

InShape

The newsletter of Sevenoaks District Council



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Best roofing and building company - good rep over 30 years, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Kent and Sussex



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Your new reusable recycling bag is on its way!

Make a big difference to the environment by recycling more of your waste using your new reusable bag.

We are phasing out clear recycling sacks and introducing 'Reusable Recycling Bags' to most households. For operational reasons, we are unable to include properties using communal bins, flats and certain properties in New Ash Green. We'll be writing to households who will not receive a reusable recycling bag.

You'll receive your new recycling bag between Monday 23 September and the end of the year, and you can use it straightaway! Please continue to recycle in clear sacks until you receive your new bag.

What is a 'Reusable Recycling Bag?'

The reusable bag is weighted, waterproof and resealable and when full is approximately 600mm (2 feet) wide by 600mm (2 feet) deep and 900mm (3 feet) high. It holds about three full clear sacks worth of recycling. The bag folds up for easy storage too.

When you receive your new bag, you should write your house number or name in the space provided with a permanent marker.

How do I use it?

Place all your recyclable items, including paper, cardboard, cans, foil and plastic bottles, pots and trays, directly into your recycling bag, and leave it outside on your normal collection day by 7am.

To keep your bag clean, and to support effective recycling, all recyclable items should be clean and dry.

Why are we doing this?

Recycling rates in the Sevenoaks District are low and we want to encourage everyone to recycle more of their waste. With your new, large recycling bag, we hope you will do this and increase our recycling rates.

Introducing the reusable bag will save us driving 30,000 miles every year to deliver clear sacks to most households, reducing our carbon emissions. By replacing clear recycling sacks it also cuts down on single use plastics.

The change will also save over £200,000 a year, helping to protect our frontline services.

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner & Greener, says: "Our new reusable recycling bag is good news for the environment. Not only will there be a reduction in single use plastics, our trials found households recycle more of their waste using this bag.

"It's a tried and tested system that's in use by 130 councils across the country.

"We are committed to continual improvement and finding new ways to deliver a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable waste collection service whilst retaining high levels of customer satisfaction."



For more information, including questions and answers, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/recyclingbags.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



By reducing waste, reusing items and recycling more, you can help protect our environment and bring our costs down, which ultimately keeps your Council Tax bills lower.

Recycling is the cheapest way to deal with your waste and is more cost efficient than landfill or incineration. The money saved can be spent on other important Council services.

Over 50% of people admit to putting things in their general rubbish when it could have been recycled. Often, we feel just putting a couple of items in the bin instead of recycling won't make a difference. But the truth is if we all recycled just a few items more, it would make a huge difference and help us prevent climate change and save money.

Remember waste sacks are only for household waste and should be kept to a minimum. They should not be used for commercial waste or household clear outs, which should be taken to a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Here are some ideas which needn't cost any extra effort and which could make a huge difference!



Reducing waste

The easiest way to reduce waste is not to create it in the first place. Buying products with less packaging or using less single use plastics is key to reducing waste.

Easy changes you can make include:

- Using fewer single use plastic bottles
- Buying products with less packaging – for example many supermarkets sell loose fruits and vegetables which you can package in recyclable bags
- Bringing your own re-usable coffee cups
- Using refills which cuts waste but also saves money
- Composting it.



Reuse

Using things again, instead of throwing them away, can also help reduce waste and save you money.

















Many items which regularly get thrown away have additional uses or can be donated to charity to help others. Ideas include:

- Reusing or repurposing items such as old clothing and towels, which make great cleaning cloths etc.
- Cardboard boxes and glass jars make great storage containers
- Upcycle and repurpose your furniture, shelves etc.
- Reuse plastic sandwich bags
- Old toothbrushes make great cleaning tools



Recycling

It's common not to know whether something can be recycled, so we've put together a helpful summary of how and where to recycle. Remember, everything should be clean and dry.

What	Where	Remember
 Paper & card  Foil & foil trays  Food tins & drink cans  Empty aerosols  Plastic packaging & trays (not black)  Cartons  Toiletry & cleaning bottles (without tops)	Kerbside in your reusable recycling bag or clear recycling sacks	No nappies, batteries, plastic film and bags, black plastic trays etc. Please remove tops and lids from spray bottles. Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/recyclingbags for more information
 Paper & card  Glass  Clothes & shoes	Recycling banks	Visit our website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/recyclingbanks for your nearest site and what materials can be accepted. Remember to leave recycling banks tidy and never leave items that can't be recycled at the site – that's fly tipping and you risk prosecution
 Food waste	Compost at home	Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/compost to view the latest deals on compost bins and food waste digesters
 Clothing, footwear & household items	Charity doorstep collections	We're working with Anglo to collect these items, who will donate a tree for each booking made. Make a booking, at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/anglo
 Grass cuttings, leaves & other organic debris	Kerbside Garden Waste collections	We collect garden waste, every two weeks. You can choose to do this in a small or large bin or in our garden waste sacks. Find out more, including charges, at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/gardenwaste
 Batteries	Shops & supermarkets	You can recycle most single use batteries at shops and supermarkets that sell batteries. Take rechargeable and large batteries to a Household Waste Recycling Centre
 Bulky items such as furniture and white goods	Collection from outside your home	We offer a competitively priced, large item collection service. Book at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/largeitems or call 01732 227000
 Most items	Household Recycling Centres	View the location of your nearest centre, what can and cannot be accepted and book a slot at www.kent.gov.uk/waste

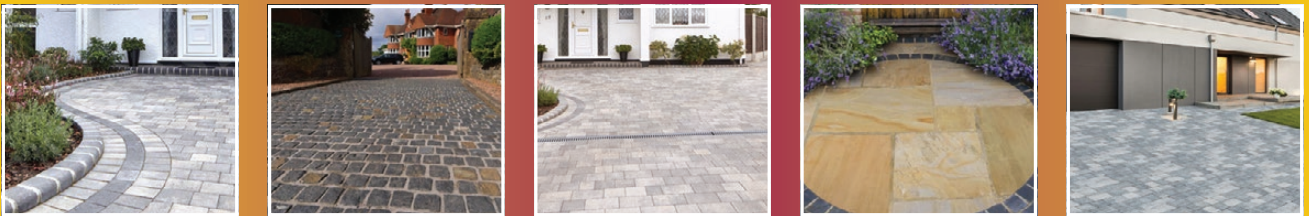
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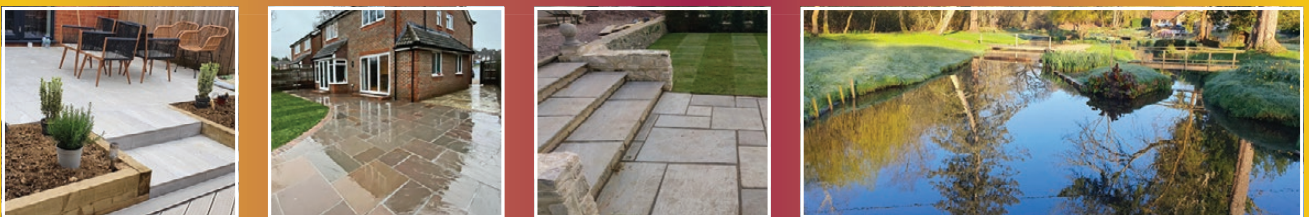
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Young people get arty in Edenbridge!

We've been working with pupils from Edenbridge Primary School and the House Youth Club to produce a mural depicting the past, present and future of the Spitals Cross estate.

The colourful mural was painted on a temporary hoarding around the site of the new shop and community hall we're building on the estate in Edenbridge.

The mural project was led by award-winning street artist, and Council employee, Graham Upton. Earlier

this year, young people took part in workshops with Graham to sketch out their ideas. The children then had the exciting opportunity to spray paint the mural with Graham over the summer.

Pupils from Edenbridge Primary School were especially thrilled that

the fox made an appearance in the final design as this was one of their favourite ideas.

Connie, a Year 5 pupil from the School says: "I loved being part of something that everyone will see. If you step back and look at it, it looks really good!"

Cllr Michael Horwood, our Cabinet Member for Improvement & Innovation, adds: "It is brilliant to see Edenbridge young people getting involved and allowing their ideas to be brought to fruition in this local art project."

The art project was funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Pupils from Edenbridge Primary School worked on the mural



Local ward Councillors, James Morgan and Angela Baker, with artist Graham Upton

White Oak Leisure Centre unveils £200,000 gym upgrade

White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley recently completed a £200,000 gym upgrade, following a significant surge in membership.

Managed by Everyone Active in partnership with us, the centre experienced a remarkable 58% increase in members since opening in February 2022, prompting the investment to enhance its facilities. The refurbishment transformed the gym floor, doubling the number of Olympic squat racks from two to four and introducing new strength training equipment, including a plate-loaded glute drive, standing calf raise, bicep curl, and tricep extension machines.

An upgraded functional area now features a Life Fitness rig with two

half racks, wall ball targets, and a battle rope, alongside the addition of a Ski Erg to provide a full-body workout.

In response to the growing demand for post-workout recovery, a dedicated relaxation zone was created, complete with theraguns for stretching and recovery.

The gym also underwent aesthetic improvements, including fresh paint, enhanced lighting, additional mirrors and new protective flooring in the weight training area.

Hasan Romel, Area Contract Manager at Everyone Active, says "The surge in membership we've experienced is a testament to how popular our facility has become within the community.

"This gym upgrade ensures we can meet the growing needs of our members by providing first class equipment and a state-of-the-art workout environment. We look forward to welcoming everyone to experience these exciting new improvements."



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Grab a grant to support your group

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

Our grants scheme helps to fund volunteer-led services, activities and projects within the Sevenoaks District that meet our community's priorities.

To find out more and apply, please visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communitygrants.

The closing date for applications is **12 noon on Wednesday 9 October 2024.**

Successful applicants will receive their funding in April 2025 and will need to complete their services, activities and projects by the end of March 2026.

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

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The MiPermit app is available on the App Store and Google Play by searching for 'MiPermit'.

See the side of our ticket machines for details of text payments.



Restoring a river

The River Darent, which runs through the heart of the District, could be set for a revival thanks to a new local partnership.

The Darent is a globally rare chalk stream, one of only 200 in the world. The 21 mile river begins near Westerham, meandering through open countryside and many of our towns and villages, before eventually making its way to the Thames.

Over thousands of years, the Darent has been altered, straightened and adapted to enable farming, transport and, in more recent centuries, industry. This, combined with water extraction and invasive species has led to a huge reduction in biodiversity in and around the river.

But the Darent Valley Landscape Recovery Project is working to restore the ecology of this precious river, along with the wider landscape.

The project is currently led by Kent Wildlife Trust and other groups, working in collaboration with 20 landowners and managers, including ourselves, who collectively form the Darent Nature Partnership.

In 2022, it secured DEFRA funding for the initial development phase of the project.

Marc Crouch, the Project Manager, spoke with In Shape about the scheme. "This is an ambitious, long-term project that aims to create and enhance a mosaic of connected habitats to support nature's recovery in the Darent Valley," says Marc.

"Over the years, farmers and landowners have sought to reverse

the decline of the river with positive environmental changes. But we can achieve much more with all of the landowners working together.

"The improvements could include re-creating wetland habitats, bringing back flood plains and reducing the manmade barriers that stop fish and other wildlife from moving freely up stream.

"The next steps are to secure further funding for the project. If successful, we hope to see more native wildlife in the coming years, including Yellowhammers, Water voles, Lapwings, Adders, Man orchid, Water crowfoot and Brown trout."

If you'd like to know more about the project, visit <https://darent.org>.



Photo courtesy of Jennie Showers

The River Darent in open countryside



Photo courtesy of Castle Farm

Summer flowers at Castle Farm, Shoreham

Cutting our carbon emissions

In the past year, the Council's carbon emissions have dropped by more than 200 tonnes!

This is due to several changes, including a more efficient energy supply at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre, more efficient waste collection rounds as well as improvements to our fleet.

We know there's more to do, but with more energy efficiency initiatives planned, including solar panels at White Oak Leisure Centre, we should see further reductions in the years ahead.

You can view our Carbon Emissions Report for 2023/24 at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/climatechange

What next for our Local Plan?

Local Plan update after the Government increases and mandates housing targets.



Our new Local Plan will set out what can be built and where from 2025 to 2040 and includes the annual housing target set by Government. We had intended to consult on the final version of the Plan early in the New Year.

However, in July 2024, the new Government proposed a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which included new mandatory housing targets for every council.

The housing target for the Sevenoaks District jumped from 704 to 1,113 new homes a year between 2025 and 2040, a huge 58% increase.

Failing to ensure the right number of homes are delivered means that we could lose powers to prepare our own plan and decide future planning applications in our area.

The Government has also proposed changes to the Green Belt, by encouraging developers to prioritise 'Grey Belt' sites – sites which are considered to be poor quality Green Belt land.

The Government is consulting with councils on its proposals until 24 September and will publish the final version of the NPPF by the end of the year.

Cllr Julia Thornton, our Cabinet Member for Development and Conservation, says: "While we remain fully committed to protecting the overwhelming majority of our Green Belt, we will have a duty to do everything we can to meet the Government's new mandatory housing targets. However, the proposed uplift in new homes is significant and will be particularly

challenging in our District, which is 93% Green Belt, the second highest percentage in the country.

"We will respond to the Government's NPPF consultation robustly to raise our many concerns.

"Once the Government has published the new NPPF, we will set out how we can proceed with the revised Local Plan. We have completed most of the work already, so we should be able to move forward quickly at that stage. But we will need to carry out some updated studies to identify if there are any more suitable sites for the required extra housing and to build in time to allow for additional public consultation on our Plan."

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MOT tests start from £54.85, and you can book at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/mot or by calling 01732 227000.

Appointments are available Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 3.30pm so book today!



Cutbacks that benefit nature!

With the arrival of autumn, we'll soon begin coppicing in our woodlands. But some people are horrified when they see us cutting down trees. They think we're damaging the environment, removing the very plants that produce the air we breathe.

But in truth, coppicing has huge benefits for nature in and beyond our woodlands. *In Shape* spoke with David Crouch, our Countryside Manager, about all things coppicing.

David says: "Coppicing is an ancient woodland management technique that dates back to the Stone Age. It involves cutting trees at their base to create a 'stool' where new shoots soon grow. Despite popular myth, this operation does not kill the tree. It does the opposite and prolongs its life.

"Coppicing would provide a regular supply of firewood and timber. Traditionally, the long straight poles produced by coppicing would have been used for fencing, building materials and locally even for hop poles!

"Today we coppice to benefit nature. Our main woodland sites are Shoreham and Farningham Woods, but we also coppice at our smaller sites, including Oxenhill Woods.

"Coppicing opens up land to sunlight, allowing a wider range of plants to flourish. This creates a wider range of habitats supporting a much greater diversity of species. After lying dormant, deprived of sunshine, ground plants such as bluebells, wood anemones and marsh marigolds burst into bloom.

"The soil is also disturbed during coppicing and this rejuvenates the seed bank. We now have notable rare plants at our sites, including the endangered Deptford Pink.

"It's not just plants that benefit. Dormice depend on the diverse type of woodland created by coppicing.

They are naturally tree-living and this replenished habitat provides them with food and shelter and a safe way to travel through woodland without setting foot on the ground.

"At Farningham Woods, coppicing and opening of the woodland has allowed bramble, young shrubs and heath to grow back, the perfect habitat for nightingales. You can now hear them singing here for the first time in many years.

"The coppiced wood we produce doesn't go to waste. Some is dried for firewood or chipped for bio fuel at Kent's wood burning power station. It is also used for fences, benches, stiles and stakes for hedge-laying in our woodlands and parks.



Woodland after coppicing. It soon grows back supporting a wider range of plants and wildlife.

"Most tree species can be coppiced, but the best suited are our native trees including hazel, sweet chestnut, ash and lime. Depending on the species, the trees are coppiced every eight to 20 years. We coppice in rotation to ensure the woodland always has a mix of ages to support a wider range of habitats and biodiversity.

If you'd like to know more, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/countryside.



David Crouch (right) with our Countryside Team

Meat a commercial waste customer

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

Our service is reliable, uncomplicated and flexible to suit your changing needs. But don't just take our word for it! *In Shape* spoke with Batchelors Butchers in Riverhead, a long-time customer of the service.

The award-winning butcher is owned by Graham Batchelor, whose parents Derek and Anne Batchelor started the business in Dunton Green in

1963, taking over the shop based in Riverhead in 1976.

Batchelors pride themselves on high quality products, expert knowledge and excellent customer service. Their motto is to always make sure customers leave with a smile on their face, and with that attitude, it's easy to see why they have a loyal customer base who come back year after year.

Batchelors have had many loyal staff over the years with the current team comprising of Joe Dolly, Anthony Church and Charlie Browning.

Charlie says: "We look after our customers and our customers look after us! We're also champions of

local produce, so it seems only right that we use a local commercial waste provider for our business. Sevenoaks District Council offers a great service; they are always quick to respond to queries and they get things sorted in a timely and efficient manner.

"I would 100% recommend this service to other businesses. There's always someone helpful at the other end of the phone and it's good to know that our waste will be disposed of in the correct way."

If you'd like to join Batchelors Butchers and become a Commercial Waste customer, find out more at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/commercialwaste



Charlie Browning from Batchelors butchers.

Free training for local businesses



Businesses and their staff now have access to hundreds of free online learning courses.

More than 200 courses are available covering a wide range of topics to help employees learn new skills and employers to improve their performance.

Each course lasts an hour and is delivered in real time giving participants the chance to interact and ask questions. Recordings of each course can be viewed afterwards.

There is 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.

Boost for employers and employees



Local employers can now access funding to take on new staff through our 'Workboost' scheme.

Employers can claim a grant to pay for new staff who would work up to 21 hours a week for a maximum of 12 weeks at the minimum wage.

Workboost staff have to be:

- Aged between 18 and 24 years old and out of work or underemployed or
- Anyone who has been unemployed or underemployed for over a year or
- A person with a disability of any age.

Underemployment refers to people who are in work but are working fewer hours than they desire or are overqualified for their job.

As well as gaining valuable work experience, the staff will receive additional training and support. This includes skills and communications training, CV writing and help applying for work.

For details of the scheme, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/workboost.

One year of Meeting Point!

Over the summer, Meeting Point in Swanley celebrated its first birthday in style with a special event.

The business hub in the heart of Swanley held a networking evening for the local business community that included a talk from marketing expert Natalie Sharp.

The packed-out event also highlighted the extensive events programme at Meeting Point and the free business support available.

Our Cabinet Member for Improvement & Innovation, Cllr Michael Horwood, says: "It was a fantastic and well attended evening to celebrate our Swanley business hub being open for one year.

"Natalie's talk on 'The Secret Ingredients of Marketing' was insightful and informative and it was great to see local businesses from Swanley and beyond networking in the spacious events area.

"Meeting Point isn't just a great space for events but also offers hot desking, a meeting room and private offices. Whether you're a new start-up looking for a high street presence, an established business looking for low-cost accommodation, or a homeworker looking for a vibrant place to work alongside others, they have a range of competitively priced options."

With hot desking packages to suit all budgets and schedules, see what Meeting Point can do for you.

Call the team on **01732 443041** or visit **www.meetingpoint.org.uk**.



New Business Park for Sevenoaks

We are proposing to regenerate our former depot at Otford Road, Sevenoaks to provide new business units, supporting the local economy.

The site is currently used to store waste bins and previously was a Kent County Council Household Waste Recycling centre (better known as the tip).

The land is extensively developed with buildings and tarmacked ground. But in recent years, it has been under used. We want to put the site into better use to support our local economy and our communities.

We are proposing four, small industrial units with a drive thru. These would provide much needed business space and would create new

jobs, benefitting local people. We've already had interest from businesses keen to take space at the site.

The finished units would remain in our ownership and would be leased out.

We shared our ideas with the community on Saturday 14 September at an open event at Bat and Ball Station.

If you didn't get a chance to come along, you can view and comment on the proposals, at **www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/businesspark**. You can have



An artist's impression of the proposed Business Park

your say until midnight on Sunday 6 October 2024.

Once we've considered all the comments, we will review our plans and we intend to submit a planning application over the winter.

Back to sports how to keep your child active during the new school year



Following the summer holidays, it can be hard to get back into the swing of the new school term. Amongst new timetables to learn and homework to tackle, it can be difficult to find time to prioritise your child's physical wellbeing.

Everyone Active are here to help as they host a variety of flexible sessions for schoolchildren. From award-winning swimming lessons to sports courses at your local leisure centre, they're helping hundreds of children to learn to prioritise their physical and mental health.

A splashing good time

Running 50 weeks a year, the award-winning swimming lessons are not just a fun activity but provide many health benefits such as improved strength, stamina and balance and wellbeing. With the help of its Swim England qualified teachers, Everyone Active has helped 2,141 children learn to swim in the last year alone, and in that time has welcomed 75,980 visits from children attending the learn to swim programme.

"We are a small, loyal team that put our swimmers first," says Mark Horne, Swimming Coach and Swim Manager at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre. "This allows us to not only know all the children by first name, but also the parents, achieving a family-first approach."

"Swimming is not only a great form of low impact sport for people with a wide range of conditions, it's one of the most important life skills we can teach children."

Beyond the pool

Out of the water, children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can get involved with a variety of sports courses. Including sessions open to all children up to the age of 17, the courses are all taught by qualified instructors in fun, safe environments and have been designed to help children advance at the right pace for them.

Children from the age of four have the chance to defy gravity with a trampolining sports course



every Thursday evening at White Oak Leisure Centre and every Wednesday evening at Edenbridge Leisure Centre, perfect for children who need to blow off some steam after the school day.

For those who prefer to keep their feet on the ground, on Fridays, a football sports course for those aged five and up is available at Edenbridge Leisure Centre during the school term, whilst a badminton sports course is available at White Oak Leisure Centre for those aged seven and above.

Parents and guardians of children on a sports course will have access to Sports Passport, a portal accessible via the Everyone Active app which is available to track a child's progress. An interactive system that joins together children, teachers, coaches and parents, Sports Passport is a safe online space that also allows children to follow along and view progress in their courses, play games and collect online trophies as an extra fun incentive to the schemes.

To find out more about children's activities, visit:
www.everyoneactive.com/centre/white-oak-leisure-centre,
www.everyoneactive.com/centre/sevenoaks-leisure-centre or
www.everyoneactive.com/edenbridge.

Celebrating a Swanley legend

In this edition of In Shape, we're honouring Carol Kent, who until recently ran White Oak Gymnastics club for 43 years!

Earlier this year, Carol became a grandmother for the first time, so took the difficult decision to retire and spend more time with her family and husband Malcolm.

Carol has made such an impact in Swanley, we thought it was only right to find out more about her amazing career.

Carol fell in love with gymnastics after watching Olga Korbut in the 1972 Munich Olympic games. Olga picked up three golds and for Carol, it sparked a lifelong passion for the sport.

After joining a gymnastics club in Crystal Palace, Carol eventually joined Cray Valley Gymnastics Club where her talent was quickly recognised.

Carol says: "I was placed straight into the squad, and I lived, breathed, and slept gymnastics! I competed in regional and national competitions, represented London and Kent and even competed in Germany with the team."

After she retired from her competitive career, Carol qualified as a gymnastics coach and spent two summers teaching her sport in Connecticut, USA.

In 1981, Carol was approached to take over the gymnastics sessions at White Oak. Having lived in Swanley her whole life, this was a perfect opportunity to give back to her community whilst doing something that she loved.

Carol's mantra was simple, give every child the opportunity to enjoy gymnastics in a fun and safe environment.

"Not everyone is a natural gymnast and my ethos was to encourage as many children as possible to take up the sport. If they were interested, they were welcome to join a class. We aimed to create a safe and welcoming environment and give our gymnasts an enjoyable and fulfilling experience".

Over her 43 years as a teacher, Carol has coached thousands of children, clocked up over 5,000 hours of training and even taught two or three generations from the same family.

In recent years, Carol moved the club over to the new White Oak Leisure Centre, where it has continued to thrive.

"It's been an incredible 43 years. My proudest moments are when the



Carol in action in 1978

parents come to our open days and celebrate with us just how much their children have improved and what they have achieved.

"It is always wonderful to see the difference you have made to a child's life and seeing them leave with a smile on their face is the best feeling.

Although Carol has retired from Head Coach at her club, her legacy will live on, and the Club continues to inspire young people to take up gymnastics.



Carol with Theodora 9 and Lauren 13 shortly before she retired

Silver Sunday is back!

There's lots of events and activities for older residents as part of this year's Silver Sunday celebrations.

Silver Sunday runs from Friday 4 October until Thursday 12 December 2024 and there's something for everyone - from Tai-Chi to coffee mornings, swimming to walking groups and lots more. Carers, friends and family members are welcome at all the activities.

Events include the Silver Sunday Fair at The Stag Plaza on Friday 4 October from 10am to 1pm. Older people are invited to this free event for information and advice about local services, support, hobbies and activities.

Silver Sunday Tea Dances offer older residents the chance to put on their dancing shoes and enjoy an afternoon of socialising, music and an afternoon tea. The dances will take place from 1.30pm to 3.30pm on the following days:

- Wednesday 16 October at West Kingsdown Village Hall
- Thursday 7 November at Hextable Village Hall



- Tuesday 19 November at Eynsford Village Hall
- Friday 22 November at New Ash Green Village Centre

And there's our ever popular 'Silver Bells' Christmas Parties at Hartley Village Hall on Thursday 5 December and the Bat & Ball Centre in Sevenoaks on Wednesday 11 December 2024. Both run from 12noon to 3pm. The free festive events include a buffet, music, dancing, games and more!

Open to all Sevenoaks District residents aged 55+.

To view all our Silver Sunday events and how to book your places, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/silversunday.

Alternatively, to request a Silver Sunday programme, please email communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call 01732 227000.

Silver Sunday started over a decade ago with a simple tea dance for older people. Within a few short years, it has transformed into a national campaign to celebrate the contribution of the over 50s while promoting social activities and bringing generations together.

The Royal Ballet and Opera comes to The Stag

The Stag will officially be a home to Royal Ballet and Opera screenings for the 2024/25 season.

The programme features many new productions streamed live from the Royal Opera House straight to the Sevenoaks cinema. Also included in the season are a mixture of live recordings of classic performances, including the festive hit, The Nutcracker, in December.

A new production of Wagner's Die Walküre, part of The Ring Cycle and known for the Ride of the Valkyries, will be a particular highlight of the season.

The whole season can be seen in full on The Stag's website. The Royal Ballet and Opera join The Stag's specially picked programme of event cinema, known as Stag Select. Amongst its inclusions are regular National Theatre productions, Exhibition On Screen documentaries, music concerts and independent films.

To book tickets go to www.stagesevenoaks.co.uk, call the box office on 01732 450175 or visit the Theatre in person, open everyday between 1pm and 8pm.



Try our 'Health and wellbeing' days at your leisure!



Older residents can sample leisure centre activities, and get advice, at our free 'Health and wellbeing' days.

Over 55s who live in the Sevenoaks District can come along to Sevenoaks, Edenbridge or Swanley White Oak Leisure Centres on certain days and times to try out the gym, swimming pool and take part in events in the main sports halls.

Our One You advisors and personal trainers will be on hand to offer free advice on exercise and nutrition.

There will also be an opportunity to have an NHS health check, speak to a diabetes nurse and get a strength and balance test.

There's no need to book and there will be free tea and coffee.

The days form part of this year's Silver Sunday events.

Free Health and wellbeing days:

- Wednesday 2 October 2024, 10am and 2pm - Swanley, White Oak Leisure Centre
- Wednesday 20 November 2024, 10am and 2pm - Edenbridge Leisure Centre
- Tuesday 3 December 2024, 10am and 2pm - Sevenoaks Leisure Centre

Change how you eat!



There are many reasons why our residents contact the One You team. Whether it's to lose weight, exercise more or quit smoking, our friendly advisors are on hand to help you all the way.



For Hayley Hayes from Swanley, it was because she had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and other conditions.

Hayley, 49, had tried to lose weight on her own but found it difficult to make any progress. She also struggled with exercise and slept a lot during the day.

Hayley's diagnosis was the push she needed to join our One You 'Why Weight' 12-week healthy eating course.

Hayley says: "The in-person group sessions taught me about eating, exercising, and portions, there was also an optional exercise class that we could take part in.

"Why Weight gave me different tools to support my journey, including showing me how to portion my food and change my eating habits. I also made friends in the group who were having problems and kept a food diary to see how to improve how much I ate and what to cut down on.

"As the weeks went on, I started to lose weight, nap less and exercise

more and I even didn't recognise myself in old photos!"

The biggest challenge Hayley faced was wanting to give up when she didn't lose weight and understanding that the process takes time and dedication. She's now realised it's ok if you slip up, you can start again the next day.

Hayley has now lost one and a half stone and an impressive 7cm off her waistline.

Hayley adds: "The people who run the Why Weight group are amazing and, from the bottom of my heart, I can't thank them enough!"

If Hayley's story has inspired you, find out more on our website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/oneyou.

FREE training to help the District go green

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 do the work.

However, we're working with MidKent College to provide free training for up to 30 people.

Most participants are expected to already be in the construction industry.

Courses range from basic trades training to advanced courses, including Level 5. They provide high-end



qualifications and skills to enable professionals to offer specific, technical advice to homeowners.

If you're an employer looking to develop new or existing staff, or you want to learn about retro fitting skills, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/retrofit.

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

Housing – here to help!



Our Housing teams do much more than just provide support and advice. They're here to help with lots of housing issues for both residents and landlords.

Pop in for housing advice!

If you want face-to-face help, support or advice about benefits, debt and housing, come to our monthly Housing and Community Hub.

You can discuss any issue or concern in confidence with us and our partners.

It takes place at our Council office in Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG. No booking is necessary.

The next sessions will take place on:

- Friday 27 September, 10am to 12pm
- Tuesday 29 October, 10am to 12pm
- Tuesday 3 December, 10am to 12pm.

Home energy efficiency

If you're on a low income, now may be a good time to see if you're eligible for help with home energy efficiency improvements. Visit www.gov.uk/apply-home-upgrade-grant for details.

You can also borrow our thermal imaging camera to see where heat is escaping from your home. The camera is popular and there may be a wait.

For home energy efficiency advice, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/energyefficiency, email psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call on 01732 227000.

Sevenoaks Landlord Hub

This scheme supports landlords who want to rent out their property without expensive letting and advertising fees. Every

landlord is matched with a suitable tenant by our experienced team.

Landlords also get access to other free benefits too, including EPCs and Gas and Electric Safety checks, financial help and support for their tenants.

To find out more, call our Landlord Liaison Officer on 01732 227000 or email slh@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Bringing Empty Homes back into use

We're working with Kent County Council's 'No Use Empty' scheme to bring empty homes back into use. It offers interest free loans, reduced commission from auction sales, expert advice and other support.

If you own an empty home and would like advice, visit www.no-use-empty.org.uk or call us on 01732 227000 or email psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Council electoral wards under review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is reviewing our ward boundaries and wants to hear what local people and organisations have to say.

Currently, Sevenoaks District Council has 54 Councillors. They are elected to 26 areas called 'wards'. Between one and three District Councillors represent each ward.

Since the wards were last reviewed in 2016, the electorate has increased in some wards more than others. This has led to an unequal distribution of electors for every councillor elected.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent organisation. Over the past year, they have held meetings with us ahead of the formal start of the review.

It is considering the number of councillors needed to represent electors, take decisions and to manage Council business.

It will publish its initial view on the number of Councillors needed on 22 October. They will then ask us and the public to give our views on the number of wards and ward boundaries, the number of councillors elected to each ward and the ward names.

The Local Government Boundary Commission will launch its consultation on 22 October 2024, and it will close on 20 January 2025. Around the time of the launch, it will hold a briefing session with interested community stakeholders.

From 22 October, you can give your views on the proposed ward boundaries:

- via the Commission website at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/sevenoaks
- by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk
- or by writing to:
Review Officer (Sevenoaks)
The Local Boundary Commission for England
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London, EC1Y 8YZ

Any changes will come into force at the next District Council elections in May 2027.

The final changes will not affect your address, town or village that you belong to or the outer borders of the Sevenoaks District.

Don't lose your vote!

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

We are currently writing to every household in the District to check if the details we hold are correct.

If your details are wrong, you may not be able to vote in future elections.

It's easy to respond to the canvass and in most cases, no action is required.

Please read our letter carefully. It will indicate if you need to confirm your details and if so, how to do so.

If your details need to be updated, the letter will tell you how to do this too.

Go paperless!

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



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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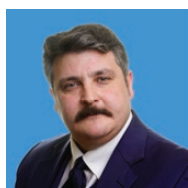
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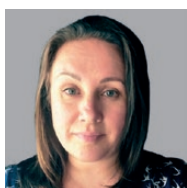
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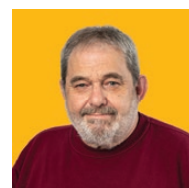
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How to contact your District Councillors

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

Keeping women and girls safe

Sadly, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) has surged by 40% in the last few years.

We want woman and girls to feel safe, so groups across West Kent, including the Community Safety Partnership, have produced a new plan to help address the problem.

The plan revolves around six key actions, which are:

1. To hold regular VAWG 'walks and talks' throughout the year
2. Continually look at data for any hotspots or trends
3. Ask the public about their priorities
4. Create a pack for schools, particularly aimed at boys, on the impact of violent behaviour
5. Provide free self-defence training for women and girls
6. Identify additional funding to continue our initiatives.



For more information, including where to seek advice and help, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/vawg.

Mental health support for young people

The modern world can be tough on young people and sometimes it can have an impact on their mental health.

It's important they get the emotional wellbeing and mental health support they need when facing difficult situations.

i-Thrive is a Kent-based website that offers free help to parents and young people who may be struggling.

The website has lots of tips on how to spot issues in young people, how to assist them or to signpost them to help. It also has lots of advice if a child has come to you for support.

Visit www.kentresiliencehub.org.uk/i-thrive for more information.

Another great resource for young people who are struggling with their wellbeing is Kooth. Kooth is a free, safe and anonymous online wellbeing service, available for anyone aged between 10 to 25 years old. It is a caring online community that includes support courses, counselling, discussion boards, self-help information and more.

For more information, visit www.kooth.com.

Say hello to Kent Family Hubs

Kent County Council has recently changed its support for families into one single place called the Kent Family Hub.

In our District, there are hubs in Edenbridge and Swanley. They offer support to children, young people and their families, from newborns to 19-year-olds, or up to 25-year-olds with special educational needs and disabilities.

To find out more call **03000 420995** for Edenbridge or **03000 421545** for Swanley. Alternatively, search 'Kent Family Hub' on www.kent.gov.uk.

Supporting an autism friendly District

A Kent and Medway partnership wants to hear from autistic people and others who are neurodivergent about their experiences of visiting public areas.

Autism friendly communities are towns and villages where autistic people are understood, respected, and included.

From trips to the local high street to visiting the NHS, autistic people and their families can find barriers. For example, bright (fluorescent) lighting, crowds, noise, smells, and unpredictability may cause issues. Many of these can be overcome by raising awareness and making small changes.

The Partnership for Neurodiversity at Kent County Council, Medway Council, Kent and Medway NHS, alongside people with lived experience, want to hear about the places where autistic and neurodivergent people feel welcome and understood.

They want to share this information with local services so more areas can learn how to better meet the needs of autistic people and their families.

If you would like to share your experiences, visit www.kent.gov.uk/yourvoice. To hear about other ways to get involved, email makingadifference@kent.gov.uk.



AI help appealing parking fines

If you've received a Penalty Charge Notice (also known as a parking fine), you can use our free AI powered telephone service to help you make an informed decision about whether to appeal.

When you call the service, you'll be greeted by a friendly AI assistant who'll ask you a few questions.

If you have grounds for an appeal, the AI assistant will advise you of the information you should provide. You can also ask the AI assistant to write the appeal, which is sent to your mobile phone.

If there are no grounds for an appeal, the AI assistant will explain why we are unlikely to cancel your Penalty Charge Notice.

Calls last about three minutes. Usual call rates apply.

To use the service, call 01732 902609.

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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