heavily and most of them are continuing to support as we are giving them Return on Investment – it needs to be a two way street
RH	What about different colour wrist bands for people who have had the virus (in theory are no longer contagious and cant get it again) maybe that would help footfall?
GA	Sponsorship for businesses to say 'we are still here' would be quite appealing?
LL	Simple and well advertised is the key to marketing
GA	Open space maps?
LL	What is the best use of public open spaces including High Street and car parks?
RH	Virtual gaming event in one of the club fields – I know a man who can 😊
RC	I would advise against stopping marketing spend – make it more targeted
KW	I think sponsorship will be an issue particularly in the shorter term. Businesses will be holding on more tightly to monies until things become more settled – whatever settled becomes
MB	Yes, use culture to drive footfall and innovation, am currently doing this in Lambeth / Brixton
GA	Street food vendors? Very popular in London cooking demos – big name chefs?
JW	Events could be more flexible. Sevenoaks has more volunteers than people who need help
GA	BFI has a competition for under 25-year old's to make a film
LL	We will be collecting all ideas and issue a document for people to give thoughts and then convene another meeting.
MB	Interesting chat, got to be a 3 – 5-year plan I think
LL	By everyone, thank you for contributing, stay safe. BW Linda (not on screen, lent my computer to Andrew).

This page left blank intentionally

This page left blank intentionally

Notes of the Town Team Virtual Meeting held on 4th June 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Executive Board	
Cllr Andrew Eyre, Chairman	Stag
Maxine Morgan, Vice Chairman	Specsavers
Linda Larter	Town Clerk, Sevenoaks Town Clerk
Glenn Ball	Local Architect
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach
Nick Brooker	Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Town Council
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors (left early)
Cllr Granville Baxter	Sevenoaks Town Council
Cllr Avril Hunter	Sevenoaks District Council
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers
Elliott Waters	Station Master
Cllr Dr Canet	Sevenoaks Senior Action Forum
Steph Harrison, Committee Clerk	Sevenoaks Town Council

Richard Baxter	Sevenoaks Society
Cllr Nicholas Busvine	Sevenoaks Town Council
Emily Haswell	Sevenoaks District Council
Cllr Richard Parry	Sevenoaks Town Council
Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2. Town Team Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan and Responses (previously distributed)

It was noted that the draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan had been widely distributed and 76 responses received and distributed.

3. Sevenoaks District Council Proposal for the Town Centre addressing spatial distancing issues.

A meeting had been held between representatives of KCC / SDC and Town Team on 1st June 2020 with the conclusion: SDC would work up a visual plan of its proposals which could be shared with everyone mid-week to enable a consensus to be sought.

Sevenoaks District Council provided the following information and accompanying map for consultation.

Branding

Can you please provide your organisation logos, which we'll add to any information literature/signage.

Pedestrian One Way

Proposed pedestrian one-way route (see attached). This is in two phases, the first covers the majority of the town but phase two can be brought in a short notice if required. Proposed draft signage and locations will be shared should we get agreement to this approach.

I think it is clear that there are potential 'pinch points' and these are indicated on the map, we have also included possible queue locations that may help with some remaining issues.

It is possible that we will need to reflect on the operation and make changes going forward, including the possibility of the need for 'hard' highway interventions (funding from KCC).

The Buckhurst (Bus Station) Car Park will be made available for use by Sevenoaks Town Council/Partnership and Town Team, outside Wednesdays Market day.

Business Pack

An online and paper business support pack will provide information on:

- *'Welcome back' postcard*
- *'Showing you're COVID-19 secure' poster pack*
- *Shops and branches – working safely guidance*
- *[Guidance on re-opening and adapting your food business](#) guidance*
- *Sevenoaks District Council Team Around the Business leaflet (information on Economic Development, Licensing, Environmental Health etc.)*
- *Key contacts*
- *Community Safety Unit contact card*

Street cleansing

Cleansing regimes will be maintained and visible to promote the town as a safe place to shop and do business.

Car Parking

All car parks will remain free until at least the 23rd of June, it is likely that we will bring some charges back after that point.

The Town Team considered and debated the proposal for a pedestrian one-way system. The concept of pedestrian one-way controls was uniformly criticised as the wrong aim and considered to be unworkable.

The following concerns were made:

- i) Not enforceable

- ii) Concern about older people and those with mobility problems creating a 'slow lane block' to flow and how they would fit into the one-way pedestrian system
- iii) Social distancing as per government guidelines would not be possible as there is not any additional pedestrian space. One person waiting outside a shop would mean insufficient space for people to pass by within recommended social distancing.
- iv) Additional space is needed for pedestrians.
- v) Retailers may want to operate click and collect which may mean collection outside their premises.
- vi) The one-way pedestrian system was considered of no benefit to helping the town and was not fair on retailers as it would discourage their customers.
- vii) This is an opportunity to bring forward and trial the following proposals within the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan which had been formed following considerable community input and consultation:

1. Promote a scheme to generally improve pedestrian facilities within the town centre, including increased footway width and improved crossing points, along with a reduced vehicle speed with 20 mph zones being introduced along the High Street and London Road.

Pg. 17: access feasibility of one-way system within the town centre to include High Street and London Road with the following key aims:

- a) Deter through vehicle movements from town centre***
- b) Reduce vehicle speeds with introduction of a 20-mph zone along High Street / London Road***
- c) Provide widened pedestrian areas with reduced carriageway widths in key areas within town centre along London Road and the area around The Stag Theatre***
- d) Maintaining flow of traffic through town centre with controlled traffic management system***

- viii) Controlling pavements in this way would not make Sevenoaks an attractive place to visit.
- ix) Every 'one-way system' relies on people respecting the signage and enforcement. This proposal does not allow for people to pass on pavements and can for example give a long detour for a prospective shopper needing to cross the road. If the town is seen as full of barriers, then people inevitably will not come defeating the object of the recovery plan.

- x) If road closure to vehicles is not able to be considered, we should consider a 'one way' system – allowing more space to pedestrians but still keeping the road open to traffic.
- xi) Given this new and unexpected opportunity the town needs to be open, accessible, and as barrier free as possible. Anything that is done now can also be used as a springboard and trial to demonstrate how such schemes would work (or not work) on a short-term temporary basis which could then perhaps lead to permanent implementation in the future.
- xii) Ideas such as those proposed for Tunbridge Wells should be seriously considered.
- xiii) Many of these proposals are part of the Council's NDP and which had also been put forward by Roger FitzGerald.

In conclusion the pedestrian route was not supported and the Town Team board recommended it should not be progressed by SDC & KCC. It was considered essential that additional marked road crossing points were necessary and should be provided as part of the new road markings.

The strong feeling was that traffic restrictions were required to enable the expansion of pedestrian space and this will be reported to the District and County Councils.

The Town Team considered that the other proposals including those for Buckhurst 1 should be considered once the priority of the High Street and London Road had been addressed.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – from impact of COVID-19. A transition to a new business environment

Results Report

Data collected 28 May 2020

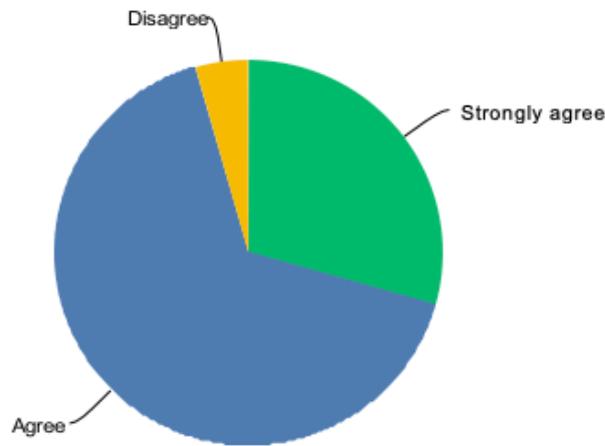
78 Total Responses

Sevenoaks Town Team (Sevenoaks Town Partnership)
c/o Sevenoaks Town Council
Council Offices
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 3QG
Email: admin.tp@sevenoakstown.gov.uk
Website: www.sevenoakstownpartnership.org

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Do you agree with the overall Recovery Plan?

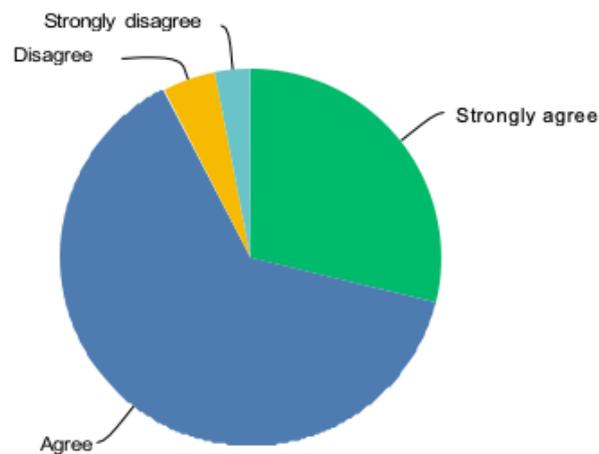
Answered: 68 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	29.41%	20
Agree	66.18%	45
Disagree	4.41%	3
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		68

Do you agree with the methodology?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 5

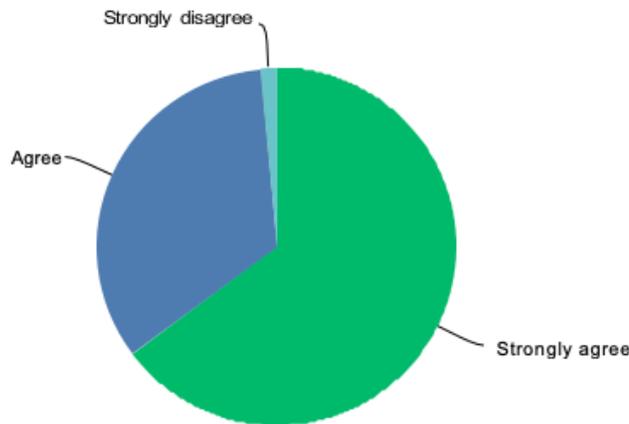


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	28.79%	19
Agree	63.64%	42
Disagree	4.55%	3
Strongly disagree	3.03%	2
TOTAL		66

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

1. Sevenoaks would follow national public health guidelines and, where appropriate, national best practice as identified by the Association of Town Centre Management. Lessons will also be learned from other countries who are coming out of lockdown ahead of the UK.

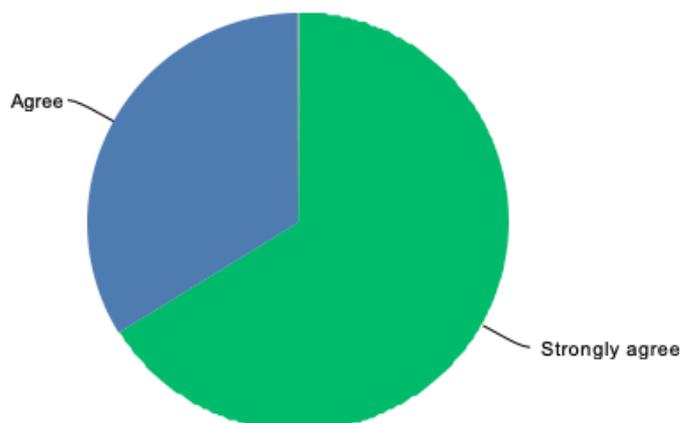
Answered: 71 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	64.79%	46
Agree	33.80%	24
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	1.41%	1
TOTAL		71

2. Public confidence will need to be restored to encourage them back into shops and businesses.

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0

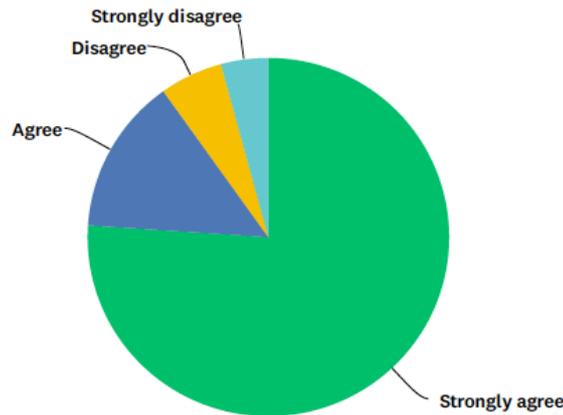


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	66.20%	47
Agree	33.80%	24
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		71

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

3. Social distancing is likely to remain for some time. Could the High Street be closed to cars e.g. as a trial for three months? Currently there are few businesses open and the public can queue on the pavement. If more opened this would become congested. The space in the road would enable more social distancing and the opportunity for pop-up businesses e.g. street food for restaurants that are unable to open.
 Note: need to consider buses and deliveries.

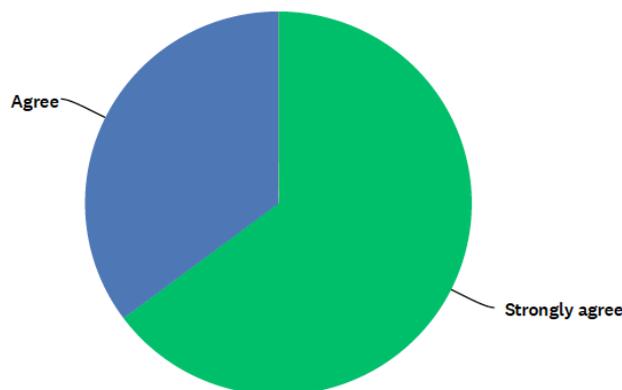
Answered: 71 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	76.06%	54
Agree	14.08%	10
Disagree	5.63%	4
Strongly disagree	4.23%	3
TOTAL		71

4. Create an Action Plan and review Funding Opportunities.

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0

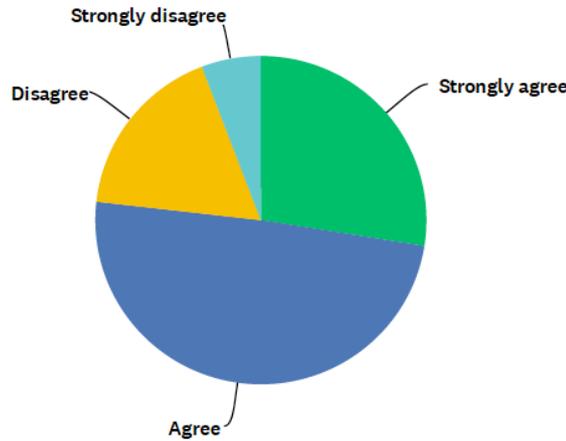


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	64.79%	46
Agree	35.21%	25
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		71

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

5. With our narrow paths could we organise that pedestrians only walk in one direction, preferably facing traffic, enabling pedestrians to step into the kerb if needed.

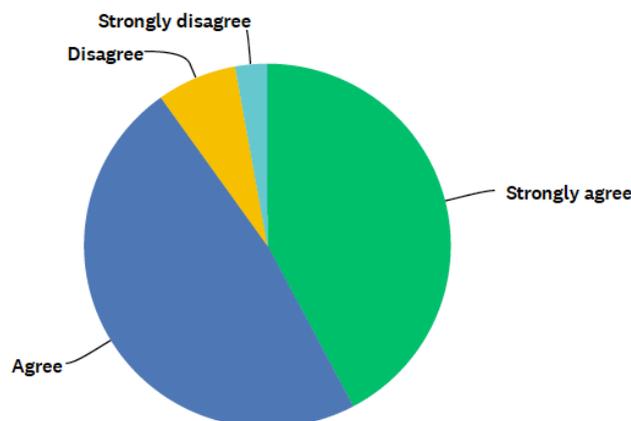
Answered: 69 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	27.54%	19
Agree	49.28%	34
Disagree	17.39%	12
Strongly disagree	5.80%	4
TOTAL		69

6. Car parking – people will need longer to shop. Giving benefits to those who have walked into town, rather than bringing their cars. Parking initiatives for those who must travel by car.

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0

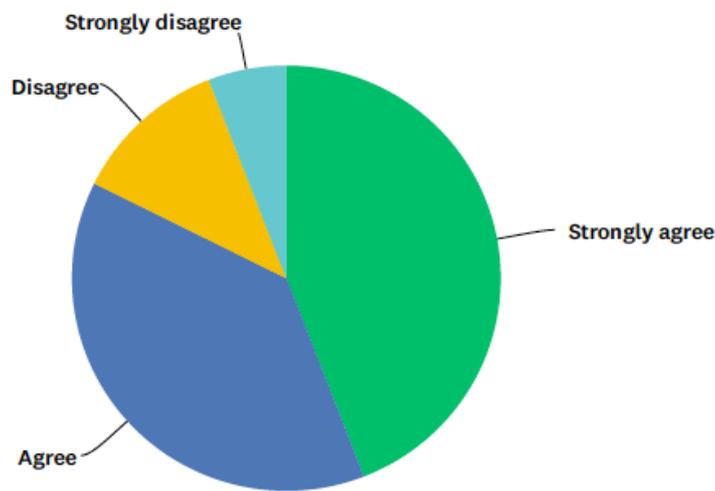


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	42.25%	30
Agree	47.89%	34
Disagree	7.04%	5
Strongly disagree	2.82%	2
TOTAL		71

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Q7. Could there be a benefit for more buses / park and ride? This could contribute to pedestrian safety – less traffic would make it easier to introduce one-way pavements for pedestrians. Previously it did work in Sevenoaks during the Bligh’s development, using the site off Otford Road, which is still available. At the time the plan was to develop a further park and ride, using space by Morley’s Roundabout to the south. Anything which could reduce vehicle use in the centre of the town would be helpful, and so maybe a joint plan with the National Trust to cut traffic using the Knole access off the High Street would be worth looking at.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 3

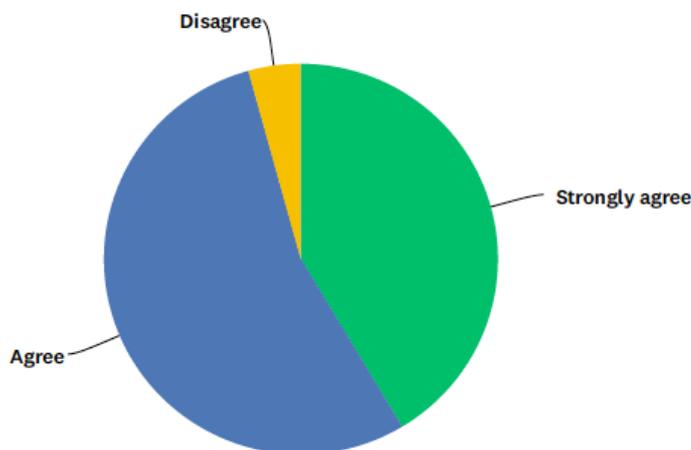


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	44.12%	30
Agree	38.24%	26
Disagree	11.76%	8
Strongly disagree	5.88%	4
TOTAL		68

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

8. Businesses have already started to work differently, delivering and extending opening hours as examples.

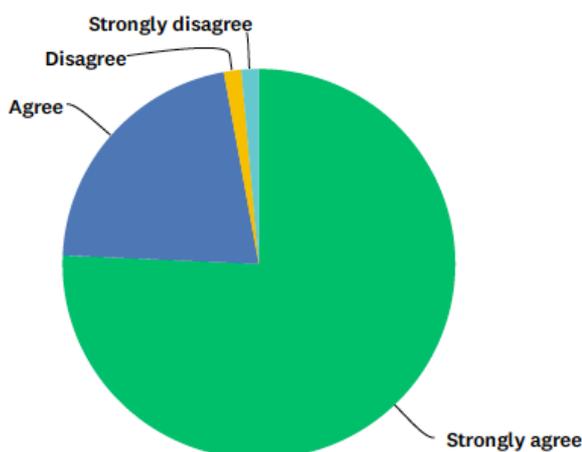
Answered: 70 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	41.43%	29
Agree	54.29%	38
Disagree	4.29%	3
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		70

9. Need a consistent and strong campaign to promote Sevenoaks as a safe place to shop and do business.

Answered: 70 Skipped: 1

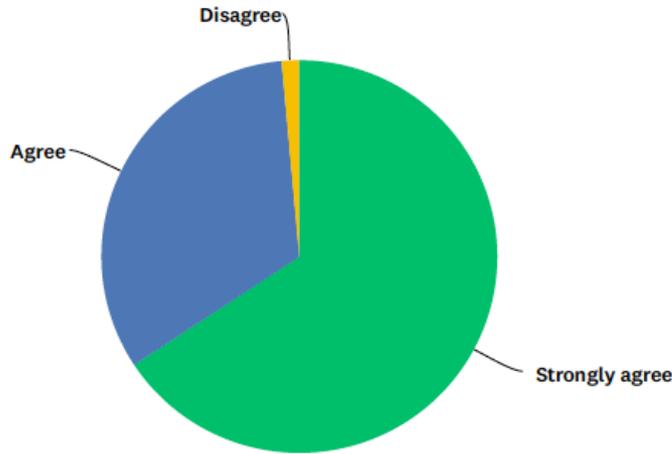


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	75.71%	53
Agree	21.43%	15
Disagree	1.43%	1
Strongly disagree	1.43%	1
TOTAL		70

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

10. All businesses regardless of sector to be encouraged to sign up and promote the same key message.

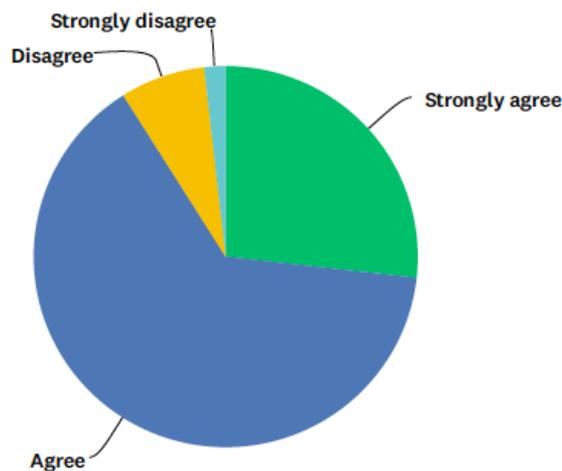
Answered: 70 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	65.71%	46
Agree	32.86%	23
Disagree	1.43%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		70

11. What is Sevenoaks' USP?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 15

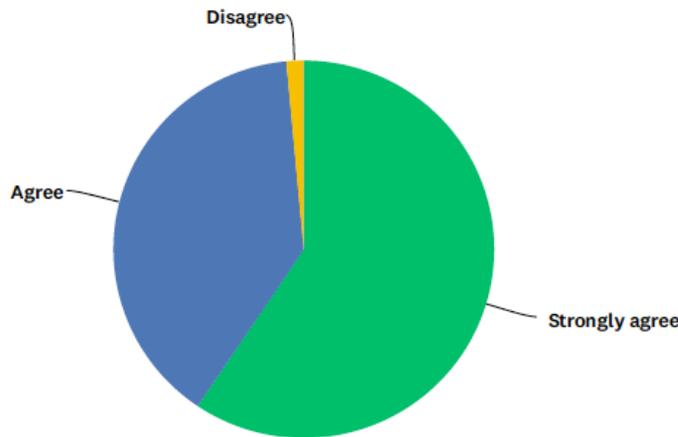


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	26.79%	15
Agree	64.29%	36
Disagree	7.14%	4
Strongly disagree	1.79%	1
TOTAL		56

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

12. Remember the target audience for the campaign including all age groups.

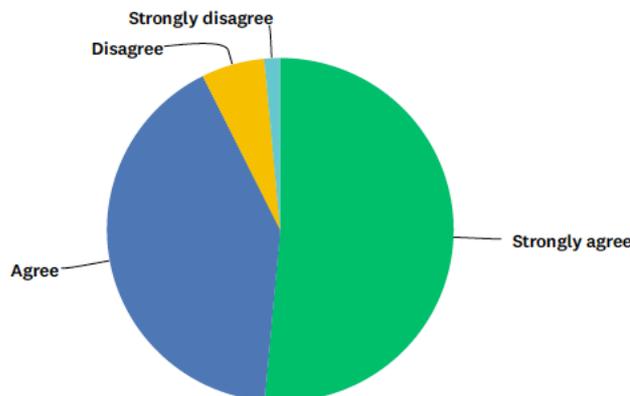
Answered: 69 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	59.42%	41
Agree	39.13%	27
Disagree	1.45%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		69

13. Stag did attract up to 300,000 visitors per annum, which had a positive impact on the local economy. Like many leisure facilities it is at risk due to COVID-19. Consider public crowdfunding / virtual fundraising events. Support re-development of key visitor attractions – Knole and Stag.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 3

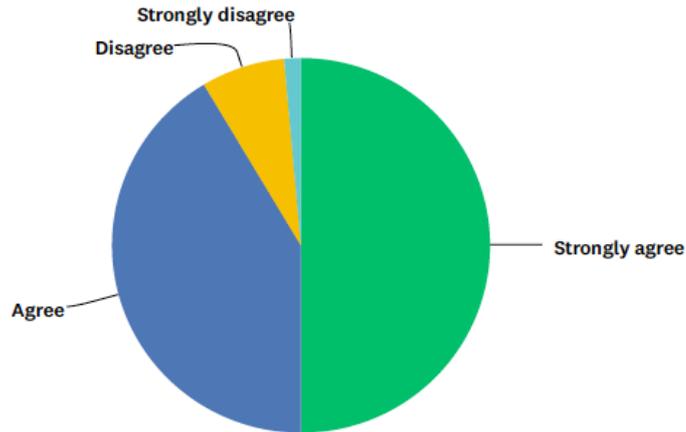


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	51.47%	35
Agree	41.18%	28
Disagree	5.88%	4
Strongly disagree	1.47%	1
TOTAL		68

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

14. Promotion and marketing activity: social media (including WhatsApp groups, physical marketing – shop window competition, marked trails, flags in flag holders throughout the town, overhead banners.

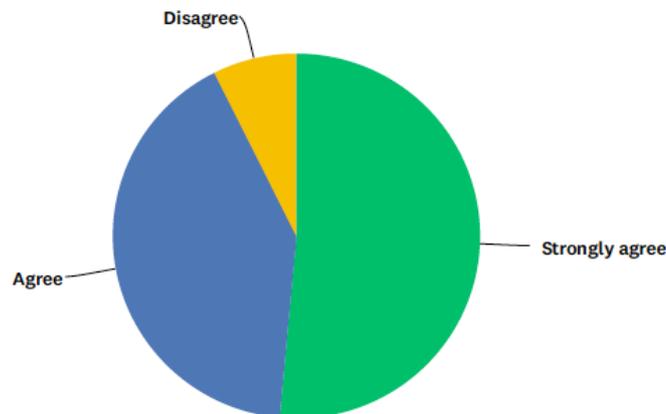
Answered: 70 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	50.00%	35
Agree	41.43%	29
Disagree	7.14%	5
Strongly disagree	1.43%	1
TOTAL		70

15. Enhance the Customer Experience – move forward with proposals for the Cultural Quarter.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 3



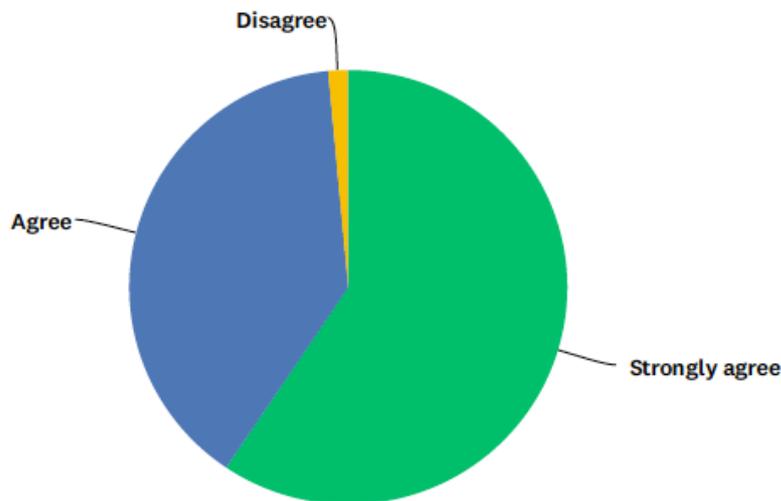
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	51.47%	35
Agree	41.18%	28
Disagree	7.35%	5
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		68

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

16. Events to encourage people back into town.

- Open-air cinemas or activities that can be held as an easier way of socially distancing.
 - Food event on the Vine, or restaurants serving outside of their restaurants.
 - Interactive entertainment.
 - Photographic Exhibition to be held at Kaleidoscope Gallery of Sevenoaks Businesses 2020.
- Could we plan events with a moveable date to avoid adverse weather conditions?
 - Can the Fireworks, Christmas Lights Switch-On, Pantomime go ahead? If so, how can it be made safe.
 - We need to make sure that when we come out of lockdown Sevenoaks is a bright and cheerful place to come to. Could we aim for our best ever Sevenoaks in Bloom? It could have real community spirit, and perhaps people who don't have gardens in Sevenoaks might like an area to attend to. It could bring real pride into the town centre.

Answered: 69 Skipped: 2

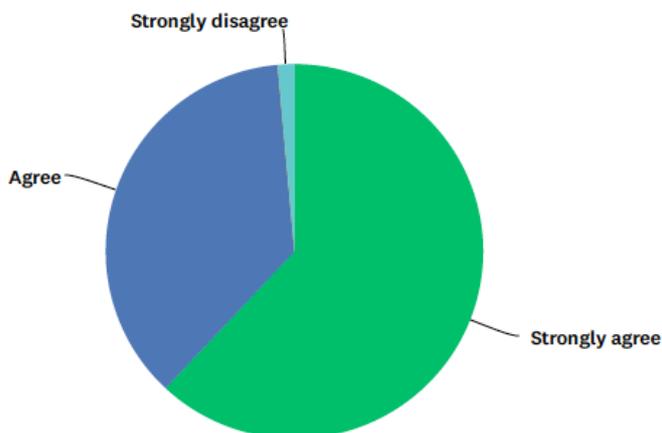


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	59.42%	41
Agree	39.13%	27
Disagree	1.45%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		69

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

17. Utilise all public open space – potentially for different uses to previous.

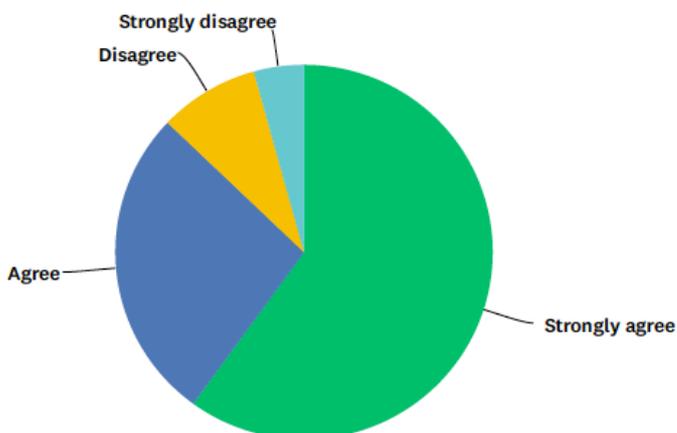
Answered: 71 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	61.97%	44
Agree	36.62%	26
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	1.41%	1
TOTAL		71

18. The market could be a key component in attracting footfall into the centre of the town. Maybe a covered market could be the right use for the Tesco site?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 1



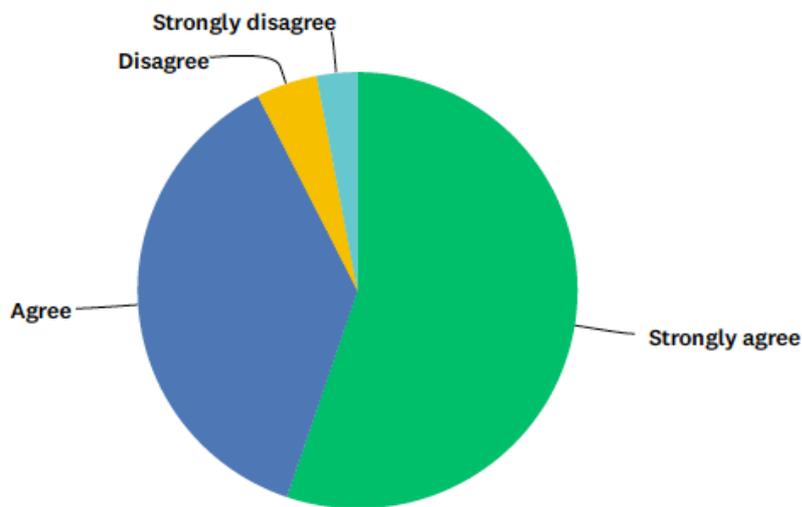
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	60.00%	42
Agree	27.14%	19
Disagree	8.57%	6
Strongly disagree	4.29%	3
TOTAL		70

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

19. Add a list of businesses that are trading now to the Town Team's weekly newsletter. Maybe a video of Andrew highlighting that the town is preparing a Recovery Plan. Comment from one member:

“When I was thinking about this, I went onto the Town Team website and found the weekly newsletter. This hasn't been advertised anywhere that I was aware of and we need to think about how we push traffic to the website, and I found it interesting and informative. I immediately circulated the link to my road WhatsApp group. We need to get that circulated so that the Town Team website is the go to website for information and perhaps a link with other parish councils websites (I live in Otford but it is relevant to people in my area too and it is people from these surrounding areas also that we want to encourage into the town”.
Perhaps businesses operating could also promote a link?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 4

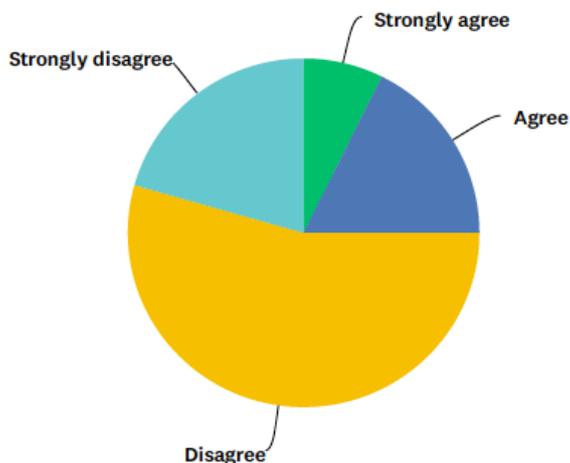


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	55.22%	37
Agree	37.31%	25
Disagree	4.48%	3
Strongly disagree	2.99%	2
TOTAL		67

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

20. Could the town be open to different groups on certain days or times?

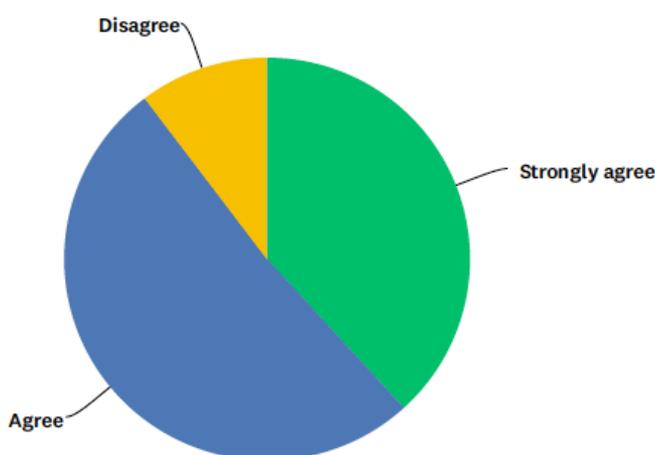
Answered: 68 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	7.35%	5
Agree	17.65%	12
Disagree	54.41%	37
Strongly disagree	20.59%	14
TOTAL		68

21. Could shops operate a click & collect service in their shops or by appointment only schemes?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 3

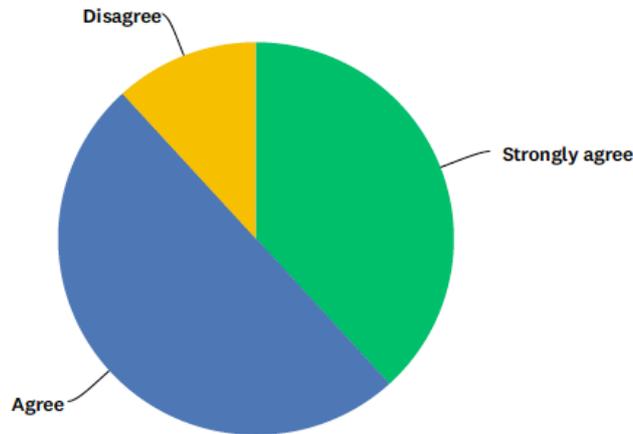


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	38.24%	26
Agree	51.47%	35
Disagree	10.29%	7
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		68

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

22. Encourage more local workers. Will commuting to work become a thing of the past? Engage with as many local groups as possible.

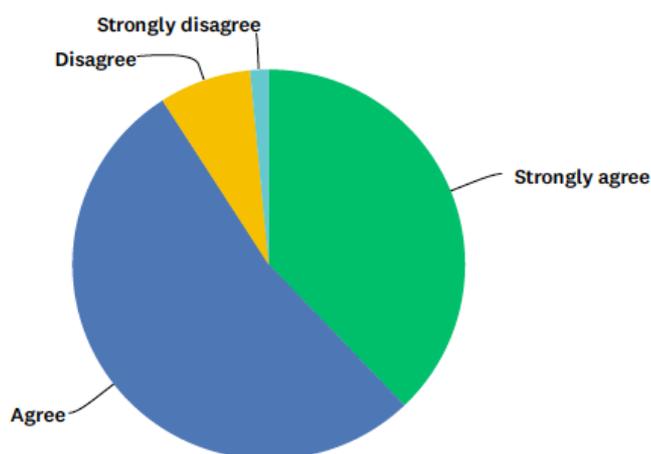
Answered: 68 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	38.24%	26
Agree	50.00%	34
Disagree	11.76%	8
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		68

23. Produce Back to Business Guide.

Answered: 66 Skipped: 5

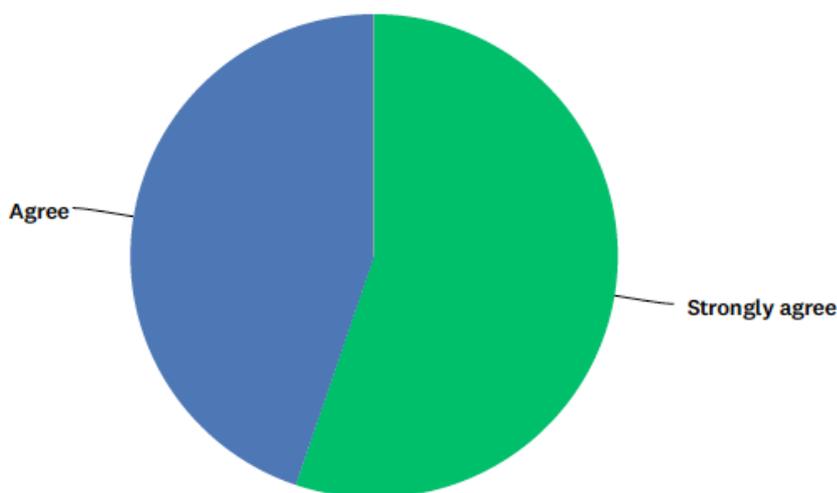


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	37.88%	25
Agree	53.03%	35
Disagree	7.58%	5
Strongly disagree	1.52%	1
TOTAL		66

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

24. Business to Business - Businesses (such as solicitors, accountants, estate agents, Stag etc. could team up with restaurants / cafes / shops etc. so that people who come in to use the business services stay in town longer. People who used to commute may be partially working from home in future, so we may have more people around to come into town. Encourage businesses and businesspeople to use local businesses more.

Answered: 67 Skipped: 4

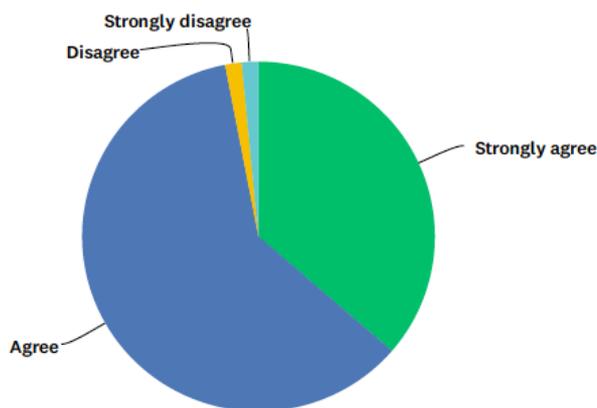


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	55.22%	37
Agree	44.78%	30
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		67

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

25. Sponsorship needs to be about working together, and not just money, to get your business name up. Sports clubs have sponsorship from businesses and perhaps they should be speaking to each other as a way of encouraging business between local clubs and businesses.

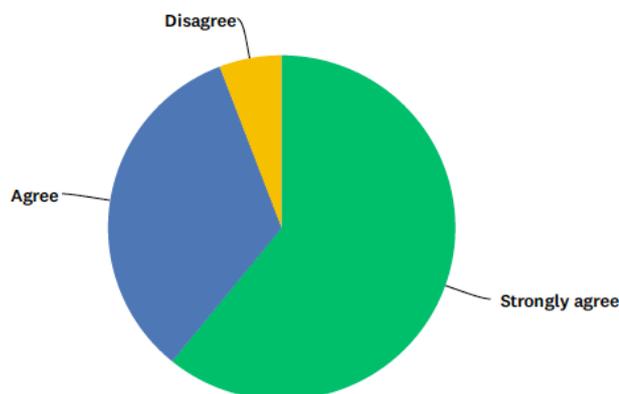
Answered: 66 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	36.36%	24
Agree	60.61%	40
Disagree	1.52%	1
Strongly disagree	1.52%	1
TOTAL		66

26. Sevenoaks should acknowledge the huge debt we owe to all those people working on the front line during the crisis, often putting themselves at risk, and celebrate what they did and recognise their achievements.

Answered: 69 Skipped: 2

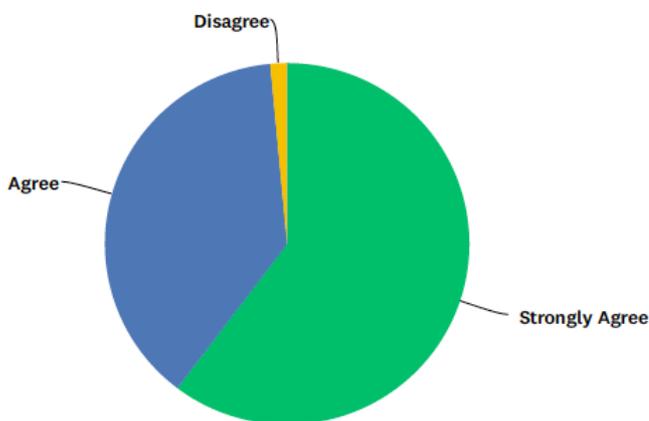


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	60.87%	42
Agree	33.33%	23
Disagree	5.80%	4
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		69

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

27. Sevenoaks should also celebrate the businesses and voluntary organisations which found new ways to make life more bearable for the community.

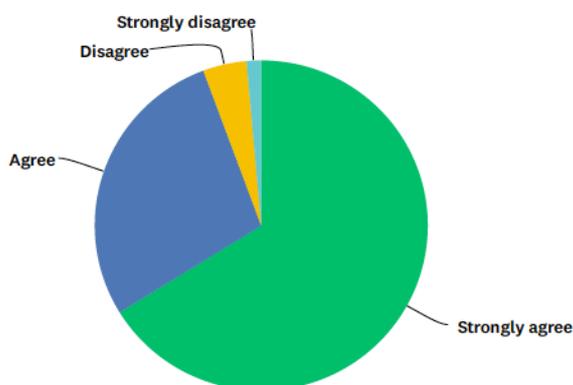
Answered: 68 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	60.29%	41
Agree	38.24%	26
Disagree	1.47%	1
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		68

28. Before the shutdown the number of secondary school students in Sevenoaks was due to increase to nearly 6,000 by 2025. This is a big element in Sevenoaks’ social and economic life. Making the streets safe for them and ensuring young people can access schools will also be a priority.

Answered: 71 Skipped: 0

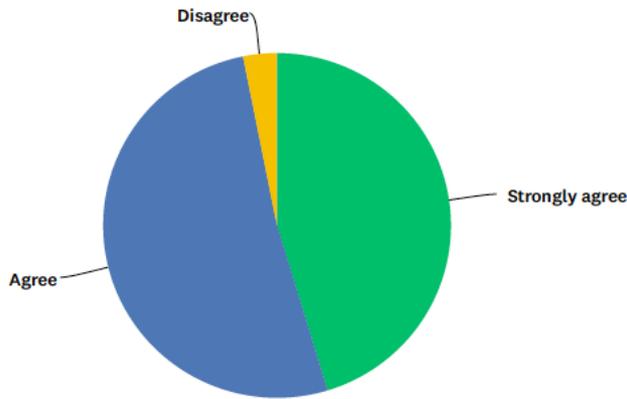


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	66.20%	47
Agree	28.17%	20
Disagree	4.23%	3
Strongly disagree	1.41%	1
TOTAL		71

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

29. Develop the planned Business Hub to enable businesses to start up again or downsize from business accommodation.

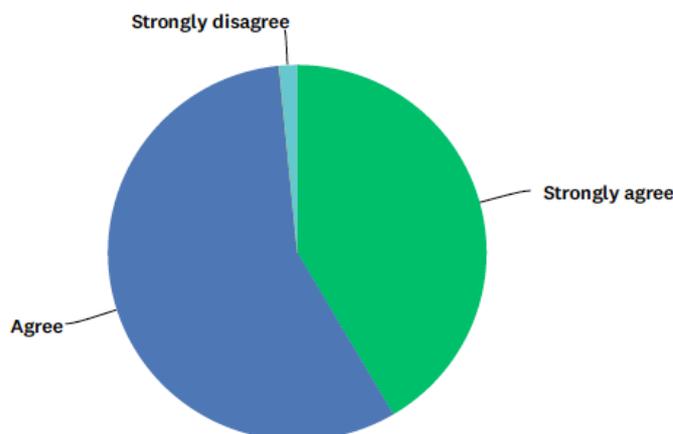
Answered: 64 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	45.31%	29
Agree	51.56%	33
Disagree	3.13%	2
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		64

30. Bat & Ball Centre due to open in December 2020 enabling events, conferences, training, trade events – supporting local businesses.

Answered: 65 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	41.54%	27
Agree	56.92%	37
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	1.54%	1
TOTAL		65

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

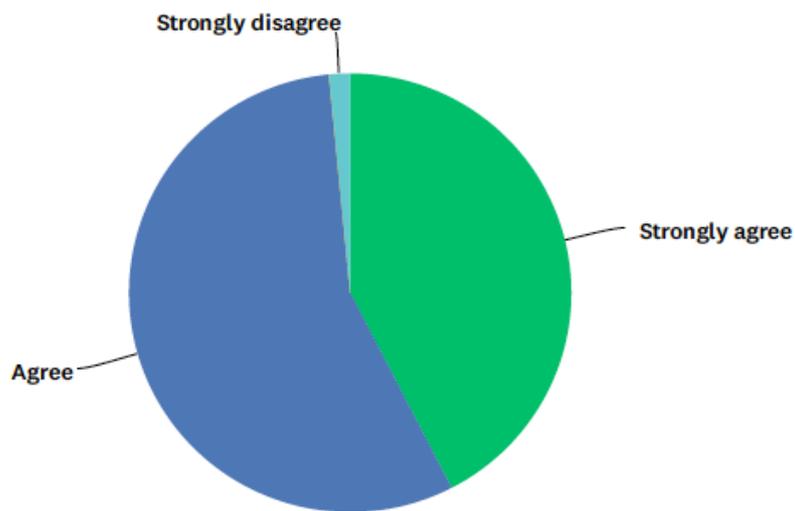
31. Next Steps

- Notes of Meeting and Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan circulated.

- Review responses and incorporate where appropriate.

- Produce Action Plan with designated tasks to different organisations or groups of organisations.

Answered: 66 Skipped: 5

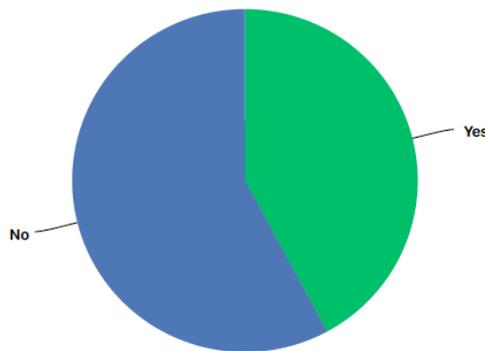


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	42.42%	28
Agree	56.06%	37
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	1.52%	1
TOTAL		66

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Are you or your business able to help with any of the practical ideas?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	42.11%	24
No	57.89%	33
TOTAL		57

How can your business help?

1. SHC would like to discuss the opportunity of laying an artificial turf and a small stage in the centre of the town. It can be trialled as part of a 3-month pedestrianisation of the High Street or conversion of the Blighs Car Park, but if successful, ideally more formally and permanently, (think mini Broadgate) In the temporary version, Sevenoaks Hockey Club can drive a timetable of events for all ages. As well as hockey skills sessions, we have our own answer to Joe Wicks ! We also imagine lots of other clubs (such as cheerleading, dance, aerobics, zumba, yoga, playgroups & all other non-contact activities, etc) all participating at different times of the day. In the evening we can have live music, open-air cinema, silent disco and even wine-tasting or stand-up, anything really, adding deck chairs or bean bags. To a lesser degree, we could also imagine running events on the Vine Gardens, but it is the centre of town that will drive footfall and create a spectacle. Please contact me to discuss further.
2. Provide marketing support and centralised assistance.
3. As one of the stores that have still been trading it's given us a good insight to how the public are behaving and what they see as important
4. My experience of working in education for 30 years at a senior level, my experience from running a local business for 30 years, my experience on a local authority education committee for a similar period of time coupled with successfully resolving many employer/employee issues would be useful in attempting to put some sparkle into this project. I am an enthusiast who believes in clear structures to provide a positive way

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

forward in resolving the issues but first we must clearly set out what we believe as the priority outcomes.

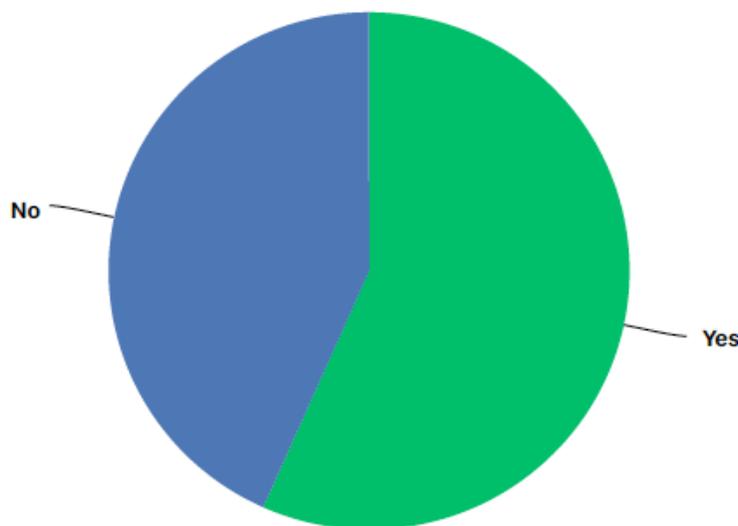
5. Provide ways to communicate with residents who use the towns services/ businesses both for leisure and to live. Include all the health and well being businesses, these bring people into town and then encourage use of cafes and retail shops.
6. I run a creative agency based in offices above Costa Coffee. Whilst my team are working remotely at this time If you needed support with graphic design and creative we could support
7. Not sure how we could help ... but always happy to be asked.
8. PR, Marketing, Digital
9. See Point 24) informal partnering with other businesses.
10. Economic Analysis Marketing and Information
11. As one of the largest sports communities based in Sevenoaks I am sure we can have a lot of input
12. Create a practical sporting centre at Knole Paddock, particularly for juniors to try new sports.
13. Promotion and marketing. Click and collect retail Appointment only NHS workers discounts and initiatives.
14. I would be happy to offer a conference call/webinar or just a chat about marketing on Facebook & other platforms. About us: we currently run Facebook advertising for a large fitness company based in the US called VShred. They spend \$100k per day on average, sometimes we've scaled to \$500k in one day during busy periods. So, happy to offer advise to local businesses when the time is right for reopening (unless they're doing deliveries then great - we can advertise for these too). We're very good at targeting customers and turning profit from our advertising.
15. Cleaning company already carried out COVID19 cleans in a sevenoaks can provide quotes and special cleans for companies wishing to reopen.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

16. We can circulate information to businesses and encourage involvement.
17. Can distribute flyers to customers, put up posters in window, we have quite a prominent position next to Waitrose, promote re-opening of town by asking customers who do come in to spread the word to their friends and neighbours via their WhatsApp groups etc. Hopefully once people come into town once and see the measures that are being taken to keep them safe they will feel confident to return and encourage others to come in.
18. As a Sevenoaks B&B, we are happy to promote Sevenoaks and it's plans to our guests, via the information stand within our B&B.
19. Continue to provide help with publicity for anything via our Tourist stands; social media; newsletter etc.
20. I'm not a business but will help galvanize energy for regeneration
21. I don't have a business. I am an 85 year old woman who has lived in Sevenoaks for over 40 years.
22. I am not speaking for a business, but I would be happy to volunteer spare time to help marshal at events or keep an eye on street furniture and markings.
23. Support via our social platforms or by providing webinars
24. Answered yes on the basis that as a landlord we could provide flexible leases and/or accomodation to help encourage new tenants
25. Sevenoaks Society written report to follow
26. I have written this as an individual but coincidentally I am joint chair of WHERA, a Residents Association with 376 member households.

Do you think any ideas are missing?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.13%	34
No	40.63%	26
TOTAL		64

Further comments

- 1 Removing my hockey hat for a moment and putting on my architect's round spectacles . . . Landlords have been unsympathetic to the retail crisis. They have crushed small business out of existence. Who wants to come to Sevenoaks to shop ? Is it the range of hairdressers, estate agents or charity shops ? Or is it Poundland ? Or is it Costa or Nero cafe ? It is the independents that make a town vibrant, not the multiples. How do we protect / encourage them ? Sitting down with the Landlords (incl Blighs) would be a great first step. Attractive pricing will obviously help. How do we fill the various empty units ? The future of retail is experiential. Sevenoaks must invest in places, not spaces. We need to create more events, seating, planting. We need to come alive - think Jazz in the Tunbridge Wells Pantiles through Summer, think of inviting new types of business to the area, think fun ! Secondly Parking Meters and Car Park prices have helped to kill visitors from afar. You can't even park for free on a Sunday ! Whilst creating revenue is important, it is a very short-sided view and should be revised. Long term Please remember retail has been slowly dying for a number of years. COVID has just focused minds into action. Please be aware this is not a problem that will go away once a vaccine has been found ! Town Centers must evolve to survive. As an architect my biggest problem is Bligh's Car Park. Imagine instead a town square with a fountain and a stage surrounded on all sides by cafes and restaurants. This is the single most important thing that must change if Sevenoaks has any chance of surviving. It is not

about putting tape on the floor and being herded like sheep. We must play the long game and here is our chance to reset. Please contact me, if you would like me to expand.

- 2 Outdoor market MUCH safer than indoor on current medical advice. Move market to Blighs from current location where it does not feel safe for people to use and obstructs the high street. Indoor market in old Tesco building too crowded to feel safe for people Closing High Street to traffic frees up much needed space for social distancing. Consider making permanent and implementing HGV ban through Sevenoaks so lorries going through use A21 bypass instead People do NOT feel public transport is safe so no point in introducing more buses from more distant car parks as long as current pandemic situation prevails. Consider later after vaccine or other solution implemented. Instead have free parking in all the streets around the town centre on Saturdays when car parking problem at its most acute, instead of the current restrictions? Using Blighs for a market will make the parking problem worse so a bold initiative is required. Encourage offices around centre with car parks to open them up to the public for free on Saturdays like the council offices? There is no point in trying to discourage cars when most people will not shop by public transport unless they do not have a car Stag, Leisure centre, Bat and Ball etc all need a complete rethink of what they do and how they operate in the situation we are now in.

 - 3 Measures that encourage walking and cycling should be emphasised in the recovery plan, with public space for business and recreational use, rather than car parking. Bligh's Meadow could be a market site and a site for public events, for example, rather than a car park; a pedestrianised High Street could create space for outdoor terrace dining areas. Traffic control measures, including 20mph speed limits, pedestrianised streets, closure of roads to cars and park and ride could help to open the streets for pedestrians and cyclists, as we have seen in the crisis.

 - 4 1.Free car parking for 1 hour a week for all local residents who live within 3 miles of Sevenoaks would boost local trade. The high street will die due to internet sales (eg Amazon) 2. Utilise the Shambles for open air shows 3. Make the high street one way in direction for cars, enabling more drop off bays and widen the pavement for pedestrians

 - 5 We feel that the traffic is the biggest barrier to encouraging more footfall Into town. Living on the High Street in Sevenoaks we have seen a huge rise in traffic since restrictions were eased. People are also parking in roads and homeowners driveways blocking access, which is not acceptable. The traffic is shockingly polluting and dangerous for people trying to walk to town or the park as the paths are so narrow. We often see children and pedestrians narrowly missed by passing cars and large trucks going very fast, when walking to/from the park or High Street. This is an accident waiting to happen. The covid19 death rate was said to be higher than expected in Sevenoaks. It has also been published that those living in polluted areas are more at risk of dying from Covid19. Could this be the reason Sevenoaks death rate was higher? We already have a higher than usual asthma rate among children in Sevenoaks. It goes without saying that in order to have a safe, clean, healthy environment for Sevenoaks residents and visitors, the level of pollution needs to be addressed urgently. By limiting access to cars and finding a solution for this growing problem would help. For too long Sevenoaks has seen rising pollution levels, the High Street is choking to walk along, making it a very unhealthy place to live and visit. It should be seen as a top priority for any recovery to set an example by making it a clean and green space to be in. The increase of children schooling here should also be a big incentive to address pollution for their health sakes. Doing this would no doubt attract more people into the town and make it a more pleasant, safe place for people to live and visit.
-

-
- 6 Cycle lanes would be really good to encourage cyclists. Sevenoaks is a nightmare to cycle around.
-
- 7 To encourage cafe life at social distancing into the evening utilising the traffic free High Street. There need to be family/all age places to go in the evenings that are not pubs this could be coupled with extended shop opening rather like the continent. More things to do in the town for all ages and all day into the evening, bearing in mind social distancing. These measures would distribute nos of people throughout the day and evening. More outdoor classes so people could attend in reasonable nos, gazebos could be used to shelter from rain whilst doing them. Use bandstand with PA system for talks, concerts and demonstrations.
-
- 8 In Q7 there is reference to both additional buses and park and ride. The Stag is in favour of facilitating additional bus services and the GoCoach Go2 initiative and Town Council No.8 bus are both exceptionally good. However it is against the introduction of park and ride as the geography of the town, the lack of availability of suitable park locations plus the abundance of parking available in the town mean a complex and expensive park and ride scheme would be a waste of resource.
-
- 9 I think this is a valiant effort at looking to how to react to this pandemic and get things moving again within however the future develops. However, its missing two vital things. Primarily there is no vision or target here of what the town should aim to look like in the future, its a purely reactive document. With no vision there's no way of driving towards one - its just a do this and wait to see what happens. In a similar vein there's no link to the current future development plans for the town or indication that those plans will have to change. I do think pedestrianising the town centre and keeping traffic away is an excellent long-term idea (provided there are first rate, fast and frequent and family-sized park and rides - eg delivered by taxis instead of busses) and Knole moves its entrance (eg via the golf course with a better access road). In a similar vein finding a route to get cyclists in and out of the town but also keeping them completely separated from pedestrians and traffic would be valuable. Given the emphasis placed on the Stag, there's an obvious missing piece to the tentative plan. If the town's thru traffic all goes down London Road then London Road will probably become a traffic nightmare. And a pedestrian one, if cyclists use it more. Traffic lights, a big crossing covering the Stag, the Post Office and the current pedestrian crossing might help, or a well designed bridge. Closing the east side pavement might help too, with shop access via the shambles. Finally, this could be the time to ban all non-electric delivery vans from the town.
-
- 10 I have not answered Survey questions where they seemed to bear no relationship to the statement that preceded them or where the statement included several different ideas and I would have wanted to comment separately or where the statement was meaningless to me (what is the Business Hub? a physical hub or a digital one; what is this talk about a Sevenoaks USP?) or where there was talk of action that requires approval from central govt or KCC or where I thought what was proposed was just irrelevant. A best window competition? Really? I think this Plan mixes up ideas for this extended period of social distancing, which may last through the winter, with ideas for Sevenoaks in 2021 or 2022. I suggest focusing on businesses' needs/actions over the next few months. Action to make Sevenoaks better for walkers and cyclists needs to be taken but it has to be carefully thought through and will take some time to debate. Closing off the High Street, forcing all traffic down London Road and up or down Pembroke Road or The Drive or Hitchen Hatch is not sensible or convincing. A covered market on a site held by a property investment firm is also unconvincing. I could say more. Somewhat disappointed by the Plan and by the Survey Questions. They should have been tailored to the statements.
-

-
- 11 Key idea is to Pedestrianise the high street at the weekend and encourage cafe and pub tables in the road. Alongside the open market suggestion this would create the town centre as a more attractive afternoon out as oppose to purely a shopping destination. Will also help social distancing and improve air quality of congested high street.
-
- 12 The proposal contains some excellent, creative proposals. I think, however, that the one-way system suggested could be rather formal and off-putting. On the other hand, the semi- permanent painting on a closed High Street could be light-hearted but functional, directing pedestrians appropriately. The most important aspect is that of inspiring confidence and communicating it thoroughly and effectively.
-
- 13 Cycle lanes in town
-
- 14 This survey prevents a balanced response by its closed design and illogical questions. For example an important principle might be illustrated by a ludicrous suggestion, thus generating a need to both "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" in the same response. Several of the "practical ideas" are not ideas at all. For example "What is Sevenoaks' USP?" This is a question which would require an answer before I make judgement as to my degree of agreement. Others are statements of existing facts or opinions disguised as fact. Residents Groups should be invited to contribute to the design of a plan which meshes with those of larger administrative areas within which Sevenoaks is located. A recovery plan should be a specific plan agreed by all stakeholders. This reads like a philosophical wish list with occasional "maybe" vague ideas inserted. The health aspects in both design and implementation of the plan, unlike national government, should follow best genuine scientific advice and methodology in timely fashion. I have already made specific suggestions to KCC regarding road space use for vehicles and pedestrians to enhance safety by using Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders. If asked I would be prepared, as part of a wider representation of Residents, to try to contribute to a meaningful exercise. I could then expand on the individual topics. I am coincidentally joint Chair of a Residents Association with 376 member households.
-
- 15 "I would like to see more cycle paths e.g. from Dibden Lane following the route of Brittain's Lane (going around the back of Downview Road & Croft Road) to join Brittain's Lane again before Little Brittain's. There could also be a junction where another route went through the Montreal Estate and Montreal Park to the Riverhead Infants School. An off-road cycle path going from Riverhead (e.g. Hamlin Road), via the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve to Knole Academy Secondary School would be good. Also, a cycle path from Rye Lane to Crampton's Road, The Moor Road, then if it was feasible under/over the railway track to Watercress Drive and through/around Greatness Playing Park and Greatness Cemetery to end up at Filmer Lane for easy access to Trinity School.
- Facilities for free parking of bicycles/motorbikes in Sevenoaks town centre would be appreciated.
- On another matter - how about a partially covered amphitheatre that could be used by schools for plays/concerts as well as for films/theatre productions? It would have to be somewhere that wouldn't upset neighbours with the noise level.
- With more people working/studying from home, new housing should have better noise insulation. All new housing developments should have footpaths and cycle paths incorporated in the plans.
- There are unofficial, but regularly used footpaths going from Riverhead Infants School to the B2042. It is very difficult to cross over the road to get to Back Lane (you need to do this to get to various other footpaths). Please could you put a mirror on the corner so that it was easier for pedestrians to see oncoming traffic.
- I would like to see a footpath, which was also suitable for wheelchairs, going around Chipstead Lake. (I understand there used to be a footpath, but some houses in the
-

Chesterfield Drive area have extended their gardens to the waterfront, and the Angling Club have certain rights)."

- 16 There must be a extensive media campaign when the High Stret reopens. When parking charges were stopped there was little or no publicity at that time, most of the people I know did not know. Information on the SDC website is not enough as it has a minimal audience. Using all Media outlets, Radio, Newspapers and blanket mailshots are essential. Lastly a new parking cost regime must be in place and be publicised PRIOR to reopening. Free for the at least the first 3 months and restructuring thereafter to encourage shoppers and diners back to the Town. A cancelling permanently of the parking charge of the "dinner tax" at night would help and promote dining in the Town.
- 17 What do you intend to include in an action plan? This means different things to different people. There will always be ideas missing and as plans develop other ideas will emerge. What are the success criteria. I have answered agree to many of the points, largely because some suggestions reduce the strength of the question. A comment box would have been useful after most of the questions. I wish you the very best in all your efforts.
- 18 We must find ways to collaborate together to maintain the wellbeing of our towns residents and businesses in this time of extreme change. Use our public buildings to benefit and include more people. Reach across the IT inequality divide and improve access for those excluded, much support needed for some of us to cope with the new reality of communication. Find ways to include people who feel lonely and isolated . We have several excellent examples in Sevenoaks that we can build on.
- 19 Knole does not need further support unless it is encouragement to use public transport. It was already causing congestion in the High St Events question is too broad to answer Any markets I have seen moved indoors have failed. Wednesday market looks as though it might be benefitting from the lockdown. Need to keep these new customers
- 20 Look for ways to support and help businesses such as dentists, hairdressers, barbers, cafes, restaurants which because of social distancing, have huge problems to survive. Think about widening pavements and making the High Street and London Rd one way, so increasing pedestrian safety and space to socially distance.
- 21 Watch this space
- 22 I would like the council to consider suspending parking fees for as long as possible. While walking is great, driving is safer than public transport and parking fees (in Blighs in particular) have put people off coming into town. I would strongly support a covered market in the TESCO site.
- 23 Interested to learn more about business hub.
- 24 I think that it would be a good idea to somehow find out what the general public feel ... those who are out and about shopping at present and somehow ... but no idea how ... those who are self isolating at the moment. I know there is good representation here from various groups ... but it is those who are less 'active' in this respect who will be those who we will rely on to bring Sevenoaks back on top. Maybe groups like U3A ... the Stag's mailing list ... that sort of thing.
- 25 Preventing and discouraging cars is madness. We are being TOLD not to use public transport so your suggestion is to use more buses! This is just an excuse to put forward all your previous ideas and biases about walking and cycling and has nothing to do with the Covid-19 Pandemic. Sevenoaks is on a hill - many cannot walk into town for health reasons. A very poorly designed survey.
- 26 Town is quite lifeless. Yet another Kentish town with the same shops. Bring into town the covered market is a good idea. Stag is old fashioned. Expensive for cinema + rip off booking fee. Small screen. Not good sound. Airflow in main theatre is absolutely terrible. No air- conditioning. It is a 3rd world experiance. Pavements are narrow widening them

is a fantastic idea. Town needs cheaper rents lower business rates to attract new business that are not just women's cloths that cost a fortune. shops coffee shops. Having lived in other countries the UK can learn alot from other countries offerings for towns. As we are from a middle class background with an average home. On line shopping and using the out of town retail is a real winner as Sevenoaks suffers from having Bluewater not too far away a different approach needs to be taken to create a cool. Smart modern approach to offer what the big shopping center can't. It is about feeling town is a great place to be. At the moment it doesn't. Out the box thinking by younger minds is needed. Sevenoaks seems stuck in the past. What is the average age of the planners and influential persons. It needs to be in the 20's or younger. Cool features, environmentally conscious well lit areas. Covered seating.

Covered walk ways. Places to sit. Places to shop without Getting wet. Some shade in the summer. Choose one theme voted for by Sevenoaks people. Then us. The people can help to put in place. The town's people can help if they are interested in the projects. Thanks for the oportunity for this survey.

27 Cumpulsory purchase the derelict land at north of high street and use for market/open space. Take this oppportunity to reduce and slow down traffic through town much of which are just using station and passing through. Wider pavements, cycle lanes and speed humps everywhere. 20 mph blanket speed restriction.

28 Ensure widening of pavements approaching the town centre to promote safe walking and ensure that these pavements are kept clear of cars, vans and lorries parking on them.

29 None spring to mind. For our part, any B2B initiative is worth considering. Also tapping into the professional population that previously commuted as no doubt many will continue to work from home. Also like the idea of utilising the redundant Tesco site for community purposes, plus open spaces.

30 All the above are in line with govt guidelines - however - until there is either a vaccine or a cure - then the streets will never be "safe" from the virus nor can be promoted to be so.

People should be encouraged to drive their own conclusions - and the council needs to be ultimately very careful in the messaging proposed in many of the ideas above. Community heros is a good idea, those who silently have shopped and cared for neighbours, Lockdown stories promoting new skills people have learned, how people have coped, ultimately sharing and providing a more community focus than held previously.

31 Someone has to take responsibility for frequent, trusted information on what's happening in Sevenoaks. A 'one stop shop' for information is the only way to communicate to residents and visitors what's going on. If it isn't the Town Council or Town partnership who should it be? The survey doesn't talk about residents at all - and getting them behind any plan, building their trust in Sevenoaks as a safe place to come - will be crucial. The survey has forced me to vote against some things - like using the market to attract people because it's expressed as a covered market which I don't think is a priority and will take years. The Plan has to be actionable in one or two years I have also had to leave blank - or disagree with - suggestions which are simply too vague. Eg crowdfunding may be helpful, but for Stag it will depend on the Trustees coming up with a business model and plan which may have to be sustainable under physical distancing rules beyond the end of 2020. You can only crowdfund a sustainable plan for the future

32 Wide designated cycle tracks marked on roads, making it safe for adults and children to ride into town. This would reduce car traffic from locals. Also easily accessible bike racks for locking bikes, once in town. I feel this should be a priority and would improve the

quality of life for our residents. Pre-lockdown I didn't feel safe to cycle on our local roads, despite being an avid cyclist who does cycling holidays abroad.

33 I will email notes on these to Alison Futtit

34 Free car parking would be essential in my opinion, also our Chairman's suggestion in the sports meeting today for an "event" for sports clubs at the Paddock is great as is idea of market style approach in town with no traffice and pop ups.

35 Free parking for a limited time would probably be the single biggest tool to kick start business in the town. To pedestrianise the High Street for, say three months, with Cultural and Sporting activity happening right in the centre would be a strong physical reminder that we are all pulling together for the town and its people.

36 Close the High Street or at least make it one way. Focus on transport hubs, how the population wants to move around and community use of the space. Open up the use of additional space for queues and expansion by shops/businesses into those spaces including the High Street. Promote the market - it is actually growing at the moment! Reduce road speeds and promote cycling/walking to make cycling safer.

37 Allow free parking in all car parks for a certain time period to encourage visitors/ spending in shops.

38 If you make the High street pedestrian, I think you should do the same for London Road, otherwise you will push all the traffic to London Road, potentially causing large traffic queues and dangerous road conditions for pedestrians and children. Along with this you will cause significant air pollution issues and increase the risk of workers in the businesses along London Road, as well as pedestrians and residents having breathing problems, as the weather warms up and the chances of a hot, humid days increases. Increasing the risk of respiratory issues for people at this time, I feel is dangerous. Thank you

39 An alternate suggestion re shops - if you do close the high street, what about having tables/clothing rails etc stemming out the front of the shops/restaurants etc, almost creating a "square" temporarily. Just a thought.

40 Given the information released by government open spaces such as parks are going to become more popular . Short term open air shows from the stag and pop up shops/takeaway in these parks and open spaces are going to be key in short term. could click and reserve picnic spaces in the parks where these pop shops/ food outlets are. given town centre free spots in these pros on these days. Long term redevelopment of cycles paths etc. Look at bedgebury pro cycles routes and go ape attract a lot of visitors. Sevenoaks have lots of open spaces let use them especially with Summer coming.

41 I think it is very important that accommodation providers are not forgotten within the towns plan. We are all thinking of ways to run our businesses safely in line with the governments recommendations. The SDAF (Sevenoaks District Accommodation Forum) aka Simply Sevenoaks will use its website to explain the steps we will be taking to keep our guests safe.

42 Where do you see the role of guest accommodation? Some of our members are starting to think about how they might ensure guests feel safe, especially for the early start of visits from family and friends and then possibly staycationers. We are keen to support retail, restaurant and tourism attractions in whatever way we can.

43 The look and feel of the town post lockdown must be as upbeat as possible to encourage looking to the future. Very glad the hanging baskets are going ahead. More along those lines. Benches for responsible gathering in public spaces. These can be signwritten by artists to note just this years date. Shambles restored and publicly opened. Library Museum Gallery Theatre flagged as part of our heritage. All cafes restaurants to be allowed outside tables. Etc etc

-
- 44 Focus must be on the town centre - this is understood - but do not forget local neighbourhood shopping - would help keep footfall under control in the town centre so that social distancing can be maintained
-
- 45 This seems to be an imaginative and useful start to planning. I hope that the tricky business of choosing the right things to prioritise and getting buy-in from stakeholders goes well, but this is a good start.
-
- 46 The local paper needs a lift to mirror this collaborative effort but as the non digital answer for those who do not have access to technology. Can it have sections or a regular directory feature for businesses offering delivery, click and collect. Another section for people to use for walks and trails. A section for crafts and education. A section for health, wellbeing, cooking and entertainment (lots of many local clubs). A section for property. A section for professional services. A section of vouchers should any retailers want to offer them. Can the paper have free drop off points - perhaps an amount made available for free on the smaller high streets like Riverhead and Seal so that there isn't a surge into the main high street which works for safety, local retail and for those can't drive and rely on local shops.
-

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 1



Bradbourne Residents' Association (BRA)

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer & Membership Secretary

Committee Members

Sevenoaks Town Team (Sevenoaks Town Partnership)
C/O Sevenoaks Town Council
Council Offices
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 3QG

My Ref : STC/01/2020

FAO : Linda Larter CEO : Sevenoaks Town Council

Dear Linda

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – From Impact of COVID-19. A transition to a new business environment.

Please see below the Bradbourne Residents' Association (BRA) response to the plan above.

We would ask that our input and suggestions are given serious consideration as a genuine distillation of our Residents care for our Town during the COVID-19 pandemic and the future beyond.

Thank you for agreeing to an extension to the Recovery Plan Residents Association response period.

Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan Post COVID-19

Following the meeting of the Sevenoaks Town Team on 30th April to discuss this plan, various of the residents' associations of Sevenoaks were approached for their views. The plan's details have been circulated to our members and our Committee has also given them its consideration. Responses have been consolidated into the feedback which follows, looked at as far as possible from the perspective of people living in the Bradbourne Estate.

It is clear that the business outlook for Sevenoaks has been hit hard by the pandemic. What is also true is that the Town Centre and traditional shopping areas elsewhere in the neighbourhood were already suffering badly anyway, hit by the triple curse of internet competition, business rates and daunting parking charges.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Plan had previously recognised the need to regenerate and revitalise the town. These took into account the growing concerns about the environment and climate change, along with the move towards less polluting forms of transport.

If there's any silver lining to be found in this COVID-19 cloud, it is that these last couple of months have given us all a taste of what life could be like if those initiatives were implemented properly. There's been no pollution, the air is clear, people cycled safely round town, and pedestrians have been able to stroll up the High Street without fear of being knocked off narrow pavements by passing lorries and four-by-fours. That's been nice but, of course, enormous difficulties remain.

Schemes such as the Neighbourhood Plan are designed for implementation over a period measured in decades, although past experience suggests many proposals will end up as unfulfilled aspirations. However, the problems now faced by the business community in Sevenoaks require tackling decisively and with great urgency, within months, rather than decades. The justification for some incisive initiatives has never been greater. Can our various civic authorities get together to morph into the dynamic force required to bring these about?

The advent of a Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan, put together by the Town Team, is encouraging. It recognises that big changes will be necessary as we come out of lockdown and explores a number of possible avenues in search of constructive ideas in this regard.

The immediate task is to determine how the business community, the town of Sevenoaks and its citizens adapt their way of life in the face of COVID-19. One hopes that a time will come when the virus is conquered and the fears surrounding it are behind us. It would be a great shame if that resulted in a return to any of the unpleasant aspects of the past. For too long, those features were tolerated. The pandemic has forced a very necessary review and presented a golden opportunity to do something to make changes for the better. It should not be wasted.

Very much representative of middle-income Sevenoaks society, from families with young children to the retired, our membership includes a good number whose job required a commute, in many cases to London. Working from home has now become common. Having established this as a feasible method of operation, that's likely to continue once "normality" returns. This must be to Sevenoaks' benefit because it increases the number to be persuaded to turn to our town to shop and find their entertainment, while the attraction of London shops and Bluewater should lessen.

Another consequence of the lockdown has been the unmistakable popularity of our local parks and open spaces. In our neighbourhood, we are fortunate to have the celebrated Bradbourne Lakes, the parks at Pontoise Close and the Nature Reserve. With national concern for health, both physical and mental, as we cope with virus restrictions, their importance is clear.

When it comes to a recovery plan for Sevenoaks, one naturally thinks of the centre, around London Road and the High Street. In doing so, one should not forget other business areas like St Johns, Tubs Hill and Riverhead, in the latter case with its own parish council. Nevertheless, the emphasis of the Town Team's initiative is toward the centre. In that respect, our comments are directed there.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Two Principles are necessary for a Sevenoaks Recovery Plan:

Short Term, acknowledging the urgency of the situation.

Long Term, allowing for further research, surveys and consideration.

SHORT TERM

Safety

Caution is necessary but media and government have combined to terrify the public. Key to the plan is reassurance. Visiting central Sevenoaks will be safe!

- Clear Guidelines. There needs to be a clear understanding of how people should behave. Rules even. E.g. One-way walking routes, customer limits, insistence on face masks.
- Control. Ensuring the guidelines are followed. E.g. Having traffic wardens trained and redeployed as street-marshals, perhaps handing out free face masks where necessary.
- Protection. Arrangements by individual establishments to quarantine handled stock, sanitise surfaces, protect distancing, etc.
- Awareness. Once in place, media coverage of the arrangements is fundamental. Persuade the likes of BBC South East Today, Kent Radio, Sevenoaks Chronicle, etc., to do encouraging local news articles. Lean on Visit Kent and the Sevenoaks District Accommodation Forum too.

Appeal

Can a visit to the town be made worthwhile? Does what's on offer represent value for money? Will it be a pleasant experience? Convenient, attractive, interesting, easy to find, these are all factors a potential visitor would consider. There are certain things that can be done in the short term. They include a number of suggestions for the High Street which could be implemented as temporary measures, with bollards, cones, sign boards, etc., but the hope is that, if they proved beneficial, they would be retained.

- One-way traffic. The town's road system itself deters visitors. In places, pavements are too narrow for safety anyway, but even more so when social distancing. A one-way system has significant popular support, permitting wider pavements while allowing, in places, extra parking and/or loading areas. Southwards, down the High Street from Pembroke Road to the London Road junction is an obvious example.
- Pedestrianisation. Some also favour this, with vehicle access only for deliveries. Ultimately, if adopted permanently, that would mean paving the section between the Old Market House and the London Road junction, while the northern part of the High Street, as one-way, would be just for buses going to the bus station.
- 20mph Zone. There is currently a move towards these. If the above ideas were implemented, such a zone would have obvious justifications for the Town Centre.
- The Business Community. Improving the town's infrastructure is the civic authorities' responsibility. Nevertheless, the town's economy depends to a large extent on the entrepreneurial skills of retailers and hospitality providers themselves. Expanding "Click (or phone) and Collect" has helped some. Certain restaurants now dispense

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

ready-made meals. Open air markets are popular and should be encouraged. Those retailing from within cramped accommodation will face difficulties but that depends on their own individual circumstances. Can the Council provide focussed advice and support to vulnerable businesses where necessary?

- Getting into town. Is that going to be a pleasant experience? The current charging arrangements for parking act as a disincentive. Now, more than ever, change is necessary. At the very least, make the first hour free. And travel by bus? This would require frequent and regular services running from very early morning until pretty late in the evening to enable people to utilise this upgraded town to its fullest extent. Park & Ride, however, was not popular amongst our respondents.

LONG TERM

Assessment

Taking those short term measures will allow time to understand better the problems of recovery during/after Covid-19, as well as addressing the ongoing problems of UK 'High Streets' generally. E.g., how do people assess the merits of a visit to the Town Centre vis-à-vis 'out of town' retail parks? How long is the average length of visit to the Town Centre? What is the impact of Car Parking Charges, on length of stay or reluctance to visit at all? What would improve the Town Centre, its attractiveness and encourage long stay visits?

Long term measures should be those which have been thoroughly researched and can be backed up by clear evidence of benefit and what the businesses and public want of their Town Centre. A look at more successful UK and Continental town centres would be a pre-requisite to any ambitious and costly schemes. Foremost, our Town Centre must be a place where people want to be other than just retail shopping. The location of Sevenoaks in the heart of fine countryside and with easy distance of the best heritage sites in the UK makes it particularly suitable for other than purely shopping visits. The lack of 'green spaces' to relax in our town centre is a problem to long term visits.

Further suggestions, for the longer term

- Central Plaza. The large open space in the middle of town, currently a car park, could be better utilised. As an attractively furnished pedestrian plaza, (with perhaps a car park underground), this could be used for a revival of street markets, open air concerts and the like. A real focal point for events. A big idea, perhaps, but isn't that all about town centre regeneration?
- Al fresco dining. The economy of Sevenoaks is particularly reliant on restaurants, coffee bars and pubs. Wider pavements would make room for the kind of canopies and street enclosures seen in many continental towns. Where possible, these should be permitted. For many in this new environment, al fresco dining would be preferable. And our climate is getting warmer.
- The Stag. Of particular concern is a future for the Stag Theatre complex. Social distancing can be tried, also using infrared thermometers at entry and wearing masks. That might work for the cinemas which are often only half full anyway. But for stage productions to succeed, control of the virus has to get to the point where sitting in a confined space in close proximity to each other once again feels safe.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

- Heritage sites. They abound in west Kent. Knole is increasingly popular since the renovations and the Upper High Street is frequently snarled up with visitor traffic. An alternative entrance, e.g. off Tonbridge Road, opposite The Rise, would eradicate the problem. With a bit of thought, it could also allow repositioning of the unsightly N.T. car park away from the front of Knole House apart, that is, from what was necessary for the disabled.

IMPLEMENTATION & COST

As lockdown eases and given the urgency of the situation, a new and swift approach is needed, at least when it comes to the short term measures. There is, of course, a cost.

- Action. There are new government powers to improve our environment and make it safer. Can they not be used here? Much of what is mentioned above is not new, it's been the subject of several consultations previously, notably the Neighbourhood Plan.
- What about funding? Before COVID-19 Local Authorities were already strapped for cash. Various amounts have been pledged by the Government. £5 billion in the March Budget to improve local bus transport. Later, £2 billion to facilitate cycling and walking. There may be others but it's hard to keep up. Whatever the amounts, Sevenoaks must make its case for a share. Time for our new MP, Laura Trott to be involved?
- Central Government Responsibilities. Current events surely justify a complete overhaul of Local Government Finance. It can't be right that Local Authorities have to rely so much on car parking revenues to balance their books. That's totally at odds with any town centre recovery initiative. And business rates? Other countries have managed to spread the local tax burden more widely whilst not inhibiting businesses in town centres. (as in Canada and the USA, sales tax, tourist tax etc). Why not the UK? Way beyond the scope of this survey, of course. What's needed is some radical thinking and a national campaign.

Yours sincerely

Secretary BRA Date

22nd May 2020

Cc. Cllr Fleming
Cllr Busvine
Cllr Crabtree
Cllr Collins
Cllr Canet
Cllr Claire Shea
Cllr Victoria Granville Baxter

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

BRA Committee Members
BRA Committee File : Correspondence with STC

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 2

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan

You have asked for comments on the draft recovery plan by 14 May.

By and large the document is good and contains many valuable and sensible ideas and proposals.

I have the following comments to make:

1. Methodology – Page 5

Point 5 talks about a phased recovery and this makes complete sense. Dividing this into four periods is also sensible.

However the fourth (and final) stage is headed “New Normal?” and this section contains only a single question mark.

Whilst it is true that none of us knows today how things will be a year from now we have a huge opportunity to be instrumental in shaping this “new normal”.

We must use this unique situation to find out what it is that the people of Sevenoaks want in the future and put significant effort and resource into shaping the “new normal” into something that benefits the community and those who live and work in it.

2. Ideas and information to include in the Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan

Whilst this section contains a number of excellent points there is no differentiation between those measures necessary in the (as yet undefined) short term and those which could, and probably should, be looked on as permanent improvements to the town – improvements which will be designed to bring long term benefits to local businesses, residents, and visitors.

The key point in this is point 3.

The flow of both pedestrian traffic and vehicles has been a serious issue for many years and none of the proposals that have been made in the past has been adopted.

Now is the ideal opportunity to take bold decisions and make changes which, although they may be somewhat unpopular when introduced, will be of significant benefit in the longer term. It is very often the case with such decisions that initial opposition (and grumbling) disappears fairly quickly once the benefits appear.

The closure of the High Street must be a serious contender but this should not be “as a trial for three months”. It should be done – with proper consideration of deliveries, buses etc. – as a permanent change.

3. Point 19 – page 7

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

This refers to the Town Team’s weekly newsletter.

I had never head of this newsletter until this document and in conversations with local friends and neighbours (admittedly a limited number because of the current situation) I have not yet found anyone who has heard of it.

It does seem that there is an urgent need for the Town Council to find better and more successful ways of communicating with the local population.

We do receive (through the letterbox) a copy of the Sevenoaks Town Crier.

One has to question the sense of having to separate publications for what is basically a single purpose – and the question is not only the cost but the distribution and the reach.

I have to say that the Town Team newsletter is of considerably greater interest and much more informative that the Town Crier; but it is disappointing that it has no reference to either the Loaves and Fishes Food Bank or to the local Lockdown Larder.

4. The information provided by City Street Scapes on page 11 and the following pages is interesting but there is a serious risk of it being too complex.

Circles and grids and squares and blue boxes and so on could well be overload. We go out there to shop or to get from A to B not to play Ludo, and more than three, maybe four messages will likely result in a lower level of compliance.

We already in some places have yellow lines to stay behind (at ticket machines, in banks, post offices and so on), and keep left indicators and similar on staircases.

What is needed now is to develop an understanding of what “two metres apart” actually means in practice – and to do so in such a way that it becomes second nature to us all. We need to be aware of it at all times; even when it is not marked out.

This needs to be done in spaces where people are constantly moving and where the fluidity of the traffic is important.

On motorways in France there are fairly frequent signs urging drivers to keep their distance from each other, and explaining that two chevrons between cars safe but less than two chevrons is not safe. The chevrons are marked on the road.

A similar system of “safe distance” marks two metres apart over the walking area will clearly indicate what is required without suggesting that people walk (or not walk) along certain lines.

The distribution of these marks would be based on adjacent equilateral 2m triangles – which is illustrated in the attachment.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

5. I have, as requested, completed the survey. Having done so, it is apparent that it is misconceived and has not been structured appropriately for this draft Plan.

All questions allow only a response of Strongly agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly disagree. This is particularly true of question 8 (Businesses have already started to work differently. Delivering and extending opening hours as examples.) and 11 (What is Sevenoaks' USP?), where such responses would not make any sense, but it is also the case to some extent with many other questions.

I trust that the results of this survey will not be used to inform the decisions made.

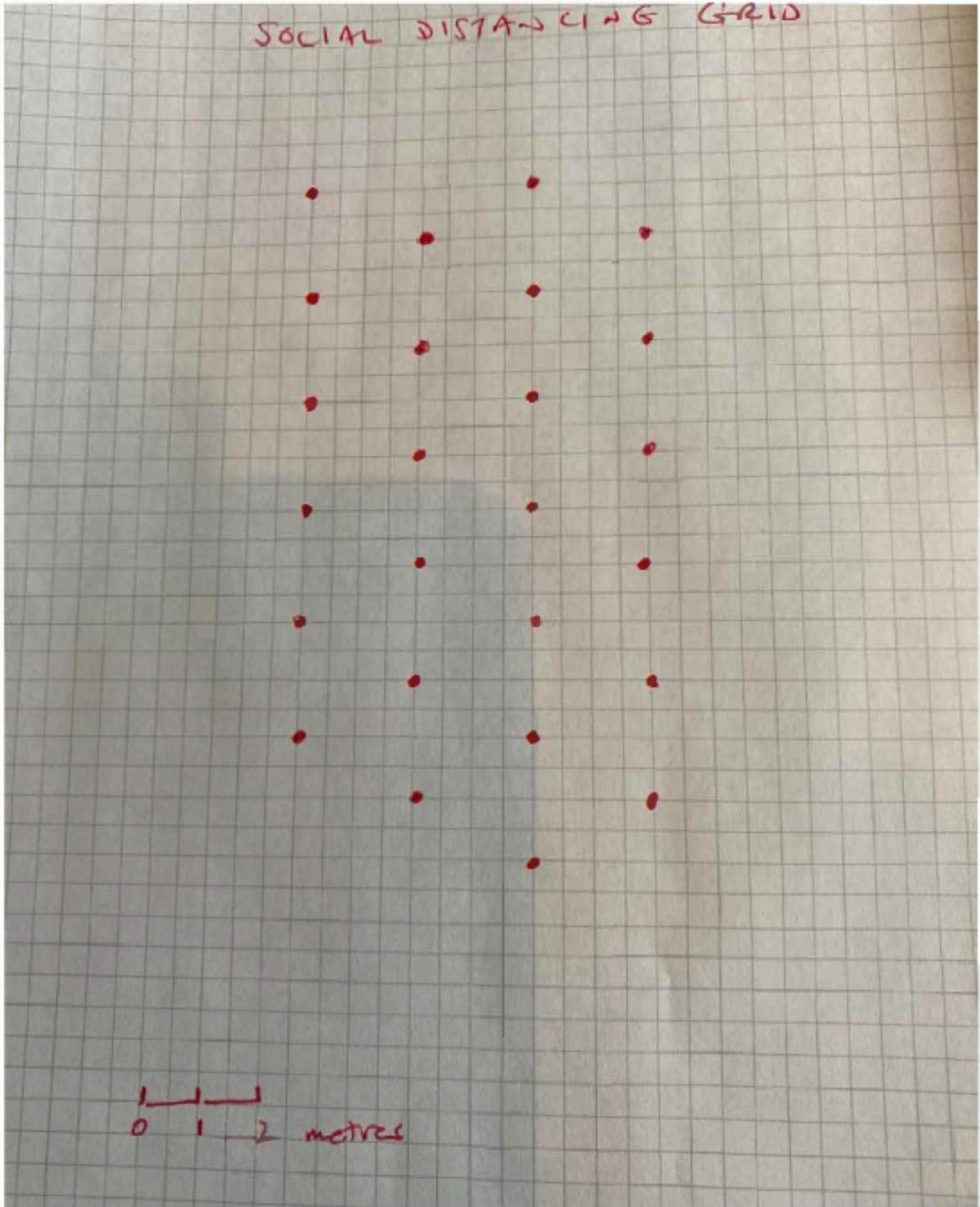
CONCLUSION

Whilst there are flaws in the document and the survey, the overall approach is sound and sensible.

The main failing in the plan is that it insufficiently bold and does not appear to take the current situation as an opportunity to improve the Sevenoaks Town experience.

It is important that this is done and that it is done in conjunction with (proper) consultation of and information from the local population.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report



Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 3.

Thank you again for organising the Sports Clubs Meeting. I think it was a good start and look forward to the next one.

In the meantime I wanted to ask about the likelihood of closing the High Street, if only for a 3 month trial.

We had a quick brainstorm about it and would be in full support.

We imagined a section of the road (or car park) could be covered in artificial pitch and could host many scheduled activities.

Maybe supported by gazebos, a stage and speakers ?

For example :

Hockey skills / obstacle courses (we have larger, softer balls for Quick Sticks)

Fitness for hockey (we have our own equivalent of Joe Wicks !)

Other back to hockey opportunities, including walking hockey (elderly and less able) and Flyerz

Hockey (wheelchair hockey)

Other sports could include : yoga, pilates, dance groups, gymnastics ?, boot camps, cheerleading, football, theatre groups ? etc.

It could tie in with the Summer Festival.

I am thinking of a surface of dimensions something like 5-6m wide (or more ?) x 25m or more that could be brought to site, rolled out and left down for the duration.

It would ideally be quite flat (but not snooker table perfect !) and with a bit of space around it for viewing.

We have begun asking around if pitch suppliers can help us out with a large piece of astro. Details to follow.

In addition we are pursuing the idea of inflatable pitches as we have contacts who might be able to help there, too.

Done well , this could be a huge positive experience for the town and even an example for the rest of the country !

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 4.



THE SEVENOAKS SOCIETY

Chairman:

THE SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT SEVENOAKS TOWN RECOVERY PLAN

The Society decided not to complete the Survey issued in respect of the Plan because it wanted to set out its suggestions for meeting the Plan's objectives in a manner which the survey as presented did not permit. The Society has the following comments and suggestions to make towards the preparation of the Plan:-

- It is considered that the Plan should concentrate on encouraging people to come to Sevenoaks in the immediate weeks and months following the lifting of the present national restrictions, whilst at the same time having an eye to the future as this may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to effect change which would enhance the environment of the Town centre (e.g. air quality). Our suggestions are made in that context.
- Why do people come to Sevenoaks? We suggest it is to:-
 1. Shop and visit the many cafes and restaurants to be found there,
 2. Visit an attractive market town,
 3. Attend events at the Stag Theatre, the leisure Centre and the Kaleidoscope Gallery and
 4. Visit Knole House and Park. In this connection we urge the Council to liaise with the National Trust and the Sackville Estate to encourage their visitors to come into the Town whilst they are in the area.
- In light of the Government's statement that people should avoid using public transport and the fact that the Town is situated at the top of a hill, many of those coming to the Town will do so by car. To encourage this we suggest that parking for the next three months should be free all day every day and that thereafter the first two hours should be free of charge on weekdays and completely free at week-ends.
- The High Street should be pedestrianised from the Suffolk Way/Pembroke Road traffic lights southwards to the point where it joins London Road, with one way passage for buses only from the lights to the entrance to the bus station. Deliveries to shops in the pedestrianised stretch to be banned from 10am (to allow for early morning deliveries) until 5.30pm. If permanent pedestrianisation is considered to be unfeasible then consider making the High Street one-way from north to south with the same restriction on deliveries. These arrangements to be for a trial period of, say, 6 months.
- Cafes and pubs and restaurants similar outlets should be allowed to place tables and chairs outside, particularly in the High Street, so as to increase their capacity to enable easier compliance with social distancing requirements. This would be facilitated by the pedestrianisation suggested in the preceding paragraph which would enable the widening of pavements.
- If necessary pavements should be clearly marked to facilitate movement and queuing of pedestrians in accordance with social distancing requirements.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Draft Results Report

- Trees and other vegetation should be planted or placed in pots in the area of the High Street to improve the ambiance and visual aspect of the area.
- The development of regular markets should be a prime objective. The Sevenoaks Market should be encouraged to expand into the extra space which would be created by the pedestrianisation of the High Street. In furtherance of this objective steps should be taken to encourage the owners of empty shops to allow their use by temporary stalls/businesses. This applies particularly, and urgently, to the former Tesco site where part of its ground floor could be utilised in this way.
- The attractions of the Town and its activities should be advertised widely on the websites of the Town and District Councils and in the local press.
- Input to the Town's future should be sought from the schools located in and around the Town. The many thousands of students and their parents coming into the area on a daily basis must be a source of business for the shops and cafes in the Town. Perhaps the Council could consider placing signage near school entrances drawing attention to the attractions of the Town.
- A programme of events to celebrate the reopening of the Town should be drawn up. Such events could make use of the Stag Theatre which, like most businesses in the Town will be in need of fresh income. These events could include a Christmas Market held over, say, a week shortly before Christmas and which could be held in the Plaza Suite. It is assumed that the present social distancing requirements will have been amended by then to enable such events to take place.
- It would be our hope that some of these ideas such as the pedestrianisation of the High Street, the planting of trees and the placing of tables outside cafes etc. if successful would become permanent features of the Town.

Dated 17th May 2020

For and on behalf of The Sevenoaks Society

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 5.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan a transition to a new business environment.

CAUTION This Plan needs careful thought for its development before decisions are made.

Methodology

A large measure of agreement is needed on the phased recovery table which should be seen as a general plan capable of adjustments which may be required. Further detail will come over time. It will need to be under constant review and a constructive but critical eye. Who is overall responsible for the Plan? What are the success criteria?

Ideas and info to be included in the Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan.

Various fairly obvious ideas have been produced and these will be a good starting point. The contributions of those who respond should produce a further collection which need consideration. Radical plans still need to be considered involving the transit of people. Are the public prepared to accept a system which is initially harsh but could be manageable once they got used to it?

It is the **ambitious** and **perhaps controversial** which will stimulate the thoughts of contributors, not necessarily those that will gain the greatest votes and **a mixture of current and far sighted ideas may eventually establish itself.**

A list of irritations and weaknesses that relate to the general public, need to be set against potential resolutions and costs. Items that are prohibitive on cost need not necessarily be set aside. There may be a group of people willing to take on the challenge of raising the funding to enable the resolution.

An Action Plan is the key to restoring public confidence for both shopping and life enhancing experiences. Hence, it must attract the greatest scrutiny and public confidence. Already businesses are responding in different ways to the same problem. Does this in itself create further problems? So, item 10 could be seen as the key guiding factor and item 11 (USP) and 12 need to be considered alongside it. Once elements of the action plan are identified, funding opportunities and advice need to be strenuously and rigorously investigated – what are the criteria for acceptance? But first of all we must identify needs and we should not be afraid to question previous routines which have embedded themselves in the system.

The discussion on the importance of closing the High Street to traffic at certain times will prompt a range of responses but whatever is suggested for the Plan it must be justifiable and practical. Furthermore it must produce a highly satisfactory outcome for businesses and the general public – different age range and needs and current and potential interests are there to be satisfied. The great danger is that the Public could lose their confidence in what is locally on offer, dramatically reduce their time in Sevenoaks town and resort to shopping on line – a great convenience but what would the public and society in general lose? This attitude would need prompt action if it became apparent.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

The success of local events has been well established and should be encouraged in the future. Immense difficulties will be experienced in reducing dangerous virus concerns to an acceptable level. We shall have to see how issues relating to these events develops. Time and perhaps vaccine development and successes will be helpful but that is some way off. So perhaps such events will need to be delayed unless someone comes up with a brilliant idea.

Members of the public will assume that events that have been part of the year's calendar for the Sevenoaks area will continue. It is vital that they are kept informed of impending changes. Reliable local web-sites should ensure that details of any events are carefully monitored. Where problems occur in maintaining an event it is important that the public know of the difficulties in the hope that someone comes forward in an effort to resolve the problem.

It is vital that summary information and notices of events are conveyed to all households and registered groups in Sevenoaks Town. In addition those who have had a part in contributing to this debate should be added to the list.

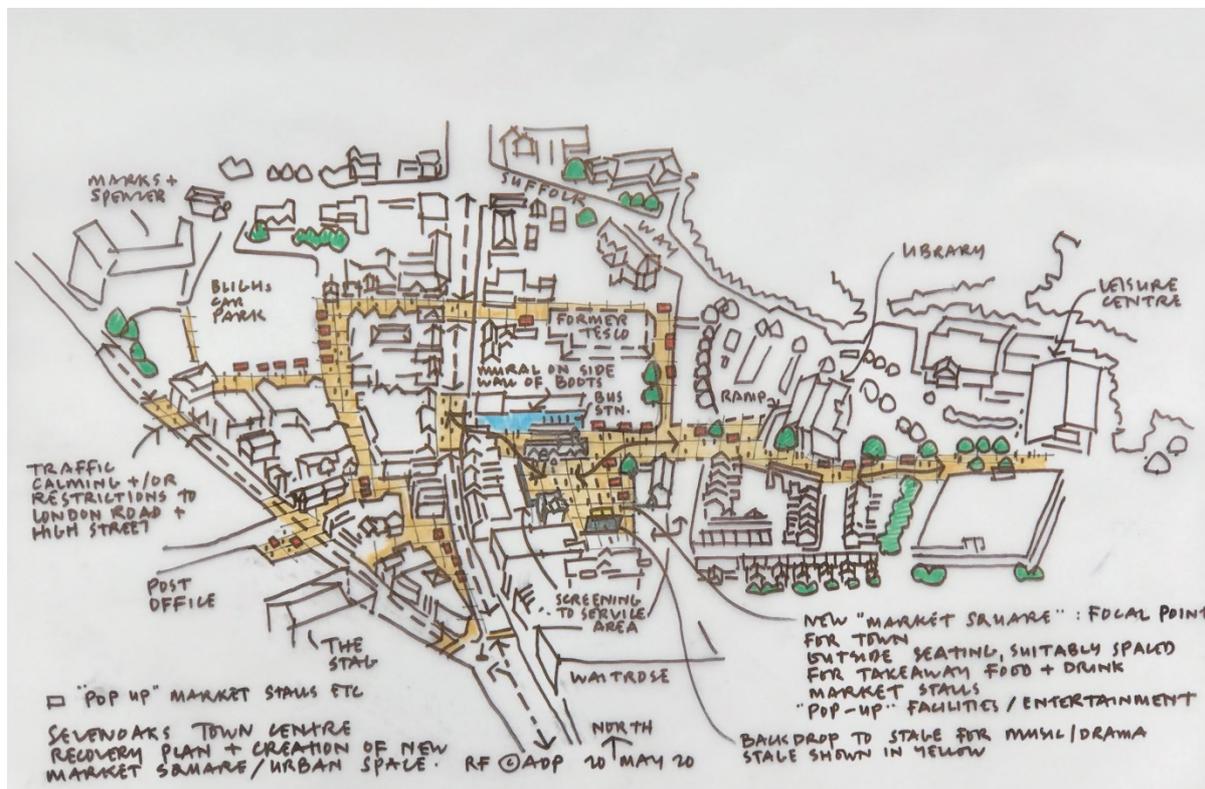
Items 16-30 demand plenty of discussion before 31 is implemented.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 6.

Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan

Response from Roger Fitzgerald



The plan in this version makes use of the Wednesday Market site - which links to the High Street both via the bus station and Locks Yard. I'm not sure if anyone has talked to the Bligh's owners about the space they own, but their shops may also need extra space outside to create a safe environment. Who should make the approach?

It also creates shared spaces in both the High Street and London Road - and asks for unspecified traffic calming - which is what the NDP says. It doesn't in this form tackle the problem of pavements less than 1 meter wide in both the High Street and London Road.

If we are to make any progress on creating space for our main shopping streets, it will need to be agreed this week. Otford, who have a plan for their High Street, have been given an deadline of this week to agree to let Kent fund it or they will lose access to the first tranche of Government cash.

I shared the following traffic ideas with Roger last night and he agrees they would complement the plan - in either version.

- High St one way south from Pembroke Road to Waitrose (except maybe for buses)**
- London Road one way north from Waitrose to M&S**
- no entry signs into the High outside Waitrose / HSBC**

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

- no entry signs into London Road heading north outside the old Chocolate Shop building and outside the Post Office

Planters to narrow High St to one carriageway starting at Marcos /Pizza Express, up to Waitrose, to create minimum 2 metre pavements wherever possible

- planters could look like the ones in the Shambles, trees in boxes (but bigger), leaving spaces where buses might need to pass

- same treatment for London Road from Natwest Bank to the Bligh's car park entrance by M&S

Designated crossing places for pedestrians in addition to current crossings

- on the High St at pedestrian entrance to Bligh's (by Danish Collection), at the bus station and by Halifax / SpaceNK

- on London Road by Bills

The whole one-way triangle - London Road, Pembroke Road, High Street - to be 20 mph.

This, Roger agrees, has the advantage of including London Road as part of the shopping / trading area, and expanding the amount of space available for businesses to create safe access.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

Response received via email no. 7.



Cllr Eyre
Town Team Chairman
Sevenoaks Town Council

By email: cllr.eyre@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Tel No: 01732 227000
Ask for: Councillor Dyball
Email: Cllr.dyball@sevenoaks.gov.uk
My Ref: LD/SR/mf
Your Ref:
Date: 13 May 2020

Dear Andrew,

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan - consultation

Thank you for sharing the Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan from Sevenoaks Town Team in response to the impact of COVID-19.

The district's businesses are facing tremendous challenges right now. At this critical time in our local economy, it has never been more important to stay connected with the business community across the district. Therefore, it is extremely important that as a district we work together to create the very best conditions for every business to not just survive, but thrive post COVID-19.

Having reviewed the consultation draft, it is evident that the present document is at a very early stage, outlining a series of suggestions and ideas, which are not aligned to or based on any current economic data and evidence.

It is unclear as to whether there is support from the wider business community, as many of the suggestions will have a far reaching impact on businesses, such as transport schemes, which operate across the district. The variety of businesses within and around the town centre must be considered to ensure that all these differing views are considered and solutions are respectful of the variety of needs and appropriate for all.

There are a number of proposed ideas, which sit outside of the control of the Town Team and are the statutory responsibility of Kent County Council or Sevenoaks District Council. Neither of these organisations has input into the initial draft document or provided commitment in terms of what is achievable and how this will impact our services and the business community.

Leader of the Council: Peter Fleming

Council offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 1HG

t 01732 227000
e information@sevenoaks.gov.uk
DX30006 Sevenoaks
www.sevenoaks.gov.uk



Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

For example, the suggestion around closing the High Street to traffic will be problematic and Kent Highways will need to be consulted with and advice sought on practicality. We are aware that new Government guidance has been issued for safer public places, but it is essential for more detailed consultation to be undertaken, as this kind of closure may be inappropriate for many businesses who rely on vehicle access to their businesses for customers and deliveries. Through anecdotal feedback from businesses, we are aware that many of our traders are exploring click and collect and delivery options. Preventing vehicle access in the High Street area would be detrimental to this approach and could impact the recovery of these businesses further.

The idea of Sevenoaks Town being open for business would be contradicted with the introduction of road closures. Such measures could prevent our vulnerable residents being able to shop safely, once guidelines allow them to do so.

Similarly, encouraging one-way pedestrian routes on the narrow paths would require significant further thought and consultation with regard to practicality, and whether this could actually be detrimental to many businesses at such a critical time for them. Getting relevant approvals and enforcing this approach could be challenging and may not be appropriate for all traders and shoppers.

The proposal for restricting the shopping times for various groups at various times is concerning as it could make shopping more difficult for our critical key workers and groups of our community. This approach may indeed decrease, rather than increase trade at such a critical time and such restrictions do not fit with Sevenoaks being ‘Open for Business’.

Whilst we note that parking is a key consideration going forward, the District Council would seek to only consider or commit to a solution which encourages trade and balances with other needs.

With regard to the Park and Ride proposal, current Government advice is clear that public transport is not recommended. Therefore, encouraging people to use a bus service to travel into the town is not appropriate. Many people would not welcome the restriction of their freedom to travel in the way that feels safest to them. The more restrictions on travel that are imposed, the more likely it is that it could discourage use of the town centre.

The draft consultation document shows that the Otford Park and Ride site is still available. However, this site has been allocated as part of the District Council’s property investment strategy and will therefore be part of stimulating investment to provide sustainable income and encouraging increased business activity. Such investment needs to continue to stimulate economic recovery.

The former Tesco site remains under private ownership. The practicality of a scheme using this site does not appear to have been investigated and the landowner concerned should be included in any consultation prior to any release of information.

Sevenoaks Town Draft Recovery Plan – Results Report

As we look ahead to our recovery work, the District Council will help shape and offer insight from the business community to guide the economic recovery of the district. We will be writing to all our parish and town councils advising them of our recovery work programme, which will help support and inform their local recovery action plans.

As a District we are keenly aware of the interrelationship between our towns, villages and surrounding areas. We will be continuing our economic recovery journey looking at the district as a whole to ensure all areas are included in our recovery plans.

Businesses within the district will be key to a successful recovery. We continue to encourage and support businesses to develop the best way forward as they all adapt to whatever the new normal is for them. The Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce is already providing excellent support for businesses and we continue to support them in their endeavours, to avoid any duplication of effort and support.

The District Council also has a well-respected Community and Voluntary Awards scheme, the ‘Making it Happen’ awards. We will be ensuring that this is promoted and used to celebrate those amazing individuals, charities, voluntary organisations and businesses that have provided such excellent support at such a challenging time.

Thank you again for sharing the draft consultation document. I hope our feedback to the consultation is helpful. Sevenoaks District is a great place with strong, resilient people that have been so kind to each other through the lockdown period. I have every confidence we can pull together to make our recovery happen.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Lesley Dyball
Cabinet Member- People and Places
Sevenoaks District Council