

InShape

The newsletter of Sevenoaks District Council



Wheelie BIG NEWS
Your new wheelie bin collection
service is coming soon

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for the summer
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McArthur
prepares for a
high-octane year



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Coming soon

your new wheelie bin waste collection service

To help recycle more and reduce waste, we're introducing new wheelie bin collections for most households.

The new service starts from **12 October 2026** when alternate weekly collections begin – collecting your waste one week and recycling the next.

Most households will receive wheelie bins. However, a small number, such as flats above shops or homes without reasonable storage or access, will continue with their current collection arrangements. If you live in one of these properties, we will contact you separately.

Food waste collections will not be affected, and we will continue to collect your food waste every week.

Why are we making the changes?

In the Sevenoaks District, studies show a large amount of recyclable material is being placed in with the general waste. Councils across Kent that use wheelie bin collections typically capture more of these materials, helping to increase recycling rates and reducing waste sent for disposal.

Introducing wheelie bins will also make recycling easier by providing more capacity, allowing you to recycle glass at home for the first time.



Your wheelie bins

If your property can accommodate bins, you'll receive:

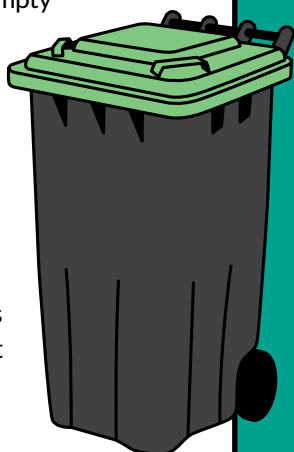
- One for all your dry recycling
- One for general waste

Your recycling wheelie bin

We'll provide you with a 240-litre bin with a green lid for recycling. All these clean and loose items can go in:

- Glass bottles & jars
- Newspapers, magazines & paper
- Cardboard boxes & packaging
- Metal cans, tins (including empty aerosols), bottle tops & lids
- Aluminium trays & foil
- Plastic bottles, tops, pots, tubs & toothpaste tubes
- Food & drink cartons, including Tetra Paks

If your recycling bin is full, we'll take flattened cardboard boxes – simply leave them neatly next to your recycling bin on your recycling collection day.



Your general waste wheelie bin

We'll also provide you with a black 180-litre bin for your general household waste.

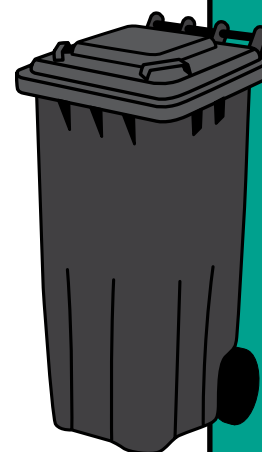
If you're recycling everything you can, and avoid creating unnecessary voids, you'll be able to fit all your waste into this bin.

Never put food waste in this bin. Instead, use your food waste caddy that's collected every week. This will help you manage the space in your black waste bin and keep it fresher.

Once we introduce wheelie bin collections, we will not collect waste or sacks left next to or on top of your bin. If your waste is not in your bin, it will not be collected.

In other areas, this has helped residents recycle more and make better use of their food waste collections. It will also protect our staff by reducing manual handling and the risk of injury from heavy sacks and hidden sharp objects.

Households with a genuine need for additional waste capacity may apply for an assessment once they have received their bins. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may take several weeks to process.



Timings

With over 100,000 bins to distribute, deliveries will take several months. They started on 13 July and will be finished by early October.

Alternate weekly collections from the wheelie bins will begin from **12 October 2026**. Please do not place your wheelie bins out before this date, but you can start to fill them the week before.

Before the new service starts, we'll let you know which bin to put out in the first week and how to check your future collection dates online.

Putting your bins out for collection

Put your bin out by 7am on your collection day as times may vary without notice. Food waste and wheelie bins are collected by different trucks at different times of the day.

Leave your bins at the edge of your property close to the road, or at your agreed collection point.

With the introduction of the new service, collection points for some households may need to change. Where properties are located some distance from where collection vehicles can safely operate, bins may need to be presented at a designated collection point closer to the roadside.

Make sure your bin lids are closed. Overflowing bins may not be collected as they pose a danger to our staff when tipped into the trucks.

Your reusable recycling bag

These bags will no longer be used once the new wheelie bin service begins from 12 October. Recycling must be placed in the wheelie bin after this date.

If you no longer wish to keep your reusable recycling bag for another purpose, we will collect it for recycling in early 2027. We will provide further information nearer the time.

During their time in service, the reusable recycling bags have saved over £200,000 and around 4 million single use clear plastic bags. Recycling rates also increased by 3.5%.

But, since their introduction, new regulations have required us to provide a simpler system with reduced manual handling for our staff.

Assisted collections

Many residents find wheelie bins easier to move than sacks or bags. If you are considering applying for an assisted collection, we recommend trying your new bins first.

If, due to a mobility issue, you're unable to move your bins to your collection point, and no one else is available to help, you can apply for an assisted collection.

If you currently receive an assisted collection, you do not need to reapply. However, some collection arrangements may change as part of the new service.



the **BIG** recycling
UPGRADE



Further information

For further details about the changes, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/wheeliebins.

Thank you for supporting our food waste collections!

Thousands of residents are getting behind our new service that generates renewable energy and fertiliser for farmers while cutting waste disposal costs.

In April, we introduced food waste collections for most homes in the District for the first time.

Many residents are already taking part with more joining in all the time.

Cllr Irene Roy, the Council's Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, says: "I want to thank everyone who is supporting our food waste collections. By doing so, they're cutting the District's carbon footprint and saving money. I also want to thank residents for their patience as we introduced a brand-new service from scratch."

What's happened to your food waste?



In just **nine weeks**, since collections began on 27 April 2026 to the end of June (just before *In Shape* went to print), we collected 550 tonnes of food waste



Food waste is taken to a Kent-based 'Anaerobic digestion' plant



There it's put into large, sealed containers where natural bacteria break down the food



This process produces natural gas, which is captured for energy production



550 tonnes of food waste will produce 165,000 kilowatts of energy – that's enough to power at least 61 average sized family homes for a year!



It will also produce around 500 tonnes of liquid fertiliser used in farming



And it will save Kent County Council around £90,000 in disposal costs compared to being disposed of with general waste



Want to get involved?

If you're not currently using our food waste collections, we'd love you to take part!

If you've lost or mislaid your food waste caddies, let us know and we'd be happy to replace them.

Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/foodwaste or call us on **01732 227000**.

Out by 7am until collection!

You may not be aware, but food waste is collected separately from your general rubbish and recycling.

This means we'll collect your food waste at a different time from your general waste and recycling. It could be after your other waste has been collected.

To make sure your food waste is collected...

- Put your orange and black food caddy out by 7am on your collection day
- Leave your caddy close to the road, or at your agreed collection point, and visible to our crews
- Don't take your caddy in until it's been emptied – this could be up to 4pm.

Family Fun Days are back!

Our ever popular and **FREE** Family Fun Days return for four weeks of action-packed activities over the school summer holidays.



As ever, our Family Fun Days include crafts, games, sports, face-painting and more in a friendly and safe environment.

Kent Police will be on hand to offer free bike marking at some locations too.

There's no need to book, simply turn up and have fun. However, children must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times. Activities are provided for children up to age of 11, but they may not be suitable for very young children.

Please bring waterproof clothing and sunscreen. Refreshments and toilets are available at locations where indicated.

We recommend you check our website or our social media accounts before setting off as the schedule may change if there's wet weather.

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

The days are funded and organised by us, run by Play Place and supported by town and parish councils.

Family Fun Day dates and locations:

Key	
	Toilets
	Refreshments
	Bike marking

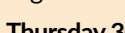
Monday 27 July
10.30am to 1.30pm
Chipstead Recreation Ground,
Chevening Road, TN13 2SA



Tuesday 28 July
10.30am to 1.30pm
Hextable Heritage Centre,
College Road, BR8 7LT



Wednesday 29 July
10.30am to 1.30pm
Farningham, Market Meadow,
High Street, DA4 0DH



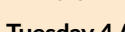
Thursday 30 July
10.30am to 1.30pm
Dunton Green Recreation
Ground, TN13 2UR



Friday 31 July
10.30am to 1.30pm
Crockenhill Village Hall,
Stones Cross Road, BR8 8LT



Monday 3 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
West Kingsdown, Gamecock
Meadow, London Road,
TN15 6BZ



Tuesday 4 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Sevenoaks, Greatness Recreation
Ground, Mill Lane, TN14 5BX



Wednesday 5 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Swanley Park, New Barn Road,
BR8 7PW



Thursday 6 August
2pm to 5pm
Edenbridge, Stangrove Park,
TH8 5LU



Friday 7 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Chiddingstone Causeway
Sports Field, Tonbridge Road,
TN11 8JS

Monday 10 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Seal Recreation Ground,
High Street TN15 0AF

Tuesday 11 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Hartley, Woodland Avenue
Recreation Ground, Woodland
Avenue, DA3 7DB

Wednesday 12 August
1.30pm to 4pm
Knockholt Recreation Ground,
Main Road, TN14 7LG

Thursday 13 August
10am to 1pm
Westerham, King George's
Playing Field, Costells
Meadow, TN16 1BN

Friday 14 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Halstead Pavilion, Recreation
Ground, TN14 7DH

Monday 17 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Sundridge Recreation Ground,
Main Road, TN14 6EJS

Tuesday 18 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
New Ash Green, The Minnis,
DA3 8HH

Wednesday 19 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Shoreham Recreation Ground,
High Street, TN14 7TB

Thursday 20 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
South Darenth, Heathside
Recreation Ground,
DA4 9AZ

Friday 21 August
10.30am to 1.30pm
Leigh The Green,
TN11 8QP

Rediscover a transformed wildlife haven

Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, home to a diverse range of plants, fungi, birds, dragonflies & damselflies

This summer is the perfect time to explore Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, one of the area's most beautiful green spaces, where peaceful lakes, reedbeds, grassland and woodland create a rich haven for wildlife.

At the heart of the reserve, the Harrison Visitor Centre has been transformed. Reopened in March following a £2.1 million refurbishment by Kent Wildlife Trust, it has been significantly upgraded to create a welcoming, accessible hub for visitors of all ages, and it's well worth a visit.

A striking feature of the new centre is its seamless connection to the outdoors. Full-height glass doors open onto a spacious viewing deck overlooking West Lake, offering uninterrupted views across the water. On a warm, clear day, it's an ideal spot to pause and take in the sights and sounds of the reserve, from ducks gliding through the reeds to the call of a reed warbler drifting across the water.

Inside, visitors will find a bright, modern café serving barista-style coffee, homemade cakes and a selection of hot food. Whether you're meeting friends, enjoying a quiet moment with a view, or refuelling after a walk, the café provides a relaxed and scenic place to sit back and soak up the surroundings.

Set across 73 hectares, the reserve supports more than 2,000 recorded species, making it one of the most wildlife-rich sites in the county. Summer is one of the best times to visit - the reedbeds are alive with reed warblers and reed buntings, dragonflies hover over the water, and wildflowers bring bursts of colour to the landscape. Woodland and scrub support all three species of woodpecker - including the elusive lesser-spotted - alongside chiffchaff, blackcap, treecreeper and bullfinch. Along the water's edge, grey herons are a year-round presence, and patient visitors are often rewarded with a flash of electric blue as a kingfisher darts low over the surface.

A key aim of the refurbishment has been to ensure that more people can experience this special place. New accessible features include additional disabled parking, upgraded toilets, hearing loops and improved pathways, making it easier for everyone to explore the reserve.

Families will find plenty to enjoy too: a nature-inspired play area invites children to climb, balance and explore, interactive digital maps help visitors plan their route, and audio benches dotted along the trails add opportunities for discovery.

The centre continues to play an important role in education and community engagement, hosting school visits, workshops and seasonal events throughout the year. It's a place where people can connect with nature, learn more about local wildlife and enjoy time outdoors together.

From a relaxed coffee overlooking the water to a peaceful walk around the lakes, or a family day spent exploring the outdoors, the revamped Harrison Visitor Centre is the perfect starting point for a summer visit.

For more information, visit www.kwtg.uk/sevenoaks-centre



Sevenoaks Harrison Visitor Centre following its £2.1 million refurbishment. Photo © IFP Visuals

Huge step forward for Bradbourne Lakes improvements

In March, we secured a £1.6m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver major improvements to Bradbourne Lakes in Sevenoaks.

This significant investment marks a major milestone in our long-term ambition to restore and revitalise one of the District's most cherished public spaces.

The funding will support our Bradbourne Re-bourne project — the most extensive overhaul of the lakes since their creation nearly 300 years ago. This investment represents one of the largest heritage and landscape restoration projects ever carried out in the District.

The site, originally part of the Bradbourne Estate, comprises five interconnected ornamental lakes dating back to 1740 that feed the River Darent.

This grant, combined with more than £500,000 of funding secured from housing developers, will enable a wide programme of heritage, ecological and community-focused improvements.

Preparation works including designs, surveys, tree works and planning

consent, are now in place and we have appointed most of the contractors. Work will begin in autumn 2026 and includes:

- Draining and restoring all five lakes, using reclaimed and locally sourced materials where possible
- Repairing and upgrading sluices, bridges, leaks and lake banks
- Removing silt and repurposing it to create new reedbeds and vegetation zones, boosting biodiversity and improving water quality
- Enhancing green spaces with new wildflower planting and improved pathways
- Developing a new natural play area, installing an accessible toilet, and new homes for bats and birds

Throughout the project and after the restoration works have finished, a programme of volunteering, community engagement,

educational and wellbeing-focused activities will be delivered in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust, West Kent Mind, South East River Trust and Historic England's Rejuvenate project.

Cllr Irene Roy, the Council's Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, says: "Everyone at the Council wishes to wholeheartedly thank The National Lottery Heritage Fund for this substantial grant. This project would simply not be possible without their help.

"Bradbourne Lakes are a jewel in the heart of the community, and this funding means we have the green light to move ahead with our ambitious plans to restore and enhance this unique heritage landscape.

"I want to give credit to the Bradbourne Residents' Association, who have been campaigning since 2012 to regenerate the lakes. Thanks to their hard work and input into our plans, we've secured this important source of funding so residents now, and into the future, can enjoy this wonderful park."



Representatives from the Council and the Bradbourne Lakes Residents' Association.

Bradbourne Lakes events

Over the summer, South East River Trust will run volunteer water monitoring projects and Youth Angling workshops at the Lakes.

West Kent Mind will also provide free wellbeing activities for adults living or working in the Sevenoaks District, including Walk and Talk Groups that combine walking with conversation to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing.

To view the full list of activities and events, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bradbournelakes.



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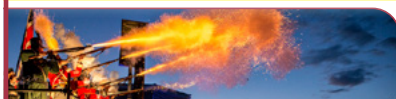
Holiday Highlights

- September - Royal Sandringham
- February '27 - Fête du Citron
- April '27 - Keukenhof and other Dutch Surprises
- May '27 - Spring in the Isles of Scilly
- May '27 - Great Gardens of Cornwall
- June '27 - Monets Garden, Versailles and other Great French Gardens

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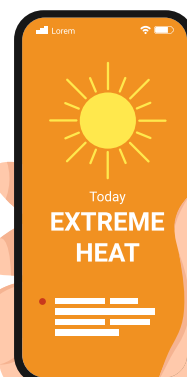
Earlier waste collections during heatwaves

As heatwaves become more common, we have to start our waste, recycling and food waste collections earlier in the day to help protect our crews from the hottest temperatures and maintain a safe, reliable service.

During periods of hot weather, collections may begin from 6am or earlier.

If hot weather is forecast, please put your waste out the night before your collection day to ensure it is available for collection.

Thank you for supporting our collection crews.



Another chance to comment on the Local Plan

You can have your say on the updated Local Plan from 23 July 2026 for eight weeks.

What has happened so far?

Last year, we asked for views on our draft Local Plan. We received more than 28,000 comments from more than 5,000 residents and organisations.

1,150 people also attended one of our 30 face-to-face 'Pop-up' sessions.

All the comments have been analysed and considered and published on our website.

What changes have been made to the updated Local Plan?

Some sites have been removed. The reasons include landowners deciding to withdraw their sites and others now considered unsuitable for development.

A small number of new sites have been added. This follows, for example, recent Government changes to National Planning Policy to support new developments close to existing transport infrastructure, such as train stations, and where new sites have become available for development.

What happens now?

The updated Local Plan is due to be published from 23 July to 17 September 2026 (subject to Councillor agreement).

This is formally known as the Regulation 19 Publication.

At this stage, you cannot suggest new development options. Instead, your comments must focus on whether the new Local Plan is compliant with the relevant legislation and if it is 'sound', in other words based on evidence, meets future need, is deliverable and promotes sustainable development.

How you can have your say

View the updated Local Plan and have your say at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/emerginglocalplan.

You can also comment in writing.

 Email: planning.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk

 Write to:
Regulation 19 Publication
Comments, Planning Policy,
Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle
Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG.

Paper copies of the Local Plan will be available to view at local libraries and our office in Sevenoaks.

What happens after the consultation closes?

The revised Local Plan, along with the comments, will be submitted to Government later this year.

A Government appointed Planning Inspector will examine the Local Plan in 2027 when the public comments will be considered.

If approved by the Planning Inspector, the new Local Plan will be used to help decide planning applications from 2028.

What's in the new Local Plan?

The Local Plan will guide what can be built and where between 2027 and 2042. It includes sites, put forward by landowners and developers, to meet the Government's housing target of 17,460 new homes.

While the Local Plan will utilise already existing built-up areas and brownfield land, the Government's amended planning laws require us to consider Green Belt land to meet its housing target. However, the Local Plan will continue to protect 98% of the Green Belt and the District's natural environment and unique and historic character.

Failing to meet the housing target could lead to the Local Plan being refused by the Planning Inspector followed by Government intervention. The District would then be open to piecemeal development making it hard for public services, like the NHS and education and transport providers, to plan for the impact of new housing.

The Local Plan also includes proposals to support the economy and new infrastructure such as schools, shops, health centres and improved public transport.



Landmark birthday for Farningham Woods!

This year marks 40 years since Farningham Woods was officially opened as a Nature Reserve by Sir David Attenborough in September 1986.

To mark this special occasion, exciting plans are being drawn up to improve the site for both wildlife and visitors.

The reserve is one of the District's most treasured landscapes. Not only is it home to a wealth of rare flora and fauna, it offers stunning views across the Kent countryside.

The 68-hectare site is jointly owned by Sevenoaks District Council and Farningham Parish Council. It is a designated ancient woodland dating back at least 400 years, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

It is home to the largest colony of the nationally rare Deptford Pink and Small-leaved Lime, a rare tree found in only one other area in Kent, and other species including Lily of the Valley, hellebores and several types of orchid.

For at least 250 years, Farningham Woods Nature Reserve has been managed by traditional coppicing. This is where trees are cut on a cycle to encourage regrowth. It creates a rich mosaic of habitats, supporting the remarkable diversity of wildlife found at the reserve today.

While the aftermath of coppicing can look dramatic, this practise is vital for maintaining healthy woodland and supporting flora and fauna that depend on open, light-filled spaces.

Through careful management, the woods continue to flourish with some areas set to be coppiced once again from this September.

A 1.6 mile walking route takes in most of the reserve, and thanks to its elevated position, you can enjoy spectacular views to Dartford to the north and Sevenoaks to the south.

The reserve is very much a place of partnership and community. Earlier this year, nearby Eagle Heights supported biodiversity improvements by installing bird and bat boxes in time for the 2026 nesting season.

Sally Ames, Director of Eagle Heights, says: "Providing nesting spaces is a simple but effective way to support declining bird populations and encouraging biodiversity. We're proud to play a part in protecting and enhancing our local natural environment."

Tom Hart Dyke, the owner of Lullingstone Castle & The World Garden, visited in early June, and adds: "Farningham Woods has inspired my botanical journey, partly because of having the honour of meeting Sir David

Attenborough in September 1986 and partly due to the exceptional flora within this gem of a nature reserve. How can anyone not be enchanted by the wondrously, glistening pink flowers of the very rare Deptford Pink?"

As part of the reserve's celebrations, Farningham Parish Council is looking to introduce new waymarkers, maps and information boards for visitors.

Our Countryside Rangers are also producing a new management plan to ensure the woods continue to thrive, so they can be enjoyed by future generations.

To discover more about Farningham Woods Nature Reserve, its wildlife, and how to get there, visit www.farninghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/page-farningham_woods



Some of the bird boxes supplied by Eagle Heights for the wood



Tom Hart Dyke at Farningham Woods



Sir David Attenborough at the official opening of Farningham Woods Nature Reserve



Countryside Rangers put up a bird box donated by Eagle Heights

New Chairman is raring to go!

Cllr Margot McArthur, a self-confessed 'petrolhead' is gearing up for a full throttle year as our new Chairman.

From a young age, Margot tinkered with cars and, while studying for psychology, social science and business degrees in Nottingham and Manchester, she would regularly spend her spare time in the university garages.

Margot says: "For as long as I can remember, I've had a passion for petrol power. It may sound unusual, but I built my first kit car at university. I feel completely at home working on cars be it replacing a carburetor, rewiring a loom or rebuilding an engine.

"I'm also a huge fan of rally car racing and do my best to attend as many events as possible."

Margot grew up in the north, the midlands and Scotland and settled in Edenbridge some years ago.

She owns a consultancy advising local companies and central Government about efficiency, restructuring, recruitment and the development of staff and services.

Margot is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, having worked in the UK and many places overseas for major brands and industry-leading organisations.

She is also a member of the Employment Appeal Tribunal, an appointment made by the Queen.

Margot was elected as our Chairman at the Annual Council meeting on 14 May 2026, and says: "I'm deeply honoured and excited to take on this role. During my year, I want to promote our wonderful District and forge new relationships."



Margot McArthur with a kit car she built while studying at university.



"I will be supporting my charity Bore Place. They do amazing work to support wildlife and the environment, and their focus is helping children and young people with additional needs through enjoyment of the natural world and outdoor activities.

"I have seen firsthand how this charity can make a real difference, so I'll be doing everything possible to raise money and awareness to support its amazing work."

Margot was elected to Sevenoaks District Council over ten years ago to represent the Edenbridge South and West ward. She served on the Cabinet leading on the early work to improve our waste collection services.

She was also a Kent County Councillor and has served as an Edenbridge Town Councillor for 15 years.

In her spare time, Margot enjoys travel and active sports, including sea and sand surfing, hang gliding and kayaking.

Margot is a trustee for three local charities, one being the Great Stone Bridge Trust Edenbridge which supports parish and town clubs and societies and awards educational grants.

She is also a volunteer for the Gatwick Passenger Advisory Group, which works to improve the customer experience at the airport.

Margot welcomes invitations to community events. To invite Margot, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/chairman or call 01732 227247.

Local heroes recognised!



Volunteers and community heroes have once again been honoured at our 'Making it Happen' Community and Voluntary awards.

Volunteers and community heroes have once again been honoured at our 'Making it Happen' Community and Voluntary awards.

Celebrity guests Dr Hilary Jones from Good Morning Britain and author and horticulturist Tom Hart-Dyke were amongst the presenters at the ceremony held on 18 June at St Nicholas' Church, Sevenoaks.

The awards celebrate the amazing volunteers and community groups across the District who selflessly give up their time to help others.

There were twelve categories up for grabs, including Community Safety Group, Contribution to the Environment, Local Hero and the Healthy and Wellbeing Award.

The prestigious Lifetime Achievement award went to Jan Berry for her 20 years in the voluntary sector, helping to protect victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment.

Cllr Kevin Maskell, the Council Leader and compere for the evening, says: "We had a fantastic ceremony full of inspirational people who help our most

vulnerable residents. It was wonderful to be surrounded by such selfless and caring people from across our community.

"With over 100 nominations, judging this year was very tough. Everyone who was nominated completely deserved their certificates and awards.

"I'd like to thank Dr Hilary and Tom Hart-Dyke and all the other presenters and those who attended for making it such a special evening."

For more information on the awards, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/voluntaryawards.



New spa coming to White Oak Leisure Centre

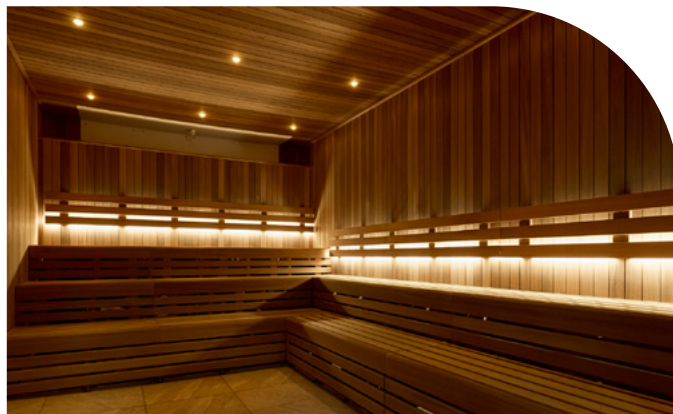
Residents across the District can look forward to enhanced wellbeing facilities at White Oak Leisure Centre, with a brand-new spa set to open in August.

Construction began in April on the £460,000 development, delivered in partnership between Sevenoaks District Council and Everyone Active. The new spa will be the first of its kind across the Council's leisure facilities.

The spa will include a sauna, infra-red sauna, steam room, aroma room and feature showers. In addition, two cold plunge units will be installed at the centre, with water temperatures reaching as low as 3°C. Cold plunge therapy involves brief immersion in cold water and is commonly used to help reduce inflammation, ease muscle soreness, and support recovery after exercise.

The new addition reflects growing demand for facilities that support both physical and mental wellbeing. Spa environments are widely associated with benefits such as improved circulation, reduced stress and relaxation, as well as helping to relieve minor respiratory symptoms.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, our Cabinet Member for People and Places, adds: "We're really excited to be working with



Everyone Active to provide a spa at White Oak, a first for our leisure centres in the District. The new spa will give our communities even more reasons to visit this popular centre."

The leisure centre opened in 2022 and has already undergone further upgrades, including a gym refurbishment in 2024 to cater for increased membership and usage.

Since opening, White Oak Leisure Centre has welcomed more than two million visits and remains a popular destination for residents.

To find out more, visit www.everyoneactive.com/whiteoakspa.

£2 million investment in Edenbridge Leisure Centre

Edenbridge is set to benefit from one of the biggest investments in its Leisure Centre since it opened, securing its future and enhancing its facilities for years to come.

In June we agreed to an exciting programme that could see around £2.2 million invested in the centre up to 2027.

The funding will be used to build on improvements already delivered over the past year, including a refurbished gym, new fitness equipment, cycle studio and café area.

The new improvement programme will include:

- Major upgrades to the wet-side changing village, including new lockers, flooring, and improved facilities

- Replacement of the sports hall roof to enable year-round use for sport and community activities
- Backroom improvements, including replacement boilers, heating systems and ventilation
- Improvements to the main entrance

The investment focusses on targeted, high-impact improvements that can be carried out at pace. We will also seek additional external funding to support further improvements such as investment in the all-weather pitch.

Cllr Michael Horwood, the Council's Cabinet Member Improvement and

Innovation, says: "Edenbridge Leisure Centre is highly valued by the local community, and our decision to invest more than £2 million demonstrates our strong commitment to its future.

"With the sudden imposition of Local Government Reorganisation, we wanted to invest in the centre to ensure the boilers, roof and changing rooms are all renewed and replenished before being handed over to the new unitary authority.

"This investment allows us to make major improvements, enhancing the experience for users and supporting health and wellbeing across Edenbridge and the surrounding villages."

Why weight to get into shape?

Going it alone when losing weight is never easy, which is why our One You team is on hand to help you every step of the way.

One person who decided to make the move to a healthier lifestyle is Sharon Thomas from Sevenoaks.

Sharon, 58, had struggled with her weight throughout most of her adult life. She was referred to our One You 'Why Weight' course after she was advised to lose weight for an operation.

Sharon says: "I found the team to be very welcoming. They listened and understood my challenges. I was reassured that it was a safe and confidential space.

"It was daunting to walk into the room on the first day of the 12 week course, however, the team made me feel at ease. With their professionalism, kindness and understanding, my fears went away."

The Why Weight course covers in-depth nutrition, including food diaries, meal planners, help with portion control and recipes. It also covers motivation, exercise, goals, mindfulness and the importance of sleep, all of which feed into creating a healthier lifestyle.

Sharon says: "I found learning about goal setting, willpower and motivation very enlightening. I was weighed weekly during the course, and my waist was measured. It's never easy, but it was done in such a respectful way, that it seemed okay.

"Course members gradually made progress through the weeks, we were all encouraged to share successes in the safe space. Weight loss gradually started to happen as things taught were put into practice. Some of us also joined the gym which we still go to together now, as friends rather than classmates."

Sharon has now lost an amazing four stone, got her BMI to a healthy number and is now eligible for her surgery.

She adds: "The outcome of the support I received, I can honestly say has been life changing.

"I feel that I have been given the knowledge I need, to go forward into a healthier future and feel sufficiently equipped to take responsibility for my weight and ultimately my health.



"Losing weight is really only the beginning of the benefits. I am more active, I move more easily and feel younger and healthier.

"I want to encourage everyone out there needing help to seek this course out."

If Sharon has encouraged you to take the first step, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/oneyou

Community asset transfer update



As we prepare for Local Government Reorganisation, we've been transferring valued assets to local town and parish councils.

We recently introduced a community asset transfer scheme so eligible property could, in future, be managed by organisations closer to the communities they serve.

Assets that generate an income for this Council or that are needed to run our services were not eligible. Assets would be transferred on financial values based on the guidance from Government, our independent external auditors, and valuers, where appropriate.

Since January, we have agreed to transfer 16 assets. Most are parks and open spaces as well as Otford Scout Hut and land relating to the Archbishop Palace.

We also considered a transfer request from Sevenoaks Town Council for the Stag, which is leased to the Town Council on a 25-year agreement with nine years remaining.

In June, the Town Council were offered two options for the Stag: one to purchase it outright at its 'restricted existing use' value of £650,000, the other for a new 30-year lease on a peppercorn rent.

Both options would allow the Stag Trustees and the Town Council to secure new funding to invest in the Stag.

Cllr Julia Thornton, the Council's Cabinet Member for Finance, says: "This year, we approved most community asset transfer requests and, with The Stag being recommended for transfer, we have demonstrated our commitment to enabling community stewardship."

"The Stag Community Arts Centre is a much cherished cultural and community asset providing theatre, cinema, arts and education not just to Sevenoaks town residents, but also communities throughout the District and beyond."

"We have always been clear that we support the transfer of The Stag to the Town Council to enhance local stewardship, so we have done everything we can to offer the best possible deal allowed by the law and guidance."

Crunch time for Local Government Reorganisation

In July, the Government will announce how Kent's councils will be restructured from April 2028.

Central Government wants councils in Kent to work in a different way.

Under the current arrangements, Kent County Council delivers some services like education, social services and roads, and the 12 district and borough councils deliver other services, like waste collection, planning and housing.

The Government wants to replace the current system with unitary councils that will deliver all council services in one area.

In recent months, the Government has been considering five proposals put forward by Kent's councils. They ranged from one single unitary authority for the whole of Kent through to the county being split into five unitary council areas.

As *In Shape* went to print, the Government had not announced how Kent's councils will be restructured.

Once it reaches a decision, the details will be published on our social media accounts, in the local press and on our website at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/lgr.

Town and parish councils would not be affected by the changes.

Council Leader, Cllr Kevin Maskell, says: "Local Government Reorganisation is the biggest change to how councils in Kent will operate in more than 50 years."

"There will be many opportunities, as well as challenges. But, as we move forward, I want to make sure we are in the strongest possible position to get the best for our residents while ensuring service delivery remains consistent and meets our high expectations."

New affordable homes and community improvements in Edenbridge



Council Leader, Cllr Kevin Maskell, Adam Jenner, Head of Property Development, West Kent Housing Association, and Cllr Michael Horwood, Cabinet Member for Improvement & Innovation.

The biggest investment in the Spitals Cross estate in a generation is nearing completion.

Work to provide much-needed affordable homes, a shop and community centre and off-road parking are set to be completed during the autumn.

The £10.3m project includes 23 affordable homes, which will be transferred to West Kent Housing Association later this year. Nineteen will be available to rent to people on the Housing Register with the remainder available as shared ownership properties.

Other improvements include a new social club and shop, replacing the existing 1960s buildings that required improvement and modernisation.

Sixty new off-road parking bays, including 25 with electric vehicle charging points, are also being provided to serve the new homes and the wider estate.

Cllr Michael Horwood, the Council's Cabinet Member for Innovation and Improvement, says: "We're excited to be delivering the most comprehensive package of improvements on the Spitals Cross estate since it was built.

"Local people had told us that finding a parking space was difficult. While the shop and club had served the community well for generations, the buildings had become dated and expensive to run. We have listened, and I believe we are giving residents the new facilities and amenities they deserve and need.

"The new homes are helping to pay for the project, and working with West Kent, they will be available to residents on our housing waiting list."

New milestone for Sevenoaks regeneration

Wates has been appointed as the preferred contractor to take forward our ambitious plans to regenerate the Land East of Sevenoaks High Street.

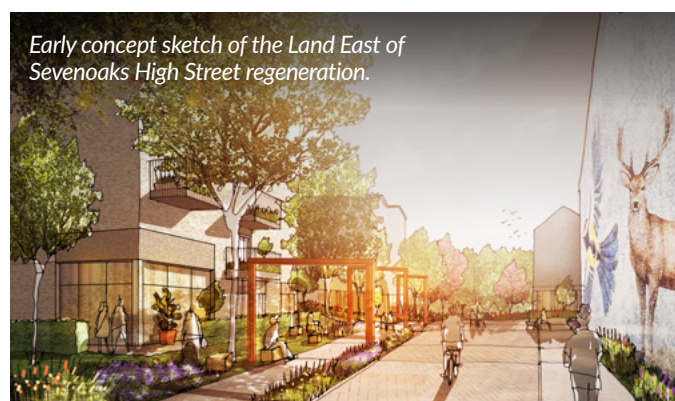
We want to enhance the Buckhurst Lane and Suffolk Way areas, helping to make the town an even more vibrant and welcoming place to live, work and spend time.

At the heart of the project is a brand new, energy-efficient, modern leisure centre. The project also includes a cultural hub and market hall at 96 High Street, improved public transport links, green spaces, a green corridor to Knole Park, and energy-efficient homes.

The value of the overall project is estimated to be around £150 million and is expected to be self-financing with income from the new homes paying for the leisure centre and other public improvements.

In the coming months, Wates will produce early project designs for the public to have their say. Following consultation, the designs will be updated and refined before submitting a planning application in late 2027. Subject to planning consent, construction could begin in 2028.

Cabinet Member for Improvement & Innovation, Cllr Micheal Horwood, says: "We're really excited to be working with



Early concept sketch of the Land East of Sevenoaks High Street regeneration.

Wates. They have an impressive track record of delivering major, high-quality construction projects and working closely with local communities to shape places that people can truly be proud of. They will be bringing forward plans, alongside a series of engagement events, giving the community a real opportunity to influence the future of the scheme."

For more information about the project, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/landeast



Between 13 and 29 March, our Better Together Community Hub supported the Great British Spring Clean 2026.

They worked with Town and Parish Councils to organise 14 litter-picking events in Edenbridge, Swanley, Sevenoaks, Eynsford, Horton Kirby, South Darenth and Crockenhill.

A variety of volunteers including residents, school children and police cadets collected a whopping 214 bags of rubbish over the two-week event.

Our street cleaning and waste collection teams also played a key role

in supporting the clean-up, equipping volunteers with litter pickers, bags and high-visibility jackets, as well as arranging additional collections to ensure waste was promptly removed from across the District.

The Council's Cabinet Member for People and Places, Cllr Lesley Dyball, says: "The Great British Spring Clean was a fantastic opportunity for our communities to come together and tidy up the places we care about. Even small

actions like litter-picking can make a big difference to how a place feels.

"We are very lucky to live and work in a beautiful part of the country and it's great to see so many people take pride in where they live."

If you wish to find out more about local initiatives and volunteer litter-picking groups in your local area, please reach out to contact@bettertogethercommunity.org.uk

Let's cook together!

FREE

Learn how to make cost-effective, nutritious and delicious meals whilst reducing your food waste with our free 'Let's Cook' in person cooking classes!

Cooking is such an important life skill, and our courses will help you prepare homemade meals on a budget that are also healthy and tasty!

In Shape spoke with three people who have taken part in a previous course in Edenbridge to find out what they thought.

David Cooper, 60, says: "I wanted to improve my range of cooking options and develop an interest in cooking more at home.

I learnt to read food labels correctly and it gave me the confidence to give anything a go in the kitchen."

Daniel Clackett, 35, says: "I signed up to meet new people and build my confidence doing something I enjoy. The team were informative and supportive making the experience fun and memorable."

Wendy Greenwood, 66, added: "I thoroughly enjoyed the course and had a good time with everything.

I learnt to make things from scratch and how to cut down on food waste. My favourite dish was the chicken curry."

If you would like to take part in a free cooking class, our next one will take place in New Ash Green, starting on 15 September.

Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/cook to book on to a class.

Bridging the last mile for rail passengers



Sevenoaks and Otford are the latest stations in Kent to host an on-site car club under a new pilot scheme launched by Southeastern and Enterprise Car Club.

Car Club members can choose to hire cars for short or longer periods, making it possible to reach local attractions or enjoy our amazing green spaces by rail.

The new car club vehicles, available in dedicated bays at both stations, can be booked via the Enterprise Car Club app or website.

The move aims to address a lack of onward connections for passengers in the last mile of their journeys. By creating more options, Southeastern aims to encourage and enable more people to travel by train, supporting more sustainable travel choices and reducing reliance on private vehicles.

Cllr Lesley Dyball, the Council's Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "This is a wonderful new initiative that will give

flexible onward travel options for many visitors coming to our area by train.

"Local attractions, countryside and open spaces, that could otherwise be difficult to reach, will now be easily accessible, offering visitors the convenience of local car travel, tailored to their needs. This is a bonus for visitors and our local hospitality businesses."

Sevenoaks District Council supports the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership which promotes travel on the rail line serving Sevenoaks, Bat & Ball, Otford, Shoreham Eynsford and Swanley.

Bat & Ball Station also has a car club run by Enterprise and Sevenoaks Town Council.

Swim safe!

Whilst open water swimming has many benefits, there are also dangers to consider when taking a dip.

As the weather heats up, more of us may be tempted to go for an outdoor swim.

However, lakes, ponds and rivers can be murky, hiding hazards such as rocks, logs and uneven surfaces and it can also be difficult to tell the depth. Open water is usually colder than water in a pool, so it can make you go into shock.

There are things you can do to keep safe. Here are our top five tips:

- Follow the signage – if it says it's not safe to swim, don't go in
- Look around – if there is no one else swimming, there may be a good reason for it
- Don't go alone – make sure you have someone with you and tell others where you are going
- Check your exit – make sure you can clearly see where you can exit the water. Also look for trip hazards
- Be prepared – check the weather and, if applicable, the tide before you go and make sure you have the correct gear.

If you see someone in trouble in open water, call 999 and ask for the Fire Service. Look around for any lifesaving equipment.

There might be a life ring or throwline – throw them to the person in the water and try to pull them in. It's natural to want to help the person in trouble while rescue services are on the way, but you should never enter the water to try to save someone.

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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 Reform (R)

 Green Party (G)

 North Sevenoaks District Independent Group (NDI)

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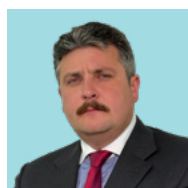
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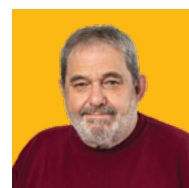
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How to contact your District Councillors

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 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

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**

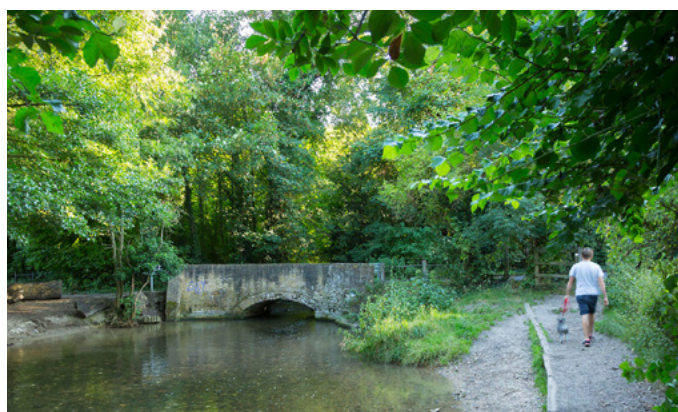
Social media

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

Taking action for residents



Recently, we asked for residents' views on introducing two Public Space Protection Orders to combat seasonal anti-social behaviour at two locations in the District.

The Community Safety Partnership is aware of problems, often during the summer months, in Riverside, Eynsford and Westminster Fields, Horton Kirby, which can cause distress to residents and visitors.

The issues include verbal abuse, excessive alcohol consumption, nuisance parking, blocking some roads, motor racing and motorcycle stunts.

Earlier this year, two Public Space Protection Orders were approved by our Councillors to prohibit these specific issues. They give the Police and the Council powers to issue warnings and fixed penalty notices to anyone who flouts the Orders.

They also prohibit behaviour which is likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress. Anyone causing trouble is not permitted to return to the areas within 24 hours.

Both Orders will be in place from July 2026 for three years.

Before we agreed the Orders, we asked residents for their views. Almost 300 people responded to our consultation with the majority agreeing to our proposals.

The Council's Cabinet Member for People & Places, Cllr Lesley Dyball, says: "Anti-social behaviour, including the niggly things like consistent, inconsiderate parking, makes life

difficult for residents. We have listened carefully to our communities who have concerns about behaviour at both locations, especially during the warmer, longer days, and we are taking decisive, pre-emptive action.

"We have worked closely with the Police, the Environment Agency and Eynsford, Horton Kirby and South Darenth Parish Councils to introduce the two Orders so we're ready to minimise any issues that may arise later this year."

If you are concerned that a Public Space Protection Order is being breached, you can contact the Community Safety Partnership on community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call **01732 227000**.

Don't lose your vote!

We are carrying out the annual canvass to update the Electoral Register, which lists the names and address of everyone who can vote.

Every household in the District will be contacted by email or post to check if the details we hold are correct.

It's quick and easy to respond to the canvass. Please read our communication carefully and follow the instructions to make sure your details are accurate on the register.

If you are a postal voter, you may already have received an email or letter from us inviting you to reapply for your postal vote.

Following a change in the law, the length of time you can hold a postal

vote has changed from indefinitely to a maximum of up to three years. We are in the process of contacting everybody who is due to reapply by 31 January 2027. If we don't receive a new application now, we'll write to you again later in the year.

If we contact you, it's important that you reapply for your postal vote and respond to your annual canvass communication if you need to.



Sevenoaks District Council at your fingertips

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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 Everyone Active

- ▲ Operated by independent limited companies



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