

InShape

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL NO.119 AUTUMN 2021



OUT WITH THE OLD AND BIN WITH THE NEW

New 'smart' bins rolled out across the District.

Page 3

THE BRITISH LEGION NEEDS YOU!

Call for new members
to safeguard its
important local work



Page 6

OUR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY AWARDS ARE BACK!

Nominate your
unsung hero



Page 9

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS!

Residents rewarded
for brightening up
our District



Page 10



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Out with the old and bin with the new

As part of our Net Zero carbon gas ambitions, we're always looking for innovative ways to do our bit for the environment.

That's why we're really excited to show off our new 'smart bins' that were installed in August this year.

The new, larger, wood clad bins include sensors that alert us when they need emptying. This means a

quicker, reactive service when the bins are full and fewer wasted journeys when bins are not at full capacity, helping to save fuel and cutting our carbon gas emissions.

The new smart-bins also hold more

waste than the current ones and include a recycling compartment. The bins are being paid for by a £25,000 grant from the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

This project is part of our overall litter strategy to help reduce rubbish across the District. Earlier in the year we also installed a solar powered compactor bin in Bligh's, Sevenoaks that can store four times more waste than a conventional bin. It too tells us when it's reaching capacity.

Our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Margot McArthur, says: "We currently spend £1.4m a year, 10% of our annual budget, on street cleaning and litter bin emptying. This new technology will allow us to work smarter and faster for our residents, businesses and visitors, while helping us to cut our carbon footprint."



Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Margot McArthur, with the new, smart bins.

Have your say on local services

You can help shape the future of your local services and win £100 in shopping vouchers by simply taking part in a short survey.

**WIN
£100 in
vouchers**

We are leading a review of our 'Community Plan', which sets out the priorities for just about every local public service for the next three years.

The Plan will be delivered by the District and County Councils, the health service, the police, the fire service and housing associations, together with voluntary organisations, community groups, businesses and faith communities.

If you have fresh ideas about how local services are delivered or priorities for the District in general, we are listening and we want to hear from you.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, our Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "The Community Plan is very important as it sets out the priorities for most local services. We want to make sure our residents have an opportunity to shape the Plan, so I am

urging you to share your views via our survey."

You can complete the survey at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communityplan where you can also view the terms and conditions for the prize draw.

To request a paper copy of the survey, call us on **01732 227000**.

The survey will remain open until 5pm on 31 December 2022.

Plant a tree for the Jubilee

Residents, businesses and landowners can help nature by supporting the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting scheme.

The initiative will mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, celebrating 70 years of service.

We are supporting the scheme by planting trees at the new White Oak Leisure centre in Swanley, around our Sevenoaks offices and in our parks and woodlands in the coming months.

The importance of trees cannot be overstated. They provide social, cultural and environmental benefits that a lot of the time goes unnoticed. They can be hugely important for our mental wellbeing and are an important part of our cultural history.

One of their biggest benefits is their value to the environment. They remove carbon from the atmosphere, helping to tackle global warming, as well as cleaning the air by trapping dust and other pollutants. They also provide shelter and food to thousands

of species of wildlife. Our humble oak tree alone is thought to have 2,300 different species associated with it!

The tree planting season is from October through to April and planting a tree is easy. Once they're in the ground, they need very little maintenance and can thrive for decades.

However, it's important to choose the right tree for the right location as Ashley Walmsley, one of our tree experts, explains.

"Selecting the best tree for your garden is the most important decision so it's worth taking a little time to do your homework before parting with your cash," says Ashley.

"You should choose a species that's suited to your garden's conditions, including the soil type.



"The size of your tree is another important consideration. A lot of common native trees tend to grow very big, with extensive root systems. So unless you have a very large garden, you may want to consider other species. For example, flowering cherries, rowan, white beam, Japanese maples and hawthorn are well suited to most gardens and they support a lot of wildlife. Some of these can also be grown in pots and containers.

"Position is important too. You should aim to keep your tree as far away from property as possible and in a position where it will get its specific needs.

"Finally, look to buy a good quality, healthy tree with a well-balanced branch system. Check for signs of damage to the trunk and avoid trees with long circling roots or where thick roots protrude through the drainage holes of the pot. Other plants growing in the pot may suggest the tree has not been well looked after.

"Your local garden centre can offer advice and you can find out more on the Queen's Green Canopy and Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) websites."

For more information, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/qgc



Ashley Walmsley, our Clean & Green Team Manager, with new trees planted in Bartholomew Park, Swanley.

THE STAG IS BACK!

www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk



The British Legion needs you!

As the Royal British Legion (RBL) celebrates its centenary, residents are being invited to join its ranks so it can continue with its important community work.

The Sevenoaks branch of the Legion, formed in May 1921, has been at the heart of local Remembrance events as well as supporting current and ex-service men and women for the past 100 years.

But, in recent times, it has seen a drop in membership and is keen to bring in new people to support its activities.

Richard Cast, Kent Chairman of the RBL, explains: "Most people know us for supporting Remembrance events and ensuring it's understood and embraced across our nation, as well as passed from generation to generation.



The Sevenoaks branch of the Royal British Legion commemorates Operation Jubilee. More than 4,000 Canadian and British soldiers were lost, wounded or captured at the failed Dieppe landings that took place on 19 August 1942.

"But that's only part of our story. We organise and take part in other commemorative events throughout the year and, arguably, our most important work is helping ex-service personnel.

"Our members support the service community by introducing them to our

national welfare teams to access the specialist help they may need.

"Members can also opt to befriend those who feel isolated or lonely via our telephone buddy service or through home or hospital visits. Some also choose to support bereaved families in a variety of ways.

"There are many opportunities and members can commit as much or as little time as they wish."

Cllr Larry Abraham, our Armed Forces Champion, adds: "Right now, the RBL is desperately short of members. Without new blood, there's a real danger its attendance and support at Remembrance events would sadly cease and the important help it provides could diminish."

"There's a common misconception that you must have served in the armed forces to join. That's not the case. Membership is open to all adults, whether they have a service background or not, as well as accompanied young people from the age of 12."

To find out more about joining the RBL, please call **07787 476879** or email kent.chairman@rbl.community

Supporting Afghan refugees

We, alongside residents, could not help but be moved by the situation in Afghanistan. So we are doing all we can to support those who have left the country through the Government's 'Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme'.

We continue to play an active role resettling Syrian refugees. Now, alongside our partners Kent County Council, Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees and private landlords, we are working to identify suitable homes in locations with good access to health and schools to support the Government's Afghan resettlement scheme.

Afghan refugees coming to the District will be housed in privately rented homes, not social housing, so we're appealing to local landlords to help.

If you have rental property available and would like to know more, please visit www.sevenoakswelcomesrefugees.org.

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south east water 

New water main installation

As part of our £2.8 million project to keep taps in Sevenoaks flowing for generations to come, we're laying a new 2.2km pipeline through Knole Park.

Find out more about the project at:
corporate.southeastwater.co.uk/Sevenoaks

If you have any questions, please call our dedicated customer liaison officer, Steve Anthony, on **07926 535414** or call our out of hours line on **0333 000 365** for any emergencies. Alternatively, please email: sevenoaks@southeastwater.co.uk

Pure knowh_{ow}

It's good to talk

Working together with Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and West Kent Mind, we're relaunching our free telephone conversation service, Telepal.

Telepal is a lifeline to people living alone or for those who feel isolated. Some individuals go all day without speaking to another person, which can cause loneliness and poor mental health.

With Telepal, you can talk to a friendly volunteer over the phone about anything you wish and as frequently as you like. It's easy to register and you only need to do it once.



Chat to a volunteer!

To set up your first chinwag, register using the details here. Once registered, you'll be matched with your volunteer.

For those over 50 years old - Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge - Email office@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk or call **01732 454108**

For anyone 18 years old and over - West Kent Mind - Email volunteering@westkentmind.org.uk or call **01732 744950**.

The burning issue of bonfires

With the arrival of autumn, you may be thinking about having a bonfire to get rid of your garden waste.

While there are no restrictions on when you can have a bonfire, we can take action if bonfire smoke unreasonably affects your neighbours. The smoke can contain toxic substances that can affect yours and others' health, especially those with existing medical conditions.

What's more, your neighbours may find the smell of smoke unpleasant and may not be able to use their garden, hang out washing or open their windows when a bonfire is alight.

If you're thinking about having a bonfire to dispose of garden waste, please consider these alternatives:

- Make use of our garden waste collection service www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/gardenwaste
- Try home composting – it's good for the environment. Discounted compost bins are available from us at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/compost



- Take your garden waste to one of KCC's Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

If you decide to have a bonfire, you can reduce the impact by:

- Burning only dry vegetation or clean, untreated wood. Never burn plastics, rubber, treated or painted wood or general waste
- Have as few bonfires as possible
- Tell your neighbours when you intend to light it. Don't light it if the neighbours have washing on the line or if they are using their garden

- Build it as far away from neighbouring properties as possible
- Continually monitor whether the fire might cause annoyance and never leave it smouldering.

Our Environmental Health Team investigate complaints about the smoke from bonfires. They may attend the area to witness the problem and can, if necessary, require you to put out the fire and take legal action to prevent the problem from recurring.

Accessible parking for all!

Making sure our services are available to all is a top priority, so we're pleased to announce our Bradbourne Car Park in Sevenoaks has been awarded the prestigious Disabled Parking Accreditation from Disabled Motoring UK.

To get the accreditation, a car park must have accessible bays and payment machines, clear signage, good lighting and bay enforcement.

Cabinet member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Margot McArthur, says: "We were delighted to have received the award. Finding a suitable place to park should not be a challenge for anyone. I am sure that both residents and visitors who use the car park will appreciate the effort that has been made to maintain high levels of safety and accessibility."



Nominate your unsung hero in our Community and Voluntary Awards!

Our 'Making it Happen' Community and Voluntary Awards will return next year, giving you the chance to nominate your local unsung heroes.

The awards will take place on Wednesday 9 March at St Nicholas's Church in Sevenoaks and will see more inspirational community stalwarts and dedicated volunteers being recognised for their amazing work. As ever, you can expect one or two celebrity guests of honour handing out the certificates!

Cllr Lesley Dyball, our Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "Our volunteers and community heroes are the backbone of our District, and even more so over the past 18 months. We are thrilled to be able to host these awards to recognise their incredible work, which is really important to us."

"Maybe there's a volunteer who coaches your child's sports team, a local business who works hard within your community or a charity raising thousands for a worthy cause. If so, please make sure you get involved and submit a nomination so your local heroes can get the recognition they deserve."

This year's categories are:

- Charity Project of the Year
- Community Arts or Sports Group of the Year
- Youth Group of the Year
- Best Business in the Community
- Local Hero - Outstanding Individual Community Champion
- Carer of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement
- Volunteer Group of the Year
- Older Person's Group of the Year
- Contribution to the Environment
- Healthy Living Award

To nominate a person, voluntary organisation or group, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communityawards.

You can also request a nomination form by e-mailing communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk or by calling us on **01732 227000**.

Nominations can be made in more than one category and can be submitted up until midnight on Sunday 2 January 2022.



Council phone lines open for longer

You can now speak with us by telephone from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday to make it easier to access our services.

Our contact centre is now open for longer to answer most queries or take payments over the phone.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Peter Fleming, says: "Working patterns have changed dramatically over the last two years so we want to make sure our customers can get hold of us at a time that is most convenient to them. We also know that not all our residents are able to access the range of services we have available online. We want to make sure these people have greater opportunity to contact us."

"By extending the opening times of our contact centre, we can answer the majority of our customers' questions and take most payments.

"We are doing this on a trial basis to begin with to see how popular the service is with residents and businesses."

To speak with the Council, call **01732 227000**. Alternatively, you can access our services 24/7 online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk.



Blooming marvellous!

Sevenoaks In Bloom came back with a bang earlier in the year with our judges being treated to almost eighty entries.

Collaborating with Coolings Garden Centre, our Chairman, Cllr Diana Esler, and Commissioner of the Public Realm, Cllr Roddy Hogarth, visited gardens and allotments of all shapes and sizes.

The judges were looking for colourful, innovative and environmentally-friendly gardening that brightened up the District and supported wildlife.

Cllr Diana Esler says: "With a record number of entries, we were spoilt for choice! The standard this year was particularly high, making the judging especially challenging. With that in mind, I would like to congratulate everyone who took part too."

The winners will be announced at a presentation evening on 15 October.

After this date, you can view the winners' names online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/inbloom.



From the left Chairman, Cllr Diana Esler, and Commissioner of the Public Realm, Cllr Roddy Hogarth, judging at this year's In Bloom.

Grab a grant!

Voluntary, community and charitable groups and organisations can apply now for a Community Grant worth between £500 and £5,000 to support their important work in the next financial year.

Our grants scheme supports volunteer-led services within the District that help the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Please apply online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communitygrants by 5pm on Friday 5 November 2021. Successful applicants will receive their funding by next April.

If you need help with your application, or you have any questions, please call us on **01732 227000** or email grants@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Don't lose your vote!

Each year, we carry out a canvass to update the electoral register, which lists the names and addresses of everyone who can vote.

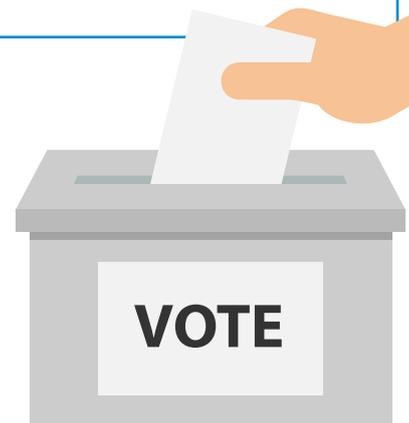
During the summer, we wrote to every household in the District to check the details we currently hold are correct. If your details are wrong, you may not be able to vote in future elections and referendums.

This year, it's easier than ever to take part in the canvass and in many cases, no action is required at all. Your canvass form will indicate if you need to confirm your details.

However, we're still waiting to hear from some people who need to respond. If we do not hear from these

people, a canvasser may call or visit their homes to collect the information. The canvasser will offer advice to help complete the forms for anyone who is unsure what to do.

The quickest way to respond is to visit www.householdresponse.com/sevenoaks or call **01732 227000** if



you do not have access to the internet and use the security codes on the most recent form you were sent.

Go paperless!

We can now contact you by email or phone to check your details on the electoral register are correct. If you would like to be contacted this way instead of by post, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections and click 'opt in to go paperless'.

Calling all business owners!

It's been a tough 18 months for businesses, but now that we are starting to see life resume to the 'new normal' make sure you are prepared.

As a business you have a responsibility to dispose of your commercial waste appropriately, which is why we offer a commercial waste removal service. Have your trade waste reliably collected safe in

the knowledge that by choosing us for this service, you are contributing to the local community.

We provide two services, one to collect general business waste, the other to collect paper and card recycling.

You can sign up to one or both services via bins or trade waste sacks depending on your requirements. You can have weekly, fortnightly or monthly collections or as many as you think you may need.

During the pandemic many of our customers didn't need this service, which is why we will not make you sign up to any long-term arrangements. We want to work to your needs.

To find out more, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/commercialwaste or call us on **01732 227000**.



ADVERTISEMENT

West Kent | Jobs & Training Fair



Wednesday 13 October

10am–2pm

**Assembly Hall Theatre,
Royal Tunbridge Wells**

Come and meet employers from across the West Kent area. Attend seminars on topics such as job searching and making job applications.

You do not need to register beforehand in order to attend this event.

We encourage visitors to continue to wear face masks





Volunteers at Hosey Common



Our countryside Ranger, Ray Froud



Shoreham Woods Valley

Surrounded by nature

Almost everyone living in the Sevenoaks District is within walking distance of a green space and during lockdown, these became more valued than ever. What isn't so well known is how many of these are owned or co-managed by us.

Looked after by a small and talented team, these woods, commons, lakes and playgrounds are doing a huge amount to improve biodiversity and habitats for rare species.

From the rare Deptford Pinks of Farningham Wood Nature Reserve to the endless bluebell vistas of Meenfield Wood, from the thriving water meadows of the River Eden, to the tranquil walks of Oxenhill Meadow, we work to sustain it all.

The largest of the woodland areas is **Shoreham Woods**, a complex of five woods in total, with Andrews Wood near Polhill being the best known.

At 189 hectares, this is an amazing area, at the heart of which lies the

Ranger's Lodge, a car park, toilets and a wheelchair-friendly trail. Walks from here take you over the M25, across sweeping valley meadows to the beautiful Meenfield and Pilot Woods above Shoreham.

The views here are worth the climb and a descent into the Darent Valley brings the reward of refreshments at local cafés, pubs and even a vineyard. Careful management of the woodland includes coppicing and woodland thinning as well as creating wide rides, allowing rare orchids and other wildflowers to thrive in the open, and with them more insects, birds and other wildlife.

Farningham Wood Nature Reserve was opened by none other

than national treasure Sir David Attenborough in 1986. At one time a coppiced wood, we and co-managers Farningham Parish Council, have kept this practice going, creating areas of open woodland to support a wide range of species. Since coppicing was reintroduced, the Reserve has moved to the highest classification available from monitors at Natural England – success!

The Small-Leaved Lime grows here, found in only one other site in Kent, and this Site of Special Scientific Interest is also home to Great Crested Newts, Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, a rare hoverfly and the elusive Dartford Pink. In time there are hopes that nightingales and nightjars might return.



Beech Tree at Andrews wood



Volunteers at Crockham Hill Common



Meenfield Wood

Oxenhill Shaw and Meadow near Otford and Kemsing is another large site (21 hectares), a managed nature reserve that was once farmland. Only a ten-minute walk from Otford station, this area has been a great success story in terms of young, naturally regenerated woodland, with grassy glades, scrub, wide pathways and an area of mature trees. A grant from the Forestry Commission in 2003 allowed more paths and bridges to be created, and despite the huge challenge of ash dieback, oak, birch, alder, rose, goat willow and hawthorn are all thriving.

A partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust and Sevenoaks Town Council is also helping to **restore important historic commons** in the area, with Heritage Lottery and Enover Community funds.

Tireless volunteers have removed invasive rhododendron and colonising birch, returning the very rare heathland

to a state so species like climbing corydalis, heath dog violet and the uncommon redstart can thrive.

These commons – Hosey, Farley, Crockham Hill, Bitchet, Fawke, Seal Chart, Redhill Wood, Godden Green and Sevenoaks – are in part-owned by Squerryes Estate and Knole, but are managed by us and local councils. Hosey Common is home to amazing bat species like Daubenton's, Natterer's, whiskered and brown long-eared bats, which all shelter in the old quarry tunnels.

On the banks of the **River Eden**, we have celebrated increases in biodiversity. Here the water meadows have been left to grow throughout the summer, with paths cut through for locals to enjoy. Partnership working with Edenbridge Town Council who mow these paths has been essential for this success and we are

seeing a huge increase in butterflies, grasshoppers, crickets and other insects providing food for birds and small mammals.

There are lovely walks heading in all directions from here too (check [www.visitededenbridge.com/discover/walks for inspiration](http://www.visitededenbridge.com/discover/walks-for-inspiration)).

For more information about facilities and accessing the green spaces in the District, visit our website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/countryside

There are plenty of opportunities to spend days outdoors volunteering for the Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project. Contact Kent Wildlife Trust to find out more.

Kent County Council, the Woodland Trust and National Trust also own and manage large woodland areas in our District, all accessible for walking and some for cycling.

Parkrun is back!

If you're looking for a free and fun way to get some exercise, Parkrun could be the perfect choice for you.

The weekly Saturday morning events are 5k and take place in parks and open spaces. All abilities are welcome and you can walk, jog or run.

We have three Parkruns across the District that take place in Kingdom (Penshurst), Lullingstone and Squerryes (Westerham).

John Cornwell, event director for the Kingdom Parkrun, says: "I've run all my life but started Parkrun six years ago for the social element and have been hooked ever since.

"The best thing about Parkrun is the inclusivity and encouragement from all



who take part. There are no winners or losers, just people who want to enjoy the outdoors, get fitter and soak up the atmosphere. There will always be a tail runner who will walk the course so you'll never have to worry about coming last."

"We have runners of all ages and abilities, from four to eighty-four, and most people will improve on

their time each week. Register at www.parkrun.org.uk.

Parkrun is coming to Swanley

If you love the outdoors and working with your local community, why not volunteer on the new Swanley Parkrun? Roles include marshalling, timing, result recording and more. If you're interested, email darran.potter@parkrun.com.

Walking for health!

Walking is a great form of exercise and we're incredibly lucky to have some beautiful spots to visit.

'Walking for health' is a national initiative, created by The Ramblers, to give people the confidence to get out walking and enjoy the outdoors in a safe way with the support of a team of trained volunteers.

The walks are completely free and a great way to meet new people whilst getting fitter. The walks usually last about an hour and are always at the pace of the slowest walker, so no one gets left behind.

If you're interested in taking part in a health walk, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walking to find your nearest one.

Could you be a volunteer?

These walks couldn't happen without the support of volunteers and we're looking to recruit personable people to get involved. If you love walking and meeting new people, you've already got the qualities we're looking for.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, our Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "Being a volunteer means you'll get to support others to become more active whilst meeting lots of new and interesting people and gaining the benefit of being outside in some beautiful green spaces.

"In addition, you'll contribute towards your own health by participating too. There are lots of different roles available and you can give as much or as little time as you'd like. Training is also provided to ensure you feel confident leading or supporting the walks."

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, email healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call **01732 227000** to find out more.





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Everyone Active working in partnership with
Sevenoaks District Council

**Sevenoaks**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

everyone
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Fitness or exercise... a lifeline for our times

According to the Office for National Statistics, around one in five of adults experienced some form of depression in early 2021 – more than double that observed before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exercise is now widely considered by medical professionals as being vital for maintaining mental fitness and reducing levels of stress and anxiety, while scientists have found regular physical activity decreases tension, elevates and stabilises mood, and improves both sleep quality and self-esteem.

In Shape spoke to some people for whom exercise is, after the past 18 months, more important than ever.

**“It’s the buzz of the centre itself; it’s about looking out for each other”
– Karen Penfold**

“Reflecting on the last 18 months, I realised the saying ‘you don’t know what you’ve got til it’s gone’ is so true. I missed taking part in aquafit, encouraging others, and being inspired by instructors to push myself. This highlighted how important Edenbridge Leisure Centre really is. It’s not just about being physically fit, it’s also about being able to socialise and meet new and familiar faces. It’s the buzz of the centre itself; the exchanging of smiles. It’s about looking out for each other when you don’t realise you are doing it. Thanks again to all the staff

for their passion and enthusiasm in keeping this important centre going the way they do.”

“I don’t think I would have been able to get through this past year and a half without that mindset” – Millie Gaskin

“I’ve been in long term recovery from various mental health conditions and during this time the instructors at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre have helped me so much. I am now able to use exercise as a way of feeling better, getting stronger and being able to think more clearly. This has been invaluable for me. I don’t think I would have been able to get through this past year and a half without that mindset. I am very thankful for all the help I’ve received from James and others.

**“I always leave with a big smile”
– Alison Head**

“During the time the centre was shut my fitness level deteriorated. Going for walks was all very well, but there is no substitute for a fun class workout. Aqua aerobics is fantastic. The instructors run great sessions with varied exercises and awesome playlists. I feel physically and mentally so much better afterwards. I currently attend three classes a week and, in addition, started doing Zumba. This gives an amazing adrenaline rush and I always leave with a big smile... and aching legs! Keep up the good work!”

“I now have a much better understanding of just how big a role the gym plays” – David Gardner



David Gardner with the Senco team

"The lockdowns had a dramatic effect on the amount of exercise I could do. Happily, by the time things reopened, I'd had back surgery for a long-standing problem and was again able to use all the facilities. For me the benefits of going to a gym are as much psychological as physical - it requires discipline to turn up come rain or shine and, of course, there is the vital social interaction as well. The past 18 months has given me a better understanding of just how big a role the gym plays in keeping me both physically active and mentally grounded."

"James goes above and beyond and is much more than a gym manager"
- **Blanche Smith (84)**

"The pandemic and other personal issues have meant I've not been able to have my training sessions with James Arnold at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre - and I've realised just how big a gap that's left. James is much more than a gym manager. He is considerate and compassionate and has helped me feel safer knowing there's someone looking out for me, even during lockdown when he went above and beyond. After I had surgery last October, he worked with the doctors on my diet to help me to a speedy and pain-free recovery. Thank you James!"

For information on all activities, classes, advice, and personal training available locally, go to www.sencio.org.uk



Blanche Smith with gym manager James Arnold

The Stag has it all!

When you choose a night out, does it include a trip to see a show?

Maybe you book to see a band, a tribute act of your favourite musician's songs perhaps, a top comedian or a gripping play? If cinema is more your thing then the latest blockbuster might be just the ticket.

All this and more is on offer at The Stag. But what about when you want to see productions that are being staged in London or from around the world?

Look no further than Stag Selected - a variety of special cinema screenings including live broadcasts, encore performances and one-off presentations from the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company and Glyndebourne and Metropolitan Opera. There are also fascinating documentaries about famous artists and behind the scenes tours of some of the world's most famous museums.

Stag Selected means you can book tickets, via The Stag's website, over the phone and in person for a whole host of screenings much closer to home.

Later this year, there will also be presentations from Exhibition on Screen, bringing art to life on the big screen:

Raphael Revealed

12 October at 8pm

Marking the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death, the greatest exhibition ever held of his works took place in Rome. Exhibition on Screen was granted exclusive access to this once-in-a-lifetime show.



The Danish Collector: Delacroix to Gauguin

30 November at 8pm

Visionary Danish businessman Wilhelm Hansen amassed a remarkable collection at his home near Copenhagen. Exhibition on Screen tells his fascinating story and brings some of the best examples of 19th-century French art ever collected to the big screen.



To book your tickets, visit www.stagsevenoaks.co.uk



Sevenoaks District Community Safety Unit

To report or receive advice on: anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, graffiti, licensed premises, abandoned vehicles, environmental and noise nuisance, crime reduction, neighbourhood watch and other community safety issues, call **01732 227000** or e-mail **community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk**

Get up to speed with the law on e-scooters

E-scooters are the latest trend in electronic travel, especially with some young people.

Although they are widely available in shops and online, many owners are unaware that it's illegal to use them on any public road and in public spaces.

We've had a number of complaints about e-scooters being ridden on roads and in estates. In response, our Community Safety team has been working closely with Kent Police to take action. The police can issue fines and in some circumstances, even confiscate scooters.

So before you consider buying an e-scooter, it's worth finding out the facts about where you can use them:

- E-scooters follow the same rules as motor vehicles, meaning you must have a driver's license, insurance and tax. But, as it's currently not possible to get insurance for a privately owned e-scooter, it's illegal to use them on any public road or in any public spaces
- Anyone caught riding an e-scooter without insurance could face a £300



fine plus six penalty points on their driver's licence. The police can also seize the scooter

- If you own an e-scooter, you can ride it on private land so long as you have the landowner's permission.

We always recommend wearing safety protection, such as a helmet, when riding these vehicles.

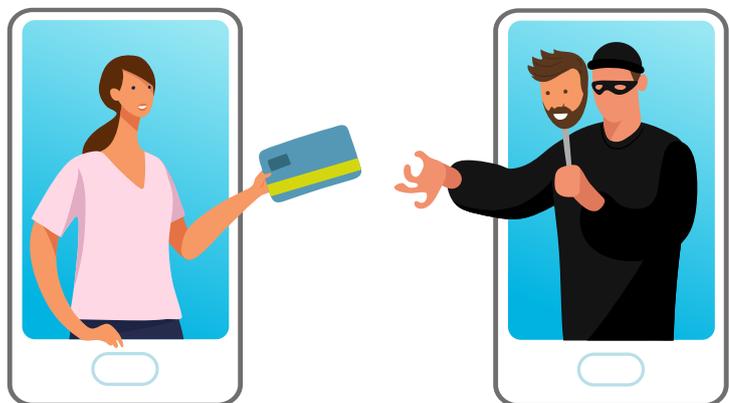
Be wary of scams!

Scammers are getting smarter and it's becoming increasingly more difficult to spot when something is fake.

However, there are a few pointers to look out for that can protect you and your money.

Firstly, never give out personal information to someone who contacts you by phone, email, text or by message.

Scammers also use fake links and numbers in their messages. Always check that the link matches the company it is supposed to come from before clicking.



If you get sent a scam message, it's important you report it so others don't fall victim. Reporting a scam is free and it will help stop the spread of these messages.

Find out more and report scams, visit **www.actionfraud.police.uk**

Reporting crime

To report a crime that is taking place, always call 999. If the incident has passed, call Kent Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**

Social media

For the latest community safety news follow us on Twitter visit **@sdc_csp**

Tackling domestic abuse

For support and advice for all victims of Domestic Abuse call the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Service on **01892 570538**

For the Community Domestic Abuse Programme for men call **07933 359210** or visit **www.kentcdap.org**

Speaking with young people about alcohol and drugs

Addiction to illegal drugs and alcohol causes countless issues for individuals, their families and local communities.

That's why we are funding the Kenward Trust to support young people at risk of addiction, helping to nip the problem in the bud.

In recent months, we've received reports of young people drinking and using nitrous oxide (sometimes known as 'laughing gas') in Edenbridge, West Kingsdown, New Ash Green, Sevenoaks and one or two other locations.

In response, Kenward Trust youth workers have visited these areas to build a bond with the young people so they can inform them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Andy Watson, a youth worker from the Kenward Trust, says: "Early intervention is really important when it comes to tackling illegal drug and alcohol use, especially with young people. Helping them to understand the dangers can stop substance misuse from becoming a much greater problem in later life.

"But to convey this important message, we work hard to build trust. All too often, there's other problems in their lives, be it at home, school or somewhere else, so it can take time to build up a rapport. But we never judge or stigmatise the people we work with and this helps us to get positive results.

"By engaging with young people, it also allows us to deal with other issues, most notably anti-social behaviour.



The Kenward Trust is also taking preventative action by reaching out to schools. Its 'Think Differently' project gives young people the opportunity to hear first-hand about real life stories from those who have experienced substance addiction, including ex-prisoners.

Andy adds: "Speaking with people whose lives have been torn apart by illegal drugs and alcohol misuse is very powerful."

"The pupils soon make the connection that drinking and taking substances can easily lead to addiction and greater problems in later life. For many, these stories stay with them for a very long time."

If you're concerned about drugs and alcohol misuse or anti-social behaviour, contact our Community Safety team on **01732 227000** or email **community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk**

Your Councillors

Sevenoaks District Council's priorities and policies are decided by 54 Councillors who were elected by local people. The Sevenoaks District is divided into 26 smaller areas, known as wards and each ward is represented by one or more District Councillors. You are very welcome to contact the District Councillors to express your views and to ask for their help on local issues.

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Labour (L)
Liberal Democrat (LD)
Sevenoaks Independent (SI)



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How to contact your District Councillors

We have provided your District Councillors' phone numbers and e-mail addresses. If you would like to write to them, their postal addresses are available on our

website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/councillors or by calling us on **01732 227000**. If you are unsure which ward you live in, please call us on **01732 227000**.

Let us help you find your next tenant

Every year, we help dozens of landlords by finding suitable tenants and offering financial and practical support.

We recognise that finding the right tenant for your property can be a complicated and uncertain process. We also understand the concerns around increasing legislative burdens, rent payments or anti-social behaviour.

That's why we have developed 'Help to let', our careful and considered support package, which takes the worry out of letting a property.

Our 'Help to let' scheme offers:

- Our free to use renting scheme with people ready to move into your property so there's no need to pay agent fees
- Deposit bonds and rent in advance to cover damage, cleaning and rent arrears worth up to a month's rent

- Access to grants and financial support to help renovate and maintain your property
- Help and advice on the latest changes in housing law.

For more information or an informal chat, contact our Housing Team on **01732 227000** or e-mail helptolet@sevenoaks.gov.uk

FOR RENT



Forget-me-not cafés are back!

Following an 18-month break brought on by the pandemic, three local 'Forget-me-not cafés' reopened their doors last month.

The cafés provide a place where people with memory problems and their carers can meet up for a bite to eat, a singsong, games and some fun!

Elaine Murray, the Chair of the Sevenoaks Area Dementia Friendly Community, which runs the cafés, spoke with In Shape.



"The pandemic has been hard for everyone, especially for those experiencing memory problems and those living with dementia. It's also been hard for their families and carers too," says Elaine.

"Over the past year, we held virtual video cafés every month, but not all of our patrons could log on and join us. And meeting online is just not the same as meeting in person. Our patrons asked us to get the cafés up and running again as soon as it was safe to do so.

"Initially we relaunched three cafés in Sevenoaks, Westerham and nearby Hildenborough. The Edenbridge café and our 'Forget-me-nots' singing group will resume soon. You can find out more on our website or by contacting us.

"Of course the health of our patrons is paramount so we've made a few changes to keep everyone safe.

"We've also used the last year to build our 'Forget-me-not' allotment in Sevenoaks. It's a beautiful place where our patrons can visit, sit and enjoy the views over the downs and water and reap our produce.

"The cafés are in large part funded by the annual 'Run, Walk or Push' in Knole Park, and we're planning next May's event already. So look out for details of how to take part or sponsor a participant nearer the time."

For more information about the cafés, visit www.forgetmenotcafe.org.uk, email forgetmenot.sadfc@gmail.com or call Elaine on **07946 534476** or Amelia on **07580 601182**.

Taxis and your safety



Setting the high standards to become a local taxi driver is all part of our work to keep the travelling public safe.

Anyone planning to become a taxi driver has to pass a series of challenging tests and checks before they can be issued with a licence from us.

Applicants have to pass all of the following tests...

- Taxi driving standards
- Detailed knowledge of the District
- Numeracy skills
- Highway Code
- Taxi policy and law
- Safeguarding, disability awareness, child sexual exploitation and County Lines

We also carry out the following checks...

- Enhanced criminal checks, repeated every six-months once licensed
- Medical examinations on both application and renewal of the licence
- DVLA Driving Licence checks on application and renewal of the licence
- Checks on candidates' right to work in the UK
- Checks against the national register of taxi licence refusals and revocations.

We even test the roadworthiness of every licensed vehicle twice a year.

So what's the difference between a Hackney Carriage and a Private Hire Vehicle...

Hackney Carriages...

- Can be hailed on the street in the District in which they are licensed, in addition to being available at taxi ranks
- Must display a fare chart and comply with our regulations on the maximum fares they can charge
- Must have a roof light that lights up when the taxi is available for hire.

Private-hire...

- They must be pre-booked
- They are free to charge fare rates of their choosing
- They are not required to have a roof light.

If you have any concerns about a licenced taxi driver, please call us on **01732 227000** or email licensing@sevenoaks.gov.uk

For more information, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/taxis

Sevenoaks District Council at your fingertips

Main Office

Argyle Road, Sevenoaks,
Kent TN13 1HG

Open Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5pm and Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm.
Telephone **01732 227000**, 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

Emergencies (outside our usual hours) **01732 227000**
then listen to the options.

Leisure centres

Ash Green Sports Centre*
01474 707164

Edenbridge Leisure Centre**
01732 865665

Lullingstone Park Golf Course**
01959 533793

The Olympic, Swanley*
01322 669201

Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club***
01732 451889

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre**
01732 470700

White Oak Indoor Bowls Club, Swanley***
01322 665571

White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley**
01322 662188

- * Operated by the local town or parish Council
- ** Operated by Sencio Community Leisure
- *** Operated by independent limited companies



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