

# InShape

The newsletter of Sevenoaks District Council



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# Your festive waste collections

Our staff will be working extra days over Christmas and the New Year so you don't miss a waste and recycling collection.

**Most collections will take place a day later than usual.**

Your normal day	Your revised collection day
Monday 23 December	No change
Tuesday 24 December	No change
Wednesday 25 December (Christmas Day)	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December (Boxing Day)	Saturday 28 December
Friday 27 December	Monday 30 December
Monday 30 December	Tuesday 31 December
Tuesday 31 December	Thursday 2 January
Wednesday 1 January	Friday 3 January
Thursday 2 January	Saturday 4 January
Friday 3 January	Monday 6 January
Monday 6 January	Tuesday 7 January
Tuesday 7 January	Wednesday 8 January
Wednesday 8 January	Thursday 9 January
Thursday 9 January	Friday 10 January
Friday 10 January	Saturday 11 January
<b>Normal collection days resume from Monday 13 January</b>	

## REMEMBER:

Our Garden Waste Collection Service will not be running after Friday 13 December until Monday 13 January when a normal collection service will resume.

Please put your recycling bags and general waste out at 7am on your collection day to help prevent attracting animals and the build-up of litter.

To view your collection days online, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays).

## Our Christmas opening times

You can visit our Sevenoaks office during these days and times over the festive period...

**OPEN** Monday 23 December - 8.45am to 5pm  
**OPEN** Tuesday 24 December - 8.45am to 5pm  
**CLOSED** on Wednesday 25 December  
**CLOSED** on Thursday 26 December  
**CLOSED** on Friday 27 December  
**OPEN** on Monday 30 December - 8.45am to 5pm  
**OPEN** on Tuesday 31 December - 8.45am to 5pm  
**CLOSED** on Wednesday 1 January  
**OPEN** as usual from Thursday 2 January - 8.45am.



**OPEN**

In an emergency, even when our office is closed, you can still call us on **01732 227000**.

Many of our services are available 24/7 on our website [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)



# Putting the wheels in motion

Construction has begun on the Sevenoaks 'East to West' walking and cycling route to link seven schools with local facilities.

The two-mile route is being delivered by us and Kent County Council. The scheme was drawn up with help from transport experts Sustrans with local people commenting on the proposals leading to changes and improvements.

Once open, walkers, wheelers (people on scooters, parents with prams and wheelchair users) and cyclists will be provided with safe opportunities to exercise, benefitting their health, while improving air quality and helping to cut the District's carbon footprint.

It is hoped that the route will take some cars off the roads, especially at busy school times, helping to improve journeys for car drivers while making the streets safer.

The route links Trinity School, The Weald of Kent and Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys in the east with Sevenoaks Primary School and Walthamstow Junior School and Amherst and Riverhead Schools in the west. It also provides easy access to Sevenoaks Rail station, Sevenoaks Hospital and Knole Academy.



Cllr Irene Roy (our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener), Cllr Roddy Hogarth (our Council Leader), Cllr Neil Baker, (KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Xavier Quinn, Amey Site Manager

Work is expected to be finished during spring 2025 and includes widening and creating new links between footpaths and upgrading some road crossings.

The route is being delivered with a £1.2 million grant secured from the Government.

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, says: "This project has been a long term ambition of both Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council, and I am delighted to see it progress into fruition.

"Encouraging our residents to use safe, sustainable travel is a top priority and forms part of our ambitions to tackle climate change. This travel route should be popular with children, commuters and the wider community.

"We want to thank the hundreds of local people who took part in our consultations about the proposals. Thanks to their comments, we have made a number of adjustments and improvements along the route.

"We are really excited work has started and we cannot wait for the Sevenoaks 'East to West' walking and cycling route to open next year."

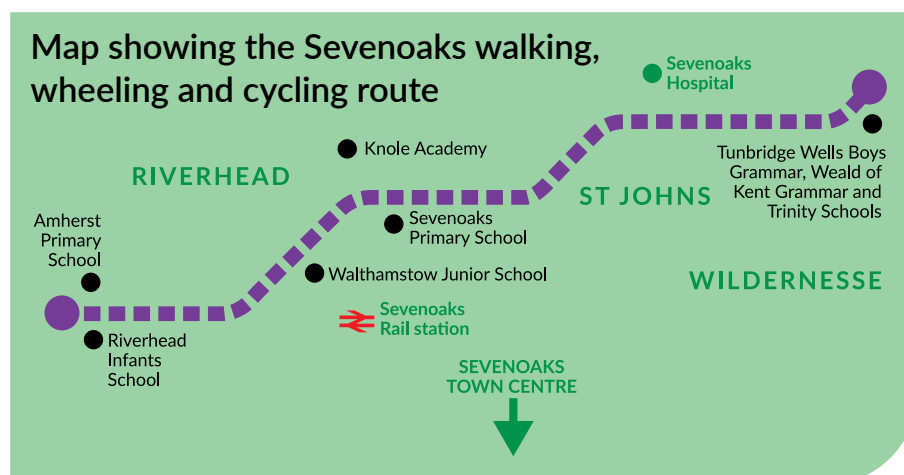
Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Neil Baker, adds: "We continue to work with local communities to make sure they are getting what they need from the spaces around them.

"We want people to be able to move around and make local journeys in the most convenient way for them, and sometimes that means not using a car.

"Making sure pedestrians and cyclists have safe and accessible routes will ensure we encourage people to choose active travel more often."

For more information, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle).

We have also secured funding to progress two further walking, wheeling and cycling routes linking Sevenoaks with Otford and a new route in Swanley.



SEVENOAKS



# A new vision for our waste service

We've agreed an ambitious plan to increase the range of materials we collect for recycling, helping the environment, starting with new glass and food waste collections in 2026.



Our new 'Waste & Recycling Strategy', agreed in November, sets out a roadmap to reduce the carbon footprint of our collection services while improving efficiency.

We're committed to tackling climate change and we've promised to reduce general waste and increase recycling. This is because recycling helps to prevent climate change by saving energy and helping to transform items that have been used into something new.

But recycling rates in the Sevenoaks District are low, around 38%. The Government has set a new national recycling target of 65% by 2035. Unless we change our current arrangements, we are unlikely to meet this target.

Since the pandemic, the amount of waste we collect has increased by about a third as more people work and shop from home. This has led to more packaging and waste.

We've made a start by introducing reusable recycling bags to most households, cutting down on single use plastics.

To help us decide on the best options for our waste collection service and improve recycling rates, we are starting work with...

- A District-wide survey to help us understand residents' views and preferences for waste collections
- A thorough review of our waste services by spring 2025 taking account of residents' feedback. This review will consider the collection containers we provide to residents and the possible introduction of wheelie bins for general waste. It will also include a timetable for introducing any changes
- New weekly food waste collections and glass collections every other week by April 2026
- Over time, we will look to collect new items for recycling, such as small household electrical goods and textiles. We also want to introduce further initiatives to cut carbon emissions from our collection services.

More information about our Waste & Recycling Strategy is available at [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/wastestrategy](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/wastestrategy).

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, says:

"Our commitment to tackle climate change means we need to change and improve our waste collection services. We want to give our communities more options to recycle, helping to reduce their general waste to an absolute minimum.

"We intend to bring in glass and food waste collections in the near future plus other improvements in later years. But before we introduce any changes, we want to hear the views of our residents."

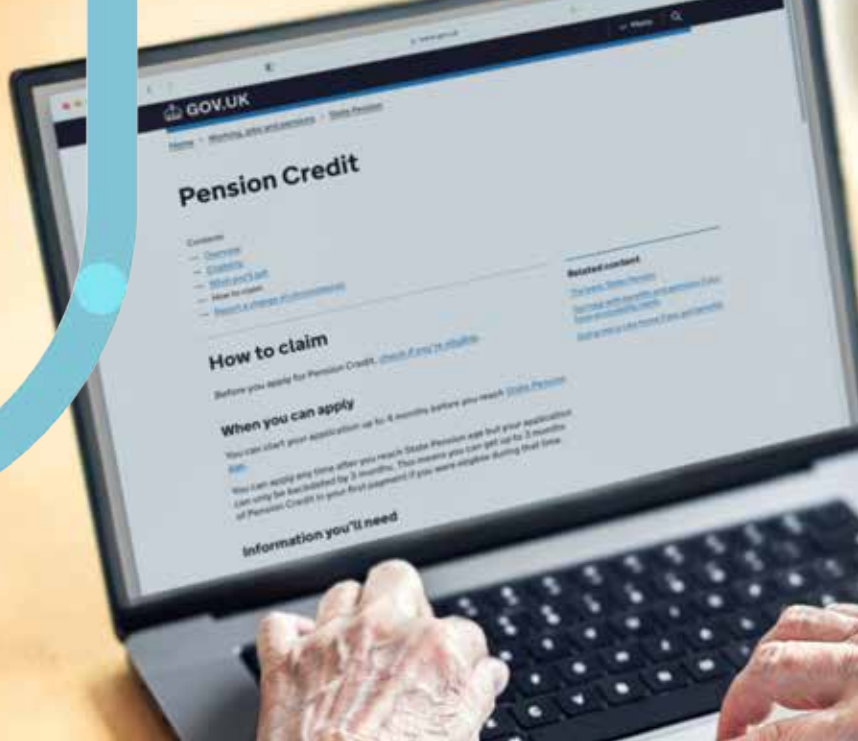
## The BIG Waste Question

You can have your say on the future our waste collection services from Monday 9 December until 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025.

The survey is available on our website [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bigwaste](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bigwaste). If you don't have online access, please call us during office hours on 01732 227000 and we'll complete the survey with you over the phone.

Every household that takes part can enter a free prize draw to win one of five, £50 shopping vouchers.

# Pension Credit



Could you or someone you know be eligible for financial support later in life? Millions of pounds are left unclaimed each year.

It is estimated that up to 18,000 households in Kent are missing out on Pension Credit.

Don't let you or your loved ones be one of them!

## Not already claiming Pension Credits?

Then visit [www.kent.gov.uk/pensioncredit](http://www.kent.gov.uk/pensioncredit) or contact the Pension Credit helpline on **0800 99 1234** today to check your eligibility and make an application!

## Quick check

Over state pension age

Live in the UK

Have a weekly income of below £218.15 if you're single or £332.95 if you're part of a couple



# Thriving over the festive period

Christmas can be a great time to relax, socialise and indulge a little.

FREE



Maria, Jenny, Yulia and Natalie from our Health Team

But some of us may be looking to enjoy everything the festive season offers while keeping an eye on our health goals.

*In Shape* spoke with our Health Team about their top tips for a healthy Christmas.

Yulia, Health Team Leader, says: "It's possible to enjoy the festivities without compromising too much. Firstly, be realistic. We're all likely to drink and eat more than usual and exercise and move less. So don't be too hard on yourself. One or two celebration meals are unlikely to make a big difference to your health."

Maria, One You advisor, adds: "Aim to incorporate some alcohol-free days during the holidays. If you want to manage your drinking, avoid stocking up on alcohol. If

you're attending an event where there could be lots of drink, take your own soft or low alcohol alternatives."

Jennie said: "Over Christmas, we may have more free time, so you could do some light exercise, for example a walk or even a jog. Again, be realistic about how much you want to do. Aim for about half an hour a day."

Natalie adds "Many of us will eat more over the festive period, but there's a few things we can do to maintain our health. A good helping of vegetables with a meal will add vitamins and minerals, and drinking plenty of water can reduce your appetite."

New Year, new you!

FREE

If you're looking to improve your health and wellbeing in 2025, our One You team is here to help!

Whether it's losing weight, improving your fitness or cutting down on alcohol, smoking and vaping, our friendly team is on hand to help you all the way.

Our next 12-week weight management course begins on 14 January 2025.

To find out more, and to book on a course, call us on 01732 227000 or visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/oneyou](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/oneyou).

## Take a step towards a healthier lifestyle

FREE

We've launched two new walks called 'Walking with a Health Coach' to help you get active.

These walks are sociable, short and mostly on the flat and are led by trained volunteers. They are perfect for anyone who has not been active for a while and those who are being encouraged to move more.

The two new walks take place in:

- Edenbridge – 8.30am on Thursdays starting outside the Leisure Centre
- Westerham – 1pm on Mondays (from 6 January 2025) meeting by Costa on The Green

There's no need to book, you can just turn up.

We also have 'Steps to Wellbeing' health walks in Otford, Sevenoaks and Shoreham.

For more information about our health walks, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walking](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walking) or contact our Health Team on 01732 227000 or email [healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk).



# New Waste Transfer Station for Sevenoaks

Kent County Council (KCC) has opened a new Sevenoaks Waste Transfer Station with the capacity to handle more recycling.



KCC is required to dispose of household waste collected by us. Once collected at the kerbside, it is taken to a Waste Transfer Station where it is deposited, bulked and then taken to be processed or disposed of. These facilities are not open to the public to dispose of their household waste, however, the site does allow for the disposal of trade waste by prior arrangement.

The new Sevenoaks transfer station includes the infrastructure to allow waste to be disposed of sustainably well into the future. It will enable more materials to be recycled,

helping us to meet the Government's future recycling targets.

It can handle up to 75,000 tonnes of waste a year, twice the capacity of the previous facility.

The previous transfer station, built in 1990, was no longer fit for purpose, struggling to manage the increase in waste and the requirement to collect and segregate a much wider range of materials. Realising the demand, KCC secured a 30-year leasing arrangement with Darenth River Ballast Company for the new site.

Construction started in July 2023 with the site opening in September 2024.

Our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Irene Roy, says: "The new KCC run site provides more facilities and opportunities to recycle a much wider range of materials. Crucially, this ties in with our plans to transform our collection services, giving residents greater opportunities to recycle much more of their waste."

Rob Thomas, KCC's Cabinet Member for the Environment, adds: "The facility is an impressive structure, allowing far more waste to be sustainably disposed of and ensuring nothing is wasted."

## FREE green, retrofit training



We're offering free training for businesses and individuals in green construction skills to improve the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings.

Making homes and business property more energy efficient is key to reducing the District's carbon footprint, helping us to tackle climate change. But, there is currently not enough people with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the booming sustainable building and energy sector.

So we're working with MidKent College to provide free training. Places are limited.

All courses provide recognised qualifications. These can cover anything from basic installation skills, through to supporting you to become a trusted advisor or project manager.

If you're an employer looking to develop new or existing staff, or you want to learn about green retrofit fitting skills, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/retrofit](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/retrofit).

The free places offer is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.





# The green way to warm your home

We're working in association with green tech company Thermly to help homeowners access and install environmentally friendly heating.



Heat pumps are an energy efficient, low carbon way to heat homes and futureproof them for years to come. With Thermly's support, homeowners can complete an installation quickly and easily.

Thermly's support includes helping eligible homeowners access up to £7,500 in Government funding towards the cost of the installation, as well as manage the entire installation process, including identifying and appointing accredited, verified and local installation companies.

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, says: "We are passionate about promoting energy-efficient upgrades to create a greener, more sustainable District. Working in association with Thermly, we can speed up the adoption of environmentally-friendly heat pumps that can dramatically cut a household's carbon emissions."

Gareth Robertson, co-founder of Thermly, adds: "We are thrilled to be working with the Council to bring more sustainable energy choices to homeowners. With a large number of homeowners already living in heat pump ready homes, there is huge potential to support more people in

making greener energy choices and to move to this incredible technology within the next few months."

Thermly is now looking for interested homeowners to get involved. To find out more, visit [www.thermly.co.uk/community/sevenoaks](http://www.thermly.co.uk/community/sevenoaks).

Thermly Limited is an independent company and uses local, independent contractors. Sevenoaks District Council is not responsible or liable for the operation of the initiative or for any works carried out. Any questions or issues regarding the initiative should be directed to Thermly Limited at [enquiries@thermly.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thermly.co.uk).



**The handy way to recycle!**

We have taken another step to reduce the impact of our services by recycling our used PPE.

Every year, our waste collectors, street cleaners and fly-tip removal teams use up to 2,000 pairs of safety gloves.

Until last year, the gloves were put in with the rubbish. But thanks to a new partnership with SMI, they are now recycled.

The gloves are shredded and reused to make a whole host of new items, including dog beds, mats and jackets. Anything that cannot be reused is ground into pellets and used for energy. Absolutely nothing goes to waste!

## Buzz around the bus stop!

During August, we installed our first Living Roof bus shelter in Edenbridge High Street.

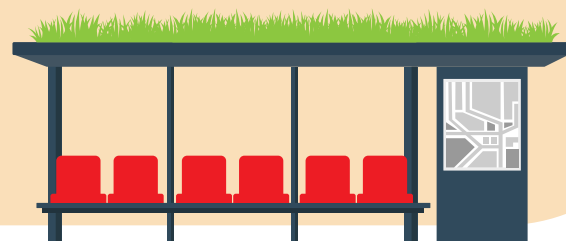


Living Roofs or 'Bee Bus Stops' support native wildlife by providing green havens for bees and are built using 100% recycled or upcycled materials.

The roof, which was created by Clear Channel UK, includes a mix of native wildflowers and other flowering plants to bolster the number of bees and other pollinators. The roof will burst into life in the spring.

Our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, Cllr Irene Roy, says: "We're delighted to have our first eco-friendly bus shelter in the District.

"Not only will it look great when the weather warms up, it will help attract pollinating insects, supporting biodiversity and our climate change ambitions."



# Real Christmas tree collections

There are lots of options to recycle your real Christmas tree for FREE after this year's festivities have ended.

## Option 1 – Use our Garden Waste collection service (for permit holders only)

If you hold a Garden Waste collection permit, simply place your unwanted tree in your garden waste bin and we'll pick it up on your usual collection day from 13 January 2025. Your Garden Waste bin lid must be closed before collection so you may need to cut up your tree. We can take trees with a trunk of up to 90mm (3.5") in diameter.

## Option 2 – Take your tree to a Household Waste Recycling Site

Take your tree to one of Kent County Council's Household Waste Recycling Sites (informally known as the tip or the dump). They will take larger trees that are too big for us to collect. Visit [www.kent.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.kent.gov.uk/recycling) or call 03000 41 73 73 to book a slot.

## Option 3 – Hospice in the Weald collections

For a donation of your choice, Hospice in the Weald will collect and recycle your real Christmas tree. To register for this service, visit [www.just-helping.org.uk/register-tree](http://www.just-helping.org.uk/register-tree).

## Option 4– Take your tree to a local collection point

Take your tree to one of the collection points, at the dates and times listed below, and we'll take it off your hands.

Location	Date and time
<b>Hartley</b> By the allotments, Woodland Avenue, DA3 7DB	Monday 6 January 8am to 8.45am
<b>New Ash Green</b> Centre Road Car Park, DA3 8HJ	Monday 6 January 9am to 9.45am
<b>West Kingsdown</b> Library Car Park, London Road, TN15 6BZ	Monday 6 January 10am to 10.45am
<b>Eynsford</b> Recycling site, Shoreham Road, DA4 0HP	Monday 6 January 11am to 11.45am
<b>Shoreham</b> Village Car Park, Filston Lane, TN14 7SX	Monday 6 January 12.30pm to 1.15pm
<b>Hextable</b> College Road, BR8 7LT	Tuesday 7 January 8am to 8.45am
<b>Swanley</b> Bevan Place Car Park, BR8 8BH	Tuesday 7 January 8am to 8.45am
<b>Crockenhill</b> Village Hall Car Park, Stones Cross Road, BR8 8LT	Tuesday 7 January 10am to 10.45am
<b>Otford</b> Opposite 2 Bubblestone Road, TN14 5PW	Tuesday 7 January 11am to 11.45am
<b>Sevenoaks</b> Suffolk Way recycling site, TN13 1LX	Tuesday 7 January 12.30pm to 1.15pm
<b>Badgers Mount</b> Near to Crest Close, Old London Road, TN14 7AE	Wednesday 8 January 8am to 8.45am
<b>Halstead</b> Village Hall, Knockholt Road, TN14 7EU	Wednesday 8 January 9am to 9.45am
<b>Knockholt</b> The Three Horseshoes car park, Main Road, TN14 7LD	Wednesday 8 January 10am to 10.45am
<b>Dunton Green</b> Lusted Road, Dunton Green, TN13 2UJ	Wednesday 8 January 11am to 11.45am

Location	Date and time
<b>Westerham</b> Recycling site, Brasted Road, TN16 1TD	Wednesday 8 January 12.30pm to 1.15pm
<b>Sundridge</b> Main Road layby, TN14 6EP	Wednesday 8 January 1.30pm to 2.15pm
<b>Crockham Hill</b> Deanery Road, TN8 6RE	Thursday 9 January 8am to 8.45am
<b>Edenbridge</b> Leisure Centre Car Park, Wellingtonia Way, TN8 5RE	Thursday 9 January 9am to 9.45am
<b>Four Elms</b> Layby by St Paul's Church, Bough Beech Road, TN8 6NE	Thursday 9 January 10am to 10.45am
<b>Marsh Green</b> Marsh Green Road Layby, TN8 5QR	Thursday 9 January 11am to 11.45am
<b>Cowden</b> Memorial Hall, Chantlers Mead, TN8 7HU	Thursday 9 January 12.30pm to 1.15pm
<b>Hever</b> Recycling site, Hever Castle Car Park, Hever Road, TN8 7NH	Friday 10 January 7.30am to 8.15am
<b>Chiddingstone</b> Richards Close, TN11 8LF	Friday 10 January 8.30am to 9.15am
<b>Penshurst</b> Penshurst Road layby, TN11 8DB	Friday 10 January 9.30am to 10.15am
<b>Fordcombe</b> Village Hall, The Green, TN3 0RT	Friday 10 January 10.30am to 11.15am
<b>Leigh</b> Recycling site, Crandalls, TN11 8RF	Friday 10 January 11.30am to 12.15pm
<b>Weald</b> Memorial Hall, Long Barn Road, TN14 6PT	Friday 10 January 1.30pm to 2.15pm



# Concerns raised about new Government housing targets

We recently wrote to the Government with our concerns about the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with new housing targets.

Over the summer, the new Government asked for views on its updated NPPF. It includes a revised housing target for the Sevenoaks District that jumped from 704 to 1,113 new homes to be built every year, a 58% increase on the current target.

In response, we said we welcomed efforts to boost local housing supply to meet residents' needs, including more affordable housing in new developments. However, we raised a number of concerns.

We argued the method for calculating the new housing target is flawed. The calculation is based on the affordability of homes and average local incomes. But it did not consider that many residents work in London where wages are higher. The target did not take account of future trends either.



While supporting the use of 'Grey Belt' sites (poor quality and already developed Green Belt land), we said these sites should only be developed in locations near transport and local facilities. We also stressed councils should decide which sites are in the Grey Belt and not developers.

We also raised concerns that there are no proposals to make developers build the homes that have been granted planning permission.

Crucially, we reiterated our long-standing stance that the Green Belt is incredibly valued, and should only be built on in very limited circumstances.

Cllr Julia Thornton, our Cabinet Member for Planning and Conservation, says: "While we remain committed to protecting the overwhelming majority of our Green Belt, we will have a duty to do everything possible to meet the Government's new housing targets.

"We have highlighted what we believe to be serious issues with the Government's revised NPPF.

"The method of calculating the number of new homes does not take account of local need. Building 1,113 new homes every year until 2040 will be especially challenging given our District is 93% Green Belt, the second highest in the country, and 60% National Landscape (AONB).

"We have been urging Government for some time to give us the tools to encourage developers to build homes on sites with planning permission. These tools could include charging Council Tax or Business Rates after a period of time. Building out these already granted schemes would make a big difference to the supply of new houses, both in our District and nationwide.

## Local Plan update

Once the government publishes the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the end of the year, we can publish our revised Local Plan timetable.

The Local Plan will be updated to reflect the final changes to the NPPF. This may involve considering additional sites for housing and targeted consultations with landowners and affected communities.



# Eco-ho-ho!

We're all aware of just how important it is to make every effort to become more sustainable. Small changes can make all the difference in reducing our environmental footprint, especially over Christmas.

With a little effort and imagination, it's possible to have an eco-friendly festive period that's full of fun and doesn't break the bank.



One of the best things about Christmas is the food. But did you know, over seven million tons of food gets thrown in the bin each festive season in the UK? Luckily there's lots we can do to stop food waste and save money. Plan ahead and freeze anything you're not going to use. Leftover vegetables are great for soups and sauces.



We all love giving and receiving gifts but this year, why not think about giving your loved ones an eco-friendly gift. Try a reusable coffee cup or water bottle, bamboo toothbrushes, wildflower seeds or a tote bag. Show someone you really care about them, and the planet, by hand-making their gift. Shopping locally is also a good way to keep your carbon footprint down and help the local economy.



Once you've got your eco-gifts sorted, make sure you wrap them with recycled wrapping paper or, for something a bit more fun, use old comics, magazines or calendars instead.



When you're decorating your home, don't splash out on new decorations. Instead, use or revamp your old ones or make your own. You can also do this with your Christmas party outfits. Search your wardrobe for some old favourites, rather than buying new ones.

## Putting their trust in us!

Organisations across the District can take advantage of our local and easy Commercial Waste service that removes trade rubbish.

Our flexible service bends to suit your needs and we pride ourselves on being uncomplicated, reliable and friendly.

But don't just take our word for it! In Shape spoke with Commercial Waste customer Jo Hatcher from The National Trust at Knole House, who has been using the service for over a year.

The National Trust is the UK's number one heritage charity, opening the doors of Knole House, a 600-year-old building, to visitors 363 days of the year.

Jo says: "We wanted to use a local service to reduce the carbon

footprint of waste vehicles having to travel large distances.

"We love the flexibility it gives us on reacting to the fluctuation in visitor numbers across the year and the staff are always pleasant, available and willing to assist with our requests."

"As we are a conservation charity, we like that the waste is used to generate electricity rather than sent to landfill."

If you would like to find out more about our Commercial Waste service, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/commercialwaste](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/commercialwaste) or call 01732 227000.





# White Oak Leisure Centre unveils £200k upgrade after membership surge

Since its grand opening just two and a half years ago, Swanley's White Oak Leisure Centre has welcomed thousands of residents through its door - with numbers continuing to grow following a recent surge in fitness memberships.



## The growth of gym-goers

In just over two years, White Oak Leisure Centre has experienced a 58 per cent increase in fitness memberships.

The Centre's inclusive feel and wide array of activities on offer for locals of all ages and abilities means White Oak is a haven for accessible sporting activity - leading to more local fitness enthusiasts using the gym than ever before.

Hot on the heels of this recent growth, Everyone Active, which manages the facility in partnership with us, recently funded a £200k gym upgrade project, helping to support both new and existing customers in their sporting journeys.

## A new age for fitness equipment

The upgraded gym boasts twice as many Olympic squat racks, alongside new equipment such as a plate-loaded glute drive, standing calf raise, bicep curl, and triceps extension machines, expanding its strength training offering to meet the growing demand.

Members can now also enjoy an enhanced functional area featuring a Life Fitness rig with two half racks, wall ball targets and a battle rope. A Ski Erg, a piece of workout equipment that works the arms, legs and core, has also been installed for a full-body workout experience never seen before at the Swanley Centre.

Acknowledging the need for post-workout recovery, the gym now also includes a dedicated relaxation zone for stretching, complete with theraguns, the only 5-in-1 whole-body wellness device proven to improve recovery, performance, sleep, mobility and stress.

And, with the upgrade featuring a new look and feel, the new gym space will ensure members are kept motivated through the winter months and the January fitness surge.

## Beyond the gym

To cater for its growing membership base, White Oak Leisure Centre has also significantly expanded its group exercise offerings, increasing from 45 classes per week to an impressive 75 classes.

The expanded timetable now includes Pilates, METCON, additional classes for older adults and instructor-led core classes, as well as an increase in popular classes ranging from a high-energy HIIT workout, to rejuvenating yoga classes.

To find out more about the array of activities available at the Centre, please visit [www.everyoneactive.com/centre/white-oak-leisure-centre](http://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/white-oak-leisure-centre).



# Full steam ahead for rail partnership

As 2025 approaches, and the nation celebrates the 200th anniversary of the railway, In Shape looks at the Darent Valley Line and how communities are coming together to support the route.

The railway age began with the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825. Over the next 50 or so years, some 18,000 miles of track were laid and thousands of stations were built.

One of these lines was the Swanley to Sevenoaks railway opening in the 1860s. Going through some of our most stunning countryside, the line transformed access to and from London and the coast. It also left its mark with striking structures, including the nine arched viaduct in Eynsford.

Today, it is known as the Darent Valley Line. For the past four years, the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership, consisting of dedicated volunteers, local councils and rail operating companies, has been working to promote and improve the six stations along the line. You can find out more about this Partnership at [www.darentvalleycrp.org](http://www.darentvalleycrp.org) and by downloading the new **Rail Trails** app.



**Shoreham** is one of three rural stations on the line that has benefitted from new directional signage. New planters, filled with plants grown by local villagers, benefit the bees who live in the station chimney! Shoreham Village School recently worked with artist Ola Intu to produce a mural for the station.



**Sevenoaks Station** has benefitted from pollinator-friendly planters and the 'Btingham Palace' bug hotel. Maintained by volunteers, these improvements are brightening up the area while supporting wildlife. A new mural was recently painted at the station.

## Bat & Ball Station

was beautifully restored in 2019 with Heritage Lottery funding. A stunning mural was recently painted on the road bridge by artist Ola Intu depicting the past and present of the line. You can also buy posters representing the beautiful areas within reach of the stations by artist Kit Boyd and enjoy delicious food and drink at the station café.







Award winning Eynsford in Bloom look after the grounds around **Eynsford Station**. The Partnership recently renovated the waiting room. As part of the 200th anniversary of the railway, there are plans for a permanent exhibit within the Porter's Lodge, including old uniforms, baggage, a trolley and information about the history of the railway. New planters are cared for by Wendy Wright who works at the station.



**Otford Station** hosts a Darent Valley landscape photography exhibition by Sevenoaks Camera Club and local residents. A new wildlife-friendly garden opened to the side of the station, maintained by volunteers. And if you're waiting for a train, take a moment to view the display about the Station's railway history.



**Swanley Station** has benefitted from a co-funded £5 million rebuild with secure cycle parking and a cycle ramp. The partnership has added lots of new planters lovingly looked after by local residents and Broomhill Bank School students. The station is hosting two displays: local photographs by Sevenoaks Camera Club and posters by Swanley History Society. Students from nearby music college SupaJam are working on a sound art project at Swanley and other stations along the Line.



# Residents have their say on Sevenoaks Business Park

During the autumn, we asked for views on our proposals for a new business park on Otford Road, Sevenoaks.

The site is currently used for storage and previously was a Kent County Council household waste recycling centre. The land is well developed with buildings and tarmacked ground. But, in recent years, the site has been under utilised so we want to put it into better use to support our local economy.

We are proposing four, small industrial units with a drive through. These would provide much needed business space and new jobs, benefitting local people.

Around 50 people attended our drop in event in September and nearly 100 people completed our survey.



The headlines from the survey were:

- 58% believed the Business Park would support the local economy, 20% were not sure
- 56% supported building the business park on already developed land, 38% were not sure
- 79% said it should include energy saving features (solar panels, low carbon heating, electric vehicle charging points and a cycle shelter), 10% were not sure
- 90% said the site should include planting to support biodiversity, 4% were not sure
- 56% supported the choice of materials for the building exterior, 35% were not sure

The proposal is now being refined following the consultation. We intend to submit a planning application in the New Year.

For the latest news on the business park, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/businesspark](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/businesspark).

## Free training for businesses

Lots of local businesses and their staff are taking advantage of our free SEEDL online learning courses.

Described as the 'Netflix of live learning' and the 'Peloton for the brain', SEEDL offers an entire education library. More than 200 courses are available covering a wide range of topics to help employees develop new skills and employers to improve their performance.

Each course lasts an hour and is delivered in real time giving participants the chance to get involved and ask questions. Recordings of each course are available after.

There's no limit on the number of courses a business or employee can take.

To view all the courses on offer, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/seedl](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/seedl).



## West Kent Expo is back!

Following this year's West Kent Expo, we're excited to announce the event is coming back for 2025!

West Kent Expo showcases the local economy giving businesses the chance to network with others.

This year's event took place in March with 50 exhibitors and close to 500 people in attendance.

Next year's Expo takes place on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at the River Centre in Tonbridge. The event is free to attend with paid for exhibition and sponsorship opportunities.

To find out more, visit [westkentbusiness.com/expo25](http://westkentbusiness.com/expo25) or email [expo@westkentbusiness.com](mailto:expo@westkentbusiness.com).







# Smash the New Year blues

Free 'Head in the Game' badminton sessions start in January in New Ash Green.

The 12-week programme aims to promote mental health through sport and is open to players of all abilities. The sessions provide a welcoming space for residents to improve their game while relieving stress and anxiety.



The sessions begin on Monday 6 January at 6pm at Ash Green Sports Centre.

To sign up, visit [headinthegame.co.uk](http://headinthegame.co.uk), email [info@headinthegame.co.uk](mailto:info@headinthegame.co.uk) or call 07507 268045.

## Help reducing your energy bills

Schemes are available to help residents, usually on low incomes, to reduce their energy bills by better insulating their home or installing efficient heating.

### Home Upgrade Grants

Grants are available for residents with a household income of £36,000 or below who do not use gas to heat their home. The home must also have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D to G. If you do not have an EPC, one will be completed on application.

Once you apply, we will arrange for an initial assessment of your home. Energy saving measures will then be recommended. These might include air source heat pumps, solar energy systems, loft or cavity wall insulation.

Find out more at [www.gov.uk/apply-home-upgrade-grant](http://www.gov.uk/apply-home-upgrade-grant).

If you have any questions or need help, please email us at [psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk).

### Great British Insulation Scheme

Households in lower Council Tax bands, with less energy efficient homes, may be entitled to upgrades such as roof, loft or cavity wall insulation to cut their energy bills.

To be eligible, you must live in a property in Council Tax bands A to D with an EPC rating of D to G.

Find out more at [www.gov.uk/apply-great-british-insulation-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/apply-great-british-insulation-scheme).

### Independent energy advice

Citizens Advice, based in Sevenoaks and Swanley, have a specialist Energy Advice team providing free, confidential, impartial advice and support. They can help you to understand your energy bills, check for financial support you may be eligible for and offer advice on energy debt.

Call their freephone advice line on 0808 278 7810 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email [energy@nwkent.cab.org.uk](mailto:energy@nwkent.cab.org.uk).

## FREE Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces are community or business places that provide a safe and friendly space where people of all ages can spend time reading, studying, chatting with others and meeting new people.

Generally they provide free Wi-Fi, tables and chairs, tea and coffee making facilities and toilets. Most are accessible for people with disabilities.

Warm Spaces are free to enter and some offer support, services and advice.

Full details can be found in our Warm Spaces directory at [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/warmspaces](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/warmspaces).

# Calling all landlords

For many years, we've been helping landlords find tenants while offering financial and practical help. Now we've launched an enhanced scheme offering landlords even more incentives and reasons to join.

Our new 'Sevenoaks Landlord Hub' is free. It can quickly find the right tenant for your property without parting with any agent fees.

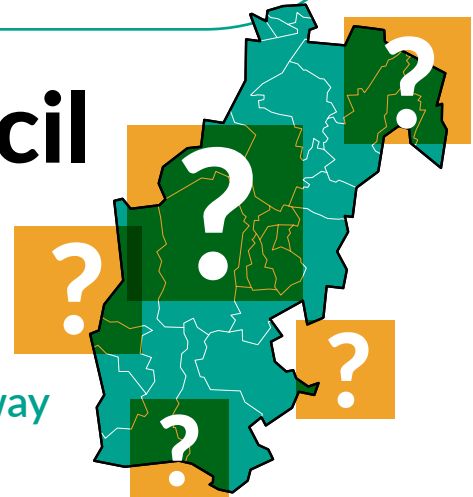


The scheme includes comprehensive support for all tenants through our HERO service. This includes saving money on fuel, debt and benefit advice, help finding work and more.

For more information or an informal chat, contact our Landlord Liaison Officer on **01732 227000** or e-mail [slh@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:slh@sevenoaks.gov.uk).

## Views sought on Council ward boundaries

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has launched a consultation to review the way wards are made up across the Sevenoaks District.



The Commission has not undertaken a review of the Sevenoaks District Council wards since 2003. Since that time, house building and population change has caused some imbalance in the number of electors each Councillor represents.

As part of the review, the Commission has decided there should be 48 Sevenoaks District Councillors from the next District Council elections in May 2027. Currently the Council has 54 Councillors.

The Commission is now considering how the existing District ward boundaries need to change so that each ward has roughly the same number of electors per Councillor and reflects the current communities.

The Commission is keen to hear from local residents and others about how best to draw up these new ward boundaries. You can have your say by 20 January 2025 at [www.commission.org.uk/all-reviews/sevenoaks](http://www.commission.org.uk/all-reviews/sevenoaks) or by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk).

Alternatively, you can write to: Review Officer (Sevenoaks), The Local Boundary Commission for England, 7th Floor 3, Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ.

Once this consultation closes, the Commission will publish its proposals for the new District Council ward boundaries on 15 April 2025 and there will be an opportunity to have a final say from 13 May to 21 July 2025.

Any proposed changes to the District Ward boundaries would not affect the existing boundaries for Kent County Council, MP constituencies, or the external boundaries of Sevenoaks District.

Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, says: "We are looking for your views, as local people, on how you think wards in the Sevenoaks District should be drawn up so they reflect local communities and identities.

"By telling us about where you live and where you access local services, it will help us to create appropriate and meaningful boundaries.

"It might be something as straightforward as where you go for shops, schools or a sporting venue, whether you see a road, park or river as a dividing feature or the heart of a community, or which areas have joint projects."



# West End stars come to Sevenoaks for The Stag panto!

Once again, some of the best talent from the West End will be spending Christmas in Sevenoaks, joining everyone's favourite comic, Silly Billy, and Dame Elaine Staige.

**WIN**  
tickets to  
this year's  
Panto

Courtney Stapleton, best known as one of the Queens in the West End smash hit musical Six, will play the Wicked Queen in Snow White. Courtney also played Belle in the UK tour of Disney's Beauty and the Beast, and had roles in Les Misérables, Mamma Mia, Bat Out Of Hell, Dear Evan Hanson and Love Never Dies.

Returning for her third panto season in Sevenoaks, Billie Hardy (The Time Traveller's Wife, Chicago, Bat Out Of Hell) will play Snow White. Fellow West End performer Michael Levi, who played Bob Crewe in the West End production of Jersey Boys, as well as appearing in Kinky Boots and Walk Like A Man, will also join the cast to play the Prince.



Sam Hall, who's most recent musical director credits include Standing On The Sky's Edge (West End), The Bodyguard (National Tour), School Of Rock (West End, National Tour, International Tour) is once again Music Supervisor and Musical Director.

To book tickets, go to [www.stagevenoaks.co.uk](http://www.stagevenoaks.co.uk), call the box office on **01732 450175** or visit the Theatre in person, open everyday between 1pm and 8pm.

Sign up to The Stag's mailing list and write "Yes" besides 'In Shape Panto' on the form to be in with a chance of winning two tickets to Snow White.

## How to report used nitrous oxide cans

Nitrous oxide, also called 'laughing gas', damages the health of users. The canisters also pose a danger to our staff.

Nitrous oxide has health impacts for users. It can lead to mental health problems, a weakened immune system and damage to the lungs and brain.

It's also a Class C drug. Possession or sale for recreational purposes is a criminal offence. Anyone caught with nitrous oxide could face a caution, community service, a fine or up to two years in prison.

The cans, and other gas canisters, also pose a serious danger to our waste collectors and street cleaners who pick them up. They can explode in the back of collection vehicles, injuring staff.

Because of the risks, we make special collections for discarded nitrous oxide and other gas canisters.

To report the location of discarded gas canisters, please email [information@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:information@sevenoaks.gov.uk) or call **01732 227000**.



# 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.

Conservative (C)  Liberal Democrats (LD)  Green Party (G)  Sevenoaks Independent (SI)  Independent (I) 



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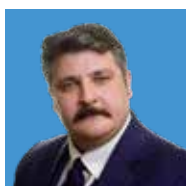
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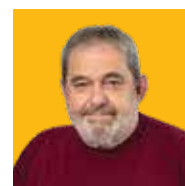
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## How to contact your District Councillors

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](http://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**.



## 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](mailto:community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.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 X visit [@sdc\\_csp](https://twitter.com/sdc_csp)

### Tackling domestic abuse

For support and advice for victims of Domestic Abuse, call the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Service on **01892 570538** or visit [www.davss.org.uk](http://www.davss.org.uk)  
For the Community Domestic Abuse Programme for men call **07933 359210** or visit [www.kentcdap.org](http://www.kentcdap.org)

# Meet our new Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Officer

As part of our pledge to reduce domestic abuse in the District, we have employed a Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Officer with a focus on violence against women and girls.

Julie Hall has worked in the field of domestic abuse for over 20 years. She is a qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advocate and certified Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Throughout the year, Julie will be hosting Violence Against Women and Girls 'Walk and Talk' sessions where anyone can come along to talk in confidence about their situation.

Julie says: "I am very passionate about this cause and my role at the Council is to raise awareness, help support domestic abuse victims and reduce the risk to survivors and their children.

"Christmas can be an especially difficult time for those in abusive relationships or those at risk. We want you to know that help and support is available.

"There are local support services that you can contact over the Christmas period including the Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS), Kent and Medway Victim Support, Refuge, Look Ahead and many more.

"If you are in serious danger, always call 999."

If you'd like to contact Julie or the team, email [community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk).

For information on local services, including dates of the 'Walk and Talk' sessions, visit [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/domesticabuse).

### Support services

Numbers for local and national organisations that you can contact safely:

- Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) - **01892 570538**
- Victim Support - **0808 168 9111**
- Look Ahead (support and housing) - **0333 010 4600**
- National Domestic Violence Helpline - **0808 2000 247** (open 24/7)



## White Ribbon Day

As a White Ribbon accredited organisation, we participated in the White Ribbon 16 days of action for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). We held our annual VAWG conference, created an awareness video and encouraged male colleagues to take the pledge to never excuse or remain silent about violence against women and girls.





# Prepare for winter

As the weather turns colder and wetter, now is the time to start thinking of the steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

## Flooding

Flooding is a very real threat for many people and can become a problem very quickly, but you can prepare by taking the following steps:

- Find out if you're at risk and sign up to the free flood warnings at [www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk).
- Do not drive through floodwater and keep children and animals away from flooded areas.
- Prepare for a flood, including creating a flood plan [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)



## Pavements and roads:

For details of winter gritting and snow clearance, visit Kent County Council's website at [www.kent.gov.uk/highways](http://www.kent.gov.uk/highways)

## Waste and recycling collections:

During freezing weather, our collections may be cancelled. If we're unable to collect your sacks and bags, please take them inside and put them out again the following week on your usual collection day, unless we advise otherwise.



Keep-up-to-date



[www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)



@sevenoakscd



sdc\_newsdesk



01732 227000

## Sevenoaks District Council at your fingertips

### Main Office

Argyle Road, Sevenoaks,  
Kent TN13 1HG

01732 227000

Open Monday to Thursday 8.45am to  
5pm and Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm.

Emergencies (outside our usual hours)

01732 227000

then listen to the options.

### Leisure centres

Ash Green Sports Centre\*  
01474 707164

Edenbridge Leisure Centre\*\*  
01732 442364

Lullingstone Park Golf Course\*\*  
01959 583019

The Olympic, Swanley\*  
01322 669201

Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club\*\*\*  
01732 451889

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre\*\*  
01732 442365

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 independent limited companies  
\*\* Operated by Everyone Active



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### In Shape advertising

Sevenoaks District Council accepts paid-for advertising in In Shape to pay towards the magazine's production costs.

**Disclaimer:** Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content of these advertisements, Sevenoaks District Council cannot accept any liability for errors or omissions contained in any advertisements provided by an advertiser. Sevenoaks District Council does not accept any liability for any information or claims made by the advertisement or by the advertisers. Sevenoaks District Council does not endorse or recommend any advertiser.

In Shape is available in other formats  
and can be explained in other  
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