

# IN BUSINESS



Check our website for information [www.sevenoakschamber.com](http://www.sevenoakschamber.com) E-mail: [info@sevenoakschamber.com](mailto:info@sevenoakschamber.com) Tel: 01732 455188

## SEVENOAKS PLAYHOUSE TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

Investigations are proceeding on a proposal put to the District Council by The Playhouse and Barratt to redevelop the theatre site.

The Council has agreed to look at a joint proposal to enter an exclusive 'option agreement' to allow Barratt to redevelop the theatre site into a complex with housing, retail & a basement theatre and cinema.

The Council has hired independent specialist experts and the research will be funded entirely by Barratt. They will investigate whether the proposal is acceptable in planning & highways terms, if disposing of the theatre is a good deal for local taxpayers & assess the future viability of The Playhouse in a smaller venue plus its ability to trade during a redevelopment phase.

The findings will be presented to a special Council Cabinet meeting on 22 June followed by an EGM of 54 Councillors on 26 June to decide whether or not to enter into an option agreement. It could then take around 2 years plus to draw up detailed plans, gain permission & a further 2/3 years to redevelop the site.

In the meantime Sevenoaks District Council will continue to support The Playhouse in a number of ways with grants, a rent free site having full relief from Business Rates and has deferred the repayment of a £140,100 loan until 2008.

I am sure we will all be very interested to hear the outcome.

**"WATCH THIS SPACE"**

## Have your say at Sevenoaks Forum

Residents and businesses of Sevenoaks can have their say on the issues that are important to them when the Sevenoaks Forum meets.

The Forum meets every four months to discuss issues relevant to people in the District & provides a platform to air your views. Anyone is welcome to attend and it is an ideal opportunity for the local council to find out what is important to local people.

If you are interested in attending the next meeting please contact Kate Hamlin-Hawes at Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227247 for more information – or Steve Mandaluff on [steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

## Saving Energy in Otford

Otford residents will be the first to benefit from energy conservation advice when the 'Sevenoaks Rural Energy Focus' project was launched at Otford Society annual general meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

Sevenoaks District Council recently scooped £67,000 from the Government to help improve energy efficiency in a number of the District's rural areas.

The money will fund the two-year 'Sevenoaks Rural Energy Focus' project to inform local people about energy efficiency, the benefit to their pocket & the environment and raise the profile of energy saving grants and discount schemes.

For further information contact: Louise on 01732 227000 Shrubsole or e-mail: [energy.conservation@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:energy.conservation@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

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## UPDATE ON ROGUE TRADERS

Be wary of two men in Sevenoaks area offering gravel left over from another job. One homeowner accepted, but after the work was done the price increased dramatically. KTS advise householders to be wary of doorstep sellers and do not allow the caller access to your home.

Also be alert as TS Officers have become aware that potentially lethal extension leads have been sold to consumers in Kent. The leads are in the form of a 10 metre cable reel and bear the brand name "Super". This product is faulty & should not be purchased or used as there is a great risk of electrocution.

Contact Trading Standards Rogue Hotline: 0845 450210.

### **Local Residents awarded for 'Taking a Stand' against crime -**

Five residents from the Sevenoaks District nominated for a national "Taking a Stand" award have scooped the prestigious honour and received £1,000 each towards improving their communities.

Organised by the Home Office, this is an annual event that allows residents to nominate individuals or groups who have taken action against anti-social behaviour.

Nominations include people who have worked with the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership to obtain evidence that enables them to target individuals responsible for assaults, criminal damage, graffiti, and violent and intimidating behaviour.

Two of the residents were recognised as 'distinguished winners' and collected their awards at a ceremony in London on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April. The three other winners will all collect their awards in June.

Further information contact Steve Mandaluff: [steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

## Conservation

Sevenoaks District Council is reviewing all 40 conservation areas in the District and has already extended a number of them in Chipstead, Leigh, Otford, Penshurst and Ide Hill.

The extension of these conservation areas will see buildings such as the Old Water Mill and Moat Farm House in Chipstead and the Old School House on Powder Hill lane, Leigh amongst others protected further by planning laws.

Conservation areas are local areas of special architectural or historic interest where the intention is to preserve or enhance character and appearance. By reinforcing character and historic interest, conservation areas can improve the local economy, encourage tourism, attract grants and investment, maintain property values and prevent unneighbourly development.

The Sevenoaks **Chamber of Commerce** has for many, many years taken a keen interest in the local Conservation Council. We have always had two Chamber members representing us, keeping a watching brief on all issues dealt with by the Planning Office in addition to the Economic Development Plan and Local Plan. **Just one of many areas where Chamber Members are involved with the local community on behalf of us all.**

### **Council Elects New Chairman**

Cllr Alison Cooke, Member of Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway, has been elected the new Chairman of Sevenoaks District Council.

The new Vice-Chairman is Cllr James Gaywood, Member for Hartley and Hodsoll Street.

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## **Recycling**

Keep on recycling!

Environmentally friendly residents of Sevenoaks District whose efforts are helping less fortunate people overseas, are being urged to continue recycling their unwanted clothes and textiles. We currently recycle over 250 tonnes of clothing and unwanted textiles a year at recycling centres and charity bins situated across the District putting us in the top 25% nationally for recycling these materials.

Clearing out your wardrobe, don't use the dustbin, use the recycling bin!

### **Useless Information**

**Do you eat breakfast, we are told it is the most important meal of the day.**

**Did you know that on the moon journey in 1969, the Apollo 11 crew ate Kellogg's cornflakes, mixed with fruit and pressed into cubes. Isn't that something to look forward to?**

### **Seal Fire Brigade**

Seal Fire Brigade recruits its first lady firefighter. She is Sally Walker who completed her training and has already been out on her first 'shout'. Also joining Seal Fire Station is Jeremy Le-Fevre, Laurence Bain & Jody Morgan. Good luck to them all. Anyone interested in joining can contact Graham French on 07767 607616.

**TO JOIN THE CHAMBER IT COSTS  
£7.10P PER MONTH!**

## **MOTORING**

If you are into gadgets, then I am sure you will have satellite navigation in your car and not the old fashioned map. Police warn "beware" as thieves continue to target Cars where the sat nav is left on display so take it with you when you leave your car and don't be tempted to hide it – criminals know all the hiding places.

### **Spychips come a step closer**

Numberplate technology coming in this year will pave way for system to monitor your every move

### **Government say it's about cutting crime**

The DVLA say plates that can't be tampered with are needed because stolen plates are currently being used on a wide scale to:

- Clone Stolen vehicles for re-sale
- Conceal the identity of people involved in criminal activity, like stealing fuel from petrol stations. Currently £20 million worth of fuel is stolen in petrol station drive-offs each year in the UK
- Evade traffic-related fines including parking tickets, speeding fines and congestion charges.
- According to police data, 33,000 numberplates were stolen during 2004, with many more thefts going unreported.

### **MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARY**

NEXT CHAMBER LUNCH WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JULY  
AT WILDERNESSE CLUB, SEAL.

WHY NOT BRING A COLLEAGUE ALONG AND  
INTRODUCE A NEW MEMBER.

EARN £10 DISCOUNT

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## Town's architecture online

Sevenoaks residents and others who use town centre may be interested to know that there is a photographic record of the town's buildings on the Sevenoaks Society's website at [www.sevenoakssociety.org.uk](http://www.sevenoakssociety.org.uk). The Sevenoaks Conservation Council and the Sevenoaks Society, who have together been responsible for the survey, welcome any further information, by way of addition or correction, about any of the buildings referred to on the website. It is also hoped that the availability of the survey on the website will lead to a greater awareness of the built heritage in the Sevenoaks town centre conservation area.

**As members of the Conservation Council, the Chamber of Commerce was pleased to be able to supply numerous "old" photographs of the town centre dating back to the 70's. It is interesting to see all the shops and offices from that time, many no longer exist.**

## Planning for 500 New Homes

A controversial proposal to build 500 new homes in Dunton Green has reached the planning stage.

An outline planning application for the project on the site of the West Kent Cold Store in Rye Lane was submitted to Sevenoaks District Council by Berkeley Homes (South East London) after months of consultation with villagers.

Residents are concerned about the effect the development would have on transport, air pollution and school capacities.

The removal of 700 daily HGVs is welcome & new homes are a step in the right direction, but the number of homes to be built, plus car ownership & levels of movement is a worry for residents.

## New Parking Charges

With roadworks on the agenda for this summer, you would have thought the last thing we needed was an increase in parking charges. SDC wants to increase charges for the London Road and High Street by around 50%. Southern Gas are expected to start work on 4<sup>th</sup> July with part of the High Street closed for around 6 weeks so this is yet another blow to trade in Sevenoaks.

We have been pressing for a long time for additional car parking facilities in the town as have the Town Council, but so far to no avail. If you have any comments or suggestions for SDC please email them to us and we will forward on for their consultation process. Email: [info@sevenoakschamber.com](mailto:info@sevenoakschamber.com)

## Bypass for Borough Green?

Kent County Council has made an historic decision to approve new factory plans at Ightham sandpit. Barring an intervention by central Government, the relief road will at last be funded by brick manufacturer H and H Celcon as a planning gain. This is a Green Belt area.

For 30 years Borough Green residents have made their case for a relief road, and the decision by KCC was welcomed by villagers.

However, joy was offset by the disappointment of anti-Celcon protestors who hope the Government will call in the application.

If this goes ahead of course Borough Green will be more than happy, but what about Seal? Traffic travels through Seal and on to Borough Green, so there is no relief for residents in Seal.

In our February 2005 News, we published details of a letter from the Dept of Transport regarding the options for adding the missing east facing slip roads at Jct 5 to connect the A21 with the M26. Consultation was being undertaken in 2005 and would be subject to planning & statutory procedures.

We need to know what is the current position.

Our MP Michael Fallon was supporting the cause and we are asking him for further information.

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EUROPAGES is a working tool for businesses with an international vocation, helping them to buy better and sell more in Europe.

[www.europages.com](http://www.europages.com) gives access to the full EUROPAGES database: 600,000 businesses in 36 European countries.

Have you looked at the Chamber web site recently?

See the Links – on line business information “ONE SOURCE”

### BUSINESS TO BUSINESS BROCHURE

It's not too late to let us have your A5 flyer. We are constantly sending out the brochure to new businesses coming into the area and numerous other enquiries. Promote your business and include your information in the “Business to Business” pack. If you need further information, contact the office.

The latest Health & Safety catalogue has arrived at the Chamber office.

New fire risk legislation introduction came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2006, and over 70 different regulations will be merged into a single fire safety act for England & Wales. The requirement to obtain fire certificates will also be abolished. The new act is likely to come into force in October, 2006.

To help prepare a DVD/Video is available “Fire Risk Assessment – The Facts”.

Contact the office for information  
Email: [info@sevenoakschamber.com](mailto:info@sevenoakschamber.com)

### **Hanging baskets**

Despite the water shortage, Sevenoaks will be in full bloom with its traditional array of town centre hanging baskets this year. They will be filled with drought resistant plants and contain water retaining gel, to minimise the watering required.

### **Councils cleaners sweep up**

Sevenoaks District is streets ahead of the rest when it comes to having the cleanest roads in the county.

Figures recently released by the GMB union show that Sevenoaks District was one of just three of the 339 local authorities in England to have 0% of its streets assessed as dirty.

### **Sevenoaks Summer Festival**

With just a few weeks to go before the biggest event on the town's calendar gets under way, excitement for the Sevenoaks Summer Festival is building. Details of this year's events have been released through 20,000 brochures and organisers are promising a two-week extravaganza showcasing all that is good about Sevenoaks.

Now in its 37<sup>th</sup> year, the plethora of events will kick off with the traditional Festival Fair on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>.

Included in the Festival are a Punch & Judy Show and barbecue, a Samba band which opens the festival fair, magicians and living statues. Children's choirs, dancing, clowns, Playhouse tours and an ocean of music throughout the day will keep people entertained. The fair centred on Bligh's Meadow, gets under way at 10 am and finishes at 5 pm.

For the following fortnight there will be a feast of entertainment, for further information read the Sevenoaks Chronicle or info is available at

[www.sevenoaks-festival.org.uk](http://www.sevenoaks-festival.org.uk)

## **NEW MEMBERS FOR 2006 - WELCOME**

**Walker & Walker Solicitors** Brian & Marlene Walker of Walker & Walker are situated at 35 High Street, Sevenoaks. Telephone 01732 450699 or email [solicitors@walker&walker.co.uk](mailto:solicitors@walker&walker.co.uk)

**Tiga Creative Marketing Limited – Alan Bracken** – for all your graphic design requirements. Telephone: 01732 779111 or email [alan@tigauk.com](mailto:alan@tigauk.com) Also see your Business brochure which includes their information.

**House on the Hill Restaurant/Bar** We wish to welcome Andre Woodward of House on the Hill to the Chamber of Commerce. Give them a call on: 01732 450120 or visit them at: 115 London Road, Sevenoaks. We held a Chamber lunch there a short time ago and all agreed it was excellent.

**Full Circle Property Services Ltd** Contact: Mick Thompson for all your requirements - as the name suggests all aspects of build to extensions, in fact a complete “full circle property service” is offered. Telephone 01732 461225 or email: [mick@fullcircle-psl.co.uk](mailto:mick@fullcircle-psl.co.uk)

**Action International** For all your Business Coaching call Jonathon Peat at: 0845 1305477 or email: [jonathanpeat@action-international.com](mailto:jonathanpeat@action-international.com)