



**Executive Board**

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm**

**Sevenoaks Council Chamber  
Bradbourne Vale Road**

**Meeting started at 18.00**

**Meeting ended at 20.10**

**Executive Board Members:**

Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Linda Larter	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Avril Hunter	Sevenoaks District Council	Present
Cllr Elizabeth Purves	Sevenoaks Town Council	Zoom
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Present
Cllr Richard Streatfeild	Kent County Councillor	Present
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
Elliott Waters	Southeastern	Apologies
Jane Parish	Sencio	Absent
Cllr Andrew Eyre, Chairman	Stag	Absent
Hannah Kay	Knole	Apologies
Andy Sims	Savills (Blighs)	Absent
Luke Jacobs	Sevenoaks Chronicle	Absent
David Green	Sevenoaks Society	Zoom
Maxine Morgan, V Chairman	Specsavers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Present
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Zoom
Glenn Ball	Local Architect	Absent
Dawn Blee	Chamber of Commerce	Present
Jim Hughes	Resident Association	Present
Helen O'Sullivan	Resident Association	Zoom
Jonathan Drury	Resident Association	Zoom
Mike Williams	Round Table	Absent
Police	Police	Absent

**In attendance:** Cllr Richard Parry, John Levett, Bonnie Tarling, Ben Thornevell, Mike Reid.

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Raikes, Cllr Granville-Baxter, Elliott Waters and Hannah Kay.

In the absence of Andrew Eyre, Maxine Morgan chaired the meeting

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None

### 3. Minutes

To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Team Board Meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

Approved

### 4. Post Lockdown

The Sevenoaks self-guided tour app produced by Trail Tale is now live. In addition to some STC staff Jim Hughes and Roberta Ware had both downloaded the app and found it to be easy to use and very informative. The app will be updated from time to time as more history and stories come to light. Should funds become available there is also the option to add audio to the app.

Ways to launch and promote the app are now being investigated. The Welcome Back Fund paid entirely for the app.

Cllr Purves and Dawn Blee had both contributed their views and content to the development of the trail and received thanks and a present from Linda Larter.

### 5. London Poster Advertising



The poster is part way through a two week run at Charing Cross underground station. Sightings of the posters have already been reported by a lot of people.



The design of the poster has also been well received and a framed copy will be presented to Laura Trott MP. Austin is planning to use a bespoke version for bus back advertising. Linda advised that A3 copies are available at £5 each, with funds going to the Mayor's charity.

Town Team paid for the design and the Welcome Back Fund paid for the display of the posters. The whole process was "last minute" as funds and costings were on a very tight timescale and because of the timing we were fortunate to secure a 90% discount from rate card for the display.

## **6. Social media**

The new Town Team Facebook page is now operational. It should be noted that Facebook is (post Trump) very sensitive to posts relating to politicians and elections etc, and boosted posts come under scrutiny. One, has already been refused for this reason. Therefore, Councillors who feature in future boosted posts might find that their title is not included.

## **7. Public realm**

The audit of items such as lamp posts, bins, benches, and signs etc is nearly complete. There is a meeting of KCC, SDC and TT scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> April, when the next steps will be discussed.

The TT had supplied The Sevenoaks Society with an inventory of the plaques which it has placed on historic buildings over the years and asked that they consider having them renovated. The Society responded to the effect that the plaques were given to the building owners and now form part of the building. TT is considering how to take this forward.

Jim Hughes, who has been checking the inventory, reported on progress of the audit suggesting that the focus of the clean up should be on the central area.

The Town Team is aware that SDC has been carrying out its own audit of the town centre bins, which by their nature are all fairly dilapidated. SDC has started a programme of using larger bins, but the meeting was not aware of the outcome of the audit and what will happen next.

There was a discussion on whether the existing sign posts could or should be used in the new scheme. It seems unlikely as whatever happens the new scheme will have a long life and existing posts might not be suitable. Another point was that in some locations there is more than one post where a single post with multiple signs would reduce street clutter. All to be considered.

Austin advised the meeting that the majority of bus stops carry erroneous information about bus services and the buses using those stops. The bus stops belong to KCC, and Cllr Streatfeild will investigate having them all reviewed.

## 8. Wayfinding project

The draft strategy is in preparation by All Points West. This will be discussed at a joint KCC, SDC and TT meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April. Topics will of course include the location and nature of the signage plus how the scheme could be funded, and if necessary, phased.

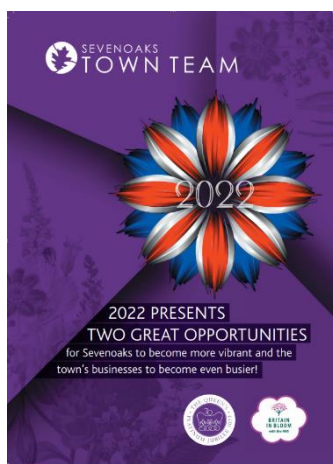
## 9. Spring Vegan Market

This takes place in Vine Gardens on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April. At the last market the live music proved to be a very welcome addition to the ambiance of the event and John Levett of the Listening Music Room Agency is thanked for organising it once again – and at no charge. There are 32 stalls booked (plus one for the Bat & Ball Café to promote its Vegan Evenings) for this event. That is at, or about, capacity and the organisers have been asked to take no more bookings as we find out how these numbers work in practice.

The event has been well promoted on social media. There has been a problem however with some of the street banner placings as the Highway Steward removed them from the junction of Suffolk Way, High Street, Pembroke Road – a location at which STC has an agreement with KCC to display them.

## 10. Britain in Bloom

This leaflet has been delivered by hand and discussed with the person on the counter, till or reception of the vast majority of the businesses in the town centre. Its content explains the importance of Sevenoaks having a great presentation for the Britain in Bloom Awards. It asks: “It would be great if all business owners would consider the condition of their premises, both inside and out, and look for ways of making improvements”. It also asks that they consider that they dress their windows in the Jubilee colours.



All the pubs, restaurants and other businesses that have floral displays have agreed to use purple and gold this year, or, where needed, to ask Head Office if they can.

The leaflet also suggests that the businesses might consider advertising in the Souvenir edition of Town Crier and invites them also to become involved in the Children’s Jubilee Trail.



There are two competitions for which the town is entered, both Regional and National. The Regional judging will be on 15<sup>th</sup> July and the confirmation of the National judging date which will be later is still to be announced.

Linda reported that volunteer “Ambassadors” are now being sought to take charge of an area of the town, a road or even just a small space, to encourage tidying and planting.

### **\*20 MPH Zones**

At this point in the meeting Cllr Streatfeild, said that he needed to leave but wanted to update the meeting on the situation with regard to plans to develop a 20mph zone in Sevenoaks.

Clearly this is a topic which can be hotly debated and he cited two examples: In Tonbridge a 20mph scheme was brought in at very short notice and with no consultation, with the effect that there was much hostile reaction. In contrast Faversham consulted widely, listened to views and made adaptations before installing the scheme. In Faversham he reports, and others at the meeting agreed, that the public observe the new system and that it works well.

So, for Sevenoaks there will be plenty of opportunity for all parties to have their say, and representatives of all user groups will be invited to do so. It will be at least nine months before any changes take place in Sevenoaks.

### **11. Business Awards**

The nomination forms have been hand delivered to the person on the counter, till or reception at the majority of town centre businesses, Bat & Ball Industrial Estates and Vestry Business Park.



Leaflet dispensers for the forms have been situated at the Bat & Ball Centre, Go Coach bus station, The Leisure Centre, The Library, Kaleidoscope, Specsavers, SDC offices and Stag.



Nominations have also been invited through the Sevenoaks Chronicle, TT website and STC Facebook page.

Nominations have been received in all categories and judging will take place on 7th June.

The speaker for the Awards Evening is Stuart Gillies, owner of the town's newest restaurant, No 8 and former CEO of Gordon Ramsay Group.

As in previous years some nominations have been received relating to businesses outside the STC boundary and considerable discussion arose relating to how these should be handled. This was resolved by a suggestion that the same boundary as applies to the nomination of STC Councillors should apply. Namely: that the Councillor (or in this case business) should be in the Town, or within a three mile boundary of it. Applying this rule to the current nominees means that all but one can be included.

## **12. Sevenoaks Chronicle**

This is now being edited by Katy Boyden, based in Folkestone! TT has a good relationship with the Chronicle and is working to maintain that. Katy knows Sevenoaks well and has worked on the Chronicle before. The meeting resolved that Katy should be invited to attend TT meetings by Zoom.

## **13. Greening Sevenoaks Survey**

The survey has not produced a huge response, though an interesting picture is emerging.

Linda informed that STC now has a Climate Project Officer and that he has been tasked to grow a response level to 3000.

## **14. Farmers site hoarding**

A new hoarding has been erected on the site and agreement has been reached for TT to place a "Welcome to Sevenoaks" and six Darent Valley Railway vinyls on it.

## **15. Reports from Town Team Members**

### *Go – Coach*

Two electric buses have been trialled. Austin reports they "drive lovely", but there again that they should do at £400+K each. A Volvo bus has also been received but is not yet registered.

Passenger numbers are way down on pre-Covid at:

- School children – 75%
- Concessions – 60%
- Paying – 42%



There is good news in the form of a Government grant of £30m having been awarded to KCC to improve bus infrastructure and that comes on top of an earlier grant of £9m for rural electric.

He is not so happy that the tendering for bus services has to be submitted before the end of July but that the application paperwork has not yet been made available.

The Go-Coach Jubilee bus is now finished, and he wants to show it off, so invited anyone to make suggestions for using it at events etc. Linda asked if it could be used to tour the Britain in Bloom judges.

#### *South Eastern*

Elliott reported by email:

Passenger numbers continue to increase, with figures around 80-90% now on some services. We are seeing ticket sales through Sevenoaks are actually now greater than prior to the pandemic (however prior to the pandemic there were a lot of annual seasons, so this does counteract it).

The 'new' CityBeam trains have started making their way on the Sevenoaks to London stopping service. There is currently only one circuit, which results in 3 round trips. It is envisaged this will continue to increase as more trains become available.

At the Station in conjunction with Sevenoaks in Bloom, we have re-planted and landscaped the triangle area by the taxi-rank. This now contains a row of planters, and a bench for people to wait on. The Sevenoaks Soroptimists have been busy planting the area up, the plants kindly provided by STC (our thanks to STC and Nicholas for his work here).

Station toilets have been out of action for some time, this is primarily by defective plumbing which has been repaired. They are in the final stages now, and this should improve the reliability of the toilet facilities provided at the station.

A large number of pallets have been donated to Darenth Community Primary School, and also Sevenoaks Allotments. We have lots of pallet deliveries and always end up with the pallets left over so if anyone would like them do let us know.

#### *Knole*

Hannah Kay reported by email:

By way of general update, we have a lot of staff and volunteers off with Covid (more than at any time since March 2020). Our Easter Egg Hunt runs from 9<sup>th</sup> April through until the BH Monday. Also, to note that we have changed the graphic design for our Jubilee related exhibition in May/June which will now be in purple and using the royal household designed logo so it fits in with the town team organised events and decorations up on the high street and around the town.



### *Thackray Williams*

Bonnie reported that the firm is extremely busy and growing at about 20% right now. It is also relocating its main offices in Bromley. They have taken on four trainees (they would have been called articled clerks a few years ago) and that in all probability, as in previous years, they would be offered permanent jobs after their two year training is complete.

### *Cllr Clayton*

The train services are reasonably OK but there are anomalies with one commuter service which used to be hourly being still at three per day. He is surprised that GTR (GTR stands for Govia Thameslink Railway and includes Southern Railway) have the new concession which includes this area fearing that Southern Eastern Railway will be of lesser interest to the company.

### *Warners*

Elizabeth Dolding reports that they too are very busy. While there are now more staff working in their offices it looks as if mixed working practices for them, are here to stay.

### *Francis Jones*

While the shop is very busy again, they are very disappointed with police progress on the burglary they had earlier this year. The thieves have been identified, but there is no warrant to arrest them. She reports that the officer dealing with the matter is virtually alone and working remotely. She has never seen him.

### *Sevenoaks Society*

The Society is about to relaunch its Twitter page. David Green also announced that as it is the Society's 70<sup>th</sup> year they are holding an exhibition from 22<sup>nd</sup> June – 16<sup>th</sup> July at Kaleidoscope. The Society is concerned about the condition of four main development sites and specifically Farmers. They have written to the MD of Ferncon asking for a meeting to discuss their plans. As sanctions against Russia are a live topic, a question was raised on whether the Russian owned Edwards Electrical site could be nationalised. No-one had an answer to that.

### *Helen Sullivan*

Helen has found that off-peak trains are very crowded now. She is concerned that the amount of daytime traffic in the town centre will deter visitors and give them a bad impression.

### *Sevenoaks Summer Festival*

John Levett announced the return of the Festival for 18<sup>th</sup> June – 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The event will be launched to the public after Easter giving new sponsors time to come forward. He is grateful to STC, Blighs and KCC for their promises of support. The flags will go up again!





*Sevenoaks District Chamber*

Dawn was very pleased to report that “everything is back to normal at the Chamber”

*SDC*

Cllr Hunter too said that SDC is pretty well back to normal now and that future Council meeting will be held in person back in the Chamber

*Specsavers*

Maxine simply said: “very busy”.

**16. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June