

Towns welcome back shoppers

As the lockdown eases, the Government has said more businesses can reopen – a relief for traders, diners, pub goers and eager shoppers.

Together with local businesses, we've been working hard to make the centres of Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham as safe as possible, giving visitors the confidence to return when they're ready.

Retailers and other businesses have put in extra safety measures, including screens, floor markings, increased cleaning schedules and limits on the number of people in their store at any one time, as they put the safety of customers to the top of their shopping lists.

We've made changes too, with additional litterbins for disposable gloves and masks and public hand sanitisers.

Town centre cleaning schedules are being prioritised with resources focussed on emptying litterbins and sweeping the streets.

Local cleaning firm Wottons has provided some of its staff for free to support cleaning in Sevenoaks town.



Thank you!

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated to the 'Sevenoaks District Communities Together' appeal that was set up to help four local charities during this difficult time.

Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS), Friends for Families and West Kent Mind are all working harder than ever to keep our most vulnerable residents safe. Our target was £10,000 to be split between the four organisations but thanks to the generosity of our residents, we raised £12k!

Each of the four charities plan to use the money to help them adapt to a new way of working so they can continue their vital services.

Praise and appreciation for army of volunteers

As soon as the Coronavirus outbreak began in March, local volunteers raced to support residents in need.

In just a few days, over a thousand people signed up to 'Care for our Community – Sevenoaks District' and they've been doing an amazing job ever since. And that's not just us saying this - people using the service are saying it too.

We carried out a survey of residents who have received help over the past four months.

The survey found there was near universal satisfaction and not one person was dissatisfied with the service.

In addition, the vast majority of residents receiving help said they would not make a change to the service.

Cllr Peter Fleming, Leader of the Council, says: "Since the outbreak began, local volunteers have dealt with nearly 1,500 requests for help. The survey shows all the incredible work and support provided by volunteers is valued by those receiving it. This has been an amazing project bringing communities together and I'm very proud and grateful for the work of the District's volunteers."

Remembering the lockdown

There's no doubting the lockdown has been tough for most of us. But, as the situation begins to ease, Fawkham Parish Council is already making plans to record the amazing work of their community in these most unusual of times.

Laura Evans, the Chair of the Parish Council, spoke with In Shape about the Council's plans to remember the voluntary and community effort over the past few months.

"If you've ever been to Fawkham, you'll know the village is spread out. That can make it a bit of a challenge for people to come together. But in the past three months, I've been blown away by the efforts of residents and businesses to help each other during this difficult time," says Laura.

"And that got us thinking. How can we make a long-lasting record of our community's efforts?"

"So, after some serious head scratching, we decided we'd bury a time capsule. We're still deciding where - it's likely to be on the village green or in the church grounds. And 'when?' is another question we can't answer right now - we're thinking when the lockdown has been further eased so we can get more people together and the local schools involved.

"But deciding what should go in has been easy. With so many wonderful things happening in recent weeks, we're spoilt for choice!"

"A rock painting initiative really caught the village's imagination. Dozens of people have been painting and hiding rocks all over Fawkham. They've really become collectors' items!"

"A local photographer took portraits of village life and the 'Claps for our Carers' and even sold some of her pictures raising £550 for good causes. Some of the photos will be included.

"People quickly volunteered for 'Care for our Community - Sevenoaks District' so a volunteer lanyard will go in the capsule.

"On VE Day 75, we planted a commemorative tree and, to brighten things up, we held a sunflower growing competition for children. The local pub has been open as a village shop and providing take away food, people have been supporting each on our Fawkham Community Facebook page, plus lots more besides. Details of all these activities and more, including a copy of this article, will be included too!"

In Shape is published by Sevenoaks District Council to inform local residents and businesses about the work of the Council.

To contact us, please call **01732 227000** or e-mail **information@sevenoaks.gov.uk**. Visit our website at **www.sevenoaks.gov.uk**

This issue of In Shape is available in large print and can be explained in other languages by calling 01732 227000.



One You goes digital

The Coronavirus outbreak has brought with it many challenges, including how to deliver our services safely to residents. So in response to the crisis, our ever innovative One You team is about to launch a digital service to support residents towards a healthier lifestyle.

Once you've registered, you'll receive on-line support to lose weight, move more, drink less and quit smoking through group weight management sessions and 1:1 meetings with a lifestyle advisor by video or over the phone.

If you're ready to take the next step towards a healthier lifestyle, register for free support by emailing **healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk** or calling us on **0300 020 0636**.