

InShape

The newsletter of Sevenoaks District Council



VE day 80 celebrations

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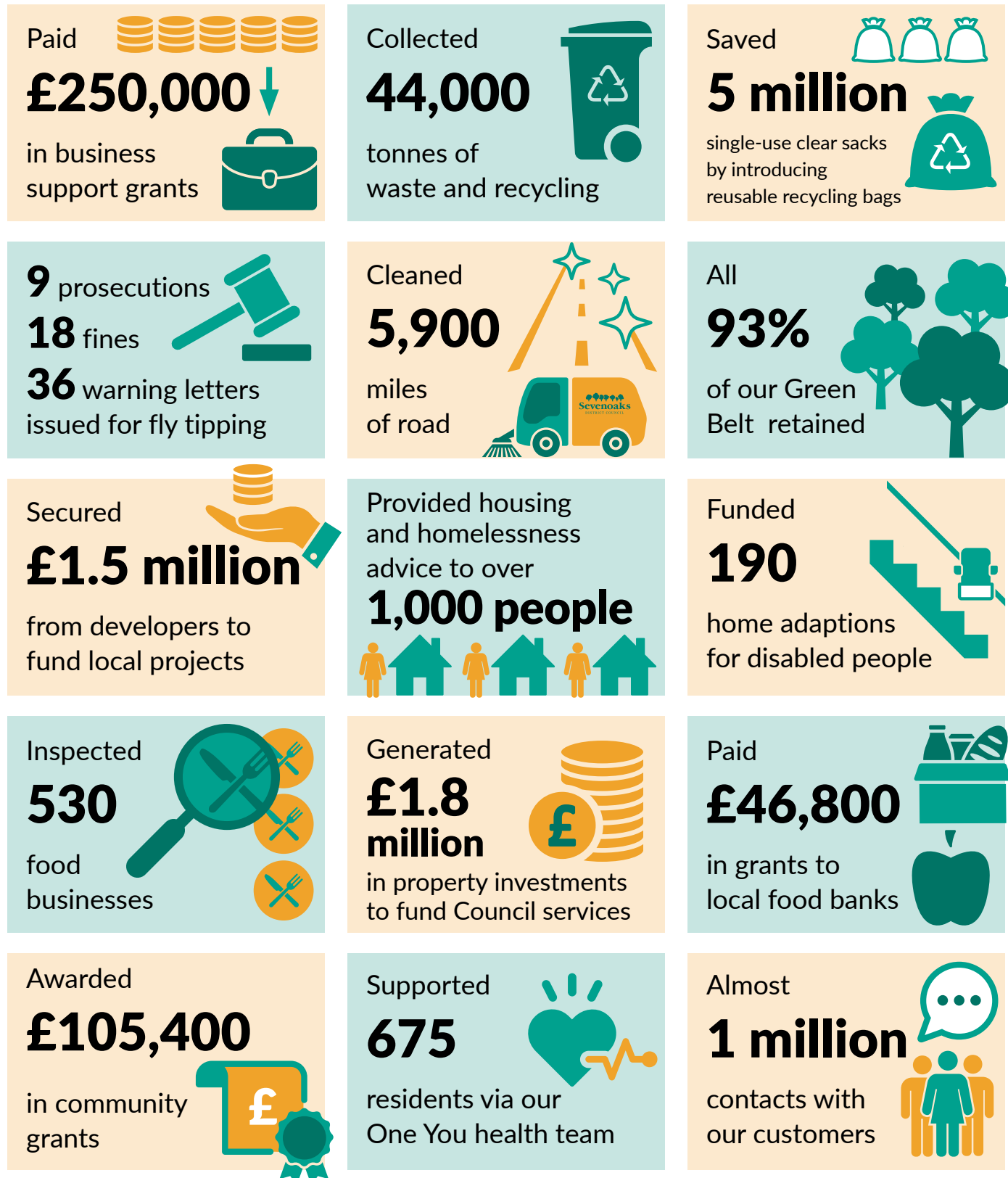
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Serving our communities

Over the past year, our work has included protecting the environment, grants for voluntary groups and businesses, securing funding from housing developers for projects, generating income and supporting older and vulnerable residents.

Here's some of our achievements over the 12 months



The graphic above covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Some of figures quoted are projections based on available data from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024 or 31 January 2025.

Free events to celebrate VE Day 80



FREE

VE Day 80 is the celebration of 80 years since the end of WWII in Europe on 8 May 1945. To mark this momentous occasion, we are putting on several events between 5 to 9 May, ending in a special outdoor concert and picnic.

Concert and afternoon tea in Kemsing

Come along on Friday 9 May 2025 to the beautiful St Clare's Estate in Kemsing to enjoy an afternoon of FREE live music from the West Kent Concert Band, as well as songs from the D'Vine Singers, Sounds Familiar and Nouveau Lounge.

There will be a traditional afternoon tea with delicious scones, sandwiches and sweet treats.

This nostalgic celebration will honour the spirit of victory, remembrance and community. Bring your flags, don your best vintage attire and toast to history with a cup of tea as we celebrate together.

We expect places for this event to go very quickly so please book in advance.

1940s tea dance in Edenbridge

As part of the celebration, you can attend our FREE 1940s themed tea dance for older people in Edenbridge on Thursday 8 May. Channel your inner dancer and learn wartime styles such as the foxtrot, waltz, tango and jitterbug, followed by afternoon tea.

1940s cooking sessions in Swanley & Sevenoaks

We're also running free 1940s cooking sessions in Sevenoaks on Tuesday 6 May and Swanley on

Wednesday 7 May. Experience the ingenuity and resourcefulness of wartime cooking as we recreate delicious meals using authentic ration-era ingredients. You will learn how to make hearty dishes, creative substitutes and classic comfort foods that kept families fed during WWII.

To book onto these events, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/veday80.

Wartime songs in Sevenoaks

The Vintage Meddlers will be singing wartime themed songs at The Vine Bandstand on Monday 5 May from 12pm to 1pm. Come along with some lunch and enjoy a singalong! No booking necessary.

Show off your blooming wonderful gardening skills

Once again, we're supporting the 'Sevenoaks District In Bloom' gardening competition.

Run by Coolings Garden Centre, with judging sponsored by Pennywood Tours Ltd, the competition is open to gardeners of all abilities, giving you the chance to display your blossoming garden.

You won't need to fork out any money as entry is completely free! In fact, everyone who takes part will be given a £5 voucher to spend at any Coolings centre.

There's lots of categories available, including front gardens, allotments, ornamental gardens, businesses and schools.

Above all, it is fun as all the judges

are friendly and looking at ways to award points for your efforts!

Ian Hazon, an In Bloom judge for the past 10 years, says: "It's always such an immense pleasure to visit so many beautiful gardens each year.

"As judges, we're looking for the positives in every garden. There are a range of areas to score points, including, maintenance, range of stock, year round interest, support for nature, site difficulties and so on.

"Whether you have a large or small garden, an allotment, a window box or a hanging basket, or you're a householder or you run a business, there's a category for you!"

The deadline to enter is Monday 30 June 2025 with judging taking place throughout July.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in September.

Full details and entry forms can be found at www.coolings.co.uk.



More VE day events

Throughout the week, local Town and Parish Councils will be hosting their own local, free events, most of which do not need booking. Some food and drink charges may apply.

For more information, please contact the Town or Parish Council running the event or visit their website.



Chevening Parish Council

- Beacon lighting – Thursday 8 May at 9.30pm on Chipstead Green
- Parish picnic – Sunday 11 May from 12 noon on Chipstead Recreation Ground (requires booking)

Crockenhill Parish Council

- Event on the Village Green – for further details visit www.crockenhillpc.org.uk.

Edenbridge Town Council

- Free event planned – further details available at www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk.

Halstead Parish Council

- Music and exhibits. Bring a picnic or buy food onsite – Thursday 8 May from 6pm, Pavilion Recreation Grounds

Hartley Parish Council

- Beacon lighting, refreshments and entertainment, including fireworks – Thursday 8 May from 7pm, Manor Field Sports Pavilion

Horton Kirby and South Darenth Parish Council

- An evening of songs, with fish and chip supper and other refreshments available to buy – Thursday 8 May from 6pm, Village Hall, Horton Road, South Darenth

Penshurst Parish Council

- An evening of Big Band music with food available to buy – Saturday 10 May, 7pm to 10pm, Penshurst Village Hall.

Riverhead Parish Council

- Free tea party that includes sandwiches, cake, tea – Sunday 11 May 2pm to 5pm – Riverhead Village Hall

Sevenoaks Town Council

- Free concert, procession and beacon lighting – Thursday 8 May from 8.30pm, the Bandstand in the Vine Gardens.

Swanley Town Council

- Afternoon tea with the Mayor – Thursday 8 May 2pm to 5pm, The Alexandra Suite. Booking is required via their website. Tickets cost £12.
- Lighting the beacon with free food and entertainment – Thursday 9 May 8.30pm to 9pm, Swanley Recreation Ground.

Weald Parish Council

- Lighting of the beacon, light show and wartime music – Thursday 8 May from 9.30pm, The Green, off Long Barn Road

Westerham Town Council

- Local event with music, entertainment, paid for food stands and more – Monday 5 May, 10am to 5pm, throughout Westerham town.



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Land East of Sevenoaks High Street

Proposals to regenerate the land east of Sevenoaks High Street are being updated following feedback from stakeholders and the public.

During last April and May, we set out our early ideas to rejuvenate and improve the area.

These included improvements to public spaces, a new leisure centre and a new library alongside other economic, environmental and cultural improvements to boost this part of the town.

Residents were supportive of the proposals but raised concerns about rebuilding the library, car parking, accessibility and traffic.

Kent County Council has now decided the library will no longer form part of the project. The library will remain in its existing form in the town centre.

We are now proposing to provide:

- A new, modern, energy efficient leisure centre
- A cultural hub and market hall for traders to compliment the Wednesday and Saturday street markets
- New public spaces, better pedestrian links to Knole Park and other landscaping and environmental improvements
- Measures to reduce the use of vehicles in the area east of Sevenoaks High Street

- New town centre homes built to high environmental and energy efficient standards.
- More dedicated parking spaces to go with the new homes

Cllr Michael Horwood, Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet Member for Innovation and Improvement, says: "We remain 100% committed to delivering this very important project to improve Sevenoaks' leisure and cultural offer, supporting the town's economy and enhancing the environment.

"We have been working hard in the background to update the scheme, taking account of residents' comments and the library no longer being part of the project. Our work so far suggests the scheme is viable and deliverable. Our next step is to appoint a development partner and we have already had interest from developers about the scheme."



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2025 Ordnance Survey/AC0000822250

Councillors will consider the updated proposals at the meeting of the Council on 29 April 2025. If Councillors give their approval, we will go out to tender to appoint a development partner by the end of this year. They would work on detailed designs during 2026, including further engagement with the public, before submitting a planning application.

The project is currently estimated to cost £123 million. It is expected to be self-financing with income from the new homes paying towards the new leisure centre and other improvements.

For the latest updates on the project visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/landeast.

Bank holiday waste and recycling collections

Following the Easter and May bank holidays, there may be one or two changes to your rubbish, recycling and garden waste collection days.

Easter

- Good Friday, 18 April – no change - collections will take place as usual on this day.
- Easter Monday, 21 April – all collections this week will be one day later than usual until Saturday 27 April.

Early May Bank Holiday

- Monday 5 May – all collections this week will be one day later than usual until Saturday 10 May.

Spring Bank Holiday

- Monday 26 May – all collections this week will be one day later than usual until Saturday 31 May.

View your waste collection days online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/collectiondays.

The 'BIG Waste Conversation' survey results

Thousands of residents shared their views on our waste and recycling collection services as part of the 'BIG Waste Conversation' survey.

An online survey was available from 9 December 2024 to 3 February 2025 and 3,853 people took part. We also ran a face-to-face version of the survey that was representative of the District population as a whole, and a further 427 people took part.

The survey sought to understand how residents currently deal with their waste and what stops them from recycling more. We also wanted to hear views about how we should meet new Government requirements for glass and food waste collections and a new 65% national recycling target while getting the best value for money.

As *In Shape* went to print, our Cabinet were due to consider the survey results when it met on 20 March 2025.

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener says: "I want to thank the many people who took part in the BIG Waste Conversation.

"Recycling is not only good for the environment, it's the most cost effective way of dealing with waste. But we face a challenge. Our current recycling rate is only 37%, lower than many areas. We also produce more waste than most. The average Kent household puts out 420 kilos of waste a year, but in the Sevenoaks District, this figure is 580 kilos.

"The survey found there was an appetite to change our waste collection services. Most residents want more recycling options while reducing the carbon and environmental footprint of the service.

"There was also strong support for home glass collections and providing households with wheelie bins for their waste.

"A small majority were in favour of food waste collections and views were split on the frequency of waste and recycling collections.

"In the coming weeks, we will consider the survey in detail as part of our waste collection review."

We have included only a very brief summary of the headline survey results in this issue of *In Shape*.

You can view the BIG Waste Conversation survey results in full at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bigwaste.

Barriers to recycling

67% of those who took part in our representative survey **say nothing stops them from recycling.**

36% who took part in the online survey **say the same.**



The reasons that stop residents from recycling more of their waste include:

- The inconvenience of using recycling banks
- The Council does not collect all the items they want to recycle
- Not sure what can be recycled
- A lack of space to store recycling

Residents' recycling habits

For both surveys...

Over **90%** say they recycle **paper and cardboard, metal cans, tins, empty aerosols, bottle tops and lids and plastics**



Between **80 and 90%** say they recycle **aluminium meal trays and foil and long-life cartons**



Between **70 and 79%** say they recycle **glass and single-use batteries**



Attitudes towards recycling

The Council should provide recycling services to help **reduce the amount of waste residents put out for collection**

88% Representative survey

87% Online survey



The Council should **improve the environmental impact** of the waste and recycling services

89% Representative survey

86% Online survey



The Council should reach or exceed the **new national 65% recycling target**

86% Representative survey

77% Online survey



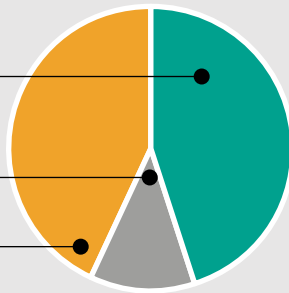
Support for collecting waste one week and recycling the next

Representative survey*

Yes **44%**

Don't know or not sure **12%**

No **43%**

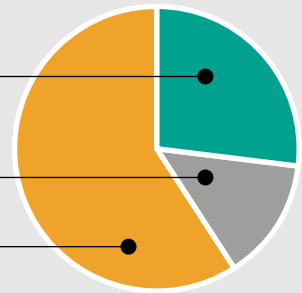


Online survey

Yes **27%**

Don't know or not sure **14%**

No **59%**



Support for providing households with a wheelie bin for their waste

69% Representative survey

67% Online survey



New collection services

Residents who would use a **glass collection service**

88% both surveys



Residents who would use a **food waste collection service**

66% Representative survey

55% Online survey



Support for new communal bins

For residents who generally live in flats and/or on an estate with dedicated, communal waste and recycling bins

Glass bottles and jars

77% Representative survey

80% Online survey



Food waste

86% Representative survey

58% Online survey



Other things like **clothes, textiles and small electrical items**

61% Representative survey

55% Online survey



*Percentages do not add to up 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number

Get ready for the County Council elections

On Thursday 1 May, you can vote in the Kent County Council (KCC) elections and have your say about who should run local schools, libraries, public transport, highway and care services.

To vote in this election, you must be on the Electoral Register.

If you're not already on the Register, you have until midnight on Friday 11 April to apply. Visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. It only takes five minutes!

Alternatively call us on **01732 227000** and we will post you an application form.

Voter ID

Anyone who votes in person, as well as proxy voters, will have to take their own photo identification to the polling station for this election.

Accepted forms of photo ID include a passport, driving licence (including a provisional licence), Blue Badge or certain concessionary travel cards.

Even if your photo ID has expired, it will be accepted so long as the photograph is still a good likeness of you.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you have until 5pm on Wednesday 23 April to apply for a free 'Voter Authority Certificate'

Apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or call us on **01732 227000** for a paper application form.

Postal and Proxy Voting

You can apply for a postal vote online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote. Alternatively, call us on **01732 227000** for a paper application form. The deadline for applications is 5pm on Monday 14 April.

The deadline to apply for a proxy vote, to allow someone to vote on your behalf, is 5pm on Wednesday 23 April. Apply at www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote or call us on **01732 227000** for a paper application form.

Business Park proposals reviewed

We've made some significant changes to our proposals for a new Business Park on Otford Road, Sevenoaks following feedback from the public.

Our proposal is to build business units and a drive thru' to support the local economy, creating new jobs for local people.

We shared our early ideas with residents last September. Taking into account their views we are now proposing to:

- Reduce the number of business units from four to three
- Locate the business units further away from Jubilee Cottages than first proposed
- Plant more trees and greenery to support wildlife with a larger green buffer between the business units and Jubilee Cottages
- Incorporate more sustainable technology to reduce Co2 emissions
- Provide space for a cycling and walking path.

As In Shape went to print, a planning application for the Business Park was under consideration.

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

The site, which is extensively developed with buildings and tarmacked ground, is currently used to store waste bins. It was previously a Kent County Council household waste recycling centre (better known as the tip).

For more information about the proposals, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/businesspark.



An artist's impression of the Sevenoaks Business Park

Why Weight to change your life?

Losing weight on your own can be a challenge, which is why our One You team hold weekly group sessions for those who need that extra bit of support.

Two participants from our last Why Weight course at Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre spoke to In Shape about how it has changed their lives.

Jennifer Smith, 75 from Edenbridge, joined the 12-week course because she had lost confidence and was struggling with her mental health. She had been told she was pre-diabetic, overweight and had high cholesterol.

Jennifer says: "I feel very lucky to have had two excellent members of staff who work so well together. Natalie and Maria have made us all feel so welcome with their kindness and encouragement, patience, knowledge and hard work. Natalie also followed up with online support and was at the end of the phone when needed. All this has encouraged me to help myself. As I live on my own, this support has not only helped me physically, but has improved my mental wellbeing too.

"I am sure I speak for everyone who attended the 12-week course at Edenbridge that this has been a great experience and that we had a lovely, friendly group."

Linda Biles, 64, was also in the Edenbridge Why Weight class and signed up after speaking with her GP about health and weight loss.

Linda says: "I was a little uncertain about attending a group session, but I am so glad I did. Both Natalie



Jennifer Smith and Linda Biles (centre) with Natalie Cater and Maria Bates from our One You Team

and Maria from the group were always very helpful and made you feel at ease.

"The programme was good for me on a lot of levels. It was nice to mix with other like-minded people and also learn about how changing small things can help change your way of life. It was educational, but also fun and I was participating with a lovely group of people.

"I would like to highly recommend the One You service. It has helped me to understand how I can help myself."

If Jennifer and Linda have inspired you to make a change, speak to a friendly One You Advisor today!

Our next Why Weight Courses start from 22 April in Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Swanley and online. Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/oneyou for more information.

Steps to wellbeing!

Are you looking for a fun and sociable way to keep fit? Join our 'Steps to Wellbeing' walks in Sevenoaks, Edenbridge, Otford or Shoreham.

The walks last at least 45 minutes and mostly explore wooded areas with a few local landmarks along the way.

They are a great opportunity to get some fresh air whilst keeping healthy and meeting new people. There's also the choice to stop for a tea or coffee afterwards with your fellow walkers.

Find out more and book on to a walk near you at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walking.

Bradbourne Lakes improvements move forward

The restoration of the much loved Bradbourne Lakes in Sevenoaks has taken a big step forward with the appointment of a dedicated project manager.

Lina Madsen took on the role of managing the £2.1 million project in November. She has previously worked on heritage, ecology and community schemes in Glasgow and London.

The 'Bradbourne Re-bourne' improvements will see the biggest overhaul of the lakes since they were built. The five ornamental lakes date back to around 1740 and formed part of the Bradbourne Estate. Water from the lakes feeds the River Darent, one of a handful of ecologically important chalk streams in the country.

Bradbourne Re-bourne will restore the 300 year old engineering marvel of interconnecting lakes and waterfalls.

The lakes will be dammed, drained and de-silted. Sluices and leaks will be fixed. The silt will be reused to form new reedbeds and areas for vegetation, improving biodiversity. This will improve water quality, supporting wildlife in the River Darent. Green spaces will be planted with wildflowers.

Paths will be improved and a new natural play area with benches and boxes for bats and birds will be installed.

The Kent Wildlife Trust, South East River Trust, West Kent Mind and Historic England, will run projects to promote conservation, protect the heritage and support residents' mental health. Bradbourne Residents' Association is also a key partner of the project.

Development funding of £253,000 has already been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help progress our plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant of £1.6 million later this year. The remaining £500,000 is funding secured from housing developers.

Lina Madsen says: "I am really excited to be involved in this once in a generation restoration project. It combines heritage, nature and the local community to improve a much loved jewel in the crown of Sevenoaks."



Lina Madsen, the project manager, with Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener.

"During 2025, we will progress the project design, produce various surveys, apply for permits and submit a planning application in preparation for spades in the ground in 2026.

"During the extensive improvement works, part of the lakes may be closed to the public. But I'm confident it will be worth the sacrifice."

Cllr Irene Roy, our Cabinet Member for Cleaner and Greener, adds: "I am very excited about Bradbourne Re-bourne moving to the next stage. The project will make the park more accessible to all while supporting nature.

"We want to thank the Bradbourne Residents' Association who have given up much of their time to contribute to our plans. We look forward to working with them to deliver this exciting project."

Sign up for the latest Bradbourne news



You can now have the latest Bradbourne Lakes improvement news sent straight to your email inbox!

To sign up for our newsletter, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bradbournelakes or scan the QR code.

The value of tourism

Tourism is one of Sevenoaks District's biggest industries. It employs thousands of people and generates millions of pounds for our local economy according to the latest data.

In December, Visit Kent published its 'Economic impact of tourism' report setting out the value and importance of tourism for the District during 2023. The report found:

- 4.3 million people visited the District. Of these, 64,100 were international visitors. Day trips accounted for 4.1 million visits and 200,000 people stayed overnight
- Tourism supported 4,264 jobs or 8% of the District's workforce. Of these, 2,960 people worked directly and 1,304 people worked indirectly in the tourism sector
- Tourism generated £261 million for the District

Cllr Lesley Dyball, our Cabinet Member for People and Places, says: "Tourism is one of our top priorities. Its importance to the local economy, in terms of jobs and income, should not be underestimated.

"We support this sector with many initiatives, including our 'Visit Sevenoaks' website, encouraging overseas visitors and residents to explore our amazing area, and our 'Sevenoaks So Much More' campaign to promote visits and inward investment.

"We also back the sector by providing grants, training and other economic development support.

"Even against the backdrop of a global cost of living crisis, we have seen growth in our tourism sector over the past four years, reflecting the District's continued appeal to international and domestic visitors alike."

To find out about our amazing places to visit, days out and more on your doorstep, go to visitsevenoaks.co.uk.

Visit Kent's 'Economic impact of tourism' report used the 'Cambridge Economic Impact Model', an industry-standard tool for measuring the economic impact of tourism in a given area.



Hever: Photo courtesy of Hever Castle



Penshurst Place: Photo courtesy of Visit Kent. Copyright Rod Edwards

PUZZLE LINE

FREE

Fancy being a present-day Poirot, combining scenic rail travel with solving a mystery? Then the new Darent Valley Line challenge will be just the thing for you!

Award-winning escape room company Timequest has joined forces with the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership to create a trail of clues at each railway station and in the surrounding areas – your task is to solve the mystery of a missing treasure.

Fun, interactive and suitable for anyone aged 11 and above, the trail can be completed in one or several visits to the area, with answers submitted to Timequest online. Leaflets with all the clues are available from the stations and nearby cafés, shops and pubs.

If you get all the answers right, you could be in for a rewarding surprise. Find out more at www.puzzleline.org.

If there are three or more of you taking part, remember to ask for GroupSave when buying your train tickets.

This project has been made possible with funding from the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Gearing up for more cycling and walking routes

Work is progressing well on the Sevenoaks East to West walking and cycle route, which is due to open this summer. But it's not the only route we're working on. We are progressing plans for additional environmentally friendly routes across the District.

Here's our latest proposals...

Edenbridge

We have commissioned a Walking and Cycling Plan for the town centre and surrounding area to identify safe routes for local residents, commuters and visitors.

Last December, we asked local people for their views and experiences of walking and cycling in the town. We received 114 comments and these are now being considered.

A draft plan is expected to be published later in the spring for residents' comments.

Swanley

The Swanley Walking and Cycling Plan was finalised in 2024. We are using this to develop a new walking route connecting Swanley town centre to Hextable via Swanley Park.

Details of the route are expected to be published in the summer and, subject to public support, will put us in a good position to bid for Government funding to design and build the route.

Otford to Sevenoaks

We're working on a walking and cycle route linking Otford to Sevenoaks.

We have secured £184,000 from Active Travel England and we've

appointed transport experts to design and draw up the route. The route will include substantial improvements to the A225.

A final proposal will be ready later this year and will put us in a strong position to secure funding to build the route.

Otford to Sevenoaks via Seal

We are at the early stages of developing a walking and cycle route linking Otford to Sevenoaks via Seal and Kemsing. The proposed route will make walking and cycling between these locations much safer.

For the latest news on walking and cycling routes, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walkwheelcycle.



New signs installed on the Sevenoaks East to West walking and cycle route

How does your garden grow?

Spring is in the air which means it's time to get gardening!

Whether you're a preening pro or shrubbery start-up, our Garden Waste service has an option for you.

We collect cuttings, leaves, and other garden debris every two weeks, saving you trips to the tip.

It's picked up on the same day

as your rubbish and recycling is collected, and there are two options to choose from:

- An annual permit for a 240-litre bin for £60 or a 140-litre bin for £44
- 25 garden waste sacks for £27

Join thousands of customers who use our service! Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 01732 227000.



Transforming wellness:

A comprehensive approach for our residents

Everyone Active has introduced 'You+', an innovative wellness membership that represents a significant departure from traditional fitness programmes.

Developed in collaboration with leading physiologist and wellbeing consultant Oli Patrick, the initiative offers local residents a holistic approach to personal health and wellbeing.

The programme distinguishes itself by addressing six fundamental pillars of wellness: sleep, recovery, nutrition, brain health, social wellness and movement. This comprehensive framework recognises that optimal health extends far beyond conventional exercise routines, responding to an increasing demand for more integrated wellness support.

Following the success of Everyone Active's 2023 Wellness membership - which attracted more than 25,000 sign-ups and represented 25 percent of new fitness sales - You+ represents an evolved approach to personal health management.

Hasan Romel, Area Contract Manager for Everyone Active in the Sevenoaks District, says: "We've designed You+ to provide meaningful, personalised support for our local community. Our goal is to empower residents with a nuanced understanding of their personal wellness journey."

Central to the membership is a quarterly consultation with a specialised You+ Coach. During these sessions, members undergo an extensive assessment that goes beyond traditional fitness evaluations. A key component is the 'Everyone Active Age' - a sophisticated metric that evaluates overall wellbeing beyond chronological age, calculated through a comprehensive questionnaire across the six wellness pillars.

The programme is the result of a year-long development process, during which Everyone Active invested in training colleagues as You+ Coaches. These professionals have received specialised scientific research and training to deliver the wellness programme effectively, ensuring a robust and credible approach to member support.

The membership offers substantial additional benefits, including:

- A virtual GP service through HealthHero, available seven days a week from 8am to 10pm
- Access to over 120 wellness brand discounts
- Two monthly guest passes
- 14-day priority booking for centre activities
- Everyone On Demand - access to a wide range of fitness and wellness partners

Available at Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, and White Oak Leisure Centres, memberships start from £34.99 per month.

Physiologist Oli Patrick, the programme's key consultant, emphasises its distinctive approach: "You+ moves beyond short-term fixes and products, focusing instead on consistent adherence to key behaviours that genuinely enhance wellbeing. We must recognise that movement and exercise form only part of the wellness picture."

To find out more, visit:

www.everyoneactive.com/sevenoaks

www.everyoneactive.com/whiteoak

www.everyoneactive.com/edenbridge

Take your business to the next level!

Meeting Point is a fantastic co-working space in the heart of Swanley. It offers hot desking, meeting rooms, private offices and events spaces.



However, Meeting Point is more than just a place to work as regular customer Darren Andrews found out...

Darren is the owner of DA Landscaping Services based in Swanley. They specialise in laying new and maintaining existing lawns, hedge cutting, tree pruning, leaf and debris clearances and all garden related projects for domestic and commercial customers.

“I’m very much looking forward to continuing to grow my business and benefitting from the resources available at Meeting Point.”

Darren discovered Meeting Point by popping in one day, after it had been recommended to him by local businesses as a place to find networking opportunities.

As well as using the modern facilities, Darren has taken advantage of the free business support on offer.

Darren says: “My experience with Meeting Point has been nothing but positive. The environment is welcoming and collaborative. I’ve been able to make valuable connections that have already led to new opportunities, and I’ve benefited from learning about the grants on offer to support the growth of my business.”

Darren applied for a Work Boost Grant and a Business Improvement Grant which made an immediate impact on his business. He was able to take on two new staff members and buy new equipment, which has significantly improved the quality and efficiency of work and freed up resources to support the expansion of his business.

He’s also attended networking events where he met new contacts that have offered services to support his business and potential leads for new clients.

Darren adds: “I would highly recommend giving Meeting Point a try. It’s a fantastic environment for working, networking and learning about local services. Whether you’re a freelancer, a small business owner or someone looking for a community of like-minded professionals, Meeting Point caters for all your business needs.

“It has been an invaluable resource for my business. It’s more than just a place to work, it’s a hub of support, advice, and community engagement. It has significantly helped DA Landscaping to move to the next level. I’m very much looking forward to continuing to grow my business and benefitting from the resources available at Meeting Point.”

For more information on what Meeting Point can do for you, give the friendly team a call on **01732 443041** or visit www.meetingpoint.org.uk.

Never miss an event!

Always know what’s going on in your local area by checking out our new ‘Visit Sevenoaks’ events page.

Events from across the District are regularly uploaded by local businesses and attractions. Each event will tell you who it’s aimed at, how to book and other helpful details.

From walks to musicals, craft events to car racing and more, there’s something for everyone!

Go to events.visitsevenoaks.co.uk to see what’s coming up near you!

If you run a local business or an attraction and you wish to upload your event for free, simply click on the ‘Submit your event’ button at the bottom of the page.

We're all 'Better Together!'

WIN
a £50
shopping
voucher

We're running a short survey asking what more 'Better Together' could do to encourage people to get involved in volunteering or to set up a new community group.

Our 'Better Together' scheme has loads of free resources for community and voluntary groups, including advice on setting up a new project, organising events and bidding for funding. It also makes grants available for local projects.

Our survey opened on 1 April and you have until midnight on Tuesday 13 May 2025 to take part.

Everyone who completes the survey can enter a prize draw to win a £50 shopping voucher. View our website for terms and conditions.

To take part in the survey, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bettertogether.



Grants to get your group moving



Last year, Better Together awarded 'Mobilisation Grants' to 11 organisations and groups working in the voluntary and charitable sectors within the District.

The grants supported community projects and ideas that improve life for local people.

Successful applicants included a sustainable swimwear initiative, a mentoring programme for young people and supporting a community wellbeing walking group.

If you have an idea that will benefit your community, or wish to launch a project of your own, visit www.bettertogethercommunity.org.uk or contact Megan Glen on 01732 227000 or email contact@bettertogethercommunity.org.uk.

The grants were funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Bowls Club gets charged up!

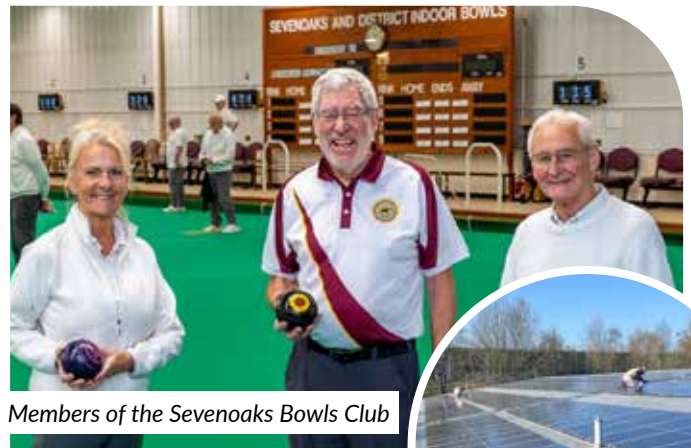
Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club is going green with the installation of solar panels thanks to a little help from our 'Better Together' team.

The Club, run almost exclusively by volunteers, is a hub for community activities. In addition to 300 bowls club members, it is used by 15 organisations from mother and baby groups to health and fitness classes and many more.

For some time, the Club has wanted to operate longer opening hours, so more community groups could use the space, but this would increase its electricity bill. At £26,000 a year, power is one of the Club's biggest areas of expenditure.

To reduce running costs, so it can open for longer, the Club has decided to install solar panels at a cost of £180,000. The 200 panels would virtually eliminate the Club's electricity bill while cutting its carbon emissions by a whopping 33 tons a year!

The Club secured £165,000 in grants towards the project, including £75,000 from us. It needed to raise a final £7,500 to match a Sport England grant of £7,500.



Members of the Sevenoaks Bowls Club

With a little help from our 'Better Together' team, the Club set up and promoted a crowdfunding campaign and managed to raise the remaining money in just a matter of days.

The solar panels were installed during February.

If you would like to know more about Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club's facilities, please call Sally Jolly on 01732 451889, email sevenoaksibc@live.co.uk or visit sevenoaks-indoor.bowls-club.co.uk.



Sevenoaks District Community Safety Unit

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

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 you safe

Over the last year, our Community Safety Partnership (CSP) have been working hard to keep you safe. We've had many successes over the last 12 months, here are some of the highlights...

In May 2024, we placed a Public Space Protection Order in Badgers Mount and Halstead to tackle anti-social behavior associated with car meets, racing and general motor nuisance. Since then, we have issued 22 Community Protection Warnings and 10 Fixed Penalty Notices in the area.

The team have also carried out initiatives to help residents report and reduce anti-social behaviour. They have gone into schools, attended community events, visited youth clubs and more. We're pleased to say that, between January and December 2024 we had a reduction of 122 reports of anti-social behaviour compared to the previous year. We now have the lowest rates of anti-social behaviour in Kent.

For information on anti-social behaviour and how to report it, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/asb.

As part of our pledge to help businesses, the CSP has cracked down on shoplifters and business crime in the District, and have set up a monthly business group to discuss relevant issues. Businesses who wish to join should email community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Sevenoaks District Council is a White Ribbon Accredited organisation, which means we are committed to preventing violence against women and girls. As part of this, we have 10 male Domestic Abuse Ambassadors and 18 female Champions who raise awareness about domestic abuse within the organisation.





Back in November 2024, we held several events to support White Ribbon Day. This included our annual Domestic Abuse Conference, which this year focused on diversity, including the deaf community. We also hosted a training event with Kent Police's Chief Inspector, Elizabeth Jones.

We run regular Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) walk and talk sessions where anyone can come along to talk to experts about any domestic abuse issues. We also run free self-defence classes for women and girls.

For more information about our VAWG services, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/vawg.



Look out for scams

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police and it's becoming increasingly more difficult to spot when something is fake.

To keep you safe from scammers, remember these three rules:

Stop

Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information.

Challenge

Ask yourself, could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

Protect

Contact your bank immediately if you think you've been scammed. If you get sent a scam message, it's also important you report it, so others don't fall victim. Reporting a scam message is free and it will help stop it from spreading.



Find out more and report scams at www.actionfraud.police.uk.

Your Councillors

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

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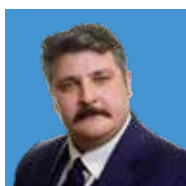
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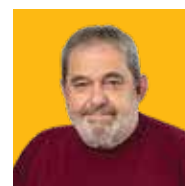
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How to contact your District Councillors

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**.

Government confirms new housing target

At the end of last year, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It included a target of 1,149 new homes to be built in the District every year.

The new target is a 63% increase on the District's previous housing target.

In response to the publication of the new housing target, Cllr Julia Thornton, our Cabinet Member for Planning and Conservation, says:

"Whilst we welcome the Government's efforts to boost housing supply to meet residents' needs, we are disappointed it has not listened to our concerns. It has pushed ahead with new policies and housing targets that will inevitably lead to Green Belt development.

"Our District is 93% Green Belt, the second highest percentage in the country. Its protection is a top priority for our residents.

"While we have a duty to do everything possible to meet the Government's new housing target, we are committed to only allowing development on lower quality Green Belt in very limited circumstances.

"In the coming months, we will carry out targeted consultations with landowners to identify suitable 'Grey Belt' sites. We will then ask our communities for their views on our proposals as part of the Local Plan process."



Next steps for the Local Plan

Our new Local Plan will set out in broad terms what can be built and where from 2025 to 2040. It will incorporate the Government's new target of 1,149 new homes a year.

You will have an opportunity to comment on the updated sites to accommodate the new homes and policies later this year. Once we have reviewed all comments and feedback, we will publish a final draft of the Local Plan for examination in 2026.

At this stage a Government-appointed planning inspector will consider whether the Local Plan is 'sound' and appropriate for the District.

The Local Plan, once adopted, will be used to determine planning applications.

Stay in touch

For the latest Local Plan news, including the Local Plan timetable, or to sign up to our mailing list, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/plan2040.

A spot of lunch!

Older residents can come along to our free monthly lunch clubs in Hextable or West Kingsdown.

As well as serving up a delicious two course meal with hot drinks, the lunch clubs offer a great opportunity to socialise with others.

We have one in Hextable every third Monday of the month at St Peter's Church, and a new lunch club in West Kingsdown, every third Tuesday of the month at St Edmund's Primary School.



They both take place from 12noon to 2pm.

Places are free but must be booked in advance at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/lunchclubs or by calling 01732 227000 or emailing communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

A new Council in 2028?

In early February, the Government wrote to all of the councils in Kent and Medway and has told them that they should work together to make a plan for local government reorganisation.

Local government reorganisation (LGR) will mean that all of the current District and Borough Councils, including Sevenoaks, Medway unitary council and Kent County Council, will be abolished and replaced with a number of new councils. Town & Parish Councils would not be affected.

Rather than District and Borough Councils providing some services and the County Council providing others, in the future there will be one council providing all local government services.

Councils across Kent have been working together through their council Leaders to assess what

options might be available. An interim plan submitted to Government on 21 March said that Kent and Medway think that either three or four councils to replace the current 14 councils is the most likely option.

That could mean a new Council for West Kent, covering a geography that currently includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and providing services to more than 550,000 people.

By 28 November 2025, a final proposal will need to be submitted to Government and they will make a decision on what will happen in Kent & Medway around April 2026.

If LGR progresses as planned, Sevenoaks District Council would cease to exist on 31 March 2028, with the new Council established on 1 April 2028.

Residents will have the chance to have their say through a Kent-wide consultation later this year. Locally, Sevenoaks District residents, businesses and other stakeholders will have opportunities to have their say on the implications and opportunities for our District and West Kent. Your input is encouraged.

For more information, and updates on LGR as it progresses, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/lgr.

Sevenoaks District Council at your fingertips

Main Office

Argyle Road, Sevenoaks,
Kent TN13 1HG

01732 227000

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

Emergencies (outside our usual hours)

01732 227000

then listen to the options.

Leisure centres

Ash Green Sports Centre*
01474 707164

Edenbridge Leisure Centre**
01732 442364

Lullingstone Park Golf Course**
01959 583019

The Olympic, Swanley*
01322 669201

Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club***
01732 451889

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre**
01732 442365

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

White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley**
01322 662188

* Operated by the local town or parish Council *** Operated by independent limited companies
** Operated by Everyone Active



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In Shape is available in other formats and can be explained in other languages by calling 01732 227000.

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