

## Sevenoaks Town Team Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting

6:30pm: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Held at

The Council Chamber, Sevenoaks Town Council, Bradbourne Vale Road TN13 3QG

Meeting started 6.30 pm

Meeting concluded: 7.35 pm

### Executive Board

Cllr Chloe Gustard	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Cllr Victoria Granville	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Linda Larter MBE	Sevenoaks Town Council	Apologies
Mike Reid	Town Team Facilitator	Present
Cllr Graham Clack	Sevenoaks District Council	Present
Cllr Richard Streatfeild MBE	Kent County Council	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton <b>Chair</b>	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Present
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Apologies
South Eastern	Gemma Louro	Absent
Andrew Eyre	Stag	Present
Hannah Kay	Knole	Apologies
Dawn Blee	Chamber of Commerce	Present
Steve Butler	Workman (Blighs)	Absent
Sevenoaks Chronicle	Vacant	Absent
Geraldine Tucker	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Maxine Morgan, <b>V Chair</b>	Specsavers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Absent
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Glenn Ball	Local Architect	Absent
Avril Hunter	Redlands RA	Present
Helen O'Sullivan	Eardley Road RA	Apologies
Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush RA	Present
Byron Brown	Bradbourne RA	Apologies
Mike Williams	Round Table	Absent
Police	PC Nick Hubbard	Apologies
Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet	Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum	Present

**In attendance:** Dennis Glasspool, Cllr Peter Dixon, John Levett, Jim Hughes, PC Tom Costin and PC Pete Wilson.

**Apologies for Absence:** Helen O'Sullivan, Byron Brown, Cllr Gustard, Ausin Blackburn, Hannah Kay, Nick Hubbard and Linda Larter.

**1. Apologies for absence**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None

**3. Minutes**

To receive and approve the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024. There were no amendments or matters arising which would not be covered in this meeting.

**4. Business Improvement District (BID).**

Just prior to the meeting a quotation had been received from British Bids setting out the costs involved. The quotation was not immediately to hand but is set out below. The Town Team Facilitator had said the cost quoted would be about £60,000.

The cost of the feasibility study is £13,500 + VAT (half at outset and half on report submission).

Campaign and ballot (post feasibility) £40,000 based on 650 levy paying businesses

Additional costs;

Design and print of business plan (logo & brand guidelines) is not included in the cost (copy writing is included)

Website domain and hosting & social media set up and management.

SDC has advised that to upgrade its software to administer and collect the levy will be in the region of £25,000.

Consideration is being given to how much of this development work can be done in house and the costs adjusted.

The BID set up costs can be recouped through the BID income though STC will be at risk if the ballot should fail.

**The timeline for progressing.**

22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Sevenoaks Town Council to consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding BID Buddy assistance @ £10,000</li> <li>Funding BID temporary administrative assistance @ £13,000</li> </ul>
23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Assuming above is agreed, an order given to British BIDS to purchase the BID Buddy service and the recruitment for a temporary member of staff to begin.
7 <sup>th</sup> June	Sevenoaks Business Show

	<p>Ben Collins and Lucy Stanford, both directors of British Bids will be speaking on the subject.</p> <p><i>The activities of a BID are determined by its members. The Show will be an early opportunity seek opinions as people will be asked “What do you want the BID to achieve for Sevenoaks?”</i></p>
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#### 5. Sevenoaks Business Show 2024

Arranged for Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 with 19 stands taken to date. The main sponsor is Clive Emson Auctioneers with FM Conway, Berry & Lamberts, Specsavers, Sevenoaks Chamber and STC supporting too.

The speakers are from British Bids, and Mark Perkins of Insight 6 about mystery shopping.

#### 6. Sevenoaks Master Plan.

A Town Council report forms an appendix to these minutes.

#### 7. Shop occupancy

The survey undertaken in Feb/March 2023 has been revisited and the results for March 2024 were reviewed. It is now more correctly titled “Sevenoaks ground floor commercial premises occupancy report 2024”. Since undertaking this year’s survey there have been some further changes:

- SPN Sevenoaks in London Road has closed
- The Royal Oak Hotel has been sold to a residential developer
- Work at the former Tesco site in the High Street has now commenced
- The former Knobbly Knees and neighbouring shop in London Road are being converted into a single unit by new owners, Premier Security
- Hoads in London Road has been sold and is being stripped out.
- The ex-Latchetts unit in the High Street is also being stripped out.

The occupancy rate in March 2024 was 96.6% and while generally regarded as a great success concern was expressed that with so few shops now available there is virtually no choice for new business or relocations. This information to be fed into the Masterplan project.

#### 8. Holly Party

It was reported that further to observations from some retailers, this year the event is moved from a Friday to Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. The main entertainment will be an Abba tribute band.

## 9. Lighting The Vine

A synopsis of the Aceum consultants report and recommendations was given. At this stage indicative costs for the hardware are white lighting will be about £3290 and colour (with attendant control kit) will be about £6150. Prices for the trenching are being sought. The budget for the whole scheme is £10,000.

There was some concern about the use of coloured lighting, though it was explained that its use would only be on “special occasions”.

## 10. Sevenoaks Summer Festival 2024

This event is going to take place over the period Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July, organised by Ray Russell & John Levett.

## 11. Members Organisations

### *Maxine Morgans – Specsavers*

The business is typically quiet over the Easter period but it was exacerbated this year by the introduction of Sunday parking charges. It seemed that the town was very quiet, and many businesses suffered.

### *Avril Hunter – Redlands RA*

Residents are complaining about the extended time that road works have been taking place in Britains Lane. This led to many comments on the proliferation of road works across and around Sevenoaks at the moment. Chamber members are also very unhappy about the situation. While all seemed to agree that works in themselves are necessary, that often there are times when no work is actually taking place.

Cllr Streatfeild said this topic is high on the agenda at KCC with the Council trying to engage with the utilities to seek better co-operation on timing and progressing these projects.

### *Cllr Graham Clack – SDC*

The Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation closed with a large number of responses being received. A revised version of the Local Plan will be published in the summer 2024 when there will be another opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The main item presently important at SDC is the opening of consultation on the Sevenoaks District Council’s proposals for the redevelopment of land to the east of the High Street.

SDC is seeking views on a once in a generation opportunity to improve the Buckhurst Lane area of Sevenoaks town, helping to make the area a more exciting place to live, work and spend time.

Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council own property and land around Buckhurst Lane and Suffolk Way, close to Sevenoaks High Street.

Early ideas include a new energy efficient leisure facility, a combined library and learning hub and other environmental and cultural improvements, including improved links to Knole Park, a new market hall for local vendors and a hotel to support the local economy.

*Jim Hughes*

What is the situation with the Wayfinding project? Significant funding through the CIL application was not successful and for the time being there is no further progress.

*Richard Streatfeild – KCC*

A strategy for the NHS and KCC to work together on healthcare and healthy living has been created, and it is one of the best plans that Richard has ever seen.

Social care and childrens' services costs are enormous and causing a real problem as KCC tries to address £90m in savings.

A timeline is being developed for the introduction of the 20mph scheme for Sevenoaks.

*Andrew Eyre – Stag*

A general round up of performances was given.

*PCs Tom Costin and Pete Wilson – Police*

The local police are enjoying a good measure of success in dealing with shoplifting, with this and other crime stories being publicised in My Community Voice. A straw poll revealed that nearly all TT Board members subscribe to this service.

The police surgeries held in and around the town are continuing. Most of the public interaction is with passers by/shoppers rather than people coming to them with specific concerns. But they are definitely a good PR tool.

A Speed Watch project in Seal resulted in several drivers being warned. Praise was received from residents and local councillors.

*Dennis Glasspool – Business Crime Reduction Partnership*

CCTV use is more intensive and helping with the shoplifting drive. The radio system is being used by publicans to alert the CCTV operators to seriously drinking customers leaving pubs intending to drive.

*Merilyn Canet – Sevenoaks District Seniors Forum*

Members want the town made more "Senior" friendly. They are also very concerned about growing exclusion created by the rise in so many digital services.

*Dawn Blee – Sevenoaks District Chamber of Commerce*

The West Kent Business Show was deemed to be a great success. Some TT board members went to the show and agreed that it was very good.

*Geraldine Tucker - Sevenoaks Society*

Forthcoming Society events are:

- 8<sup>th</sup> May – ‘The Beatles in Kent (including Sevenoaks)’
- 25<sup>th</sup> September – Society AGM followed by ‘The Wildlife and Estuaries of North Kent’
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October – ‘SOE: Special Operations Executive, Churchill’s Secret Army’
- 13<sup>th</sup> November - ‘Anti-colonial protestor on a post-imperial plinth: John Chilembwe in Trafalgar Square’

*John Levett - The Listening Room Agency*

The Sevenoaks Festival is definitely returning and thanks were given to STC as being the main sponsor. Tarmac too are providing funding this year.

He wished to promote The Mayors Fundraising Show supporting Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees on 27<sup>th</sup> April. This will be a popular music concert of two halves. Celebrating the sound of the 80s with the acclaimed covers band 'Squeeze a Crowd' and Elektra Violin Duo.

*Hannah Kay – Knole*

Being in absentia Hannah had sent this report:

By way of an update for the team at the end of last month we held a large scale emergency salvage exercise at Knole working with the emergency services. We hosted 60 firefighters, members of the police force, paramedics and representatives from Sevenoaks District Council during the exercise which ran from early afternoon through into the evening.

We practiced wet and dry salvage, life rescue from behind compartmentation lines, hose laying, rescue from height, our full emergency plan including telephone tree and the setting up of an incident command. It was an incredibly demanding but rewarding day. We and the fire service have learnt a huge amount and will both be updating our emergency planning documentation as a result.

[Firefighters put skills to the test at historic site | Kent Fire and Rescue Service \(fire-uk.org\)](https://www.fire-uk.org/news/firefighters-put-skills-to-the-test-at-historic-site)

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

Date to be announced once the STC calendar for the new Civic year has been set.

**Meeting closed at 17.35**

## **ANNEXE**

### **Report to Sevenoaks Town Council on the Masterplans for Town Centre & St John’s Hill**

In May 2023 following a public referendum the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan was adopted and has now become part of the statutory development plan for Sevenoaks. The

Neighbourhood Plan sets out a future vision for the town and includes a number of objectives and policies to deliver the vision.

The Town Council is now moving forward with the next steps to delivering this vision and has commissioned the preparation of a masterplan for Sevenoaks town centre and a separate masterplan for the St. John's Hill area. These masterplans will provide spatial visions for these important parts of the town and progress some of the objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. This will include for instance preparation of design guidance for particular sites, consideration of the opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic in the centre, and the potential to better link or enhance cultural attractions and to introduce more green infrastructure (for instance street trees, planting, and rain gardens) and enhance biodiversity in the centre.

The masterplans will be prepared collaboratively with the input of many people and organisations that care about and have an interest in Sevenoaks.

We have appointed masterplanners Urban Initiatives Studio to prepare the masterplan and they will facilitate the workshop with support from transport and public realm experts, Urban Movement. They will outline the purpose, scope, and timescales for preparing the masterplan and how you can get involved and shape its content. Following a brief introduction our consultants will lead, weather permitting, a 'Placecheck exercise' in the town centre to explore what works well and what works less well. We will then hold round table discussions to agree the future vision for the town and the issues and opportunities that the masterplan should seek to address.

At the previous Town Team meeting Sevenoaks Town Council provided an update including the specification for its proposals for two Masterplans for the Town Centre & St John's Hill. The Town Council are starting to put in place arrangements to progress the Masterplan(s). Please see outline of this below.

- UIS will be holding a meeting and discussion with STC Councillors in the near future.
- It is hoped that a separate online meeting will be held with Town Team members.
- UIS will be contacting as many people as possible on the contact list STC have supplied for one to one discussions via zoom calls.
- At present there are 3 initial Stakeholder meetings to be arranged:
  - i) Town Centre - At Stag Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 4 – 7 p.m.
  - ii) St John's Hill – At STC Offices Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 4 – 7 p.m.
  - iii) Cultural Quarter – details tbc.
- All of the above and potentially more will be fed into a first draft document and plans for public consultation.
- UIS will be attending the Sevenoaks Business Show on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to engage further with local businesses about the Masterplans.



- STC have provided SDC with all details and specification of its Masterplan(s) proposals as requested. It was agreed that SDC would share with STC its proposals and a coordination would be made between the two authorities' consultants.